



*Eastern Home
Missions*

Newsletter

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Our Visitors

As far back as October of 2008 I reported that we have had visitors that attend on a regular basis. These are still attending! The Strangs have requested that they receive membership classes from me this summer. We will be starting work on this soon.

Another family has been attending on a regular basis too. They are also interested in becoming members, but must finish some matters in the church where they are attending. We hope by the next newsletter to be able to identify them for you.

In October I also mentioned that a young man visited us with the intention to join us in the early part of this year. Well, Sam Colon has arrived! He too is seeking membership classes with a view to becoming a member soon.

Our Fellowship also enjoyed once again the sacrament of baptism. This sacrament was administered on May 24 to Ginelle Rose, infant daughter of Pete and Megan Cnossen. Our Fellowship always rejoices in the times when this sacrament can be administered. It is an evident token to us of God's covenant established in our midst.

We held our annual Memorial Day church picnic on that holiday. We had a enjoyable day eating, visiting, and playing basketball

and softball. I spoke for about ten minutes on the subject, "Singing the Songs of Zion."

It is evident in all of this that God's blessing rests on us in our labors. By this I do not mean only that God is adding to our numbers. Numerical growth is not in itself an indication of God's blessing. As we well know, many churches grow rather quickly by the thousands. But their growth is based upon compromise and even false doctrine. So numbers alone do not necessarily imply God's blessing. We look for more than that. We are beginning to see a certain organic life developing in our Fellowship. Our membership includes older members, busy parents, young people, and small children, all of which together add to the life needed to testify of a communion of saints. With this, there is also a sincere desire in our Fellowship to grow in the Reformed faith.

"Is Marriage Worth It?"

On Friday, May 8, our Fellowship hosted the first of our marriage workshops. Our general theme is: "Is Marriage Worth It?" The topic of this first workshop was: "Dating." The next workshop in our on-going series is scheduled for August 14 and will concentrate on the seriousness of the wedding ceremony. We will examine the seriousness of taking vows and the truth that God is binding two into one flesh. As you can see, we are slowly laying the biblical foundation for the truth of the permanency of the marriage bond.

The saints in the Fellowship here felt that the past workshop was a huge success! We had 11 visitors in attendance, besides 19 of our own members. Out of these 11 visitors 9 were singles, and one couple. We began the evening with an hour-long, interactive lecture on the need for proper dating. We then had dinner in the church basement. Afterwards we had a 45-minute, lively discussion on the subject. The Word was well received—even when it was said that where we have sinned in this area of our lives there is a need for repentance and a seeking of the cross of Christ. The workshop lasted approximately 3 and a half hours. Each visitor received a free copy of *Better to Marry* by Prof. David Engelsma. Our pile of pamphlets by Rev. Ron VanOverloop on *Sex and Dating* also disappeared quickly.

All who visited said they would return

and bring a friend. We are hoping that the next workshop will be an even greater success.

Radio

The producing of one-minute spot ads on WORD radio has now started. I have found that it is not as difficult as it first seemed. If I record at least five ads per month, it is sufficient. The ads are played several times through the course of that month. It is our goal, however, to record more than five a month. We have found that the best format includes a few sentences of a doctrinal distinctive, an invitation to come and join us for worship, and then our web site address and phone number.

A few of the ads we already recorded and aired included our distinctives concerning marriage and an invitation to our workshop on marriage. These ads proved themselves effective in drawing people to our workshop. All those who attended heard of the workshop on WORD radio.

Central Ohio Reformed Institute

The last week in April my wife and I took a short trip into eastern Ohio. The purpose of this trip was twofold. First, over the course of the past few months we have made several contacts in Ohio. A day was spent visiting these contacts. Mary and I traveled to Steubenville, OH on a Monday morning and I was able to visit for an hour or so with a man who listens regularly to the Reformed Witness Hour. He wondered if we were going to start up a work on the western side of Pittsburgh. At present, of course, this is not possible, but we certainly keep this in mind in our future labors.

In the afternoon of the same day we visited with two elderly brothers who live in Damascus, OH, an hour and half north of Steubenville. These brothers also listen to the Reformed Witness Hour. But their mainstay is downloading Protestant Reformed sermons from the internet and listening to them together. They too expressed a real interest in starting up a work near them that they could attend.

In both of these instances we reminded these saints that if they wanted a work to begin, they themselves must scour about to see if there are others who may be interested. If they are

able to find even a handful of people we may be able to start a midweek Bible study with them.

The second reason for our trip into Ohio was in order that I might attend a conference in Millersburg, the heart of Holmes County. This conference was organized by the Central Ohio Reformed Institute, an organization made up of a number of men from independent Reformed churches in Ohio. The participants in the conference were, in the main, pastors and elders from these churches, as well as a few men of various Presbyterian denominations. When I registered for the conference I was called and asked to give a meditation on a theme of the Reformation. I spoke on the "Apostolicity of the Church." The speeches were, for the most part, edifying and the discussion lively. I was able to make at least one important contact at the conference that later led to another one in Canton, OH.

I believe the trip into Ohio was a worthwhile venture for the sake of the spread of the gospel.

Heidelberg Reformation Society

The Spring conference of the Heidelberg Reformation Association was held on May 26 and 27. Not all the speeches planned for the conference were given, however, due to lack of attendance. Instead, some time was spent reevaluating and discussing the aims and purposes of the association. It was concluded that instead of focusing merely on conferences, the association should become more involved at a hands-on level. Instead of attempting to gather men for a conference, we ought to be going to individual churches and offering them instruction in the use of confessions in general, and the use of the Heidelberg Catechism in particular.

The association has already begun to contact specific churches and ask if they would like a few speakers to come in and talk to them about the Heidelberg Catechism. We will wait now to see what response we receive to our inquiries.

We remain busy and active in our labors in eastern home missions. We pray that God will give us fruit upon our labors, even if that means small but sound growth in the cause of the gospel.