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Dear saints  
in the Protestant Reformed Churches,

Since my last newsletter in August, the new church season has begun. Chester (15) and Dale (12) Mansona are finishing off Old Testament History for Juniors. They have never had catechism before this, so a lot of the history was completely new to them. This evening we will have the last lesson, D.V., and then a test! I have been teaching that class throughout the summer in the Mansonas' living room on Monday evenings, with their mother, Salome, observing. She has remarked that she has learned a lot from the classes and is disappointed that the course is almost over. Salome hopes to join the adult Essentials class as her schedule permits. Chester and Dale have also joined the Saturday afternoon New Testament History for Juniors class, so for a while they have been studying Old and New Testament history at the same time. Often their father, Alfonso, joins us. We finished Lesson five last week. The children come very well prepared. That is always a joy for any catechism teacher.

For the adults, we have resumed Essentials of Reformed Doctrine. We have one new regular attendee, a student from the University of Limerick. For his (and the others') benefit I spent several weeks reviewing Theology and Anthropology before we began Lesson 14, "The Offices of the Mediator," last week. The summer was long and memories are short! We will have another review, D.V., when we finish Christology after Lesson 18. It is good to see the saints enjoying systematic doctrinal instruction. Another welcome addition to Catechism teaching is a large whiteboard, a

"hand-me-down" from the CPRC in Ballymena. We already have their old pulpit. Both the pulpit and whiteboard are being put to good use! On Wednesday evenings, our study of the Gospel according to John continues. Last week we began chapter fifteen on the Vine and the branches.

In the preaching we continue Heidelberg Catechism in the morning and preaching of series in the evening services. I have almost finished my first time through the Catechism and have preached seven sermons in an ongoing series on Matthew 24, "The Signs of Christ's Coming." I chose something on Eschatology because it is the subject *du jour*, with Harold Camping again predicting the end of the world, and because we do not reach Eschatology in Essentials until the end of the course. Sober amillennial exposition is the need of the hour.

Attendance at the Lord's Day services is steady with about a dozen souls. Obviously, we would like to see more, but we understand that these things take time. Every so often we have visitors turn up but they do not stay long. Some come once and never return; others wander in off the street halfway through the service and do not even stay for the end of the sermon; one Romanian man came last week but his agenda was to ask for money; another Latvian lady came a few weeks ago, but we have not seen her since. This is disappointing but we press on. To attract more visitors we need to become better known, and people have to overcome certain prejudices against us before they visit. Among the evangelicals in Limerick there is still much suspicion.

In fact, a man from Limerick, who now lives in San Francisco, started attending recently. He will not be staying, however, as he intends to return to America before the beginning of winter. Nevertheless, I asked him, "How did you hear about us, and what

have you heard about us?” He said that he had heard two things: one, we use the KJV Bible, and two, we believe in infant baptism. In addition, he told us that many evangelicals object to the creeds, and especially to the fact that we preach the Heidelberg Catechism. In fact, he said, “that thing” (he referred to the pink “Three Forms of Unity” booklet) is the reason many will not come to the Limerick Reformed Fellowship. Anti-creedalism is a big issue in Evangelicalism, and stems from their independent views of church government, their confusion about church authority, and their failure to appreciate the development of dogma in the church. In addition, the Limerick Reformed Fellowship is considered by some to be too negative in the preaching. This feedback is useful, not because we intend to change to suit evangelicalism. We certainly do not. We would cease to be a Reformed witness if we did *that*. Nevertheless, we need to make evangelicals understand *why* we hold to the creeds, what exactly we mean by the creeds’ authority, and why polemical, antithetical, expository, doctrinal preaching is necessary. Perhaps these are things we can work on as we develop a consistent Reformed witness here. Criticism, even when it is wrong-headed, can lead one to some useful self-examination.

Our public lectures continue. On 1<sup>st</sup> September, I travelled to Wales to speak on the covenant, “Friendship with God,” and I plan to return on 3<sup>rd</sup> November. Before that, I hope to give a lecture in Limerick, on 31<sup>st</sup> October, Reformation Day. The saints have asked for “Freewill and Predestination.” I plan, therefore, to give that speech in Limerick and then in Wales, D.V.



On the weekend of 23-24 November, the CPRC and LRF met for what has come to be known as the “Overnighter.” This time we chose a place called the Foy Centre in Carlingford, Co. Louth, on the Cooley Peninsula as our venue. Carlingford is a pretty town near the sea and the mountains, and most importantly, it is on this side of the border, in the Republic of Ireland. This enabled Chester and Dale Mansona (who are Filipinos and therefore need visas to cross the border into Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom) as well as Flora Guerra Wanderley, a Brazilian student, studying for several months in Dublin, recommended to us by Nuno Pinheiro of Portugal, to join us. Marco Barone also joined us from Italy. He is an EU citizen, so visa problems do not apply to him. With some juggling of vehicles at the last minute, we all managed to get there and back. Rev. Stewart and I led Bible discussions on the “Antithesis” and the “Priesthood of all Believers,” and fun, fellowship, and food were enjoyed by all. After the Overnighter, Rev. Stewart and I swapped pulpits.



Let us continue to remember one another in prayer and be encouraged by Christ’s promise that, “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:14).

In Christian love,  
Rev. Martyn McGeown