

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

14 April, 2017

Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

Local Press

Patrick, the great British missionary who preached the gospel of grace in Ireland in the fifth century, is probably the world's most famous "patron saint." Sadly, parades on St. Patrick's Day (17 March) are now being used to promote the homosexual agenda.

However, when he boarded a ship to escape from slavery in Ireland, the real Patrick did not comply with the request of the (male) sailors: "I refused to suck their breasts for fear of God, but rather hoped they would come to the faith of Jesus Christ, because they were pagans" (*Confession* 18). In fifth-century, pagan Ireland, sucking a man's nipple was a sign of friendship or of the reception of protection. Patrick "refused" to engage in it out of the "fear of God" in order to avoid *any* homosexual connotations. Instead, this faithful Christian, whose two writings are saturated with the authoritative Word of God (e.g., *Letter to Coroticus* 20) and who would later return to Ireland as a missionary, "rather hoped they would come to the faith of Jesus Christ."

So I wrote a letter to the N. Ireland press, explaining from Patrick's own writings, the earliest extant Irish literature, how he was sharply opposed to sodomy as anti-scriptural and sinful. The *Belfast Telegraph* and the *News Letter* published the letter in full on St. Patrick's Day or the day before, respectively (www.cprf.co.uk/articles/patrickandhomosexuality.html).

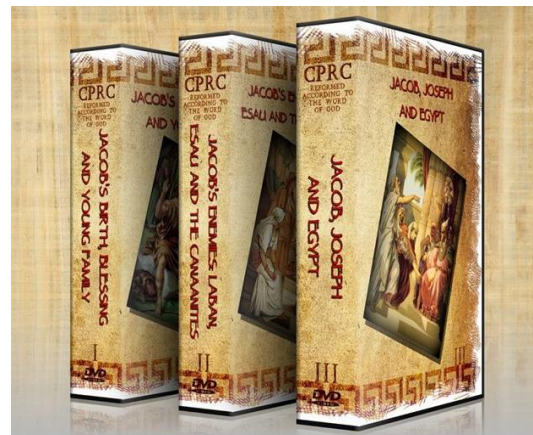
Besides an earlier article in the *Mid-Ulster Mail*, the *Tyrone Courier* printed a piece I sent them about Rev. McGeown's new book *Called to Watch for Christ's Return* (22 February), as did the *Ballymena*

Guardian (11 April). With the help of Marco Barone, a willing trans-Atlantic courier flying to and from Grand Rapids, our supply of this end times' book has been renewed.

Our bookstore, filled with RFPA materials, is a great resource for building up our members, getting out the truth of the Reformed faith, and making our church better known. We love selling these wonderful books!

Ministry of the Word

The 34-sermon series on "The Life of Jacob" (Gen. 25-50) has concluded, with the third box set of the trilogy entitled "Jacob, Joseph and Egypt" (Gen. 37-50). Available on CD or DVD, it is listed with about 70 other box sets on-line (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/boxsets.htm).



A couple of weeks ago, we started a new series of sermons on "The Conclusion to Christ's Farewell Discourse" (John 16). This beautiful chapter of God's Word deals with such themes as Christ's bodily departure, the persecution of His saints, the work of the Holy Spirit, prayer, and peace.

The CPRC catechism classes concluded with an end-of-season test on Monday, 27 March. All the students in the 3 classes on

Beginners New Testament, Juniors Old Testament, and *Heidelberg Catechism* Book 2 did well—a testimony not only to their hard work but also to that of their parents.

After 16 classes on the holy war, we have begun a study on the holy land in our Tuesday morning classes. It is a massive theme in Genesis, the rest of the Pentateuch, and throughout Old Testament history and prophecy, with important lessons for us New Testament Christians (e.g., Heb. 11:8-16).

Our Wednesday night study of the *Belgic Confession* is in rich ecclesiastical pastures. Our six classes on *Belgic Confession* 31, “The Ministers, Elders and Deacons,” looked at how Christ calls His officebearers: their qualification, nomination by the council, election by the congregation, and ordination. We also covered sinful motives for, and ways of, seeking church office, equality among officebearers, and “Murmuring, Strife, and Contention Against Officebearers.”

We are currently on *Belgic Confession* 32, “The Order and Discipline of the Church,” dealing with the whole area of church authority: its nature, source, parties, etc. Our *Belgic Confession* audio page includes some 215 audios of all of the classes from over the last six church seasons (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/belgicconfessionclasses.htm).

The subject of my last lecture in South Wales was “The New Calvinism and the Reformation” (2 March). The speech contrasted the “New Calvinism” of John Piper, Mark Driscoll, Tim Keller, etc., with the old Calvinism of the Reformation and its creeds in the areas of the doctrines of grace, Charismaticism, worship, ecclesiology, etc. There were 17 of us present. The video of the lecture, plus the question and answer session, is on-line (www.youtube.com/watch?v=soWSTosMTsYp).

Others

The CPRC YouTube site continues to grow, thanks to the work of Stephen Murray

(www.youtube.com/cprcni). Our subscribers have increased to 770. Now all the sermon series, conference speeches, and debates that we have on-line in video are in handy playlists. Thus, for example, the videos of the 6 sermons in the 2010 series “The Outrage of Gibeah” (Jud. 19-21) are arranged one after another on a special YouTube page.

The CPRC main website (www.cprc.co.uk) is doing well. We average about 2,400 different people per day (excluding those listening to audios or reading pdfs). The last 2 months saw the addition of just 7 new translations (3 Spanish, 2 Hungarian, and 2 Czech), probably our worst haul ever! Though slow, our foreign section keeps growing (www.cprf.co.uk/lan-guages.htm).

This summer, Mary and I are taking our biennial holiday in North America, D.V. I am to preach 8 times: Spokane (23 July), Edmonton and Lacombe (30 July), Lynden (6 August), and Providence and Hudsonville (13 August). It will be good to worship with the saints in all these 6 churches again. I will also be giving a slide presentation after the Sunday afternoon/evening service in 4 of these churches. Rev. Brummel and I are to speak at an evangelism conference in Lacombe on Saturday, 29 July.

Our sister-church relationship is important to us, so we appreciate all these opportunities to maintain contact and strengthen our bonds in Christ. In our absence from Northern Ireland, Rev. Bleyenbergh of Providence PRC will be preaching in the CPRC and the Limerick Reformed Fellowship (LRF) on three Lord’s Days (30 July and 6 & 13 August).

We appreciate your interest, support, and prayers for your sister church and its mission work on the island of Ireland.

May the Lord be with you all,

Rev. & Mary Stewart