

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

14 May, 2013

Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

Church Visitors

Rev. Carl Haak of Georgetown PRC and Elder Pete Vander Schaaf of Faith PRC were our church visitors this year (15-23 March). The day after their arrival, Rev. Haak gave two fine addresses on “Looking for the Glorious Appearing of Our Saviour.” The ladies provided a lovely lunch between the speeches. We had ads and articles published in both the Ballymena papers and various people passed out fliers, plus we ran a trailer after the Reformed Witness Hour broadcast that we sponsor. About sixty people were present at one or both of the Saturday lectures and a good quantity of Reformed materials were sold or given out. This was our first half-day conference in our new building and we were very pleased with the attendance and at how smoothly things ran.

Rev. Haak also preached at both Lord's Day services, led our Tuesday morning Bible study (on Christian discipleship), and gave a midweek lecture on “Life in Heaven”—all of which were greatly appreciated.

Our two American brethren conducted official church visitation with the CPRC Council, visited with several families in the congregation, and walked some beautiful coastal trails, despite their stay including the deepest falls and longest lasting snow I recall seeing in Northern Ireland.



Church Visitors P. VanDerSchaaf and Rev. Haak with Rev. Stewart

Such visits are a highlight in the CPRC year, providing great encouragement and deepening our fellowship with our sister church in North America. Long may it continue!

Annual General Meeting

Moving from the very start of the last two-month period to its end, we come to the CPRC Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Monday, 13 May. Rev. McGeown, who remained in Northern Ireland after the pulpit swap the day before, gave a missionary report; Ivan Reid, the treasurer's report; Stephen Murray, the audio-visual report. I made some concluding remarks on evangelism work. We are thankful to our gracious heavenly Father for steady progress on so many fronts and the faithfulness of solid, supportive, and active members.

Ivan and Lily Reid celebrated their 40th anniversary on the day before the AGM, and Ivan ended his 25-year stint as treasurer. So at the meeting, Brian Crossett presented them with a laptop computer and a painting, etc., on behalf of the congregation as a small recognition for their devoted service over many years. William and Alison Graham will now take care of the church's finances.

Church Life

The CPRC had a good catechism season, with well-prepared students. Our Wednesday night *Belgic Confession* class is also finished for this church year. Our third season on this great Reformation creed covered Articles 16-21a, dealing with eternal election, Christ's Person, natures, priestly office, etc. It has been a very rewarding study and the on-line audios of our *Belgic Confession* classes get a lot of hits (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/belgicconfessionclass.htm). The Tuesday morning class is concluding its treatment of preterism (which puts all or most of eschatology back in the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70!) by considering the dating of the book of Revelation.

The conclusion of the church year has given me more time for writing, e.g., book reviews and an extended defence of the Christian and Reformation teaching that “outside the church there is no salvation” (www.cprf.co.uk/articles/boundtojoinreview.htm).

Recent transatlantic visitors include Hank and Barb DeVries (Randolph PRC), Philip and Julie Rainey (First PRC), and Stephanie Adams (First PRC). Stephanie was able to witness the baptism of her nephew and our youngest member, Lucas Joshua Hall (14 April). Sadly, the Hallidays left the CPRC; it proved difficult for them to attend, given their distance from Ballymena.

Websites

The last two months have seen 69 on-line translations added (www.cprf.co.uk/languages.htm), with the biggest growth being in the Burmese section. John VanBaren of Hope PRC forwarded to us 46 Burmese translations by Rev. Titus in Myanmar. We now have the whole of Rev. Hanks's *Doctrine According to Godliness* on-line in Burmese. The other additions were 7 Italian, 7 Hungarian, 3 Spanish, 2 Portuguese (including Prof. Engelsma's pamphlet, "A Defense of Calvinism as the Gospel"), 2 Nepali (the *Apostles'* and *Athanasian Creeds*, sent to us by Krishna Kandel), 1 Chinese ("The Kingdom of God," a 43-page pamphlet by Prof. Engelsma), and 1 Ilocano (the *Apostles' Creed*, located on-line by Chester and Dale Mansona of the Limerick Reformed Fellowship).

Recently, our Translator Fund received donations of \$1,000 and £100, with which we send free books to translators. Without this generosity, it would be difficult to continue this project. Of late, free literature has been mailed to appreciative brethren in Hungary, California, and the Czech Republic.

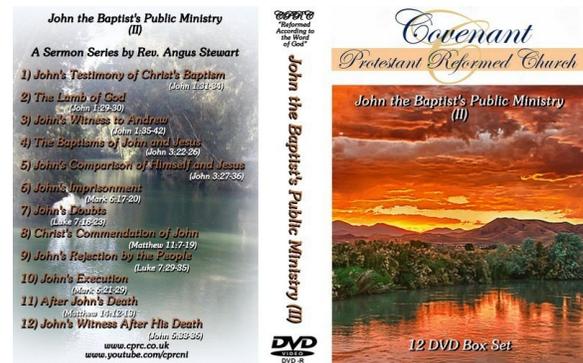
Mary has now converted all of the 1,000 or so audio files on our website to urls beginning www.cprc.co.uk, which makes it much easier to compare the hits received for all of our various sermons and speeches. In the five months of 2013, we have averaged between 600 and 2,400 audios listened to each day.

Speaking of (little) milestones, we added our 30th topical resource page, that on the Reformed Worldview (www.cprf.co.uk/worldviewresources.htm). Our YouTube page (www.youtube.com/cprcni) surpassed 100,000 video views (currently 102,092) and 350 subscribers (currently 352), while the CPRC Facebook page (www.facebook.com/CovenantPRC) now has over 1,000 friends (currently 1,042). Please feel free to sign up or subscribe! We have found these to be helpful (and free!) ways of disseminating the Reformed faith, reaching new translators, selling literature, etc.

Others

The CPRC Bookstore sold 546 books in the past year (not including RFPA Book Club members), up from 370 the year before. Our best-selling title is *The Reformed Worldview*, by Profs. Hanks and Engelsma, with 118 sales in the last twelve months, despite the terrible review it received from a devotee of common grace in the *Evangelical Times*! Our second best-selling book, *Federal Vision: Heresy at the Root*, by Prof. Engelsma, has had three good reviews in the UK: Brian Harris (*Bible League and Quarterly*), John Hooper (*English Churchman*), and Timothy Spence (*British Reformed Journal*).

Our latest CD and DVD box-set is "John the Baptist's Public Ministry (II)." I found preparing for the 24 sermons on John (from which we made three box-sets) very helpful in understanding the great forerunner of our Lord and the harbinger of the New Testament age.



The last South Wales trip was very encouraging (18 April). Mary and I had dinner with the Harris and Holt families before the lecture on "The Spirit of the Age and the Church," at which the attendance and sales were very good. Please pray that the Lord may continue to prosper this work and the saints in Wales.

Mary and I are looking forward to our trip to the US this summer (17 July – 13 August), when we are to attend the weddings of a nephew and a niece, and I am to preach in Calvary and Heritage (21 July), Lynden (28 July), Randolph (4 August), and Faith (11 August), D.V.

May the Lord's kingdom come and may He be with you all.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. & Mary Stewart