



*Eastern Home
Missions*

Newsletter

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Activities in the Fellowship

The labors among the saints in the Fellowship keep all of us busy. In September the catechism classes and Bible Studies began. I teach four catechism classes. The Beginners class meets on Sunday mornings after church. A new student in catechism class is Ethan Gurevich, the oldest son of Kelli Gurevich. We meet on Sunday morning for Kelli's convenience. Otherwise, the three other classes I teach are on Tuesday evening. That makes four classes total with eight students. How do you like that teacher/student ratio? Some of our smaller congregations know what I am talking about! My daughter Lydia and Anthony Bauman are taking a pre-confession class in hopes of making confession of faith in November.

Young People's Society meets on Sunday evenings. At present we have eight young people who attend this society. Pete and Megan Cnossen, though married, still enjoy attending this society. Our discussion is lively and interesting. This year we have decided to discuss Judges. We have also appointed an activities committee to try to come up with one or two activities the society can become involved in.

The Neighborhood Outreach Committee

has been busy making plans for our upcoming Reformation Day lecture. Fliers have been sent out to about 25 neighboring churches asking them to invite their members to the lecture. Another mailing is being made to those on our mailing list. The rest of the mailers are going to be delivered door to door.

Another project that is in the works is a dinner/seminar in February. We intend to invite young couples who are contemplating marriage to attend in order that we might teach them how to establish a marriage that can last a lifetime. Of course, we are not interested simply in teaching them some practical things about dating and marriage, but we intend to get into the subject of the permanency of the marriage bond. Also, we intend to teach them that Christ is needed in life to establish a good marriage. So, that project is in the workings now already too.

The Media Committee has also been busy. To the printers are the short explanations of the various aspects of our worship services. These are being printed up professionally to be made available in the back of church for those who visit. This committee is also setting up cams and projectors in order that we might record DVDs for distribution to several churches and individuals. I have begun two new series of sermons on Sundays. The first is on the Heidelberg Catechism. The second on "The Signs of Christ's Return."

Visitors

The young family I mentioned in my last newsletter continues to attend—now both services. Joy and George Strang and their two daughters Kathryn (3) and Elizabeth (2) have expressed some interest in becoming members by us. We consider this family a real blessing to us. Their attendance is very encouraging.

A second family with two daughters has also been attending for about two months now. On August 3 Samuel Colon visited our church services. He has visited us before and has expressed his intention to move to Pittsburgh and affiliate with our Fellowship in the early months of next year.

We advertised our series of sermons on WORD radio. This has resulted in a number of visitors on Sunday evenings. Another person has requested recordings of the evening sermons via mail. We are pleased with the results of our advertising as well.

Missions class

This past month I began another class at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological School. The class is entitled, "The Theology and Goal of Missions." Dr. Steven Miller, a professor adjunct and a former missionary in Africa, teaches the class. Again, as with the class I took from him last year, it is evident that he has done much study in this area.

Outside activities

We continue to supply preaching for the saints in Franklin. Rev. Rodney Kleyn filled the pulpit there on August 17 and Rev. Haak intends to fill it on November 16. I still preach there once a month on the last Sunday of the month. This small church has seen some growth. Just recently a young couple decided to become a part of the church there.

The annual Fall meeting of the Heidelberg Reformation Association will be held on Saturday, October 11. Howard Sloan, who is the man instrumental in organizing the association, will speak at this meeting. We will conduct our annual business at this meeting, which includes selecting a man and a place for our Spring lecture. There continues to be an interest among the members of this association for materials on the Heidelberg Catechism. Howard informs me that several of these men have been downloading from the internet our catechism books on the H.C. for use in their churches. We pray that God will continue to bless the efforts of this association unto the establishment and preservation of His church.

I am in contact with a man in Steubenville, OH, about an hour west of the city of Pittsburgh. We are making plans to meet for coffee soon. He has expressed an interest in our work here in Pittsburgh but is too far away to make it to our Sunday services. He would like to see a work start up on the western side of Pittsburgh or thereabouts.

Now, that is an interesting idea! There is a borough named Heidelberg on the west side of Pittsburgh. That would be an excellent place to start up a work! This is just a *thought*, of course. I do not want to start a rumor that we are actually starting a work there. But this man ought to prove an interesting contact to make.

Missionary musings

I was thinking: Every new place to preach and teach, every new idea for a lecture or a speech or a seminar, every new family that visits our Fellowship...makes for more work.

Do not get me wrong. I do not want to complain about work. I have always said: "A congregation loves a minister who works hard, but a minister who works hard and complains about it is never appreciated." So, no complaints here. In fact, I enjoy such variety to my work.

But this is what I was thinking. I was thinking that it is easy for a minister or a missionary to "coast" in his work. I mean, I like to coast once in a while, just to get a breath. But it is easy for a minister to fall into a rut and keep on coasting. Visiting new contacts and visitors, preparing another speech, gaining a new family that needs some instruction in the Protestant Reformed faith, searching out new places to preach—these are not simply activities that are work in themselves. These are activities that *create* more work. All this on top of the necessary routine labors that are found in the ministry.

For that reason a minister can look up against doing these things. Not only ministers, but members too, must ask God for the necessary strength and zeal to carry on in these labors. Encouragement is needed in such labors. Certainly when we do them the reward is great! Many blessings that otherwise remain hidden are poured out on the minister and the church that is zealous in the work of the ministry.

So, anyway, just some thoughts....