



Eastern Home Missions

Newsletter

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My sincere apologies for not sending out this newsletter earlier. Time does have a way of getting away from me!

The Sacrament of Baptism

Our Fellowship rejoiced this past August when the infant daughter of Chad and Kim Skolny was baptized. The name of this newest member in our Fellowship is Abigail Grace. She is a welcome addition to our mission fellowship. We also are glad for the opportunity to witness an infant baptism in our midst. This sacrament testifies and assures us as believing parents that God is establishing the blessings of His covenant in the line of our continued generations. To us this means, in turn, that God is building His church here. In humble gratitude to God we thank Him for His faithfulness.



Preaching in Spokane

In September I was allowed the opportunity to fly out to Spokane, WA with Mary in order to visit with Rev. Rodney and Elizabeth Kleyn and family. We real-

ly enjoyed ourselves in the home with their family and are grateful for their hospitality. We also were able to visit briefly with members of the church.

While there Rev. Kleyn and I recorded several radio broadcasts introducing our churches and our doctrines. We also spoke on the subjects of a Reformed family and the doctrine of the last things. Since then, Rev. Kleyn has had these broadcasts edited and is airing them presently in Spokane. The Friday evening I was there I spoke to the church and visitors on the subject, *The Witness of the Reformed Believer*. Then Sunday Rev. Kleyn and I preached sermons on passages relating to the witness of the church.

We are thankful for the faithful witness of this little church and its members in the area of Spokane and beyond. Thanks also to Candidate Daniel Holstege, who filled the pulpit in Pittsburgh while I was gone!

Our Open House

A few years ago, after our church building was remodeled, we held an open house. We invited the people of the neighborhood to visit the newly renovated church. We held a short service during that time, during which Rev. Griess (who was a student then) and I spoke on the subject of the church. The open house was well attended.



We decided to hold another open house this year. The format was different, however. Instead of simply making the building available for a tour, we decided to put up several different displays. There were displays of RFPA books and the *Standard Bearer*, a variety of pamphlets, our work on WORD radio and The Reformed Witness Hour, our internet web page, and recordings of CDs and DVDs. Most of the members put a lot of time and effort into making displays that were attractive and interesting. Dave Reitsma and I put some time into developing a PowerPoint presentation on Reformed doctrine. We spent a half hour presenting this during the open house. We also developed a display

highlighting the Reformed view of the five points of Calvinism and the covenant.

Even though a lot of hard work went into preparing for this day, we knew this did not necessarily mean there would be visitors. I counted six visitors during the three hours we held the open house. That means, of course, there were not hordes of people crowding around the displays grabbing everything they could lay hands on. Ah, if that could only happen one time—just *one* time! But we know from experience that that does not happen. In fact, that six people showed up is probably, for the most part, the norm.

In terms of numbers, we might say this day was a failure. But out of the six that attended, one man has been in church a number of times. Two others, who were elderly women, talked about attending our Saturday morning classes. They are too old for evening Bible studies in their own church (a Reformed Presbyterian church) and have expressed a genuine interest in attending our class. We will see what comes of these contacts. But if this is all we achieved by means of an open house, then it was worth the effort!

Reformation Day Lecture

We are planning our 13th annual Reformation Day lecture for October 29. I will be speaking on the subject, *Martin Luther: Captive to the Word*. Certainly, this is not a unique title or subject, but we are hoping it will attract as much interest as our John Calvin lecture did last year.

We have decided to continue pursuing subjects that highlight the lives of Reformers. This is what caught the attention of so many last year. They wanted to learn who John Calvin was. Now, we are hoping the same interest will be shown as to who Martin Luther was. As usual, we have advertised quite heavily on WORD radio and sent out mailers and flyers. We also made signs that are now posted along busy routes, in the hope that drivers will see them. You will hear in the next newsletter the results.

Volunteers Repair Retaining Wall

Our church building sits on a hill. It is about 20 or 25 steps above the level of the sidewalk and the street. Along the sidewalk there were three rows of block supporting the weight of the hill. These blocks have been leaning since before we moved into the church. A few of them had even fallen from their courses. It was not a pretty sight!



In the last week of September, Mr. Dave Kregel organized a volunteer work crew that skillfully finished the work they began a year ago on the driveway of the house next door to the church. The young men who helped are: Steve Huizinga, Derek Kuiper, Andy Bylsma, and Brent Kregel. In two day's time these men constructed a beautiful retaining wall in front of the church. We are grateful to them and to those who supported them financially. When witnessing volunteer labor of this sort, the saints in the Fellowship continue to grow in their love and appreciation for our denomination! Thanks to all of you!



Visitors

I have mentioned, in past newsletters, the names of four individuals that I referred to as visitors. The Fellowship does not view them in this way anymore. All four of them have been with us for over a year now. They attend church as well as the Saturday morning doctrines class. They are involved in the functions of the Fellowship. Although their names may not be on the list of those members of the mission who partake of the Lord's Supper, nevertheless by this point we consider them members of the Fellowship. All of them have expressed a desire to be a part of our mission group.

When I speak of visitors, therefore, I am not referring to them, but to those people who have visited us more than just a time or two. I made mention of a middle-aged man who has come to church several times

over the course of the past few weeks. This man enjoys our preaching and is learning an appreciation for the Reformed faith. He comes out of an independent church. We expect to see more of him.

For the past five weeks we have had a family from Butler, PA (about a 45-minute drive northeast of our church) visiting our worship services. He is a doctor who works in the hospital in Butler. He is married and has two teenage daughters and a twelve-year-old son. A few years ago I met with a group of men north of Pittsburgh called the Java Reformers. Since that time I had to drop out of this group of men due to the increase in my labors and the distance. Someone of this group was speaking with the wife in a family that is visiting us. She expressed a desire to find a church that believed in the six-day creation and in the permanency of the marriage bond. The member of the Java Reformers referred her to us.

She contacted me through e-mail, we traded a few more emails, and she and her family have since been coming by us once a Sunday. I have had opportunity to talk with him about a number of other doctrinal positions. He expressed quite an interest in our view of the unconditional covenant.

We are thankful for the evidence of God's faithfulness to us in this way too. Of course, it is always our prayer when we have interested individuals and families that we will be able to wade through differences and misconceptions in order that they might come to doctrinal agreement with us. That truly is where the work of a missionary becomes difficult and time-consuming. There are those with whom much time can be spent and who seem to be in agreement with almost everything—and then there will arise that one point of doctrinal difference that stands in the way of unity. Then the work suddenly ends and they do not remain. That hurts! But when by God's grace difficulties can be overcome—what great reason for joy! We have experienced both, and we have learned to wait on God's sovereign will as He builds His church.

Our thanks to all of you for supporting us financially through synodical assessments and collections. Thank you, too, for remembering us in your discussions and prayers. A special thanks to our ministers, who continue to bring the needs of the work of Pittsburgh before God's throne of grace in their congregational prayers.