



*Eastern Home
Missions*

Newsletter

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Lectures:

Our Fellowship has been busy the past few months with several new projects. One of them culminated in a visit to the mission, on the evening of June 22, by Rev. Garry Eriks, his wife Jennifer, a number of adults, and a dozen young people from our Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. Eriks presented a lecture that evening on the subject "Christian Money Management." Although we could have wished for more, we were thankful that the advertised lecture did draw a few visitors from the community.

The next day the young people of Hudsonville helped us out with some heavy cleaning and organizing of a number of rooms in the church. We concluded our day by attending a ball game at PNC Park, where the Pirates did a number on the Tigers. It was a good game!

We are grateful for the interest shown by those who come here and worship with us. Such interest in our work is always an encouragement to the saints here. We pray too that it will help keep us in the thoughts and prayers of our churches and people.

We are planning to hold our second Family Retreat and Conference in October. Two years ago we held it in Sugar Creek, Ohio. This year it will be closer to home. We are going to meet in Hyatt Place in Cranberry, PA about 35 minutes north of our Fellowship. It is our prayer that we will be able

to draw people from the north of Pittsburgh, from Butler, PA (about an hour north of Pittsburgh), and from Cranberry itself. If enough interest can be found in these areas in the future, we may be able to begin a mid-week Bible study to the north somewhere.

The theme of our conference is "Exercising Ourselves in the Knowledge of Scripture." Rev. Slopsema will give the first speech on Friday night entitled, "Things Hidden and Things Revealed." The next morning, Saturday, Rev. Bruinsma will speak on the subject, "How Much Knowledge of Scripture Is Enough?"

We are advertising for the conference quite heavily by means of radio, mailings, special invitations, and flyers. This has already taken quite a bit of planning on the part of our Neighborhood Outreach Committee. We pray that this will be fruitful unto the extension of our work in this area.

A month after our Family Retreat we plan to hold our annual Reformation Day lecture. This lecture always seems to draw the most visitors. For the past three years we have seen more than 20 visitors attend each time. Perhaps this is because of the subject matter of the lectures. We have chosen to give a biography of different reformers. For the past three years we have spoken on John Calvin, Martin Luther, and John Knox. This year we are planning a lecture on the life and teachings of William Farel. This is at the request of several of the visitors last year.

So, we are busy with our planning of and advertising for our lectures.

Other work:

The saints in our Fellowship are also busy with other work in connection with our outreach and witness. We have developed a mailing list of about 100 people, most of whom are in or from the area around Pittsburgh. We send quarterly mailers to these people, including in them events taking place in our mission and a short (usually a tri-fold) pamphlet. We have had good response to these pamphlets. Several of these contacts have phoned, written, or attended some of the special functions that we have. This is a good way of maintaining a presence in the area. Any contact we receive from the Reformed Witness Hour, our own ads, requests for pamphlets, and the RFPA we add to our list of names.

We often have requests for pamphlets. Many of

these come from Rev. Stewart and the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland bookstore. For that reason, we have a number of people busy organizing the pamphlets we have, filling orders, and reordering pamphlets. This is an area we are developing. We are waiting for shelves to be put up in one of the rooms of the church in order that we might have an organized supply of pamphlets.

There is also an effort being made to write new pamphlets and to reformat some of the pamphlets already written. Much of this stands in close connection with our mailings. It seems we are making new tri-folds with every new mailing!

Labors in the Fellowship

I know everyone is interested in what is going on in the Fellowship itself. I also know that I have been horribly remiss in filling you in on the events of the mission. My apologies! I hope to improve in the future—no excuses. We have been very busy in our labors.

There are two highlights in the work in the past several months. About three years ago a young couple who were dating came and visited our Fellowship for the first time. They have attended since. If you recall, a little over a year ago now John and Julie Fennell were married in our church. It was a first for us. Well, about a month ago the two of them were blessed with the birth of an infant son, Ian Fitzgerald. Both mother and son are doing well. Baptism is scheduled for the near future. We rejoice with this young couple of our Fellowship! God in His faithfulness has led them this far in their spiritual journey and reveals to them (and us with them) the beauty of the promise of His covenant.

A part of that spiritual journey for John and Julie was walked with another young man of our Fellowship: Mike Murrell. Mike is a 23-year-old man who began visiting all on his own some three years ago—a few months before John and Julie came. He has been faithful from the very outset in his church attendance. He has become actively involved in the work of the church, using his computer savvy for recording, copying, and labeling CDs of the worship services and lectures. On April 15 John, Julie, and Mike made confession of their faith before the Fellowship. They were examined and their confession was approved by a delegation of Southwest Council and before the Steering Committee of our Fellowship. Again, we have had much reason for thanks!

We are thankful too that we might be busy in the instruction of the children and of the newer members of our Fellowship. The saints here are at different levels of knowledge, and this requires much in the way of instruction—and patience.

Knowledge and understanding of the Word of God does not drop suddenly from the skies! It is not as if we are working with Reformed believers who have a certain level of knowledge before they come to us. Many of the saints here are altogether new to the truths of Scripture as they are taught in our churches. How much time to develop would you give to one who needed instruction in every area of life and doctrine? How much time to learn and develop would you give to saints who have been taught wrongly in many areas of life and doctrine? This consumes much of what we do in our labors.

There are many reasons to rejoice in the labors we do. We are thankful for them all. But there is another reality that exists in the work. There are those who come only for a time. We begin to love them and depend on their presence. But they leave for one reason or another. This is always a blow and very discouraging to the members of the Fellowship. Yet, especially for those who have been in the mission from the start, this is a reality they have had to face over and over again. Membership in a mission can be so fluid. So we push on, rejoicing in and working with what God does give us. Our prayers continue that God will, in His time, establish His church here in Pittsburgh and expand that work to other areas nearby.

Remember us and our needs in your prayers too.