



*Eastern Home
Missions*

Newsletter

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Interested Visitors

The labors within the Pittsburgh mission itself have become a full-time job. It is indeed a blessing when God adds to the numbers of our mission group, but this, in turn, requires much more of the time and efforts of the missionary.

God has indeed blessed us with growth! In our last newsletter we mentioned the Dr. Tony and Tracey Maalouf and their three teenage children. This family continues to attend our morning worship services. For the past several months we welcomed as well the attendance of Steve and Lindsay Brosgol during our evening worship services. This is a young couple who have been married for about two years. Steve's background is Roman Catholic and Lindsay's is Presbyterian USA. Prior to coming to our services, however, they were attending the Assembly of God. At times Lindsay's mother, Martha, comes with them. Lindsay also attends our Saturday morning Reformed Doctrines class. This young couple has become a welcome and refreshing part of the group here.

At about the same time that Lindsay and Steve started visiting us in the evening, Harriet Munsey began attending the morning service. Harriet is a lady in her 50s who was attending an Arminian Baptist church. She was led to a knowledge of Calvinism through the teachings of John McArthur. She (as did the Brosgols) heard our ad on WORD radio and decided to visit. She has been coming on

Sunday ever since. She also attends and contributes well to the studies that we hold on Saturday mornings.

These saints are *interested* visitors. We have visitors that may come once, never to be seen again. Some attend a few times but lose interest. Every time we have a visitor, everyone's face seems to brighten. When they do not return, there is always a little bit of disappointment. But these saints whom we just mentioned are truly interested in the Reformed faith and what it teaches. That they are with us regularly and reveal an excitement for the truth helps renew us all in our efforts to spread the gospel.

We are thankful for them and their willingness to stand by us to learn with us the wonderful doctrines of grace!

Social Activities

We have enjoyed a number of social activities in these past several months as well.

We still hold our Fellowship Dinner every other Sunday evening. The women of the Fellowship prepare some kind of dish to pass. Then, after the evening worship service, we all go downstairs to the church fellowship hall. We eat together and simply enjoy one another's company. Our visitors especially enjoy this since they are able to learn who we are personally. In an informal setting they feel free to ask questions about our churches and what we teach.

In February the young people of the Fellowship traveled to Hidden Valley ski resort to go tubing. We spent a beautiful day marching up and down the slopes and enjoying the brisk, refreshing winter weather. The young people took along a few friends to share in the enjoyment.

On May 30 we held our annual Memorial Day picnic. Keith Bauman grilled hamburgers and hot-dogs—in a way that only a true chef can do it! Everyone brought something to complement the picnic meal. It was a hot day, but the young men of the Fellowship managed to play basketball and softball. As usual, it was a good day.

Now, it may seem that these social activities hold little importance as far as the life of our Fellowship here is concerned. But that is far from the truth! Surely, these activities cannot and do not re-

place the spiritual exercise we must exert in order to grow in the grace and the knowledge of God's Word. The church is not some social club that places more stock in social activities than spiritual ones. That would be a grave mistake in mission work if that were the case.

But at the same time neither can we ignore these activities or check them off as useless in the work here. First of all, we always use these activities to invite others to come and involve themselves in our Fellowship. We "show ourselves friendly" (Prov. 18:24). We are ready to "entertain strangers" (Hebrews 13:2). It is important that those who are friends or family of the saints of our Fellowship know that we are common, ordinary people, just as they are, but also a people set apart by God unto the service of His name. Visitors at our Fellowship dinners, visitors at our Memorial Day picnic, or even at an outing of the young people are able to witness the godly conversation of the saints of our Fellowship.

In the second place, social gatherings are also important for the life of the mission group itself. God takes various individuals and families from different ethnic and religious backgrounds and unites them together into a body of saints. We certainly are characterized by like faith and a desire for the truth. But we have to learn to live together and function together as friends. We have to learn that our friendships are to be found among our fellow saints. This is an easy thing to do when there are hundreds of people of the same ethnic background or who have been members of Reformed churches for years. It is not so easy when their backgrounds are so varied. Social gatherings help us to learn to appreciate each other and the friendships that we can establish with each other.

Franklin, PA

Ever since starting my labors in Pittsburgh I have also been traveling an hour and a half north of Pittsburgh to Franklin, PA. There is small church there for whom I have preached one service a month all these years. I have developed a real love for these saints in Franklin and their specific needs. For various reasons—none of them hostile or adverse—the elders in the small church there and I have decided that I would no longer travel to Franklin to preach.

This is a sad development, since we have really grown in our mutual appreciation for one another. But I am becoming busier in my labors in the Pittsburgh Fellowship. The Steering Committee and I understand the need of my being here as much as possible. So, both Southwest PRC and the Domestic Mission Committee some time ago already decided that June would end my regular visits to Franklin to preach.

This does not mean our contact with the church there is finished. We will remain in contact with each other and I can still help out at times when the need is strong. The last Sunday of this month, after I preach in Franklin, the church there is having a farewell dinner on our behalf. The plans are that the church there and our Fellowship here will continue to share in various functions with one another.

We wish God's blessings on the congregation in Franklin.

Fennell/Hernley Wedding

On July 22, the Lord willing, John Fennell and Julie Hernley of our Fellowship will be married. The wedding will be held in our church. I will be officiating. Pete and Megan Cnossen and Chad and Kim Skolny will be among the attendants. Everyone in our Fellowship is excited about the wedding. It will be the first wedding in our church building! Flowers are being planted outside the church, the women's bathroom has received a facelift, and additional pews and chairs will be set up in the sanctuary in order to seat the people.

We rejoice because this wedding again reveals to us God's blessing on the Fellowship here. Baptisms, confessions of faith, marriages (the third one in our Fellowship) all reveal the development of the life of the covenant in our midst. It is necessary that the church grows from without. But we must also find evidences of internal growth. Christ uses both to build His church in this world.

As in all the labors of the church, God also sends struggles and disappointments in order to temper the joys we experience (Ecclesiastes 7:14). We have our share of hardships too, but in them all we surely can see God's hand of blessing upon us. The Lord our God builds up His church!