

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

17 August, 2015

Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

US Trip

Mary and I greatly enjoyed our trip to the US to see family and friends (6 July-3 August). We attended the wedding of our niece Kaelyn Hanko and Joe Richards (10 July) and were present at a family reunion of 56 of us in Colorado for Mary's parents' (Fred and Ruth Hanko) wedding anniversary during the last week of July.

Around those two fixed dates, we structured our holiday so that I preached on two Sundays in Loveland in Colorado (19 and 26 July), staying those weekends with our fine hosts, Bob and Patti Bos and family. I also spoke in Kalamazoo, and in Cornerstone in Indiana (12 July). Our last Sunday was in Grand Rapids, where I preached in Georgetown and Grace (2 August). In each of these five PR churches, I gave a presentation on the CPRC from the perspective of our evangelistic work: "What We Do and Why We Do It." We were very encouraged by the fellowship and support of the saints in our sister churches! We also had a lot of interest in next year's British Reformed Fellowship (BRF) Conference in Castlewellan, Northern Ireland (16-23 July, 2016). Booking forms should be available around the end of this year.

While in Grand Rapids, I had a meeting with some of the Contact Committee. On our last morning in the US, we saw Rev. McGeown and Chester and Dale Mansona of the Limerick Reformed Fellowship, before completing our packing of fine RFPA books and PR pamphlets, and flying home to Northern Ireland refreshed and uplifted by our time with the saints from our sister churches in America.

The Haaks

For much of the time we were in the US, Pastor and Mrs. Haak were in the British Isles. Rev. Haak led the services in the CPRC for two Sundays (19 July and 2 August) and in the LRF for one Sunday (26 July) when Rev. McGeown was in the CPRC.



Rev. and Mary Haak, Corey and Katelyn

Both local Ballymena papers carried articles about his coming and we had a good number of visitors attend his preaching. Rev. and Mrs. Haak also visited a good number of members of the congregation in their homes. Their time with our church in Northern Ireland was much appreciated!

Going Green!

Since my last letter, solar panels have been fitted to the roof on the manse or parsonage (29 May), after Brian Crossett provided us with the results of his research. A while later, and after consulting the congregation, we had panels fitted on our church building's roof too. Before you marvel too much at the "greenness" of the CPRC, I should add that our decision was based wholly on economic factors.

If you are wondering how this could make financial sense in a sun-starved country like Northern Ireland, it is because of state incentives. However, like much legis-

lation from the civil government, this too has had unintended results, for I can hear the chain saw even as I write. When the sawing is finished, about sixty trees will have been felled, for at certain times of the day or the year these trees would cast shadows across our solar panels. Many of these trees were nearing the end of their lifespan anyway. I have also been lowering the manse's castlewellan hedge so we are due another big bonfire in the next few days.

Other News

Julian Kennedy, with the assistance of Tommy Duncan and Chris Hutchings, manned a CPRC stall at the Ballymena Agricultural Show (29-30 May). Some books and box sets were sold and a good number of free pamphlets taken.

We had a couple of other items published in the press. In the lead letter in the *Belfast News Letter* (29 May), I answered a homosexual advocate who badly misunderstood the Old Testament ceremonial law. Homosexual activists train others to parrot the same fallacious arguments to create a smokescreen to confuse people, as if the Scriptures were not clear in condemning this sin. A fine book review of the BRF book *Ye Are My Witnesses* was in the 12 June issue of the *British Church Newspaper*.

“What Is a Protestant?” was the subject of a speech I gave in South Wales (11 June) and Portadown in Northern Ireland (26 June). There was good attendance at both lectures, with several attending the Portadown speech through the article published about it in the *Portadown Times*. Since the Wales lecture was very close to our 15th wedding anniversary, we flew over the day before for some lovely walks in the Gower including to Worm's Head, a tidal island, spending the night in a Bed and Breakfast which was the house in which Evan Roberts, the Arminian, second-blessing leader of the 1904-1905 Welsh revival, was born.

We held a congregational barbecue at the manse on Friday, 19 June. With a num-

ber of CPRC families on holiday or unable to make it, the majority of the sixty who came were actually non-members who are friends of the congregation. Though the weather was damp, we had a great evening.

We can report 35 new translations (www.cprf.co.uk/languages.htm). From Asia, we received 16 Indonesian (now all of *The Five Points of Calvinism*, a book by Profs. Engelsma and Hanko, is in this language), 4 Korean, and 2 Javanese translations. The other continents are represented as follows: Africa with 6 Afrikaans, Europe with 6 Hungarian, and South America with 1 Brazilian Portuguese.

I conclude with a very significant item. As many of you will know, with the approval of our mutual sister at June's synod in Faith PRC, the CPRC in Northern Ireland and the CERC in Singapore officially established a sister-church relationship. May the Lord bless the sister-church relationships of His children.

By grace,
Rev. and Mary Stewart