

# Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

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21 January, 2015

Dear saints in the  
Protestant Reformed Churches,

## Church Visitors

We were delighted to have Prof. and Lori Gritters (Hudsonville PRC) and Dave and Mary Kregel (Grandville PRC) with us from about noon on Friday, 9 January, to the morning of Friday, 16 January. This was the first time both Protestant Reformed church visitors brought their wives and it added greatly to the value of the visit. All of them entered into the life of the congregation and enriched the communion of the saints. So this year, our thanks go not only to Prof. and Dave but also to Lori and Mary!

Their first engagement came on their first day with us: our annual congregational dinner, followed by William Graham's table quiz, which Dave assured us has the status of "legendary" among PR church visitors! Eighty people, including some friends of the congregation, enjoyed a lovely meal and good fellowship.

Prof. Gritters preached at well-attended Sunday services on "The Sanctuary and the Sea" (Ps. 77) and "Foreknowledge: The Basis of Election" (Rom. 8:29), as well as leading a fine Bible study on Tuesday morning on covenant breaking in Leviticus 26. The sermons have been getting a lot of hits on YouTube ([www.youtube.com/user/CPRCNI](http://www.youtube.com/user/CPRCNI)).

Monday night saw the actual church visitation of the two PR delegates with the five-member council of the CPRC. Our officebearers and congregation benefit from this oversight, and appreciate the advice and wisdom of our brethren from North America.

Wednesday night's public lecture on "The Prince of Darkness Grim: The Reformed Teaching About Satan" had been advertised through the *Covenant Reformed News* and a trailer after our Reformed Witness Hour broadcast, as well as articles accompanied by a color photograph of Prof. Gritters in both local Ballymena weekly papers. A very good number were present, despite the inclement weather. The excellent speech on audio and video, with the accompanying handout and written answers to follow-up questions, is available on-line ([www.cprf.co.uk/audio.htm](http://www.cprf.co.uk/audio.htm)).

Beside the more official aspects of their time with us, our four visitors had dinner in the homes of five of the families of the church and called with some of the other saints. John McAuley brought

them to meet the mayor of Ballymena, with a local paper carrying a color photo of the group. While Elder Dave Kregel was not honored by a typo calling him a Professor (as was Pete VanDerSchaaf five years ago), he did at least get called a preacher.



Mary and I also accompanied them to some beautiful sites, such as the Dark Hedges (see picture above), and on some lovely walks along the north coast, including the Giant's Causeway. With strong winds and a foaming sea, the weather certainly was "invigorating," with periods of snow, hail, and rain and even lightning, as well as many rainbows.



Prof. & Lori Gritters, Mary & Dave Kregel

## Translations

The last two months have been very fruitful for translations, with 61 in 5 languages—one translation per day on average! Our Indonesian section has seen the most additions, with 28 Indonesian items being added to our website ([www.cprf.co.uk/languages.htm#indonesian](http://www.cprf.co.uk/languages.htm#indonesian)). Growth in Indonesian is especially significant because it is the official language of Indonesia, which, with over 252 million, is the fourth most populous country in the world, only behind China, India, and the US.

Some of these are links to web pages containing our forms in Indonesian, for many churches in that country have the same creedal heritage as we do, since Indonesia used to be the Dutch East Indies. A few of the translated articles are on Scripture and creation, including the lengthy “Calvin Versus Darwin: Anniversaries, Origins and Worldviews” and a critique of theistic evolution by David Crossett. The other Indonesian translations are of recent articles from the *Covenant Reformed News*.

Irwan, our hard-working Indonesian translator, is from Surabaya on the island of Java, which, with 143 million inhabitants, is the world's most populous island. Recently, Irwan received the 5kg box of RFPA and BRF books we shipped to him. A couple of days ago, Cai, a friend of Irwan, said that he too will help us with Indonesian translations, so hopefully this section of our website will continue to grow quickly.

Rafa from Texas weighed in with 22 Spanish translations on Scripture, the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, and predestination from Rev. Ron Hanko's *Doctrine According to Godliness*. Balint translated six *Covenant Reformed News* articles into Hungarian as part of his monthly emailing of the *News* to those on his list. Nic sent us four pieces in Afrikaans and Renat added a Russian translation.

## Other News

Last Sunday, I started again with Lord's Day 1 of our comforting *Heidelberg Catechism* and preached the twelfth sermon in the series on “Absalom and His Rebellion.” All the Monday night catechumens did well in our mid-year catechism tests in December.

In our studies on the kingdom of heaven in our Tuesday morning Bible study, we have considered it as the sphere of salvation, the sphere

of righteousness, and the sphere of blessedness. We have also looked at the kingdom of God and the sovereignty of God, and we are presently examining the predictions of Jehovah's kingdom in the minor prophets (Obadiah, Amos, Micah, etc.) to see how our Lord (rightly) interpreted them and the Jewish religious leaders misunderstood them, like many in Christendom in our own day.

In our Wednesday night classes on sanctification (*Belgic Confession* 24), we spent three sessions examining Romans 7:14-25, a crucial and controversial passage. Since then we have looked at the standard, the goal and the progress of sanctification ([www.cprf.co.uk/audio/belgicconfessionclass.htm](http://www.cprf.co.uk/audio/belgicconfessionclass.htm)).

Sales in the CPRC Bookstore have been very good, so good that our stock of RFPA books was running very low ([www.cprf.co.uk/bookstore.htm](http://www.cprf.co.uk/bookstore.htm)). Thanks to the generosity of a member of the PRC, free postage was provided for some boxes of books that were shipped to us. This consignment included Lois Kregel's delightful stories of Herman Hoeksema: *Just Dad*. Even though we have not mailed out a new *Covenant Reformed News* (along with a flyer for this new title) since the boxes arrived, sales of *Just Dad* are already promising. Marv Kamps' *1834: Hendrick de Cock's Return to the True Church* was favourably reviewed in the *English Churchman* in time for a copy of it to be sent to our brother before his entry into the heavenly Jerusalem.

The new *British Reformed Journal* should soon be reaching Protestant Reformed subscribers via our church visitors, who carried copies back with them to America to lower our postage costs. This new issue contains articles on Hyper-Calvinism, trichotomy, Open Theism, communion with the triune God, and a review of a new four-volume work containing Reformed confessions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If you would like to subscribe, send \$20 (checks made payable to “Mary Stewart”) for four issues to Mr. Fred Hanko, 7341 Pine Grove Drive, Jenison, MI 49428.

May the Lord be with you,

In Christ,  
*Rev. and Mary Stewart*