

The Standard Bearer

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The Great Commission

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Matthew 28:19-20

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Mark 16:15

Here we are. Gathered around the feet of the Master, high up in a mountain of Galilee, where the view of the sea, hills, and fields below is truly spectacular. Only recently our Lord and Savior arose from the dead and showed Himself to us by many infallible proofs, by which we are now sure that His love covered our sins and conquered death on the cross. O, the joy to see our beloved Savior again before He goes up in the cloud to sit at the right hand of the Majesty on high!

Our Lord has a final word for us. Something urgent

Rev. Holstege is a missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, stationed in Manila, the Philippines.

and of worldwide significance. Some new command and commission. What a breathtaking location for this final word! For here we can look panoramically at the whole world, to the east, to the north, to the south, to the west. Now, listen, He is about to speak. "Go ye," says our all-powerful and exalted Master, "into all the world and teach all nations. Preach the gospel.... Baptize those who believe.... Teach them to observe all things.... And lo, I am with you alway...."

Go.

Simple, yet demanding task! It is simple enough to understand the call to go, for every day we are going somewhere, from one place to another. But so demanding! For He is calling us to go out of our sphere of familiarity, out of our beloved life here in Galilee near that little sea down there, and into all those nations of the world!

O, but let us now recall that He Himself went out from His realm of heavenly splendor, being sent by the Father, and came into this world to save us poor, lost sinners from our sins and the destruction we deserve. Is it such a great thing, then, if we His disciples are to follow in His footsteps? Indeed, remember what He told us not long ago, that as His Father sent Him, even so He is sending us? For that matter, has He ever told us that the

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way would be easy? Was it easy for Him to go into the world and suffer reproach and forsakenness and death?

Demanding is this mission from our God that calls us to leave our comfort zone, our earthly home, our families and friends, and go to nations and places afar off, where the customs and language are strange to us and the people sometimes hostile. But looking up into the face of the Lord and hearing the urgency of His tone, we know that He means what He says with utmost seriousness.

Go!

Into all nations of the world!

Did He not once direct us to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel? Yes, but remember how our brethren according to the flesh have despised and rejected Him, crying out for His crucifixion! Do you remember how He said to us that many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven? The time has come, brethren, for the ingathering of the Gentiles, the fulfillment of the promise to father Abraham that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed! Into all the world! For He taught us that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that all who believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. The sheep must be found and drawn to the Shepherd. The gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world—so He told us on the Mount of Olives—for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come, the glorious appearing of the Master on the clouds of heaven!

So, we go! To Jew and Gentile, high and low, rich and poor, male and female, dark- and light-skinned. We are runners, brethren, with a glorious torch to carry into all the world! We must press toward the mark, not slowing down as we draw near to the finish line, but pushing ourselves to run faster and harder, into all nations!

What an amazing privilege He has just given to us, His specially called and ordained apostles! To be leaders in His church whom He will use to build His church upon the rock of brother Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God! We are no men of high repute or earthly power, no kings or governors, whom He has sent to do this task, but mere servants of our King in a spiritual kingdom, ordained ministers of the gospel.

What a blessed work we are sent to do—and not only we but *all* whom the Master calls into this ministry of

the Word, laborers in His vineyard, pastors and teachers in His church, preachers of the gospel of peace and glad tidings of good things! Let *all* who follow after us do the work of an evangelist! Let them go out into the highways and byways and bid their neighbors to the marriage of the Lord! Let them not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but be eager and open and ready to speak with their lost, heathen neighbors. Let them go, too, into other nations, across vast oceans, over mighty mountains, afar off to preach the gospel or aid and encourage those who do.

And, O, that *all* His disciples, male and female, farmer, sailor, builder, lawyer, doctor, engineer, craftsman, businessman, single and married, mother and father—would support and participate in our great commission! O, that they all would pray for us, with intimate understanding of our work, that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified! O, that they would give cheerfully and liberally to support us who preach the gospel, so that we need not make tents or have another occupation by which to eat our daily bread! O, that they might have opportunity to visit us on far away mission fields to witness the glorious work, and appreciate it all the more! But, O, that they would themselves participate, being ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks them a reason for the hope that is in them! O, that they would shine as lights in the world, in the midst of crooked and perverse nations, ready and eager to hold forth the Word of life to those who are without! Not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but knowing that it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes! Would to God that they would radiate every day with the hope of eternal life, having faces that show that the joy of the Lord is their strength! Master, use them too to bring others into the fold to hear the blessed tidings of salvation! Give them too to hear the call—GO!—as the Lord puts in front of them an opportunity in their daily lives to bear witness of Christ Jesus!

“Go..., teaching them.”

That is what the Master said. “Make disciples,” is what He told us to do. Simple, yet highly demanding task! Surely, He does not mean *we* can make anyone into a disciple of the living God, but rather that He will do so through us. But still, is not a disciple one who both believes in our Lord and Savior and follows Him in all areas of his life, through thick and thin, even at the cost of losing his life? We will need to have tremendous patience

in this task. We will need to be committed to those who show vital interest in the gospel. We will need to have a long view of things.

But what a blessed task is ours! For the Lord has seen fit to make disciples in all nations by sending us to preach the gospel! To declare that He came into the world to save sinners. To herald that He must needs have suffered on the cross and given His life a ransom for many to redeem us from the curse of the law. To make known that He arose from the dead for our justification. To speak of the breadth, length, depth, and height of the love of Christ for us whom God has chosen before the foundation of the world. To speak of the glories of everlasting life with God, in a sinless world without end, for all who love the appearing of the Master on the clouds on that great and notable day of the Lord!

“Baptizing them....”

What a joy that will be when men and women are drawn by the Father and given true faith in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit so that they may be baptized into His triune name! What a moving experience it will be to apply the waters of baptism to those sheep who are as yet afar off! To give them this new sacrament, this holy sign and seal, which bespeaks their union with the triune God and their inclusion in the eternal family—God the Father witnessing unto them that He makes an eternal covenant of grace with them and adopts them to be His children and heirs; God the Son promising them that He washes away all their sins by His precious blood; and God the Holy Ghost sealing unto them that He dwells in them and will sanctify them more and more!

What a wonder our Lord is revealing unto us, that the LORD of hosts, the God of our fathers, is indeed one God in three persons, a Father with His Son in loving communion through the Holy Spirit! And what an awesome blessing that He is drawing us and all who believe and are baptized into His divine life! Believers, and their seed! For our God has always extended the promise to us and

our children, and our Lord told us to let the children come to Him and forbid them not. So we will baptize these believers with all their household, and new lines of the covenant promise will begin!

“Teaching them to observe....”

The Lord has still more for us to do. Our task will not yet be complete when the heathen are converted to Christ and baptized. But what a joy it is, too, to teach! All things that thou hast taught us, Lord? Thou hast taught us so much! The gospel of the kingdom of God! The precepts of Thy kingdom—love, forgiveness, compassion, humility, meekness, faithfulness, generosity, truth, courage, conviction, spirituality, trust, and doing all things to the glory of God! There is much to teach, so we must get busy and make disciples who know all Thy doctrines and who strive to follow all Thy precepts with delight.

But, Lord, this commission is greater than we.


Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. You are not alone, but I am with you. When you stand up to preach to the multitudes, I will be with you. When you are driven out of town, shackled in prison, lying under a pile of stones, I am with you. When words fail you and strength is gone, I will not leave you. When you leave

father and mother, sister and brother, and go to far away places, I will go with you. I will be with you always. I will never leave you or forsake you. I will bless your lips so that you may give an answer to those who ask a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.

Do you believe that I am with you? Believe this promise with all your heart, and GO! There will never be a time until the very end of this present age, until I return on the clouds of heaven where I am about to go, when I will not be with you. For you are my servants whom I love, and I intend to use you for the coming of My kingdom!

So, go, in this confidence.

Into all the world!

Until I come again. 

*But, Lord, this commission
is greater than we.*

*Lo, I am with you always,
even unto the end of the age.*

*You are not alone,
but I am with you.*

This issue of the *Standard Bearer* is our special concentration on missions. Keeping with our commitment to have Scripture exposition at the beginning, we start with a moving meditation on "Jesus' Great Commission" by Missionary-Pastor Daniel Holstege, who recently took up labors as the PRC's second missionary in the Philippines. Please read the meditation with that in mind. We include news from our denominational Domestic Mission Committees; from the Reformed Witness Hour Committee about radio broadcasting; from evangelism committees of eleven different congregations; from Hope PRC in Grand Rapids, MI, about their growing works in Myanmar; from our sister, the CERC in Singapore, about her work in Kolkata (Calcutta) in North India; and from Covenant PRC's work in Limerick, Ireland. Some of the reports we cannot fit in an issue of 24 pages.

Reading all this will make plain to

you that the Lord has opened many doors for the PRCA to do missions. It will show that many local congregations are taking initiative in missions that, in the past, belonged almost exclusively to the denominational committees. The fields are (still!) ripe for harvest.

What does not come out in these reports, however, but ought to stand out in our minds, is the urgent need in the PRCA for missionaries. Positions for missionaries stand vacant. There is promise of more positions to be created. But so few missionaries! Let us raise fervent prayers from pulpits, from catechism rooms, and from family altars in every home:

Lord, send us men—young or older—who are moved by a sense of Thine own call to prepare themselves for, or accept a post to be Missionary-Ambassador of Jesus Christ. Move them irresistibly, O God; then make them willing

in the day of Thy power. Rise up, Lord, how long? Call sons of our own family, our own congregation. Then create in them the necessary gifts, so that the 'willing' are also able and faithful men of God. Bless our homes so that young men mature in godliness, are trained up in the willingness to endure hardships as good soldiers. Prepare godly young women also, fit to accompany them to lands unknown.

Gracious God, also grant us as churches a spiritual fitness to send men forth. And by these labors, sweetly draw men and women to Jesus Christ; add many more to the already great throng of redeemed worshipers.

Father, we are undeserving to be involved in this high privilege. Accept our humble thanks, Lord, for allowing us even this small part in the great endeavor of gathering the church of Jesus Christ. In His name, Amen.

— BLG 

The Work of the DMC

The Good Labors of the Domestic Mission Committee

What is the Domestic Mission Committee (DMC) and what is its work? And what work is the DMC doing now while we currently have no home missionary? Good questions. There is no better way to get the answers than to go to the DMC's official Constitution, which can be found on the PRCA website (prca.org).

The Preamble of the Constitution states that

The Protestant Reformed Churches believe that, in obedience to the command of Christ, the King of the Church, to preach the blessed gospel to all creatures, baptizing, and teaching them to observe all things which Christ has commanded, it is the explicit duty and sacred privilege of said churches to carry out this calling according to the

measure of our God-given ability. We believe that this missionary activity includes the work of church extension and church reformation.

Further, the committee chosen by synod to do this (DMC) is "to regulate and supervise all mission activity of the churches in common as prescribed by synod."

What a calling for our churches and what good labors for this committee! But how is all this to be accomplished?

The DMC's Constitution stipulates that "The Mission Committee shall consist of ten members from Classis East, five of which shall be ministers and five elders or ex-elders" (II. Constituency). As a full committee, we meet monthly at 7 A.M. on a Tuesday morning at the Seminary

to review the work of the previous month done by various subcommittees and then to map out future labors.

Among those labors given to the DMC is to “find possible fields and recommend them to the churches” (IV. B., Duties). This is the work of the New Fields subcommittee. We welcome potential leads from all sources. We follow up to ascertain to what extent we should pursue these leads. There are currently a number of individuals with whom we are in contact. The New Fields subcommittee has been assisting a small group of believers in Franklin, Pennsylvania who have expressed interest in becoming a mission work of our denomination. Various ministers from our churches have been preaching for this group, bringing them the Word and working to increase interest in the gospel in that area.

In conjunction with the above-stated goal, the New Fields sub-committee has conducted a number of presentations to evangelism committees and councils of our churches. These presentations promote the scriptural concept of local churches reaching out into their surrounding areas with the ultimate goal of establishing new congregations. In addition, the presentation lays out a general pattern of how to begin an outreach program and guidelines to follow as such a program develops and matures.

We must obey Christ’s command to the local church in His Great Commission to go and teach all nations (Matt. 28:18-20). The early church obeyed this command by reaching out to entire regions, such as Galatia (Acts 14) and Macedonia (Acts 16). Our denomination is seeking to reach out to the areas surrounding our churches by conducting Bible studies. Grandville PRC is holding a Bible study in Rockford, MI; Grace PRC in Spring Lake, MI; Byron Center PRC in Wayland, MI; Cornerstone PRC in Aurora, IL; Georgetown PRC in Muskegon, MI; and Heritage PRC of Sioux Falls in Harrisburg, SD.

Let us know if your church is interested in having us come to share some background and ideas on how to start an outreach program of your own.

The DMC is also mandated “to advise the calling church with regard to the organization of a new congregation” (IV. F., Duties). This past year saw our mission labors in Pittsburgh come to the point where the group of believers we had been working with for over 15 years

could be organized as a new church. Thus the DMC concurred with the decision of Southwest PRC, the calling church, to come to Classis East with a request for organization. This request was granted and the Pittsburgh Protestant Reformed Church was organized as another pillar and ground of the truth on June 24, 2016.

The DMC’s Constitution also stipulates that “Synod shall request one of the churches to function as the calling church. It shall be the duty of said church to call a missionary from a list of suitable candidates provided by the Mission Committee” (VI., The Calling of a Missionary). Southwest PRC had been the calling church for our missionary Rev. W. Bruinsma, who, as we know, accepted the call from the newly formed Pittsburgh PRC to be their pastor. As a result, Synod 2016 requested Byron Center PRC to be the calling church for a new home missionary. In light of the Great Commission, they have faithfully accepted this great responsibility and, from the list of candidates provided by the DMC, have called a number of our ministers to serve in this capacity. A joint committee from the DMC and Byron Center has met with these men to answer any questions they may have about the call. This is especially necessary since the missionary that we are calling must do something not done before—he must create his own field. This raises many questions as to how the work is to be done and where the missionary will be stationed before a field of labor opens up. So far the Lord has directed these pastors whom Byron Center PRC has called to remain in their existing charges. As a denomination of churches, we all should be praying for the Lord of the harvest to send His laborer into the field.

Another important stipulation of the DMC’s Constitution is that “Although the local church has the calling to perform the work of missions, synod regulates the mission work of the churches in common through its Mission Committee, working closely with the local consistory” (VII., Relation Between the Committee and the Calling Church). Here we read of differing roles between the calling church and the DMC, and the harmony needed to have the Lord’s blessing on the work. The Constitution gives details as to what is meant by this working in harmony: “The local church and the Mission Committee will work closely together to determine a field of labor, the time of labor, and the method

of labor to be employed” (VII. A.). How is this carried out? “...the decision of the local calling church regarding the field of labor, the time of labor, and the method of labor is to receive the approval of the Mission Committee” (VII. B). This means that the calling church ultimately makes the decisions regarding the field of labor, the time of labor, and the method of labor. The calling church does this, however, with the input of the DMC and then, finally, with the approval of the DMC.

In addition to these labors stipulated by its Constitution, the DMC also oversees the denominational website (prca.org). Our webmaster, Chuck Terpstra, is in charge of the daily maintenance of the website and the app, with help from others. The webmaster consults periodically with the Website committee on policy matters and content for the website.

The DMC also has a Mission Development subcommittee. This committee has the mandate to develop mission policy, especially as it relates to the method of labor that is to govern the work of the home missionary.

This is the subcommittee that drafted the proposal of the DMC to the 2016 Synod to call a missionary who is to create his own field of labor. Although the method of doing this has been adopted by synod, the details are yet to be worked out. The subcommittee hopes to be able to do this in consultation with the missionary the Lord will give us.

These, then, are the key points of what the DMC is about, along with some of its actual labors. According to our Heidelberg Catechism, good works (labors) are only those that proceed from a true faith, are performed according to the law of God, and to His glory. As a committee, we strive to follow these principles. Ultimately, we know it is the Lord Himself who calls His people unto Himself, with His gospel that He has accomplished in Christ, through His preachers whom He has raised up, and whom He sends out under the auspices of His churches. Brethren, pray for us as we do the good labors He has given us.

— Mr. Pete Adams 

FMC Work in the Philippines

The Work of our Philippine Missionaries

What are the typical labors of our foreign missionaries in the Philippines? The labors of a missionary are diverse. The Lord gives us the opportunity to be involved in a lot of different and interesting work. With the goal of giving the reader an overview of our current mission work in the Philippines, here follows a summary of some of the main aspects of our labors on the mission field.

Preaching

Since preaching is the power of God unto salvation, the preaching of the Word is, as it ought to be, the main work and calling of a missionary. Our Philippine missionaries ordinarily preach twice each Lord's Day, including Heidelberg Catechism preaching. We can thankfully report that the latter is something that the churches and saints here have grown to appreciate and love.

Rev. Daniel Holstege preaches, for the most part, in Provident Christian Church (PCC) in Marikina. This congregation is located about 45 minutes from where

we live, has been a regular object of our mission work since 2013, and desires to become part of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the Philippines (PRCP). We believe that the preaching of the gospel is the main way in which this desire and goal will, through God's blessing, be attained.

Now that Rev. Holstege preaches in PCC, I preach more often in the three churches that make up the PRCP: Maranatha PRC, the PRC in Bulacan, and the Berean PRC. Preaching in these churches often coincides with my work of serving as an advisor at their monthly consistory meetings, which are held on Sunday afternoons. I also recently began preaching in a few Reformed churches in Southern Negros Occidental. Some of the pastors of these churches have been our contacts since the late 1990s. Our goal is that they also might become part of the PRCP one day.

We also do pulpit exchanges with each other, and from time to time with the three pastors of the PRCP (Rev. J. Flores, Rev. V. Ibe, and Rev. L. Trinidad). This

has the obvious benefit of enabling us to become better acquainted with and to stay in touch with the various congregations and their members, and they with us.

Teaching

The main area of teaching is that of pastor training. In that connection, one of our goals is to establish a seminary here in the Philippines; thus the ongoing process of calling a third missionary for the Philippine field so that one of the missionaries will be able to devote his time to getting a seminary started. In the meantime, we continue the work of providing instruction to existing pastors in subjects that they have not received before, or that they have not received from a Reformed perspective.

Pastors' classes are held twice a month in the Manila area. We refer to these as our 7M classes (Metro Manila Monthly Martes [Tuesday] Morning Ministers' Meetings). Usually between five and eight men attend, although not all of them are pastors. In the past year, we have studied the Church Order, Catechetics (catechism instruction), and Poimenics (pastoral care).

We also hold pastors' classes in the city of Sipalay in Southern Negros Occidental (central Philippines). We meet once a month with a group of 10 to 15 men, a few of whom are elders in the churches there. The current instruction is in Reformed Dogmatics and Reformed church government. By means of their many questions, their lively discussions, and their purchase of our Protestant Reformed literature, these men give evidence of a keen interest in as well as commitment to the Reformed faith and truth as we hold it in the PRCA. Some have also mentioned their desire that a missionary spend more time among them and in their churches.

In addition to the pastors' classes, we have opportunity to teach by means of lectures. Rev. Holstege is currently lecturing on the Canons of Dordt each week in PCC. We also lecture from time to time for one day conferences organized by the PRCP, or as requested by some of our contacts.

Advisors

The Federation of Protestant Reformed Churches in the Philippines, which was organized in April of 2014, consists of three churches. The Berean PRC has 26 families and is pastored by Rev. Vernon Ibe. The PRC

in Bulacan has 20 families and is pastored by Rev. John Flores. The Maranatha PRC has 11 families and is pastored by Rev. Leovy Trinidad.

We have opportunity to serve as advisors to these three churches and their consistories. This involves attending the monthly consistory meetings in two of the churches. It also involves giving advice, upon request, to the pastors and officebearers. We are grateful for their willingness to seek such guidance and for their receptivity to the advice given.

The missionaries serve as advisors to the Classis of the PRCP, as well as to the two standing committees of the Classis. This involves attending the Classis meetings (held three times a year), assisting in the work of church visitation, and participating in the work and meetings of the standing committees of Classis.

Recently, our work as advisors meant that Rev. Kleyn accompanied a delegation of the PRCP to visit the Protestant Reformed Fellowship in Albueria, Leyte. This Fellowship has been a mission outreach of the PRC in Bulacan since 2007, and the PRC in Bulacan recently asked Classis to take over this mission work so that it would become an official work of the denomination.



Philippine Missionaries
Holstege: Rev. Daniel, Leah, Charity (baby);
Kirsten, Kiley, Gabriel (in front);
Kleyns: Rev. Daniel and Sharon (in back)

The purpose of the delegation visit was to investigate and evaluate the viability of this. The work in Leyte looks very promising from the viewpoint of the interest in the Reformed truth, the number of men who could serve as officebearers (the Lord willing), and size (over 70 members). The evaluation is ongoing, but we thank the Lord for these positive and encouraging signs.

Another significant area of our work as advisors has been to assist the PRCP as it seeks to establish a sister-church relationship with the PRCA. The PRCP Classis has been in communication with the Contact Committee of the PRCA, and the Contact Committee has sent delegations here twice. These visits have been a means to affirm the unity that exists between our denominations. The PRCP is eager to have such a relationship, and pending synod's approval and eventually the approval of our sister churches, looks forward to it becoming a reality, the Lord willing.

Correspondence

The main ways in which new contacts have come to us is through the witness of the members of the churches here, through book sales, and through the Internet.

We regularly stay in touch with many contacts throughout the Philippines. If they are in the Manila area, we also put them in touch with the nearest congregation of the PRCP.

Most often the correspondence itself centers on answering questions about the Reformed faith and life. Sometimes we deal with questions that arise from reading our literature or hearing our sermons online. Usually, questions come by email on a daily basis. Such mentoring of new believers is an enjoyable and exciting part of the work.

In the past year, some of these contacts, along with others who have been in direct contact with the PRCP, have begun attending the PRCP churches. It has been a great encouragement to the pastors and members of the PRCP to witness the excitement of these new believers, as well as to experience some external growth.

Studies

A significant part of our current labors is to study and learn Tagalog. All of us plan to take formal language studies at a Tagalog language school that was recommended

to us by other missionaries. Rev. and Leah Holstege have begun their classes already. My wife and I hope to begin sometime in the coming months so that we can refresh our knowledge and further our use of the native language. We believe this is and will be time well spent, so that we can communicate better with Filipinos, and even incorporate more Tagalog in our preaching and teaching.

Another area of study is that of reading missions' literature. There is much that we are able to learn from others in this important work and calling of the church.

Promotion

Our mission work is promoted within the Philippines itself in especially two ways: through our website and through book sales.

We regularly upload new material to our website, such as audio sermons, audio recordings and handouts of lectures, class notes, and Tagalog translations of sermons and Reformed Witness Hour messages. Interest has increased, as the following list of the number of visitors to our website shows: 6,700 in 2013, 11,800 in 2014, 13,400 in 2015, and 12,400 in 2016. The website address, for anyone interested in taking a look, is prcaphilippinesaudio.wordpress.com.

Book sales are managed by my wife Sharon. We sell all the books published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, along with materials from our Protestant Reformed seminary (Psalters, Church Orders, syllabi, etc.). The books are located in our home. The collections taken in our PRCA congregations enable us to provide Reformed literature to our Filipino churches and contacts at very reasonable prices. These collections also enable us to provide free shipping as well as free copies of the *Standard Bearer*, *Beacon Lights*, and more. Book sales have gone well, as the following numbers of books sold in each of the past five years indicate: 800 in 2012, 1,100 in 2013, 1,860 in 2014, 1,150 in 2015, and 1,800 in 2016. The book sales have proven to serve well for the spread of the Reformed faith as well as for gaining new contacts.

Promotion of our mission work within our churches in North America is done by means of our quarterly newsletters, our presentations during furloughs, and presentations done by various visitors. Unofficially, our work is also promoted through the blogs that Leah and Sharon have of our lives and work here (see holstegesinthephilip-

pines.wordpress.com and kleynsphilippines.blogspot.com). Please check them out if you would like to stay abreast, especially through pictures, of the work here and of our families.

Prayer

None of this work can be done without prayer.

For ourselves, we are mindful of the need to “give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4), and to do it in that order. Prayer must be first.

For the reader, we echo the words of the apostle Paul

when he said, “Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified” (II Thess. 3:1). May God be pleased to use our churches to spread His Word and thus hasten the return of Christ.

We thank God for our PRCA denomination. We are grateful for your care and support, for the many encouragements we receive, and for your remembrance of us in your prayers. We sense the denomination’s interest in and support of the work and of the saints here. May God be praised.

— Rev. Daniel Kleyn 

CERCS Mission Labors in India

Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church (Fellowship) in Kolkata, India

On a street named after Mahatma Gandhi, it is hot. The deteriorating asphalt radiates the heat of the sun, which shines down on a scene with a thousand thousand moving parts. The traffic is a wonder, and menacing to an outsider: huge steel public buses, hulking Ambassador cabs, cars, cars, cars, and cars, but even more motorcycles, including an army of green and yellow motorcycle taxis; all racing, weaving, dodging, detouring their winding way around and past each other on this hot, narrow road.

Walking down the middle of the street, implacable and unperturbed, is a massive bull, sacred to the majority-Hindu population and, therefore, untouched and unrestrained as he plods along. Tonight he will find his master’s crib, but today he rules this road, and the traffic seamlessly and without complaint adjusts itself to his presence. A pack of wild dogs, panting and restless, scatter themselves through the throngs, dodging cars and kicks as they look for the next scrap to eat. The shops crowd along the road where all the action is, so that the narrow dirt shoulder also serves as the sidewalk and the shops’ entrance all in one.

The whole scene is filled with people: walking, sitting, talking, sweating, marketing, and sometimes stopping to savor a steaming cup of chai. Their clothes are colorful and bright, and stand out even in the dazzling,

sun-drenched air. The aroma of curry wafts past, with goat meat and chicken and a rainbow of vegetables, and mangoes for dessert.

And the noise! If the traffic does not cause one to stagger backward, certainly the noise will: honking, barking, lowing, greeting, parting, warning, chattering; and underneath it all the wheels and wind of the traffic. Welcome to Kolkata, India.

Down a side street, a little apart from the bustle of the main road, there is a rented room, with over twenty pairs of sandals outside the door. Inside, barefoot and cross-legged on the floor, a small group of Indian Christians listen to their Savior’s voice as the gospel is proclaimed to them. To a Protestant Reformed visitor, the language would be unintelligible: Bengali. But if that visitor could understand what was being said, it would warm his heart, for it is the pure gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. And if he would listen a little closer, he would realize that the pastor was reading from the Heidelberg Catechism as he preached. And if the visitor could have heard why the minister was preaching from the Heidelberg Catechism, he would have heard the people asking for it. A Reformed Catechism sermon in Kolkata! By popular demand! Welcome to the Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church (Fellowship) in Kolkata.

The story of the CERC Fellowship in Kolkata begins with their missionary-pastor, Rev. Emmanuel Singh. Emmanuel was raised in a Brethren Church with an Arminian background. His journey to the Reformed faith had many twists and turns, but there are two events that God especially used to bring him to understand Reformed doctrine.



Rev. Emmanuel Singh, presenting to CERCS.

The first event occurred in 2003, when Emmanuel was playing with the contemporary Christian band *Caedmon's Call*. He had earned a diploma in music and had become an accomplished player of the tabla, traditional Indian hand drums. Touring the United States with the band, Emmanuel found himself in John Piper's Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis before a concert. In the bookstore, Emmanuel picked up A.W. Pink's *The Sovereignty of God*. His eyes were opened to the truth of God's sovereignty in salvation, and he began to search for other similar resources. He learned from works by Piper and John MacArthur, but also realized that he did not agree with their Baptist theology. Emmanuel still had a long way to go, but the Lord was leading him to seminary, and he was becoming more Reformed.

The teaching that Emmanuel encountered in seminary was Arminian. Emmanuel stood against the teaching of his professors in several classes, but was allowed to graduate with a diploma. His background was music, and now he had a theology degree, so he joined various independent parachurch ministries that allowed him to combine his gifts. There seems to be little understanding in India of the importance of the local, instituted church. Parachurch ministries and independent ministries abound. Although by now Emmanuel was quite Reformed in

his understanding of the doctrine of salvation, the only model of church work that he knew was these parachurch ministries, and so he gave himself to these.

However, this situation could not last, because Emmanuel's Calvinistic convictions were coming into sharper and sharper conflict with the Arminian theology of the ministries he served. As Emmanuel's views became more firmly rooted, some of his former acquaintances began spreading the rumor that Emmanuel belonged to a cult. They tried to dissuade people from listening to Emmanuel, until finally he was unable to continue in these ministries. Along the way, God had given Emmanuel a wife, Sonali, who shared his Reformed convictions. Together, they decided that they could not continue their participation in these Arminian ministries. The ties had been cut, and Emmanuel and Sonali were adrift.

This led to the second major event that God used to bring Emmanuel to the Reformed faith. At home, unable to find a faithful church to attend, Emmanuel googled "Reformed gospel." One of the search results was the Reformed Witness Hour. Emmanuel listened to Rev. Carl Haak bring the gospel, and he was amazed to find someone teaching the Reformed faith for which he had so recently suffered. In 2011, after having listened to more sermons in the subsequent months, Emmanuel decided on a whim to contact Rev. Haak directly. He thought this was a long shot, because it is very difficult to reach the pastors of big American churches. There would certainly be layers of phone screeners to get through. Nevertheless, he found the number for Rev. Haak, dialed it, and was shocked when Rev. Haak himself answered! Rev. Haak invited Emmanuel to meet via Skype with himself and several other Protestant Reformed ministers: Rev. J. Kortering, Rev. B. Woudenberg, Rev. R. VanOverloop, and Rev. R. Kleyn. This led to a weekly conference call between Emmanuel and the group of Protestant Reformed ministers, in which they would spend an hour studying Reformed doctrine together. Through these studies, Emmanuel became grounded not only in Reformed soteriology, but in all Reformed doctrines.

At the same time that all of this was going on, Emmanuel was sharing his faith with others in Kolkata. This is one of the gifts that God has given our brother. He is able to communicate gospel truths to many people that he meets, using illustrations drawn from daily life

in India that make the truth readily understandable to them. A small group of people began gathering in Emmanuel's home on Sundays to study the Scriptures. As the months and years passed, this study group became more and more structured along the lines of a worship service, with Emmanuel teaching the gospel. After (and sometimes during!) the sermon, there would be a time of questions and answers, and through this, the little group began to become convinced of the Reformed faith as well.

After two years of meeting with Emmanuel via Skype, the Protestant Reformed pastors became convinced that it was time for a local consistory to take over the work. What had begun as personal contact with one man was developing into a fledgling mission field. Because India is nearer to Singapore than to the United States, Rev. Korterling reached out to Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore to see if they would be willing to oversee this work.

Thus it was that in 2013, CERC Singapore officially began investigating the possibility of overseeing Emmanuel and of doing mission work in Kolkata. Many questions had to be answered, but the main question was whether we could work with Emmanuel, since no one in Singapore really had access to Kolkata. None of the men in Singapore speak Bengali, the language of Kolkata, so we needed a local man to bring the gospel in that city. Furthermore, the Fellowship in Kolkata was the fruit of Emmanuel's labor, and we could not very well oversee it without him. Also, although Singapore is closer to Kolkata than the U.S. is, it is still a 4 to 5 hour flight away. Therefore, if we could not work with Emmanuel, there would be no way for us to continue the work in Kolkata. During more than three years of our labor with Emmanuel, God continually opened the way for CERC Singapore and Emmanuel to work together. Right from the beginning, there was a good relationship between Emmanuel and our men. More importantly, that relationship was founded upon a mutual love of the Reformed faith. Through weekly Skype meetings, delegations to Kolkata from Singapore, and invitations for Emmanuel and Sonali to come to Singapore, it became clear that Emmanuel was eager for CERC Singapore's oversight, and one with CERC's confession. God had opened a door of utterance for CERC Singapore to speak the mystery of Christ in Kolkata.

There is one decision in particular that has colored all of CERC's work in Kolkata. Early on, we faced the difficult question: How do we do mission work in Kolkata without a missionary? We had a contact in Kolkata in Emmanuel; our contact had even been an ordained minister of an independent council; but our contact was not *our minister*. This was such a critical problem, because CERC had become convinced through the years that foreign mission work requires gospel preaching. As important as Bible studies and classes are, and as helpful as CERC Singapore's advice might be, mission work in India required gospel preaching. And gospel preaching requires a preacher.

So, could Emmanuel be our preacher? Could we as a foreign church call a man from the mission field itself to be the missionary on that mission field? As we asked these questions, we kept coming back to the conviction that mission work requires gospel preaching. If we were really going to do mission work in Kolkata, we needed to call Emmanuel to be our missionary. But how to do this? Emmanuel's training had been in another seminary; his ordination had been in another church; he was no longer affiliated with that former church. How could we even begin to call him as CERC Singapore's missionary to CERC Fellowship Kolkata? We turned to the Reformed Church Order and found our answer. Article 9 lays out the procedure for a church to follow in order to call a minister from another denomination as its own pastor. We sketched out the plan, adopted it as a consistory, and presented it to the congregation. We had approved the concept of following Article 9 in order to call Emmanuel as our missionary.

By God's grace, we had come to the right decision, we believed. However, we had also just committed to an enormous amount of work. Article 9 requires a classical examination before the minister can be called, and the exam includes a few extra subjects in addition to all of the normal subjects in a classical exam. We now had the great privilege of preparing Emmanuel for this exam. A delegation to Kolkata grilled Emmanuel for several hours a day over the space of three days in all of the necessary subjects. Through this exercise, we found where Emmanuel's knowledge and belief was mature and where he still needed instruction. For the next year and a half, Emmanuel had two Skype meetings a week for instruction in preparation for his examination.

Finally, on October 29, 2016, Emmanuel submitted to an examination by the Session of CERC Singapore, with two delegates from the PRCA helping with the questioning: Rev. Daniel Kleyn and Rev. W. Bruinsma. Emmanuel acquitted himself well and was declared eligible for a call by CERC to be a missionary to Kolkata. This was a joyful day for CERC Singapore, as God had opened door after door for us to do mission work in Kolkata. Subsequently, Emmanuel was called by CERC Singapore, and God led him to accept the call. He was installed as minister of the gospel in CERC Singapore as missionary to Kolkata on January 8, 2017. Emmanuel is now Rev. Emmanuel Singh.

The next question that will color the rest of our work in Kolkata is: When is the fellowship ready to be organized as a church? We do not know the answer to this

question yet, but God is already opening doors here too. The congregation has already heard an entire round of sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism. At their request, they are receiving instruction in the Belgic Confession. Rev. Singh faithfully expounds God's Word to them each Lord's Day, leads them in weekly Bible studies, visits the distressed, and carries on the work of a missionary of the gospel.

Pray for the saints in Kolkata, and pray for CERC Singapore, that we may be wise, and that we may trust in God to build His church in Kolkata.

Amid the noise and push of life in Kolkata there is now another sound that is mightier than them all: the gospel of Jesus Christ calling sinners to salvation in Him.

— Rev. Andy Lanning 

CPRC Mission Work in the British Isles

The Mission Fields in Limerick and South Wales

Limerick

The Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland (CPRC) supports a mission field in Limerick, Ireland. Readers of the *Standard Bearer* should be aware that Ballymena, the home of the CPRC, and Limerick, the home of the Limerick Reformed Fellowship (LRF) are in different jurisdictions. The island of Ireland, known by many as the Emerald Isle, is divided into Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The two countries are very similar in nature—similar people, similar climate, similar customs. The one major difference—apart from political affiliations—is religious. The vast majority of people in the Republic of Ireland (population c. 4.6 million) are Roman Catholic. Of course, a large number are nominal Roman Catholics—they rarely attend Mass, but they do seek baptism for their children and a priest for their funerals. The population of Northern Ireland is about 60%-40% split of Protestant-Catholic (population c. 1.8 million). Of course, many Protestants and Catholics are nominal also, although there is a sizeable evangelical presence, much larger than in the Republic of Ireland, where evangelicalism is minimal. Of the

very small number of evangelicals in Ireland, most are Arminian, Baptist, Pentecostal, Dispensationalist, and Independent. To reform such a population is very difficult. The Reformed faith demands a complete change in Soteriology (doctrine of salvation), Ecclesiology (doctrine and practice of the church), and Eschatology (doctrine of the last things)! Few are willing to make the necessary sacrifices.

For many years Rev. Angus Stewart (and before him Rev. Ron Hanko, presently pastor in Lynden, WA, USA) has produced a monthly *Covenant Reformed News*. This made its way to a pastor in Wales, who was a friend of Bill Davies, originally from Wales but living in Limerick, Ireland (population c. 105,000). It was through the *CR News* that Bill Davies (now aged 82) came into contact with the CPRC and Rev. Stewart. Unhappy with the preaching and teaching in the evangelical churches in Limerick, Bill requested copies of the sermons preached in Ballymena. Bill was also able to get the *CR News* and copies of sermons into the hands of other men in Limerick. Slowly, a very small group of people was formed, who were hungry for the truth of God's Word.

In 2004, Prof. Herman Hanko, who was vacationing in Ireland at the time, visited this group and gave them a lecture on “What Is a Reformed Church?” Prof. Hanko urged Rev. Stewart and the CPRC to investigate Limerick as a possible field, whereupon Rev. Stewart gave his first Limerick Lecture on “Predestination: What Does the Bible Say?” on September 28, 2004. There were, as you might imagine, mixed reactions to that topic. Rev. Stewart recalls a very lively Q&A time after the speech—some people were very angry; others were more interested.

Between September 2004 and June 2010, Rev. Stewart (and, occasionally, visiting pastors from the PRCA) delivered over forty lectures. Gradually, a small group began to form in Limerick, calling themselves the Limerick Reformed Fellowship. They began meeting in members’ homes to listen to recorded messages from the CPRC. As the group developed, they began to hold worship services in a public hall—Conradh na Gaelige, an Irish-language school situated in Limerick city center—and to develop a website.

During this time (September 2006-June 2010), I, Martyn McGeown, a native of Northern Ireland, was in the PRC seminary. It became clear to the CPRC Council that the LR Fellowship was ready for their own missionary. In June 2010, I received and accepted the call to labor in Limerick and on July 31, 2010 I was ordained. My inaugural sermon, “Desire the Word!” (1 Pet. 2:2) was preached on August 1, 2010. Since that time the LR Fellowship has been holding two worship services every Lord’s Day (11 A.M. and 5.30 P.M.), as well as conducting catechism classes, Bible studies, doctrinal classes, and public lectures.

Since August 2010, the LR Fellowship has seen two weddings and six baptisms. Bill Davies, our oldest member and founder is still with us. We have an average attendance of between 15-20 souls every Lord’s Day. Many are young families, a small and enthusiastic group of Reformed saints. In our short time, we have seen members come and go; we have seen the twofold effect of the Word—some are edified by the preaching; others are repelled by it.

Our greatest challenge is to make and keep new contacts. This is a common problem on the mission field—the core group is often small and keen for growth, but gaining new members is difficult. The members are

busy with work and family, and it is hard to find the time for “extra projects” such as evangelism efforts. In addition, Ireland is hard to reach. Superstition, ignorance, and disinterest are formidable obstacles. Yet we know that Christ will gather His church using weakest means to fulfil His will. We covet the prayers of our brethren.

It may interest the readers of the *SB* to know that the University of Limerick offers study-abroad programs, where students can take courses in Ireland. In the past, members of Trinity PRC and Covenant ERCS have worshipped with us in Limerick while participating in such a program, and presently a member of Zion PRC is studying here. We invite others to follow in their footsteps.

South Wales

Across the Irish sea is Wales, part of Great Britain, with a population of some 3 million. Rev. Ronald Hanko was PRCA missionary in Ballymena from March 1993. During his time there, he lectured and preached regularly in Wales, especially in a small coastal town called Porthcawl, finishing his ministry there in 2000. After a gap of some years, Prof. H. Hanko brought the Word there in December 2003 on “The Sovereignty of God and the Signs of the Times.” Rev. Stewart first lectured there in February 2004 on “The Glory of God,” and has been faithfully travelling there ever since. I gave my first lecture there on February 24, 2011. Rev. Stewart and I travel to Wales every other month or so. The current venue is Port Talbot, after our former venue in Porthcawl, an old people’s rest home called “The Rest,” closed a few years ago.

The work in Wales is more difficult than the work in Limerick. The core group is smaller—and dwindling due to the age and the infirmity of many of the saints. Brian Harris, Richard Holt, and David and Chris Hutchings make up the core group at present. The group is also more scattered over a wider area. One man drives a considerable distance after milking his cows to come to the lectures. The Word is, however, gladly received by the few who come, and they purchase many books and CDs/DVDs. Wales is spiritually dead—it was a land of “revivals,” but today few Welsh people attend any kind of public worship. In the last census, Wales had the highest percentage of people reporting that they had “no religion.”

Brethren, pray for us—for our mission fields in Lim-

erick and Wales, and that the Lord might open up other fruitful mission fields, and that He might provide laborers in His vineyard. Let us not despise the day of small

things, but let us labor while it is still day, for the night comes when no man can labor.

— Rev. Martyn McGeown

Mission Labors in Myanmar (Burma)

Hope PRC's Work in Myanmar: In Love for the Church

The existence of the people of God on this earth is often one of great difficulty and trial, particularly for a true servant of God preaching the gospel of Christ in a thoroughly pagan land. Rev. Titus Sanceuluai, pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Yangon, Myanmar (PRCM), is clearly an exemplar of this: a man who labors tirelessly for the good of the church he loves and to the glory of the Most Holy God.

Already as a young aspiring minister, Rev. Titus suffered serious consequences for his commitment to learning and teaching the Reformed truth. An excerpt from a letter written by Rev. Jason Kortering, then minister-on-loan to the Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore (ERCS), and published in the March 15, 1997 *Standard Bearer*, illustrates the situation of Rev. Titus.

I have been keeping you posted on (a) situation in the life of Rev. Titus of Myanmar (Burma). I do this mostly



Pastor Titus and family.

so you can pray for this brother, who is so energetic for the Reformed faith and has to pay such a high cost.

Titus returned to Singapore with the urging of his uncle, who is leader of the Evangelical Presbyterian Churches of Myanmar and also head-master of Far Eastern Fundamental School of Theology, that he ought to read other books than by PRC authors and decide where his theological position ought to be. He questioned whether he could be pastor in the EPC or teach in FEFST if he held to the Amil [position] and 5 points of Calvinism. Titus returned January 2 and felt so guilty for not coming “clean” with his uncle that he decided he had to telephone his uncle and tell him: no more reading, no more study; I am convicted in my conscience of these truths (and) I will bear the consequences. In the Burmese culture, to have a man as important as (Titus’) uncle tell his father that he had an unruly and rebellious son was most humiliating. Only yesterday, his father called Titus to tell him the latest. His uncle refuses to talk anymore with him; no more phone calls. Also, that Titus will be excommunicated from his church and that he will not be allowed to preach or teach again. His wife has to be out of the apartment at the college by (the) end of February or, as he said, “We will throw her out in the street.”

By the grace of God, Rev. Titus willingly endured this persecution and persevered, responding to an inquiry from Rev. Kortering, “I have such sweet peace in my heart.”

Contact with saints desiring the truth in Myanmar began already in the early 1990s between a pastor in the Bible Presbyterian Church (Myanmar) and ministers in the ERCS (Rev. J. Kortering, 1995). This contact was extended and strengthened by the Protestant Reformed churches and the ERCS, most notably by Rev. Kortering and later Rev. Arie denHartog. In 2007, Synod approved

Hope church's recommendation that they be authorized to continue giving assistance to the PRC in Myanmar, accomplished primarily through the newly formed Myanmar subcommittee's personal communication with Rev. Titus.

With the establishment of this official relationship came a significant increase in workload for the Council of Hope church—an increasingly fruitful and pleasurable work to be sure—nonetheless, much extra. As a result, last year the Council accepted the offer of the Reformed Witness Committee (RWC) of Hope church to assist them in whatever capacity the Council regarded appropriate. Currently, the principal work of the RWC is bringing a greater awareness to the PRCA of the church in Myanmar and the work being undertaken there by Hope's Council, and of equal importance, to strengthen the bond of friendship between far away members of our Lord's one church.

Rev. Titus, described as “thoroughly Reformed, humble, compassionate, and a diligent worker” by delegates of Hope's six trips to Myanmar, is the man whom God is using to establish and strengthen His church in a country where Reformed teachings are seldom found and Reformed preachers are few. Despite being isolated as a Reformed minister, Rev. Titus has wholly committed his life to disseminating the gospel. Each week he teaches three catechism classes to approximately twenty children of various ages. Also on a weekly basis, he teaches a Reformed doctrines class to five or six attendees, usually elders and ministers from other churches, who rely on Rev. Titus to extend their knowledge of the Reformed faith. Frequently, he also fulfils various requests to come and either preach or conduct seminars both in the Yangon area and in other outlying areas—by no means an easy task considering the means of travel in the country. In addition, Rev. Titus travels once or twice a year to the northern region of Myanmar to bring the Word of God, teaching along the way both to his regular stops and to those who have requested his help. These trips generally last a few weeks and require a great amount of effort, and they often generate new contacts that Rev. Titus is very willing to accommodate. The congregations of Kyangin and Lemah in the Irrawaddy Division and the churches in Falam, Kale, and Nagaland are some of the places Rev.

Titus has recorded visits to in his monthly reports.¹

Being fluent in English, Chin, and Burmese, and academically capable of achieving the work, Rev. Titus has undertaken the monumental task of translating into Burmese many important, written works. Most essential on the list of works being translated is the King James Version of the Bible. Rev. Titus currently has translated and is re-editing the entire New Testament as well as the first five books of the Old Testament. Each week he circulates his *Sunday Digest*, which currently includes a translated section of *For Thy Truth's Sake* written by Prof. Herman Hanko. Concurrently, Rev. Titus is translating *Come, Ye Children* by Gertrude Hoeksema, as well as *Unfolding Covenant History* by Homer C. Hoeksema. Many of the catechism books used by our churches for many years he has translated and is currently using to teach his regular catechumens. These books include “Essentials of Reformed Doctrine, A Guide in Catechetical Instruction”; “Heidelberg Catechism”; and “New Testament Story.” Listed above is a sampling; many other works Rev. Titus has translated, too many to list in the confines of this article.²

The commitment Rev. Titus has to teaching the truth of the gospel is exceedingly apparent from his heavy, weekly schedule, but even more so when considering the Buddhist culture and the former, authoritarian government of Myanmar. With a population comprised of ninety percent Buddhists, the country is largely and openly opposed to Christianity, especially Reformed Christianity.³ Rev. Titus has reported in the past of efforts made by Buddhists to interrupt or halt the worship of God: spying on neighbors and reporting Christian worship to the government; playing loud music in the streets that made preaching nearly impossible; extreme monks heavily influencing the government against Christian churches; and even Buddhist monks constructing a pagoda in the yard of a church. The military government, while influenced by Buddhism, had itself been anti-Christian for many years, and it actively persecuted

¹ See Rev. Titus' monthly reports on Hope church's website in the Myanmar blog (hopeprchurch.org) or at prca.org under the missions tab.

² For a more complete view of this work, go to <http://www.cprf.co.uk/languages.htm> and click Burmese.

³ Approximately 4-6% of the population identifies as Christian with the vast majority either Roman Catholic or Baptist.

Christians throughout the land. A quote from Rev. Titus reveals the reality of Burmese Christians:

From 1965, General New Win chased all Christian schools from Burma, confiscated Church properties, Christian school buildings. And Christian people, we became second-class citizens. We are like no-existence; anytime, anywhere army people could make problems to us. On Sunday when we worship, every time we worry whether or not military police come; are we informed by our own neighbors or 10 home chief [a low-level military government official]? When we send our children to school, will they be treated by teachers badly? We pray with tears all the time.⁴

It is clear from Rev. Titus' recent writings that the change in the government of Myanmar is of great importance to the PRCM and has directly affected their everyday life. Significantly, he reports that the church now feels "liberation in worship." No longer does he fear that some who come to him with questions or visit worship services may be spies working for the government. In addition, Buddhist monks have lost much of their anti-Christian influence. Rev. Titus gladly notes the second vice-president of the country is Chin (Rev. Titus is of the Chin tribe) and of greater importance, Christian—a first in Myanmar. Although the full impact of the change in

government is yet largely unknown, Rev. Titus and the PRCM plainly feel a sense of relief and joy in their ability to worship God far more openly and with a greatly decreased fear of persecution.

Rev. Titus is a stalwart of the gospel of Jesus Christ. With the increasing religious freedom in Myanmar and the growing interest in Reformed doctrine found there, a native man with a deep understanding of the Reformed truth is of incalculable value in the spreading of the gospel. The work is increasing, not decreasing, and much support and assistance are yet needed and longed for. Rev. Titus is one of few Reformed preachers in Myanmar, and being native to the land, of greater value than any foreign missionary could be. The knowledge of this weighs heavily on the Council of Hope PRC; one of its primary future goals of the work in Myanmar is planning for the succession of Rev. Titus. This and many other important topics will be discussed when Hope's delegates arrive in Myanmar in May. The PRCM and Rev. Titus always receive the support, assistance, and especially the time spent with delegates with much joy and humility. We encourage you to read the monthly reports, note well the work being accomplished, and experience a bond of friendship with the saints in Myanmar. To God be all glory, forever and ever.

— Mr. Nathan DeVries 

⁴ Taken from Rev. Titus' monthly reports to Hope PRC.

PRC Radio Ministry

Reformed Witness Hour Spring 2017 Newsletter

Now in our 76th year, by God's grace the Reformed Witness Hour (RWH) broadcast, continues to have the privilege of sending out the biblical, Reformed message that "God is God" through radio, Internet, CDs, and printed booklets. We thank the Lord for our three radio pastors, Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma, Rev. Carl Haak, and Rev. Rodney Kleyn, and for the faithful gospel of Jesus Christ He has given them to proclaim each week on our program.

The RWH is now on Facebook! Each Sunday a link to the latest message is posted, and links to archived message transcripts or audio files are posted during the week. We pray that young people and individuals who do not

live where the RWH is broadcast will benefit from our page, and we encourage you to "like" it and share it with others!

You may not realize that your congregation, through your evangelism committee and pastor, can develop a good relationship with the radio station broadcasting the RWH in your area. Evangelism committees can add tags at the end of the program, letting listeners know where and when their church meets. Radio stations usually have a quota of locally sponsored broadcasts that they are required to meet, so any local personal contact is welcomed by station managers. Please support *your* evangelism committee and pastor being involved in this way.

A special thank you to the churches who have joined First Church (Grand Rapids, MI) in sponsoring our broadcast locally for one month or more. A short announcement promoting the sponsoring church is aired at the end of the program for that month. We encourage *your* church to take advantage of this sponsorship again, or for the first time. Contact our RWHC chair for more information.

At present we continually gauge the interest level of our audience and the location of our listeners by monitoring downloads of the broadcast on Sermonaudio.com and reformedwitnesshour.org. In 2015 we averaged just under 11,000 different people visiting reformedwitnesshour.org per month. In 2016 that number increased to roughly 13,000 unique visitors per month! Our messages have averaged over 25,000 downloads per month worldwide, from China to South Africa, from Sweden to the Seychelles. Look in your church's newsletter or narthex or on our RWH website for our Internet statistics page.

As part of a joint effort with the Domestic Mission Committee of the PRC, the RWH broadcasts on a 10,000 watt Christian AM station reaching the entire tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. There is a listening audience potential of several million persons —our broadest radio witness anywhere! Pray for this new witness, that the clear sound of the gospel may

go out, and that there would be an attentive audience.

Are you aware of the RWH Endowment Fund? Gifts from churches and individuals are vital in meeting the annual budget, but the Endowment Fund is a way to provide long-term benefits to support the RWH and possibly expand its work. If you are interested in contributing to the Endowment Fund through a donation, your will, or estate planning, we invite you to contact a RWH Committee member for an informational brochure.

Thank you for your giving to the RWH personally, through your church, or by PayPal on our website. *Please pray* that God will use this broadcast to send His truth far and wide by radio, Internet, and booklet. And please continue to give to this ministry liberally as God has blessed you.

In Christ's service, The RWH Committee:
Rev. C. Haak, Rev. W. Bruinsma, Rev. R. Kleyn,
associate radio pastors

Chuck Terpstra, president, Faith PRC
Marilyn Adams, secretary, First PRC, G.R.
Hank VanderWaal, treasurer, Hope PRC, Walker
Audrey Starrett, corresponding secretary, First, Holland
Dave Jessup, program engineer, Hope PRC, Walker
Jordan Whiteley, website, First PRC, G.R.
Miriam Koerner, promotions, Southeast PRC

PRC Evangelism Committee Reports

Bethel PRC—Roselle, IL

The Bethel PRC Evangelism Committee seeks to equip its members to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" (I Pet. 3:15) by the following activities:

1. The committee maintains a church webpage which includes information about our beliefs and practices, as well as recent sermons and lectures (bethelprc.org).
2. The committee provides denominational pamphlets for our members and visitors.
3. The committee has written two pamphlets that are directed to the person who has little or no exposure

to faith and religion. The topics are "Good Enough for God" and "Even the Youths."

4. The committee organizes a summer book study for our members. This year the book will be *Be Ye Holy* by David Engelsma and Herman Hanko.

5. The committee organizes an annual lecture to coincide with Reformation Day. This year the topic will be "Martin Luther."

— Rev. Dennis Lee

Crete PRC—Crete, IL

As the Evangelism Committee of the Council of Crete Protestant Reformed Church, we are bound by our Constitution. The Preamble states the following:

The Protestant Reformed Church of Crete, Illinois, believes that in obedience to the command of Christ, the King of the Church, to preach the blessed gospel to all creatures, baptizing, and teaching them to observe all things which Christ has commanded, is the explicit duty and sacred privilege of said Church to carry out this calling according to the measure of our God-given ability.

We believe that this mission activity includes the work of bringing the gospel to the unchurched and heathen, as well as the task of evangelism and church reformation.

To carry out this calling, our sub-committees are involved in the following activities.

- *Reformed Perspectives* Committee—We publish a magazine periodically with Reformed articles. Our current series is on the doctrinal truths of TULIP. We send this magazine out to many of our contacts and publish it on our website.
- Advertising Committee—We are active in advertising books, pamphlets, sermon series, and church services in magazines as well as on *Sermonaudio.com*.

- Pamphlet Committee—We publish and distribute pamphlets. Our current activity has focused on digitizing the pamphlets we have published, making them available in a number of electronic formats. We will be publishing these formats on our website for free download.
- Website Committee—We are responsible for our church's website (prccrete.org). We recently upgraded our website with a focus on user friendliness as well as mobile friendliness. We track monthly activity on both our website as well as our *Sermonaudio* page.
- Reformed Bookshelf Committee—We are responsible for maintaining the church library and books available for sale. We stay busy recommending new books to be purchased for the library as well as promoting books both within our congregation as well as on our website.
- Lecture Committee—We are responsible for organizing our yearly Reformation Day lecture. This past year, Prof. R. Cammenga spoke on the topic of common grace and the effect it has had on the Reformed church world.
- Correspondence Secretary—Our correspondence secretary is busy maintaining contact with our contacts and responding to inquiries from new contacts and sending out book and pamphlet requests.

— Kevin Brummel 

Doon, Edgerton, Hull, Calvary, Heritage PRCs

Many years ago the churches in Doon, Edgerton, and Hull formed the Reformed Witness Committee (RWC). Its goal was to spread the truth in northwest Iowa, southeast South Dakota, and southwest Minnesota. Members from each of the churches would regularly meet to plan activities to meet this goal. Among the activities in its early history was the production and distribution of pamphlets and holding lectures in the tri-state area. Older members remember the days of stapling, addressing, and mailing the pamphlets to various places not only in the area but to far-flung regions as well. The committee also facilitated the airing of the Reformed Witness Hour on two local radio stations—one in Sioux Center, Iowa, and one in Pipestone, Minnesota. Later, the committee began a Bible study at Dordt College, which

is still in existence today. They also sponsored a radio talk show hosted by (then) Rev. R. Dykstra and Mr. Jim Regnerus. This committee also made several attempts to evangelize the Sioux Falls area, which eventually led to the formation of Heritage Protestant Reformed Church.

Approximately nine years ago the churches changed the structure of the evangelism work in the area, giving most of the responsibilities to an evangelism committee (EC) in each of the five churches. The RWC still meets quarterly to carry out work done by the five churches in common. They also hear reports from each local evangelism committee and in that way share ideas and discuss what efforts have worked and what have not. Each congregation's consistory is responsible for the oversight of their church's EC, and the RWC reports to each consistory after its meeting.

The RWC still sponsors an annual fall lecture, though an individual EC is responsible for its planning and execution. They also continue to sponsor the two radio programs. A website that the RWC operated lost its host, and so the committee is working on revising the materials so that the local evangelism committees can use them. They also publish a quarterly newsletter in their area churches to show the congregations what has been done by the RWC and the local ECs.

A highlight of the Calvary PRC's EC is work that they are doing among the Hispanic community in Hull, Iowa. Members of the EC have been holding summer Bible camp for children. This past summer that camp had twenty attendees from eight families. They also try to stay in contact with these families. During the holiday season they have delivered meals and PRC literature in Spanish to the families. They also invited them to their Sunday School children's Christmas program. They are now looking into starting a Bible study with the adults of those families.

The Doon EC has been spreading the gospel by publishing articles penned by their minister in the local newspaper. It has also been advertising in that paper. A recent activity is getting permission to erect some road signs around Doon advertising the church's location. Doon's EC was in charge of last year's fall lecture, which featured Rev. A. Brummel speaking on the topic of "The Reformation and Missions."

Edgerton's EC holds a spring and fall presentation given by their minister on a variety of topics. Last Fall the topic was an overview of TULIP. This Spring Rev. D. Kuiper will present an introduction to church history as a springboard to this Fall's 500th anniversary of the Reformation of 1517. These presentations are advertised in

local newspapers, flyers in surrounding communities, and bulletins of local churches. This EC, too, puts articles in the local newspaper. It is now submitting sections of Rev. R. Hanko's book, *Doctrine according to Godliness* (RFPA, 2004, 2012). The EC has also begun posting sermons on *Sermonaudio.com* as well as on its church's website (edgertonprc.org).

The newest congregation in our area, Heritage PRC, has been active in evangelism as well. Her EC has done much advertising in the area to encourage Sioux Falls residents to attend Heritage's church services. It has used Facebook, the U.S. postal services, and other local advertising avenues for this. The EC also is hosting a Bible study in a nearby town, Harrisburg. They have been working through a study of the Old Testament with a varied number of regular attendees.

The Hull PRC EC is now in charge of the Bible study at Dordt College. It has been named the "Young Reformers" and has a presence on Facebook. They meet weekly during the school year. Right now they are studying the book of Romans, but they break from that study periodically for discussions of topics of interest to the college students. Last Fall they discussed the political situation in our country and the response a Christian should have to it. Hull's EC will be in charge of this Fall's annual lecture and are making plans for it.

From all this you can see that evangelism work continues in our tri-state area. Methods old and new are used. Most of the local EC's are also reading and discussing some piece of literature on evangelism or the Reformed faith. It is our prayer that God will bless our work and use it to the furtherance of His kingdom.

— Skip Hunter 

Hope PRC—Walker, MI

The Reformed Witness Committee of Hope PRC, Walker, MI labors under the oversight of our consistory and is composed of the lecture, pamphlet, correspondence, website, and Myanmar subcommittees. The following is an update on our recent labors.

On November 11, 2016, we sponsored a lecture by Prof. D. Engelsma on the topic, "The Necessity of Mem-

bership in a True Church," which was held in connection with Hope's 100th anniversary. Overall, it was a wonderful evening. Prof. Engelsma delivered an excellent speech on a timely topic, the audience submitted thought-provoking questions, and many stayed and enjoyed refreshments and fellowship following the lecture. About 175 people attended the lecture, and an additional 70 listened

online through *Sermonaudio.com*. If you would like to listen to the lecture, the audio is available on our website, hopeprchurch.org, under the resources tab on the homepage. This lecture webpage also contains 28 questions and answers from the lecture.

In Spring 2017, our committee published Prof. Engelsma's speech along with the questions and answers as a 64-page booklet. Although the RFPA has already published two books written by Prof. Engelsma on the topic of church membership, we felt the lecture merited publication. The booklet provides fresh insight on the topic and issues timely warnings to all churches in the Reformed community. The thoughtful questions and Prof. Engelsma's instructive responses are profitable for all to read as well. Request your free copy of the booklet by email to hoperwc@gmail.com.

Google AdWords was one successful form of advertising used to promote the recent lecture. What's Google AdWords? It is an advertisement that shows up in the Google search results when someone searches a specific term on Google. For example, if you search the term "car" on Google, an ad for a local car dealership will likely show up at the top of the search results. The results of our lecture advertisement were impressive. Over 2,000

individuals clicked on our ad and were directed to our website. Several of these individuals also corresponded with our committee. We plan to continue promoting our website through Google AdWords in the near future.

In 2016 our committee began collaborating with our Council's Myanmar committee in order to help with Hope's work with Rev. Titus and the saints in Myanmar. There is much work with the church in Myanmar. We plan to aid our Council with any projects they are too busy to accomplish, while also keeping the denomination well informed of Hope's Myanmar labors. Visit our website (hopeprchurch.org) to view information and pictures from a recent delegation visit and Rev. Titus' monthly reports, both of which provide fascinating insight into life in this third-world country. The monthly reports have also been posted to the PRCA website along with an article outlining the history of the work in Myanmar. Click on "Myanmar (Burma)" under the missions tab on the PRCA homepage (prca.org). Our committee is also in the beginning stages of planning Myanmar presentations, which we intend to hold at other PR churches. We look forward to shedding more light on the exciting work in Myanmar.

— Matt Rutgers 

Kalamazoo, MI PRC

Our Evangelism Committee, consisting of eight men, including our pastor, strives in various ways to assist our congregation in being a bright light in the Kalamazoo area and beyond.

We believe one aspect of our work is to keep the congregation informed and, consequently, more involved through prayer and support, regarding our denominational work in missions and contact with other churches. In the last couple of years we have had presentations, which we normally publicize in the community, on Covenant PRC of Northern Ireland and the Limerick Reformed Fellowship, Vellore PRC in India, and our mission work in the Philippines. This Spring we are having a presentation: "Contact in Africa: A Tour with the 2016 Delegation to Namibia and South Africa" by Prof. R. Cammenga.

We have been scheduling a public lecture each Fall, often in connection with our observance of the great Reformation. These lectures may be advertised by bulk mailings, door-to-door invitation, Facebook ads, area church bulletin announcements, posted fliers, and, of course, personal invitation.

We recently had an attractive new congregational brochure printed, providing information about our church. Until recently, we had a small pamphlet rack with some of our literature in a Family Christian Bookstore located in Portage.

We maintain an active church Facebook page informing others of highlights in our congregation and various events and activities. We have just finished our church's new website at www.kalamazooprc.org. We are also now making our sermons available on *Sermonaudio.com*.

A popular project involving many members, young and old, has been Saturday afternoon Psalter-number singing at Park Village Pines, a local Christian assisted-living facility. Many of the residents really appreciate the Psalms and join us in singing. We schedule these programs every three months or so.

We labor in the confidence that it may please the

Lord to use these efforts to draw some unto the faithful preaching of the gospel and into the fellowship of the church. We rejoice that our exalted Lord continues to add “to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47b).

— Rev. Michael DeVries 

Loveland, CO PRC—Being His Witnesses

On October 28, 2016, Prof. B. Gritters delivered our annual Reformation Day lecture and encouraged our congregation to “be who we are” as witnesses of our mighty God. As an evangelism committee, we have sought to fulfill this essential characteristic of a church of Christ through various means.

At the same Reformation Day lecture we handed out the short book *Evangelism and the Established Church* by Rev. J. Kortering. We are putting together a “Sharing the Good News” Scripture-memorization challenge for our congregation based on that book. Each passage will be accompanied by a short explanation of the passage and the fundamental gospel truth it teaches.

This Fall, the week following the Reformation conference in Michigan, Rev. S. Key, Rev. M. McGeown, and Prof. R. Cammenga will lead a conference in Loveland celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The conference will focus on the continuing good fruit of the Protestant Reformation.

Northern Colorado is an area of the United States

that is in great need of the good news of the gospel truths passed to us by our Reformed fathers. We have spent the last year investigating where and how to start a work in our area, as the Domestic Mission Committee has been promoting. While we wait for the Lord to open doors, we have identified some small steps to take in preparation. We developed a “Welcome Packet” with information about our church, a return mailer, and basic pamphlets to hand to visitors and neighbors. Our church website has been modernized with an up-to-date look and feel. It is also much easier to keep updated with information and the special events on the church calendar (sites.google.com/site/lovelandprctest1/home).

Our committee also keeps busy with regular mailings, pamphlet management, and the other routine work of an Evangelism Committee.

It is our heartfelt prayer that the Lord of the harvest may use these small means to gather His children in northern Colorado.

— Eric Westra 

Peace PRC—Lansing, IL

Peace PRC Evangelism Committee (EC) has been working on some projects this past year. Our committee meets at least once every three months according to Article 6 of our Constitution. The EC at each meeting gives opportunity for our members to bring new ideas on how we can bring the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to our community and congregation.

Our EC Constitution’s preamble states, “We believe that evangelism is the activity of preaching the gospel to all men, both the church and the unchurched, in order to bring them to a proper understanding of the

truth.” As a congregation, we are blessed to have a pastor who loves our Lord and is faithful to the Word of God. Each Sunday as a congregation we are able to meet together and sit under the preaching of the Word, sing praises to our Lord, and grow in knowledge and love for God. The message that is preached is recorded and is available on Sermonaudio to all who wish to listen. We still have available sermons on CD, if there is a request.

Last year the EC took on the task of updating the Peace PRC website (peaceprc.org). Our website was

outdated not only in content but also in its design. A technology committee was formed through the Council, and that committee took on the website project. They designed a new website, got it up and running, and are helping to maintain it. The technology committee also watches over the audio for our worship services and keeps that running smoothly. The congregation is very blessed to have members of the church who are willing to give of their time and talents to help assist the congregation and help spread God's Word.

On our new website, our pastor Rev. R. Barnhill has a blog where he writes about subjects that are relevant to our lives in this day and age. These messages are aimed not only at our own members and other Protestant Reformed churches, but also at others outside of our denomination. The committee is also planning to produce a podcast in the near future on the subject of entitlement. This can be accessed through our website or on Sermonaudio. This is something new for the EC, and we are eager to see how many we can reach. As you

can tell, the EC has some new, younger members. Fresh ideas, technical ideas, different ways to spread the gospel! The committee has not abandoned the "old ways," and we will be working as well on some traditional ways to bring forth the truth to our congregation and to others.

The EC has also been active in assisting others outside our congregation who request correspondence. Rev. Steven Houck, now retired and also a member of Peace congregation, was willing to give of his talents to mentor an inmate who asked for help in learning more about the Reformed faith. The committee would like to thank Rev. Houck for his willingness to help in that request. Upon request, the committee sends books and pamphlets to other churches in our denomination, to mission fields, and to individuals outside our circles.

The EC considers this work of spreading the gospel to be an important work. It is our aim that God, and His Son, Jesus Christ, receive all the praise and honor in this labor.

— Gerald Kooy 

Southeast PRC—Grand Rapids, MI

The Evangelism Committee of Southeast PRC has for a long time been involved with printed pamphlets and literature. In addition to filling requests that come to us as well as placing printed material in local businesses, we have kept a catalog going, which categorizes the many PRC pamphlets available into topics and main themes. We have also, for many years, provided the *Standard Bearer* in audio version, which is found on our church's website (southeastprc.org).

During the past year, a couple decisions were made by Southeast's Council that are intended to have a positive effect on our church's evangelism efforts. First, a new technology committee was initiated and appointed.

This committee has taken up the task of overhauling our church website, which is currently a work in progress. Second, the evangelism society was changed to an evangelism committee, meaning that members now volunteer to serve three-year terms, are now functioning directly as a committee of the Council, and have closer Council involvement in the work.

New evangelism projects we are presently exploring include jail ministry and the startup of a Bible study, as has been presented and suggested by our Domestic Mission Committee.

— Jim Holstege 

Trinity PRC—Hudsonville, MI

The Evangelism Committee of Trinity Protestant Reformed Church continues to work to bring the Word of God to those within and without the sphere of the church in a distinctively Reformed manner.

The Lord continues to open doors for Trinity with

Sermonaudio. We continue to receive a large number of monthly downloads of our sermons from all over the world. Recently, we started advertising free booklets that we have posted in the store section of *Sermonaudio.com*. This has led to over 150 new contacts in the last 6 months.

We continue to investigate ways to do more with our contacts. We send out periodic emails to the contacts and are starting to look into ways to judge the effectiveness of that approach. We are also investigating ways to reach out to our contacts via webinars. We did a trial of this technology with a speech by Rev. W. Bruinsma. He spoke in Pittsburgh, and we listened to the speech at Trinity as well as through a live broadcast on Google Hangouts. We had a question and answer session that worked well also. We are continuing to develop this, with the ultimate goal of reaching out to our contacts.

To help our members reach out to their neighbors, we held a two-day workshop lead by Prof. B. Gritters on personal evangelism.

In our outreach to the community, we promoted a speech on the power of the tongue that was heavily advertised on the radio as well as a local billboard. We place copies of the *Beacon Lights* in two local restaurants and have promoted sermons on Facebook through advertisements targeted at the Jenison and Hudsonville area.

— Jon Drnek

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wedding Anniversary

■ On May 5, 2017, our parents and grandparents, **JIM and KAREN ANDRINGA**, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. We rejoice with them and thank our heavenly Father for blessing them with many years of marriage and for the love and instruction given to us through them. We pray that He continues to bless them and keep them in His sovereign love and care. "For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

- ✿ Chad and Dawn Andringa
Allyn and Jaci Brummel
Shayna, Mandi, Silas, Shelby, Amos, Eliza, Lani
- ✿ James and Tanya Haveman
Tyler, Derek, Damon
- ✿ Rob and Candice Andringa
Kaylie, Luke, Gavin, Simon, Jack

Sanborn, Iowa

Teacher Needed

■ The Protestant Reformed School of Wingham is in need of a *part-time or full-time* teacher for the 2017-2018 school year. There is grade flexibility with grade assignments, etc. and the board is willing to work with an interested individual's preference. Please contact Jim Siertsema at jimsiertsema@gmail.com / 519-955-5665 or Preston Crich at prstncrch@gmail.com for more information and to apply.

Call to Synod!!

■ Synod 2016 appointed Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, Hudsonville, Michigan the calling church for the 2017 Synod.

The consistory hereby notifies our churches that the 2017 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America will convene, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, June 13 2017 at 8:30 A.M., in the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, Hudsonville, Michigan.

The Pre-Synodical Service will be held on Monday evening, June 12, at 7:00 P.M. Rev. G. Eriks, president of the 2016 Synod, will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the consistory before the service.

Delegates in need of lodging should contact Mr. Ralph VanderVeen, 2973 Willowrun St., Hudsonville, MI 49426. Phone: (616) 669-5833.

Consistory of
Hudsonville PR Church
Ralph VanderVeen, Clerk

Reformed Witness Hour

May 2017

Rev. Carl Haak

Date	Topic	Text
May 7	"To God, My Exceeding Joy, I Will Go"	Psalm 43
May 14	"A Joyful Mother of Children"	Psalm 113:9
May 21	"Except Ye Be Converted"	Matthew 18:1-5
May 28	"My Soul Is Anchored in Heaven"	Hebrews 6:20, 21