

## **Evangelical Reformed Church of Latvia (ERCLat) / Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary (BRTS)**

ERCLat is a new mission which began in 1992 (after regaining independence from Soviet Union) as Riga Reformed Bible Church (pastor Alvis Sauka). In 1998 the BRTS was established in Riga with the help of Dr. Gerard Van Groningen and International Theological Education Ministries (St.Louis, U.S.A.); it operates mainly by visiting professors. We believe that the Bible is God's authoritative Word. The Westminster Confession has been translated and adopted as standard; other Reformed confessions are used.

BRTS has 3 main goals: 1) Theological Training (pastors and lay leaders) 2) Reformed literature -translation/publishing 3) Supporting Reformed church-planting.

In 1998 the 2nd congregation was started; the leaders were trained by seminary. These two congregations have grown to over 50 members each by way of evangelism (there were no historical Reformed people) and now have a number of trained elders who can preach/teach (this has been the biggest effort/battle/longest process). In 2015 the 3rd church-plant has been started by a BRTS graduate with a considerable team of trained leaders.

Seminary is offering a full-size theological program in our Evangelical environment where training trend is more and more reduced to "leadership skills focus" approach. Students from Baptist and other Christian groups have also taken the studies at the seminary. The program has been made available also in Lithuania and several graduates are in active ministry there.

ERCLat prays and makes efforts to be missional to the secular culture of Latvia and seeks to grow by evangelism, discipleship and training ministers of the Word through BRTS, with the help of its partners.

## **Evangelical Reformed Church of Russia (ERCR)**

Christians and the Baptist Union. The legal battle for this building will be very tense and the ERCR is the resurrected group of the Reformed Churches in Russia which was formed in 2007. The ERCR was formed on the basis of the old ERCUR (Evangelical Reformed Churches Union in Russia) which ceased to function in 2007. The ERCUR was established as a legal body in 1992 by three legal entities namely the Tver congregation, Tver Institute for Calvinism, and Moscow congregation, which split in 2006 and has been finally dissolved in 2012 by a Court decision.

The ERCR now unites a dozen of local congregations spreading from Saint-Petersburg to Siberia. Because the ERCR does not exist as a legal body at present it can't have its own seminary, therefore the training of students is done in the Moscow Evangelical Seminary's Reformed Theology Faculty.

The Moscow and Tver congregations of the former ERCUR reconciled last March, but this reconciliation was more an informal one than by a Synodal decision. The Moscow congregation decided to restore the Synod and create a new legal body in cooperation with the ERCR. The Tver congregation though insists on full independence and denies a Synod. The immediate establishment of a legal body for the ERCR was up to now impossible because a few of the ERCR congregations are under the negative influence of Federal Vision for example having Paedocommunion. The present EuCRC-2016 conference, where Paedocommunion was discussed in detail, would provide a good opportunity for correcting the member churches of the ERCR who are under wrong influences.

The Reformed Theology Faculty, a part of the Moscow Evangelical Seminary, can provide a yearlong course for Christian Ministry. It is enough to teach Church planting and basic ministry of the Word, and is acknowledged by the Russian Federation. Further training can be done at the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary (ERCLat). Due to political and religious reasons at present it is difficult to invite foreign professors to teach in the Moscow Evangelical Seminary. It seems better to therefore rather send Russian Pastors for intensive courses to Riga.

Prayer requests: (1) the establishment of a legal body (centralized religious organization) for the ERCR and (2) restitution of historical Reformed Church buildings, at least in Moscow - it is difficult because the building in Moscow is at present occupied by Evangelical we would need help from our Reformed brothers, especially those from the Netherlands.

## **Evangelical Reformed Church, Transcarpathia, Ukraine**

About us. We are a new Confessing Evangelical Church in Transcarpathia, Ukraine. Founded in 2006. Our Catechisms: Catechism of Heidelberg, The II. Helvetic Confession and the Westminster Confession. We accept the first 4 General Synod, and we believe the Five Sola. We have four pastors, 110 adult members and their children, together 200 members. But many other people attends our services as visitors. We preach the Word of God in 11 villages. We have reformed church government, with Synod and with local presbyterian councils. We regularly have one day conferences for the youth, the adult and also for men and little children. We educate the Bible (from age 6-13) and the Catechism (from age 14-15) for our children. There is also charity work (diaconia) not only for the members, but toward the other sick people at the places where we live and mission work among children and young people. We hold 5 children conference, 5 youth conference, 5 adult conference, 4 men conferences and 2 five-day and one 3-days Bible camps a year. We can hold our camp at the local Presbyterian Conference Center near Beregovo.

Our short history. In 2006 we separated from the local liberal Reformed Church. In this Church we used to be pastors, elders, and active ministering members. For many years there had been a serious long teaching about reformation, because the Church left its Confession, and with it the Word of God. There was no problem with the teaching itself, but as soon as we started to live the church life according to the Reformed Confessions, we found ourself in a strange situation. The Church, involving the Synod, the preachers, elders and members, started to fight against us and against the Word of God. In a Church, where there is no need for the Word of God, there is no place for a believer. So we separated, founded a new Reformed Church and started to live according to the Bible and the Reformed Confessions. Since than God blessed our decision with new members and with new lives by converting people along our ministries. We can do mission work too, though there is a strong opposition from our former liberal Church. Our mission work is: first the confession of our members and the confession of their life, second is our writings: church magazine, booklets, written sermons which are spread by our members, third our camps and children mission. Fourth we have been doing street children and poor children mission at the local town with 20 children. In the first years we attended our services at family-houses. Later we managed to buy or to build church buildings and meeting places.

About our communities. We hold Sunday morning services in 6 villages. And Bible classes in 11 villages. For the Sunday morning services people come together from different villages. Status: We are formal, registered churches by the Ukrainian State since 2007 making a denomination named: Evangelical Reformed Church. We are non episcopal, non independent and non hierarchical church. We are presbyterian, reformed, confessing evangelicals. Every community sends two deputies to the Synod.

Our needs and aims: We need parish buildings, places for pastors' families to live. We have four pastor families but only one lives on parish. The other 3 families live in their own family house with their parents and so have to travel a big distance to reach the communities. We also need a Conference Center. From the grace of Our Lord we have just started the planning and the state permissions of the reconstructing of the potential building (see photos at: <http://www.evrefegyhaz.com> ). The mission goes on, there is a big need of it, but we are few and our financial capacity is little.

Connections: e-mail (common, formal address): [evrefegyhaz@gmail.com](mailto:evrefegyhaz@gmail.com)

## **Evangelisch Reformierte Kirche Westminster Bekenntnis (ERKWB)**

The confessional standards of the ERKWB are the Westminster Confession of Faith 1647 and the Heidelberg Catechism 1563.

The first congregation of the ERKWB was planted in 1984 in Neuhofen, Upper Austria by a former Pastor of the Reformed Church in Austria, which has become very liberal.

During the following years, from 1998 to 2009, 4 additional congregations were planted in Austria and Switzerland, namely Rankweil and Wien in Austria and Winterthur and Basel in Switzerland.

Today, the ERKWB consists of 5 churches in the named two countries and counts about 170 members in total. Only 4 of them have a pastor, three full time, one part time.

The goal of the ERKWB is to plant and establish Reformed churches in the German speaking countries: Austria, Switzerland and prospectively Germany.

By now we are in ecclesiastical fellowship with the Reformed Church in the Netherlands (liberated) and with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the USA, and are looking to have the same with other confessional Reformed churches, with which we already are in a brotherly relationship.

## **General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in Russia (GAPCR)**

General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in Russia (GAPCR) has been established in 2012 in Moscow. GAPCR is one of the younger denominations in Russia, with 59 churches in the four regional presbyteries, throughout the European continent from Moscow to Sakhalin Island.

GAPCR holds the reformed doctrinal beliefs from the Bible, which are found in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Presbyters elected by the church members govern local churches.

One of the main works of the denomination for now is registering with the Government.

## **The Reformed Churches in The Netherlands**

In the way of a number of splits in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century the RCN were founded. The split in 1944 was caused by disagreement on the issue of covenant and baptism. There was also a struggle concerning the application of the Church Order.

The churches currently count 119.500 members, 268 congregations and 273 pastors. Moreover, there are several church plantings projects. Increase of members is mainly due to (converted) refugees which have found a safe haven in The Netherlands. For the training of new pastors the churches have their own Theological University in Kampen. This University is partly subsidized by the government. The students are not only from The Netherlands but also from abroad. This year the University started the Master International Reformed Theology (MIRT).

There is an increasing collaboration with the Christian Reformed Churches and the Dutch Reformed Churches. In some places the local churches of these denominations are united. There are plans to unify the Theological University in Kampen, the Theological University in Apeldoorn and the Seminary of the Dutch Reformed Churches.

Verre Naasten is the mission organization of the RCN. Verre Naasten supports the churches in carrying out their global mission. This mission is: to share worldwide the faith in Jesus Christ, in words and deeds.

At present the RCN maintains sister church relations with 31 churches all over the world. The RCN has also official contact with 24 other churches in several countries.

## **Protestant Reformed Christian Church in Croatia** (A Jurisdiction of the Reformed Episcopal Church)

Protestant Reformed Christian Church in Croatia was founded on 24, May, 2001 after several parishes became independent from the Reformed Christian Church in Croatia. The Church has been founded on its historical tradition of the 16th century Reformation in Croatia when the oldest parish of the PRCC has been founded in Tordini (on 17, May 1551). The Church has been registered as the religious community i.e. a church in the Official Registry of the Religious Communities and Churches in Croatia.

### Creed:

The Protestant Reformed Christian Church in Croatia confesses basic Christian creeds, The Apostolic Creed, the Nicene Creed and Athanasian Creed. As a Church of the Reformation legacy we accept the Calvinist teachings as they are defined in the Heidelberg Catechism and the 39 Articles of Faith.

### Liturgy

Protestant Reformed Christian Church in Croatia is liturgical Church. The church uses the Book of Common Prayer 1662, and liturgically follows the form of the Anglican reformation of the 16th century.

### Mission – Evangelism

PRCC holds that important task of the church is mission and evangelism, and the church is active in proclaiming the Word of God and planting new churches.

### Church structure:

At the Synod held on 19, May 2011 PRCC entered into fellowship with the Reformed Episcopal Church and accepted the Episcopal Church structure. Bishop Ordinary is Rt. Rev. Royal U Grote, and Assistant Bishop is Rt. Rev. Jasmin Milić.

## **Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland**

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland has its roots in the Reformation in Scotland in the sixteenth century. In order to defend their faith and church government from hostile civil rulers Scottish Presbyterians bound themselves together by signing 'covenants', in particular the National Covenant (1638) and the Solemn League and Covenant (1643), and so they became known as 'Covenanters'. Scottish soldiers and settlers brought their Reformed theology and church principles to Ireland in the seventeenth century and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland is descended directly from these Covenanters. The first Reformed Presbytery in Ireland was formed in 1763 and, as the church grew, the first Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland was formed in 1811.

Today the RPCI has 29 congregations scattered throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, along with several church plants which are at various stages of development. The total adult communicant membership is around 3500. The congregations are divided into four presbyteries which meet several times a year, and together they form the Synod which meets annually. Ministers and other church workers are trained at the church's seminary in Belfast, the Reformed Theological College, where the professors are also full-time pastors of congregations. In the past the church conducted mission work in Syria, Lebanon and Cyprus (in partnership with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America) and in Ethiopia. For the past 30 years there has been a mission work in the city of Nantes in France, involving two missionary families. The RPCI has close links with Reformed Presbyterian churches in Scotland, North America and Australia, and was a founder member of the ICRC.



## **The Christian Reformed Churches In The Netherlands**

We are a denomination that desires to be faithful to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have adopted as our confessional standards the Three Forms of Unity: the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort.

Historically, the CRCN have their roots in the Reformation and in the Secession of 1834.

Today, we face all the problems that are connected with the secularization process that is taking place. It is a challenge to show the relevance of the gospel to the youth of the church. Vital in this is to live the gospel in our daily lives. Despite spiritual indifference and apostasy, we believe and rejoice to see that the Holy Spirit is working among all ages of church members.

The CRCN currently has 74.000 members, 182 congregations and 144 ministers (18 of them are involved in a special ministry).

Churches that are situated in close proximity usually meet twice per year in a classis meeting. At these meetings the churches seek to mutually assist each other and exercise oversight over each other. We are regionally organized in four Particular Synods. Once every three years the churches meet in a General Synod.

Our seminary is in Apeldoorn where students are trained at the Theological University of Apeldoorn (TUA). Three professors, two associate professors and a number of instructors are involved in teaching and training students.

Our churches reach out in mission and home mission projects.

## **Free Church of Scotland**

Tracing our roots from the Protestant Reformation of the Scottish church, the Free Church of Scotland was formed in 1843 when most of the evangelical ministers in the Church of Scotland resigned because of state interference in its internal affairs.

They understood the historic position of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland to be that the Church and State were independent in their own spheres and that they ought not to interfere in each other's business, but rather help one another for the Christian good of Scotland.

The denomination currently has over 100 congregations in Scotland, as well as one in London, with more than 13,000 people attending our Sunday services. We have sister churches founded by mission work in India, Peru and South Africa; and continuing mission engagement in these and other fields. The Church has a full time seminary in the middle of Edinburgh for the training of its ministers and other Christian workers.

The Free Church today is in fellowship with many other Reformed churches throughout the world and stands firmly in the tradition which accepts the Bible as its supreme standard and the Westminster Confession as its subordinate standard.

Central to our life and worship therefore is the preaching of the gospel: the good news of salvation through the sovereign grace of God in His Son Jesus Christ; and of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, for lives lived in obedience to the Bible. It is this message, far more than any historic or cultural distinctive, that defines us.

## **Ukrainian Evangelical Reformed Church**

1925 in Western Ukraine. By 1939 there were more than 35 religious communities with 15 preachers, five thousand members and the same number of supporters.

Seizure of Western Ukraine in late 1939 was the major blow for this evangelical Church which had a clear national foundation. The church suffered severe losses. Part of its preachers and believers were killed in Siberia, others had to emigrate. The days of persecution and pursuit provided initial hardening to help the church face the hardships of 1939 and subsequent years.

Our church is young when compared with other Evangelical Reformed Churches in the world, but we are a free and independent church. Our UER church was destroyed, but with God's help and with the help of Reformed Churches of the Netherlands and other it managed to resume Sunday worships, hold Bible lessons, and fulfil sacraments. We have an opportunity to evangelise, hold Bible courses, and teach children about God's love which He showed through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Our church operates and it leads an active church life by glorifying the Lord. The activity of our Church in Rivne began in 1991. About a year later we started to hold worship in Stepan (Rivne). Having some prerequisites for its establishment in Ukraine in XVI-XVII century, UERC revived in region. Subsequently, new communities appeared in Kiev, Kherson region, Zakarpattya, and Khmel'nitsky region. There are several relatively new church plants. We have a close relationship with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and with joint efforts we organized a seminary in Kiev for our students. We are happy to cooperate with other churches. We all want to live in peace and harmony with everyone and work for the glory of God.