

Ministry to State

State Capitols

Christmas 2015

“In the beginning” these three words open both the first book in the Bible – Genesis and the Apostle John’s Gospel. The first speaks about God’s creation of the Heavens and the Earth, the universe as we know it. The second speaks about the Word of God. When God said “Let there be light,” these words created light and the universe was full of it. This Word of God, John writes, became flesh (a man) and dwelt among us. We call him Jesus and this past week Christians (and many non-Christians) celebrated and remembered his birth around the world.

“In the beginning” describes where we are today. Lorelei and I have left one ministry, the Army Chaplaincy, to join a new Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) ministry called Ministry



to State (MTS) which is part of the PCA’s larger Ministry to North America (MNA). We are excited about the ministry and thank you for showing interest. We are planning a quarterly newsletter to keep you

informed. We have a website. It is very basic right now, but as the ministry moves forward we will update it. You can find us at MTScapitols.org.

Providence

The Declaration of Independence ends with this sentence “And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.” The America’s founders believed in Providence. If you read

correspondence from that time period, you would see this word a lot. In a July 1775 letter to his wife, Martha, General George Washington wrote “I go fully trusting in that Providence, which has been more bountiful to me than I deserve, and in full confidence of a happy meeting with you sometime in the Fall.” The best verse in the New Testament I can think of that describes providence is from the Apostle Paul’s letter to the congregation of Christians in Rome “*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*”

God works in mysterious and wondrous ways – This is providence. During my last leave for the Army (vacation time for those not familiar with the military term), I took my wife to Ireland, a place she had always wanted to go but we could never get to. First work of providence was our sons, Joseph and Christopher, work for an airline, so our airfare was at a greatly reduced cost. The second work of providence, was that Chris and a member of our church had a friend, Gordon, who lived in Northern Ireland. After

contacting him, he offered to allow us to use his home as a base to travel and visit from (and of course to sleep, saving us the cost of hotels). The third work of providence; Gordon invited us to a Wednesday night bible study of his church and we meet his pastor, George Johnston. Fourth work of providence; Gordon is a newly appointed Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) In Belfast. Once his pastor learned

what our new ministry was about, he invited us back during the first week of December to



preach at his church, to meet with business leaders in the community, and possibly meet a few Northern Ireland Assembly members. All of these things encouraged us and gave us insight into the life of a young political leader, just the kind of hearts our new ministry is designed to reach. When the church offered to bring us back and host us for the week, we gratefully accepted.

Our first official business trip for MTS was held, therefore on the coast of Northern Ireland. The week was a full one. Wednesday night the church, Carnlough Presbyterian Church, had their annual Christmas dinner where Lorelei and I were able to meet the church members, and Gordon, in a great social gathering. On Thursday, we were able to take a side trip to the home of some of Lorelei's ancestors and even met a distant cousin.

On Friday, I was the speaker for a business leader's breakfast. In attendance were farmers, lawyers, legislators, realtors, a radio station manager, and owners of local retail shops. I spoke about Providence guiding my military career, the role of the chaplain in the U.S. military, and our new ministry at MTS. I opened the floor for questions and, given current events in the US and the world, there were quite a few. Afterwards, the radio station manager interviewed me for his broadcast.



The church in Carnlough, has two special services on the first Sunday in December called "Harvest of the Sea" and

I was asked to preach at both. I preached from Luke 5:1-11 on God's calling of the Elect in the morning service and on sharing the Gospel, from John 21:1-17, in the evening service.

We ended our business by visiting Stormont Parliament Buildings in Belfast. We met with a few MLAs and discussed our ministry. They had a lot of questions and some good insights. One message was clear; the church should be



reaching out to those who are called by God into the political powers of our government. They need the hope of the Gospel and wisdom from God to govern

well. The leaders we met testified to the need and they are very encouraged that the Presbyterian Church of America has established a ministry to do just that.

Our way ahead

Over the next few months, Lorelei and I will be visiting churches and individuals to raise support for the ministry. Please pray that our Lord will lead us to those he is already calling to provide the resources necessary for this ministry. Please be praying for our political leaders in Washington DC, and your political leaders in your state, and locality. If you wish to contribute, please click here: or you can use this url:

<https://www.egsnetwork.com/gift2/?giftid=ACEC8E591AAC4CE>