



COVENANT

Bible-Presbyterian Church

Preaching Christ for His Glory and His Kingdom

Order of Worship – 30 October 2016

Theme for the Year: "What Would Jesus Say About Your Church?" (Rev 3:22)

Prelude	<i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i>
Call to Worship	
*Opening Hymn	35 - <i>Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven</i>
*Invocation & † <i>Gloria Patri</i>	
Scripture Reading	John 14:12-31
Hymn	TP 139:1-10
Tithes & Offering	
**† <i>Doxology</i> & Offertory Prayer	
Scripture Reading	Acts 2:37-41
Hymn	170 - <i>O Breath of Life</i>
Confession of Faith & Pastoral Prayer	
Sermon	"The Spirit Convicts"
*Closing Hymn	Insert - <i>We Have Not Known Thee As We Ought</i>
*Benediction & <i>Threefold Amen</i>	
Silent Prayer & Postlude	
Announcements	* <i>Congregation standing</i>

† Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
And to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning,
Is now and ever shall be:
World without end. Amen.

†† Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Covenant Bible-Presbyterian Church meets every Sunday at 10:00 am
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The Reformation and Christian Unity

Introduction

Wait a minute, "The Reformation and Christian Unity?" Isn't the Reformation about schism?

Isn't it about a tubby monk in a black robe vandalizing a church door and inciting people to rebel against the established church?

Where's the Christian unity in that? Some would say there wasn't any.

And that's the common critique of the Reformation, particularly by Romanists and those who'd like to see a greater visible unity among Christian groups.

In an age where Christian unity is taking a more visible and organizational form, what lessons can the Reformation teach us about unity?

Reformation, Not Revolution

The purpose of the Reformation was just that – reformation. It didn't intend to split the visible church.

Luther did not have an impious destruction of the church in mind, but rather its basic Christian renewal.

That love for the church was the catalyst for the nailing of the 95 Theses on the door of Wittenberg Church.

Even before his conversion, he wrote against specific abuses in the church – his aim was to rid the church of such excesses and hypocrisy.

And after his conversion, the Biblical doctrine of justification took a much larger role in his criticisms. He taught that men were not simply justified by being a member of the church or by buying indulgences.

But even this he did for the purpose of spiritually renewing the Roman Catholic Church.

When Calvin wrote his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* to plead with the French King not to persecute the French Protestants, he argued that the Protestant Reformation was not teaching another religion, but rather the faith of the apostles and early church.

In fact, all the Reformers, in defending their faith, not only quoted from Scripture, but also the Apostolic and Early Church Fathers.

This was to show that Reformation religion was an ancient faith, and that it was the Roman Church that had departed from this ancient religion to espouse a man-made tradition.

Now, it is important to note they thought the Roman Catholic Church was worth saving; they never denied that there were true believers in the Roman communion, and never doubted the validity of some of her ordinances.

But in Luther's words, it was a crippled church, and so the rehabilitation of the church depended on a Reformation.

They never had a church split in mind. But if they never intended to split the church, and we ask the obvious, why did the church split?

Truth Above Visible Unity

There were many reasons why the church split. One obvious reason is the fact that the biblical teachings of the Reformers were contradictory to the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church.

And by teaching them, the Reformers hit a vital nerve of the established church. They undercut the importance and value of the Papacy, making of no importance the indulgences the papacy claimed to administer; in other words,

eternal life and other spiritual benefits were not dependent upon the Pope, as once thought. All that was needed was simple faith in Christ and trust in God's Word.

And when threatened with excommunication and expulsion from the Roman Catholic Church for their teachings, they faced the option of either separation for the truth's sake or unity in unbiblical compromise.

Neither option was utopian, but the former one was correct according to Scripture.

And it was justifiable, for by that time, they were convinced that there could be no reconciliation or reformation if Rome continued to view herself as infallible and the only true church.

And because of that, to defend the truth of Scriptures and to live out the Reformation, the Reformers separated themselves from Rome.

But while they separated and formed other congregations, the Reformers still acknowledged that they were part of a larger church. However, this was not the view of some, namely the Radical Reformers.

Schism and Schismatics

The Reformation was not the uniformly glorious and moral movement that many claim it to be. It had its own share of human and ecclesiastical excesses.

One such example is seen in the Radical Reformers (and the reaction to them).

These were men who did not acknowledge there was a larger church and that the only church spoken of in Scripture was the local church. And as such, they focused inordinately on the purity of the Church.

No doubt, each congregation should strive towards purity of doctrine and practice.

But both Luther and Calvin taught that there was no perfect church on earth, and as long as the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments were pure, that church no one should abandon on account of every trivial difference. Even the purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error.

But because Radical Reformers were ceaseless in their quest for purity, they caused schism wherever they were, leading to them being pejoratively called Enthusiasts (as they were all sense and zero sensibility), Cathars (ancient heretics notorious for their spiritual haughtiness), Revolutionaries, and Donatists (another ancient group of heretics known for their schismatic behavior).

One of the motivating factors for their extreme separatism was their eschatological mindset – their belief in Christ's imminent return caused them to see error everywhere and to set up their pure and true congregations.

An interesting account is told of John of Leiden, who went to Münster and became one of her prophets; he led the people of the city to expunge all those who didn't believe as they did.

He proclaimed himself the Anointed of God, took the name King David (along with 16 wives), and fought with everyone else in the Christian world, until his movement and he were thankfully crushed.

Fortunately, the Radical Reformers did not constitute a large part of the Reformation. On the whole, despite some disagreements, the Reformers themselves adopted a catholic and generous spirit.

Charity and Unity

Despite their justifiable separation from the Roman Catholic Church and the Radical Reformers, the Reformers did strive for unity. They didn't always achieve it, but they certainly did try.

In 1529, Protestants met in Marburg to discuss their similarities and differences. The chief participants were Luther and Zwingli, another prominent Reformer.

They had much to agree on, in fact, 14 points, but they parted without agreeing on the 15th, being the nature of the Lord's Supper.

It would not be the last time that Protestants would be out of agreement. But what follows is more encouraging.

The next year in the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, Luther's friend Philip Melancthon wrote the Augsburg Confession, as a careful and cautious summary of Lutheran doctrines.

In the preface, there was a plea for Christian unity, and a promise that the Lutherans were "neglecting nothing that may serve the cause of Christian unity."

And this promise was indeed fulfilled, for 10 years after Augsburg, Melancthon produced a revised edition, *The Variata*. He rewrote some parts in order to make peace with Calvinists. And John Calvin himself signed the 1540 version.

Similarly, Heinrich Bullinger, the successor of Zwingli in Zurich, forwarded the efforts of unity. Just as Luther disagreed with Zwingli on the nature of the Lord's Supper, Calvin, too, disagreed with Zwingli.

However, in 1549, Bullinger and Calvin succeeded in overcoming the differences in doctrine and produced

the Zurich Consensus. This resulted in a united Reformed witness.

Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli are known as the three men of the Reformation, systematizing and promoting Biblical truths.

But the fourth, being Bullinger, was the one who truly promoted unity.

The Second Helvetic Confession, which he penned, came to be adopted by the Reformed Church in Switzerland, Scotland, Hungary, France, and Poland; being known as the most recognized Reformed confession after the Heidelberg Catechism.

Bullinger was a personal friend and confidante of John Calvin, Martin Bucer, Melancthon, Beza, Cranmer, Hooper, Lady Jane Grey, the kings of England, Denmark, and the German princes.

His work of unity and catholicity greatly influenced and advanced the cause of Reformation.

Lessons for Us Today

Often the theme of unity is looked upon with suspicion in separatist and Fundamentalist churches. Naturally, we are tempted to think of any Christian unity as unbiblical ecumenism.

And the topic of true visible Christian unity is never given the weight that it deserves. It is often classified as a by-the-way of Biblical Separation, rather than the opposite.

But do we ever stop to consider if much of the separatism that goes on in the name of truth is really just plain old schism?

The Reformation teaches us valuable lessons, and practical ones too!

Firstly, it teaches us that reformation takes time. No church is perfect and there will be plenty to reform – in

doctrine, in practice, in character, and in behavior.

But often we get impatient and behave more like revolutionaries – we give up hope for the church, we express our displeasure (sometimes very enthusiastically), and we leave the church (often with great flourish).

But the Reformation teaches us that efforts to maintain unity (while upholding the truths) is preferable, and separation to be implemented when there is no other recourse.

Secondly, the Reformation teaches us to be faithful to the essential truths of Scripture. There are many small things we can disagree on. And we can easily make these minutiae the basis of fellowship.

We fight not for these things, but we fight for the essential truths and the gospel.

Thirdly, the Reformation teaches us to consider the church as Christ sees her – she is his Bride, whom he is preparing for that great marriage supper – she is not yet perfect, but being perfected.

And when we see ourselves as imperfect we hardly expect better from others.

Schism always happens because of pride; we may proclaim loudly our desire to protect the truths of Christ, but do it in a spirit that is contrary to the spirit of Christ. Schism must be crushed.

And fourthly, the Reformation teaches us to be catholic in our outlook – to maintain our distinctives as Reformed Christians, because we're convinced of the doctrines of grace, but also to be charitable and eager for biblical unity.

~ *Pastor*



Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 105. What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the first commandment, are, atheism, in denying, or not having a God; idolatry, in having or worshiping more gods than one, or any with, or instead of the true God; the not having and vouching him for God, and our God; the omission or neglect of any thing due to him, required in this commandment; ignorance, forgetfulness, misapprehensions, false opinions, unworthy and wicked thoughts of him, bold and curious searching into his secrets; all profaneness, hatred of God; self-love, self seeking, and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them off from him in whole or in part; vain credulity, unbelief, heresy, misbelief, distrust, despair, incorrigibleness, and insensibleness under judgments, hardness of heart, pride, presumption, carnal security, tempting of God, using unlawful means, and trusting in unlawful means; carnal delights and joys; corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal; lukewarmness, and deadness in the things of God; estranging ourselves, and apostatizing from God; praying, or giving any religious worship, to saints, angels, or any other creatures; all compacts and consulting with the devil, and hearkening to his suggestions; making men the lords of our faith and conscience; slighting and despising God and his commands; resisting and grieving of his Spirit, discontent and impatience at his dispensations, charging him foolishly for the evils he inflicts on us; and ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have, or can do, to fortune, idols, ourselves, or any other creature.

The Spirit Convicts

Acts 2:37-41

When we are confronted with our sins, do we respond with guilt and conviction or with hardness of heart? Once, Christ was first in our lives - we worked hard to subdue our sinful temperaments. But slowly we became comfortable with our sins. We may not be guilty anymore. But the Spirit was sent to convict us. That's his ministry.

1. The Guilt We Should Feel and the Plea We Should Make
 - a. They made the plea
 - b. They felt guilt for their sins
 - c. How do we crucify Christ?
2. The Assurance of Complete Forgiveness Upon Repentance
 - a. The way to escape judgment is by repentance
 - b. The result of repentance is forgiveness and the Spirit
 - c. The extent of that forgiveness
3. The Joy of a Convicted Life
 - a. The burden of conviction
 - b. Exhortation to join a remnant and leave the culture of sin
 - c. The result is gladness

How joyful are you in your Christian life? It is a direct correlation with how you receive and respond to the Word. The response to the Spirit's convicting is not merely remorse, but change. How has the Lord spoken to you about your vocation, leisure, family, temperament, service, relationships, and children? We have joined a remnant. What plea should you make to God?

Questions for Reflection:

1. What effect does justifying sin and delaying repentance have on the conscience?
2. Why are we so afraid of repenting and changing our lives when the results of it are spiritual maturity and joy? What are the consequences of seeking first the kingdom of God?
3. Peter exhorted the people to repent and he put his life on the line. These were to his own people the Jews. When he was required to do so to the Gentiles, he faltered (Gal 2:12). What are some reasons that would cause us to falter in our exhortation to others to repent?

We Have Not Known Thee As We Ought

Thomas B. Pollock, *Adoro Te*

We have not known Thee as we ought,
Nor learned Thy wisdom, grace and power;
The things of earth have filled our thought,
And trifles of the passing hour.
Lord, give us light Thy truth to see,
And make us wise in knowing Thee.

We have not feared Thee as we ought,
Nor bowed beneath Thine awful eye,
Nor guarded deed and word and thought,
Remembering that God was nigh.
Lord, give us faith to know Thee near,
And grant the grace of holy fear.

We have not loved Thee as we ought,
Nor cared that we are loved by Thee;
Thy presence we have coldly sought,
And feebly longed Thy face to see.
Lord, give a pure and loving heart
To feel and know the love Thou art.

We have not served Thee as we ought,
Alas, the duties left undone,
The work with little fervor wrought,
The battles lost or scarcely won!
Lord, give the zeal, and give the might,
For Thee to toil, for Thee to fight.

When shall we know Thee as we ought,
And fear and love and serve aright?
When shall we, out of trial brought,
Be perfect in the land of light?
Lord, may we day by day prepare
To see Thy face and serve Thee there.

Worship Service Roster

Service	This Week (30.10.16)	Next Week (6.11.16)
Speaker	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Worship Leader	Johnson Lim	Mark Chen
Pianist	Eugene Lim	Evelyn Lee
Welcomers	Yen Fye & Angela Yap	Ian & Merrill Read
Offering Stewards	David Lim*, Vincent Chiu* LH Chua, David Pang	John E Tan*, Terence Lee* Micah Chiang, Rex Sriharan
Usher	Merilyn Woo, Joyce Ng	Wendy Gong, Angela Yap
Kitchen Duties	Jenni Budiman*, Sandy Chua, Jemima Ng	Lydia Orchard*, Helen Wong, Grace Wang, Vincent Chiu
<i>Prayer Meeting</i>	<i>4 November 2016</i>	<i>11 November 2016</i>
Facilitator	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Pianist	Ian Tay	Eugene Lim

Announcements

1. A warm welcome to all worshipers. May God richly bless you. Please stay behind after the service for fellowship and tea.
2. We will be celebrating Lord's Supper next Lord's Day. Please bring a dish to share at the fellowship lunch.
3. Next week's message: "The Spirit-Controlled Church Learns" (Acts 2:42-47).
4. Next week's Junior Worship message - "Biblical Molting" (Colossians 3:5-11).
Speaker - Jackie Hong.
5. Combined Youth Camp. "Living as Christians in a Non-Christian World." 1-3 December at Serpentine Camping Centre. Speaker: Pastor Ron Nugent. Fee: \$55. For more information, see Eugene Lim or Jerome Ng.
6. Congratulations to Mr & Mrs Jansen Ng on their holy matrimony.

Appointments for the Week	Last Lord's Day Tithes & Offering, & Attendance
WED 10:00 am Craft Group FRI 7:45 pm CBI & Prayer Meeting SAT 4:30 pm JF & TF SUN 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Service	<i>General Fund</i> - \$5,432.20 (#630 - \$2,000.00). <i>Missions Fund</i> - \$390.00 (#632 - \$100.00). <i>Building Fund</i> - \$100.00 (#398 - \$100.00). <i>Total Tithes & Offering</i> - \$5,922.20. Attendance - 160.

Building Fund to Date		
Available Building Fund	\$72,415.39	Building Fund Account:
Outstanding Pledges	\$0.00	
Last Week's Collection	\$100.00	
Total	\$72,515.39	Covenant Bible-Presbyterian Church (Westpac Bank, Applecross)
<i>Outstanding Loan</i>	- \$416,000.00	BSB: 036-031 Acct: 316969
<i>Amount Still Needed</i>	\$343,484.61	SWIFT: WPACAU2S

Elders: **Mark Chen (Pastor)** 6114 4242, 0415 932 373. **Jimmy Orchard** 0413 274 407.
 Deacons: **Ken Chong** 0402 553 313. **LH Chua** 0435 601 373. **Johnson Lim** 0402 145 682. **Jacob Woo** 0421 212 206.