



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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“For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9)

Vol. 15 No. 44

LORD’S DAY 30 OCTOBER 2011

ORDER OF WORSHIP

	<i>Morning Service – 11am</i>	<i>Evening Service – 4pm</i>
<i>Prelude</i>	<i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i>	
<i>Call to Worship</i>	1 Chronicles 29:11	Psalm 111:1-3
<i>Opening Hymn *</i>	RHC 15 – “How Shall I Sing That Majesty”	RHC 16 – “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name”
<i>Opening Prayer *</i>	John Poh	John Poh
<i>Gloria Patri *</i>	<i>Glory Be to the Father</i>	
<i>Responsive Reading</i>	Psalm 94	1 Corinthians 3:1-23
<i>Second Hymn *</i>	<i>Psalm 94 verses 1-2, 14-15</i> (to the tune of Beatitudo, RHC 63)	RHC 399 – “I Am Thine, O Lord”
<i>Announcements & Memory Verse</i>	John Poh	John Poh
<i>Tithes & Offerings & Doxology *</i>	RHC 87 – “I Know Whom I Have Believed”	---
<i>Scriptural Text</i>	Matthew 13:1-23	Exodus 20:13
<i>Pastoral Prayer</i>	Rev Timothy Ki	Rev Timothy Ki
<i>Sermon Message</i>	<i>Parable of the Sower</i>	<i>The Sixth Commandment – Smoking/Drinking</i>
<i>Closing Hymn *</i>	RHC 328 – “How Firm a Foundation”	RHC 419 – “Take My Life and Let It Be”
<i>Benediction / 3-Fold Amen *</i>	Rev Timothy Ki	Rev Timothy Ki
<i>Postlude</i>	<i>The Lord Bless You</i>	<i>Lord Dismiss Us (stanzas 1 & 4)</i>

* Congregation Stands

THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE

The Lord is in His holy temple,
The Lord is in His holy temple:
Let all the earth keep silence,
Let all the earth keep silence before Him -
Keep silence, keep silence before Him. Amen.

DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

GLORIA PATRI

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, Amen.

THE LORD BLESS YOU

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord lift His countenance upon you,
and give you peace, and give you peace;
The Lord make His face to shine upon you,
And be gracious unto you, be gracious,
The Lord be gracious, gracious unto you. Amen.

Church Theme 2011 – “Continue in the Word” – 2 Timothy 3:14

REFORMATION:

PROGNOSIS, PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

Introduction

Jeremiah 6:16 says, *'Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.'* 494 years have passed since Martin Luther posted the 95 theses on the door of Wittenberg church on the 31 October 1517. Time has an uncanny effect on man's puny memories and a great part of evangelical Protestantism has conveniently forgotten this historic event of the 16th century Reformation. There is a dire need to revisit it and renew our interest in the spiritual significance and historic value of this momentous event for all Christians. Today we need a reinvigorated fervour and insight and a sobering rehearsal of this historic event for the cause of Christ in these last perilous days of effectual gospel witness and the vigilant defence of the most holy faith.

Prognosis of the Historical Background

In the Church of the Middle Ages, the Christian community experienced a period of wide-spread spiritual and moral corruption and bankruptcy in its religious life, practicing the deadly sins of pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger and sloth. There were great spiritual and moral declension and abuses among the clergy and the church was in a absolute spiritual stupor and the adverse effects were finally felt after many centuries. This was noted at the Council of Constance, where prelates and cardinals attempted to combat declension and corruption in the Church, beginning in 1414 when 3 so called popes were vying for the same top position. They tried to resolve this and finally had to call a council to address these intractable problems. At about the same time, John Huss (c 1372-1415), a God honouring Bohemian pastor and reformer, was unjustly excommunicated for his biblical preaching and teaching of the word and was forced to go to Constance for trial supposedly under the safe conduct of the Emperor Sigismund. The Bishops of Constance imprisoned him despite the failure to prove the so called 'errors' in his pamphlets. The Council unfairly condemned him to the stake, a death he suffered courageously in 1415 and in the process, revived Bohemia. Other devout Christian leaders, such as the English Professor, John Wycliffe, who stood against transubstantiation and translated the English bible from the Latin vulgate, Savonarola, Jerome of Prague and Hus had urged Christians to return to the Scriptures for a true renewal of Christian faith and life. The Waldenses of the 13th century are faithful Christians and Thomas Kempis summoned believers to follow Jesus, through his reflections in his **Imitation of Christ** (c 1418). After the Council of Constance, the call for reform grew even more insistent and intense and there was no turning back.

Personalities and Performance

Martin Luther (1483-1546), a man called of God for such a time as this, became a divine catalyst for what is called the 16th century Protestant Reformation today. Martin Luther was a miner's son who later became an Augustinian monk after his theological training. He was born at a time when the Church, under Pope Alexander VI of the Borgia family, was in a spiritual decline. To rebuild Rome's pristine church, Pope Leo X was involved in the sale of indulgences (or forgiveness tickets) for the remission of all sins both on earth as in purgatory. The sale of these indulgences by professional monks like Johann Tetzel, with much of the profit going for to the building of St Peter's Basilica in Rome by Pope Leo X, was a financial scandal in reality. About the same time, Luther providentially developed a deep anxiety about his own salvation and attempted to purify himself with good works, even kneeling on the stairs of St. Peter to do penance for his sins but to no avail. His rediscovery of the truth came suddenly in his reflection on Paul's letter to the Romans that the 'just shall live by faith' in the unmerited grace of God shown in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:16-17). Although Paul was known in the Church, his central message of the unmerited graciousness of God had been neglected by the church for centuries. Luther was regenerated by the Spirit of God and he expressed his insights publicly in the 95 Theses that were then posted for debate. He did not know that it would turn out to be a worldwide rallying point that would convulse Europe in a great spiritual awakening by the will of God. In 1520, he also wrote these widely read tracts, printed on the new presses that had previously made the Bible and pamphlets available to the public.

James Hutchinson Smylie (in "A brief history of the Presbyterians") added that these tracts included **An Address to Christian Nobility**, which urged nobles to join in the reform of the Church; the **Babylonian Captivity of the Church**, which attacked the Church's sacramental system that deny the Christian of the true benefits of the glorious gospel of Christ; and the **Christian Liberty**, in which Luther proclaimed the freedom of Christians from a works' righteousness, to freedom in God's promises to those who live by grace and by faith alone. Because of his teachings, Luther was summoned to the city of Worms for trial in April 1521, which was presided over by Emperor Charles V. In his defence, Luther appealed to the Scriptures, under which authority both of his powerful adversaries, the Emperor and the Pope, professed to live. He held that unless he was proven wrong by the scriptures, 'I shall not and cannot recant, so help me God". Tradition also suggested that he exclaimed, **'Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.'** Luther, who was supposed to face certain death ironically was not harmed although he was declared a heretic and condemned for 21 days by the Emperor. He was to be hunted by the forces of the Emperor but mysteriously, he was kidnapped, hidden and protected by the Elector Frederick the Wise, in Wartburg castle for 10 months under the name of George. The hymn, a Mighty Fortress is our God was composed by Luther as a result of this incident.

The magisterial reformers of the age included Luther, Calvin, Knox of Scotland and Tyndale of England and Zwingli stood for **a spiritual renewal and reformation of the medieval church that was steeped in superstition, lifeless ceremonies, rituals and tradition.** They returned to the authority and perspicuity, sufficiency to Holy Scriptures as the bedrock and foundation of our faith and rediscover true freshness and vitality of the written word that was missing in the medieval church then. They found the doctrines of saving **grace in justification by faith** (not by works), **the universal priesthood of believers** (not through the confessional box of a celibate priesthood), the **authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures** (not through the decrees of synods and encyclicals of a man). Their new found faith that was lost for almost 1,000 years liberated souls by the triumphant and living faith in Christ alone. This spread all over Western Europe from Germany to Switzerland, England, Scotland, France and Holland and some of the Scandinavian countries by the end of the 16th century. A historic meeting at the Diet of Worms in April 1521 sealed this irreconcilable differences between the newly formed Reformation party and the established Roman Catholic Church. The Reformation was on good footing to fully realize its doctrinal and practical implications and it was unstoppable.

The Benefits of the Reformation

The Reformation was a blessing to Europe for it brought about benefits like **universal literacy and education.** This is made all the more important because of the availability of the Bible and the expanding learning of those years. Calvin was trained with profound medieval learning during the Renaissance and his skills were greatly used of God to write the Institutes of the Christian religion in 1536 and other bible commentaries. (The Reformers considered the teacher among the Church offices sanctioned in the Scripture.) **All believers, the Reformed held, should have access to the Scriptures, the rule of faith, life and learning and were called to serve God with all the gifts of divine grace.** Therefore, Calvin and his followers stressed universal education which included reading the Bible. In Geneva, for example, the Ecclesiastical Ordinances ruled that the "youth should be faithfully instructed." This included poor youths and women, who were to receive elementary education. This was a small but important step in the advancement of women's lives. Calvin participated in this process and led in the revival of Geneva with the practice of strict ecclesiastical discipline under the Presbyterian polity. Traumatic changes that took place in Geneva during Calvin's life, brought about by the higher hand of God where his supposedly one day stay in Geneva turned into 25 years of service when he was challenged by William Farel. The Reformed tradition stimulated the mind of believers to the economic benefit of the western society and the world at large. The protestant work ethic was soon all over Europe which fuelled its spiritual and economic development and progress for centuries.

The Reformation made a significant contribution in the political reforms primarily through the participation of people in representative constitutional governments. Civil magistracy is a gift of God to encourage just and compassionate human behaviour and to discourage and restrain evil. The Reformers knew from their studies of the Greek and Roman classics and through history. James Hutchinson Smylie in "A brief history of the Presbyterians" says, "The various forms of government and their dangers – monarchy and tyranny (the rule of one), aristocracy and oligarchy (the rule of the few), democracy and mobocracy (the rule of the mob). They moved toward a participatory and representative system of government in ecclesiastical matters as well as in the political sphere. They advocated a combination of democracy with an aristocracy of merit as the best form of government."

The Presbyterian form of church polity was introduced as a biblical model of church governance. This form would provide the proper checks and balances to control our depraved tendency to draw to our own interests and to promote civic responsibility. **This will be a precursor to the democratic parliamentary systems in various forms today.**

Reformation Up To Date

Today after almost half a century, nothing much has changed except that the tone and tactics of the medieval church is more conciliatory. The Lutheran Church had signed a pact in August 2000 to be reconciled to Rome with no substantive theological concessions. The ECT of 1994 and 1997 embrace the dogma of Rome again without having settled the basic theological differences between the two churches. The world's ecumenical movement has included the new age, the charismatic movement and the questionable alpha course which helped to cement ties and bond the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches even closer together. There are more voices in support in a superficial organizational unity at the expense of truth, thus preserving a vital spiritual heritage of the reformed faith of our fathers who defended the truth with their lives. Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:15 warns, *"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."* Paul warns clearly in Act 20:28-31, *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."*

There is a greater peril of surrendering our spiritual heritage and foundation to accommodate and placate the increasing demands of Rome for a united religion first to prepare for the way of the anti-Christ regime. The World Council of Churches has increased tremendously in influence and membership over the past 63 years and fundamental, reformed churches are under duress to join and accommodate them. Yet 2 Chronicles 19:2 says, *"And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD."*

Analysis of the Problems

The Reformation was not without problems. There were setbacks and obstacles as seen in a few incidents.

Firstly, **it was the peasants revolt of 1523** that adversely affected the good name of the Reformation. Luther had to come out publicly and denounced the violence due to zealots and overly excited followers who attacked and burned buildings and rebelled against the authorities physically. **Extreme zeal and fanaticism will not have a positive contribution to the cause of Christ** and some are guilty of it today with excessive fervour not according to true knowledge (Rom 10:1, 2).

Secondly, it is the **disunity between the German and Swiss Reformation** by the disagreement between Luther and Zwingli at the Marburg Colloquy of 1529.

The division was so sharp and divisive that they parted angrily over one issue of the Lord's Supper (agreeing on 14 others) and adversely affected the united front and effectiveness of the Reformation Movement. It need not end this way but the sovereignty of God had allowed it. The wrath of men will not work out the righteousness of God and we must remember that today and not make the same mistake again.

Thirdly, there was a sad incident in the Swiss Reformation when Zwingli took part in the military battle of 1531 and was killed prematurely, leaving Bullinger his successor to continue the Reformation. From hindsight, it was not necessary to be engaged in physical combat to address the cause of Christ. Satan has often successfully undermined our genuine efforts to serve the Lord by extremism and fanaticism which has often divided the church but we acknowledge that the hand of God permitted this to happen. These are humbling and sobering lessons for us today as we must contend for the faith in the right manner and failure to do so will give Satan a foot hold to destroy and divide us to our detriment and to the loss of our effective witness for Christ to the world. These can be serious consequences of our times.

There are also other issues with regards to the different styles of the Reformers, vestments in the Anglican Church, and the controversial way in which Michael Servetus, the heretic and the Anabaptists were dealt with for some. But each has to be examined carefully in its proper context to get the full and correct perspective. It only reminds us that we need always to be prayerful, patient and humble and to always seek the will of God and keep close to God's leading in doing God's work.

There are graver dangers ahead of us in this 21st century as the last days come to a close. The world is in favour of a one world religion that will support a world global order run by one supreme world leader who has political and economic, military, religious backing and power (2 Thess 2:7-21). **Persecution of Christians is on the increase** as many are intolerant of the Christian faith as reported in some incidents in Malaysia and Indonesia and Iran recently.

The world's leader (Anti-Christ which will precede Christ temporally in world dominion and power in the last days) will bring false peace and impress many and finally, will persecute the church through the later part of the seven years of tribulation if the Lord tarries. Those will be extremely difficult days of great testing and we are to be strong and vigilant with patience and perseverance of the Lord in those final moments of human history (Mat 24:1-24).

Possibilities Ahead

Is the Reformation really over with the peace treaty of Westphalia in 1648? Probably not. There is still much to be done today in the face of what had happened in the past and present. Firstly, there is still a grave need to continue to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints and to propagate the pure gospel and to defend the word in a world of liberalism, atheism and agnosticism. The issues of rising worldwide ecumenical evangelism (i.e. Alpha Course used by the Roman Catholics), the new age movement and biblical separation is still needed with regard to the New Age, Charismatic and ecumenical Movements, as well as the cult and occultic influences. There is spiritual and moral compromise as epitomised in the Lutheran Accord of 1999 and ECT of 1997.

Secondly, Hosea 4:6 says, *'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.'* **The church needs to be knowledgeable of the truth as ignorance is not bliss.** The Reformation stood for the profound knowledge of the Word and its liberating saving impact in the Church, family, personal lives and we desperately need a renewal of the same today. Are you rooted and grounded properly in the Word of God today in the true spirit of the Reformers or do the sensational, temporal gifts, healing services and so called miracles excite and rule your lives? **We need to build up sound reformed churches and families grounded and rooted in the Word of God and in the reformed faith.**

Conclusion

Philippians 1:27 says, *'Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.'* We need to seek the Lord for godly discretion and pray for courage, perseverance and prudent discernment in these days and be willing to declare, defend and preach the pure and unadulterated gospel while there is yet freedom and opportunities. We are not to be slack but fervent and faithful in these days of trials and compromise. Matt 24:14 says, *"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."* May the Lord preserve and strengthen us and give us the boldness and tenacity to be faithful to Christ till the very end in trying, uncertain and perilous end times.

DrJack Sin

(NB. For deeper studies, read Robert Godfrey, **Reformation Sketches**, 2003 and James Hutchinson Smylie, "A Brief history of the Presbyterians" 1996)

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our **worship services** begin promptly at **11.00 am** and **4.00 pm**.

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

APPOINTMENTS FOR THE WEEK			WELCOME
Fri 04 Nov	7:30pm	Young Adults Fellowship	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Phoebe Choo, Theresa Nadi and Lingwei Ko to our worship services last Lord's Day.
Sat 05 Nov	4:00pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study	
<i>Next Lord's Day</i>			
	<i>Morning Service</i>	<i>Evening Service</i>	LORD'S DAY DUTIES
<i>Preacher</i>	Dr Stephen Scott-Pearson	Dr Stephen Scott-Pearson	TODAY: 30/10/2011
<i>Message</i>	TBC	TBC	<i>Chairman:</i> John
<i>Text</i>	TBC	TBC	<i>Organist:</i> Anthony
NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS			<i>Pianist:</i> Joy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday Pre-Lunch Bible Study: Pastor Ki will continue the series of studies on "The Doctrine of the Church." • Ladies Fellowship will take place after lunch today: Please see Sis. May Chew for more information. • Saturday Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Come and join us to pray and to study God's Word. • Pray for those who are sick: Douglas, Barbara, Prema, Eld Ford, Lydia, Margaret, May Chew, Brian, Constance, Deborah Sherwood, Jonathan's father, Avi, Mrs Ki, Lai Kheng. • Pray for those who are/will be on travel: Sonia, Pastor & Mrs Ki. • Pray for those seeking employment: Yetta, Rachael. 			<i>Ushers:</i> Jonathan / Tom
			<i>Sunday School:</i> Hannah / Joy
			<i>Lunch:</i> Maureen
			<i>Washing Up:</i> Volunteers
			<i>PA Crew:</i> Lee Wei
Worship Service Collections - Last Sunday: £643.30, Lunch: £64.50			<u>NEXT WEEK: 06/11/2011</u>
Attendance - Morning: 34 (A) 3 (C), Evening: 27 (A) 3 (C)			<i>Chairman:</i> Jonathan
SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 96			<i>Organist:</i> Anthony
<p>Q: What is the Lord's Supper?</p> <p><i>A: The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his DEATH is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are – not after a corporal and carnal manner – but by faith made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Lord's Supper is so called because it is a feast instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is likewise called the Communion. The outward act in it is eating bread and drinking wine, according to Christ's appointment; and the inward meaning of it is the sacrifice of Christ – the broken bread telling of his broken body, and the poured-out wine telling of his shed blood. In itself it is of no value whatsoever, but when received <i>in faith</i> it quickens our love to God, deepens our faith in Christ, and promotes the welfare of our souls. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the bread in the Communion is changed into the <i>actual flesh</i> of our Lord; but this is an error. We can only receive Christ by faith.</p> <p><u>Proofs:</u></p> <p>1 Corinthians 11:23, 1 Corinthians 10:16</p>			<i>Pianist:</i> Joy
			<i>Ushers:</i> John / Evelyn
			<i>Sunday School:</i> Hannah / Joy
			<i>Lunch:</i> Maureen
			<i>Washing Up:</i> Volunteers
MEMORY VERSE			<i>PA Crew:</i> Brian
<p style="text-align: center;">Last Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Psalm 46:6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Psalm 46:7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Next Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Psalm 46:8</p>			