



NEW LIFE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

44 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6NN

Charity No. 1060655

Tel: 020 7328 0869 (Manse)

Email: newlifebplondon@yahoo.co.uk

Website: www.newlifebpc.org.uk

Supervisory Pastor: Rev Lim Chee Boon

Email: pastor@newlifebpc.org.uk

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

Vol. 28 No. 43

LORD'S DAY 27 OCTOBER 2024

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Morning Service – 11am

Prelude

The Lord Is in His Holy Temple

Call to Worship

Psalm 36:5-7

*Opening Hymn **

RHC 47 - "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

Opening Prayer

John Poh

Responsive Reading

Psalm 123

*Second Hymn **

Psalm 123

(to the tune of Bethlehem, RHC 15)

Scriptural Text

John 15:9-17

Pastoral Prayer

Eld George Chew

Sermon Message

Love in Friendship

*Closing Hymn **

A New Commandment (Insert)

*Benediction/3-Fold Amen **

Eld George Chew

Postlude

The Lord Bless You

** 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.

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.

SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 28

Q: Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?

A: Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day

Comments:

Exaltation means a rising from meanness to greatness. Christ's exaltation consists in the following

particulars: 1. In rising from the dead; 2. In ascending up into heaven; 3. In sitting at God's right hand; 4. In being appointed to judge the world. This is the state in which our Saviour is now

Scriptural Reference:

Matthew 28:6, Mark 16:19, Matthew 25:31-32

REMEMBERING THE HISTORIC LEGACIES OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

Introduction

The Background to the Reformation

The Protestant Reformation movement was divinely timed in one of the most remarkable periods of European history. The taking of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in the middle of the fifteenth century had dispersed the literary treasures and the scholars of that rich and learned city all over Europe. Men began studying diligently the old Latin and Greek language, and they read the New Testament in the original languages in which it had been written and Western World was eager to be taught their ancient Hebrew tongue as they studied the Old Testament writings. A whole world of new thoughts in poetry, philosophy, and sacred literature was then opened before the men in Europe of the period which preceded the Reformation.

The discovery of America by Columbus in 1492 not only revolutionized trade and commercial enterprise, but fired the imagination of Europe. The Printing Press was invented by Johannes Gutenberg in 1455 in Germany and the dissemination of reformation doctrine was sped up all over the European world. It was the dawning of a new era of learning and intellectual and spiritual knowledge grew with progress. **This era is commonly called the Renaissance which started in the middle of the 13th century preceding the Great Protestant Reformation was divinely timed of God.**

As we commemorate the 507th Anniversary of the 16th Century Protestant Reformation, we need to ask the crucial basic question of why the Reformation took place and whether it is over and if is a need to continue today in the spirit of that Reformation.

Causes of the Reformation

Why was there a Reformation in the first place? One of the reasons why the Reformation happened was due to the **rediscovery of the attractiveness of the pure gospel**. After the Renaissance (13th to 15th centuries), the minds of the people in Europe were opened to the searching of the arts, literature, and ancient works. People in Europe began to question the teachings and practices of the established church. Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, the humanist scholar, by the sovereign hand of God did the church a great favour by the edition of the Greek New Testament in 1516 from which many worthy translations of the bible in different languages will be based upon in the 16th-18th century. Men like Thomas Bilney, Luther and others read the New Testament first hand and began to discover for themselves the spiritual vitality and beauty that was lacking in the medieval church. They could not contain this great spiritual excitement in rediscovering the watershed doctrine of justification by faith alone. It gives meaning, purpose and life to the Church and the Church was invariably revived. Is this prized heritage something to be jettisoned overnight? We need to pray for wisdom and discernment, ponder carefully and not barter Truth for peace to our detriment in these hazardous times.

The Middle Ages was a time of **theological declension and falling away of the church**. The worship of relics, saints, indulgences, mass, ceremonies, rosaries, and works reigned supreme in the hearts of the ordinary people in the church for 1,000 years. John Wycliffe, a Pre-Reformer in the 14th century, asked an English commoner how he hoped to go to heaven, and he replied that his priest had assured him that he could buy his way to heaven. That would probably be the average answer you would get from most people living during those pathetic times of the dark ages. The Reformation broke that spiritual yoke and bondage from a work-for-your-salvation religion, and restored the doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ alone (Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5, Rom 1:17). **Justification by faith alone, the authority and sufficiency of the bible and the universal priesthood of believers were the touchstones of the movement**

Today, the New Age Movement and other religious movements (ie cults and occult) have generally this theme in mind: we have to placate the gods with "good life and the works of our hands," and we are ourselves gods too (cf. Gen 3:5). Protestant Christianity stands radically different from the rest. Jesus says, in John 14:6, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

The clergy of the Middle Ages were blind spiritual guides and their unmarried monks were often guilty of moral excesses, corruption, gluttony and other social wiles. The people were starved spiritually and frustrated. Like

what Isaiah said, they waited for light (Isa 59:9). The Waldenses (started by Peter Waldo) like John the Baptist, preceded the way of truth and light in the Pre-Reformation days of the 12th and 13th centuries, but were mercilessly persecuted and martyred. But the sovereign Lord had predestined a time for revival. and they later joined the reformation

The Reformation changed the **role of the clergy**. Luther called himself a pastor, not a priest, because the Bible teaches the universal priesthood of believers (1 Pet 2:9). He would hear no auricular confession before a confessional box. For the first time, after more than 1,000 years, priests would be redundant in the church for those who know Christ Jesus personally. Every man is to pray directly to his God because of Christ Jesus, our only Mediator (1 Tim 2:5). Luther and Calvin (and others) got married and started the Christian family living in a covenant home. Children were catechised and brought up in the fear and nurture of the Word. Celibacy was never a burden the Lord meant His servants to bear (1 Tim 3:1–5).

The late medieval times became a period of enormous interest in Christianity. People flocked to Wittenberg and Geneva to hear Luther and Calvin; and Zwingli in Zurich (Knox was also influencing Scotland in no small way later). The success of Tetzl, Rome's super salesman of indulgences, (ie forgiveness tickets to clear purgatory for loved ones) sanctioned by Pope Leo X for the rebuilding of St. Peter's Church for Rome, diminished as the enlightened people realised that forgiveness is rich and free in Christ Jesus alone, and not a commodity that can be bought in the 'spiritual' marketplace. The financial corruption and spiritual deception by the church officials of the church was finally over. It would never be the same again after the 16th century revelation through the God initiated Protestant Reformation.

The Reformation brought home the **importance of Christian education**. In the medieval times, only the priests were educated. Now, every true believer needs to understand his new-found faith. The Bible is to be given to them in their own vernacular language, and they are to read it, relish and apply it. One of the great ideas of the Reformation was to unravel the enormous wealth of Holy Scriptures and have it savoured by the common people. We thank God for the works of Luther, Wycliffe, Tyndale and others for their legacy. Calvin encouraged theological learning in Geneva, and soon John Knox of Scotland and others came from afar to study in Geneva college. With the invention of the moveable type printing press by Johann Guttenberg in 1454–1455 (a divine provision), literature could be duplicated quickly and disseminated all over Europe. The development of exegetical works, commentaries and biblical theological text books like *Calvin's Institutes* flooded Europe. These relieved the people of erroneous and heretical preaching and practices all those years. The Reformers' motto was "Back to the Scriptures," recommended to the Western world in all their writings.

(The Reformation is one of the most life-shaping and life-changing movements in modern history.) Biblical illiteracy of the common people for so many centuries was finally over. 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 regained its true sense of spiritual direction and rediscovered the real dynamics of the early Church in expository preaching and right observance of the sacraments, true worship and prayer, and evangelical repentance. It was almost a second Pentecost revival initiated by the Holy Spirit that revolutionised the world. that singularly altered the course of European history and drastically changed the spiritual landscape of western continental Europe

Why was there a Reformation? Because **there was a lost gospel to be rediscovered in all its fullness.** Because the Church had veered off from the straight and narrow way of the Lord. The Reformation gave us important bearings, landmarks and pertinent lessons to address today's issues and problems with the inspiration and the relevant resources of the past.

We need four things today and always.

1. A Reformed and Transformed Mind

"The just shall live by faith" (Rom 1:17). That gave Luther a new heart in the truth of Holy Scriptures. We need a new spirit to pursue and defend the truth. Salvation belongs to the Lord alone (Titus 2:10), not to man or works. I am convinced that one of the battlefields today is the mind (Phil 4:8). God has given to us a sound mind (2 Tim 1:7), and we must strive to understand and know what and why we believe. Emotions must not

take centre-stage in our lives, understanding of the Scriptures should be instead. Paul speaks of the renewing of the mind (Rom 12:1–2) that comes about as a result of knowing and applying God’s Word, and “*bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*” (2 Cor 10:5). We need to discipline our minds with the word of God and not the seductive pictures in the movies web portals and worldly magazines of today

Children of the Reformation are single-hearted. **It is a heart dominated exclusively by one principle, love for God, His Kingdom, His cause, His Church and His Truth. It is a heart of discernment and evangelical obedience to God’s Word.** It is submission to the will of God and total reliance on the finished work of Christ alone at Calvary. It is a disciplined, vigilant and diligent mental spirit to advance the cause of Christ against all foes. An informed and reformed mind must pervade every Christian today.

2. A Reformed Covenant Home

The Reformation literally reformed and transformed the Christian home. With Luther and Katherine von Bora’s marriage (Calvin and Idelette, and others also), they started catechising the children and had regular family worship. It was unheard of for a priest to have a wife, let alone have children at home. The Reformers blazed the trail of the setting up of a covenant relationship at home. It was an example for others on how to raise children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. The English Reformers and Puritans taught their children the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Shorter Catechism of Westminster and the Bible and many children and youths came to know Christ as Saviour and Lord at a tender age.

Do we fill our children with the Word and prayer or are their minds filled with the things of the world only? The average family, the most basic building block of our society, is under siege by the adversary today. There is an increase in divorce, recalcitrant children and irresponsible parents. The English Reformers paid great attention to giving domestic instruction to their children. Families are destroyed by a lack of knowledge of God’s Word and spiritual fidelity to God first and then to each other. Today we need a reformation of the family, from worldly values and earthly pursuits to holiness, godliness and the principles of the Reformed faith found in God’s Word. Moses advised in Deuteronomy 6:6–7,

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Let godly fathers and mothers follow the examples of the Reformation forebears, and protect and preserve the sanctity, vitality and harmony of the Christian home in the midst of the demise of the homes wrecked by divorces, spousal violence and teenage rebellion (Ps 127:1). Where the Christ-centred home is, the fear and worship of God will be there also.

3. A Reformed and revived Church

What about the church that we are worshipping in? Is it a separated, gospel-preaching and faith-defending Reformed Church.? Is it an assembly of saints that stands firmly on the doctrines of grace taught in the Scriptures and will not compromise nor barter it for anything? **Is it a redeemed community jealously guarding, protecting and defending the precious tenets of true religion, especially the vital issues concerning salvation, and the authority, inerrancy, verbal inspiration, sufficiency and perspicuity of God’s Word? The motto of the Church should be “reformed yet reforming.**

There is to be a sense of spiritually measured militancy and urgency for the propagation of sound biblical doctrines, unadulterated with worldly ideas and human philosophies. No New Age teachings, Alpha course, the passion of the Christ movie, the prophetic and dancing movement of the charismatic churches and secular psychology and man centred church growth techniques, ecumenical or humanistic or modernistic, liberal wisdom, or the ECT of 1994 (Evangelical Catholic Together) theology should rob us of the Truth again. The Church of Christ must stand firmly on this and not waver, compromise or be ignorant in the tumultuous days ahead.

We need the gumption and tenacity just like the Reformers to propagate and advance gospel truth without fear and favour of men. Being human, we are vulnerable to deception and falsehood and a vigilant and discerning church is the answer. Truth can be lost by wickedness as well as weakness. The days will be few when men will endure sound teaching and biblical truth. Our time to preach the gospel is soon running out, with the imminent coming of Christ (Titus 2:13; Rev 22:12, 20) In the midst of wars and disasters and calamities

and the signs of the times. The Church of Christ must continue steadfast and faithful to preach, teach, contend and defend the most holy faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

4. A Reformed Expository Preaching and teaching of the word

The 16th Century Reformation was accompanied by strong and uncompromising doctrinal expository preaching of the Word of God. Luther, Calvin, Knox and Zwingli were gifted and eloquent preachers and teachers of the Holy Scriptures. They wasted no time in sharing with the masses what they discovered from the canonical Scriptures, as opposed to traditions and church councils. Today, we desperately need a return to God-honouring and cross-centred biblical preaching, without the fear and favour of men, and with the power and unction from above. John Robbins of the Trinity Foundation has commented aptly here:

Biblical preaching is preaching that declares the whole counsel of God and not just snippets from that counsel. Most “evangelical” congregations are starving, living hand to mouth from the crumbs that fall from the pulpits. Neither the preachers nor the congregations suspect that there is a system of doctrine in Scripture, a system so rich and satisfying that no one need starve or go hungry, a system built upon the revelation of Jesus Christ alone, a system that answers all questions, and supplies all needs. “Evangelical” preachers have rejected the idea that the Bible is sufficient, and its corollary, the sufficiency of Christ. They deny that the Gospel is the power of God to salvation. They are careless so-called shepherds, betraying the trust of their Lord and their sheep. Many of them are false shepherds, preaching only the doctrines and commandments of men.

The power of the Gospel to salvation is implicitly denied and the Gospel itself dishonoured by such ministerial machinations and man centred methods. Psychological manipulation has become the substitute for the power of the Gospel in many churches today.

The Gospel is not merely a gate to Christianity; it is the narrow road as well. It is the focus and centre of Christian doctrine and worship. Paul’s determination in preaching must be ours: To know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified (*The Trinity Review, September 1999, 3*).

Conclusion

Before the Reformation, **The solid and in-depth exposition of the gospel has been replaced by the superficial and shallow homilies in many modern churches. Preaching is often theatrical, melodramatic, entertaining and emotional and some musical or dramatic man pleasing entertainment and dancing as well. Its focus is personal experience.** The congregation is often regaled with the psychological theories and life experiences of men and other banter that pander to the itching ears of some.

Worldly advice and psychological tips (ie positive thinking, self esteem and the latest teaching healing in the Lord;s Supper by local mega church pastor) are propagated from the pulpit, and from the seminaries as though they are biblical truths today, to unsuspecting gullible members and friends. A church devoid of sound biblical doctrinal preaching with have members who are spiritually malnourished and emaciated, and vulnerable to falsehood and heresies. which is what we are witnessing today in many churches. We need to return to the doctrine and practices of the old paths the historic Reformation and relive the legacies it had bequeath upon us today

Rev Jack Sin
Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church

(For Bibliography see William Webster, *The Gospel of the Reformation, WA; Christian Resource, Inc, 1997*, B K Kuiper, *The Church in History*, Eerdmans Publishing, 1991 and Philp Schaff, *Church Through the Centuries*, Zondervan Publishers 1996)

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our Lord's Day activities begin with the **Worship Service** at **11.00 am** followed by a **Bible Study** at **1:30pm**. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear Worshippers, we extend a warm welcome to you this Lord's Day. We hope that you have a blessed time of worship with us today.

For those unable to attend Church in person, please join our Worship Service and Bible Study on our live-stream via YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/@NewLifeBPCLondon>

We thank God for providing Eld George Chew to minister to us this Lord's Day. Next Lord's Day, our speaker will be Rev Mark Chen.

Tithes & Offerings – There is an offering box at the entrance to the Church Sanctuary for you to place your offerings in.

Children's Sunday School – held after the After-Service Fellowship at 1:30pm.

After-Service Fellowship – Join us for lunch fellowship after the morning worship service. Please bring your own lunch as only drinks will be provided.

Afternoon Bible Study – Eld Chew the study entitled "Parables of the Lost" with the scriptural reference taken from Luke 15:1-32.

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week

"And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart."

Jeremiah 24:7

This Week

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

John 15:9-10

Pre-cautions for Worship Services held at the church premises:

Dear all,

When attending the church Worship Service and Bible Study, we will continue to observe the following precautions:

- We continue to urge those who feel unwell (especially with Covid symptoms) to stay home and join us online.
- Please place your offerings in the offering box when entering or exiting the church.
- During worship services, please continue to sit with your own households.

To join our online services or for more information, please visit the church website (www.newlifebpc.org.uk) or call the church manse (020 73280869).

With the Lord's blessing,

John Poh & Jonathan Kim,
Task Force Members