

SERMON NOTES: OCT. 27
SCRIPTURE READINGS...I PETER 2: 4-10, MATTHEW 28: 16-20

THE FUTURE CHURCH...on Reformation Sunday, we glance back even as we look forward. It has been predicted that the future Church will be vastly different. History won't matter; denominations will be irrelevant; our Presbyterian heritage could fade away. It raises a troubling issue: if people don't know WHERE THEY'VE BEEN, how will THEY KNOW WHO THEY ARE? Will future Christians make up their beliefs as they go? Will they bear any resemblance to Jesus.

HOW WE GOT HERE...we are here because others paved the way; they put their faith on the line; they built churches/schools/hospitals; and they traveled the globe doing missions. Famous people fill the CHURCH'S FAMILY ALBUM-Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox-who sparked the Protestant Reformation in Europe. God has always been DOING NEW THINGS or we'd all be observant Jews. It began with Jesus who refused to stay in a grave; he sent his Disciples out with a promise "I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS" They took his story VIRAL: the Jesus MOVEMENT was born; they got persecuted but stayed true to him. The movement had to go underground until...

In 312 AD Emperor Constantine became Christian: we came out of Hiding. Now the official religion, the POWER went to our heads

THE REFORM IMPULSE... two things happened that changed history: the invention of PRINTING PRESS, bibles got printed/read by laypeople; and Martin Luther, a German priest, got mad over abuses in the CATHOLIC HIERARCHY, nailed his 95 grievances on a Church door in Germany. His intent wasn't to destroy the Church but to reform it and return it to its core mission of serving Jesus. Within the Christian family, there has always been an impulse to reform itself.

WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY... today we retrace our Christian roots. Our family has had FIGHTS, formed DEMONINATIONS, split apart but it helped us to clarify what BEING A CHRISTIAN MEANS.

From an UNDERGROUND MOVMENT using code language to avoid detection; tiny house churches meeting in secret; Paul putting Christianity on the map; to the church becoming an institution.

We have a rich history, a heart for MISSIONS, a respect for traditions. Presbyterians do things orderly; we often discuss things to death. At our best, we let WHAT WE BELIEVE DRIVE WHAT WE DO.