

Slide 1



Slide 2

Zeal for your house
will consume me
John 1:17

New Reformation?

- Now that we have celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, is it time to notice that we are undergoing a New Reformation?

- I’m sure Pastor Dennis talked about some of these changes in recent years
- As with any talk of reform, the aim is to be more faithful to the mission of Jesus

Slide 3

New Reformation	
Old	New
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holy Roman Empire → Smaller state empires → Colonialism (Christendom)• New religion• Key words: faith (belief), grace, justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gradual separation of church and state → secular society → Post-Christendom• New Way of being human – Religionless / spirituality• Key words: faithfulness (discipleship), transformation, justice

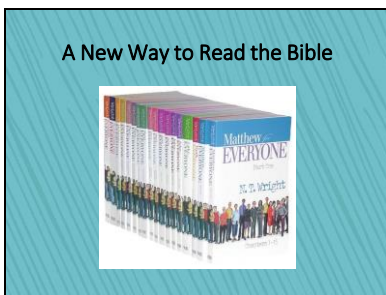
- In our increasingly secular age, we are becoming more aware of how the church became less faithful to the mission of Jesus when the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the imperial religion.
- Proposal: Jesus’ mission wasn’t even to start a new religion. It was to pioneer and launch a new way of being human. (Bonhoeffer, in prison, prophesied about the coming of a religionless Christianity, rooted in spirituality.
- The Reformation did not make the crucial changes to move the church away from its alliance with empires.

Slide 4

New Reformation – Leaders	
Old	New
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early: Martin Luther, John Calvin• Later: John Wesley, Menno Simons, Jonathan Edwards, Billy Graham	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early: Mahatma Gandhi, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Jr.• Later: Brian McLaren, Diana Butler Bass, William Barber III, Bishop Tom (N. T.) Wright

Gandhi, as a Hindu, might seem strange as a leader of the New Reformation, but not as shocking as a crucified Messiah to the Jews of Jesus’ day. As crucified, they saw him as outside their religion. Gandhi did not claim Christianity as his religion, but he did claim discipleship to Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, continuing Jesus’ movement of a new Way to be human which brings it into nonviolent conflict with the old ways of being human.

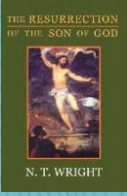
Slide 5



N. T. Wright is a pioneer in new ways to read the Bible that strive to be more faithful to Jesus’ new way of being human. He writes both immense, scholarly books that work out many of the details. But, as a leader in the church, he also writes very readable and inspiring books for the church at large. His New Testament for Everyone series is highly recommended.

Slide 6

A New Way to Read the Bible




- “Going to heaven when you die”
- Heaven, God’s Spirit, coming to earth in order to renew the whole creation
- New Creation
- “Eternal Life” = “Life in God’s New Age”

- To bring out the points of this slide, introduce his new book on Paul and read from the Introduction (pp. 7-8) on the change from “going to heaven when you die” to heaven coming to earth in launching New Creation.
- Briefly anticipate next week’s text on “eternal life” as “life in God’s new age.” Explain how Jewish thinking is in terms of differing historical ages on disobedience and obedience to God, now overlapping after Easter – instead of in terms of different places, earth and heaven.

Slide 7

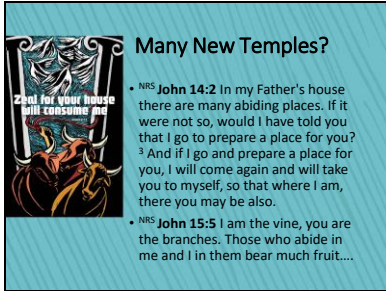
A New ‘Temple’



- **John 2:19** Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”²⁰ The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?”²¹ But he was speaking of the temple of his body.²² After was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

- Notice first in this Gospel story how Jesus’ action in the Temple is a forerunner to nonviolent resistance. The Temple represented the hub of political, economic, and cultural powers. Jesus was prophetically anticipating their fall.
- But the second part of this reading is the crucial one for us today: Jesus is proclaiming that the new place of God’s presence in the world is a human being.
- And that place would not be going away with his Ascension to the Father: no, his death and resurrection prepare many new places for God’s presence to abide in the world

Slide 8



Many New Temples?

- NRS **John 14:2** In my Father's house there are many abiding places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?
3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.
- NRS **John 15:5** I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit....

- . . . Giving us a very different way to read this familiar passage in John 14, commonly read at funerals. It is not about “going to heaven when we die.” It’s about Jesus preparing many new places for God’s presence to abide in this world as new temples: US! Disciples! That’s what all the “abide” language in John is all about. Jesus’ new Way of being human begins with God abiding in disciples in new ways. We are called to openness to Jesus living in us so that we bear fruit in the world, as God continues to make new the Creation.

Slide 9



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