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unfeelingly mouth the words to a psalm, but neither is he glorified when our hearts are artificially enflamed by the beauty (or volume!) of the music. This is why we call our musicians “accompanists”: they do not perform for our enjoyment, rather they serve and support the lyrics with fitting musical beauty that leads to authentic praise issuing from both the mind and the heart.

Singing unites our theology with our practice. Singing enacts our theology. It is the proper expression of our newness in Christ. We have become servants and worshipers of the great king, and what do servants and worshipers do but serve and worship! Imagine the disconnect of a person who claims to be grateful but never says “thank you.” Now imagine the disconnect of a person who professes faith in the risen Jesus but never rises to sing praises to him. Singing puts our money where our mouth is. We do not sing because we feel like worshipping God; we sing so that we might worship God! We often think of singing as an expression of our faith (which it is), but it may be better to think of it as the formation of our faith. By singing we become singing creatures; by worshipping we become worshipping beings. Dead theology fades away with a whimper, but living theology resounds in unending doxology!

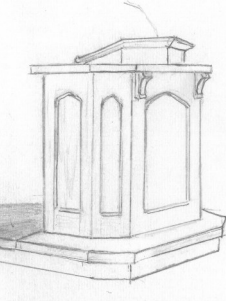
Singing unites the individual with the community. Lastly, singing forms us as a corporate body. We express our union with Christ and his body as we sing together: different voices,

singing different parts, coming together with one voice to worship our one head, the Lord Jesus Christ. The modern church has largely missed this point by emphasizing and celebrating solos and special music. Each of these expressions may have their place, but that place must be well shy of the esteemed place we give to corporate singing. Paul Jones explains the history: “The rise of the pop-music industry, particularly in the 1930’s to 1970’s, exalted the soloist (as well as bands) to previously unheard-of popularity...It was principally the influence of the superstar singing in American culture that brought soloists (as we think of them) into the church.” Professional singing may be more aesthetically pleasing (debatable), but it can never match the unifying effect of the simple, congregational song.

If I have convinced you of the formative power of song, then there is only one thing left to do: sing! We must fill our services with hearty, robust, heart-felt, and vibrant singing. We obey our king by worshipping as he commands: “Shout to God with loud songs of joy!” (Ps. 47:1) Sing like this, and you will be changed as the Spirit unites the disparate aspects of your life into an authentic expression of praise.

The Sacred Desk

By Rev. Jim Curtis



Pastor Sean hinted in the previous edition of the Sacred Desk that options for this edition were numerous. There, he reminded us of the sermon series up to September. Of course, we can now add to that list our upcoming Advent series on the promises of God (for which I am ecstatic, and I think you should be too). With all these options, another article on 1 Kings hardly seems the most tantalizing use of space—yet, it will prove most fruitful of the options.

As we have resumed this series, you may have noticed how much air time have been given to Jeroboam I. Only Ahab will surpass him in ink spilled, but not in lasting influence. Jeroboam will continue to ring out like a wretched bell, as it will be said of other kings:

“He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin which he made Israel to sin.” (1 Ki 15:34; see also 16:26, 31, 21:22, 22:52, 2 Ki 3:3... you get the idea).

You see, the problem is that David really was one in a million. Even Solomon in all his wisdom could not compare to David’s affection for the Lord. And Jeroboam? He just replicates what Solomon did: he builds cities (13:25), temples and altars (13:28–31), and offers sacrifices (13:4). Jeroboam is no innovator; he plagiarizes. Even his calves come from Aaron. His ingenuity to mix just enough truth with just enough lie, though, brings lasting consequences.

You doubtlessly remain befuddled as to the fruitfulness. Let me clarify: knowing history is a good thing, if for no other reason than we may avoid repeating it. But God gifted this history to us for a better reason, even if we find it a tough pill to swallow. Simply put, 1 Kings shows us the cycle will keep going and going and going until God decides to break it. This go-round, as it turns out, is not very merry.

Once we see this, I think we can begin to appreciate 1 Kings much more—along with Solomon’s circuitous route in Ecclesiastes, Paul’s laborious proof of sin in Romans 1–3, Peter’s bombastic principles of suffering for righteousness, and so much more. God has been gracious to let others give it the ol’ college try, so that he can show us just how much it does not work.

Preaching Schedule		
Date	Morning	Evening
Nov 2	Romans 3:9-20	Reformation Service
Nov 9	Romans 3:21-22a	1 Kings 16:8-28
Nov 16	Romans 3:22b-26	1 Kings 16:29-17:7
Nov 23	Romans 3:27-31	1 Kings 17:8-24
Nov 30	2 Peter 1:3-4	1 Kings 18:1-19
Dec 7	Exodus 34:6-7	
Dec 14	Isaiah 43:2	1 Kings 18:20-19:8
Dec 21	Psalms 34:10	1 Kings 19:9-21
Dec 28	TBD	

Online Church Directory

By David Livernois

The older I get the slower I am to incorporate newer technology into my life (ask my kids how long it took before I finally felt comfortable giving my phone permission to use the facial recognition feature to unlock it, or to add my debit card to my phone’s “digital wallet.”) My hesitation has not been as much about the lack of know-how when it comes to setting these features up (user guides these days are more and more user-friendly), and more about the unspoken question, “is it really worth the hassle?” After all, what is wrong with a good old plastic debit-card? And, how hard is it to type in a series of numbers to unlock my phone like I always have? But, when I finally consent to these technologies, I always end up asking another question- “Why have I not done this sooner?”

I suspect I am not alone in what I just described. And while it may be a bit presumptive, I wonder if a similar experience might be true of you if you have not started using *Breeze*, our online, member-only church directory app.

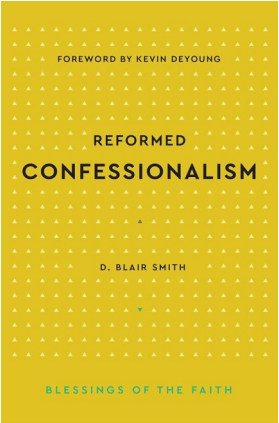
And this brings me to the point of this article: to make you a convinced *Breeze* user. Why? Because I still firmly believe *Breeze* can be a great blessing and benefit to you as a member of CRPC. So, allow me once more to highlight a few ways *Breeze* goes above and beyond the capabilities of a paper directory. First of all, with *Breeze*, all the familiar features of a traditional directory are still available, but each feature is enhanced. Take for instance one of the features we all love about traditional church directories, putting a face with a name (“who is Mr. so and so again..?”). When it comes to photos, each member can personally upload a picture of themselves, and update their picture as often as they would like. Members can also personally update their phone number, email address, and mailing address with ease whenever necessary. New members who join the church are also listed in the directory as soon as they join, and have access to the directory as well once they set up an account.

Additionally, while *Breeze* can be accessed using a desktop, laptop, or tablet, using the *Breeze* mobile app on your smartphone opens up even more convenient features. For example, looking up a number will give you the option to automatically call it simply by tapping the number. Likewise, when looking up an address, tapping the address will automatically pull it up for you on your phone’s GPS. Texting and email? You guessed it, all at the tap of a button from the same screen. Practically, these features are incredibly helpful for things like taking someone a meal, calling someone to check in with them and pray, driving to someone’s home for a shepherding group, or simply remembering someone’s name as the Lord adds to our number. And that’s just for starters.

Lastly, while *Breeze* has great and timely customer service, instead of calling or emailing a stranger for help with your questions, you can simply call or email the church office and I will be glad to personally walk you through the “how- to” of using the app— as many times as necessary!

Reformed Confessionalism —Review

By Micaiah Liner



A great woe of the fallen and sinful human condition is that of forgetfulness. Often, when we become overly familiar with a good thing, we fail to see its goodness in our lives. I am sure you can think of a whole host of ways this is true. When we think about a topic like reformed confessionalism, we might be tempted to glaze over a little bit. Indeed, it would be very easy to take for granted the many ways in which our spiritual lives are blessed and strengthened by something we do every Lord’s Day morning and evening. In *Reformed Confessionalism*, Dr. Blair Smith seeks to introduce his reader to the great treasures found in our confessional documents.

The book begins with definitions, helping to distinguish between creeds, confessions, and catechisms. From there it moves to consider their historical background; specifically, the challenges faced by the Church throughout the ages. Smith shows how the unfortunate occurrence of heresy in the Church has often been the catalyst for those creeds and confessions we are most familiar with today.

Some have critiqued confessionalism as being dry, even lifeless. But Smith shows that, when practiced well, confessionalism ultimately enlivens a church’s worship and strengthens the bond of unity among her members. Of particular note is the way confessionalism broadens our theology beyond the specific areas of faith and theology which interest us. Confessional documents help to remind us that God and his Word preside over every part of our lives, producing in us a more mature faith. Another blessing is that these time-tested confessions provide an anchor for us in turbulent times. They continually draw us back to the truths of the Bible, which transcend whatever cultural storm is raging at the moment.

The book concludes with a thorough Q&A section that addresses a variety of questions and objections. This section would prove particularly helpful in discussions with friends and family curious or doubtful of the Reformed tradition.

This book is essential reading for anyone new to (or interested in) a Confessional church. It is brief, easy-to-read, and enlightening. It also serves as a reminder of how good it is when these enduring confessional documents are embraced and cherished as a regular part of our spiritual diet.

Even as we approach this Lord’s Day, let us remember that we confess the most wonderful truths known to man. We confess faith in the Triune God, who has redeemed sinners, and has graciously given us this great purpose: “to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

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Formed By Singing

By Rev. Sean McCann

Going to church on vacation is an adventure, is it not? We try to find a good Presbyterian church to worship with, but that is not always available. We have joined Baptists, Lutherans, and Anglicans over the years, and experienced the variety of singing and music that American Protestantism has to offer! One service stands out from the rest, not due to the singing, but rather the lack of singing. It was the early service at a Bible-believing Episcopal church near the beach, and their liturgy included every element of worship except for singing. In lieu of song, they substituted responsive readings that conveyed the content of a song, but lacked the musical form. Needless to say, we left that service unsatisfied. It was a true worship service, and yet felt empty and incomplete, almost fake.

In this final article on how the elements of worship form us, we will see that **singing forms us by uniting the disparate aspects of our lives**. Imagine each part of our lives as a different musical instrument. Most of our lives sound like the chaotic beginning of an orchestra performance when all the instruments are tuning and warming up. When we come to worship our minds race, our bodies hurt, our hearts yearn, our eyelids droop. We are pulled in countless directions and we wonder what can bring us together, what can unite us in our worship of God. The answer, I humbly offer, is singing. Like the conductor taking the stand and drawing all the individual instruments together for the performance, when the worship leader calls us to stand and sing he is calling us to unite the disparate aspects of our lives into an authentic expression of praise. Consider some of the scattered pieces of our lives that singing unites.

Singing unites God's Word with our words. Before we turn to the form of our singing, we need to consider the content. Terry Johnson asks and answers this foundational question: “What does a Christian worship song look like? Answer, it looks like a Psalm. Reformed Protestants have sometimes exclusively sung Psalms. But even if that is not one’s conviction, one should still acknowledge that the Psalms themselves should be sung

and that the Psalms provide the model for Christian hymnody.” Anyone who sits down to write a love letter knows how difficult it is to put our feelings into words. Our words fail to convey the deep things of life, and this includes worship. As we sing God’s Word (and words inspired by and modeled after God’s Word), we become a people who offer authentic and acceptable sacrifices of praise.

Singing unites truth with beauty. In God, everything that is true is beautiful, and everything that is beautiful is true. But in our finite reflections of these transcendentals, we fall well short of this authentic union. We often present truth in ugly forms (e.g., cheap Bibles), and our expressions of beauty are plagued with falseness (e.g., much of the advertising industry). When it comes to singing, T. David Gordon helpfully points out how “there is a relationship between the message of the lyrics and the musical setting of those lyrics.” This idea bore great fruit during the Reformation when Martin Luther and others “were convinced of music’s power to transmit theological substance” and returned singing to the common people in worship. Form conveys content, so true content must be accompanied by beautiful forms.

Singing unites the tongue with the heart. The beauty of music is powerful, so powerful in fact that we must beware of its danger before we can channel it for good. Music has the power to move us – to tears, to laughter, to joy, to silence. Used rightly, beauty complements truth and aligns the emotions of our heart with the words of our tongues. No matter how powerful the words of a hymn may be, simply reading them aloud will never move us quite like singing them. But therein lies the danger. The power of music can be abused to manipulate our emotions beyond, or even in contradiction to, the truth. Again T. David Gordon is helpful: “If the substance of a hymn, prayers, or sermon provokes appropriate emotional response, all well and good; but to manufacture such a response without a corresponding reason is just sentimentality: emotion for emotion’s sake.” God is not glorified when we

November – December			
Upcoming Events For additional information about any of these events, please refer to our website (covenantreformed.net), or contact the church office at 828-253-6578; office@covenantreformed.net. The Lord’s Supper Please prepare your hearts in advance to take of the sacrament together. Morning Worship: November 2, 16; December 7, 21 Evening Worship: November 30 Shepherding Groups: November 2 Joint Reformation Service: November 2 at Trinity PCA Youth Events November 14–16, Middle School Retreat Men’s Second Breakfast November 8 Christmas Eve Service December 24	Weekly Events		
	Sunday:	9:30 am	Except on 1st Sunday
	Sunday School	10:45 am	
	Morning Worship	6:00 pm	
	Evening Worship		
	Wednesday Nights (ends 11/19)	6:00 pm	
	Bible Study		
	For Men:		
	ROMEOS	7:30 am	Every Thursday
	(Retired Old Men Eating Out) at Cornerstone Restaurant		
	Norm Bomer’s Home	7:00 pm	1st & 3rd Thursdays
	For Women:		
	Gail Albee’s Home	9:30 am	Every Tuesday
	Fall Bible Study at Church (ends 11/11)	10:00 am	Every Tuesday
		7:00 pm	Every Tuesday
Watering Seeds Podcast			
Be sure to check out our church’s weekly podcast, <i>Watering Seeds</i> . Each week our pastors review, discuss, and apply the previous Sunday’s sermon. You can find the podcast on any major podcast platform, such as Anchor, Spotify, or Apple Podcast, by searching for our church name or the title, “Watering Seeds,” or by scanning the following QR code: 			