

Recovering the Heart of Reformed Spirituality

In Christ Alone

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This Cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My Comforter, my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ Alone

In Christ alone, who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
'Till on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

In Christ Alone

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

In Christ Alone

No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
'Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

Overview

I. **Spirituality**

II. **Reformed Spirituality**

III. The **Heart** of Reformed Spirituality

IV. **Recovering** the Heart

I. Spirituality

Working definition

- “spirituality” < *ruach*
 - spirit
 - breath
 - wind
- “spirituality” = what “**animates,**” provides “**breath**” or “**spirit**” for our life.
- “spirituality” = a way **seeing** and **living** life.

II. Reformed Spirituality

A. **Origin:** the covenantal embrace of the Trinity

- love of the Father
- the grace of the Son
- the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

Not: *our* embrace of the Trinity

II. Reformed Spirituality

B. **Character:** walking with God as a covenant community

- loving the Father
- through union with Christ
- by keeping in step with the Spirit

Not: *individualistic* response

II. Reformed Spirituality

C. **Posture: fear-of-the-LORD**

- in holy wonder and absolute attentiveness having our thoughts, emotions and behavior **synchronized** with the Trinity
- who is mysteriously present and active in creation (giving life), history (rescuing from sin and evil) and church (creating communities of love)

Not: a journey into **self**, but into **obedience**.

A journey into obedience = living in sync
with the Trinity as a covenant community in
holy wonder + attentiveness



II. Reformed Spirituality

D. **Means:** faith

- affirming with the mind
 - trusting with the heart
 - surrendering with the will
-
- ❖ **Not:** *self*-generated, but *God*-generated.
 - ❖ **See presentation # 3: *Spiritual Disciplines***

The God-generated life = living in sync with the Trinity as a covenant community through faith



II. Reformed Spirituality

E. Goal: glory of God

- revelatory = God on display
- responsive = worship of God

Not: *self*-focussed, but *God*-focussed.

God on display = living in sync with the
Trinity as a covenant community



This *animates* my life.
This is how I *see* and *live*.
This is Reformed Spirituality



III. The **Heart** of Reformed Spirituality

Union with Christ

or

**United with Christ in the Father through the
fellowship of the Holy Spirit**

III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

A. Grounding Text

John 14:20

On that day you will realize that *I am in my Father*, and *you are in me*, and *I am in you*.

III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

1. I am **in** my Father

a. the Trinitarian life = a life of mutual, **co-inhabiting** each other
(*perichoresis*)

➤ e.g. body and soul

III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

1. I am **in** my Father

b. **home life** of the Son

- **Father:** “My beloved Son”
- **Son:** “Abba, Father”
- **Spirit:** personal bond of fellowship

III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

1. I am **in** my Father

c. home life of the **human** Son

- Because of the **incarnation**, our human nature has been forever **united** to Christ's divine nature and in this way **co-inhabits** the Trinitarian life.

III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

1. I am **in** my Father

c. home life of the **human** Son

- ❖ **Not** as **water** and **wine**
- ❖ But **unconfused** + **unmixed**



III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

1. I am **in** my Father

c. home life of the **human** Son

- ❖ **Not** as **oil** and **water**
- ❖ But **undivided** + **unseparated**



III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

1. I am **in** my Father

c. home life of the **human** Son

perichoresis

or

**co-inhabiting the Trinity
in Christ**



III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

2. You are **in** me

a. Jesus' home life becomes the **church's** home life.

- **Father:** "My beloved Son"
- **Son:** "Abba, Father"
- **Spirit:** personal bond of fellowship

III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

2. You are **in** me

- b. This is because the church is **united** with Christ
 - when He **died**, she died (= reconciliation)
 - when He **arose**, she arose (= new creation)
 - when He **ascended**, she ascended (= our gravitational center)

III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

3. I am **in** you

Jesus' home life come to earth

- Jesus **forms** Himself in his church
- This spiritual formation takes place through his **Holy Spirit**

III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

4. **I in the Father, you in me and I in you.**

- This is the **secret** of the church's existence
- This is the **heart** of Reformed spirituality

I am in the Father, you in me
and I in you

Not like water and wine

Pantheistic merging



I in the Father, you in me and I
in you

Not like oil and water

Deistic detachment



I in the Father, you in me and I
in you

perichoresis

or

**co-inhabiting the Trinity
in Christ**



In Christ we live in sync with the Trinity as a covenant community with holy wonder and obedient attentiveness



III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

B. The grounding text **sheds light** on other texts

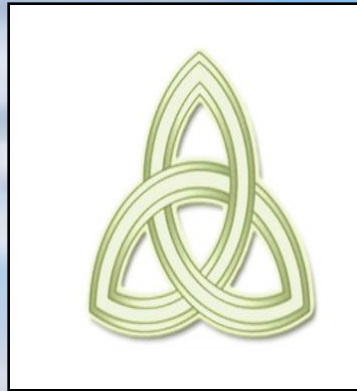
Acts 17:28

For **in him** we live and move and have our being.

In him we live and move and have our being



Not pantheism



In Christ



Not Deism

III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

B. The grounding text **sheds light** on other texts

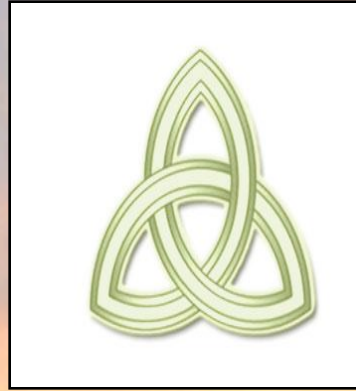
1 Cor. 6:17

But he who **unites** himself to the Lord becomes **one spirit** with him.

He who unites himself to the Lord becomes one spirit with him



Pantheism



In Christ



Deism



III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

B. The grounding text **sheds light on other texts**

Ephesians 3:19

[And I pray] that you may be **filled** with **all the fullness of God**.

Filled with all the fullness of God



III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

B. The grounding text **sheds light** on other texts

2 Peter 1:4

Through these [God's glory and goodness] he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may **participate in the divine nature** and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

Partakers of the divine nature



Pantheism



In Christ



Deism

III. The Heart of Reformed Spirituality

B. The grounding text **sheds light** on other texts

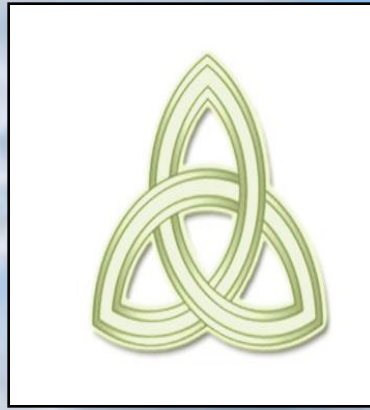
John 3:8

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone **born of the Spirit**

In him we live and move and have our
being = living and moving and having our
being in the Spirit



Not pantheism



In Christ



Not Deism

Reformed Spirituality = living in sync with the Trinity as a covenant community by living in the Spirit in holy wonder and obedient attentiveness



IV. Recovering the heart of Reformed Spirituality

A. My personal experience

- the Dutch connection
- 2001: a major crisis
- Christ-centered literature
- Time with Jesus
- Doctor of Ministry in Spiritual Formation
- Recovered heart of Reformed Spirituality

IV. Recovering the heart of Reformed Spirituality

B. The Experience my focus groups

I enjoyed the course. Thank you so much for inviting me. . . I pray that your work may help many to find Jesus in a deeper way; that many may understand and experience the love and grace of their Creator in a way unknown to them before. . . .

IV. Recovering the heart of Reformed Spirituality

B. The Experience my focus groups

This study has been a great experience for me personally. It has enriched my faith life and will continue to do so. . . Doing the exercises has been very helpful. I pray that I would be a better representative of God's love and radiate his love to others.

IV. Recovering the heart of Reformed Spirituality

B. The Experience my focus groups

In general, this has been the beginning of a different journey than the usual Bible Study Group. The 10 lessons have only opened that door but an inch. I wish more of this, if possible. . . . The discussion questions were very open and ‘in your face’. They make you think deeper about your faith life and practice.

IV. Recovering the heart of Reformed Spirituality

B. The Experience my focus groups

What an experience! I am glad I had this opportunity. I have a long way to go and grow but this is a good start and thank you for the start of the journey.

IV. Recovering the heart of Reformed Spirituality

C. Larry Crabb's experience

The urgent need of today's church is not better management, more programs, stronger opposition to moral evil in our culture, or a clearer statement of biblical principles to follow in dealing with our lives.

We must return to worship as participation by the Spirit in the Son's relationship with the Father.

IV. Recovering the heart of Reformed Spirituality

D. Robert Webber's *The Divine Embrace*

This book is about the Christian story of the *divine embrace*, the spirituality that proceeds from it, and how this spirituality may be **recovered** in a relativistic, postmodern world where spirituality is viewed as a common, contentless experience of otherness.

Discussion



This is my Father's World

This is my Father's world, and to my
listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings the
music of the spheres.

This is my Father's world: I rest me in the
thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's World

This is my Father's world, the birds their
carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white, declare
their Maker's praise.

This is my Father's world: He shines in all
that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass;
He speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father's World

This is my Father's world. O let me ne'er
forget
That though the wrong seems oft so
strong, God is the ruler yet.

This is my Father's world: the battle is not
done:
Jesus Who died shall be satisfied,
And earth and Heav'n be one.

This is my Father's World

This is my Father's world, dreaming, I see
His face.
I open my eyes, and in glad surprise cry,
"The Lord is in this place."

This is my Father's world, from the shining
courts above,
The Beloved One, His Only Son,
Came—a pledge of deathless love.

This is my Father's World

This is my Father's world, should my heart
be ever sad?

The lord is King—let the heavens ring.
God reigns—let the earth be glad.

This is my Father's world. Now closer to
Heaven bound,
For dear to God is the earth Christ trod.
No place but is holy ground.

This is my Father's World

This is my Father's world. I walk a desert
lone.

In a bush ablaze to my wondering gaze
God makes His glory known.

This is my Father's world, a wanderer I
may roam

Whate'er my lot, it matters not,
My heart is still at home.