

# The Pastor's Report

Greetings to the Saints of the Park!

I know, I know, it is never a good sign when the Pastor's Report employs any form of Latin. It was that or David Bowie lyrics (Cha, cha, cha, cha, changes). I figure more people were apt to know the motto of the Reformed Tradition, "The Church Reformed, Always Reforming" than have the album *Hunky Dorky* marked as a favorite on their Spotify profile.

Emerging from the 16th-century Protestant Reformation, the Latin phrase, "Ecclesia Reformata, Semper Reformanda," is meant to express the need for *continuous* church reform, as the church had drifted from apostolic faith and biblical truth. 20th century Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth popularized the phrase for our modern generation of the church, though some claim it has ancient roots stretching back to St. Augustine. Regardless of how and when it arose, or who popularized it, these four simple words represent a radical understanding of the body of Christ (i.e., the Church) while also preparing for a world which remains unsettled.

It was not by accident that the Genesis account of creation finds God bringing order out of the midst of chaos. Up until the advent of the Rule of Law, Enlightenment, Scientific and Industrial Revolutions, and enormous technical advancements of recent decades, we humans have been ever aware of how small and helpless we are in the face of natural events and human misadventure. The story of human endeavor is

the story of trying to tame the nature around us, as we all as the nature within us, to yield a more ordered, predictable, and reliable reality. Often this is accomplished through the creation of human systems, institutions, and value all in and effort to mitigate change and the unpleasant uncertainty which often accompanies it.

While the term "reform" is meant to express a change that is planned and intended to bring about positive results, I think such an understanding is a bit unrealistic or, even, pollyannaish. While it may be nice to imagine having everything mapped out in front of us and implemented in neat, logical steps to achieve a clear and discernible end or goal, the truth is changes usually just happens to us, around us, and in spite of our best intentions or heart-felt hopes.

That's not to say that the world is spinning out of control, though it may seem like it some days. The simple truth is that change is inevitable and, given enough time and perspective, very often just the right thing at just the right time (there's that mystical reality again).

I tell you all this because one of the things I've realized over the course of the past 33 years of ministry is that while God might be a constant, the body of Christ is not. The church is *always* moving and grooving to become something new. The trick is to enjoy it.

Many blessings upon you,  
Rev. Mike



Ecclesia  
Reformata,  
Semper  
Reformanda

