

Sunday Sermons – CSI Church, Toronto
Sunday, September 28, 2014

Unity in Witnessing

Ezekiel 37:15-22

Psalms 122

Ephesians 4:1-6

John 17:20-26

Remembrance of CSI formation: CSI was formed on September 27, 1947. CSI remains the only church formed out of the union of Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational traditions. There are 22 bishops and 22 dioceses. Headquarters is at Chennai, known as the Synod. Our Bishop, Rt. Rev. Thomas K. Oommen, is presently the Deputy Moderator. It took 30 years of constant prayer and study to form the present day CSI.

Today's Bible portions deal with the concept of unity in which the people of God should move around and witness.

1. Ezekiel 37:1f – the valley of dry bones; 15f – unity: Two sticks: (1) For Judah and the Israelites associated with it. (2) For Joseph – the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel associated with it. (Ezekiel 37: 22- 23)
2. Psalm 122 speaks about the joy of being in the house of the Lord.
3. Ephesians 4: 1- 6 speaks about the unity of church, the unity in the body of Christ – one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one Baptism, one God and the Father of all.
4. John 17: 20- 26 – the high priestly prayer of Jesus – verse 21: ‘That they all may be one’. Jesus prays for His disciples and all who will turn to Him through His disciples.

Let us uphold the unity in Christ, and in this unity, let us be fruitful witnesses and glorify God.

Getting to know CSI is very important. The first attempt will be to understand the worship and liturgy of CSI.

Importance of the Order of Service

1. To have an order, a meaningful sequence
2. To avoid heresies (wrong teachings or personalized versions)
3. To have a legacy

CSI is the union of the episcopal and the non-episcopal churches. New liturgy was published in 1950, which drew the attention of the universal church.

CSI liturgy has come from five different traditions:

1. Basel Mission
2. Presbyterian
3. Methodist
4. Congregational
5. Anglican

The liturgy was revised in 1950, 1954, 1962 and 1979, according to the need of the hour, with modifications. Eucharistic liturgy came out as a short version in 1963, a revised version in 1972, an alternate version in 1985 and another revised version in 2006. Eucharistic liturgy has also incorporated some elements from St. James' liturgy.

Sunday Sermons – CSI Church, Toronto
Sunday, September 28, 2014

Elements:

Adoration, Confession, Ministry of the Word of God, Intercession and Holy Communion.

1. The Devotion: preparatory part
2. Opening Prayer: extempore prayer
3. Procession: Cross, Choir, Bible, Presbyter (Celebrant) (and Bishop)
 - a. Cross: signifies our trust and aim.
 - b. Choir: the robes – red and white (washed by the blood of Christ and made pure)
 - c. The Bible: signifies Jesus Christ – John 1:14, ‘The Word became flesh and lived among us.’
 - d. Bishop / Minister – shepherding – the folk walk before
4. Procession: Byzantine Liturgy – Church of Scotland.
5. Bible: on the right hand side of the minister. The Word of God is a sword of the Spirit. Ephesians 6:17 (whole armour of God)
6. Offertory Vessel: left hand side of the minister – the position of the heart in the human body. II Corinthians 9:7, ‘Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.’
7. Centre: the Chalice and Paten – sacrifice of our Lord, presence of our Lord.
8. Little Entrance: reminder that our life is a pilgrimage going on looking at the cross; taking the cross. Luke 14:27, ‘whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.’
9. The structure of the Church:
 - a. The minister faces the congregation.
 - b. The choir faces each other.
 - c. It is a square in which a point can be in between. Matthew 18:20, ‘for where two or three are gathered in my name, I’m there among them.’
10. Gregorian collect for purity: A supplication that God, the Holy Spirit shall enable us to worship. ‘Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be opened, all desires known.....’
11. Liturgical song: *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* – fourth century hymn – begins with angels’ song. Luke 2:14 (Birth of Jesus Christ) leads on to the plea for mercy and peace before the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.
12. Praise of God – conviction of sin - ‘glory to God in the highest.....’
13. Alternative prayers: Trisagion and Liturgy of the Lamp
14. Our Lord’s Summary of the Law and Prophets: (Deuteronomy 6:5, Mark 12:30-31, Luke 10:27 – ‘Lord have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law.’
15. Time of Examination: Understand the meaning of exhortations, take time to remember the past life, silence is very important.
16. Prayer of Confession: it is from the books of Common Prayer and Common Order.
17. Absolution: comforted with the gracious Word of God. Matthew 11:28, John 3:16, I Timothy 1:15, John 2: 1-2. Mercy of God, pardon affirmed, deliverance assured, confirmation of our lives in Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and bring us to eternal life.
18. People say: Amen, thanks be to God.
19. AMEN – the word that is used most in the world with transliteration.

Let us understand the meaning of our liturgy and use it. Let us really participate in this worship and prepare for witnessing each week.
