

Mission Sunday, November 15, 2015

September 2015, *Equipping* #159

HWB - *Hymnal Worship Book*, SJ - *Sing the Journey*, SS - *Sing the Story**

* Song book abbreviations match those used for corresponding worship resources in *Leader Magazine*

Introduction

*Prepared by Bock Ki Kim, Mennonite Church Canada
Witness Worker in South Korea, for November 15, or any
Sunday in November.*

According to the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, “mission” is defined as the work of God. “The true missionary witness is in the very nature of God rather than in ecclesiology, eschatology, pneumatology, anthropology, or practical theology.” It is not human beings but God who initiates the mission. Mission is the practical aspect of Christian evangelism and church development along with biblical teachings. In recent years, church leaders have proclaimed that “the kingdom of God is the central theme in mission.”

In Bible translations to other languages such as Korean or Chinese, the word “mission” also translates as calling, task, responsibility, ministry, or vocation. Regardless of the translation, the core meaning relates closely to God’s work of active love and grace in the world.

However, mission agents or missionaries have sometimes misunderstood it on a mission field. Indigenous language, culture, and even people may have been neglected or objectified. As a result, God’s beautiful new song is torn apart so that it is hard for both parties to hear its good news. While one side cheers at achieving missional victory or accomplishing their goal, the other side mourns the loss of their original culture and lifestyles.

During November, we remember people who lost their lives during war. The proclaimed purpose of war is to bring peace on earth but it has not turned out that way. Similarly, our witness of proclaiming peace with God’s Word has often failed, as well. It is time to recognize and mourn our human mistakes and sinfulness. This third Sunday of November, among many, we want to recall a country that struggles with the aftermath of the Korean War, billed as a civil war, but really the result of the cold war. Although it continues, most people do not know this, so it is also called the Forgotten War. The war has been paused but the tension is ongoing.

In this world, there are two different lines of history. The

one is human history, shaped by human beings, while the other is divine history, which the Holy Spirit shapes. As Christians, we need to see both, but focus on divine history.

As we commemorate Remembrance Day in November, let us pay more attention to God’s role and mission in this world, particularly in war.

Theme: *Holistic Shalom for all God’s people*

Scripture Texts

- Isaiah 65:17-25
- Psalm 98
- Luke 21:5-19

Suggested Hymns:

- HWB 408 - O day of peace
- HWB 42 - All people that on earth do well
- HWB 299 - New earth, heavens new
- STJ 2 - Hamba nathi (Come, walk with us)
- STJ 78 - Sizohamba naye (We will walk with God)
- STJ 22 - By the waters of Babylon
- STJ 42 - Listen, God is calling
- STJ 46 - O breathe on me, O breathe of God
- STJ 52 - Jesus, help us live in peace
- STJ 54 - Longing for Light
- STJ 59 - Confitemini Domino (Come and fill our hearts)
- STJ 66 - If the war goes on
- STJ 73 - The Lord lift you up (sending song)
- STJ 87 - Put peace into each other’s hands
- STJ 107 - God remembers
- HWB 340 - ‘Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus
- Arirang - A Korean Hymn. For English lyrics and music see attached PDF. For the music, see: www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWdJsJ9izBQ

Opening Prayer:

Loving and caring God, who created a new heaven and a new earth, we come to worship you.
Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a peaceful spirit within us.
Help us to see what you have done for us so that we can sing a new song.

Loving and caring God,
when we call you and worship you,
Listen to us and be near to us.
In Jesus' peace, we pray.

Prayer of Confession:

God of grace and peace,
Have mercy on us.
For though we bear the image of God,
We often forget and distort it.
You created a peaceful world and beautiful hearts,
But we easily destroy peace selfishly. (pause)

God of grace and peace,
Have mercy on us.
Human history is filled with wars,
We so easily hurt and curse each other.
You make us happy and glad,
but we easily make each other angry and sad. (pause)

God of grace and peace, Have mercy on us.
God of grace and peace, Have mercy on us. Amen.

Children Story:

Visual materials: Globe or Korean map to see 70 years of two Koreas' history. Blue and red linen on the table to symbolize two divided countries or parties (North and South, or East and West, or Democratic and Communist).

Throughout human history, there have been many famous battles and wars. However, there have also been many less-known battles and wars. Today we would like to talk about a forgotten war. Officially, this war was "stopped" about 60 years ago, but it is still going on.

Imagine two brothers who fight each other. They hurt each other physically and hurt each other's hearts and feelings. Because of these hurts, they stop fighting for a while but they do not make peace with each other. (Ask the children how they feel when this happens with their siblings.)

That is what this forgotten war is like. More than 3 million people's lives were lost in the 3 years of active fighting, and

one country became two after they fought. This separation still causes a lot of pain. Sadly, very few people pay attention to these two countries. Because of this, history writers name it the Korean War (June 25, 1950 ~ July 27, 1953), the Forgotten War. Do you know what these two countries are? (Prepare a globe or map.) They are North and South Korea.

Korea has now continued as two countries for 70 years. South Korea celebrated its Independence Day on August 15, 1945, while North Korea celebrated the beginning of their communist party on October 10, 1945. Behind these historic events, there is an ideology and a cold war. After 70 years, North and South Korea still struggle with the pain of war and division. We wonder, who can bring peace and reconciliation for this country?

The Children's storyteller can also share stories from Mennonite work in South Korea. During the Korean War, Mennonites started helping Korean children, families and refugees. They did this for about 20 years through Mennonite Central Committee. (<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&cpid=sites&csrcid=a2FjLm9yLmtyfG1jY2tvcvVhLWVuZ2xpc2h8Z3g6Njc0MDdiNDg5MWE5Mzg3Mg>) Since 1994, God has opened possibilities for Mennonites to work in **North** Korea through MCC. The example of one program in South Korea to serve families in need helped to launch a Korean Family Welfare Association (<http://www.readperiodicals.com/201207/2762527281.html>) See the websites: <http://mcc-en.kac.or.kr/>. Some of the students at a Mennonite school grew up to invite the Mennonite Church back to **South** Korea and share their values in the Korean Church. (<http://news.mennonitechurch.ca/south-koreas-anabaptist-way>, <http://www.canadianmennonite.org/articles/spreading-word-south-korea>, and <http://www.commonword.ca/File-Download/14603/Equip-120Celebration.pdf>)

The reason we tell these stories to our children is to remember what happened in the world and how God is working through all of this. Through the story,

- we can remember that we are people of God,
- we can remember that God's people should be peaceful people,
- we may strive for peace in our daily lives and as a global community.

Closing Prayer for Children's Story

God of Peace, we thank you for bringing your peace to our children. Lord, as our children grow, bless them to follow you and live with your grace and peace! Thank you for your example. Help us all walk humbly with you and do our parts in working for peace on earth. Lord, bless our children

and help them to be a blessing. We pray this in your name. Amen.

Sermon Guide

In this mission month, we invite people:

1. to repent of being tempted by Constantinian views of victory;
2. to reflect humbly on what happened in mission fields during last century;
3. to thank God for providing his mission of sacrificial service;
4. to remember and honour missionaries who humbly and sensitively share the gospel and their lives with people cross-culturally.

Isaiah 65:17-25

It is a blessing to see God's different view. Our human history is filled with a great variety of images, including those of hatred and war. The prophet Isaiah projects many good images for people who have no hope. Isaiah 65 is especially famous for projecting a vision of a new earth and new heaven. People may respond to God through returning to God and following the will of God rather than making mistakes and sinning against God. This text shows the eschatological peace for all God's children. It is great to see hope and peace of God's kingdom through Isaiah 65.

Psalms 98

Four psalms of praise start with "sing a new song to the Lord": 33, 40, 96, and 98. As one of them, Psalm 98 reveals God as the Lord who is the victorious King and brings justice to his people. When we look at human history in our daily lives, we cannot praise the Lord rightly. When we look at God's historical act of salvation and goodness, however, we can fully praise the Lord. From a human perspective, it is not easy to sing a new song while we still see people's sinfulness, conflicts, wars, and hatred. However, when we focus on God coming to make right everything that is wrong, we can easily praise what he has done for us and what he calls us to through his salvation, righteousness, justice, and peace. This is the reason to praise him and sing a new song to the Lord. In the midst of our remembrance weeks, we remember that God is the Lord of "salvation," "steadfast love," "faithfulness," and "equity". This is a great and saving message for all God's people all around the world.

Luke 21:5-19

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Many people understand this text of Luke 21 as destructive discourse. However, Jesus tell his disciples not to lose their souls and lives. Luke's text offers comfort and encouragement through the Holy Spirit, who prepares us to witness in front of authority. Historical peace churches witness when their members refuse to join military service. Luke provided the resources for new ways of understanding God and the world, and helped them correct behaviour and challenge theology they found faulty. When Jesus walked through the darkness of the valley of death, he never gave up this hope and God's help.

Closing Song:

- Arirang (see attachment)

Benediction

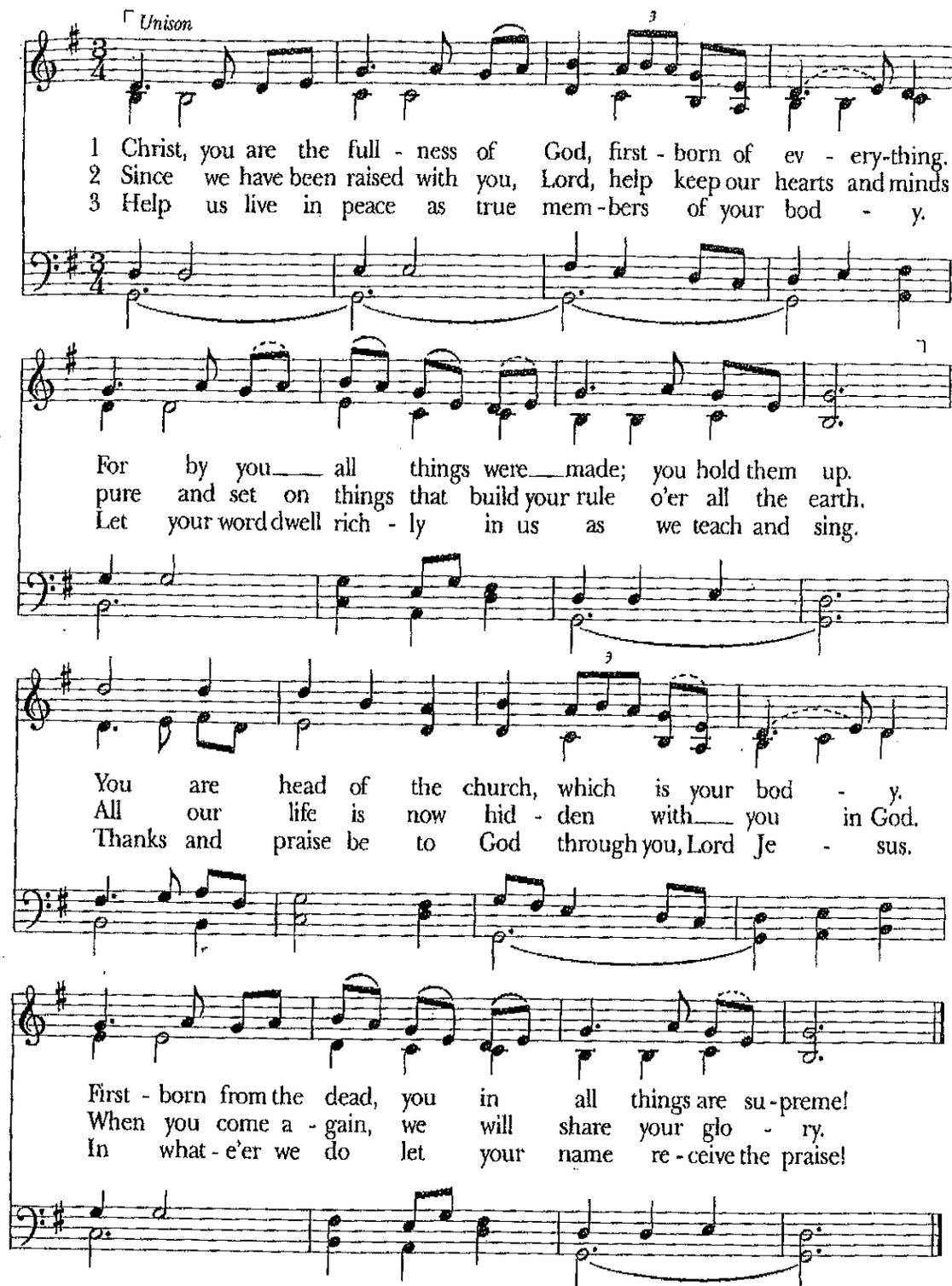
Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. AMEN. (From Romans 8:38, 39)

Direct your comments about Special Sunday Worship Resources to Elsie Rempel at erempel@mennonitechurch.ca

Christ, You Are the Fullness

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Unison



1 Christ, you are the full - ness of God, first - born of ev - ery - thing.
 2 Since we have been raised with you, Lord, help keep our hearts and minds
 3 Help us live in peace as true mem - bers of your bod - y.

For by you — all things were — made; you hold them up.
 pure and set on things that build your rule o'er all the earth.
 Let your word dwell rich - ly in us as we teach and sing.

You are head of the church, which is your bod - y.
 All our life is now hid - den with — you in God.
 Thanks and praise be to God through you, Lord Je - sus.

First - born from the dead, you in all things are su - preme!
 When you come a - gain, we will share your glo - ry.
 In what - e'er we do let your name re - ceive the praise!

Text: Colossians 1:15-18; 3:1-4, 15-17; vers. Bert Polman, 1986

Tune: Korean; harm. Dale Crotenhuis, 1986

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*irregular
ARIRANG*

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