

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for
June 23, 2024



"So then, awhile we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith." – Galatians 6:10

“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Romans 13:1-16

Leader: Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God,

People: Which is your spiritual service of worship.

Leader: And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is,

People: That which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Leader: For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment,

People: As God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Leader: For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many,

People: Are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Leader: Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy,

People: According to the proportion of his faith;

Leader: If service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence;

People: He who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Leader: Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil;

People: Cling to what is good.

Leader: Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence,

People: Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

Leader: Rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

People: Contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

Leader: Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

People: Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Leader: Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly.

People: Do not be wise in your own estimation.

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – Romans 5:6-10

***Hymn #353** (red hymnal) – “*I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord*”

Scripture Reading – Galatians 5:13-6:10

Ancient Creedal Reading – Apostles Creed (pg#845 in the red hymnal)

Offerings Presented

[Please put your tithe/offering in the plates before or after the service – Thank you!]

[Gifts labeled “Deacon’s Fund go to aid those in need in the congregation.]

***Doxology #731** (red hymnal)

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

*Prayer of Dedication

***Sung Psalm #34C** (red hymnal) – “*O Sons and Daughters*”

Prayers of the Church & Lord’s Prayer (sins)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Reformation Creedal Reading – Savoy Declaration (1658 AD), 16.1-2

Leader: *Good works are only such as God has commanded*

Micah 6:8; Rom 12:2;

People: **In His holy Word,**

Heb 13:21

Leader: *And not such as, without the warrant thereof,
are devised by men out of blind zeal,*

1Sam 15:21-23; Is 29:13; Matt 15:9;

People: **Or upon any pretense of good intention.**

John 16:2; Rom 10:2; 1Pet 1:18

Leader: *These good works, done in obedience to God’s
commandments, are the fruits and evidences
of a true and lively faith;*

James 2:18;

James 2:22

People: **And by them believers manifest their thankfulness**

Ps 116:12-13; 1Pet 2:9

Leader: *Strengthen their assurance,*

2Pet 1:5-10; 1John 2:3,5

People: **Edify their brethren,**

Matt 5:16; 2Cor 9:2

Leader: *Adorn the profession of the gospel,*

1Tim 6:1; Titus 2:5,9-12

People: **Stop the mouths of the adversaries,**

1Pet 2:15

Leader: *And glorify God, whose workmanship they are,
created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that, having
their fruit unto holiness,*

John 15:8; Phil 1:11;

1Pet 2:12

Eph 2:10

People: **They may have the end, eternal life.**

Rom 6:22

Ministry of the Word – Preaching

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Titus 3:12-15

***Gloria Patri #735** (red hymnal)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Sermon – “*Our People*”

A Sermon Series on Titus

***Hymn #432** (red hymnal) – “*We Give Thee But Thine Own*”

***Benediction** – Numbers 6:24-26

Announcements

- **Remember: Church in July & August starts at 9:30 AM.**
- Pastor Doug will be on vacation from July 8th through 22nd. Elder Jon Haulenbeek will be preaching those Sundays.
- Pastor Doug plans to preach a mini-series on **sermon requests** this summer. If you have any biblical, theological, historical, moral, and/or cultural questions relating to the Christian faith please email him (douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net) or put your written request in the collection plate. Please, only one request per person. This Fall we will return to our norm of expository preaching, working our way through a section of the Old Testament Law.
- The Elders and Deacons are trying to think of a **local charitable outreach** TRC could do, either for someone in the church, or someone / something in the community - If you have any thoughts, suggestions, or requests, please see Pastor Doug.
- If you would like to **help the Franceschetti family** (Dave, Janelle & baby Caleb) there are a few options:
 - Prayer, which is always greatly appreciated.
 - The Franceschetti’s have a gofundme account at: <https://gofund.me/1c7aaeb4>
(Or you can search for: “gofundme Franceschetti Family”)
 - If you would like to donate a meal, see Julie Latina.
(julieannalatina@gmail.com; h=860-824-8410; c=860-480-1687)
- There are **Bibles** and “**Basics of the Faith**” pamphlets about various theological topics free if you are interested.

Upcoming Special Events

- On Saturday, **July 20th** (with a rain date of July 27th), there will be a **pool party and picnic** for the church at the Decker-Gabelmann house, starting at noon. The address is: 101 Wallens Street, Winsted (it is a long driveway with the house a bit off the road.) You can park anywhere along the side of the driveway as well as at the end of the driveway where the 2-car garage is.
- On Saturday, **September 7th**, there will be a **picnic** for the church at the Winters' house, starting at noon.
- On Saturday, September 21st, will be a joint Elders & Deacons’ meeting at Pastor Doug’s house.
- After church on Sunday, **November 10th**, will be the **Annual Meeting**.

Normal Weekly Schedule

Sunday

10:30 AM LORD'S DAY WORSHIP – Lord's Supper on the 1st Sunday
c.11:40 AM Coffee Hour

Wednesday

6:30 – 8:00 PM Wednesday Bible Study (Pastor Doug's house) – Ephesians

Friday

6:30 PM YADG – Young Adult Discussion Group (Pastor Doug's house)
1st & 3rd Fridays

Saturday

[morning] Prayer Group – Meets at the Decker-Gabelmann house.
If you are interested, please contact Sheryl Gabelmann.

Online Resources

Internet Prayer Chain: If you have any prayer requests you would like the Internet Prayer Chain to pray for, please email them to Donna Ensminger at: trcnwprayer@gmail.com. (If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, also see Donna.)

Church's Facebook Page: facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/

Church's Webpage: TrinityReformedCT.org

Church Youtube Channel: youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT

Pastor Doug's Youtube Channels:

Simply Reformed: youtube.com/simplyreformed

Pilgrims of Plunder: youtube.com/@PilgrimsofPlunder

*Liking, Commenting, Sharing
facebook posts and Subscribing,
Liking, Commenting on youtube
helps boost TRC's online
outreach.*

Leadership

Teaching & Preaching Elder: Pastor Doug Aldrich
(860-379-1147; douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net)

Ruling Elders: Bob Ensminger
(860-485-8738; robert.ensminger@arthurgrussell.com)
Rich Gabelmann
(860-605-7852; rgabelmann0415@gmail.com)
Jonathan Haulenbeek
(860-283-0224; jhaulenbeek@icloud.com)

Deacons: David Mattson (*chair*), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell,
Mason Goodell, Dean Winters

Music Coordinator & Treasurer: Cindy Rines

Clerk: Sheryl Gabelmann

Sunday School: Verna Aldrich, Mason Goodell

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Sermon Notes

Titus 3:12-15

"Our People"

A Sermon Series on Titus

June 23, 2024

Introduction

- 1) When you think of "good works" what do you think of?
- 2) As we chatted about last week, I bet we think of individuals doing "random acts of kindness" to strangers, especially the needy.
 - a) This is not wrong, because Christians are to be charitable to all people, even our enemies. Matt 5:44; 22:39; Luke 10:30ff;
Rom 12:20; Gal 6:10; 1Thes 3:12
 - b) And the Bible teaches the Lord has a special concern for the poor.¹
- 3) However, there is a dangerous subtle trap set by the world here.
 - a) The world has no problems with Christians doing good works as long as those good works correspond to the world's dogmas.
 - b) It is easy for the Christian to fall into passively following the world, doing a limited set of good works, not out of obedience to God's Law, or the guidance of Holy Spirit, but out of fear for the world.
 - c) At worst, the Christian will think he or she is doing good works, because it is pleasing to the world, but in reality, are actually going against God.
 - i) The world does not want the church to engage in good works, that contradict its dogmas. (e.g. promoting respect for life, the family, let alone preaching the Gospel.)
 - ii) The world does not want the church to be a strong, unified body.
 - d) As Isaiah the prophet warned: "*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight!*" – Isaiah 5:20-21
 - e) However, the Apostle Paul commands: "*So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*" – Galatians 6:10
- 4) As we have seen throughout Paul's Epistle to Titus, the Apostle is very concerned that the church do good works.
 - a) Paul warns about false Christians whom "*profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.*" – Titus 1:16b
(Good doctrine is required to do correct good works!)
 - b) Pastor/Elders are commanded "*in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified*" – Titus 2:7
 - c) The Gospel is that we are justified by faith and not by good works. Titus 2:14; 3:5
 - i) Yet it is the power of the Gospel that true good works come from. Titus 3:5
Eph 2:10

¹ Ex 22:21-24; 23:9; Lev 19:33-34; 25:35-43; Deut 15:7-18; 10:18; 14:29; 16:11,14; 24:14,17-21; 26:12; 27:19; Ps 9:9; 10:14,18; 68:5; 72:4,13-14; 82:3; 146:9; Prov 14:31; 17:5; 19:17; 23:10-11; 28:27-28; Is 1:17; 11:4; Jer 5:28; 7:5-6; 22:3,16; Zech 7:9-10; Luke 4:18-21; James 2:2-6.

- ii) Christ's blood covers, and sanctifies our good works making them pleasing to God.
 - iii) Because we are in the New Covenant, having been put "in Christ" and have the Spirit we now do works out of thanksgiving and hope.
 - iv) The supreme good work of love is empowered because we have true hope in Christ. That hope comes from the fact we trust (i.e. faith) in Christ, and all of this comes from grace alone.
- d) Christians are commanded to do good works:
- i) Titus 3:1 - "*Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,*"
 - ii) Titus 3:8 - "*This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.*"
 - iii) Titus 3:14 - "*Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.*"
- 5) Paul lists numerous good works throughout Titus, many of which are not surprising.²
- 6) The works Paul focuses on after verse Titus 3:8 (commanding Christians to be careful to engage in good deeds), to the end of the epistle in Titus 3:15, is surprising.
- a) Focus on the church to avoid bad theologies and reject the heretic and factious man, which we talked about last week. Titus 3:9-10
 - b) Today, we are going to focus on doing good works both for the local and catholic church. Titus 3:12-14

Catholic Good Works

- 1) "Catholic" is a good word, it simply means "universal."
 - a) We Protestants very much believe in the catholic (universal) church.
 - b) Our problem is not with the word "catholic", it is with the word "Roman".
 - c) We believe this, because the Bible clearly teaches that all local congregations are united in Christ and are in one universal/catholic church.
 - i) Hebrews 12:22-23b - "*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church (in the singular) of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven . . .*"
 - ii) Just look at our sermon text today.
- 2) One of my favorite suggestions as an aid for individual Christians studying the Bible is to give this intellectual thought challenge: How would you preach the text you are reading?
 - a) One of the best ways to test yourself to see if you know something is if you are able to explain it to someone else.

² To give a list of the positive things, Christians should have: sound faith (1:1,9; 2:2,10), consideration for their neighbor (3:2), gentleness (3:2), godliness (1:1; 2:12), hope (1:2), knowledge of the truth (1:1), love for what is good (1:8; 2:2), perseverance (2:2), purity (2:5), purity in doctrine (2:7), reverence (2:3), righteousness (2:12), self-control (1:8), soundness in speech (2:8), temperance (2:2), etc.

Also, Christians should be: supportive of the church (1:5,10-11), above reproach (1:6,7), devout (1:8), dignified (2:7), hospitable (1:8), just (1:8), peaceable (3:2), sensible (1:8; 2:2,5-6,12), subject to authority (2:9; 3:1), supportive of family (1:6; 2:3-5), etc.

b) Challenge for you today, how would you preach, not just explain, but proclaim: “*When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them.*” – Titus 3:12-13

3) First, we do need to explain a bit of the historical background:

a) Paul is the great evangelist to the Gentiles, who traveled around the Roman Empire preaching the Gospel and establishing churches. Acts 9-28
Gal 2:7-9

b) It is 65 AD and Paul is in Nicopolis, as we read in Titus 3:12.³

i) Though there are many “Nicopolis” in the ancient world, most scholars think this in Epirus, which is in northwest Greece.

ii) Which is a good distance away from Crete.

iii) 65 AD is getting towards the end of Paul’s life. He will be martyred in Rome in 67 AD.

iv) Paul, while in Nicopolis, writes the Epistle to Titus, instructing Titus how to organize the church in Crete, and sends the letter by courier (probably Artemas or Tychicus from verse 12).

v) When the letter arrives, Titus is to “make every effort” to meet Paul in Nicopolis, where Paul has decided to spend the winter.

vi) Two other people are coming to Crete: The lawyer Zenas and Apollos.

- Zenas is only mentioned this one time in the Bible. He is either an expert in Greco-Roman law, i.e. a lawyer, or an expert in the Jewish Torah (the first 5 books of the Old Testament).
- The other is Apollos, which is probably the famous Apollos who is mentioned several times in the New Testament.⁴

vii) That Zenas and Apollos are “on their way” implies they are missionaries traveling about preaching the Gospel.

4) Knowing the historical background is important. However, a history lecture is not a sermon. So, how would you preach this text?

a) What is the focus?

i) Answer: The church. The text is showing the importance of the church, so preach that.

ii) This is particularly important in our hyper-individualistic age.

b) This text, however, is about the catholic/universal church.

5) These verses are about how local churches work together and support each other.

a) The church in Crete is not an island unto itself.

³ Most dates given from the ancient world are approximations. The ones above are taken from the excellent Paul; His Life and Teaching, by John McRay. (Baker Academic, 2007).

⁴ Apollos was a learned and eloquent Jew from Alexandria and was a disciple of John the Baptist (Acts 18:24-26; 19:1; 1Cor 16:12; Titus 3:1). He was, in the broader sense of being one sent out by the church, an apostle. (1Cor 4:9) While Paul was in Palestine Apollos went to Ephesus to preach the Gospel, (Acts 18:22) where he proved to be very eloquent and learned in the Scriptures, though had only known the baptism of John. (Acts 18:24-25) He was further educated by Priscilla and Aquila. (Acts 18:26) Eventually, Apollos went to Corinth where he showed himself to be an expert apologist. (Acts 18:27-28) Some foolish Corinthians were split into factions claiming one church leader over another. (Peter, Paul, Apollos, etc. 1Cor 1:12-17; 3:5-9,21-23; 4:6) Apollos is last mentioned in Titus 3:13 where he is on some sort of journey. Martin Luther and others have guessed that Apollos wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews.

- b) Throughout the New Testament Christians are called to have fellowship with and support other churches and Christians.⁵
- 6) Look at 2Corinthians 8:18-24 – *“We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches; and not only this, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness, taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of his great confidence in you. As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ. Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.”*
- a) How do we, Trinity Reformed Church, do this?
- b) Yes, we believe in Congregationalism, that every local church is autonomous in the sense no one can take it over.
- c) However, autonomous, never means we should be isolated by ourselves. That would be contrary to Scripture and dangerous.
- d) We need to explore how we can have relations with other churches, including exploring denominations.
- 7) You might ask: Why?
- a) First, it is biblical, as we have just read.
- b) To give two particular examples:
- i) Where do we go to find the next pastor of this church?
Notice in Titus, leadership is from within (the “appoint elders” from 1:5) and from without (Paul, Titus, etc.)
- ii) To help with “*pressing needs*” means both the catholic church can help a local church, and the local church can help other churches.

“Our People”

- 1) We read in Titus 3:14 – *“Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.”*
- a) Obviously, Christians should do good works.
- b) Having no fruit (i.e. good works) in one’s life means you probably don’t have faith. James 2:14-26
- c) Notice the focus of this verse, however, is on “pressing needs.”
- d) What exactly those are, the text does not say. However, from the context, it implies both local and catholic needs.
- 2) As our nation is seemingly becoming more hostile to Christianity we Christians Acts 2:45
will be forced to band together more and more. Praise God! Eph 5:16
- a) This will be bad for the country but a blessing to the church. Acts 5:41; 1Pet 1:14-16

⁵ Matt 16:18; John 13:34-35; Acts 2:38,42,47; 20:28; 22:16; Rom 12:10; 1Cor 12:12-14; 2Cor 8:18-24; Eph 1:22-23; 5:23-25; Col 1:18,24; 2:2; 1Tim 3:15; Titus 3:12-13; 1John 1:7

- b) This is made easier when we band together not just as a local body but also with other churches.
- 3) Important question: Who is the “*our people*” in Titus 3:14 when it comes to us?
- a) Clearly, it refers to Christians.
- b) In the ancient world, that was easy, since there had been no splits in the catholic church.
- i) There were non-Christians: Jews, unbelievers (pagans) and heretics (those who rejected or twisted the authority of Christ’s apostles).
- ii) And Christians, those who were apostolic. Acts 2:42; 2Tim 4:15
- c) 1John 4:6 - “*We* (the Apostles) *are from God; he who knows God listens to us* (the Apostles); *he who is not from God does not listen to us* (the Apostles). *By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.*”
- 4) In the modern world this is harder since there have been divisions among those who claim the ancient apostolic (from the Apostles), catholic (universal), orthodox (correct teaching) faith.
- a) *First major division*: The Great Schism of 1054 when the church split into the Eastern Orthodox church and Roman Catholic church.
- b) *Second major division*: The Protestant Reformation of 1517 when the western church split into Protestant and Roman Catholic churches.
- c) There are divisions within these three groups too, whether Protestant, Roman Catholic and/or Eastern Orthodox.
- d) Within Protestants there are: Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Anglican/Episcopalians, Dutch Reformed, Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, etc.
- e) Let alone heretical liberal versions of each. (We have more in common with a conservative Roman Catholic church than a liberal Congregational church!)
- 5) So, who are “*our people*”?
- a) This is a complicated question, however. Let me give some general answers.
- b) When it comes to inter-reacting with individual Christians on the street we (individual Christians) should be broad-minded, generous and liberal (in the good sense).
- i) The Bible does command us to be charitable to fellow Christians. Rom 12:10-21
- ii) As we have read in Titus: “*to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.*” – Titus 3:1b-2
- c) The Scripture also warns us to flee false teaching and overtly immoral (false) believers. 1Cor 5:2,11-13; 10:14; 2Thes 3:6,13
- As we have read in Titus: “*Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.*” – Titus 3:10-11
- d) The more you officially bind yourself with another person, or group, the higher the standards become. 2Cor 6:14
- i) Whether about personal things (marriage, business, family, etc.)
- ii) Or especially church things (i.e. worship, teaching, the sacraments), such as joining a local church or a denomination.
- e) This is why it is critical for a church to know what theological tradition it believes is the most biblical.

6) So, from a conservative Reformed Congregational perspective, who should we, (Trinity Reformed Church) have fellowship with? Going from worst to best.

[*Note:* We are talking about how the church collectively acts, not necessarily individuals within this church. I have Roman Catholic friends though I would never join the Roman Catholic Church.]

[Also, this simple guide can be helpful on determining where you go to church when on vacation!]

a) Those who reject such core doctrines as the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the Gospel, and/or promote gross immorality we should have no fellowship with on any level.

Examples: Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, militant theologically liberals Protestants (i.e. most modern Congregationalists), Oneness Pentecostals, etc.

b) Those who worship the same God (i.e. believe in the Trinity, the deity of Christ, etc.) but twist or reject the core teaching of the Gospel that justification is by faith alone, we should have no fellowship with.

Examples: Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholics, liberal Evangelicals.

c) Those who are conservative Protestant Christians, but have drifted from the Reformation, and affirm such doctrines as libertarian free will, we at best should be guarded about, and probably have no formal fellowship with.

Examples: Arminian Baptists, Methodists, Fundamentalists, Charismatics, many conservative Evangelicals

d) *Conservative* (not the liberal versions of) Protestants of the Reformation who are not (fully) Reformed Congregationalists we can have fellowship with though probably would not join one of their denominations.

Examples: Presbyterians who reject local control of the church, Dutch Reformed, Anglicans, Reformed Baptists, Lutherans.

e) Those Conservative Protestants of the Reformation who are from our Puritan Reformed heritage and believe in Congregational government we can have full fellowship with.

Examples: Conservative Reformed Congregationalists (though only a tiny few exist today) and Presbyterians who believe in local control of the church.

Conclusion

1) Look how Paul concludes this magisterial epistle: "*All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.*" – Titus 3:15

2) These greetings are catholic, between Christians of different local churches.

3) Notice the phrase "greet those who love us in the faith".

a) Who is the "us"? The Apostles

b) We are called to be apostolic (i.e. biblical) in our faith.

c) This love is rooted in trust in Christ.

4) Thus the Apostle can declare to all Christians: "*Grace be with you all.*"

a) We already have the full grace of being justified & adopted by/for God through Christ.

b) The Apostle also prays we continue to receive grace in our sanctification.