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PROPHETS AND PROPHECIES

Jeffrey Khoo

Are there prophets today? The Charismatics would say yes. They say God continues to speak to His people through His voice, His angels, visions and dreams. They claim that God reveals to them in extra-biblical ways things that are yet to happen whether in the world, in the church, or in their personal lives. Question is: Does God still speak to His people in such extraordinary ways just like He did in the days of Moses and the Prophets, and in the days of Jesus Christ and His Apostles?

Another questionable view held by the Charismatics is that a prophecy today can be fallible. They say a prophecy from God can contain mistakes. An example of this they say is the prophecy of Agabus in Acts 21:8-14. Can a true prophet make a mistake in his predictions? Is it possible for a prophet to prophesy fallibly? If his prophecy is fallible, then is not God who gave him that prophecy fallible as well? Is God fallible? Can God make mistakes?

Meaning of Prophecy

Before we consider the prophecy of Agabus, let us understand what prophecy is. The word “prophecy” comes from the Greek word *prophemi* which literally means to speak before, to foretell, or to predict. This is basically what we find the prophets in both the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT) doing—foretelling or predicting future events as revealed by God who knows all things, even things that have yet to happen.

The prophets were called servants of God and spokesmen of God (Jer 35:15). As such, it is impossible for a true prophet to make a false prophecy, or a mistaken prophecy, or a prophecy that will not come true. It is important to note that with their foretelling also came a forthtelling—a preaching against sin and a call for sinners to repent of their ways.

Many of the prophets wrote the Scriptures (eg Isaiah, Jeremiah,

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Ezekiel, Daniel and others). The prophets spoke with divine authority—“Thus saith the LORD”. Many of the things they said became Scripture. Now the question we want to ask is this: Does God still send out such prophets that speak God’s Word with such authority, and can His people continue to expect prophecies from God with regard to future events?

Cessation of Prophecies

The biblical answer is no. There are no prophets today and no more prophecies today like those of the OT and NT. Why? It is vital to understand that the prophets and their prophecies flourished in a time when God’s Word (the Bible) was still in the process of being written and completed.

It is significant to note that after the OT was completed—all 39 books—the last being Malachi, there followed a lengthy period of silence when there were no prophets and no prophecies. This lasted for 400 years until John the Baptist came into the scene to herald the coming of the Messiah and inauguration of the NT. John the Baptist came in the spirit of the prophet Elijah to announce the coming of the Messiah, the Apostles prophesied and wrote the NT, and to some NT church members the gift of prophecy was given (eg, Philip’s virgin daughters in Acts 21:9 and Agabus in verse 10).

Know that the NT was written in the first century. The Lord used His Apostles to write the 27 books of the NT. Once completed, prophecies would cease. How do we know this? Where in the Bible does it say that once the NT Scriptures are completed, prophecies shall cease for all time?

The answer is in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” Prophecies and knowledge through visions and dreams shall fail and vanish away; they shall be removed when “that which is perfect is come”. Question: What is this perfect thing? It is the Bible—the Canonical Scriptures (all 66 books). The revelatory gifts like prophecies, tongues, and knowledge through visions and dreams will all be taken away once the Bible is complete, once the last book of the NT is written, God will cease from speaking through such spectacular ways because the believers would now have the whole Bible—perfect, complete, totally sufficient and absolutely

authoritative on all matters of Christian faith and life. No one is to add to it or subtract from it (Rev 22:18, 19).

False Prophets Today

Now if that is the case, then how is it that today, we still find in the Church people who call themselves prophets and are prophesying in the name of Christ, saying they have a Word from the Lord, and saying, “Thus saith the LORD”?

In light of what the Bible says about the cessation of prophets and prophecies after the Canonical Scriptures are completed, there can be but one conclusion—the so-called prophets and prophecies today are false ones. Did not Jesus already warn, “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” (Matt 24:4-5), “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.” (Matt 24:11), “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” (Matt 24:24).

Many of such false prophets are found in the Charismatic churches today. Beware of them. Jesus already warned that all these false prophets who prophesy in His Name will be judged on that final day, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matt 7:15-23).

Many lives are destroyed by these false prophets through their false prophecies. There have been cases of how a young man thought he had received a prophecy from the Lord to marry a certain lady in the church. Not wanting to disobey or reject a “prophecy”, both got married only to divorce soon after. Did God make a mistake?

A Fallible Prophecy?

Owing to such cases of mistaken prophecies, Charismatics and New Calvinists are advocating that the prophecies that God gives today can be fallible and errant. Wayne Grudem, John Piper and Mark Driscoll are among those who propound such a view that prophecies from God can be fallible. One example cited as proof of this is Agabus in Acts 21:10-12. According to them, Agabus' prophecy, "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." (v11b) did not come true. They say there are mistakes in the prophecy. Alleged mistake #1: The Jews did not bind Paul but the Romans. Alleged mistake #2: The Jews did not deliver Paul to the Romans.

We do not believe Agabus' prophecy was fallible or contains mistakes. We believe all prophecies that come from God are infallible and inerrant. The contentions of those who claim that Agabus gave a fallible or mistaken prophecy can be easily refuted by just one statement in verse 11, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost." It must be noted that Agabus' prophecy was not really Agabus' but the Holy Spirit's. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity. He is God, and God is infallible. The Holy Spirit is also called the Spirit of Truth—He does not lie (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13). Man makes mistakes but not God. Although penned by human beings, the Bible is God's Word infallible and inerrant. Man was the pen, the instrument, but God was the Author, the Writer. Similarly, Agabus was the mouth but God was the Speaker—"Thus saith the Holy Ghost."

The fulfilment text in Acts 21:27-36 tells us the prophecy was fulfilled precisely. As predicted, the Jews seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple intending to kill him (vv30-31), the Romans bound him with chains (v33), and when the Romans took him away, they shouted, "Away with him". In Acts 28:17, Paul himself testified, "Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans."

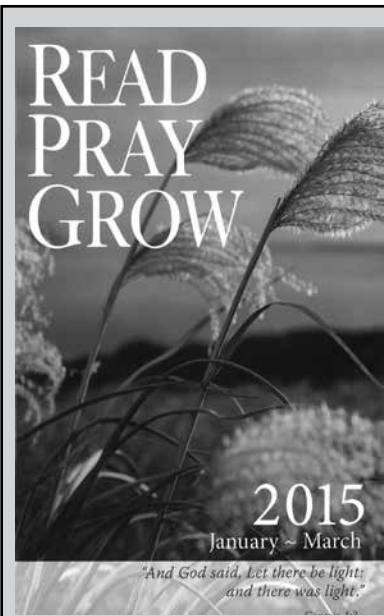
Dear brethren, believe the Scriptures. Do not believe the many false prophets out there today who claim to speak in God's name. Know that God never sent them. Heed God's warning in Jeremiah 23:16, 21, 25, 26, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision

of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. ... I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. ... I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart.”

Why False Prophets?

Why does God allow these false prophets to do what they do? It is to test us, whether we love Him or not. The Lord commands us, “Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.” (Deut 13:3-4). Did you pass the test?

The Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo is Principal of the Far Eastern Bible College and Pastor of True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church.



**READ
PRAY
GROW**

2015
January ~ March

*"And God said, Let there be light:
and there was light."*

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REFORMATION PILGRIMAGE

Joycelyn Siew-Miang Chng

Introduction

Church history is an important discipline in theological studies. While it may not involve the study of the Bible as intensively as some of the other Biblical subjects, it is nonetheless pertinent and full of instruction for believers. In the recently concluded semester, this was one of the main lessons that had been impressed upon my heart when I studied the first part of Church History which dealt with the pre-Reformation period.

I am thus most thankful to the Lord for the wonderful opportunity to be part of this Reformation pilgrimage led by Rev Dr and Mrs Jeffrey Khoo, to visit the countries that figured prominently in the 16th Century Protestant Reformation and learn more about the great reformers whom God raised up and used for His glory and purpose. The significant stops in this pilgrimage included Wittenberg, Erfurt, Eisenach, Worms and Constance in Germany, Strasbourg in France, and Zurich and Geneva in Switzerland. This was indeed very much a study trip as much as a pilgrimage, for as we visited the historical sites, we were taught about men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli and John Hus, and their work for the Lord.

This paper is a record and testimony of the lessons that I have learnt from this pilgrimage, focusing primarily on the reformers. It also includes some of the other precious insights gained during this pilgrimage.

Lessons from the Life and Work of Martin Luther

The one name that is almost always the first to come to mind when one talks about the 16th Century Protestant Reformation, is Martin Luther. He is known as the “Father of the Protestant Reformation”. Thank God that we got to visit the places in Germany where he had spent time during the important phases in his life. As I piece together the various glimpses that I got from each of these places, namely Erfurt, Wittenberg, Worms

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and Eisenach, as well as the devotion sessions by Dr Khoo, I have a clearer picture of his life, struggles and work for the Lord and the Truth. Truly, the earlier parts of his life tell of how God had to reform this man before God used him to reform the Church.

10 November 1483	Martin Luther was born in Eisleben
1484	Moved to Mansfeld
1488 - 1500	Went to school in Mansfeld, Magdeburg and Eisenach
1501	Studied in Erfurt
1505	Awarded Master of Arts
2 July 1505	Took his vows as a monk
17 July 1505	Entered into the monastery of the Augustinian hermits in Erfurt
1507	Ordained as a priest
1511	Bible professor in Wittenberg
1512	Awarded Doctor of Theology
1517	Luther's 95 theses against the selling of indulgences marked the beginning of the Reformation
1518	Luther cross-examined by the papal envoy Cajetan in Augsburg
1519	Disputation with Eck and Karlstadt on papal primacy and the infallibility of church councils in Leipzig
1520	Threatened with excommunication
17/18 April 1521	Imperial Diet in Worms - Luther refused to recant his teachings - outlawed by Emperor Charles V
4 May 1521 - 1 March 1522	Luther stayed at Wartburg Castle under the name of „Squire George“
December 1521 to February 1522	Translation of the New Testament
September 1522	Publication of the first edition of the New Testament (September testament)
December 1522	Publication of the second edition (December testament)
1525	Marriage to Katharina von Bora
1534	First complete edition of the bible in the German language
18 February 1546	Luther died in Eisleben

Biography of Martin Luther (displayed in Wartburg Castle in Eisenach)

Erfurt

Martin Luther, who was born in 1483, spent about ten years of his life in Erfurt, starting from 1501 when he was 18. Erfurt, capital of Thuringia, is situated at a geographical crossroad. There were marshes here, which became its natural defence system, as well as provided fertile land for the people to grow wheat etc. A special crop unique to Erfurt called “woad” is grown here, and it is used to produce the colour blue. This made Erfurt rich, so much so that it became the first city to have a university financed by its people. This is the University of Erfurt, which was founded in 1392, and it was where Luther studied philosophy from 1501, obtaining his degree in 1503. He continued with his postgraduate studies here and was awarded Master of Arts in 1505.

Around this time, Luther began to question the meaning of life and how he could go to heaven. After experiencing the trauma of having one of his best friends killed and a terrible thunderstorm that broke over him,

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he entered the St Augustine's Monastery in Erfurt. He lived as a monk in this Augustinian monastery from 1505 to 1511. It was during this period that Luther was converted to the Lord, and it is no surprise that he later viewed the years spent here as the most influential in his life.



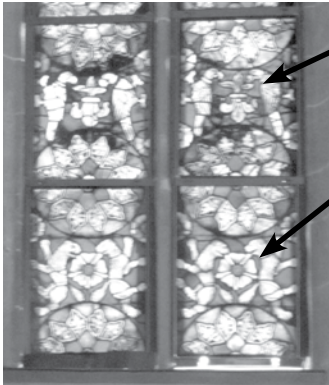
*St Augustine's
Evangelical Monastery in Erfurt*



◀ *Augustinian monks came to Erfurt in 1266. They begged and were seen as a weird cult. In 1276, they managed to acquire this land located outside the city to build the St Augustine's Church and Monastery. The building took more than 50 years to complete, from 1277 to 1330. This was made possible because they were given permission to go out to work for pay and be exempted from paying tax to Vatican. They were also able to issue letters of indulgences. The money obtained was used to build the church.*

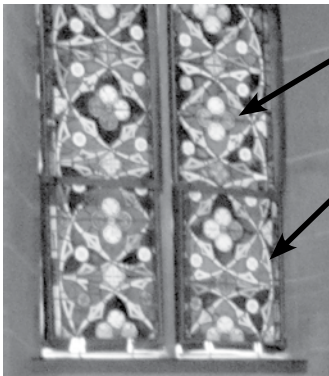
St Augustine's Monastery

There is a church, cloisters and courtyards in the monastery compound. One feature of the St Augustine's Church is the stained glass windows (dated 1310-1330) with designs which are said to depict the following among others:



*Parrots: depict purity
Said to represent the monks, who are only to repeat what they hear, not interpret.*

*Rose: supposedly an emblem for Mary
Said to have inspired Luther later when he wanted to come up with his code of arms/seal. He would have seen this each time he came into the church. This symbol is known as "Luther Rose", and is now a widely recognised symbol for Lutheranism.*



Design with 4 petals representing the 4 cardinal points (N, S, E, W); 4 gospels; 4 seasons

Design with 3 petals representing the Trinity



Another significance is seen when $4 + 3 = 7$, which symbolises perfection. This is also seen in the design of the cloisters.

Another feature in the church is a rectangular area made of stone on the ground in front of the altar. The monks (including Luther) had to lie down flat on the stone to take an oath to serve God. It struck me how they

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took serving God so seriously such that they had to take an oath. Not only that, the posture with which they did it tells me how it must be done with much humility. The lesson that I learnt here is that I must not take lightly my service to God and I must serve Him humbly. This certainly must also apply to the study of God's Word. And while we do not take an oath like the monks did, may the Lord help me to always remember how He had so graciously called me and how I yielded to Him and heeded His call. That to me, is my personal oath, and I pray that the Lord will help me to keep it only by His strength and enabling.



▲ *Stone before altar
where monks laid to take oath*



▲ *Chapter room*

The Chapter room was where Luther and all the other monks would gather every morning. I learnt that it is so called because a chapter of the rule book would be read to them each day. Tasks for the day would thereafter be allocated to the monks. Things were conducted slightly differently on Fridays, where a confession time was added after the allocation of tasks. Confession was done in front of fellow monks. I appreciated that this was one of the things that had showed forth

Luther's desperate struggle with sin and his earnest desire to do well. He worked very hard as a monk and yet could find no peace. Here in the Chapter room, Luther would confess to every little sin and even whipped himself until he almost became unconscious. How many of us would find confessing our sins in front of others daunting, what more one such as Luther who was so conscious of his lack of holiness. But surely this was the working of the Lord, breaking him down, and preparing him to receive the Word of God in Romans 1:17 in due time. This therefore was the personal reformation that God had wrought in Luther's life, before God used him mightily to bring about the Reformation in Europe. This also reminded me that we cannot serve God unless we ourselves have known and tasted of God's saving work in our lives.

Some of the items that we saw in the exhibit BIBLE-MONASTERY-LUTHER were the printing press which was integral in making the Bible available to the people, and other items typical in the life of an Augustinian monk.



▲ *The bell governed the activities of the monks. They generally had 2 types of activities: *aura* (prayer) & labour (work). They led a rigorous life — their day started at 2am with morning prayer, and only had breakfast at midday, after their tasks and midday prayers.*

▲ *More than 250 of Luther's writings were printed at Erfurt, including one of the earliest protestant hymn books.*

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The monastery later reformed and became Protestant after Luther preached the Protestant faith in Erfurt in 1521. According to the guide, the last monk in St Augustine's Monastery died in 1555. It is now a conference and meeting centre of the Evangelical Church in Central Germany. We were also informed that it is a place for debates and conferences on political and social issues. With a focus on "outcome-oriented dialogue between Church, business, academia and politics" as well as "public welfare" and "entrepreneurial courage", its compromise with the world can be seen.

St Mary's Cathedral & St Severin's Church



During these years as a monk in Erfurt, Luther was ordained as a priest. This took place in 1507 in St Mary's Cathedral (also known as Erfurt Cathedral), a Roman Catholic Church. This was also the place that resisted the Protestant faith, and as the diocese of the Bishop of Mainz, remained Catholic together with its surrounding area. Therefore although Thuringia is a Protestant state, Erfurt as the capital is 50% Protestant and 50% Catholic. However, of note is the fact that only 15% of the population is religious.



▲ *An illustration of the falsehood of the Roman Catholic Church: The sad sight of a figure of a dead Jesus lying in a coffin.*



▲ *What joy it was then when Dr Khoo read God's Word from Rom 3:9-26, and shared how Luther taught mainly the doctrine of justification by faith alone. I was encouraged to know that Luther quoted Matt 15:9 in the preface of his Bible; that it is not human tradition but Holy Scripture that gets us saved.*

Wittenberg

Many did not understand when sometime after his ordination, Luther began studying the Bible earnestly in the monastery in Erfurt. However, the vicar general Johannes von Staupitz encouraged him in his Bible studies, and recommended him for the post of professor of Theology in the University of Wittenberg founded in 1502 by Frederick III (the Wise), Elector of Saxony. Luther thus arrived in Wittenberg in September 1508, and stayed in an Augustinian monastery, where he was able to study the Bible while lecturing in the university. He returned to Erfurt after autumn of 1509 and continued with his lectures there.

In November 1510, Luther and a fellow monk were sent to Rome as representatives of the monastery in Erfurt to protest against the union pursued by Staupitz between the stricter and the lax monasteries of the Saxonian-Thuringian order province. The journey was unsuccessful in terms of its mission, but it opened Luther's eyes to the wickedness, ignorance and superstitions of the papacy. He returned to Erfurt in March 1511 and joined Staupitz in his efforts for mediation, thereby pitting himself against the majority at the Erfurt monastery. Staupitz subsequently transferred Luther to Wittenberg in late summer of 1511. He studied in the University of Wittenberg, obtaining his doctorate in 1512.

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Luther House



▲ *Here at Wittenberg, Luther lived in the Augustinian monastery as a monk. The monastery was later dissolved, and he continued to live here with his family after his marriage in 1525 to Katharina von Bora, a nun who wrote to him for help after reading his writings and whom he helped to escape. It is now known as Lutherhaus (or Luther House), a museum that recalls the life, work and impact of Luther the Protestant Reformer.*



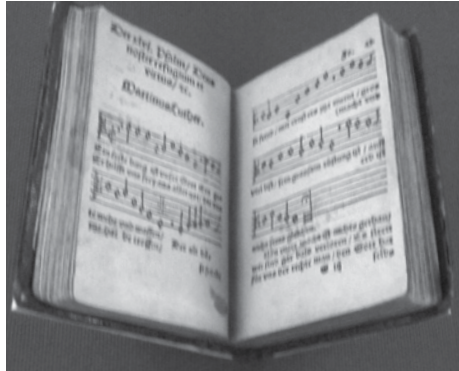
▲ *Luther's Living Room: Luther could only afford to decorate his living room 10 years after his marriage.*

▲ *The main feature is the tiled stove. Also seen is the table where Luther and his friends had the famous Table Talks.*



◀ *Luther's Pulpit:*

Luther ministered at the city church, and preached a large portion of his sermons from this pulpit. He was 1.63m tall.



▲ *The earliest print of Luther's hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" which he wrote in Autumn 1527, was found in the first edition of Joseph Klug's hymn book of 1529. This is the only known copy of the second edition of 1533.*

At the Luther House, I learnt that Luther liked to drink beer and wine. He is quoted, "Whoever drinks beer, he is quick to sleep; whoever sleeps long, does not sin; whoever does not sin, enters Heaven! Thus, let us drink beer!" Another quote goes, "Beer is made by men, wine by God." Furthermore, his wife ran a brewery. This taught me that a man, no matter how mightily he might be used by God, is not sinlessly perfect. We who study the lives of these reformers must never blindly accept and follow all their practices as if they can do no wrong. Discernment is key and God's Word must always be the standard.

City Church (St Mary's Church)

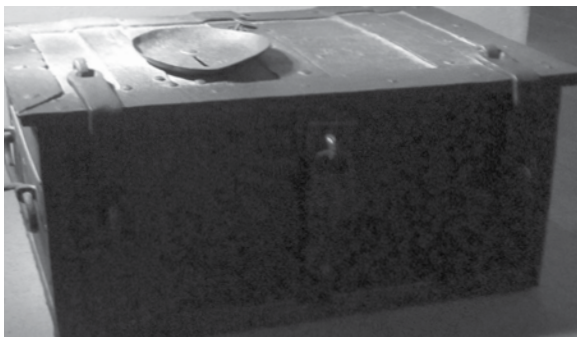
During this time, Luther preached Christian truth like no other priests had done before him. Then from 1515, indulgences were sold in Wittenberg amongst other places. The believer is promised remission of the punishment due to his sins with the purchase of a letter of indulgence. The people were told that the money was used to build the new St Peter's basilica in Rome. However, much of the money was actually used by Albrecht von Hohenzollern, the archbishop of Magdeburg, and also of

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Mainz. He had acquired both offices with money, taking loans from the powerful Fugger bank in Augsburg in order to pay the large fees to Rome. Dominican monk Johann Tetzel was in fact engaged by him to organise the sale of indulgences so that he might repay his debts. Luther preached strongly against Tetzel and made known from the pulpit his doubts about the indulgences.



▲ *In 1512, Luther was commissioned to preach at the City Church. This is the site of many of his sermons (about 2000 preached here according to the guide). Known as the Mother Church of the Reformation, it is where the first Protestant service was held on the Christmas of 1521. Protestant services held in the German language have their roots here, and services feature congregational singing and the distribution of Holy Communion. This was where Luther was married in 1525, and also where his 6 children were baptised.*



Box used in sale of indulgences



◀ *Door of the Castle Church:*

The original wooden door was destroyed in 1760 by fire in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763).

In its place stands a bronze door that was installed in 1858, a gift of Prussian king Frederick William IV.

The 95 theses are inscribed on the door in their original Latin form.

Those who say that as soon as the money clinks in the chest, the soul flies out of purgatory, preach only human doctrines.

Any Christian who is truly repentant has a right to full remission of all penalty and guilt - without any letter of indulgence.

▲ *2 of the 95 theses in English (displayed in Luther House)*

Castle Church

Luther eventually wrote the 95 theses against the evils of indulgences, and nailed them to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg on 31 October 1517, at noon. This was the act that marked the start of the Reformation.

The Castle Church was built by order of the prince, Frederick III (the Wise), Elector of Saxony in 1497. From 1507, it also served as the university church/chapel. A close association existed between the University of Wittenberg (renowned in those days as a centre of learning and theology in Europe) and the Castle Church as both were founded by Frederick III. Interestingly, I learnt that the door of the Castle Church served somewhat like a bulletin board in those days. Therefore, it was not unusual for Luther to have nailed his theses (written in Latin) on it.

Many people read the theses when they went to the church the following day which was "All Saints' Day" and word soon spread. Luther also sent a copy to archbishop Albrecht, who passed it on to Rome on suspicion of heresy. But Luther did not stop here. I learnt that he spread the message in the German language through his "Sermon on Indulgences and Grace". In fact, one guide shared that the two things Luther did to pass on the message was to (1) expound the Bible through sermons (2) put new lyrics to German folk songs.



Site where Luther burnt the papal bull (this oak was planted in 1830)

The Luther Oak at Lutherstrasse

Pope Leo X soon demanded that Luther recant. Luther refused, and the situation escalated until the pope excommunicated him and issued a bull (edict) on 15 June 1520, condemning him and ordering the burning of his writings. Luther responded by gathering his scholar friends from the university and burning the papal bull publicly. It is said that an oak was planted a day later at the place where this took place. Thereafter, Luther denounced the pope as antichrist in his writings.

Dr Khoo led in the reading of 1 John 2:17-22 during devotion that evening, and the Bible is indeed clear that “He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son”. Verses 20-21 say, “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.” This must surely have been the experience of Luther, who had come to the truth through the illumination of the Holy Spirit and by the reading of the Word of God. The importance of reading and studying God’s Word is very much highlighted through Luther’s life. It was only when he read God’s Word for himself in the Erfurt monastery that light began to shine. As Psalm 119:130 says, “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” And when he continued studying the scriptures, the truths of God’s Word were revealed to him. These truths so took hold of him that he was now able to stand firm against those who were opposed to Christ and His Word.

I realise that a firm foundation built upon God's Word is necessary if we are to remain faithful to God in the face of persecution and oppression. May the Lord help me to keep in mind the importance of studying His Holy Word and to never get tired of doing so.



◄ *The Roman Catholic Church reacted to the burning of the papal bull by requesting Emperor Charles V to deal with the case in an imperial diet (parliament) that he was presiding over in Worms. Luther's case was heard from April 16 to 18, 1521.*



▲ *Monument built in 1868 to commemorate Luther's appearance before Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms. Other (pre) Reformation figures such as Savonarola, John Hus, Peter Waldo and John Wycliffe are depicted around Luther.*

Worms

When Luther was summoned to appear before the Emperor, his friends told him not to go because they were afraid that what had happened to John Hus will happen to him too. Nevertheless, on 16 April 1521, Luther arrived in Worms, and on the next day, he appeared before the Diet. When he was asked if he would recant the doctrines he had written about in his books, Luther asked for time to think it over. After a night of prayer and reflection, Luther appeared before the Emperor again on 18 April. He replied that he cannot recant as he is subject to the Scriptures and his conscience is captive to the Word of God. Although

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this created an uproar, Luther was able to leave as Frederick the Wise (also a member of the Diet of Worms) had earlier obtained a guarantee for Luther's safety if he would appear before the Diet.

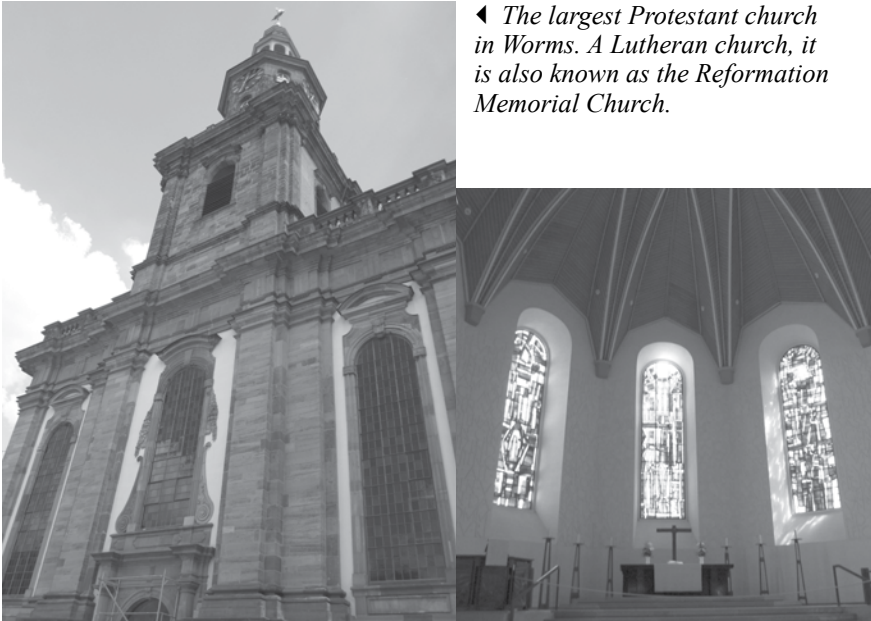


◀ *According to the guide, although the Diet was held at the Town Hall, Luther's hearing before the emperor was conducted at the bishop's palace instead. Apparently, Luther had jumped down these steps shouting in joy after he left the hearing. Spanish soldiers guarding the palace shouted after him "heretic to the fire". Luther went back to his hotel and drank hot beer. The glass broke and word got round that it was a miracle. This became the first legend concerning Luther.*

The Edict of Worms was later issued by Emperor Charles V on 25 May 1521. It declared Luther an outlaw, and forbade anyone from giving any form of protection to him. We were told that there are about 1000 Jews, 1000 Catholics and 3000 Protestants in Worms today. Most of the people in Worms chose to follow Luther's stand while the nobles took the side of the bishop.

What struck me most about Luther's appearance at the Diet of Worms, was the fact that he requested for time to consider when he was asked if he would recant. He took time for a thorough reflection and examination of his writings against God's Word. I believe thoughts of the consequences that would befall him would surely have come to his mind during that night of consideration. Yet, despite this, he still came to the conclusion that he had no other choice but to stand for God. His was a measured, considered, and a reasonable faith. It was not blind zeal or a case of bravura. It taught me how humble Luther was, that he did not want to take for granted that he could not err in his writings. He knew well that God's Word alone is the standard and yardstick for truth. It also showed me that indeed, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." (2 Cor 13:8).

Holy Trinity Church



◄ *The largest Protestant church in Worms. A Lutheran church, it is also known as the Reformation Memorial Church.*

Most of the people in Worms eventually became Lutherans. But while St Magnus Church was the first church in Worms to convert to Protestantism, there had not been a Protestant church built in the city. However, when part of the Worms Cathedral was destroyed in 1689, the people of Worms saw it as a punishment from God for having built a grand municipal hall but not a Protestant church. The Holy Trinity Church was hence built on the site where the former Town Hall stood, in memorial of the reformation. The current church was rebuilt after WWII, and boasts a modern interior with a preserved facade.

Wartburg at Eisenach



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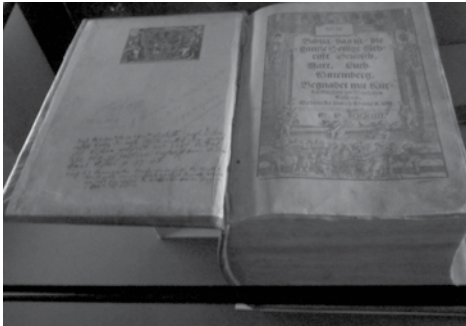
Luther left Worms and was on his way back to Wittenberg when he was “abducted” and brought to Wartburg, a castle atop the hill overlooking Eisenach. This stay in Wartburg was actually arranged by Frederick the Wise as he had anticipated hostilities against Luther even before the issue of the Edict of Worms. Frederick the Wise had been helping and protecting Luther, and interestingly, I learnt that this was not because he took the same religious stand as Luther for he was said to have remained a lifelong Roman Catholic. It was rather his care for Luther as his subject, him being the Elector of Saxony, that he protected Luther. Surely it must all have been the Lord’s moving of the heart of Frederick the Wise, choosing to use him to care for His servant. “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.” (Prov 21:1).



◀ *Luther stayed at Wartburg Castle from 4 May 1521 to 1 March 1522, under the name “Squire George” or “Junker Jörg”. He was no stranger to Eisenach, having gone to school here in 1500 before entering the University of Erfurt.*

◀ *Luther lived and worked in this room, once a noblemen’s prison. Although the furnishings of the Luther room are the only items in the castle that have been preserved from earlier times, only the footstool made out of a whale vertebra dates back to Luther’s days. It is said that Luther had one of his most productive creative periods during this 10-month stay in Wartburg. He wrote 13 treatises including “On Confession, Whether the Pope has Power to Order”, “On the Monk’s Vow”, “On the Misuse of Masses” etc.*

While in Wartburg, Luther translated the New Testament from Greek into German in just 11 weeks from December 1521 to February 1522. We were told that the German language he used in this translation became the High German language that is still in use today, especially in newspapers and official communications. Apparently, Luther had written to his friend Johann Lang, “I also want to translate the New Testament into German; our people demand it.” I thank God that He never leaves His people without His Word. In His providence, God raises up faithful men to make His Word available to His people in their own languages so that they can understand what God’s Word says. How else are we able to live by “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4)?



▲ *The first complete edition of the Luther Bible in German was ready in 1534 (displayed in Luther House, Wittenberg)*



▲ *Luther’s travel spoon: A gift from Luther to his friend Caspar Aquila who worked with him on the translation of the Bible from 1524 to 1527. Features biblical sayings in Latin and Hebrew.*

Concluding Reflections on Martin Luther

The Reformation in Germany could not have been achieved by Martin Luther alone. God in his sovereign orchestration, brought together men and other instruments so that His plan was fulfilled in His time. As our guide in Wittenberg pointed out, these three factors had greatly aided Luther in his efforts to reform the Church: (1) support from co-workers, chiefly Philip Melanchthon, (2) support from nobility, Frederick the Wise, and (3) technology in the form of the printing press.

Melanchthon was a language expert, and he wrote the notes for some of Luther’s dissertations. He drew up the Augsburg Confession, the central creed for the Protestant Church, with Luther’s help. It

presented the great doctrines of Scripture including justification by faith. It encourages me to know that God is gracious to give many people the privilege to have a part in His work. Although we may not be in the forefront, we can still offer ourselves to the Lord to serve Him in whatever area He has for us. This is God's wonderful condescension and grace upon us, who are but sinners saved by grace!

On another note, I could not help but notice how Luther has been somewhat turned into a commercial figure in some of these places. Little statues of Luther are made and sent to many important people, his wedding anniversary is celebrated with much festivities every second weekend of June, and a shop selling "Luther" sweets and chocolates was observed.



May the Lord be merciful that the true significance of the Protestant Reformation will never be forgotten.

Lessons from the Life and Work of John Calvin

Another important figure of the 16th Century Protestant Reformation is John Calvin. It is acknowledged that in the Reformation which was a work of God, Luther was used to "set up the new structure, solid and strong, resting firmly upon the foundation of God's Word." But it was Calvin whom God used, for the "completion of the building." Having been blessed with a keen mind, his treatises and commentaries on Scripture remain "an abiding influence in the Christian Church." This is indeed a truth that we of the reformed faith in Singapore can testify to. I thank God that we got to visit two cities that have close links with Calvin — Strasbourg in France and Geneva in Switzerland.

Background

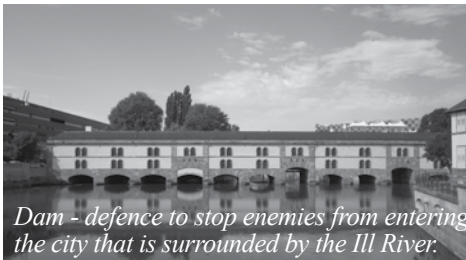
Calvin was born in Noyon, France, in July 1509. He studied in the University of Paris to prepare for the priesthood upon the instruction of his father, but left later to study law at Orleans when his father changed his mind. After the death of his father, Calvin returned to Paris. Although the details of his conversion is not known, it is said that by 1533, Calvin had already "been deeply influenced by the doctrines of the German

reformers” and converted to the reformed, biblical faith. He openly sided with the Protestants in Paris who were persecuted, and helped Nicholas Cop, rector of the university prepare a speech which called for reform of the Church after the example of Luther. After this was found out, King Francis I ordered for their arrest. Calvin escaped and eventually found refuge in Basel, Switzerland in 1535.

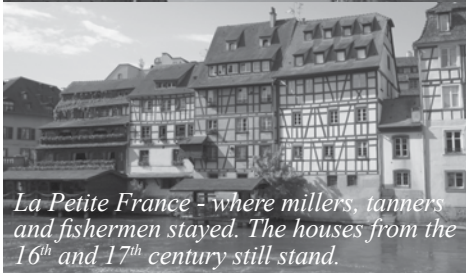
In Basel, Calvin wrote his treatise on the Christian religion, Calvin’s Institutes or *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, which was first published in Latin in 1536 and later in French in 1541. Calvin had written it to the king of France, to show him that the French people who were persecuted for receiving the reformed faith (known as the Huguenots) were a peaceful people and were not heretics.

Strasbourg

In 1536, after slightly more than a year in Basel, Calvin decided to



Dam - defence to stop enemies from entering the city that is surrounded by the Ill River.



La Petite France - where millers, tanners and fishermen stayed. The houses from the 16th and 17th century still stand.

◀ *Strasbourg is a city which brings together the culture of Germany and France.*

At the time of the Reformation, Strasbourg was part of Germany.

In 1529, the decision was made by the city council that the whole city would adopt Lutheranism.

According to the guide, it was a city with a lot of social tension, as Protestantism is not just about theology, but also about sociology (opposes sale of indulgences etc).

Although it is supposed to be the most Protestant city of France now, 70% of the population is Catholic, 20% Protestant, with a small number being Calvinist.

This reversal came about because King Louis XIV of France took over the city in 1681, bringing it under France. Wary of the Protestants’ work ethic and sociological impact, he enticed them with tax exemption to convert to Roman Catholicism.

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retire in Strasbourg and concentrate on his studies there.

However, Calvin's plan got disrupted. On the journey from Basel to Strasbourg, he made a stopover in Geneva, intending to stay only one night. When William Farel, a French reformer doing the work of the gospel in Geneva, knew that Calvin was there, he went to see Calvin to get him to stay on as there was a desperate need for a pastor in Geneva. Calvin testified later that it was more of an imprecation from Farel, which left him with no choice but to desist from going to Strasbourg. Therefore in 1536, Calvin stayed in Geneva and preached the Word of God there with Farel. They emphasised a strict discipline which was too strict for many. In 1538, Farel and Calvin were banished from Geneva as a result of the schemes of the Libertines, who were those who resented the strict discipline imposed.

Calvin went to Strasbourg after being chased out of Geneva and met Martin Bucer, a German reformer who was based there and pastoring the St Thomas Church which had converted to the Protestant faith in 1524.

► *St Thomas Church:*
It is a Lutheran church, and is the largest Protestant church in France. Vertical lines feature strongly in the Gothic architecture style and it is said that the purpose is so that the worshipper's eyes will be turned upward.



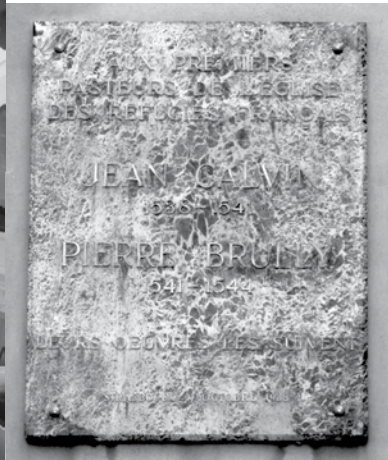
Bucer was said to have employed the same kind of remonstrance and insistence as Farel did when he invited Calvin to pastor a French refugee congregation in Strasbourg. This marked the beginning of Calvin's three-year stay in Strasbourg from 1538 to 1541.



◄ Many French refugees (Huguenots) who were persecuted for their faith came to Strasbourg. The Lutherans allowed them to stay, but gave 2 conditions: (1) their church must not be built by the main street (2) no steeple and bell. Calvinists were not well received by Lutherans because of differences in views and language.



◄ Calvin compiled a psalm book, which is still used by the church today.



▲ The French Refugee Church that was pastored by John Calvin. It is located in a courtyard, with no steeple or bell.

These three years of ministry in Strasbourg were described by Calvin as the best years of his life. He also married Idelette de Bure, a widow, and they had a son who died in infancy. Although Calvin met with great opposition in Geneva, it was no doubt part of God's plan and purpose, to use him mightily for the work in Strasbourg. And that work started by Calvin still bears its witness today. I was reminded that God truly works all things out for good (Rom 8:28), praise the Lord!

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Geneva

Meanwhile, by God's providence, there was a change in the political situation in Geneva, and Calvin was invited to return in 1541. During the evening devotion, it was impressed upon my heart that this was surely not an easy decision to make, to return to the people who had rejected him just three years earlier. But Calvin heeded the call and returned to Geneva.

It struck me how Calvin had denied himself and submitted fully to God's will and direction in his life. From this, I learnt the precious lesson that if God wants us to do something, we had better obey. God's plan for our lives is the best, we need only to submit, trust, and obey. Thank God for reminding me of this important truth for this was also the lesson that I had learnt earlier that day, from the sermon by Rev Stephen Khoo who preached from Esther 4:10-17 during the Lord's Day worship.



▲ *Symbol of Geneva today – a cosmopolitan city, where 40% of the 200,000 residents are foreigners*

International Monument of the Reformation

Calvin ministered in Geneva from 1541, until his death in 1564. He ordered the civil and religious life of the city according to the Word of God, and under his spiritual leadership, Geneva became an important city in the Reformation. Calvin was known as the leader of the Reformation at Geneva, and also the dominant figure of the Protestant Reformation after the death of Luther.



International Monument of the Reformation

▲ *This monument was erected in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of Calvin's birth. Its background is an actual section of the former city wall, with the statues cut into the stone of the wall itself.*

From left to right:

William Farel - missionary from Bern, and initiator of the Reformation at Geneva.

John Calvin - leader of the Reformation at Geneva, and depicted with an open Bible in his hands.

Theodore Beza - rector of the newly founded University, and Calvin's successor at the head of the reformed church in 1564. Depicted holding the laws of the academy.

John Knox - Scottish pastor of the first Puritan congregation of the English refugees and one of the earliest coworkers in the translation of the Geneva Bible.

The year 1559 is important in the Calvinian Reformation as these 4 reformers were present together at Geneva. This date is inscribed on both sides of the pedestal.

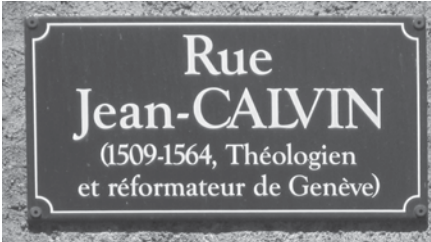


Greek name of Jesus in its abbreviated form

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The motto of Geneva and the aim of the Reformation, Post Tenebras Lux (Latin for After darkness, light), is engraved on the wall.



▲ *Street named after Calvin, where his house was located, a short distance from the cathedral.*



▲ *Lamp from time of Calvin.*

Calvin's House



Saint Peter's Cathedral



▲ *Built between 1150 and 1230, this cathedral was originally a Catholic church. Its style was inspired by the Pantheon in Rome. It was converted to a Protestant church in 1536, during Calvin's first stay in Geneva. Calvin preached many sermons in this cathedral and it became a major centre of the Reformation under him.*

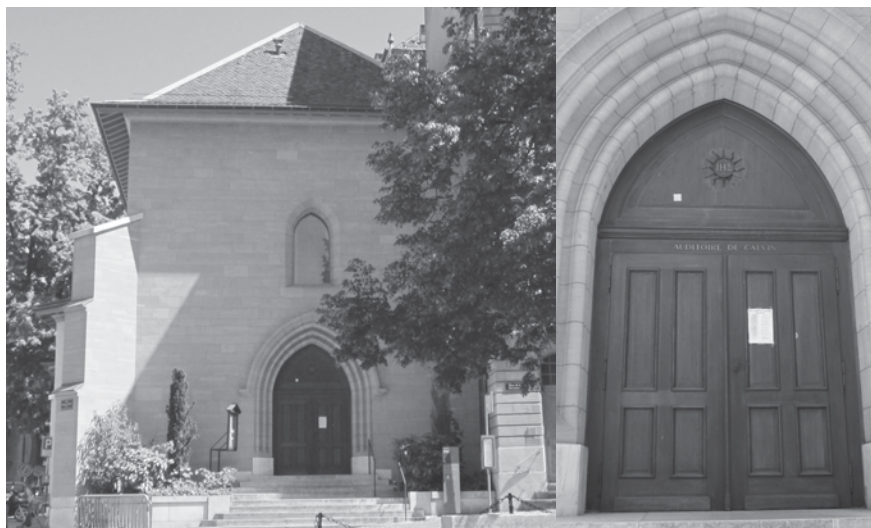


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▲ Calvin's Auditorium

▲ Calvin's Chair:
A chair from Calvin's time. He was
said to have sat in a chair like this.



▲ Also known as John Knox Chapel. Knox preached here after Calvin.
The Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) now worships here every Sunday.

Calvin also founded a Bible College, located a short distance away from the cathedral. In this auditorium, Calvin taught Reformed theology, and we were told that all Protestants in Europe came here in those days to train to be pastors. In the middle of the 16th century, reformers, Protestants, refugees from different countries came together here to pray and to learn of the teaching of Calvin, Knox and Beza. These people include the French, Dutch, German, Italian and Scottish.

Concluding Reflections on John Calvin

Calvin had a weak and sickly body, but he laboured on for the Lord, preaching and teaching the great and wonderful truths of Scripture to many who would come to hear him. Indeed, by his teaching ministry, the truth of God's Word was spread far and wide. He also continued with his writing ministry, and his works are used by God to greatly benefit many Christians even till today. It was Calvin whom God used to really bring the Protestant Reformation to its height. I am much encouraged and instructed by this good example set by Calvin, for he gave all that he had to the Lord, and exhausted all for the Lord. And the Lord so wonderfully blessed his labour for the glory of God.

The account of how God led Calvin to the various stations of ministry in his life also reminded me of the sovereignty of God. Truly, "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD." (Prov 16:33). It is a most pertinent lesson for me, of how I need to surrender completely to God to let Him lead me to wherever He has planned for me. At the same time, it is most comforting to know that nothing can thwart God's plan in our lives, but what joy we will taste if we will be sensitive to His leading and guidance, and be obedient.

Lastly, the manner in which Calvin, who died at the age of 54, was buried also taught me much. His grave is said to be located in the common cemetery and is not marked by any tombstone. It convicted me that it is the work done for the Lord that is important, and that God alone should get all the glory and honour. The commendation that the faithful ones will get from the Lord Himself when He welcomes them home, is far better than the ostentatious and vain show of recognition from men.

Lessons from the Life and Work of Ulrich Zwingli

Ulrich Zwingli was born in Switzerland in 1484, the year after Luther was born. I learnt during the devotion message that he studied in the University of Basel and Vienna, schools which promoted humanism.

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He was ordained as a young priest at the age of 22. However, by the grace of God, Zwingli was later convicted of the need to return to the sources, and was led to study the Bible for himself. Through this, he realised that what the Bible teaches is very different from the practices of Roman Catholicism. Zwingli then began to preach the gospel in 1516.

Zurich



Lake Zurich, with the Swiss Alps in the background

In December 1518, Zwingli moved to Zurich to start his ministry here, and preached his first sermon in Zurich on 1 January 1519.

Switzerland has a population of 8 million people and is divided into 26 cantons. The people speak German, French, Italian or Latin, depending on where their town is situated. Zurich is the biggest city in Switzerland, with 400,000 people. As it lies in the northern part of Switzerland, the people speak mainly German.

Grossmünster

Zwingli ministered in the Grossmünster, which means “Great Minster” or “big monastery” according to the guide. The Grossmünster was previously a Catholic monastery church, but became Protestant after the Reformation. It was known as “Zwingli’s church” from which he preached the Reformation.



◀ *The Grossmünster with its characteristic twin towers. It is an Evangelical Protestant church today, located in the old town of Zurich, on a street named after him, “Zwingliplatz”. The old town dates back to the 13th century.*

The original Zwingli Bible is displayed here. He had gathered a group of people in 1531, and together, they translated the Latin Bible to German here. Zwingli did not manage to see through this work to its end, and it was completed by Henry Bullinger.



◀ *The theological school of the University of Zurich is located just next to the Grossmünster.*

Zwingli was charged with Lutheranism, but he vehemently denied that he is following Luther. I learnt that the main doctrine that he promoted is Sola Scriptura, and he would not preach anything else. Zwingli insisted that his teachings and practices are all in accordance with the Bible alone. He also noted that he started to preach the gospel before Luther in 1516 and therefore was not influenced by him.

The response of Zwingli made me see how God's Word must be the basis for all that we say, do and think. We must teach no other doctrine than that which is given in the Bible. At the same time, I could not help but wonder if pride was a factor in Zwingli's defence of himself. I am reminded of Philippians 3:17 which says, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." There is nothing wrong with following after those who are faithful and who walk in accordance with the truth of God's Word. In fact, we are to take them as our examples. I personally think that it is encouraging to know that I have fellow brethren who are fighting for the same cause, though in different places.



▲ *Statue of Zwingli in Zurich, depicted with a sword:*

Zwingli was very strict as a preacher. He gave the people six weeks to get used to his rules. If they could not get accustomed to the strict morals expected, they were told to leave.

I learnt that in 1522, the Reformation started in Switzerland. During the period of Lent, in which the Roman Catholics are to fast, the disciples of Zwingli ate sausages in order to protest against the Roman Catholic practices. This was a statement made against the Pope and the Catholic Church.

In 1523, Zwingli published 67 theses that focussed on the gospel, how Jesus is the only way for one to be saved.

Zwingli's House



◀ *This was where Zwingli had lived, a short walk from the Grossmünster. While in Zurich, he fell in love with Anna and as he was ordained as a priest, he sought permission from the Council of Constance to marry. They eventually got married at the Grossmünster.*



▼ *In the Zwinglistube — some chairs, a table and a stove*



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The Anabaptists



◀ *House where the Anabaptists held secret meetings*

▶ *Spot where Anabaptists were thrown into River Limmat, said to be one of the oldest place in Zurich*



The guide explained that two of Zwingli's associates, Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz, broke away from him in 1525, because they felt that he was not reforming the city fast enough. They rejected infant baptism and taught that believers were required to be baptised again. They became known as the Anabaptists and met secretly with other like-minded ones for Bible study. Zwingli did not agree with this group and the city council of Zurich banned the Anabaptists in 1526. They were persecuted by both the Catholics and the Protestants, and many of them were drowned for their beliefs. The Amish, Mennonites, Brethren and Baptists trace their roots back to the Anabaptists.

Kappel



▲ *Memorial Stone at Kappel marking the place where Zwingli fell in battle.*

The Swiss believers formed the Reformed Church. Although many accepted the reformed doctrine, there were those who remained Catholic. When civil war broke out between the two groups, Zwingli, being both a pastor and politician, raised an army of 2000 to defend. He joined the forces as the army chaplain, but was killed in the battle fought at Kappel on 11 October 1531. It is said that his body was cut into four. There are detractors who say that Zwingli “died as a soldier, not a martyr”. Perhaps that is why Zwingli is always depicted with a sword in his hand. Dr Khoo read from Matthew 26:52 at the memorial site. We were reminded that although it is not wrong to defend (Luke 22:36-38), however as a pastor, Zwingli should have concentrated on being a pastor, and leave the defending to others.

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Concluding Reflections on Ulrich Zwingli

The major lesson from this pilgrimage which was reinforced in Zwingli's life, is the importance of studying God's Word for ourselves (Ps 19:7-11; 119:130).

Another thing that I learnt is that servants of God ought not to mix religion with politics or any other agenda. We should rather give our wholehearted devotion to serving God, studying and teaching His Word. All other pursuits are but vain endeavours.

Nevertheless, I am much encouraged by how God uses weak men to do His work. So that none can boast and glory save in Christ alone (2 Cor 3:5; Gal 6:14).

Lessons from the Life and Work of John Hus

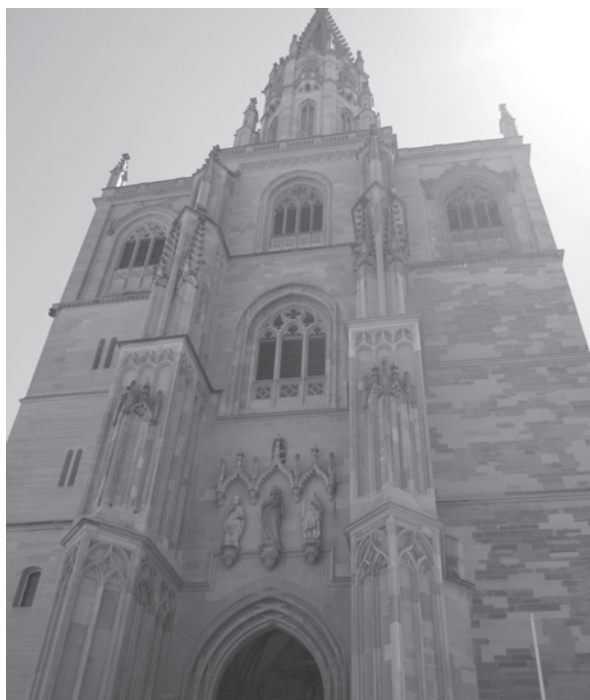
Before Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, there was John Hus (or Jan Hus), a forerunner of the Protestant Reformation from Bohemia (modern day Czech Republic). He was born around 1369 into a poor peasant family, and was much influenced by the writings of John Wycliffe, who wrote against the superstitions of the Church.

Constance

Hus preached in the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, and exposed the errors of the Church. Eventually, in 1414, Hus was summoned to appear before the Council of Constance, in an attempt to bring an end to the religious dissension within the Church. He was promised safe conduct by the Emperor Sigismund.

Constance Cathedral

Hus arrived in Constance on 3 November 1414, but was arrested and imprisoned in a dungeon after a few weeks despite the promise of a safe conduct. His trial began on 5 June 1415, and he was asked if he will recant the teachings of Wycliffe, but Hus said he will not because the teachings are based on the Bible. Hus was also asked if he will submit to and obey the Pope completely, but he replied that he will only trust and obey completely the Lord Jesus Christ and Scripture.



◀ *The Council of Constance was held in the Constance Cathedral (Konstanz Minster) from 1414 to 1418.*



Hussenstein



◀ *The Hussenstein — marks the place where Hus was burned at the stake on 6 July 1415, now a quiet residential neighbourhood.*

Hus was sentenced to be burned at the stake as an “arch-heretic”. We were told that while at the stake, Hus asked God to have mercy on the people. In this same Council of Constance, Wycliffe was condemned posthumously (he had died in 1384) as a heretic, and his bones were ordered to be dug up, burned, and thrown into the River Swift.

Here at the memorial stone, Dr Khoo gave a word of assurance, comfort and promise from Revelation 2:10, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into

prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”



With this glimpse of what had happened to Hus, I understood better why Luther’s friends tried to dissuade him from going to the Diet of Worms. This incident must have been deeply etched in the minds of the believers in those days. But Luther did not let it stop him from standing firm for the faith. Likewise, may it not discourage us, but may it serve as a good example for us as we remember the faith and courage of these godly men who were willing to lose their lives for Jesus’ sake.

Other Lessons

Pergamon Museum in Berlin

I got a glimpse of the magnificent kingdom that Nebuchadnezzar had built. An inscription in cuneiform characters attributed to him reads, “Upon the walls in the inner room of the gate are bulls and dragons and thus I magnificently adorned them with luxurious splendour for all mankind to behold in awe.” This indeed tallies with the pride of Nebuchadnezzar described in Daniel 4:30.



▲ *The Ishtar Gate of Babylon:*

Nebuchadnezzar was said to have erected the gate for purposes of fortification as well as religion. Depicted on the wall is “god” shown in animal form such as the bull and lion. It is dedicated to Ishtar, the mother goddess of Babylon. This is a reconstruction using the original brickstones which had the colours put and burned onto the brick.

During that evening’s devotion, Dr Khoo exhorted us from Daniel 4:28-37. When God made Nebuchadnezzar as a mad man, it was God’s grace and mercy upon him in order to chastise him. And when he finally humbled himself, God exalted him. The lesson is that we must humble ourselves before God if we want to be blessed by God. We are exhorted to remember God and give Him all glory for all things.

Swiss Alps

The final two nights of this pilgrimage were spent in Grindelwald, where we were treated to breathtaking views of the Swiss Alps from inside our hotel rooms.

I am very thankful to God that I could behold His beautiful creation the moment I awake each morning. Truly praise God for His might and power, so wonderfully reflected in these snow-capped mountains.



*“For every beast of the
forest is mine, and
the cattle upon a thousand
hills. I know all
the fowls of the mountains:
and the wild
beasts of the field are mine.
If I were
hungry, I would not tell
thee: for the world
is mine, and the fulness
thereof.”
(Ps 50:10-12)*



Trümmelbachfälle

I also thank God that we got to see and experience a little of God’s great power when we visited the ten glacier waterfalls inside the Mountain Lauterbrunnen Valley. It was truly a magnificent display of God’s power as I stood near the waterfall and observed the water gushing down.

“Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. ... the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth. He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.”
(Ps 104:1-10)



Conclusion

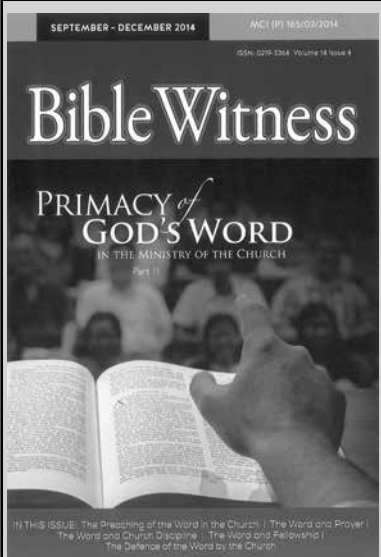
I thank and praise God for His blessings of a most fruitful pilgrimage. I got to learn much more about Church history as I picked up interesting nuggets of information from the guides at the various places, which I would not have come across otherwise. This is because books usually tell us about the general happenings, while through this pilgrimage, many more details of the lives and works of the reformers were discovered.

Through the learning of how each of these reformers came to challenge the falsehood in the Church in those days and to defend the faith that is based on Scripture, I am convicted that a diligent and humble study of God’s Word is essential. There is simply no other way to know the truth. Interestingly, a close link between the church and the Bible college or school can be observed from Wittenberg, to Geneva, and even Zurich. Indeed, this shows that, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps 11:3). A restatement would be that

insight by Paul Contento who said that the church would die without the Bible college. Thank God that Rev Timothy Tow understood this well, and established the Far Eastern Bible College for the training of God's people. I pray that God will protect the symbiotic relationship between the FEBC and True Life B-P Church for His own glory!

Finally, the study of these reformers taught me that we are not alone in the battle for the faith. Before Luther, there was Hus, and before Hus, there was Wycliffe etc. Luther had contemporaries like Melanchthon who was serving alongside him, and Zwingli who was also fighting the battle of faith in another country. Then God raised up Calvin to further the work and others like Beza and Knox thereafter to carry on the battle. How unmistakable is God's sovereign hand behind it all! May the Lord be gracious to use even us for His purpose and glory! Amen.

Joycelyn Chng is an MDiv student at Far Eastern Bible College and a member of True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church.



Bible Witness is a magazine for the nurture of individual spiritual life, a magazine for every Christian home, and a magazine for Bible study groups. Visit the Bible Witness website for discussion questions based on the articles in the magazine. You may print out the questions and use them to facilitate discussion in family worship, Bible study groups, etc. You may also use them for individual study.

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THE HISTORY OF CAPS AND GOWNS

Natalia Maree Belting

It happens every spring; at least every spring wherever there is a college or university. Sometimes it happens more often. It happens whenever an academic procession winds its slow and dignified way across a campus. Parents and friends and the just-plain-curious line the sidewalks watching the faculty march by with their gowns billowing behind them and their hoods flashing brilliant colours against the somber black. They watch as the graduates go by with their mortar boards set at crazy angles on the backs of their heads. Then the questions start coming. Why did Professor Smith have red velvet on his gown and that professor next to him blue velvet? Why do they call that cape a hood? Why are the sleeves on those gowns cut off so funny, not big and full like on the other gowns?

Usually nobody knows, though you may hear all kinds of answers. As a matter of fact, it is a parade of the Middle Ages. For caps and gowns, in all the assorted cuts and styles and colours, are actually an inheritance from the university scholar of four and five and even six hundred years ago. That is not to say they are just the same. Probably the scholar of the 14th century would not even recognise his everyday costume in today's academic regalia, and yet it was out of his ordinary dress that the cap and gown did evolve.

Dress of a Cleric

In those early days of the universities, the ordinary dress of the scholar, whether he was a student or a teacher, was the dress of a cleric, or a clerk, as he was commonly called. For a very good reason, too, because, with few exceptions the medieval scholar had taken Minor Orders at least, and had made certain vows, and perhaps been tonsured, and had some connection with a church or a monastery which provided him with what amounted to a scholarship or a fellowship for his university studies. So he wore a long gown, and a long sleeveless tunic over it, and when the weather was cold, a long, full cloak to which a

shoulder-length cape with a hood was attached.

At first the clerk's dress was not a great deal different from the everyday dress of somebody who was not a clerk. Then something began to happen to European life. A middle class was rising in the towns, and their trading caravans and ships were bringing them increasing wealth and making them independent of their feudal overlords. And if a man had money, he liked to show it in the clothes he wore. He had his gowns and his tunics and his cloaks fashioned of fine silks and damasks and wools from the East, and his hoods lined with miniver [plain white fur] instead of rabbit's fur, and he lengthened the toes of his shoes until sometimes he had to tie the points around his legs to keep from tripping over them. The nobility began to complain that you could not tell a free-born member of the aristocracy from these unfree, "new rich" townspeople. Something had to be done about it. The something was sumptuary legislation issued by the kings, restricting the use of certain furs and precious stones to members of the feudal society, and decreeing that a man's rank must determine the amount of money he could pay for the material that went into his clothes.

Obviously, when that was happening outside the university, there were bound to be similar situations developing among the scholars. After all, few peasants' sons went to universities. And a great many belonged to well-to-do and wealthy families, who could afford to dress their sons well and in attire that was somehow not what one would consider appropriate for a humble cleric.

Cost

As a result, the first university regulations regarding dress among the students and faculty were concerned not with the style and cut of their gowns, but with the cost. In 1314 the rector and administrators of the University of Toulouse in France felt themselves compelled "to set an affixed price for the said clothes and garments, in order that by a fixed price and tariff this reprehensible superfluity of clothing may be checked and an approved mediocrity in respect to costume be maintained in the said university ...".

They did this "since superfluity of clothing in clerics is reproved by the holy fathers ..., since too, because of the superfluity of clothing which clerics and scholars at the University have hitherto been wont to make ... many, abhorring the said superfluity of clothing and not unjustly

fearing the immoderate cost of the same, have refused to attend the said university and have gone to others which were not so expensive, while many who came to the said university have withdrawn from the university because of the cost of the same clothing.”¹

This regulation affected not only the students, but “all masters, licentiates and bachelors” who must “wear their garments of the said price everywhere through the city or in the city and in the buildings of the city outside their lodgings.” Those scholars who might have clothing given them by bishops or friends or relatives among the nobility had permission to wear this clothing “wherever they are outside academic functions. But at academic functions, as in classes and at the university mass and wherever the university goes or meets, there they shall wear or be required to wear garments of the cloth and price stated.”

In some of the German universities the statutes specifically prohibited scholars and faculty from indulging in such high fashions as the long-pointed shoes, trunkhose, puffed and slashed sleeves, and parti-coloured garments, but even then no single academic costume was prescribed. Occasionally students of a college adopted a special colour or “livery”. At the University of Beauvais, for instance, the livery was blue. The “Queen’s men” at Oxford wore blood-red; other Oxford undergraduates favoured green or blue.

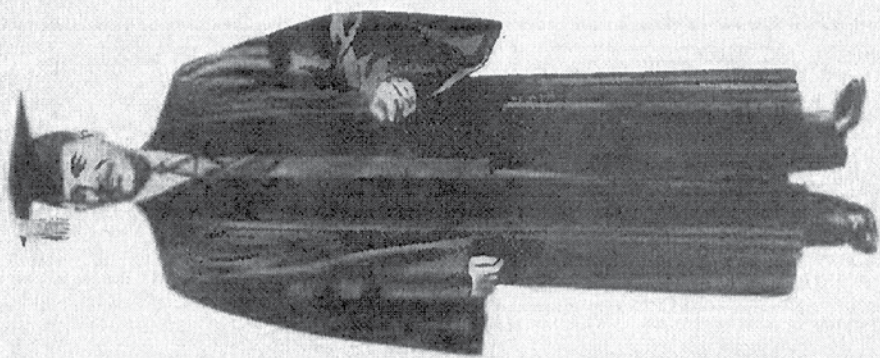
Colour

Colour did have some symbolism in the medieval university though there was no uniformity from one university to another. An unknown philosopher in the middle of the 14th century, commenting on the University of Paris, pointed out that the University “dispenses distinct costumes” to its four faculties.² Those in the liberal arts “go forth in black round copes (cloaks) of noble brunet or of fine perse lined with fur Their costume befits lords of liberal philosophy, because it is the nature of black to collect the sight.”

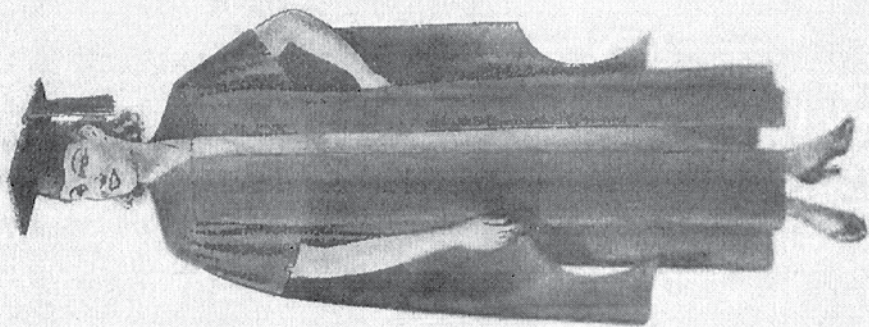
The physicians and medical men rejoiced in ordinary copes of brunet somewhat brighter than the artists and more nearly red like the colour of thick rouge. And in the closeness of this colour to true brunet is figured the connection between these faculties, since he is a poor physician who knows no logic or who has no recourse to natural philosophy.

The jurists at the University had “scholastic copes” of scarlet and

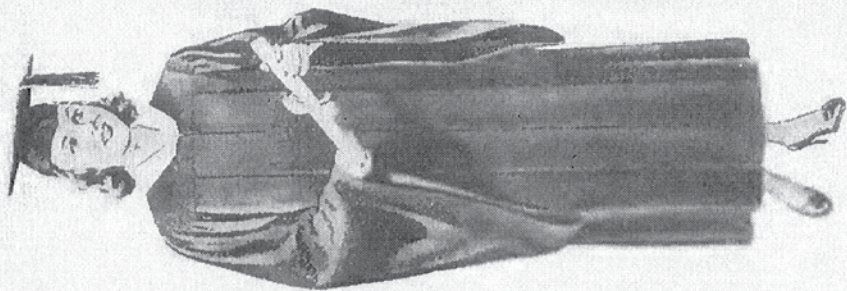
DOCTOR'S GOWN



MASTER'S GOWN



BACHELOR'S GOWN



THE HISTORY OF CAPS AND GOWNS

of a fiery red, since the red colour signifies an “inflamed mind.” The theologians wore the garments prescribed by their Order, “or any simple garb of humble colour to denote the humble and innocent preaching of this science.”

The definite association of certain colours with certain ranks and degrees and even with certain faculties was to be a much later development, and one which was to be standardised only in the United States. In 1895 the Intercollegiate Commission drew up a code which was subsequently adopted by 95% of the American colleges and universities and which besides regulating the cut and style and materials of the gowns, prescribed the colours which were to represent the different fields of learning. White, taken from the white fur trimming of the Oxford and Cambridge BA hoods, was assigned to arts and letters. Red, one of the traditional colours of the church, went to theology. Royal purple, a colour associated with kings and therefore with their judicial power, became the symbol for law. Green, the colour of medicinal herbs, was adopted for medicine, and olive, because it was so close to green, was given to pharmacy. Blue, for centuries the colour associated with wisdom and truth, became the colour for philosophy, while the Oxford pink was retained for music. Golden yellow, standing for the wealth which scientific research has produced, was assigned to the sciences. And russet brown, the colour of the dress of the ancient English foresters, was given to forestry. The complete list of colours and the fields of learning they represent are as follows:

White - Arts and Letters

Red - Theology

Royal Purple - Law

Brown - Fine Arts

Orange - Engineering

Lilac - Dentistry

Green - Medicine

Blue - Philosophy

Yellow - Science

Pink - Music

Olive - Pharmacy

Russet - Forestry

Copper - Economics

Dark Crimson - Humanities

Drab - Commerce, Accountancy

Sea Green - Optometry

Nile Green - Chiropody

Grey - Veterinary Science

Lemon - Library Science

Light Blue - Education

Silver Grey - Speech (Oratory)

Salmon - Public Health

Sage Green - Physical Education

Maize - Agriculture

But to get along with the evolution of the modern cap and gown, everybody agrees it comes largely from the clerical dress of the 13th and 14th centuries. And hardly anybody agrees with anybody else as to exactly how the cassock, the tabard, and the cappa became the modern gown; there is not quite so much disagreement over the evolution of the mortar board, and none at all about the academic hood.

Gown

The cassock of the medieval scholar was a long, somewhat fitted garment, with long and usually narrow sleeves. Over this he frequently wore a tabard, a narrow, sleeveless gown or tunic which slipped on over his head, and was sometimes belted and sometimes not. The cappa or cloak with the hood attached was worn indoors as well as out-of-doors.

Out of these garments by the end of the 16th century in England a distinctive academic costume evolved. The cassock became a sleeveless undergarment. The tabard was slit up the front, and had sleeves added to it, sleeves not necessarily narrow as they had been on the cassock, but full and flowing, or long and trailing with slashes cut in them after the secular fashion from the first days of the universities, in the 12th century, and they were very much in fashion in the days of Henry VIII of England when Oxford and Cambridge were first prescribing a definite academic costume. These sleeves sometimes were so long that slits had to be cut in them, far from the end for the arm and the hand. And probably it was not only scholars who found that such sleeves made excellent pockets for everything from notes to lunch. Modern candidates for the master's degree who have discovered the same thing about their sleeves have, after all, made no new discovery!

Hood

As for the hood, originally it was a head covering worn by everyone, priest and layman, aristocrat and commoner. A hood was no mark of distinction, but with the enactment of sumptuary laws by the kings and similar regulations by university authorities, the materials that went into the making of the hood did come to denote a man's rank in society or his standing in the university. In the English universities, bachelors of all the faculties were allowed to line their winter hoods with badger's fur or lamb's wool. Masters and regents were allowed to use miniver or something equally expensive.

Cap

When the skull cap was adopted, the hood continued to be worn, thrown over the shoulder, with its peak or liripipe [tail of a hood or cloak], hanging far down behind. At Oxford and Cambridge, the peaks on the graduates' hoods were shorter than those on the undergraduates. In 1489, Oxford undergraduates were prohibited altogether from wearing hoods, and between that year and the end of the next century, the wearing of the hood came to be a mark of the attainment of a degree.

As the hood disappeared for a head-covering, a close-fitting skull cap, or a round cap with a point or tuft in the center took its place. Gradually the latter cap assumed a square shape as folds of material were added to it until it became the biretta [square cap with three or four ridges at the top], and was adopted by masters as their distinctive badge. Doctors of some of the faculties adopted red or violet birettas also.

Then during the days of the Reformation in England, more and more material was added to the biretta, and it began to droop over the face until a piece of board had to be stuffed inside to stiffen it. Soon the top became a square of cardboard with a skull cap fastened to it, the tuft became a tassel, and the modern mortar board was in existence.

From a traditional background covering hundreds of years, the present academic costume has evolved.³

Notes

¹ Lynn Thorndike, *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1944), 150-154.

² *Ibid*, 213-215.

³ Adapted from Natalia M Belting, *The History of Caps and Gowns* (New York: Collegiate Cap & Gown Company, 1958). Published without copyright notice. Public domain and available online at <http://archive.org/details/historyofcapsgow00belt>.

Dr Natalia Maree Belting (1915-1997) received a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Illinois at Urbana in 1936, and went on to earn a master's degree and PhD in American history (1940) from the same institution. She was professor of history at the University of Illinois at Urbana from 1941 to 1985.

WORSHIP IN SONG: A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO MUSIC AND WORSHIP: A BOOK REVIEW

Eileen Siew-Juan Chee

Introduction

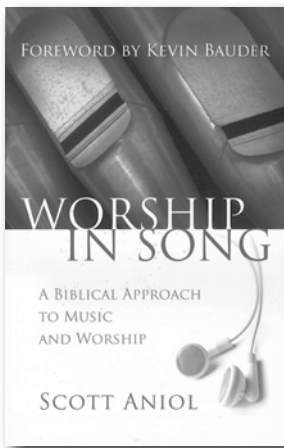
Worship is a prominent feature of Christianity. It is one face of Christianity by which unbelievers look at and formulate their impression of the church in general. Yet the manner of worship varies from church to church. The most contentious aspect of worship is music.

How does anyone begin to talk about music objectively? Must one be a musical virtuoso before he can even begin to critique music? The answer would have to be in the negative. As Scott Aniol has pointed out in his book—*Worship in Song: A Biblical Approach to Music and Worship* (Winona Lake: BMH

Books, 2009, 281pp)—it is the Christian’s knowledge and obedience to God and His Word that can help him to evaluate music properly. A Bible-living man will wield the Sword of the Spirit and rightly discern the use of music in both the private and public realms of his life. *Worship in Song* is the author’s attempt to detail and explain his approach to evaluating music as found in the church. Is his approach biblical, effective and comprehensive for Christians to adopt?

Music and the Worshipper

The first and most important step in a biblical approach is to lay theological and historical foundations. The author did this by identifying five fundamental and core bases in evaluating whether any music is godly or not. The five bases are (1) the Bible’s all-encompassing authority, (2)



the meaning of worship, (3) the significance of sanctification, (4) the need for spiritual affections and (5) the history of music. Aniol recognises that mere technical knowledge of what the Bible says about worship is insufficient; what is needed even more is the spiritual maturity of a Christian in his selection of music for worship. A spiritually mature Christian who is concerned with his sanctification and cultivation of spiritual affections will spare no effort in worshipping God with the right music. He provokes the reader to think: "... as an emphasis on right doctrine increases in contemporary evangelicalism, Christian living does not seem to improve. Why is this so? If the root problem behind wrong living is wrong thinking, why does not the education of the mind directly influence the will to do what is right? There is a great missing link between the mind and the will that we must recover if Christians are going to connect what they know to be true with how they live."

Aniol identifies this "missing link" as biblical affection which "comes from the affirmation of right spiritual truths, and it results in right actions. Without right beliefs, there would be no right affection, but without right affection there would be no right action". In essence, worship begins with understanding spiritual truth about God and is a result of proper spiritual response to truth about God. Not only does music reflect the worshipper's understanding of God, it is also about his response to God.

To round this section up, he provides glimpses of church music in history. A pertinent question is asked, "What kinds of relationships exist between church music and culture, and to what extent does one influence or control the other?" According to Aniol, the seven distinct time periods in history (ie, the Early Church, the Middle Ages, the Reformation, Pietism, Enlightenment & the Industrial Revolution, American Democracy, Modernism/Postmodernism) show that there is indeed a tight correlation between church music and culture. Good quality church music was produced in time periods when religion, positive moral values and true music talents dominated. But since the turn of the 18th century, worldly church music became the by-product of a pop culture that is saturated with commercialism and mass media. Indeed, worshippers need to be discerning of the times and realise that there is a glaring fundamental difference between the old-time "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" and the contemporary worship songs of today.

Music and Its Influence

Music permeates all of one's life. Hence, it makes good sense to look into how music can exert its influence on the listeners. In this second section, Aniol discusses the objective and subjective aspects of music. The objective aspect consists of the music's textual content, poetic form, associative meaning, intrinsic meaning and various elements such as tempo, rhythm, volume etc. All these work together to affect the person intellectually and emotionally. As such, those who think and believe that music is neutral and innocuous should quickly banish such thoughts and face the music (literally) for what it can do to people.

As for the subjective aspect of music, Aniol refers to it as the "deeper asthetical qualities", which he equates to the beauty of music. Obviously, different people have their own views on what makes a certain piece of music beautiful, and what makes another piece to be not. He believes that the ability to appreciate beauty (and beautiful music) helps one to choose the right music to worship God, as opposed to having a penchant for what is common, casual and vulgar. It is his conviction that believers are to pursue what is beautiful, not just what is true and good. Appreciating music is a lifelong process of learning and growth. This reasoning does lend support to the listening of classical and instrumental music during times of recreation and relaxation. Aniol has even included a guide on how to build a classical and sacred music library in the appendix.

Though Aniol has an interesting take on beauty and music's sanctifying ability, he has a tendency to overemphasise the role of music itself to help a believer know God more, worship Him better and draw nearer to Him. Music may be important and even powerful to a certain extent but it is definitely not on par with the power that the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Spirit have to sanctify and assist believers spiritually. John 17:17 says "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Without Scripture and the Spirit's application of Scripture, music is useless for the believer's sanctification.

Nonetheless, he urges Christians to make good musical choices that glorify God. He says, "Making decisions regarding music is no different than making decisions in any other area of the Christian life. If a person is genuinely concerned with his sanctification; if he is willing to ask the right questions and give up what is not certain will please the Lord; if he is daily in God's Word, striving to know more about God and think more

like God; he will certainly glorify God with his music.”

Music can be two things – either the Christian’s master or his servant. It is then wise to be acquainted with its influence and use it to help one to worship God.

Music and Its Worth

Aniol finally comes to why music is necessary in corporate worship. It is something the church cannot do without. Understanding the purpose of music can help believers to appreciate, promote and defend the use of godly music in church. First, he addresses what he views as common but faulty reasonings for the purpose of music in worship services. Phrases such as “it is a prelude to preaching”, “it prepares the hearts for the message” and “it can teach and affirm biblical truth” are inadequate explanations. He is not denying that hymns and spiritual songs can teach worshippers truths about God, for he quoted Colossians 3:16 where it says that believers are to “teach and admonish one another” when they come together for mutual edification and encouragement. Nonetheless, he feels that the above reasonings may lead believers to focus on the words alone and miss the music that accompanies the words.

Godly music is a vehicle to bring out the right emotions during congregational singing. Citing valid scriptural examples, Aniol shows that believers in the Old and New Testament habitually used music to express an array of emotions such as awe, joy, zeal, sorrow, remorse etc. The whole being of man – mind, will and emotion, is to be fully engaged in worship. Sadly, emotions is a topic which many fundamental pastors and teachers fear to tread, lest they be misunderstood as siding with the sentimental in the contemporary camp. This might explain why there are many stone-cold and deadpan expressions during worship services.

So then what constitutes godly worship music? In order to come up with the characteristics, Aniol has to highlight certain features in the contemporary worship scene. Today, many churches have become seeker-friendly and revivalistic. They aim to attract unbelievers, and keep worshippers on an emotional high. This results in worship leaders preferring short choruses, repetition of praise, songs of experience and songs with shallow theology that overemphasise God’s goodness at the expense of His other attributes like holiness, justice etc. Modern church music can thus be described as egocentric, hollow, sentimental and

individualistic. In contrast to this, godly music is God-oriented, doctrine-oriented, affections-oriented and congregation-oriented. It glorifies God most of all.

Music and the Church

Similar to a hortatory address, Aniol begins to apply to two groups of people after the thorough treatment of music. He first challenges and encourages church leaders to cultivate a proper worship climate. Leaders should not just focus on imparting doctrine and creeds but also teaching members the right kind of emotions to have. This means that they are directly responsible for the music in church, for music can either make or break the church. Aniol also recommends that music education be made a compulsory subject in bible colleges and seminaries, as many ill-informed and untrained pastors have led their flocks to use shallow and sinful music in worship (even if the lyrics are sound and right). Martin Luther for instance believed that young men should not be ordained as preachers, “unless they have been well-exercised in music”. Church leaders can find not a few suggestions on how they can prepare and conduct the whole worship service. This book is not just a theoretical exercise; it is also useful, practical and relevant.

Secondly, worshippers ought to participate heartily in the singing. Just as much as they would give their full attention to Scripture reading and sermon, they should also give their best at singing hymns. Singing is not optional, but is vital and necessary. On top of this, worshippers are to be critical of the music they listen to for the rest of the week, since music shapes emotions.

Last but not least, though this is in the appendix, Aniol makes a plea to leaders and parents to teach hymns to children and youths. Children and teenagers should not be deprived of good, solid hymns especially since these can teach them deep things about God, and how they can worship God. If this is not ensured and enforced, the church will run the risk of losing a generation to the world.

Conclusion

Aniol is indeed a passionate proponent of traditional and true worship. Here in this book, he has capably demonstrated that there is a biblical approach to music and worship. This approach begins from the Bible’s authority, the believer’s submission to it and his goal towards

WORSHIP IN SONG

sanctification. Then it goes on to examining the powerful effects of music through its various elements before discussing the characteristics of music that is good and appropriate to worship the Almighty God. This biblical approach is not merely theoretical. It extends to the parties involved in worship, namely leaders and congregation members. Readers can expect to be thoroughly informed and educated on this subject, yet not finding the reading heavy and difficult. His efforts to teach Christians about biblical worship can also be seen in the website he has set up on www.religiousaffections.org.

However, there is one caveat. For the strong convictions the author has on music and worship, he shows himself clueless with regard to the Reformed doctrine of Scripture. He thus denounces the exclusive use of the King James Version (KJV), and even discourages hymns and songs that read like the KJV because to him the archaic expressions of the KJV hinder understanding. His logic and application here is inconsistent to say the least. If believers ought to be educated to sing the good old hymns as he advocates, why cannot they be taught to read from the good old KJV? There are dictionaries, and the Defined KJV published by the Dean Burgon Society is definitely a help and a step forward.

Notwithstanding his bias against the good old KJV, pastors, musicians, worship leaders and choir directors will find this book a valuable resource if they wish to promote biblical and godly worship and music that pleases God.

Eileen Chee (MDiv 2011) serves full-time at the Far Eastern Bible College and worships at Truth Bible-Presbyterian Church.

College News

FEBC began its new academic term on 21 July 2014 with a day of prayer and registration. The principal reminded faculty and students that the call of Christ is a call not only to salvation and service, but also to suffering. 2 Timothy 3:12-15 says, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

What a privilege it is to teach and to study God’s forever infallible and inerrant Words. FEBC is one of the very few institutions in these last days of rampant apostasy and unbelief which uphold the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) and the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures, and defend the full authenticity and absolute authority of the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus underlying the good and faithful King James Version of the Holy Scriptures.

For our faith in VPI and VPP, FEBC was taken to court by Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (LBPC) not once but twice. We cannot thank God enough for delivering us from their first suit which sought to evict us from our birthplace and home at 9, 9A and 10 Gilstead Road (Prov 22:28). The Lord has magnified His Word above all His Name (Ps 138:2) when the Court of Appeal in their landmark judgement in 2011 ruled in favour of FEBC, declaring that the VPP doctrine is in no wise inconsistent with the Westminster Confession of Faith to which FEBC subscribes. Now we pray the scheme that has been drawn up by the High Court with regard to the sharing and use of the premises would be effective to prevent future disputes.

In the meanwhile, before the Scheme was implemented, LBPC filed another suit against FEBC. This second suit was about money (\$250,000). The trial over this matter was held in the State Court on 24 and 25 July 2014. Dr S H Tow and Dr Jeffrey Khoo were FEBC’s witnesses. Mr Ng Beng Kiong, an Elder of LBPC, was LBPC’s sole

witness. Praise the Lord who has delivered us once more. FEBC had no case to answer. On the second day of hearing, LBPC through her lawyers proposed to settle out of court.

The residential courses last semester were taught by the **Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo** (Systematic Theology III, Greek Exegesis I, Life of Christ II), the **Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew** (Old Testament History I, Homiletics, Contemporary Theology I, Hebrew Reading I), the **Rev Dr Prabhudas Koshy** (Biblical Covenants, Ezekiel II, Hebrew Elementary I), **Mrs Ivy Tow** (Greek Elementary I), the **Rev Stephen Khoo** (Church History II), the **Rev Dr Koa Keng Woo** (Bible Geography IV, Hymn Leading III), the **Rev Tan Kian Sing** (Philippians), **Mrs Jemima Khoo** (Teaching Methods, Beginner Pianoforte), **Miss Carol Lee** (Youth Christian Education), **Mr Dennis Kabingue** (Greek Reading I), **Mrs Anne Lim** (English Intensive I), **Mrs Irene Lim** (English Intermediate I), **Elder Han Soon Juan** (English Advanced I).

FEBC's total enrolment last semester, July-November 2014, was 467: 77 day students (fulltime 45, part-time 32), 220 "Basic Theology for Everyone" (night class) students, and 170 distance learning students. The students come from 13 countries: Australia, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Kenya, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

There were seven new students from four countries: (1) **Tan Bun Kuoy** from Cambodia whose brother Tann Heng graduated from FEBC last year; (2) **Leonard Ngui Chong Teck** from Calvary BPC, Sibul, and (3) **Elaine Low** from Calvary Jaya BPC, both Malaysians; (4) **Ezekiel Maung** from New Life Orphan Centre, Yangon; (5) **Khoo Peng Keong** from Calvary Tengah BPC; (6) **Leanne Joy Wong** and (7) **Tai Cae Ryn**, both from True Life BPC, Singapore. Cae Ryn is taking a full-time load this semester while waiting to enter the university. It goes without saying that the study of the Holy Scriptures is an excellent way of preparing for university studies.

The Principal taught Calvin's Institutes in two parts to the BMin students at the Bible College of East Africa (BCEA), Nairobi, Kenya from 18 to 28 November 2014. Mrs Jemima Khoo taught Christian Hymnology to the regular students. A graduation service was held on November 29 where six were conferred their BMin degrees. The BMin programme at BCEA is conducted by FEBC in cooperation with BCEA since 2001.

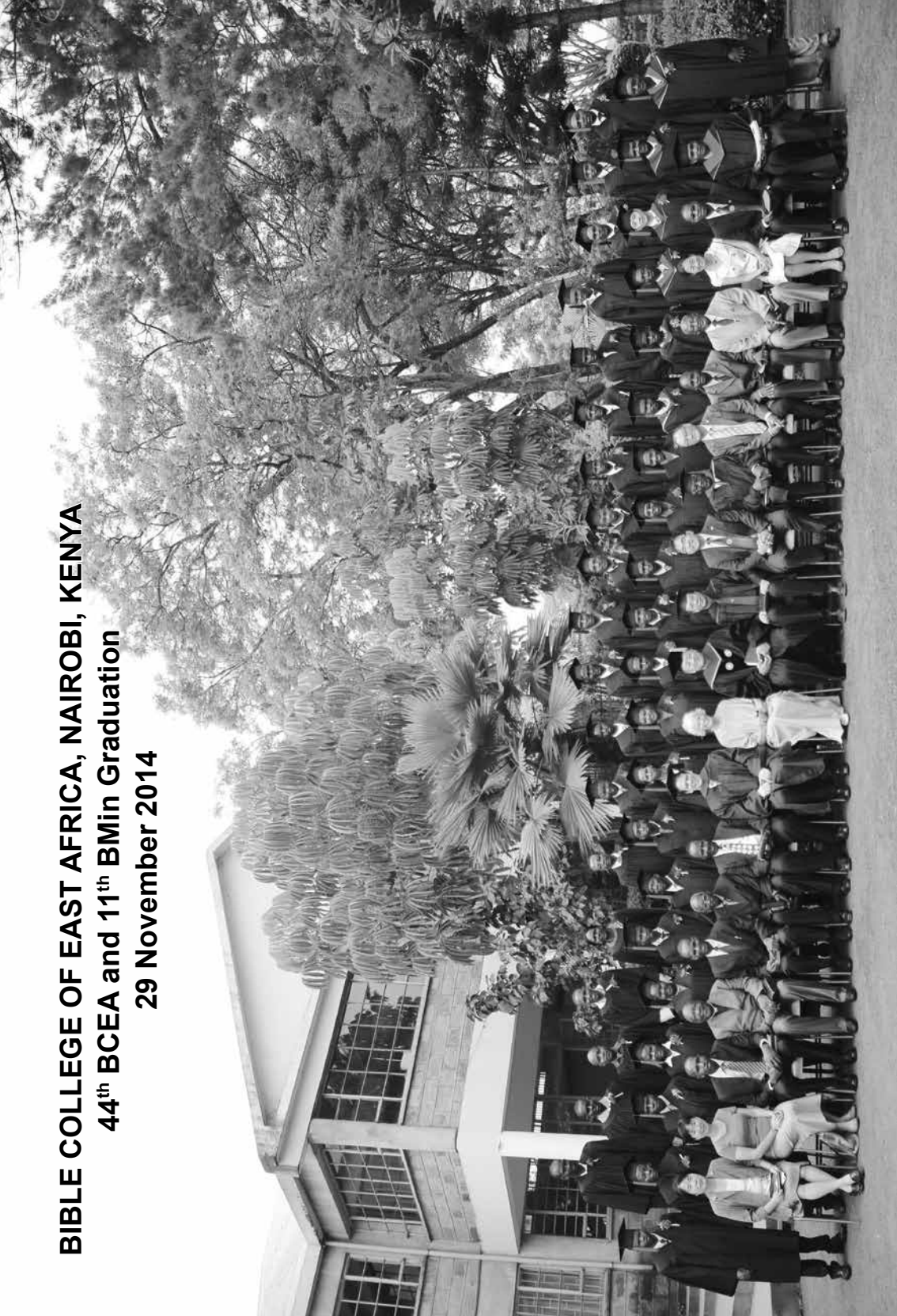


FEBC's 18th Holy Land Pilgrimage was conducted from 7 to 19 December 2014. Besides Israel and Jordan, the pilgrimage this time also covered Cyprus, an island visited by the Apostle Paul in his first missionary journey. A total of 44 pilgrims from ten churches (Calvary Pandan B-P Church, Bethel B-P Church, Christ Methodist Church, Church of Our Saviour, Faith Presbyterian Church, GKY Presbyterian Church, Gospel Light B-P Church, Tabernacle B-P Church, True Life B-P Church, Sharon B-P Church) and four countries (Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore) participated.



Mark Sugarman, Our Jewish Guide

BIBLE COLLEGE OF EAST AFRICA, NAIROBI, KENYA
44th BCEA and 11th BMin Graduation
29 November 2014





FAR EASTERN BIBLE COLLEGE
1st Reformation Pilgrimage, Germany, France, Switzerland, 14-24 May 2014