



# The Burning Bush

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# THE BURNING BUSH

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# A PLEA FOR A PERFECT BIBLE

Jeffrey Khoo

The Bible controversy today is hotting up. The controversy ironically involves the simple question of whether the Church today has a perfect Bible. Fundamentalists today cannot agree on this very basic question. The issue concerns the biblical doctrine of verbal plenary preservation.

## VPI and VPP

King James Version (KJV) fundamentalists who affirm the *verbal plenary inspiration* (VPI) of the Bible, and believe in a perfect God who has given His Church a perfect Hebrew and Greek Text underlying the King James Bible are being labelled “extreme” and “dangerous” by non-KJV fundamentalists. Since when has believing in a perfectly inerrant Bible in the original languages ever been considered such? Are 21<sup>st</sup> century fundamentalists recanting their belief in verbal and plenary inspiration that their 20<sup>th</sup> century forebears fought so hard to define and defend against the modernists? These Neo-fundamentalists are saying: We had a perfect Bible then, but we do not have a perfect Bible now! The danger in fundamentalism today is the failure among fundamentalists to affirm the *verbal plenary preservation* (VPP) of the Scriptures.

## Apparent Discrepancies or Scribal Errors?

Anti-VPP fundamentalists would deny that God’s people today have the perfect Word of God. According to them our Bible today contains scribal errors. However, such errors are so insignificant that they do not affect the spiritual truths taught in the Scriptures. This sounds rather neo-evangelical, doesn’t it? Anti-VPP fundamentalists appear to be quite sure that 2 Kings 8:26 (Ahaziah is 22 years old) and 2 Chron 22:2 (Ahaziah is 42 years old), and 2 Sam 8:4 (700 horsemen) and 1 Chron 18:4 (7000 horsemen) are *true contradictions or errors*. Although some might concede that the reformers “are quick to consider many of these

contradictions as merely apparent” (which is my view for “it is not improbable to reconcile the apparent contradiction between 2 Kings 8:26 and 2 Chron 22:2 by explaining that prior to his official reign at the age of 42, he might have co-reigned with his father at the age of 22,” and as for 2 Sam 8:4 and 1 Chron 18:4, it might be explained that one counted them one-by-one, and the other group-by-group, and so both figures could be correct), they prefer not to see them as apparent discrepancies but “scribal errors.” If they are indeed scribal errors, surely there must be manuscripts that reflect the correct reading. Surely God could not have possibly allowed the corruption to be so devastating that not a single manuscript would reflect the autographical reading.

Anti-VPP fundamentalists say they are able to correct the errors found in our present Bible by a collation of various manuscripts. But where are the manuscripts? Why did the Masoretes—the keepers of the purity of the OT Scriptures—refuse to correct these “scribal errors?” Was Jesus wrong when He said that the Hebrew Scriptures the Jews had at the time when He was on earth, which were not the autographs, were word perfect to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18)? Interestingly, the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* lists no variants. If this is the case (ie, there are no extant manuscripts that reflect the correct reading), then they could be *actual and factual* errors committed by the original inspired writers and not necessarily scribal, could they not? Is this not a serious problem? Would this not lead to a denial of VPI?

Anti-VPP fundamentalists ape the neo-evangelicals when they say that it is of no consequence whether such discrepancies are simply scribal errors or true factual errors since they are so “minor;” they deal with numbers, names, dates, and places, and hence do not affect our salvation since the gospel is not impaired by such “errors.” Is this correct thinking? I submit that if they proceed with this line of thinking and of judging the Bible, crying “error, error, error” here and there, they are no better than the neo-evangelicals who say that our Bible is only inerrant in a limited sense (see “Discrepancies in Scripture,” in *The Battle for the Bible* by Harold Lindsell, 161-184).

### **The Autographa Not Lost**

No one denies that scribal errors were committed during the work of copying Scripture. But the question is: Did God allow any of His inspired words in the autographs to be lost during this transmission process?

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Although the Church does not have the autographs (the very first scripts) today, she has the apographs (copies) which reflect the autographs. Providentially speaking, the autographs were *neither lost nor destroyed*.

Was God careless in preserving His Scripture? Can He even allow “minor” corruptions? 17<sup>th</sup> century theologian—Francis Turretin—wrote, “It will not do to say that divine providence wished to *keep it free from serious corruptions, but not from minor*. For besides the fact that this is gratuitous, it cannot be held without injury, as if lacking in the necessary things which are required for the full credibility of Scripture itself. Nor can we readily believe that God, who dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired (*theopneustois*) men, would not take care of their *entire* preservation. If men use the utmost care diligently to preserve their words (especially if they are of any importance, as for example a testament or contract) in order that it may not be corrupted, how much more, must we suppose, would God take care of his word which he intended as a testament and seal of his covenant with us, so that it might not be corrupted.” Turretin does not deny scribal errors in the *copying process* but he says that “even if some manuscripts could be corrupted, *yet all could not*.”

By faith, we believe in God’s promise that He will allow none of His words to be lost. Ps 12:6-7 says, “The *words* of the LORD are pure *words*: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt *keep them*, O LORD, thou shalt *preserve them* from this generation for ever.” Jesus declared in Matt 24:35, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my *words* shall not pass away.” In Matt 5:18. Jesus promised, “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, *one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass* from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

### **Closest and Purest**

There are some other fundamentalists who believe that the purity of the Scriptures has been purely *maintained*, but not finally *attained* in the Traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and Greek Textus Receptus underlying the KJV. The Dean Burgon Society statement which declares that “the Texts which are the *closest* to the original autographs of the Bible are the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text for the Old Testament, and the Traditional Greek Text for the New Testament underlying the King James Version.” They take the word “closest” to mean that the

Hebrew and Greek Scriptures that underlie the KJV are *not completely inerrant* since they contain so-called “scribal mistakes.”

It must be clarified that the word “closest” in the Dean Burgon Society statement does not at all mean that we have an errant text or that the text is not the same as the original writings. The Dean Burgon Society statement must be understood in the *context* (ie, the battle against Westcott and Hort) in which the statement was phrased. Westcott and Hort had puffed up their cut-up Greek text as being closest to the original since they based it on the 4<sup>th</sup> century Alexandrian manuscripts, which Dean Burgon had dismissed as “most corrupt.” The term “closest” seeks to *correct and counteract* Westcott and Hort’s view on the identity of the true text. The term “closest” also distinguishes between the autographa (past and “lost”) and the apographa (present and existing). VPP fundamentalists do not deny that the autographa and apographa *though distinct are the same*. The *paper* may be different, but the *contents* are the same.

The word “closest” should be interpreted to mean “purest.” Dr D A Waite, President of the Dean Burgon Society, likewise understands the statement to mean “that the *words* of the Received *Greek* and Masoretic *Hebrew* texts that underlie the *King James Bible* are the very *words* which God has *preserved* down through the centuries, being the exact *words* of the *originals* themselves.” This declaration is entirely consistent with the fundamental doctrines of VPI and VPP.

Such a high view of Scripture grants believers *maximum certainty* with regard to the authenticity of the inspired words of Scripture. And such certainty can only be had if the doctrine of the special providential preservation of the Scriptures is upheld. Dr E F Hills wrote, “if we believe in the special providential preservation of the Scriptures ... we obtain *maximum certainty*, all the certainty that any mere man can obtain, all the certainty that we need. For we are led by the logic of faith to the *Masoretic Hebrew text, to the New Testament Textus Receptus, and to the King James Version.*”

Does the Lord want His people to be certain about His inspired words? Listen to what the Lord says, “Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, That I might make thee know *the certainty of the words of truth*; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?” (Prov 22:20-21). Be sure of this: God

wants us to have certainty concerning His words, and we can be certain of God's words only if we apply the logic of faith consistently.

### **Which Textus Receptus?**

If there exists a perfect TR, then which of the many editions of the TR is perfect? It must be affirmed that all the editions of the TR being from the pure stream of God's preserved text are *pure*, no doubt about it. But which is the *purest*? It is the TR underlying the KJV. Dr Hills takes the same view concerning the KJV and TR. Hear Dr Hills himself, "The texts of the several editions of the Textus Receptus were God-guided. They were set up under the leading of God's special providence. Hence the differences between them were kept down to a minimum. . . . But what do we do in these few places in which the several editions of the Textus Receptus disagree with one another? Which text do we follow? The answer to this question is easy. We are guided by the common faith. Hence we favor that form of the Textus Receptus upon which more than any other *God, working providentially*, has placed the stamp of His approval, namely, the King James Version, or more precisely, the Greek text underlying the King James Version."

Like Dr Hills, we believe that all the TR editions are pure, but there is one that is purest—the one underlying the KJV. Dr Hills said that the King James Version "ought to be regarded not merely as a translation of the Textus Receptus but also as an independent variety of the Textus Receptus." Is not the Greek Text underlying the KJV the Textus Receptus? Whose TR? Not completely Erasmus's, Stephen's, or Beza's, it is *a new edition* of the TR which reflects the textual decisions of the KJV translators as they prayerfully studied and compared the preserved manuscripts. According to the Trinitarian Bible Society, "The editions of Beza, particularly that of 1598, and the two last editions of Stephens, were the chief sources used for the English Authorised Version of 1611. . . . The present edition of the *Textus Receptus* underlying the English Authorised Version of 1611 follows the text of Beza's 1598 edition as the primary authority, and corresponds with 'The New Testament in the Original Greek according to the text followed in the Authorised Version,' edited by F H A Scrivener."

## **Special Providence Not Static But Dynamic**

It ought to be noted that God's providential preservation of His Scripture is *not static but dynamic*. The deistic heresy that God inspired His Word but did nothing to preserve it must be rejected. Dr Timothy Tow rightly said, "If Deism teaches a Creator who goes to sleep after creating the world is absurd, to hold to the doctrine of inspiration without preservation is equally illogical ... inspiration and preservation are linked one to another. Without preservation, all the inspiration, God-breathing into the Scriptures, would be lost. But we have a Bible so pure and powerful in every word and it is so because God has preserved it down through the ages."

I believe God providentially guided the KJV translators to produce the purest TR of all. The earlier editions were individual efforts, but the TR underlying the KJV is a corporate effort of 57 of the most outstanding biblical-theological, and more importantly, Bible-believing scholars of their day. And as the Scripture says, "in a multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Prov 11:14). The KJV translators had all the various editions of the TR to refer to, and they made their decisions with the help of the Holy Spirit. I believe the Lord providentially guided the King James translators to make the right textual decisions. As such, I do not believe we need to improve on the TR underlying the KJV. No one should play textual critic, and be a judge of God's Word today. *God is His own Textual Critic*. I accept God's special providential work in history during the great 16<sup>th</sup> Century Protestant Reformation.

## **Why the TR Underlying the KJV?**

Now the question remains: Why the TR underlying the KJV and not Luther's German Bible, or the Spanish Reina Valera, or the Polish Biblia Gdanska, or the French Martin Bible, or some other language Bible? Now we do not deny there are faithful and reliable versions that are accurately translated and based on the TR, nor do we discount the need for foreign language Bibles, but here is Dr Hills's reply to the question: "God in His providence has abundantly justified this confidence of the King James translators. The course of history has made English a world-wide language which is now the native tongue of at least 300 million people and the second language of many millions more. For this reason the King James Version is known the world over and is more widely read than any other translation of the holy Scriptures. Not only so, but the King James



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Version has been used by many missionaries as a basis and guide for their own translation work and in this way has extended its influence even to converts who know no English. For more than 350 years therefore the reverent diction of the King James Version has been used by the Holy Spirit to bring the Word of life to millions upon millions of perishing souls. Surely this is a God-guided translation on which God, working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval.” This is in keeping with Jesus’ words, “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ... Wherefore *by their fruits ye shall know them*” (Matt 7:17-20).

I believe the purity of God’s Word has been *faithfully maintained* throughout the whole transmission of the Traditional/Byzantine/Majority/Received Text, and is *fully represented* in the Apographa of the Hebrew Masoretic Text for the Old Testament and the Greek Textus Receptus for the New Testament underlying the KJV. So I agree with David W Cloud, in his paper quoting E F Hills, that “the KJV is accurate in all textual matters, *and if there is a difference between a KJV reading and any certain edition of the Received Text, we follow the KJV*” (ie, the TR underlying the KJV). I also agree with Dr Hills who warned, “We must be very cautious therefore about finding errors in the text of the King James Version, and the same holds true also in the realm of translation. Whenever the renderings of the King James Version are called in question, *it is usually the accuser that finds himself in the wrong.*”

### A Virtual Photocopy

As regards the Traditional Hebrew and Greek Scripture underlying the KJV being a “virtual photocopy” of the original, G I Williamson did write to this effect in his commentary on the *Westminster Confession* concerning preservation, “This brings us to the matter of God’s ‘singular care and providence’ by which He has ‘kept pure in all ages’ this original text, so that we now actually possess it in ‘authentic’ form. And let us begin by giving an illustration from modern life to show that an original document may be destroyed, without the text of that document being lost. Suppose you were to write a will. Then suppose you were to have a photographic copy of that will made. If the original were then destroyed, the photographic copy would still preserve the text of that will *exactly the same as the original itself*. The text of the copy would differ in no way whatever from the original, and so it would possess exactly the same ‘truth’ and meaning as the original. Now of course photography was not

invented until long after the original copy ... had been worn out or lost. How then could the original text of the Word of God be preserved? The answer is that God preserved it by His own remarkable care and providence.”

Concerning what the Westminster theologians meant when they declared that the Hebrew OT and the Greek NT “being immediately inspired of God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic,” we have another commentary from Prof William F Orr of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary who wrote, “this affirms that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New which was known to the Westminster divines was immediately inspired by God because it was *identical* with the first text that God had kept pure in all the ages. *The idea that there are mistakes in the Hebrew Masoretic texts or in the Textus Receptus of the New Testament was unknown to the authors of the Confession of Faith.*”

### **Biblical Basis**

So does the Church have a perfect Hebrew and Greek Bible today? Yes, indeed she does. Based on what? Based on God’s promise that He would preserve every one of His words to the jot and tittle (Exod 32:15-19, 34:1-4; Pss 12:6-7, 78:1-8, 105:8; 119:89,111,152,160; Prov 22:20-21; Eccl 3:14; Jer 36:30-32; Matt 4:4, 5:18, 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; John 10:35; 1 Pet 1:23-25; Rev 22:18-19).

Some may say that this belief on biblical preservation is a result of “circular reasoning.” Indeed it is. On what basis does the Church believe in VPI? Is it not on the testimony of the Bible itself (2 Tim 3:16, Matt 5:18)? “God says it, I believe it, that settles it.” Circular reasoning or *a priori* reasoning is not illegitimate. It is fallacious only when the premise to begin with is false. If I reason, “I am perfect because I say I am,” it is fallacious because the presupposition is utterly untrue (Rom 3:4-23). If God says of Himself, “I am perfect because I say I am,” that is absolutely true. Why do we believe God has preserved His Word and words perfectly? It is simply because God has promised to do just that in the Scriptures cited above. We simply take God at His Word because God cannot lie (Num 23:19).

Do we know everything that went on in the transmission of the text? No, we do not. But God knows; He knows everything and we believe He knows what He is doing. For instance, we were not there when God

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created the world. We did not see His work with our own eyes. When Science contradicts what the Bible says concerning origins, who are we going to believe? Science or the Bible? We believe the Bible. Heb 11:3 says, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Faithfulness to God and His Word demands that a Christian believe in a perfect God who has given His Church a perfect Bible. Biblical epistemology is not “seeing is believing,” but “believing is seeing.”

### **Canonisation and Preservation**

Is there a historical precedent that tells us that God’s providential work can involve a closure, a terminus? The answer is yes. All the inspired NT books were completed by AD 100 when the Apostle John wrote the last book of Revelation, and God warned against adding to or subtracting from His Word in Rev 22:18-19. However, we know that in the first few centuries, there were uninspired men who penned spurious gospels and epistles, and passed them off as Scripture. Some of these were the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Epistle of Barnabas, etc. Nevertheless, none of the inspired books of Scripture have been lost or obscured in the canonical process. By the providential guidance of the Holy Spirit, God’s people were led to identify the 27 books to become our NT Canon, no more, no less. There was a terminus to the canonisation of Scripture at the Council of Carthage in 397.

In like manner, the Lord allowed copyist errors and corruptions to enter into the transmission process through the pen of fallible scribes. Nevertheless, His providential hand kept His inspired words of Scripture from being lost. In light of God’s providence, that nothing happens by chance, and that history is under His sovereign control, I believe that in the fulness of time—in the most opportune time of the Reformation when the true church separated from the false, when the study of the original languages was emphasised, and the printing press invented (which meant that no longer would there be any need to handcopy the Scriptures thereby ensuring a uniform text)—God restored from out of a pure stream of preserved Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, the purest Hebrew and Greek Text of all—the Text that underlies our KJV—that accurately reflects the original Scriptures.

That the providential preservation of Scripture sees its historical parallel in the providential canonisation of Scripture was Dean Burgon's thinking as well. Dr Hills wrote of Burgon: "Burgon ... never lost sight of the special providence of God which has presided over the transmission of the New Testament down through the ages, expressly set out to maintain against all opponents that the Church was divinely guided to reject the false readings of the early centuries, and to gradually accept the true text. He denied that he was claiming a perpetual miracle that would keep manuscripts from being depraved at various times, and in various places. But 'The Church in her collective capacity, has nevertheless—as a matter of fact—been perpetually purging herself of those shamefully depraved copies which once everywhere abounded with her pale' (*The Revision Revised*, 334-5). He believed that just as God gradually settled the *Canon* of the New Testament by weaning His churches from non-canonical books, so He did with the *Text* also."

### **A Perfect Bible Today!**

What kind of Bible do fundamentalists have? Do they have a perfect Bible? The VPP fundamentalist would say yes, but the anti-VPP would say no. Make no mistake about it, both claim to believe in VPI, but despite this, anti-VPP fundamentalists say they do not have a perfect Bible. Is this biblical? Is this logical? Is this safe? Anti-VPP fundamentalists say that God's preservation of His Bible is *imperfect*. They say God did not preserve His words, only His doctrines; it is conceptual, not verbal preservation. What? Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, and Matt 24:35 tell us explicitly that God will preserve His "pure words," and every "jot and tittle" of His "words." Did not the Lord convey His doctrines through words? Without the words, where the doctrines?

Dr Hills sounded a pertinent warning, "Conservative scholars ... say that they believe in the special, providential preservation of the New Testament text. Most of them really don't though, because, as soon as they say this, they immediately reduce this special providential preservation to the vanishing point in order to make room for the naturalistic theories of Westcott and Hort. As we have seen, some say that the providential preservation of the New Testament means merely that *the same* "substance of doctrine" is found in all the New Testament documents. Others say that it means that the true reading is always present in *at least one of the thousands of extant New Testament*

## WHAT KIND OF BIBLE DO YOU HAVE?

### The Perfection of the Bible: Three Views

	<b>NOT PERFECT</b> <i>Not Perfect Then &amp; Now</i>	<b>NOT SO PERFECT</b> <i>Perfect Then Not Now</i>	<b>ALL PERFECT</b> <i>Perfect Then &amp; Now</i>
<b>THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL</b>	Liberalism/Modernism, Neo-orthodoxy	Neo-evangelicalism, Neo-fundamentalism	Biblical & Reformed Fundamentalism
<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE BIBLE</b>	Bible <i>is not or becomes</i> the Word of God	Bible <i>contains</i> the Word of God	Bible <i>is</i> the Word of God
<b>VIEW ON BIBLICAL INSPIRATION</b>	Human or Non-miraculous inspiration	Divine inspiration only in Autographs	Divine inspiration in Autographs & faithful Apographs
<b>VIEW ON BIBLICAL PRESERVATION</b>	Denies preservation of words & doctrines	Denies preservation of words / Affirms preservation of doctrines	Affirms preservation of both words & doctrines to the jot & tittle (VPP; WCF 1.8, Matt 5:18)
<b>AUTHORITY</b>	Science Alone	Science plus Bible	Bible Alone ( <i>Sola Scriptura</i> )
<b>EPISTEMOLOGY</b>	Intellect not Faith is supreme (See to believe)	Faith subjected more to the Intellect than to the Bible (See to believe)	Faith and Intellect totally subjected to the Bible (Believe to see)
<b>VIEW OF BIBLICAL INFALLIBILITY &amp; INERRANCY</b>	Denies both infallibility & inerrancy	Denies inerrancy / Affirms infallibility (ie, limited inerrancy)	Affirms both infallibility & inerrancy to the jot and tittle (VPI)
<b>ARE THERE MISTAKES / ERRORS IN THE BIBLE?</b>	Full of mistakes, with all kinds of factual discrepancies & actual contradictions	No mistakes only in spiritual matters but not in science, history, geography where discrepancies are actual or factual errors	No mistakes or errors at all, and any discrepancy is only apparent
<b>CHOICE OF ORIGINAL GREEK TEXT</b>	Westcott-Hort Minority & Critical Text Only	Westcott-Hort Minority & Critical Text is Superior	Textus Receptus (Received Text) Only
<b>POSITION ON BIBLE VERSIONS</b>	Only Liberal, Ecumenical, Roman Catholic, Feminist versions acceptable	All versions acceptable whether corrupt or not	Only KJV acceptable since it is the best (most accurate, faithful & reliable)
<b>CHOICE OF BIBLE VERSIONS</b>	RSV, NRSV, TEV/GNB, TNIV	NIV, NASB, NKJV, ESV	KJV Only
<b>TRANSLATION METHOD</b>	Dynamic Equivalence (Contextualisation)	Dynamic Equivalence (Thought for Thought)	Formal Equivalence (Word for Word)
<b>PROponents</b>	Metzger, Aland, Nida, Martini, Wulgren, UBS, WCC, SBL	Lewis, White, Kutilek, Carson, Wallace, Price, Hudson, IBS, NAE, ETS, BJU, CBTS	Burgon, Hills, Otis Fuller, Waite, Cloud, Paisley, Morris, PCC, TBS, DBS, McIntire, ICCB, BPC, FEBC

*manuscripts*. And still other scholars say that to them the special, providential preservation of the Scriptures means that the true New Testament text was providentially *discovered in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort* after having been lost for 1,500 years.

“If you adopt one of these false views of the providential preservation of Scriptures, then you are logically on your way toward *the denial of the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures*. For if God has preserved the Scriptures so carelessly, why would he have infallibly inspired them in the first place? It is not sufficient therefore merely to *say* that you believe in the doctrine of the special, providential preservation of holy Scriptures. You must *really* believe this doctrine and allow it to guide your thinking. You must begin with *Christ and the Gospel* and proceed according to the logic of faith. *This will lead you to the Traditional text, the Textus Receptus, and the King James Version*, in other words, to the common faith.”

God forbid that we should ever make this anti-biblical statement: “The Bible contains mistakes and errors but they are so small and so minor they should not cause us any worry.” If the Bible contains error, no matter how small or minor, I worry! “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas 2:10). If a person says he believes in a perfect Bible, and yet denies just one verse, yea even a jot or tittle, he is guilty of denying all of the Bible. Jesus warned, “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt 18:6).

I believe in a perfect God who has given us a perfect Bible. “*Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar*” (Rom 3:4)! Since God said it, that settles it, and my duty is simply to *believe it!* This kind of faith ought to be instilled in every Christian. We need to cleave on to the very words of God and never doubt the veracity of His words! No one has all the answers. God has all the answers, and sometimes He allows false prophets (like Westcott and Hort with their Accursed Text), and false doctrines (like limited inerrancy and imperfect preservation) to come into the scene in order to test whether we love Him or not (Deut 13:3, Ps 139:21-22). Would we doubt or question Him, or would we trust and obey His every word no matter what man may say? “Man shall not live

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by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4).

Instead of the rationalistic approach that begins with the opinions of man and then work backwards to the truth of God, which confuses it, we ought to take the faith approach. That is why Hills warned that if we do not really apply the logic of faith consistently and allow it to reach its logical conclusion, we would end up ultimately denying the very Word of God itself. It is thus no surprise that anti-VPP fundamentalists are prepared to call what are apparent contradictions in the Bible “errors.” In denying VPP they effectively deny VPI as well. They are not able to say they have a perfect Bible.

Can we afford to believe in a Bible that is less than perfect? If God is incapable of giving us a perfect Bible, what makes us so sure that He is capable of preserving our salvation to the very end? We are thrown into all kinds of doubts. If we doubt our Bible, we might as well doubt our salvation (cf 1 Cor 15:14-19). If we as biblical fundamentalists are unwilling to affirm that we have a perfectly flawless Bible *today*, something is seriously wrong somewhere! *Absolute and unquestioning faith in God’s infallible and inerrant Word is the only solution!* “The law of the LORD is *perfect*, converting the soul” (Ps 19:7).

### **Affirmation of VPI and VPP**

It is absolutely vital for those who love God and His Word to affirm the twin doctrines of VPI and VPP. Here is a summary statement of my faith in a perfectly inspired and preserved Bible today:

- (1) I do affirm the biblical doctrine of providential preservation that the inspired words of the Hebrew OT Scriptures and the Greek NT Scriptures are “kept pure in all ages” as taught in the Westminster Confession.
- (2) I do believe that “the Texts which are closest (ie, purest) to the original autographs of the Bible are the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text of the Old Testament, and the Traditional Greek Text for the New Testament underlying the King James Version.”
- (3) I believe that the purity of God’s words has been faithfully maintained in the Traditional/Byzantine/Majority/Received Text, and fully represented in the Textus Receptus that underlies the KJV. Providential preservation is not static but dynamic.

## **FEBC Faculty and Board Take the Dean Burgon Oath Affirming a Perfect Bible**

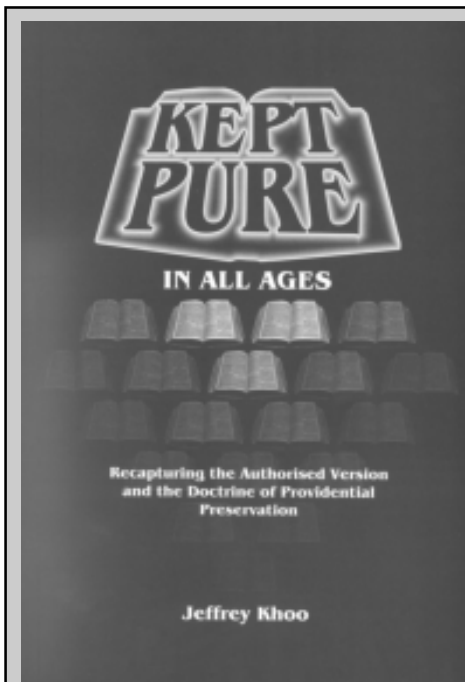


**I swear in the Name of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit that I believe “the Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.” So help me God. Amen.**



*A PLEA FOR A PERFECT BIBLE*

- (4) I do believe that God's providential preservation of the Scriptures concerns not just the doctrines but also the very words of Scripture to the last jot and tittle (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33, Rev 22:18-19).
- (5) I do not deny that other faithful Bible translations, including foreign language ones, that are based on other editions of the Textus Receptus can be deemed the Word of God.
- (6) I do believe in the verbal plenary inspiration and total inerrancy of Scripture. I do not believe there are any scribal errors in our present Bible, and any alleged errors are only apparent and not errors at all.
- (7) I do not believe we need to improve on the TR underlying the KJV. I do not want to play textual critic, and be a judge of God's Word. I accept God's special hand in His providential work of perfect Bible preservation during the Reformation.



**KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES**

*by Jeffrey Khoo*

There is a battle to be fought today. It is a battle for the Bible. The battle in the last century concerned the doctrine of Bible inspiration. In this new century, the battle concerns the doctrine of Bible preservation. The doctrine of inspiration is meaningless without the doctrine of preservation. The same God who inspired His Word has promised to preserve His Word. The Westminster Confession affirms the twin doctrines of Bible inspiration and Bible preservation: "The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), *being immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic.*"

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## **BIOETHICS: WHO SHOULD PLAY GOD?**

Charles Seet

### **Text: Psalm 139:13-18**

Questions on bioethics and biomedical research will be asked more frequently in the months to come, since the world is now waiting for the arrival of the first cloned human. The Bioethics Advisory Committee (BAC) has recently announced its recommendations after 10 months of consultation with various religious and professional groups. A few months ago plans were unveiled for the building of a complex called Biopolis at Buona Vista to build a thriving biomedical *R & D* hub here in Singapore. We cannot ignore these momentous changes, as they will affect us.

Nowhere is the danger of playing God more evident, than in the area of biomedical science. Almost all the leading research scientists in the genetic field are either atheists or agnostics who look only within themselves for ethical guidance. They reject the idea of a sovereign God who created us, and to Whom we are accountable. To them, humans are only a product of blind, mindless evolution, and they are helping man to make further and faster progress in evolution. For this reason, we need scriptural principles to deal with these bioethical issues instead of being led blindly into a “Brave New World.”

### **Human Life is Designed and Made by God, Not Man**

The Bible tells us that man is the highest of all God’s creatures, being made on the sixth day of creation in His own image, as the grand climax of all creation! King David said in Ps 139:14, “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.” If you could see the millions of intricate little events that must happen in exact and precise co-ordination and in proper sequence when a new person is developing from a single cell into a newborn child, you would truly marvel at how awesome God’s

## BIOETHICS: WHO SHOULD PLAY GOD?

creative power is! There are so many things that can go wrong in the formation of a new human being and if just one small little detail fails, there would be disastrous results!

Can any man ever claim credit for this? Should any man ever attempt to determine what a new individual will look like, and what attributes or personality he will have? Not at all. These are prerogatives that belong to God alone, and He is greatly glorified in them. But some are already talking about the day when man can design himself. On June 26, 2000, researchers moved a step closer to realising this when they announced the completion of a “working draft” reference DNA sequence of the human genome. One day soon, prospective parents may be able to walk into a medical store called “Genes R Us” and choose whatever physical and mental features they would like their child to have. Imagine what will happen when the child that is born grows up and reads Ps 139:14, *“I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”* How will he praise God for what he is? What if he is not happy with the way that his parents designed him? What if there is a flaw in their design? Can he sue them in court for it?

Using genetic technology to heal the sick is fine. But using it to breed and evolve stronger, more intelligent kinds of human beings is playing God. History has shown that whenever some new development in technology opens up new possibilities for enhancing human life, there will always be a demand for it. This is due to the idea that man has evolved from lower beings, and is still evolving and progressing into a higher being. It is the same sinful desire as that of wanting to be as gods that Satan tempted Eve to commit (Gen 3:5), and that Satan himself had, *“I will be like the most high”* (Isa 14:14). The desire to be like God and to play God is part of the rebellious sinful nature of fallen man.

This is the motivation behind the present race to produce the first human clone. Cloning of humans oversteps the boundaries set by God, and should be absolutely forbidden because man is created in God’s image. And what is disturbing about the BAC’s recommendations is that though they do not condone the cloning of human beings, they allow for therapeutic cloning of human embryos. Scientists believe that cloning is a great way to perpetuate genius, that it can provide soldier and servant classes of people, and provide spare body parts. But these reasons are utilitarian and man-centred. They do not bring any glory to God. No consideration is made at all, of how the clones themselves will feel about

being products of biomedical technology, made just to fulfill these utilitarian purposes.

### **Human Life Should Only Be Taken by God, Not Man**

Since God is the originator of human life, He alone has the right to decide when a person's life is to end. One moral issue that scientists handling human life have to deal with, is what to do with experiments that have gone wrong. Today, the sixth Commandment "*Thou shalt not kill*" (Exod 20:13) is being violated by scientists who treat human fetuses as nothing more than a mass of tissue that can be destroyed at any time. Because of the public outcry against this by various groups, some have attempted to establish a limit within which experiments can be done on prenatal human life. The BAC recommends that human embryos that are 1-13 days old can be used freely for experiments or for harvesting embryonic stem cells for medical purposes. It even approves the creation of new embryos in the lab using donated sex cells, just for these purposes.

It is alleged that only at the 14<sup>th</sup> day the primitive streak in the embryo that later becomes the nervous system, appears. So before this streak appears, the embryo has no sensation of pain, and is therefore not a person. This is pure conjecture, not science. As long as there is the slightest doubt that a newly fertilised egg or embryo is not a person yet, liberties should not be taken with them. There are some who say that as long as many people stand to benefit from the research, it does not matter if some human embryos have to be sacrificed. But taking such liberties with human embryos is playing God. The scriptures are clear that life begins at the moment of conception:

(1) The Bible consistently refers to conception when speaking of the beginning of a person's history. Conception is mentioned 64 times in the Bible, and often as the beginning of a person's life. See Job 3:3 and Ps 51:5. (2) According to Luke 1:42-44 John the Baptist, then only a six-month old fetus (v36) and already filled with the Holy Spirit, leaps for joy in his mother's womb at the arrival of his cousin Jesus in Mary's womb. The unborn Jesus was probably only a zygote or an embryo at this time, because this meeting took place shortly after Mary received the announcement that she was going to conceive Jesus soon. (3) Passages like Jeremiah 1:5 show that God calls some people into fulltime service even during their fetal life.

*BIOETHICS: WHO SHOULD PLAY GOD?*

We must take these as God's final word on the question, "*When does human life begin?*" It begins right at the time of conception. These principles need to be known and applied by all Christians, especially those who are in the field of biomedical research, or who are contemplating on being involved in it. Don't get yourself into any career that will cause you to overstep the scriptural boundaries and to play God, no matter how good the prospects may be. There is still a lot of research that can be done in the life sciences that do not violate biblical principles, e.g. with plants and animals. It is good that the BAC recommends that the consent of parties is needed for those who are going to be involved in biomedical research. This means that no one can be compelled to take part in any research if he has strong views against it. We hope that this recommendation will be strictly implemented when the time comes. Let us always maintain a sense of reverence for what God has ordained – the miracle of human life, that God has specially made in His own image, in His own likeness.

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*Rev Charles Seet is an assistant pastor of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church and a lecturer at Far Eastern Bible College. The above was a message delivered to Life Church at the 10.30 am service, July 7, 2000.*

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## **PERSPECTIVES IN CHRISTIAN MUSIC**

Jack Sin

Music is a powerful medium of communication. Today, the church is bombarded with all sorts of sights and sounds under the name of “Christian contemporary music.” Advocates of “pop-idiom” evangelism claim that their music and songs can help propagate the gospel. But are these claims true? The Christian church needs proper guidelines, standards or criteria for choosing biblical and God-honouring music and songs.

The Scriptures are our ultimate standard and guide on this matter, as on all others. Eph 5:19-20, for example, provides biblical criteria for a proper selection of “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” that are honouring, glorifying and pleasing to God.

### **The Theology of Worship**

An individual’s attitude in worship is determined by his theology and concept of God. If he recognises the attributes of God, that He is an almighty and sovereign Creator, holy, just and righteous (Rev 4:8; 5:4; Deut 32:4), he will approach God with reverence and fear. If, however, his knowledge of God is shallow and deficient, this will be reflected in the manner in which he worships. His choice of music will be self-centred, frivolous, superficial and even worldly.

A worship service should be characterised by reverence, sincerity, humility and dignity. Congregational singing should always be an expression of our worship, adoration and praise. There should be a restful meditative atmosphere, where people can hear the Word of God and sing his praise without distraction. The New Testament gives no definitive instructions as to the proper format of worship. But there are general principles that can be gleaned from different portions of Scripture.

Firstly, Paul exhorts that all things should be done decently and in order (1 Cor 14:40). This provides a good guide in the choice of music for

## *PERSPECTIVES IN CHRISTIAN MUSIC*

worship. Disorderly, chaotic and outlandish tunes, loud and jarring instruments, go against orderliness and should be rejected.

Secondly, Jesus told the Samaritan woman to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Hence, praise and worship must be a sincere, spiritual, personal and intelligent activity. The mind, heart and will of the worshipper are to blend together in expressing praise, love, gratitude and obedience. Worship must be “in truth” as opposed to falsehood, and “in spirit” as opposed to sensual or physical. Whatever assistance we may derive from music or instruments, these things cannot of themselves constitute a spiritual act of worship. They should not be accorded such significance that they eclipse or interferes with worship. Dr Peter Masters writes:

Musical aids must never be allowed to draw the minds of the worshippers away from the Lord ... in these days so many people are speaking of worshipping through outward physical senses; they want to express worship by instrumental dexterity and dance.

When we are engaged in direct worship as in our Sunday services and private devotions, all purely human activities must desist except those that are simply assisting in direct spiritual worship. A melody, which is appropriate to the sentiments of a hymn, will often help powerfully to prepare us to realise that we are meant to be a rejoicing and victorious people. Solemn music may equally affect us and help us to sorrow over sin, examine our hearts and dedicate ourselves afresh to God.

So, instruments are to be used sparingly in worship and not for showmanship and entertainment. In some churches with synthesisers and drums, the music drowns the voice of praise altogether.

Thirdly, we were told to “worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” (1 Chron 16:29). Holiness, because the person we worship is the thrice-holy Jehovah, and that requires propriety and decorum from his subjects in public worship. Thus, loud, lilting, jarring and syncopated music that encourages a flippant and irreverent attitude is inconsistent with the principle of beauty and holiness in worship and ought to be discarded.

### **Contemporary Christian Music**

There is a proper place for new edifying songs and hymns, composed today with theologically sound lyrics and suitable tunes. But

the majority of new songs and tunes that are emerging are far from edifying. Calvin Johansson comments:

The music of the world supports the repudiation of biblical standards by using combinations of sounds which are violent, mind-numbing, vulgar, rebellious... undisciplined and chaotic ... If listeners do not hear these things, it is because it has dulled their aesthetic sensibilities ... In some of this music; violence and the call to violence have become acceptable. It is not acceptable to me.

There should be no compromise and accommodation with worldly music, even if it is so-called “gospel music” like songs by Amy Grant, Sandy Patti or Cliff Richard. Some may have started well but the allure of the world’s popularity has led them to a deadly compromise.

The church should not adopt a utilitarian or pragmatic approach in the name of sharing the gospel. The means have to be right and acceptable before God, and the end does not justify the means. Johansson adds: “The centuries-long trend towards the enthronement of self has done much to invalidate our worship ... We cannot set ourselves as gods and expect to worship God.”

Many young believers are mesmerised by new tunes. Because of this the lyrics enter their subconscious minds, which accept and retain the information. Sound reason, which should filter and reject unhelpful information, is bypassed. The ideas absorbed by the subconscious mind then influences the personality and the way it responds to situations. We need to examine carefully the content of the lyrics and the musical arrangement of the song.

### **Drunk on Music**

The Bible tells us: “gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:13). This is a warning to believers to be ready to protect the faith we have in Christ. We must be continually on the lookout for things which will have a negative influence in our lives. Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones opined,

We can become drunk on music; there is no question about that. Music can have the effect of creating an emotional state in which the mind is no longer functioning, as it should be, and no longer discriminating. I have known people to sing themselves into a state of intoxication without realising what they were doing.



These are remarkable facts — music is a powerful tool that can be manipulated for better or worse.

The lyrics of some “Christian songs” produced today are questionable. Coupled with the lifestyle and behaviour of the composers, they leave much to be desired. What we listen to and feed upon, is what will affect and be evidenced in our lives. We must not let ourselves be pushed around by feelings generated by contemporary music. Rather, we must be guided by our reason, enlightened by knowledge of the truth of God in the Scriptures.

### **Biblical Principles**

In 1 Corinthians, Paul delineates some general guidelines for God-honouring Christian living and decision making. These are also helpful for the selection of sound, godly edifying Christian music. They can be expressed as four questions.

***Is it expedient?*** (1 Cor 6:12). All things are permissible but are they beneficial or profitable to me spiritually? Yes, it is legal to do certain things like going to rock concerts or singing worldly sentimental music. But is it good for my soul?

***Is it enslaving?*** (1 Cor 6:12). Do I become dependent on it, enslaved by its repetitive and hypnotic sounds so that I must hear it or do it? We can become addicted to worldly contemporary music if we are not careful.

***Is it an example?*** (1 Cor 8:9). Is it offensive to other Christians? Does it cause a brother or sister to fall or to doubt? For the sake of our brother’s weaker conscience we should not sing tunes or words that offend or mislead others spiritually.

***Is it edifying?*** (1 Cor 10:23,31). Does this song or music increase our devotion and love to Christ? Does it strengthen faith, holiness, godliness and Christian piety? Is it glorifying and honouring to God?

Is the name of Christ exalted and extolled? This is one vital question we need to ask and answer, even before we discuss specific criteria for the selection of good Christian music.

### **Lyrics and Bible Truth**

The foremost consideration in choosing a song is the content and message of its words. Does the lyric convey a scriptural message, or are

its words repetitive and devoid of theological content? Are there scriptural or moral flaws? Are the sentiments expressed anti-biblical, or even anti-Trinitarian? We must be careful not to sing unscriptural songs and nonsensical ditties. For example, consider these words:

*When my Lord shall come again,  
When he walks and talks with men ...  
Will he feel a welcome here  
Or will he go away in tears?  
Am I all that I should be  
Is he satisfied with me?*

The theology of this verse is absolutely unbiblical. At his Second Coming, Christ will appear as King and Judge. He will certainly not “go away in tears” but will accomplish all that he has purposed.

Or, again, what about this song for children?

*Father Abraham has seven children,  
Seven children have father Abraham,  
One of them is fat, one of them is thin ...*

This is both ridiculous and factually wrong. Abraham had only two children and we know nothing about their size. Calvin Johannson says,

We need to practise a theism which is comprehensively disciplined (and accurate). If we do not, our words and symbols will say one thing but our deeds, actions and forms (including music) will say another.

### **Words and Music**

A chief principle of choral composition is that the musical arrangement must harmonise with the words that go with it. Consider the melody and rhythm. Are they compatible with the words? Are they uplifting, devotional and edifying? Or are they jarring or distracting? Music has a character of its own and to some extent conveys its own message. If an inappropriate tune is coupled with fine lyrics, the incongruity can be disastrous or ludicrous. The way a text is expressed is as important as the text itself.

Sacred music must be characterised by clear communication and comprehension of the text. We must sing with understanding and meaning. Paul testifies, “if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit

prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful ... I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Cor 14:14-15).

Can you sing ‘Near the Cross’ in a flippant, fast-paced and frivolous way? Or “Lead Me to Calvary” in a swaying, jazzing and hypnotic manner? In the 1970s a worldly pop group called “Boney M” sang words taken from Ps 137, “By the river of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, when we remembered Zion.” Even though the words were from Scripture, their rendition was totally unacceptable because the jazzy, seductive music was incompatible with their sombre meaning.

### **Reverent Worship**

E J Young, a reformed theologian, wrote:

It is well-known that the character of the song, almost equally with the character of the preaching, controls the theology of the church. In more than one communion where the preaching had departed from the biblical truth, the remnant of sound theology contained in favourite hymns has prevented the spiritual life of the church from becoming fully blighted. There is a need for the resurgence of reverent worship of the Lord in song. It is essential that he be worshipped in accordance with his own infallible Word and that worship seeks to reflect the whole counsel of his will.

The text used to convey spiritual truth should be carefully composed. Some so-called Christian songs are shallow, superficial and irreverent, like this one, “Give me gas in my car, keep me trucking for the Lord.” Music affects our feelings and behaviour. Some Christian music grips young hearts by its sensuality. They reject traditional church music as outmoded and boring and, as a consequence, a worldly culture has invaded the church.

Rhythms, too, must correspond to the spiritual emphasis of the words. Rhythms that are syncopated, lilting or toe-tapping, have no place in the worship of God. Sensual, suggestive and worldly music must not be mixed with sacred words and tunes. Much of the contemporary Christian music sung in some charismatic and liberal churches is outrageously unacceptable. It devastates Christian influence and testimony.

The choice of Church music and hymns should reflect the relevance and needs of the occasion. There is an appropriate hymn for every occasion. For example, to begin the worship Service, a hymn of praise like “O For a Thousand Tongues” or “O Worship the King” might be

chosen. For an offertory hymn we might select “All to Jesus I Surrender” or ‘More Love to Thee.’ For some occasions a hymn of consolation and comfort might be needed, such as “The Comforter Has Come” or “Keep on Believing.” During a vigil service, we might sing “Abide with Me;” on Resurrection Sunday, “Low in the Grave He Lay;” and so on. Appropriateness and relevance are important if the hymn or music is to reinforce the message or the occasion.

### **Ministry, Not Entertainment**

The purpose of sacred music is to glorify God and edify the saints. The church must promote good healthy Christian music. Johansson comments,

Music in church is a change agent; poor church music denies the gospel. Right music will exert a positive influence on people; worldly unedifying music will distort and corrupt the minds of men. We are affected by what we hear.

We should teach Christian virtues and doctrine through good Christian music. Sacred music is a ministry to the soul, not an entertainment or gratification of the flesh. Many can testify to the godly influence of healthy music in their spiritual lives. It was said that more were converted by Charles Wesley’s hymns than by John Wesley’s sermons.

The choice of hymns and music plays a vital role in congregational worship. The theme of sound, acceptable, reverential worship of a sovereign God is dominant throughout the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation. Every Sabbath is an emblem of eternal rest. Believers should prepare for eternal worship by singing God-honouring, biblically sound hymns, choruses and spiritual songs, worshipping God in spirit and in truth (Col 3:16).

The selection of hymns should be biblically sound. Lyrics on Christology, pneumatology, theology and eschatology must accord with Scripture. There is an acceptable way of worshipping the living and true God. The Westminster Assembly defined what is commonly called the “regulative principle” in worship: “He may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men or any way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, 21:1).

God prescribes how he may be approached and it is not left to the whims and fancies of men. There is to be sanctity of worship, reverence and awe for the holy and Almighty God. To some degree, different ethnic cultures, or different forms of church government, may influence our choice of music. But the overriding principle should be one of sanctity, sacred devotion, reverence, awe, decency and orderliness in worship, praising the Lord always (1 Cor 14:40; John 4:24).

The words in Col 3:16-17 should be our guide and principle, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Good hymns speak to our heart and can teach and admonish us.

### Conclusion

Music as a medium can be used for either good or evil. Paul exhorts,

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Rom 12:1-2).

We must not be conformed to the world's carnal tastes but, rather, transformed by godly, spiritual, theologically sound and edifying Christian music. As justified and sanctified people, we should avoid all forms of music that are unedifying and enslaving. Let them not infiltrate either the church or our Christian homes. Let us be pure and undefiled, offering acceptable, reverential worship and ministry in a day when many churches are confused and compromised.

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*Rev Jack Sin is the pastor of Maranatha Bible-Presbyterian Church, and lecturer in church history at Far Eastern Bible College. The above article was published in Evangelical Times (UK), July and August 2002.*

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## **MISSION OR MISSIONS?**

Edward Paauwe

“Ed, would you be able to help edit *Biblical Missions*?” The question came from our Mission Board President. I had graduated from Bob Jones University in 1965 and from Faith Theological Seminary in May 1969 and in September of 1969 my wife and I were appointed as missionaries to Singapore under The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, with headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After doing our deputation, we left for the mission field in April 1970 and came back for our first furlough in March 1972. It was in that year that the question came from our Mission Board President.

We were spending most of our furlough time in the Philadelphia area, and I was pleased and honored to be able to serve the Lord and help our Mission Board in this way. One of my responsibilities was to type all articles for *Biblical Missions*, our monthly missions magazine, and get them ready for the printer. One day, our Mission Board President gave me his editorial to type, in which he referred to the *International Review of Mission*. I was somewhat familiar with that publication, as I had seen it as a Seminary student in about 1967 or 1968. However, I remembered the name of that publication as the *International Review of Missions*, and so I put an “s” after “Mission” in what our Mission Board President had written.

Our Mission Board President was very gracious. He did not call me into his office to tell me that I had made a big mistake in changing Mission to Missions. As a matter of fact, I do not recall him saying anything directly to me about it at all. However, he did make it clear by telling the whole office staff, which of course included me, that the name of the publication had been changed from the *International Review of Missions* to the *International Review of Mission*. This had happened in 1969, and with my graduation from Seminary in that year and our going to the mission field in 1970, I had somehow missed that change. While the office staff probably did not know the President was referring to my

## MISSION OR MISSIONS?

gaffe, I sure was embarrassed and I learned something very important that day. I can assure you I never forgot and never made the same mistake again.

After I started to write this paper, I decided to read the above-mentioned editorial again. I was embarrassed to discover that I had changed “Mission” to “Missions” no less than three times, twice in the name of the publication the *International Review of Mission* and once in the World Council of Churches’ Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.<sup>1</sup>

### Mission or Missions?

You may wonder what all the fuss is about. After all, in English, doesn’t the addition of an “s” simply change a word from singular to plural? While it is true that the plural of mission is missions, the meaning of the words *mission* and *missions* is different. *Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language* says that the English word “mission” is derived from the Latin “*missio*, a sending, sending away.”<sup>2</sup> “Mission” is among other things “a sending out or being sent out with authority to perform a special duty ... the special duty or function on which someone is sent as a messenger or representative ... the special task or purpose for which a person is apparently destined in life; calling: as, he considered it his *mission* to educate the ignorant.”<sup>3</sup> The key word is the word “special.” Mission is a special duty, a special function, or a special task. As such mission refers to one specific task that a person wants to accomplish.

“Missions” on the other hand is defined as “organized missionary work, especially for spreading Christianity.”<sup>4</sup> Or, as Dr Irwin Steele, former missionary to Latin America, explains, “Someone has given the following definition: ‘Christian missions is the proclamation of the Gospel to the unconverted in all the world, according to the command of Christ.’”<sup>5</sup> It would seem that “someone” was Robert Hall Glover who said, “‘Christian Missions’ is the Proclamation of the Gospel to the Unconverted Everywhere According to the Command of Christ.”<sup>6</sup>

C Gordon Olson says, “Missions is the whole task, endeavor, and program of the Church of Jesus Christ to reach out across geographical and/or cultural boundaries by sending missionaries to evangelize people who have never heard or who have little opportunity to hear the saving gospel.”<sup>7</sup> A more detailed definition is given by George Peters:

*Missions* is a specialized term. By it I mean the sending forth of authorized persons beyond the borders of the New Testament church and her immediate gospel influence to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in gospel-destitute areas, to win converts from other faiths or non-faiths to Jesus Christ, and to establish functioning, multiplying local congregations who will bear the fruit of Christianity in that community and to that country.<sup>8</sup>

To summarize, *missions is reaching the lost, wherever they may be, with the saving Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to build the new believers up in the faith.* To distinguish between mission and missions, we can say that *mission refers to a specific task, while missions refers to the overall task of evangelism, church planting, and the nurturing of believers.*

It should be pointed out that today the word “mission” is *not* used to refer to a specific task. Rather, as Olson says,

Several decades ago ecumenical writers began to substitute the term “mission” for “missions” with the evident intention of broadening the focus to include things which had not previously been included, such as social-action programs and the “social gospel.” In the intervening years many evangelicals have been indiscriminating in following this terminology. I will not do so since I am convinced that there is an essential difference between the terms.<sup>9</sup>

Olson clearly sees a distinction between the words “mission” and “missions”. Peters does as well: “Much is being said today of *mission* and *missions*. ... They are not synonyms.”<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, as far back as 1971, even Peter Wagner called attention to the importance of the change from “missions” to “mission”. He said, “The phrase the *church is mission* is more dangerous than it might first appear. It reflects a subtle [sic] but widespread shift in emphasis from making disciples as the top-priority missionary goal to simply doing good works in the world.”<sup>11</sup> And more than forty years ago, Bishop Lesslie Newbigin already indicated that subtle, crucial differences were implied in the use of the word “mission” as opposed to “missions”:

When we speak of “the mission of the church” we mean everything that the Church is sent into the world to do—preaching the Gospel, healing the sick, caring for the poor, teaching the children, improving international and interracial relations, attacking injustice—all of this and more can rightly be included in the phrase “the Mission of the Church.”



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But within this totality there is a narrower concern which we usually speak of as “missions.” Let us, without being too refined, describe the narrower concern by saying: it is the concern that in the places where there are no Christians there should be Christians.<sup>12</sup>

Dr William R LeRoy, former missionary to São Paulo, Brazil (now retired), said that when the apparently insignificant letter “s” in the title of *The International Review of Mission* was dropped in April of 1969,

it symbolized not only the triumph of secular theology as the guiding norm of the ecumenical movement, but also represents a historic and a gigantic step forward in adopting revolutionary concepts in their effort to reinterpret the very nature and mission of the Church. This action was also taken to bring the *International Review of Missions*, now, *International Review of Mission*, into line with the thinking of the Mexico meeting of 1963 of the Commission of World Mission and Evangelism, the Geneva Conference of Church and Society of the WCC in 1966, and the Uppsala meeting of the WCC in 1968.<sup>13</sup>

In other words, the change from “missions” to “mission” is not only deliberate, but it also indicates a major shift in theology. It is unfortunate that many Christians are not aware of the distinction between “missions” and “mission” and use the terms interchangeably. May God help these Christians to see the difference between these terms so that they will use them properly.

### **A Look at History**

It is necessary to go back into Church History to see how this change came about. The early Church believed in a strict verbal inspiration of the Bible and held it as the final authority. This view was held, with very few exceptions, until the seventeenth century, when there was a tendency to eliminate the human element in the writing of the Bible. In the eighteenth century, rationalism denied the infallibility of the Scriptures and inserted the existence of errors in the Word of God. In the nineteenth century, Schleiermacher excluded the supernatural element in inspiration. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries all previous views held from the first through the nineteenth century are held in all kinds of variations. Today there are basically four attitudes towards the Bible. While this may be an oversimplification, because there are so many variations of each view, it will nevertheless give us a good idea of the attitude people today have towards the Bible.

The *Liberals* believe that the Bible *contains* the Word of God, or that it may contain it. The *Neo-Orthodox* hold that those parts of the Bible which speak to your heart *become* the Word of God to you. The *Neo-Evangelical* view is that the Bible *is* the Word of God, *but it's really not important*. Love is the most important thing. It should be added that of late some Neo-Evangelicals have moved to a "limited inerrancy" view. They believe that "the Bible is infallible and inerrant in matters concerning salvation, but that its writers were subject to the worldview of their time and so, in matters of science and history, may have made some errors."<sup>14</sup> Other Neo-Evangelicals have adopted a theistic evolution view of the creation of the world. Fundamentalists believe that the Bible *is* the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God, the only and infallible rule for faith and practice. Fundamentalists would agree with the words of Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield when he said, "Inspiration is that extraordinary, supernatural influence exerted by the Holy Ghost on the writers of our Sacred Books, by which their words were rendered also the words of God, and, therefore, perfectly infallible."<sup>15</sup>

It will now be necessary to look at a number of different church and missionary conferences, as well as congresses on evangelism, to see how the gradual change from "missions" to "mission" occurred. This will also show that the understanding of salvation has changed among liberal and neo-orthodox circles from the vertical to the horizontal—from a consideration of man's relationship to God to man's relationship with his fellow man. It should be noted that Harvey T Hoekstra, who wrote *The World Council of Churches and the Demise of Evangelism*, is actually "a minister whose church has been a member of the World Council of Churches [WCC] from its inception."<sup>16</sup> He states, "I intend to remain a part of this church within the Council. As an 'insider' then I am primarily addressing my colleagues in the churches that make up the membership of the World Council."<sup>17</sup> Part of the historical material that follows is taken from Hoekstra's book. It is the opinion of this writer that using material written by an "insider" will give a fair representation of the views expressed by the World Council of Churches, even though Hoekstra generally speaks very favorably of missions within the WCC context. For instance, commenting on the 1963 meeting in Mexico, he says, "Basically, the consensus at Mexico City was in the tradition of ... the classical view of missions."<sup>18</sup> Fundamentalists cannot agree with that. But while we cannot agree with many of Hoekstra's observations and

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conclusions, his reports of what happened at the various conferences are very helpful and enlightening.

### **New York — 1900**

In 1885 A T Pierson suggested that a world conference on missions be gathered to help “evangelize the world in this generation.” In 1900, a conference convened at Carnegie Hall in New York with over 200,000 people attending the various sessions during a 10 day period. Officially, there were 1,666 participants representing some 400 agencies.<sup>19</sup>

### **Edinburgh — 1910**

“The modern ecumenical mood is usually traced back to Edinburgh, 1910, where delegates of the missionary community came together to share their joint concerns for the evangelization of the world.”<sup>20</sup> Three movements came out of the Edinburgh conference. First of all, there was the Faith and Order movement (1920); secondly, there was the Life and Work movement (1930). As Hoekstra says, “These two streams eventually merged to form the World Council of Churches (1948).”<sup>21</sup> The third movement that came out of the Edinburgh conference was the International Missionary Council (IMC) (1921). In 1961 “the IMC was integrated into the WCC and became known as the Division of World Mission and Evangelism.”<sup>22</sup>

Doran says regarding the Edinburgh conference, “In order to accommodate the various groups participating, a deliberate move toward minimizing doctrine was made by the committee so that conflict would be avoided.”<sup>23</sup>

### **Jerusalem — 1928**

“The Jerusalem, 1928, conference dealt with the threat of secularism. In a world where mission and church leaders were perhaps tempted to join with other religions in a common effort to stem the tide of secularism, the IMC clearly affirmed:

Our message is Jesus Christ. He is the revelation of what God is, and of what man through Him may become ... He made known to us God as our Father, in Him we find God incarnate, the final, yet ever unfolding, revelation of the God in whom we live and move and have our being (IMC 1928:402).<sup>24</sup>

### **Madras — 1938**

This meeting “wrestled with the relationship of the Christian message to the messages of the non-Christian world.”<sup>25</sup> Doran observes that the Jerusalem and Madras conferences “advanced the issue of social involvement in missions and began to articulate a ‘Larger Evangelism,’ i.e., a view of evangelism that encompassed more than personal salvation. This view laid the foundation upon which much of the later developments would build.”<sup>26</sup>

### **Whitby — 1947**

At Whitby, the Christian way of life “was seen as in social competition with secularism. The social superiority of Christianity became a motive for evangelism.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Amsterdam — 1948**

This was a significant year because both the World Council of Churches and the International Council of Christian Churches were established in the same month. The WCC was thoroughly ecumenical and the ICCC staunchly fundamental. In the 53 years since then, the WCC has moved further left, while the ICCC still stands “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9). Olson says regarding the WCC, “Although the founding documents of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam seemed evangelical on the surface, in the ensuing years the liberal and neo-orthodox viewpoint became dominant.”<sup>28</sup> Olson also points out that since the time of its inauguration, “the World Council of Churches has had the organizational unity of Christendom as its major goal, and evangelical doctrine, evangelism, and missions have been minimized and repressed.”<sup>29</sup>

### **Willingen — 1952**

Hoekstra says that, “It was at the Willingen meeting in 1952 that new theological winds began to blow more strongly.”<sup>30</sup> This is a significant admission. In his discussion of the conferences mentioned so far, Hoekstra has not indicated any problems at all. But now he says that new theological winds are beginning to blow *more strongly*. In other words, they have been blowing before, but now it is becoming more obvious. “The Willingen conference,” says Hoekstra, “was the crack in the door that opened the way for the classical-biblical interpretation of

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mission to be supplanted by ‘New Mission.’”<sup>31</sup> What is “New Mission”? Hoekstra explains, “By this term I mean that understanding of mission that lifts up humanization as its goal—and the ultimate objective of which is to bring about a new socio-economic-political world order having a ‘just, sustainable and participatory society.’”<sup>32</sup> And the back cover of Hoekstra’s book explains: “Though founded upon a passion for the three billion ‘unreached peoples,’ the WCC, through years of coffee, communism, and compromise, has washed away the Great Commission in favor of a new jargon. Now ‘New Mission’ redefines *missionary* as *Marxist*.”<sup>33</sup> That is quite a revelation: a book written by a member of the WCC admits that the WCC redefines *missionary* as *Marxist*!

### **Evanston — 1954**

This was the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches. We shall not comment further on this Assembly, except to say that the new theological winds that had begun to blow more strongly at Willingen, were becoming stronger yet.

### **Ghana — 1957**

“At Ghana the assurance was given that the IMC would be able to do more for ‘missions and evangelism’ from within the WCC than by remaining outside.”<sup>34</sup> As a result,

the IMC voted to recommend to its constituent members that it be integrated into the World Council of Churches, though it was not until 1961 (at New Delhi) that the decision became final and the IMC officially became the Division of World Mission and Evangelism within the World Council of Churches.<sup>35</sup>

However, Stephen Neill “believed that integration [of the IMC into the WCC] was a thinly disguised way for the WCC to liquidate the troublesome IMC.”<sup>36</sup> Neill rejected integration because “the present attitude of the World Council, however masked by polite phrases, is that the IMC is simply an anachronistic nuisance and the sooner it is liquidated by becoming a part of the World Council, the better...”<sup>37</sup> Subsequent events have shown that Neill’s view was correct. It is clear that:

at Ghana world mission began to be interpreted differently. On the one hand the concept of mission was being broadened until it included, at least in theory, the whole life of all Christians everywhere—i.e., “everything is

Mission.” On the other hand, the concept was limited to a more specific task defined in terms of evangelism, or proclaiming the Gospel of salvation to non-Christians, particularly to those of non-Christian religious traditions. At Ghana there was already a degree of polarization between these two positions.<sup>38</sup>

### **New Delhi — 1961**

The Third Assembly of the WCC met in New Delhi in 1961. “This denotes the historic moment when the IMC was integrated into the WCC and became known as the Division of World Mission and Evangelism.”<sup>39</sup> While some “hailed it as an act that would place the missionary and evangelistic task at the center of everything the WCC would now undertake”, others “feared that ... the missionary obligation would be submerged and obscured by the many other things churches must also do together.”<sup>40</sup>

Subsequent events have shown that those who opposed integration were correct. Hoekstra states:

Not only have most mission agencies and boards been structured out of existence in WCC member churches, but even the need for a Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (within the WCC) has been discussed, on more than one occasion, by the WCC staff.<sup>41</sup>

### **Mexico City — 1963**

“Mexico City is remembered particularly for the slogan ‘Mission in Six Continents.’ ... The whole world is a mission field.”<sup>42</sup> Hoekstra explains that,

Many subjects touched on at Mexico City became central issues in succeeding years in the WCC’s quest for reconceptualization of Mission. These included: (1) Dialogue: the encounter with people of other living faiths and ideologies; the relation of dialogue to proclamation and conversion; the ethics of dialogue. (2) The structure of the missionary congregation: the renewal of the church to give a credible witness to the Gospel. (3) Urban and Industrial Mission: how to bear witness to the Gospel in a world of cities. (4) The proclamation of the Gospel and the social dimension of the Gospel: “holistic evangelism” of Bangkok 1973. (5) Service and Justice: the churches’ response to human tragedy, hunger, poverty, earthquake and fire. (6) Secular man and the kind of salvation God intends.<sup>43</sup>

## **Uppsala — 1968**

At this Assembly of the World Council of Churches, it becomes increasingly clear that the new theological winds that Hoekstra said had begun to blow more strongly at Willingen, have now turned into a storm, if not a hurricane. Norman Goodall, in his report on Uppsala, wrote:

Because the world is always changing, it is always necessary to evaluate missionary principles. ... We suggest the following criteria for such evaluation:

do they place the church alongside the poor, the defenseless, the abused, the forgotten, the bored?

do they allow Christians to enter the concerns of others to accept their issues and their structures as vehicles of involvement?

are they the best situations for discerning with other men the signs of the times, and for moving with history towards the coming of the new humanity?<sup>44</sup>

Reading this, it is no wonder that only a few short years later, “the WCC called its member churches to an all-out effort to struggle against injustice and create a more humane social order. WCC leaders felt a different set of missionary priorities was needed for today’s revolutionary, often violent, and increasingly secularized society.”<sup>45</sup> This different set of priorities is clearly seen in the following quote from Hoekstra:

The Uppsala Assembly cannot be thanked for what it failed to say. In its intense emphasis on the horizontal relationships, the vertical dimension and the power of the Gospel to change those who hear and believe into new people in Christ was scarcely mentioned. The challenge to repentance and new birth into the Kingdom of God through belief in Jesus Christ for people everywhere was notably absent. Pity and compassion for the millions upon millions who have never validly heard of Jesus Christ, God’s only appointed Savior, was a missing element. Nowhere mentioned was the intent of God that through the proclamation of the Gospel his salvation could reach to the ends of the earth. The great unfinished missionary and evangelistic task of the churches appeared to be deliberately omitted.<sup>46</sup>

The change from “missions” to “mission” is becoming increasingly clear and will become even clearer when we consider Bangkok.

## **Bangkok — 1973**

The Bangkok Conference was ten years in preparation. It was originally planned for 1969 or 1970. But the CWME [Commission on World Mission and Evangelism] leaders were not ready; nor was the time ripe for their

desired objectives. For *the goal of Bangkok was to complete the process that would involve the whole WCC in a common effort: to implement the horizontal understandings of New Mission as laid out in Uppsala; to re-orient and redirect the missionary movement* (emphasis added).<sup>47</sup>

That the Bangkok Conference was judged to have been a success can be seen from the words of Emilio Castro (who was to become the new director of the CWME) at the close of the meeting: “The missionary era has ended and the era of world mission has just begun.”<sup>48</sup>

In a sense we might say that truer words were never spoken. As far as the WCC was concerned, the era of missions, i.e. of winning the lost to Christ, had ended. The era of mission, of seeing salvation on a purely horizontal level, had begun.

The theme of the Bangkok Conference was “Salvation Today.” Hoekstra says that, “the discussion papers written by the WCC staff, and which formed the basis for Bangkok planning, indicate that salvation was to be defined very largely in secular terms and that the churches would be summoned to enter the struggle for liberation leading to a new society.”<sup>49</sup> Emilio Castro, Director of CWME, put it this way after the Conference:

We discerned in Bangkok that the theological schizophrenia that separates relation with God from relations with our neighbours disappears in this wonderful knowledge of a liberating God whose Spirit works through different agents of liberation, but works fundamentally through his Church to convey to mankind the secret of his love and to offer the possibility of a conscious decision to incorporate ourselves into his divine mission of salvation and liberation.<sup>50</sup>

Salvation then is seen in liberation. It is not seen in man’s relationship with God, but in his relationship with his fellow man. The WCC is now embracing “the new, horizontal understanding of mission—the salvation God intended as described by New Mission.”<sup>51</sup> Keep in mind, as mentioned earlier, that “‘New Mission’ redefines *missionary* as *Marxist*.”<sup>52</sup> Truly, mission is far removed from the Bible’s teachings on missions.

## **Nairobi — 1975**

This Assembly of the World Council of Churches was held in the Kenyatta Conference Centre in downtown Nairobi, November 23 — December 10, 1975. Interestingly, the International Council of Christian Churches held its Ninth World Congress at the same venue, July 16-27,



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1975, in direct opposition to the WCC. The following “Statement on World Council of Churches,” which clearly explains some of the WCC views, was adopted unanimously at the ICCC Congress:

Whereas the position of the World Council of Churches on most of the issues facing the churches and the world in general is now well defined and well known, it becomes the duty of Bible-believing Christians everywhere, and those represented in the International Council of Christian Churches with its 202 denominations, to speak out strongly in the terms of the Scriptures themselves.

The WCC’s drive for a one-world church; their representation of salvation as social gospel, which is not a gospel; their promotion of Marxist-Christian dialogue; their inclusion of the Communist-controlled churches in their membership, their financial support of certain liberation movements which have actually produced Communist states; their actual misleading of certain governments and falsely accusing others, have alienated and disrupted. It is imperative that a clear, clean-cut break be made with this agency in every section of the world.

The providences of God have brought the ICCC and the WCC into a historical, dramatic, international, and African confrontation with their assembly, November 23 — December 10, scheduled to be held in the same country, city, and Kenyatta Conference Centre, and has in itself generated national and international discussion and provocation.

In the light of these circumstances, this Ninth Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches calls upon all of God’s people who are in any way affiliated with the World Council of Churches to immediately separate themselves from the WCC and to discontinue all financial and material support of any kind, all of which they have been and are now using to promote the above causes against those churches and groups throughout the world which maintain the historic Christian faith and are militant against what they believe are the works of the Devil. The obligations placed upon God’s people from Scripture cannot be avoided. “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 5:11). “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:17, 18).<sup>53</sup>

The ICCC, in a Statement on Moratorium on Missions, referred directly to “mission”. The pertinent part of the Statement reads as follows:

Because many WCC leaders now have the concept of “mission” (horizontal relationship — unity with men) rather than “missions” (vertical relationship with God through Christ — unity with God), they want to stop missionaries from entering other countries, especially missionaries who will stress the vertical relationship with God in Christ rather than exclusively the horizontal.<sup>54</sup>

### **Melbourne — 1980**

Rev Dr K C Quek, who at that time was Recording and Executive Secretary of the International Council of Christian Churches, attended the Melbourne Conference of the WCC’s Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in May 1980. He wrote an extensive (six pages single-spaced) report of the proceedings. The following section of his report deals with the subject under our consideration, i.e. mission and missions. The title of the subheading in Dr Quek’s report is “Soul Saving Mission [sic] and Evangelism Completely Absent”:

... throughout the CWME Conference there was a complete silence on the Biblical purpose of missions and evangelism according to the Great Commission of our Lord in Matthew 28. To the World Council, preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ is no longer necessary, since to them “all paths lead to God”; “there is light and truth in other religions”; since “Jesus is the life of the world.” Nor is evangelizing or soul-winning welcome, for instance, to the South Pacific, where cannibalism gave place formerly to Christian civilization through faithful preaching by faithful missionaries. Said a delegate representing that region in his address to the plenary session, which was followed up by a written statement at the suggestion of the chairman, “We are concerned that the Pacific region has been seen and used by many churches as a classroom for missions. We resent this strongly and wish to make it clear to the churches in this conference that we do not want to be exploited by the churches through their missionary programs. The proliferation of missionary activities in the Pacific by the independent missionary organizations is increasingly seen by the Pacific people as a threat to their cultures, their communities and their lives. ... We solicit the support of this Conference ... to help us correct the attitude of churches regarding missionary expansion in the Pacific....

Thus, instead of being asked to promote missions and evangelism, the World Council’s Commission of Mission and Evangelism was called upon to discourage and even prohibit the very activities which that commission was originally set up to promote and co-ordinate. Is there anything more paradoxical and ridiculous?<sup>55</sup>

## **Mission or Missions**

After introducing the subject of “Mission or Missions”, we considered the two terms “mission” and “missions”. We looked at the definitions and the differences between them. We observed that “ecumenical writers began to substitute the term ‘mission’ for ‘missions’”<sup>56</sup> and that the two terms are not synonymous but different. We then looked at history to see how these various changes came about. In the historical discussion we briefly considered eighty years of liberal and modernist development from the New York missionary conference in 1900 to the Melbourne CWME Conference in 1980. There have, of course, been developments after 1980, but this should be sufficient to see the gradual, but very definite, change from missions to mission. We have seen that “Salvation Today” is seen in the horizontal rather than the vertical dimension.

The International Council of Christian Churches dealt with the subject of mission at some length during its Eighth World Congress. Dr William R LeRoy brought a lengthy and highly technical message entitled “Mission Versus Missions.” He concluded his message by saying:

We have seen in this message that the word “mission” may mean a number of things from the ecumenical standpoint such as: response-mission is the response of the “Christian” community to the Gospel; Dialogue — on the basis of a shared humanity one seeks the true meaning of life; Translation — God’s revelation in Jesus Christ was a process of translation into the terms which men could understand; Service — expressed in the Servant Jesus Christ; Presence — by being present in different situations without preaching within them; Fulfillment — not personal salvation which is a form of selfishness, but the consummation and reconciliation of all creation in Christ; Community — activity in which all share and help one another; Ecumenism — the religious, racial and political unification of the world community.

The Bible teaches us that God will have the last word in this gigantic conflict of the ages between the force of righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, truth and error, heaven and hell. Let us be sure that we are on His side and that we are safe in the arms of Jesus through acceptance of Christ as our own personal Saviour from sin. Let us be sure that we keep ourselves unspotted from the world, the flesh and the devil in these days of great moral decadence. Let us be sure that we belong to, and support a Bible believing church which is completely separate from false theologies and doctrines and from compromising alliances of any

kind with the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches in America, or with any of its related regional councils, alliances, or confederation of churches in any of the many nations of the world represented in this great assembly today.

May God give us churches that will support the cause of truly biblical missions around the world by the proclamation of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, by the sinning [sic] of the lost to Christ, by the planting of self supporting and self propagating churches that will preach and defend the Faith, of His Spirit, bold in His power, yet humble in His grace; militant in His Truth and for His Truth. May God save our nations, our churches, our families, our children and our own souls for Jesus' sake. Amen.

But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>57</sup>

The ICCC also prepared a statement about mission and missions. Although it is fairly lengthy, it fits in with our subject and, therefore, we reproduce it here in full:

### **STATEMENT ON MISSIONS, NOT MISSION**

This statement was adopted unanimously by the delegates attending the Eighth World Congress of the ICCC, June 13-24, 1973, in Cape May, N. J., USA.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Never in the history of the Christian Church has there been a greater need for the proper understanding and application of a truly Biblical imperative of missions in a divided world. It therefore behooves this Eighth Plenary Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches to reaffirm our Biblical position on the meaning of missions and related concepts in the light of the radical crisis in missions brought on by the WCC.

### **SALVATION**

The word SALVATION as presented in the Holy Scriptures is an all-inclusive term which includes the great redemptive acts and processes of God on behalf of those who believe in Christ. We speak of such terms as justification, redemption, sanctification, and glorification (Rom. 1:16).

Being a lost sinner before a holy God, man's basic problem becomes one of being freed from the guilt and penalty of his sin. Salvation in the Bible, therefore, is dealt with in three basic tenses: (1) PAST TENSE (justification) — having been saved from the guilt and penalty of sin (Luke 7:50; 1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:15; Eph. 2:5, 8; 2 Tim. 1:9); (2) PRESENT TENSE (sanctification) — being saved from the habit and dominion of sin

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(Rom. 6:14; Phil. 2:12, 13; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 8:2; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 3:18); (3) FUTURE TENSE (glorification) — at which time believers will be completely conformed to that moral perfection in Christ (Rom. 13:11; 1 Pet. 1:5; 1 John 3:2).

This salvation is received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as He is presented in the context of His historical death and resurrection as our sin-bearer and Saviour. It is a free gift of God wholly without works (Eph. 2:8).

There is no Biblical basis for the concept of salvation as proclaimed by the WCC at Uppsala and Bangkok. Salvation has been put in the context of a purely horizontal perspective by the WCC. For them salvation has become “humanization” and social revolution, while the vertical dimensions of salvation and Biblical faith are completely neglected.

The “new man” in Christ Jesus is not some new or improved human nature obtained by human struggle, social activism, or participation with God in the revolutionary secular events of history as implied by WCC pronouncements. It is rather a supernaturally implanted spiritual nature which is received by faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In secular and ecumenical theology today, salvation has been transferred from the vertical or theological, to the horizontal or historical plane. We are told we must “participate” with God in the humanization of society. According to this concept, man becomes a Christian, first by going into the world, and second by participating with God in the struggle for human dignity through social and political emancipation. But the Bible teaches us that man becomes a Christian by coming to Christ through repentance and faith. Following this, he goes into the world to bear witness of his faith.

Secular theology, which is the basis of the ecumenical concept of MISSION, represents an aberration of Biblical doctrine and a serious departure from the Christian faith. It destroys all distinctions between the vertical (spiritual) and the horizontal (temporal) spheres of Christian truth. The Church, therefore, loses its identity as a separate institution and becomes fused with the world community on the earthly plane. The entire secular or horizontal plane, therefore, becomes sacred. In this way, God, as an abstract term, becomes identified with the natural processes of history. The great political struggles of history thereby become God’s efforts to liberate His people from social and political oppression.

## **LIBERATION**

The word LIBERATION is not translated in the English Bible as such even though it is related to the words “liberty” and “freedom” in Galatians 4:5; 5:13; and Romans 8:21. But in these verses the thought is clearly

spiritual and theological liberty, and not political. Being related to the word “redemption,” it means to set free by paying a price. In the context of Scripture, this refers to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as being the price paid to set us free from the penalty of our sins. Ecumenical theology today is completely contrary to the concept presented in Holy Scripture. This false theology views the Biblical dimension of salvation as **POLITICAL LIBERATION**, and not a true concern for the restoration of God’s “shalom” on the earth.

## **MISSIONS**

The Biblical concept of missions is related to the proclamation of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. Its objective is winning the lost to Christ and planting self-supporting and self-propagating churches that will teach, preach, and defend the Faith, for the glory of God. The word “missions” also bears with it the theological concepts of supernaturally revealed Bible Christianity as it concerns God, Christ, the Bible, miracles, salvation, and eternal life.

## **MISSION**

What, then, is meant by “mission” today in the ecumenical church? “Mission,” in the singular form, is **ONE**, they say, for the whole church. It is the main cause of the ecumenical movement. The gospel of reconciliation as they understand it is not easily preached by a divided Church. Since “mission” is the mission of the **ONE** God, they hold that the Christian response requires that it is the **ONE** Church which participates in **ONE** mission for **ONE** world.

We must fully reject the ecumenical concept of mission as stated in the Uppsala report and similarly expressed at Bangkok as the “total activity of the Church oriented towards the world.” In this definition there is an abandonment of the traditional theocentric dimension of missions. In its place salvation is substituted in a social or ethical way as “liberation” for the whole man and his social situation.

“Mission,” they say, implies the total responsibility of the Church for the world. In order for the Church to become the “Church for others,” it must radically change its structure. It must become a “go-structure,” rather than a “come-structure,” which is oriented toward action in the world and the establishment of the “New Humanity” among men.

We affirm that the true purpose or mission of the Church is **NOT** to save people **FOR** this present world, but to save them **FROM** corruption and future destruction of this world. Ecumenical leaders today look only to this present world of sin and misery for their salvation. True Christians rest their hope of eternal salvation in the Christ of Scripture, and in the promise

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of a New Heaven and Earth wherein dwelleth true righteousness and justice (Rev. 21:22).

### **HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL DIMENSIONS**

One of the questions before us is not whether the horizontal dimension of the Gospel should accompany the vertical dimension. Fundamental Christianity has always been in the foreground in showing the love of Christ. Throughout the entire history of the modern-day missionary movement, true Bible believers have expressed their love of Christ through many forms of social concern. But the question before us is: What is the essence of the Gospel that we are to preach? Is it vertical or horizontal, theological or sociological, KERYGMA or DIAKONIA? According to 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 we find that the essential nature of the Gospel is theological or doctrinal, and it is not sociological or political.

Another question that we must ask is: What is the nature of the horizontal dimension of the Christian duty that we are to perform? Is it to promote social revolution through Marxism? Is it to show a kind of humanitarianism towards others (many non-Christians appear to show more humanitarianism than even we)? Or is it our duty to demonstrate a special kind of social concern called DIAKONIA (service) in the New Testament? This implies a manifestation of Christian love for others. It must be inspired by the love of Christ and done for the glory of God. True Scriptural “diakonia” can only be accomplished by the presence of the grace of God in the heart of a born-again Christian.

Again we ask the question — Is the horizontal dimension an end in itself as interpreted by secular theology, or is it a means to an end which is the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the glory of God? We affirm that the horizontal dimension of Christian duty is not equal to, nor superior to, the vertical dimension. It is a necessary consequence of our spiritual experience in Christ through the vertical relationship.

### **THEISM AND MISSIONS**

To affirm faith in the traditional concept of missions implies acceptance of supernaturally revealed Christianity. The acceptance of the traditional concept of missions raises, in the minds of secular theologians, the problem of the very existence of God, whose personal existence many no longer accept. This is so, because missions has been equated historically with supernatural Christian theism.

We affirm our sincere faith in the personal existence of the sovereign, triune God of the Bible. We accept the revelation of His will for all men as presented in the infallible and inerrant content of Holy Scripture. We acknowledge the fact of sin and the judgment to come, and we declare it to

be the duty of the true Church to proclaim the substitutionary death of Christ to every living soul upon the face of the earth. Our authority to proclaim this message rests upon the commandment of the resurrected Christ (Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:18-20).

It is true that the ecumenical theology of “mission” is highly Christocentric; but it is without deity, and thus it is not the Christology of Scripture. Christ becomes only a point of reference as the human ideal for the New Humanity. This New Humanity becomes synonymous with a purely secular and socialistic society.

By the use of the term DIALOGUE, ecumenical theology teaches that we are to share “our common humanity” and its “dignity.” We are further to express our common concern for that humility [sic]. In dialogue, the Christian must be willing to listen and to change. It is the way of openness to others and of personal encounter. In dialogue the Christian and non-Christian seek to find meaning in life on the basis of their shared humanity. This dialogue is to be carried on not only with other so-called “living faiths,” but also with Marxism and other ideologies.

We affirm that the very existence of dialogue in the ecumenical context as a means to promote the mission of the Church represents a serious compromise of the Christian’s position. It is a denial of the exclusiveness, supremacy, and uniqueness of the Christian faith. Moreover, the ultimate and permanent cause for Biblical missions must rest directly upon the conviction that the Gospel is true, and that there is no other Gospel (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Logic dictates that if one proposition is true, its contrary part is false; and if one is false, its contrary part is true.

The concept of ecumenical dialogue as a substitute for preaching the Gospel is based upon the Marxian-Hegelian-Evolutionary principle of arriving at truth through the dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. In every synthesis there are the seeds of antithesis. Thus truth becomes something relative, never absolute, and always in the state of constant flux and evolutionary change. This principle, which presupposes theological universalism, has become the driving wedge to promote religious syncretism and the religious and political unification of the world community. We reject all forms of ecumenical universalism.

### **SECULARIZATION**

There is today a new missionary concept based on the theology of secularization. It is included in the ecumenical use of the term “mission.” It encourages the presupposition of the “death of God theology”: humanity



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itself can deal with its own history, without God's transcendental intervention and without any direct reference to Him.

The most revealing feature of secular theology is its express attempt to substitute man for God. This over-focus on the human situation seems to be the crucial turning point in the development of the ecumenical movement. This position in actuality is a turning away from God as the absolute Reference Point for all religious thought and service. Without reference to God at the beginning and end of all Christian affirmations, man's salvation becomes self-salvation; and man puts himself ultimately in the place of God.

### **CHRISTIAN LOVE**

We cannot love our brother or neighbor Biblically until we first learn to love God through His Son Jesus Christ. The first table of the law directs our relationship toward God, and the second table of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," directs the true horizontal relation of the Christian.

In vain these ecumenical leaders seek to fulfill a false interpretation of the Second Commandment in the strength of the flesh through carnal means and pagan philosophies, while neglecting the more essential matters of the First Commandment, such as love, obedience, repentance, and faith toward God through Jesus Christ.

### **CONCLUSION**

We affirm that the most relevant message today for contemporary man is the eternal and infallible Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as revealed in the pages of Holy Scripture. It deals with man's deepest needs and offers the only divinely given solution to those needs in the person and work of our Saviour Jesus Christ. We affirm that we cannot have a better society until we have better men. We cannot have better men until we deal with the sinful heart of man. It is the sinful heart of man which produces the moral corruption and social iniquities of our day. Man is desperately in need of divine regeneration. To seek to bypass the reality of sin and the need for Biblical conversion as implied in the ecumenical theology of mission will only result in complete spiritual bankruptcy. Moral failure, increased social injustice, oppression for all of mankind, and eternal separation from God can be the only fruits of ecumenical theology.

We call upon all Bible-believing churches around the world to repudiate the secular and ecumenical theology of mission as promoted by the World Council of Churches and its related agencies in the world today. We further call upon them to separate themselves from the same and with renewed dedication to preach faithfully the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the

“power of God unto SALVATION to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16).

We give thanks to God for every local church or denomination which is no longer dependent upon others as a “receiving church,” but through self-development, responsibility, and leadership, has become a “sending church.” These younger churches are now not only taking the Gospel to their own people, but also are sending their own missionaries to other nations of the world. Thus, the true Church multiplies itself, and the purpose of truly Biblical missions is being fulfilled until Jesus comes.<sup>58</sup>

We are grateful to the ICCC for adopting such an excellent and helpful statement on “Missions, not Mission” and to Dr. William R. Le Roy for preparing and delivering such a powerful and detailed message on “Mission Versus Missions”.

### **Conclusion**

The Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the earth” (Matt 28:18-20). These verses are commonly known as the Great Commission, or, sometimes, as the Unfinished Commission. These verses have challenged believers in the Lord Jesus Christ for 2,000 years to be involved in missions. It is only in the last 100 years that there has been a gradual change from missions to mission, contrary to the clear teachings of the Bible as explained in the ICCC papers.

Interestingly, Hoekstra, who, as was mentioned before, is an “insider,” i.e. a minister in a church that is a member of the WCC and who intends to remain a minister in that church, gave an excellent definition of missions (although he called it mission). He writes about “*classical-biblical mission* ... by which I [Hoekstra] mean that complex of activities whose chief purpose is to make Jesus Christ known as Lord and Savior and to persuade men to become his disciples and responsible members of his Church.”<sup>59</sup> He adds, “This classical understanding of mission involves evangelism.”<sup>60</sup> I say this is interesting because a member of a WCC church admits that the classical-biblical view of missions involves exactly what fundamentalists have always believed and continue to believe about missions, based on the Great Commission.

## MISSION OR MISSIONS?

In Matt 28:18-20, the Lord Jesus Christ told His followers that after having gone into all the world they should do three things: make disciples, baptize these converts and teach them. That is at the very heart of missions, which is sometimes put in the words: evangelism, church planting and the training of the believers.

The true mission (i.e. the special duty or task) of missions (i.e. spreading Christianity) is first of all to reach the lost, wherever they may be, with the saving Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Once some of these lost people have come to faith in Christ, they should be baptized and a local Bible-believing church should be organized for them. Then these believers should be taught, at a Bible school of some kind, all things that Jesus had commanded, so that they can become leaders in these churches thus established. As the Apostle Paul put it, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2). It is only when these things are done that we see truly Biblical Missions. Let us remember that missions is our mission and that we should do all we can to advance the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ around the world, for His glory. Amen.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Lynn Gray Gordon, “South Asian, Yes! Liberation, No!,” *Biblical Missions*, (December 1972): 2, 10 and (January 1973): 3, 20.

<sup>2</sup> David B Guralnik and Joseph H Friend, *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1964), 942.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Guralnik, 942.

<sup>5</sup> Irwin Steele, “Biblical Missionaries,” *Biblical Missions* (June-July 1978): 8.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Hall Glover, *The Progress of World-Wide Missions* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939), 21.

<sup>7</sup> C Gordon Olson, *What in the World Is God Doing?* (Cedar Knolls, New Jersey: Global Gospel Publishers, 1994), 13.

<sup>8</sup> George W Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody, 1972), 11, quoted in C Gordon Olson, *What in the World Is God Doing?* (Cedar Knolls, New Jersey: Global Gospel Publishers, 1994), 13.

<sup>9</sup> Olson, 13.

<sup>10</sup> Peters, 11, quoted in Olson, 13.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Wagner, *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971) quoted in Harvey T Hoekstra, *The World Council of Churches and the Demise of Evangelism* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1979), 28.

<sup>12</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, "Mission and Missions" *Christianity Today*, (August 1, 1960): 23, quoted in Harvey T Hoekstra, *The World Council of Churches and the Demise of Evangelism* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1979), 27, 28.

<sup>13</sup> William R LeRoy, "Mission Versus Missions", a message delivered at the Eighth World Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches, Cape May, New Jersey, June 13-24, 1973, *The Christian News Encyclopedia*, vol. II, ed Herman Otten, (Washington, Missouri: Missouriian Publishing Co, 1982), 1331.

<sup>14</sup> David L Smith, *A Handbook of Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 64.

<sup>15</sup> Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, ed. Samuel G Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co, 1948), 420.

<sup>16</sup> Hoekstra, Harvey T. *The World Council of Churches and the Demise of Evangelism* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1979), 11.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>19</sup> David M Doran, "The Mission of the Church," unpublished lecture notes for the course *Current Biblical and Theological Issues*, Bob Jones University and Seminary, Summer 2001, 127.

<sup>20</sup> Hoekstra, 19.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>23</sup> Doran, 127, 128.

<sup>24</sup> Hoekstra, 32.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Doran, 129.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 130.

<sup>28</sup> Olson, 159.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 152.

<sup>30</sup> Hoekstra, 34.

<sup>31</sup> Hoekstra, 35.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, back cover.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>35</sup> Hoekstra, 36.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>37</sup> Karsten Nissen, "Mission and Unity," *International Review of Mission* 63 (1974): 546.

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<sup>38</sup> Hoekstra, 47.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Hoekstra, 50.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>44</sup> Norman Goodall, *The Uppsala Report 1968*, official report of the Fourth Assembly of the WCC (Geneva: WCC, 1968), 32, quoted in Hoekstra, 64.

<sup>45</sup> Hoekstra, 64.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 81, 82.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>48</sup> Hoekstra, 90.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>50</sup> Emilio Castro, “Bangkok, the New Opportunity”, *International Review of Mission* 62 (1973): 139.

<sup>51</sup> Hoekstra, 109.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, back cover.

<sup>53</sup> ICCC, *The Reports and Messages of the Ninth World Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches* (Collingswood, New Jersey: ICCC Office, 1975), 31.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 34.

<sup>55</sup> ICCC, *The Reports and Messages of the Eleventh World Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches* (Collingswood, New Jersey: ICCC Office, 1983), 131.

<sup>56</sup> Olson, 13.

<sup>57</sup> LeRoy, 1332, 1333.

<sup>58</sup> ICCC, *The Reports and Messages of the Eleventh World Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches* (Collingswood, New Jersey: ICCC Office, 1983), 52-55.

<sup>59</sup> Hoekstra, 12.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

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## **KEYS TO SUCCESS (JOSH 1:7-9)**

Ho Chee Lai

Moses had led the people of God out of Egypt, the land of bondage. Now, Joshua was tasked to lead the people into Canaan, the land of promise. It was a tremendous task. Although he had been Moses' faithful apprentice, to lead a group of stiff-necked people, without the presence of Moses was definitely not going to be easy. Was this task too great for him to take on?

By the grace of God, Joshua accomplished his task successfully. Through his leadership, the powerful Canaanite armies were destroyed. Each tribe laid claim to a piece of the promised land as promised by God.

All of us, in many ways, are like Joshua. Studying at FEBC is such a great responsibility. You may feel that you are not up to the task which God has called you to. I felt this way when I was a student in this college. It is the desire of every student in this college to do his best for the glory of his Master. I doubt any of us would think otherwise.

But the question is "How can we go through every semester successfully?" How come some of the students seem to be more successful than others? What is their formula for success? If these are your questions and you are seeking the Lord for an answer, look no further. The book of Joshua has the formula for success. God has provided the solution in the passage that we have just read. There are three basic keys to success in our studies at FEBC.

### **Be Certain of God's Will**

The first key to success is found in verse 9. The Lord said, "Have not I commanded thee?" Why would the Lord ask Joshua such a question? Perhaps, Joshua was not assured of the calling of God. God had to remind him of His commandment to lead the nation of Israel. God assured Joshua of the certainty of His will for him. This is the first key to our success: Be certain of God's will. If Joshua was not certain of God's will, the evil one would have cast doubts in his mind each time he took a

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step forward. Joshua would never have been able to move forward in doing God's will. He would not have successfully completed the task God had for him.

What about you today? Why do you want to study theology full-time? What is your motivation in taking this course of action? Has the Lord called you to this task? Are you certain that the Lord has done so? How do you know?

You must be certain of God's will. If you are not certain, you can never go far in your studies. You may thrive when the going is easy, but when difficulties arise, you will be the first to leave your studies. Imagine the harm you would do if you were to enter the pastoral ministry without the calling of God. You would be no better than a hireling! What would you say to the Lord when you meet Him face to face?

God's calling into the ministry is not an infatuation with full-time ministry. It is not because of the influence of any man upon you, nor is it because the idea of giving your life to God is a noble thing to do. It is not a matter of the mind, as one says, "If you don't mind, it doesn't matter." It is a matter of the heart. God's calling into the ministry is a deep conviction and persuasion within your heart. It is not, "I can live with being a full-time minister." Rather, it is, "I cannot live without being a full-time minister." Such must be the strength of your conviction and certainty of God's will for your lives. Only when you are certain of God's will, will you be able to see beyond the difficulties and trials in your studies and training, and overcome them, because the Lord has indeed commanded you to this task.

My friends, are you called by God to study at FEBC? Be certain of God's will. If you are not certain, then seek His will diligently. May the Lord grant you no peace, until you are certain of His will.

### **Be Courageous in God's Work**

The success of Joshua is also found in the encouragement the Lord has for him, "*be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed*" (Josh 1:9). This is the second key to success: Be courageous in God's work. Joshua must have been quite fearful to fill the shoes of Moses, the servant of Jehovah. Although he has been trained both as a captain of the armies of Israel and an assistant to Moses, yet there was a sense of fear when he was called to assume the leadership.

We must understand that fear is something that is not from God. 2 Tim 1:7 says, “*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*” However, there is a fear that is of God, that is to fear God. This is the formula for success in studies. Prov 1:7 says, “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge*” and again Prov 9:10 says, “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.*” In other words, when doing God’s work, we fear not but fear God.

How could Joshua be courageous in God’s work? It was the promise of God’s presence. The Lord says in the same verse in Josh 1:9, “*for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*” In the Lord’s work, we are constantly assailed by our foes on all fronts. And to fight the battle of the Lord, we must be on the Lord’s side. Are you on the Lord’s side? Are you willing to take a stand for the Lord, against all forms of falsehood, charismaticism, ecumenism, and liberalism? Or has your fear overpowered you in your service?

Look unto God and depend upon His strength to serve Him. God has promised his servants, “*Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness*” (Isa 41:10). Be strong and be courageous in God’s work, for He is with you as you serve Him.

### **Be Consistent with God’s Word**

The third key to success is found in verses 7 and 8. They speak of how we should approach the Word of God. We need to be consistent with God’s Word. Joshua was commanded to use the Word of God as his guide. He was exhorted to practise consistently what is written therein, turning neither to the right nor to the left. Joshua was also commanded to meditate consistently on the Word of God, both day and night. By doing so, the Lord assured Joshua that he would have success.

The same applies to you during your studies at this college. In order to be successful, meditate upon the Word of God daily. Do it consistently. Do not replace the time of personal devotion with assignments. The Lord promises His blessings on those who meditate upon His Word consistently. Ps 1:1-2 says,

*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his*



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*delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*

Apply the Word of God consistently in your life. Balance the meditation of God's Word with the application of God's Word. Let your understanding of theology be as clear as crystal, and your application of theology as warm as fire. The Apostle Paul exhorted, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Tim 2:15). The chief end of it must be, "*that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (2 Tim 3:17). Be consistent with God's Word.

### Conclusion

Are you ready for the challenges facing you as you begin this semester? You would do well if you remember these three keys to success. Firstly, be certain of God's will. Make sure that it is the appointment of the Lord that you are studying in this college, or else it might become a disappointment. Secondly, be courageous in God's work. Our courage is based on the Lord's strength and the fact that God promises He is with us always. Finally, be consistent with God's Word. Arm yourself daily with the Sword of the Spirit. In so doing, the Lord promises, "*for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success*" (Josh 1:8). May the Lord help us. Amen.

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*Ho Chee Lai (MDiv '02) is a newly appointed lecturer at the Far Eastern Bible College. The above sermon was delivered to the students when the college reopened on July 22, 2002 with a day of prayer at Grace Bible-Presbyterian Church.*

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## College News

FEBC commemorated her **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** during her **27<sup>th</sup> Graduation Exercises** held on May 5, 2002 at Calvary Bible-Presbyterian Church, Pandan Gardens. Her founding principal—Rev Dr Timothy Tow—was the speaker. His message: “For We Can Do Nothing Against the Truth But For the Truth.”

The college saw its largest graduating class. The following 37 graduated: **Certificate of Religious Knowledge (CertRK)**: Amongbi Jamir, Feily Feilanny Sofian, Kin Bopha, Sin Mi Sook, Lewis Ting Kok Kin. **Certificate of Biblical Studies (CertBS)**: Lee Seung Il, Roth Kim Nang, Seow Kim Guan. **Diploma in Theology (DipTh)**: Aldous Kent Limosnero, An Sitha, Deborah Kie Hwee Ching, Sun Sokha. **Bachelor of Religious Education (BRE)**: Anong Wettayanukool, Bai Eun Young, David Mwendwa Mulyungi, Harrison Kasip Wan. **Bachelor of Theology (BTh)**: Joshua Khoo Book Huat, Paul Losute Kendagor, Riangwati Gulo, Tee Chung Seng, Tran Anh Kiet, Wong Wei Ping (*magna cum laude*), Louis Zung Hlei Thang. **Master of Religious Education (MRE)**: Alex Nasong’o Wugu, Cho-Kim Jung Nyun (*cum laude*), Karuna Sitthisakthanakul, Kim Sang Moo, Na In, Ong Chair Siang (*magna cum laude*), June Tan Mei Lan, Hannah Yeo Tsy Ay (*cum laude*). **Master of Divinity (MDiv)**: Mark Chih-Chuan Chen (*magna cum laude*), Ho Chee Lai (*magna cum laude*), Quek Keng Khwang (*summa cum laude*), Suksit Thep-Aree. **Master of Theology (ThM)**: Prabhudas Koshy (*summa cum laude*), Tran Thanh Minh.

FEBC reopened with a **Day of Prayer** on July 22, 2002. The meeting was held at the newly renovated sanctuary of Grace B-P Church (Rev Tan Eng Boo, DipTh ’78, BTh ’92).

In this 40<sup>th</sup> year of FEBC, the new semester saw the **largest enrolment** of new students ever. We had 31 from 10 countries: **Belgium**: Marc Peter Gerard Vrambout; **Cambodia**: Roth Phannith, Sonida Chhun, Chhim Vanarith; **India**: Joel Merry (Nagaland), Byju Samuel, Georgekutty Skaria, Loreni Tsopoe (Nagaland); **Indonesia**: Thu Ajin, Karyanto

Gunawan, Febian Christophet Siregar; **Korea:** Bai Eun Young, Chang Tae Sung, Cho Yong Pyo, Choi Chan Suk, Choi Eun Joon, Jeon Mi Kyung, Kee Bong Ju, Kim Dae Youl, Eben Yoon; **Malaysia:** Kek Fong Soon, Francis Lim Kee Bin; **Philippines:** Dominino Tillor Dela Cruz Jr, Kim Randolph Brillo Galleto, Leonora Theresa T Garcia; **Singapore:** Karen Chan Kah Wai, Alison Chua Mee Chin, Linda Foo Kui Ping, Theresa Yip Moh Chung; **Taiwan:** Philip Weng Chon Jen; **Vietnam:** Vu Le Bao An. The current enrolment (excluding night class students) stands at 122 from 15 countries. Night classes average between 150-200 in attendance.

The principal and matron—Dr and Mrs Timothy Tow—with Rev Charles Seet (BTh '90, MDiv '97) led a mission team of 15 to Kompong Som,



Mrs Ivy Tow with FEBC graduates An Sitha & Kin Bopha

Cambodia, July 11-15, 2002, to inaugurate the **newly built Bible School** of Rev Moses Hahn (MDiv '97). The Principal also led a team of five to Nairobi and Masailand, Kenya, August 31-September 10, 2002, to dedicate the **new Kiluani Clinic of Life** (Nurse: Chan Pui Meng of Life B-P Church, Singapore) on the campus of Kiluani Secondary School of New Life B-P Church, Singapore (Pastor: Rev Dr Patrick Tan, BTh '89). Dr Tow and Dr Jeffrey Khoo also co-taught the Westminster Standards to

a class of 120 students at the Bible College of East Africa (Principal: Rev Dr Mark Kim, DipTh '90).

The FEBC **Gospel Rally** was held at Life B-P Church on September 14, 2002 with Rev Kwan Yew Weng as the Lord's messenger. There were a total of 73 visitors out of an attendance of 142. Five confessed Christ. Praise the Lord!

***The Burning Bush appreciated!*** Here is a recent letter to the editor: "I have read your commentary on the Evangelical and Catholics together (Jan '96 issue). You can not know how I appreciate your statements, and your adherence to scripture. ... Thank you for your honesty in explaining the 'oneness' in John 17. I am saddened by the state of our churches today. May the Lord bless your ministry" (Arlene Johnson). Please note that the 1995-2002 issues of *The Burning Bush* are available at the FEBC Bookroom (febcbrm@singnet.com.sg). A set of two beautifully **hardbound volumes** with 1,380 pages worth of information in defence of the reformed and premillennial faith is going for only \$40. Only 50 sets available.

## Class Notes

Dr **Benjamin Loo** (BTh '85) is pastor of Jireh Baptist Church and adjunct lecturer of Baptist Theological Seminary, 495 Margaret Drive, Singapore 149305 (Email: btsedu@bts.org.sg).

Rev **Colin Wong** (BTh '87) ministered for two months (Aug-Sep, '02) at the New Life B-P Church in London. **Mark Chen** (MDiv '02) took his place for the next couple of months (Oct-Nov '02).

Rev Dr **Jeffrey Khoo** (BTh '89) has a paper entitled "Dispensational Premillennialism in Reformed Theology" published in the December 2001 issue of the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. His 34-page critique of the book—*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*—first published in this journal (January 2001) was republished in May 2001 in the form of a booklet by Pensacola Theological Seminary, USA, together with Dr Thomas Strouse's review of the same book. Two are a confirmation (Matt 18:16).

Mrs **Jemima Khoo** (BTh '89) is now serving as principal of the Far Eastern Kindergarten.

Rev **Pang Kok Hiong** (BTh '92) has established a new Chinese Christian Church in Irbid, Jordan where there are more than 4,000 Chinese working

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in the factories. Since November 2001, over a hundred have been gloriously saved and baptised. Praise the Lord!

Rev **Prabhudas Koshy** (BTh '92, MDiv '94, ThM '02) and Rev Quek Suan Yew (BTh '89) were visiting lecturers at the Bible College of East Africa, June 17-July 12, 2002 to conduct a series of intensive courses for BCEA graduates cum pastors in the Bachelor of Ministry (BMin) programme.

**Kim Yong Gyon** (BTh '97) has earned his MDiv from Korea Theological Seminary, and is now a full-time minister of Irwadong Church in Seoul.

**Jang Sae Kwang** (BTh '00) married Rachel Oh Chiew Ting on December 25, 2001 at Life B-P Church, Singapore. Both are settled in Florida, USA, where Sae Kwang is studying towards his MDiv at Pensacola Theological Seminary.

**June Tan** (MRE '02) is a missionary of Life B-P Church, teaching Christian Education and Information Technology at the Bible College of East Africa, Nairobi, Kenya. (Photo below: June driving the BCEA van.)



**David Weng** (BTh '01) and Susan Suryati (BTh '02) are graduate students at Pensacola Theological Seminary, USA.

**FEBC 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 27<sup>th</sup> Graduation Service  
(May 5, 2002)**



L-R (zig-zag): Principal leading the processional; Faculty; Lewis Ting (CertRK); Seow Kim Guan (CertBS); Sun Sokha (DipTh); Aldous Kent Limosnero (DipTh); Joshua Khoo (BTh); Wong Wei Ping (BTh).

*Graduation Service*



L-R (zig-zag): Louis Zung (BTh); David Mulyungi (BTh); Bae Eun Young (BRE); Riangwati Gulo (BRE); Harrison Kasip Wan (BRE); Tran Anh Kiet (BRE); Na In (MRE); Suksit Theparee (MDiv).

*The Burning Bush 9/1 (January 2003)*

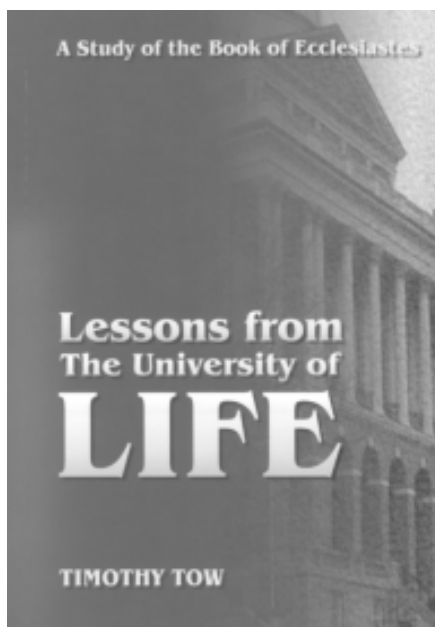


L-R (zig-zag): Quek Keng Khwang (MDiv) & Ho Chee Lai (MDiv) with their spouses; Hannah Yeo (MRE) with Eld & Mrs Sng; Rev Das Koshy (ThM) & family; Isaac Ong (MRE) & family; Rev Koshy with Rev Tan Eng Boo (Grace BPC); Deborah Kie (DipTh) & friends; Tee Chung Seng (BTh) with FEBC alumni; An Sitha & Kin Bopha with friends.



## New Books from the Principal's Pen

FEBC Bookroom • <http://www.lifefebc.com/febcbkrm>

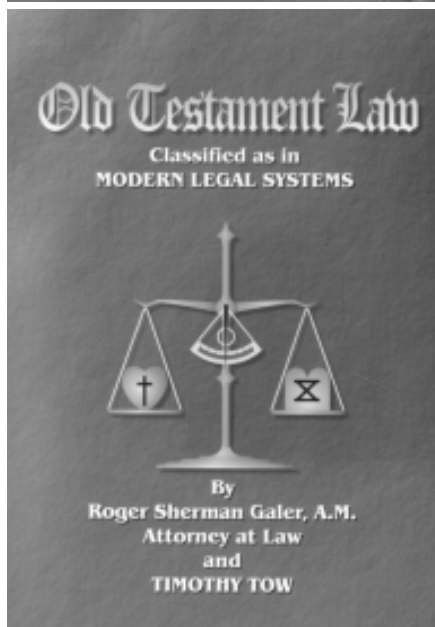


**Life is a deep well of mysteries.** Hence Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, is challenged to delve into these mysteries. Under the sun, he found them a vanity of vanities. Life lived above the sun is God's answer to man.

The answers to Solomon's studies on the many aspects of life are rightly called "Lessons from the University of Life". The conclusive answer in the concluding chapter brings us to the conclusion of the whole matter — *"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."* (Eccl 12:13,14).

This book is highly evangelistic, against the atheism and agnosticism of yesterday or today. And Christ the Son of God who died for our sins and rose again from the dead is the only answer.

ISBN: 981-04-5974-2, Price: \$4.00

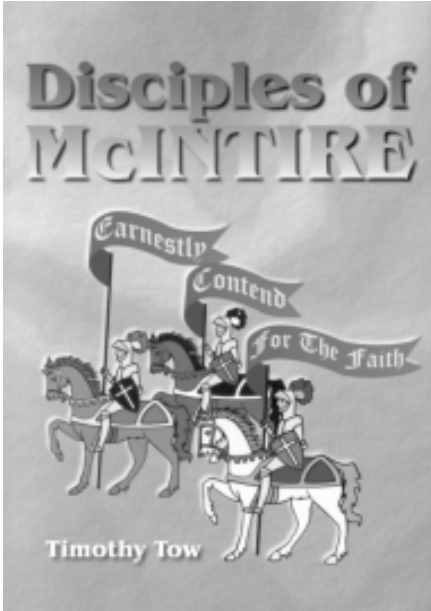


**By studying OT Law** classified as in Modern Legal Systems through our Scripture Annotations, the student will see it clearly portrayed, and marvel at the balanced justice given by the hand of Moses. Christ came not to improve on Moses' Law but to correct the erroneous interpretation by the Scribes thereof. Therefore we have called the Law of Moses the Law of Jesus.

Since the Old Testament Law is God's Law you will find how man's laws have fallen short of Divine Justice. You will study the Statutes and Judgments of the Hebrews at length, that you may use these principles for judging altercation between contending members in your church. This is a book for pastors, elders and matured members of the church.

Without the classification, the student of these laws will often be left wandering in the woods.

ISBN: 981-04-5406-6, Price: \$5.00



ISBN: 981-04-6692-7, Price: \$5.00

**Dr Carl McIntire**, who was Dr. J. Greshem Machen's disciple in the great fight with modernism and liberalism in the thirties became Machen's successor. What Machen did for the United States, McIntire did for the whole world.

Dr Timothy Tow went to study at Faith Theological Seminary in 1948 when the modernist churches were going to form a World Council of Churches and the fundamentalists were organizing as the International Council of Christian Churches. McIntire was President of the Board of Faith Seminary and he spoke about the importance of a 20th Century Reformation. It is to preserve the fruits of the 16th Century Reformation brought about by Martin Luther.

Dr Tow's heart became knit to Dr. McIntire's, like Jonathan's to David's. By God's special grace, Dr K C Quek and Rev C T Hsu, joined the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation. They became *The Three Musketeers* in the Reformation movement in Singapore.



ISBN: 981-04-1286-X, Price: \$4.00

**McIntire Maxims** is a new name I've given to *Freedom Is My Business*, "a book of quotations compiled on the occasion of Dr Carl McIntire's 50th Anniversary in the Bible Presbyterian Church of Collingswood, New Jersey, October 1, 1933 to October 2, 1983 ..."

"This has been put together by the Independent Board for Presbyterian Home Missions. Dr Morris McDonald was assisted by Roberta McDavid in research and typing and by Bonnie Runge who did the cover sketch."

As a disciple of Dr McIntire, I have taken the liberty to reprint this book of quotations. The observations of McIntire on the Bible, the Church, on Home and Nation and on the Philosophy of Life are gems that must be preserved for the new generation.

To make them stand out from each other, the sentences are printed alternatively in ordinary type and black.

"Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning" (Prov 9:9). Amen.

## Life BPC / FEBC Kenyan Mission Trip (Aug 31-Sep10, '02)



L-R (zig-zag): Dr Timothy Tow with his students; June Tan & Gina Wong; Reformation Hall (BCEA library); June in BCEA library; Dr Patrick Tan & Dr Timothy Tow; Kiluani New Life Secondary School; Kiluani Clinic of Life; Dr Patrick Tan & Dr Timothy Tow; Dr & Mrs Tow with Carol Mok (far left), Pui Meng (2nd from right) and J S Heng (far right).

**Bible College of East Africa  
College Church, Kiswahili Congregation**

