



# The Burning Bush

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# THE BURNING BUSH

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## Editorial

### **A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Reformation Movement for the Verbal and Plenary Preservation of the Holy Scriptures**

The Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) remains a Bible-believing and Bible-defending institution. *The Burning Bush* since 1997 has defended the biblical doctrine of the verbal and plenary preservation of Scripture from assaults made by anti-reformed and neo-fundamental textual critics. As a confessional school, FEBC affirms its faith on a forever infallible and inerrant Scriptures not just in the Autographs but also the Apographs as spelt out in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, “The Old Testament in Hebrew ... and the New Testament in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical.”

The College Board and Faculty affirm the 100% inspiration and 100% preservation of the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35), and take this solemn oath in all sincerity believing that “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 word 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.”

FEBC stands against modern textual criticism and the modern perversions of the Scriptures that are based on the corrupt Westcott and Hort Text by declaring univocally that the traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and Greek Textus Receptus underlying the King James Bible to be the totally inspired and entirely preserved Word of God.

FEBC champions the International Council of Christian Churches’ (ICCC) resolution on the preservation of Scripture passed at its 16<sup>th</sup> World Congress in Jerusalem in the year 2000. The ICCC statement #11 affirmed, “Believing the OT has been preserved in the Masoretic text and

the NT in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the complete Word of God.”

In an effort to undermine the Reformation doctrine of the verbal and plenary preservation of Scripture, anti-preservationists and anti-KJVists have concocted lies to cause confusion. What are these lies? Lie #1: that the KJV is as or more inspired than the original language Scriptures. Lie #2: that believers who do not use the KJV are condemned to hell. Let it be known that FEBC holds to no such absurd views; never had, never will! Propagators of such lies ought to cease and desist from transgressing any further the 9<sup>th</sup> commandment.

Persecution came. The college was ordered to stop teaching the truth of God’s 100% preservation of His Word and words. No one is to defend it, not even to breathe a word about it; it is merely personal conviction not dogma. But we respond in the spirit of Luther, “If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point that the world and the devil are at the moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages is where the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.”

Some say it is “foolish faith” to believe that God has indeed preserved His Word to the jot and tittle, that we do certainly have all of His words today. In reply, let me quote Luther, “Unless you prove to me by Scripture and plain reason that I am wrong, I cannot and will not recant. My conscience is captive to the Word of God. To go against conscience is neither right nor safe [it endangers the soul]. Here I stand. There is nothing else I can do. God help me. Amen.” This is the logic of faith (Heb 11:3, 6). “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt 11:15).

FEBC stands by her Statement of Faith as written in her Constitution, Article #4.

#### **4. Statement of Faith**

- 1.1 The Statement of Faith of the College shall be in accordance with that system commonly called “the Reformed Faith” as expressed in the Confession of Faith as set forth by the historic Westminster Assembly together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

- 1.2 In abbreviated form, the chief tenets of the doctrine of the College, apart from the Doctrinal Position Statement of the College, shall be as follows:
  - 1.2.1 We believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Autographs) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (Apographs) of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35).
    - 1.2.1.1 We believe the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament underlying the Authorised (King James) Version to be the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant.
    - 1.2.1.2 We uphold the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible.
    - 1.2.1.3 The Board of Directors and Faculty shall affirm their allegiance to the Word of God by taking the Dean Burgon Oath at every annual convocation: “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 word 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.”
  - 1.2.2 We believe in one God existing in three co-equal and co-eternal Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deut 6:4, 1 John 5:7).
  - 1.2.3 We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man in complete and direct fulfilment of Isaiah 7:14 (Matt 1:20-23, John 1:1, 14, Col 2:9).
  - 1.2.4 We believe God created the whole universe *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) by the Word of His mouth, and all very good, in the space of six literal or natural days (Gen 1:1, Exod 20:11, Ps 148:5, John 1:3, Col 1:16, Heb 11:3).

- 1.2.5 We believe that man was created in the image of God, but sinned through the fall of Adam, thereby incurring not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and become sinners in thought, word and deed (Gen 1:26-27, Rom 3:19-20, 5:12, 6:23).
- 1.2.6 We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died a propitiatory and expiatory death as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who repent of their sins and believe in Him are justified before God on the grounds of His shed blood (Rom 5:8-11, 1 John 2:2, 1 Pet 1:18-19).
- 1.2.7 We believe in the bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His ascension into Heaven, and in His exaltation at the right hand of God, where He intercedes for us as our High Priest and Advocate (1 Cor 15:1-4, 15-19, Phil 2:9-11, Heb 3:1, 4:14-16).
- 1.2.8 We believe in the personal, visible and premillennial return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to judge this world, restore His chosen nation Israel to greatness, and bring peace to the nations as King of kings and Lord of lords (Jer 3:17, Zech 14:9, Acts 1:6, Rom 11:26, Rev 20:1-7).
- 1.2.9 We believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone, not by works, and that all who repent and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour are born again by the Holy Spirit and thereby become the children of God (Rom 5:1, 8:14-16, Eph 2:8-10, 1 Tim 2:5, Tit 3:5).
- 1.2.10 We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and to convict and regenerate the sinner, and indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service (John 16:7-14, Rom 8:1-2).
- 1.2.11 We believe that Christ instituted the Sacrament of Baptism for believers and their children and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which sacraments shall be observed by His Church till He comes (Matt 28:19, 1 Cor 11:23-26).
- 1.2.12 We believe in the eternal security, bodily resurrection and eternal blessedness of the saved, and in the bodily resurrection and eternal conscious punishment of the lost (John 10:27-29, 1 Cor 15:51-53, 1 Thess 4:13-18, Rev 20:11-15).

1.2.13 We believe in the real, spiritual unity in Christ of all redeemed by His precious blood and the necessity of faithfully maintaining the purity of the Church in doctrine and life according to the Word of God, and the principle and practice of biblical separation from the apostasy of the day being spearheaded by the ecumenical movement, charismatic movement and other false movements that contradict the Holy Scriptures and the Historic Christian Faith (2 Cor 6:14-7:1, Jude 3, Rev 18:4).

By the grace of God, FEBC will remain true to its fundamentalist ethos, “earnestly contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints,” to the glory of God until Christ returns. Amen.

## **EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH**

Timothy Tow

*“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).*

The title of my message is “Earnestly Contend for the Faith.” The apostle Jude was writing to the believers and at first his idea was to talk of the common salvation. That of course will edify our hearts. But the apostle Jude says, “When I desired to do this thing, it was needful for me to exhort you.” He was constrained by the Holy Spirit that this one thing was very important: that you should earnestly contend for the faith. The whole epistle is devoted to this one theme—earnestly contend for the faith. And who are the examples of those whom we must oppose? Three people are mentioned—Cain, Balaam and Core. These are rebels who do not obey the faith, who resist the Lord.

Why should we earnestly contend for the faith? We need to contend for the faith because there are so many who are against the Lord, and they are mentioned as follows—false Christs, false prophets, false apostles, false teachers, false spirits, false witnesses and false brethren. And we have three synoptic gospels—Matthew, Mark and Luke—warning against false prophets and false Christs, from the mouth of our Lord Himself, and three epistles, namely, Jude that we have just read, and 2 Peter and 1 John. But the fact is that the whole life of Jesus in His ministry of 3½ years was a constant battle against “this wicked generation.”

What is the wicked generation? They are the scribes, the Jewish theologians, and the Pharisees, the high churchmen. They were constantly against Jesus, against His claim to be one with the Father, He is the Son of God, He is equal to the Father and that He can forgive sins. Who can forgive sins but God? But Jesus countered right away, “That you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, ‘Rise up



and walk.” He said this to the paralytic that was brought by four men. And he arose and took up his bedding and he walked away praising the Lord. Our Lord Jesus Christ, when He preached the gospel to the multitudes had also to constantly expose the false prophets in the church. This is the wicked generation. Now we ask ourselves: Is there such a wicked generation—false Christs, false prophets, false teachers, in high places today? Exactly the same as in the Jewish Church, so it is in the Christian church.

Why has the Lord blessed the Bible-Presbyterian (B-P) Movement? I will tell you my own testimony. I went to study in America in 1948, January, 54 years ago. One wintry morning there came a very distinguished gentleman. He was none other than Dr Carl McIntire who has just been received into glory and his funeral will be held next Tuesday, March 26, 2002. He told us about the great danger in the church because they were going to form the World Council of Churches to extend their influence, which is the Ecumenical Movement. By now I believe you know what is ecumenical. One inhabited world, one roof under which all denominations must unite and all the Protestant denominations will return to Rome. That is the meaning of the Ecumenical Movement. Dr McIntire called for young men like us to join a counter movement called the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation Movement. It is to carry on the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation Movement of Martin Luther and to separate from the Ecumenical Movement. Well, when I went to seminary I had some idea of Martin Luther. I knew that he was a reformer. My heart was set on fire. My heart was knit to his heart, like David and Jonathan. I took such a keen interest in the Reformation Movement that I have been helped by the grace of God to stand firm to this day. I have taken part in many oppositions raised by the ICCC (International Council of Christian Churches) to speak against Romanism, Ecumenism, Neo-evangelicalism, Charismaticism.

But now the battle is centred on the Bible. Because you suddenly realise that the market is flooded with well over one hundred new versions during the last 50 years. These new Bibles so-called depart a great deal from the Received Text upon which the King James Bible, the Bible that we use, is founded. The Bible is two and two are four. The Bible has only one answer. The Bible has only one teaching. That is the reason why we founded the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) exactly 40 years ago, to stand against those who are false prophets and false

teachers. The battle must continue because if FEBC does not take a strong stand against the erosion of faith we will be toppled.

In 1947 there was founded in Los Angeles the Fuller Seminary. It was founded by Charles Fuller, the preacher of the old-fashioned revival hour. And he had five faculty members that were true to the Word. But in no time liberalism entered it and through one man the whole seminary was toppled. Today, Fuller Seminary is one that appears to be evangelical, but is most diabolical.

Now the battle today is mainly on the Bible. As I told you there are well over one hundred versions. The first version that came in to take the place of the King James Bible which has been reigning supreme for the last 300 years, was the translation of the Revised Standard Version (RSV) in 1952. The ICCB at once went to battle and exposed this Bible to be a poisonous one. It translates "Behold a virgin shall conceive" into "Behold a young woman shall conceive." What young woman cannot conceive? Our council took a strong stand against the RSV and its sale was restricted. But in 1978 there arrived the NIV. It is now sweeping the Christian world. I am very sure you know what the NIV is, the New International Version. The NIV is not based on the Textus Receptus on which the King James Bible is based but is based on the corrupt text of Westcott and Hort. Who are these two men? They are two Cambridge professors of Greek who spent many years to manoeuvre the Anglican Church. The Anglican Church agreed with them that they needed a new translation and so they produced in 1881 the Revised Version.

When I was a boy, I bought a Revised Version but the Revised Version attacked point after point our old Bible. Over 9,900 words are altered, deleted. Out of the Bible, the equivalent of eight chapters, First and Second Peter, are scissored. Let me ask you, suppose you have one page torn from your Bible, can you use it? I will not use that Bible. But when you have torn away 8 chapters and deleted and changed 9,900 words, all the more you will not have it. As a result, it died a diseased death. After some years it went out of publication because the people, true Christians, would not buy a poisonous Bible.

But now, just as poisonous as the Revised Version is the NIV. To prove to you the NIV is a very corrupt Bible, it has "taken out" the passage of the woman taken in adultery. But I tell you that the story of the woman taken in adultery is the most magnanimous account of Jesus' life.

## EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

The Jews tried to trap Jesus. To put Him in a place where they say since she is guilty of adultery she must be stoned to death. But any good lawyer could challenge them, “If she is taken in adultery what happens to the adulterer, the man? Why don’t you bring him here?” Jesus is the Son of God. He is God. Can puny man try to outwit God? Jesus retorted, “Who is without sin, let him cast the first stone.” Dr John Sung has a very humorous way of illustrating the situation. From 70 downwards to 15 one by one slunk away like a beaten dog. When Jesus looked around everyone was gone. Then Jesus forgave the woman, “Go and sin no more.” Is not that most expressive of the marvellous grace of God? It strikes at us. Who can say I am pure? A glance of the eye will cause us to commit adultery in the heart. But NIV “takes out” the precious Word.

The last 12 verses of Mark are also “missing” and 1 John 5:7. In the King James Bible, we have three in heaven who are witnesses—the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost. It is a most definite statement on the Holy Trinity. Today, the great battle is on the Bible. “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

I want to apply to your very excellent magazine—the *Bible Witness*. Truly it is full of spiritual food. But I must tell you, the church is very sick. Just like this time I got sick. I have never been sick for so long. It is terrible. Now I can sympathise with those that are in trouble. And we must realise that we are in trouble. In the B-P Church today we are the very few who are standing for the faith. So I told your pastor, “Today I am going to challenge you. First of all, that when the next *Bible Witness* comes out, it will have one special section on defending the faith.” And so I pray that the Lord will give your church much power by taking a stand for His cause.

Remember Satan has the ability to change himself 72 times like the monkey god. Knowing his tactics, let us continue to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Amen.

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*Message delivered by Rev Dr Timothy Tow, principal of the Far Eastern Bible College, at the 14<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Thanksgiving Service of Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church, March 24, 2002.*

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## JOHN OWEN ON THE PERFECT BIBLE

Jeffrey Khoo

### Introduction

John Owen (1616-83) was the respected systematic theologian of the Puritan tradition. One of his greatest works—“On the Divine Original of Scriptures”—sought to vindicate the purity and integrity of the Hebrew and Greek Texts of the Old and New Testament. His writings in 23 volumes were published electronically by AGES Software in 2000. I have quoted Owen extensively below, and the page numbers are those of Volume 16 of *The Works of John Owen* (as found in *The AGES Digital Library Series*, [www.ageslibrary.com](http://www.ageslibrary.com)).

John Owen clearly believed in the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of Scripture. He wrote, “That as the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament *were immediately and entirely given out by God himself*, his mind being in them represented unto us without the least interveniency of such mediums and ways as were capable of giving change or alteration *to the least iota or syllable*; so, by his good and merciful providential dispensation, in his love to his word and church, his whole word, as first given out by him, *is preserved unto us entire* in the original languages; where, shining in its own beauty and lustre (as also in all translations, so far as they faithfully represent the originals), it manifests and evidences unto the consciences of men, without other foreign help or assistance, its divine original and authority” (450).

Owen affirmed the VPI and VPP of the Scriptures in the “original languages” (364). He opposed Bible-deniers who said that “the original copies of the Old and New Testaments are so corrupted that they are not a certain standard and measure of all doctrines, or the touch-stone of all translations” (366). His view of the 100% inspiration and 100% preservation of the original language Scriptures as found in the Autographs and Apographs truly reflects the Reformation mind of *Sola*

*Scriptura* over against the Neo-evangelical and Neo-fundamental view of *Sola Autographa*.

### Verbal Plenary Inspiration

Owen affirmed the VPI of the Holy Scriptures as written by the apostles and prophets: “That the laws they made known, the doctrines they delivered, the instructions they gave, the stories they recorded, the promises of Christ, the prophecies of gospel times they gave out and revealed, were not their own, not conceived in their minds, not formed by their reasonings, not retained in their memories from what they heard, not by any means beforehand comprehended by them (1 Pet 1:10-11), but were all of them immediately from God” (384). “Thus, the word that came unto them was a book which they took in and gave out without any alteration of one tittle or syllable (Ezek 2:8-10, 3:3; Rev 10:9-11)” (386).

The Scripture is a product of divine and not human inspiration. Owen wrote, “the Scripture was not an issue of men’s fancied enthusiasms, not a product of their own minds and conceptions, not an interpretation of the will of God by the understanding of man—that is, of the prophets themselves. Neither their rational apprehensions, inquiries, conceptions of fancy, or imaginations of their hearts, had any place in this business; no self-afflation, no rational meditation, manned at liberty by the understanding and will of men, had place herein” (391).

The prophets and apostles were under the direct supervision of God in penning the Holy Scriptures: “God was so with them, and by the Holy Ghost so spake in them— as to their receiving of the Word from him, and their delivering of it unto others by speaking or writing—as that they were not themselves enabled, by any habitual light, knowledge, or conviction of truth, to declare his mind and will, but only acted as they were immediately moved by him. Their tongue in what they said, or their hand in what they wrote, was no more at their own disposal than the pen is in the hand of an expert writer” (384-5).

The Bible has many writers, but only one Author—God Himself. It is only truthful to conclude that a perfect God must give a perfect Bible. It goes without saying that a perfect Author must give a perfect Script.

Owen explained that the divine inspiration of the Scriptures concerns the words, not simply the doctrines. He argued for word-inspiration and not thought-inspiration. “It is the *he graphe* that is

*theopneustos* (2 Tim 3:16), ‘the writing, or word written, is by inspiration from God.’ Not only the doctrine in it, but the *graphe* itself, or the ‘doctrine *as written*,’ is so from him. Hence, the providence of God hath manifested itself no less concerned in the preservation of the writings than of the doctrine contained in them; the writing itself being the product of his own eternal counsel for the preservation of the doctrine” (387).

Thus the Scriptures bind our conscience to affirm its veracity and authenticity purely by our faith in them. “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” (Heb 11:3). “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17). Owen wrote, “We do so receive, embrace, believe, and submit unto it, because of the authority of God who speaks it, or gave it forth as his mind and will, evidencing itself by the Spirit in and with that Word, unto our minds and consciences: or, because that the Scripture, being brought unto us by the good providence of God, in ways of his appointment and preservation, it doth evidence itself infallibly unto our consciences to be the word of the living God” (410).

### **Verbal Plenary Preservation**

Owen not only believed in a 100% inspired Autographa but also a 100% preserved Apographa. He wrote, “It is true, we have not the Autographa of Moses and the prophets, of the apostles and evangelists; but the Apographa or ‘copies’ which we have contain every *iota* that was in them” (387).

On the VPP of Scripture, Owen agreed that the Autographs have “utterly perished and lost out of the world.” However, that does not mean that the *contents* of the Autographs have perished and are lost also. Every one of the words of the Autographs has been preserved by the promise of God (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35). Although it is readily acknowledged that God chose not to preserve His Word miraculously but providentially, Owen believed that the care and providence ensured “the preservation of every *tittle* contained in them” (454).

Owen did not deny the existence of textual variants (387). Nevertheless, he clarified that “the whole Word of God, in every letter and tittle, as given from him by inspiration, is preserved without corruption” (388). There is no question from the above statement that

Owen saw the 100% preservation of Scripture as a dogma and not simply a conviction.

Owen argued that if the infallible Word is not preserved wholly and intact, then the Book is useless and our faith has no sure foundation. He raised this concern: “It will assuredly be granted that the persuasion of the coming forth of the word immediately from God, in the way pleaded for, is the foundation of all faith, hope, and obedience. But what, I pray, will it advantage us that God did so once deliver his word, if we are not assured also that that word so delivered hath been, by his special care and providence, *preserved entire and uncorrupt* unto us, or that it doth not evidence and manifest itself to be his word, being so preserved? (Isa 59:21, Matt 5:18, 1 Pet 1:25, 1 Cor 11:23, Matt 28:20)” (450). In other words, if God’s Word is not perfect today, fully preserved, how then can we appeal to it as our sure and steadfast, final and supreme rule of faith and practice? We simply cannot! If the Scriptures be not perfect, Christians are a most miserable lot for sure (1 Cor 15:19).

Some presume that only the doctrines of Scripture are preserved but not its words. What has Owen to say about this? Are only doctrines preserved or words as well? Owen affirmed the latter, “Nor is it enough to satisfy us, that the doctrines mentioned are preserved entire; *every tittle and iota* in the Word of God must come under our care and consideration, as being, as such, from God” (389). Owen clearly believed in verbal and not conceptual preservation. Without the words, where the doctrines? It is not only fallacious but utterly illogical to say that only doctrines are preserved but not the words (cf. Gal 3:16).

### **Supreme and Final Authority**

Owen argued that the absolute authority of the Holy Scriptures rests on the very fact that they are the very Word of God, breathed out (*theopneustos*) from heaven (2 Tim 3:16). The supreme authority of Scripture remains so today because of the special providence of God for He has promised that the Hebrew OT and Greek NT “have been transmitted to us without corruption or mutilation” (382).

The Word of God has self-evidencing power because it is Light itself. “Now, the Scripture, the Word of God, is light. Those that reject it are called (Job 24:13) ‘light’s rebels’—men resisting the authority which they cannot but be convinced of (Ps 19:8, 43:3, 119:105, 130; Prov 6:23; Isa 9:2; Hos 6:5; Matt 4:16, 5:15; John 3:20-21). It is a light so shining



with the majesty of its Author, as that it manifests itself to be his (2 Pet 1:19), ‘a light shining in a dark place,’ with an eminent advantage for its own discovery, as well as unto the benefit of others ... A church may *bear up the light* — *it is not the light*. It bears witness to it, but kindles not one divine beam to further its discovery. All the preaching that is in any church, its administration of ordinances, all its walking in the truth, hold up this light” (412-3).

On the basis of the self-evidencing efficacy of the Scriptures, Owen ridiculed those who with a double tongue claim to believe the Scriptures to be the very Word of God, and yet demanding human proof for it: “By saying that the Scripture is the word of God, and then commanding us to prove it so to be, they render themselves obnoxious unto every testimony that we produce from it that so it is, and that it is to be received on its own testimony” (404).

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov 1:7). Unless man applies the principle of faith as expressed in Hebrews 11:6, “believe that he is” (i.e., “believe that His Word is what it claims to be, the very Revelation of God itself”), he will remain blind and lost in his pride and arrogance. Our assurance that the Holy Scriptures are the very words of God, “is in and from the Scripture itself; so that there is no other need of any further witness or testimony, nor is any, in the same kind, to be admitted” (405). Science (from Latin *scientia* meaning “knowledge”) must come under the microscope and scrutiny of Scripture, and not vice versa.

The Word of God shares its authority with no one. It is its own authority and sovereign in its judgements. Truth is determined by the Scriptures, and by the Scriptures alone, not the traditions of the church, nor the opinions of men, no matter how great they may be for who can be greater than God? Only God and His Word are infallible, not the Church, not man. As such, our supreme and final authority in faith and practice can only be our infallible God who has revealed Himself infallibly in His infallible Word.

### **Textual Criticism**

Owen said that “the supernatural Scriptures must not be treated like any ordinary book.” His high view of Scripture led him to dismiss textual criticism which he averred might be useful for human literature, but certainly not divine Scripture. He wrote, “It were an easy thing to correct



a mistake or corruption in the transcription of any problem or demonstration of Euclid, or any other ancient mathematician, from the consideration of the things themselves about which they treat being always the same, and in their own nature equally exposed to the knowledge and understanding of men in all ages. In things of pure revelation—whose knowledge depends solely on their revelation—it is not so” (389).

In Owen’s mind, textual criticism contravenes the doctrine of VPP. He wrote against certain scholars who tried to correct the OT, “And these are the chief heads and springs of the criticisms on the Old Testament, which, with so great a reputation of learning, men have boldly obtruded on us of late days. It is not imaginable what prejudice the sacred truth of the Scripture, preserved by the infinite love and care of God, hath already suffered hereby; and what it may further suffer, for my part I cannot but tremble to think. ...The dangerous and causeless attempts of men to rectify our present copies of the Bible” (376).

Owen was against textual critical judgements that went against the *Textus Receptus*: “We know the vanity, curiosity, pride, and naughtiness of the heart of man; how ready we are to please ourselves with things that seem singular and remote from the observation of the many, and how ready to publish them as evidences of our learning and diligence, ... Hence it is come to pass, ... that whatever varying word, syllable, or tittle, could be by any observed, wherein any book, though of yesterday, varieth from the common received copy, though manifestly a mistake, superfluous or deficient, inconsistent with the sense of the place, yea, barbarous, is presently imposed on us as a various lection” (467). This certainly argues against minority and indeed spurious lections of the corrupted Alexandrian manuscripts of the Westcott and Hort Text which goes against “the common received copy.”

God has supernaturally preserved every jot and tittle of His Word by “His singular care and providence.” Insofar as copying or printing errors are concerned, Owen says that “there is no need of men’s critical abilities to rectify such mistakes” (532). No man should play textual critic. God is His own Textual Critic, and He knows how to keep His Word intact and pure.

## **Conjectural Emendation**

Owen minced no words in denouncing the conjectural emendation of Scripture: “The conjectures of men conceited of their own abilities to correct the word of God are not to be admitted ... All that yet appears impairs not in the least the truth of our assertion, that every letter and tittle of the word of God remains in the copies preserved by his merciful providence for the use of his church” (461).

Owen was decidedly against calling a corruption in the text a variant reading. He wrote, “First, then, here is professedly no choice made nor judgment used in *discerning* which may indeed be called various lections, but all differences whatever that could be found in any copies, printed or written, are equally given out. Hence many differences that had been formerly rejected by learned men for open corruptions are here tendered us again. ... It is not every variety or difference in a copy that should presently be cried up for a various reading” (468). This surely applies to the Alexandrian manuscripts which had been cast into the waste basket and long rejected as corrupt; but textual critics today hail them as the oldest and the best, removing the inspired and preserved readings for obscure and corrupt readings.

If Owen were to be given a copy of the United Bible Societies’ (UBS) or Nestle-Aland’s (NA) Greek texts with their critical apparatuses, he would have decried their indiscriminate display of variant readings, and not only that, the actual replacement of ancient readings from the commonly received texts with corrupt ones from already rejected heretical texts. He warned of “how, by the subtlety of Satan, there are principles crept in even amongst Protestants, undermining the authority of the ‘Hebrew verity’ [i.e., the original inspired words of Scripture] as it was called of old, wherein Jerusalem hath justified Samaria, and cleared the Papists in their reproaching of the Word of God” (377). Note that the UBS and NA Critical Texts are edited by Roman Catholics and Modernists. What a shame it is that as in the days of Owen, undiscerning Protestants today clear “the Papists [and Modernists] in their reproaching of the Word of God.” The Protestants today are undermining the Reformers. These are certainly days of Deformation, not Reformation.

The indiscriminate display of textual variants and the conjectural emendations of textual criticism destroy the certainty over the identity of God’s totally inspired and entirely preserved Scripture as commonly

received. Owen wrote, “If these hundreds of words were the critical conjectures and amendments ... what security have we of the mind of God as truly represented unto us, seeing that it is supposed also that some of the words in the margin were sometimes in the line? And if it be supposed, as it is, that there are innumerable other places of the like nature standing in need of such amendments, what a door would be opened to curious, pragmatistical wits to overturn all the certainty of the truth of the Scripture every one may see. Give once this liberty to the audacious curiosity of men priding themselves in their critical abilities, and we shall quickly find out what woeful state and condition the truth of the Scripture will be brought unto” (517).

The anti-preservationist textual critics today call “all men fools or knaves that contend for its purity [i.e., the purity of the Scriptures],” yet as Owen rightly challenged, “they are none of them able to show, out of any copies yet extant in the world, or that they can make appear ever to have been extant, that ever there were any such various lections in the originals of the Old Testament” (378). Surely, one such example is 2 Kings 8:26 and 2 Chronicles 22:2 where the Hebrew originals record the age of Ahaziah when he became king as 22 and 42 respectively, evincing no scribal error in keeping to the Lord’s promise of “jot and tittle” inspiration and preservation (Matt 5:18).

The Christian is thus no fool to believe that in the Scriptures no words are lost, and such discrepancies only apparent.

### **Against “Ruckmanism”**

Owen was no Ruckmanite. He wrote against the “Ruckmanites” of his day, who “place themselves in the throne of God, and to make the words of a translation authentic from *their* stamp upon them, and not from their relation unto and agreement with the words spoken by God himself” (365).

These proto-Ruckmanites elevated the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT, also known as the LXX) to a place it did not deserve, above the original Hebrew Scripture. They criticised the Hebrew text in favour of the LXX by questioning the existence of an infallible and inerrant OT in the apographs. They claimed that the existing Hebrew Scriptures cannot be trusted because the “ancient Hebrew letters are changed from the Samaritan to the Chaldean; the points or vowels, and accents, are but lately invented, of no authority; without their

guidance and direction nothing is certain in the knowledge of that tongue; all that we know of it comes from the translation of the LXX; the Jews have corrupted the Old Testament; there are innumerable various lections both of the Old and New; there are other copies differing from those we now enjoy that are utterly lost” (367).

It goes without saying that a Romish or a Ruckmanite view of a doubly inspired version or translation whether ancient or modern goes directly against Jesus’ promise to preserve the original language Scripture to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18). The denigration of the Hebrew Scriptures in favour of the LXX or any other version insults the Author of the Holy Scriptures who had appointed the Jewish people to be keepers of the oracles of God (Rom 3:2). It is well known how the Jews took religious and meticulous care in their transcription of Holy Writ. This is clearly attested by a common saying among them, “to alter one letter of the law is no less sin than to set the whole world on fire” (456).

Owen rightly saw the LXX as a corrupt version with an uncertain origin. “The Septuagint is ... woefully corrupt. Its rise is uncertain. Some call the whole story of that translation into question ... The circumstances that are reported about them and their works are certainly fabulous. That they should be sent for upon the advice of Demetrius Phalereus, who was dead before, that they should be put into seventy-two cells or private chambers, that there should be twelve of each tribe fit for that work, are all of them incredible. Some of the Jews say that they made the translation out of a corrupt Chaldee paraphrase; and to me this seems not unlikely. Josephus, Austin, Philo, Jerome, Zonaras, affirm that they translated the Law or Pentateuch only” (529).

In light of this, Owen wrote against a certain one who attempted to change the inspired Hebrew text by means of the LXX: “It was an unhappy attempt, ... that a learned man hath of late put himself upon, viz., to prove variations in all the present Apographa the Old Testament in the Hebrew tongue from the copies used of old, merely upon *uncertain conjectures* and the credit of *corrupt translations*. ... The translation especially insisted on by him is that of the LXX. That this translation either from the mistakes of its first authors ... or the carelessness, or ignorance, or worse, of its transcribers—is corrupted and gone off from the original in a thousand places twice told, is acknowledged by all who know aught of these things. Strange that so corrupt a stream should be judged a fit means to cleanse the fountain” (388).

He went on to say, “To advance any, all translations concurring, into an equality with the originals,—so to set them by it as to set them up with it on even terms,—much more to propose and use them as means of castigating, amending, altering any thing in them, gathering various lections by them, is to set up an altar of our own by the altar of God, and to make equal the wisdom, care, skill, and diligence of men, with the wisdom, care, and providence of God himself” (459).

This sort of a shameful conjectural emendation of the Hebrew Scriptures is precisely what the translators of the New International Version (NIV) and New American Standard Bible (NASB) have done, using the corrupt LXX to correct the Hebrew in 2 Chronicles 22:2 (cf. 2 Kgs 8:26). There they rendered the age of Ahaziah as 22 instead of 42 contradicting the inspired and preserved text. If such fallacies are allowed, where are we to stop?

Are such employments of translations in correcting the originals valid? Owen answered thus, “for my own part, I am solicitous for the ark, or the sacred truth of the original, and that because I am fully persuaded that the remedy and relief of this evil provided in the translations is unfitted to the cure, yea, fitted to increase the disease. Some other course, then, must be taken; and seeing the remedy is notoriously insufficient to effect the cure, let us try whether the whole distemper be not a mere fancy, and so do what in us lieth to prevent that horrible and outrageous violence which will undoubtedly be offered to the sacred Hebrew verity, if every learned mountebank may be allowed to practice upon it with his conjectures from translations” (520).

It ought to be noted that Owen does not deny that in corrupt translations, a man may find the gospel and salvation, but he argued that this should not in any wise cause Christian Protestants to deny that God had indeed preserved, and will continue to preserve His infallible and inerrant Word to the jot and tittle.

### **Apparent Discrepancies**

On things hard to be understood, Owen commented, “It is readily acknowledged that there are many difficult places in the Scripture, especially in the historical books of the Old Testament. ... The industry of learned men of old, and of late Jews and Christians, has been well exercised in the interpretation and reconciliation of them: by one or other a fair and probable account is given of them all. Where we cannot reach

the utmost depth of truth, it hath been thought meet that poor worms should captivate their understandings to the truth and authority of God in his word. If there be this liberty once given, that they may be looked on as corruptions, and amended at the pleasure of men, how we shall be able to stay before we come to the bottom of questioning the whole Scripture I know not. That, then, which yet we insist upon is, that according to all rules of equal procedure, men are to prove such corruptions before they entertain us with their provision of means for remedy” (533). This is sane and sound advice. “Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom 3:4).

### **Conclusion**

John Owen believed in the authority, purity and perfection of the Holy Scriptures. As it is today, so was it in his day that “Many there have been, and are, who, through the craft of Satan and the prejudice of their own hearts, lying under the power of corrupt and carnal interest, have engaged themselves to decry and disparage that excellency of the Scripture which is proper and peculiar unto it” (363). Owen called these Bible disparagers, “pretenders” and so they were, “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (363-4).

Owen was persecuted for defending the 100% preservation of the Holy Scriptures. He was unjustly accused of creating unrest, but he spoke sincerely, “When I have been for peace, others have made themselves ready for war; some of them, especially one of late, neither understanding me nor the things that he writes about,—but his mind for opposition was to be satisfied. This is the manner of not a few in their writings: they measure other men by their own ignorance, and what they know not themselves they think is hid to others also” (378).

It may be asked: Why do so many Protestants today deny the *total* preservation of the Scriptures when it is clearly stated in so many places that the Scriptures are *forever* infallible and inerrant? Owen offers this reason, “Many men who are not stark blind may have yet so abused their eyes, that when a light is brought into a dark place they may not be able to discern it. Men may be so prepossessed with innumerable prejudices—principles received by strong traditions—corrupt affections making them hate the light—that they may not behold the glory of the Word when it is brought to them” (413).

What then is the solution? It is simply to submit to the supreme authority of the infallible Word. Owen wrote, “The Word, then, makes a

sufficient proposition of itself, wherever it is; and he to whom it shall come, who refuses it because it comes not so or so testified, will give an account of his atheism and infidelity. He that hath the witness of God need not stay for the witness of men, for the witness of God is greater” (414). How we need to humble ourselves not only before the Christ, but before His Word if we are truly to see the Light of Truth! This is the logic of faith (Heb 11:6).

Christians who deny the self-evidencing infallible and inerrant Word that God has perfectly inspired and preserved question their Saviour, and undermine the very Foundation of their faith. Owen wrote, “How know we that the Scripture is the word of God; how may others come to be assured thereof? The Scripture, say we, bears testimony to itself that it is the word of God; that testimony is the witness of God himself, which whoso doth not accept and believe, he doth what in him lies to make God a liar” (417).

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps 11:3). May the Lord grant us faith to believe in the precepts and promises of His forever infallible and inerrant Word so that we might begin to understand and appreciate the twin doctrines of 100% inspiration (VPI) and 100% preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures.

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## **A SCRIBAL ERROR IN 2 CHRONICLES 22:2? NO!**

Robert J Sargent

### **Texts in Question**

*2 Kings 8:26—“Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel.”*

*2 Chronicles 22:2—“Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother’s name also was Athaliah the daughter of Omri.”*

Is there a discrepancy between 2 Kings 8:26 and 2 Chronicles 22:2? To the casual reader, there indeed appears to be a contradiction between two parallel accounts of the accession of King Ahaziah over Judah. Was Ahaziah 22 or 42 when he ascended the Judean throne?

### **The “Scholarly” Solution**

There is an easy solution to the problem—*if* you are a Bible corrector! Obviously this just has to be an error! The “scholarly” statement of this “explanation” is: “The number ‘forty and two’ in 2 Chron 22:2 is evidently the mistake of a copyist.” In other words, since Ahaziah’s father Jehoram died at age 40 (2 Chron 21:20), it would have been impossible for Ahaziah to succeed him at an age of 42! Therefore, somewhere in the history of the transmission of the Hebrew text, a careless scribe committed a transcriptional error.

The problem with this easy solution is: if there is one error in the Bible (albeit an innocent slip of the pen), who is to say there are not other errors in the Bible? How could we be absolutely certain that the precious verses God used to speak to our heart and save our soul are not among those containing errors? Can we really trust our Bible?

For a number of compelling reasons, we believe the Bible is the *Perfect Word* (Ps 119:140) of a *Perfect God* (Tit 1:2) and given to man in a *Perfect Manner* (2 Pet 1:21, 2 Tim 3:16) and preserved in a *Perfect*



*Form* (Ps 12:6-7). Our Bible is not only infallible in all its teachings but inerrant in all its content. That is why we can say with full assurance: “*I know* whom I have believed;” that is why we can say with absolute confidence: “there hath *not failed* one word of all his good promise.”

### **Statements of Fact**

How, then, can we understand this apparent contradiction concerning the age of King Ahaziah when he began to reign? Before we come to untie what one writer calls “the Gordian Knot of the Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah,” several statements of fact need to be made.

- (I) Some parts of God’s Word are likened to milk (1 Pet 2:2), while other parts are called strong meat (Heb 5:12-14). This conundrum most definitely falls into the strong meat category.
- (II) Every Christian is commanded to study the Bible (2 Tim 2:15). This particular question is one which requires much careful and diligent study.
- (III) Whenever we encounter a difficult-to-understand Bible passage, it does not mean the Bible is somehow in error. We have to consider two realities:
  - (1) that we may not be of sufficient spiritual maturity to grasp the deep treasure God has put there in His Word (1 Cor 3:1-2, Luke 24:25), and must therefore keep growing and keep studying; or
  - (2) that God never intended for us to know everything there is to know (John 21:25), and must therefore be content with the knowledge that He has given us all we need to know until we enter into His glorious presence in heaven (1 Cor 13:12).
- (IV) The two passages in question are accurate English translations of the Masoretic Hebrew text—all the extant Hebrew manuscripts say the same thing! This is not some supposed “poor translation” by the translators of the Authorised, King James Version. Why, those men would run rings around 20<sup>th</sup> century scholarship—and do you not think they would have had enough sense to “patch up” such a glaring inconsistency if they really believed it was an error? (This perplexing question is actually a wonderful demonstration of the honesty of the translators of the Authorised, King James Version.)

- (V) When interpreting the Bible chronologically (which is part of the solution to these problem texts), it is absolutely necessary to keep in mind some important facts:
- (1) Scripture deals only with whole years when it comes to the reign of the kings. A part of a year is counted as a whole year, and when applied to the kings of Israel, that part of one year may actually be counted twice—once for the outgoing king, once for the incoming king. As a matter of fact, at time of the events mentioned in our problem text, the Northern kingdom of Israel had three kings reigning in the same year—Ahab (absent in battle, then killed), his son Ahaziah (co-Rex, then dies of a fall), and his grandson Jehoram.
  - (2) Sometimes the reign of a king is dated from the beginning of a dynasty instead of the beginning of his own succession to the throne. The classic example of this is found in 2 Chronicles 16:1 where the reign of Asa at the time of Baasha's invasion has been counted from the division of the united monarchy under Rehoboam. (This explains the apparent contradiction with 1 Kgs 16:8.) Chronicles records the length of the kingdom; Kings records the length of the term of office. We may find this a strange way of reckoning, but that is the way it is sometimes counted in the Biblical record.
  - (3) Sometimes the beginning of the reign of a king may be given from his anointing or from his accession, or both! The Lord Jesus Christ was born King of the Jews (Matt 2:2), but His reign will not begin until He sits upon David's throne in the Millennium. Following the deportation of his father, Jehoiachin legally became king of Judah when he was eight years old (2 Chron 36:9), but his mother ruled for him as queen (Jer 13:18) until he was 18 (2 Kgs 24:8). Three months later both king and queen mother were deported (2 Kgs 24:12).
  - (4) It was not uncommon for there to be more than one king reigning at a given time in either Israel or Judah. Some ruled as pro-Rex (in place of the king), others as co-Rex (together with the king).

- (VI) The term “son,” as it is used in the Bible, does not always mean the contiguous male offspring of a father. A father may actually be a grandfather (Dan 5:2—Belshazzar was Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson), or step-father, or a distant forebear (Matt 1:1).
- (VII) This particular question is somewhat complicated by the similarity of names of the kings of Israel and Judah during the period of time. There were in fact two Ahaziah, one in the Northern kingdom of Israel and one in the Southern kingdom of Judah. One way to keep them straight in your mind is to remember the following formula: ISRAEL = A-A-J (Ahab-Ahaziah-Jehoram); JUDAH = J-J-A (Jehoshaphat-Jehoram-Ahaziah). Lastly, Ahaziah has three names in the records: Ahaziah (2 Chron 22:1), Jehoahaz (2 Chron 21:17), and Azariah (2 Chron 22:6).

### **The Biblical Solution**

The “key” which unlocks the door to our understanding this matter is found in the New Testament. The royal genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ is recorded in the Gospel according to Matthew. Matthew 1:8 lists the kings in the Davidic line at the time of our particular concern—and there are some notable omissions!

The following chart compares the kings of Judah as given in the Old Testament record to the same kings listed in Matthew 1:8:

<b>OLD TESTAMENT RECORD</b>	<b>CHRIST’S GENEALOGY</b>
Asa	Asa
Jehoshaphat	Jehoshaphat
Jehoram	Jehoram
Ahaziah	-
Joash	-
Amaziah	-
Uzziah	Uzziah

Three kings of Judah are not counted in the lineage of Jesus Christ! Why? The answer to that is found in Exodus 20:5, Numbers 14:18 and Psalm 109:13-15 and is seen in the character of this reign (2 Chron 22:2-4). The fact is, Ahaziah is not counted as a seed of David—his ancestry is traced to the house of Omri. The Bible accentuates both the bloodline and the influence of his mother (Athaliah), who is the daughter of Omri—either literally, or in the sense that she is the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kgs 8:18), i.e., she is Omri’s granddaughter.

### **Two Possible Explanations**

This being the case, there are now two possible explanations:

#### **Solution #1**

Ahaziah was literally 22 years old (2 Kgs 8:26) when he ascended to the throne of Judah. He was the actual son of Jehoram and Athaliah.

Ahaziah was co-Rex with his ailing father Jehoram (2 Chron 21:18) for one year (2 Kgs 9:29—the 11<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoram of Israel) and sole king for one year (the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoram of Israel—2 Kgs 8:25).

Ahaziah ascended to the throne in 894 BC [Ed: 842/1 BC]. If we count backwards 42 years (to 936 BC) we come to the first year of Omri [Ed: 885/4 BC]. In other words, Ahaziah was indeed 22 years old (as stated in Kings), but his reign is counted (in Chronicles) from the beginning of the evil dynasty of Omri. This is the Holy Spirit’s way of highlighting the wicked aberration in the royal Davidic line.

The phrase “Forty and two years” may then be taken as a Hebrew idiom “A son of forty two years”—meaning that it was 42 years from the beginning of the dynasty founded by Omri.

#### **Solution #2**

Ahaziah was literally 42 years old (2 Chron 22:2) when he ascended to the throne of Judah. He therefore was not the literal son of Jehoram (who died at age 40), but a son in the sense of being a step-son. His mother was his father’s wife.

If we count back 20 years (to when Ahaziah was 22 years old—2 Kings 8:26) we come to the year 914 BC [Ed: 862/1 BC] which is the eighth year of Jehoshaphat. This was about the time that Jehoshaphat “joined affinity with Ahab” (2 Chron 18:1), since we know that in the

third year of Jehoshaphat's reign he instituted a revival in Judah (2 Chron 17:7-9), following which his kingdom prospered (2 Chron 17:12).

We are told in 2 Chronicles 18 that several years after this alliance was forged, Ahab and Jehoshaphat engaged in a joint military venture against Syria (2 Chron 18:2). Both kings went into battle (2 Chron 18:28) and Ahab was killed (2 Chron 18:33-34). Prior to the battle the faithful prophet Micaiah was deported in chains to Amon where (the one-year-old) Joash was residing (1 Kgs 22:26). It is here, in this passage, we have a most revealing statement: Joash—the biological son of Ahaziah (2 Chron 22:11)—is called the “king's son,” indicating that Ahaziah was already a king! How could this possibly be? If, as part of the affinity Jehoshaphat made with Ahab, Ahaziah was anointed king at this time, the pieces of the puzzle begin to fit together.

In other words, Ahaziah was anointed king at age 22—he finally sat on the throne of Judah 20 years at age 42.

The Word of God does not give all the details of the affinity between the two monarchs. Evidently, it was far-reaching because in 2 Chronicles 21:2 Jehoshaphat was given the title “king of Israel!” Furthermore, when Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram finally gained sole rule over Judah, he not only murdered his brothers, but “divers also of the princes of Israel” (2 Chron 21:4). Why would he do that if they were not a threat to the Judean throne?

Not only that, but Ahaziah obviously felt “right at home” in the Israeli court (2 Chron 22:6). Perhaps both kings were interested in reuniting the monarchy which had been divided for about 70 years—undoubtedly with different motives. Ahab (or Jezebel!) conspired to install one of his own on the Judean throne following the death of Jehoshaphat—a move which would be accomplished by earmarking Ahaziah (whose mother was Ahab's own daughter) ahead of time. When Ahab's scheme to have Jehoshaphat killed in battle backfired (2 Chron 18:29, 31-33), Ahaziah had to wait 20 years to be enthroned.

In this way, Ahaziah was both 22 and 42 when he began to reign—22 when he was anointed, 42 when he was seated.

The only question which remains is: Who was his biological father? The affinity struck between Ahab and Jehoshaphat appears to be somewhat sordid—a tangled web in fact! Consider that Ahaziah is said to be:

- (1) The son of Jehoram (2 Chron 22:1). Since Ahaziah was two years older than his “father” Jehoram, he must have been his step-son, brought into that relationship with his mother Athaliah when she married Jehoram.
- (2) The son-in-law of the house of Ahab (2 Kgs 8:27). This relationship would have been established by his marriage to Zibiah (2 Chron 24:1) who must have been either a daughter or grand-daughter of Ahab.
- (3) The son of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron 22:9). It seems Ahaziah was given a decent burial only out of respect for the fact that he was a son of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron 22:9). Could it be that in earlier times, Jehoshaphat followed the custom of cementing royal ties (1 Kgs 3:1) by going in unto Athaliah, Ahab’s daughter? Perhaps it is at this point that the Biblical record ceases to give sufficient details for anyone to know for certain.

The Almighty God is never pleased with unholy alliances (2 Cor 6:14-17). The Lord never recognised the reigns of Jehoram and Azariah, who both sought to introduce Baal worship into Judea—along with Joash, they are omitted from the genealogy of the Saviour. When Ahaziah died, God Himself cut off the house of Ahab from the royal line (2 Chron 22:7-9).

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## **DID JESUS AND THE APOSTLES RELY ON THE CORRUPT SEPTUAGINT?**

Prabhudas Koshy

The Septuagint (aka LXX) or Greek translation of the OT is an unreliable version both yesterday and today. We cannot be certain of the authenticity of its readings. Its textual purity was questioned by Thackeray who said, “We are much more certain of the *ipsissima verba* of the NT writers than of the original Alexandrian version of the OT” (ISBE, s.v. “Septuagint”).

It has been claimed that Jesus and the Apostles quoted the Greek translation of the Old Testament, namely the Septuagint, even though they knew that it was corrupt. Why this claim? This claim is made to support the use of corrupted modern English versions of the Bible. It is argued that since Jesus and the Apostles used a corrupt Greek translation of the Old Testament, we today can also use corrupt modern versions of the Bible. Some even allege that those who say that it is wrong to use a corrupt version of the Bible are in danger of accusing our Lord and His Apostles of sin. This allegation is inaccurate on two counts: (1) the assumption that Jesus and the Apostles quoted from the Septuagint is false, and (2) the promotion or support of the use of corrupt versions certainly dishonours Christ.

The claim that Jesus and the New Testament writers always used the Septuagint to quote from the Old Testament is without biblical evidence. It has been said that in the New Testament there are about 263 direct quotations from the Old. However, many of these Old Testament quotations in the New are significantly different from the Septuagint. If Jesus and the Apostles relied on the Septuagint for all their Old Testament quotations, such a difference would not have resulted.

There was no need for Jesus and the New Testament writers to rely on the Septuagint to quote the Old Testament. Jesus Himself was the Author of the Holy Scriptures. He could quote Hebrew Scriptures and

translate them infallibly into Greek. As far as the Apostles were concerned, the Holy Spirit was their Chief Aide who supervised their writing of the Scriptures. There is nothing against them citing the Old Testament and translating the words into Greek themselves. Let us be mindful that both Testaments were inspired of the Holy Spirit; and that the Spirit was their infallible Author.

The New Testament's translations and interpretations of the Old Testament are not taken from any corrupt human work. Whatever the New Testament says about the Old Testament, whether it is a translation into Greek or an interpretation, it must be viewed as the infallible and inerrant work of the Holy Spirit. Every word of the New Testament, including quotations, interpretations and applications of the Old Testament, is not from any corrupt human translation but from the Holy Spirit Himself. As such it is highly unlikely that Jesus and the New Testament writers quoted from the corrupt Septuagint as some allege.

Moreover, Jesus made no mention of the Greek Septuagint. Neither did He assert that His quotations were taken from the Septuagint, nor mention the Septuagint. However, He did speak about the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. In Matthew 5:18, He referred to the Hebrew text of the Old Testament when He said, "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." The *jot* (or *yodh*) is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet; and the *tittle* is a portion of a letter that distinguishes two similarly written letters. Here Jesus spoke authoritatively about the accuracy of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. Jesus also declared His commitment to every letter of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament (Matt 5:17-18). It is impossible to think that Jesus who affirmed His absolute commitment to every letter of the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament would quote or endorse its corrupt translation. If Jesus used the Greek Septuagint, His scriptures would not have contained the jots and the tittles. He obviously used the *Hebrew* Scriptures and not its corrupt Greek version!

In addition, the descriptive designation of the Old Testament used by Jesus in the New Testament reveals that He used the Hebrew Scriptures instead of the Greek Septuagint. He often referred to the Old Testament as (1) "The Law and the Prophets" and (2) "The Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." In Luke 24:44 we read, "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all



things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.” The reason for such a reference to the Old Testament was because the Hebrew Bible was then divided into three parts: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. The *Septuagint* contained no such division. Not only that, the Septuagint contained the spurious Apocryphal books that have been mixed together with the canonical Old Testament. How could Jesus have possibly referred to the corrupt Septuagint if the order of the biblical books had already been hopelessly mixed up with the non-inspired Apocryphal books?

If Jesus had spoken only of His commitment to the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, how can one claim that Jesus relied on the corrupt Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures? Certainly such a statement is a misrepresentation of Christ.

Certainly the conduct of our Lord and the Apostles was very different from some of the modern day ministers who accept versions produced by men who deny the inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures. Does it not dishonour Christ to allege that He and His Apostles quoted a version that was calculated to diminish the clarity and glory of true doctrines? It is startling that some would dare to attribute such a heinous act to Him and His Apostles! It is impossible to think that Christ who is holy, just and truthful would endorse a translation that disregards the truth and the glory of the Almighty. The very nature of God would tell us that Christ would never have sanctioned the use of a corrupt Greek version of His Word. It is those who want to use inferior or corrupt modern versions, who say that Christ endorsed the corrupt Septuagint. Certainly we want to have no part in such an erroneous view of Christ.

In the pattern of Christ and His Apostles, we accept no inferior or corrupt translation, but the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures behind the KJV. As far as English translations go, the KJV is the best—the most faithful and most reliable.

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## **DID GOD PROMISE TO PRESERVE HIS WORDS?: INTERPRETING PSALM 12:6-7**

Quek Suan Yew

Psalm 12:6-7 states, “*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.*” The teaching from these two verses appears quite clear that God would preserve His Holy Word forever. Yet many have argued otherwise. They say that the preservation in verse 7 refers to people only.

Those who interpret Psalm 12:7 to mean people and not the words of God say that since the pronominal suffix in “keep them” (v7a) is in the masculine gender (plural) and “the words of the LORD” (v6) is in the feminine gender (plural), the pronoun “them” must refer to “people.” They argue that for “them” to refer to God’s words the pronominal suffix must also be in the feminine gender agreeing with its antecedent and related noun.

The above grammatical argument against the preservation of God’s words in Psalm 12:6-7 is false. Gesenius, a Hebrew Grammarian, wrote, “Through a weakening in the distinction of gender ... masculine suffixes (especially in the plural) are not infrequently used to refer to feminine substantives (E Kautzsch, ed, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed by A E Cowley [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910], 440, sect O).” Besides Psalm 12:7, here are a few other examples from the OT where this occurs:

- (1) Genesis 31:9, “Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your [*masculine plural pronoun suffix*—referring to Rachel and Leah] father, and given them to me.”
- (2) Genesis 32:15, “Thirty milch camels with their [*masculine plural pronoun suffix*—referring to the thirty female camels] colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals.”

DID GOD PROMISE TO PRESERVE HIS WORDS?

- (3) Exodus 1:21, “And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them [*masculine plural pronoun suffix* — a reference to the midwives] houses.

Thus, according to the Hebrew language, it is most legitimate to take the *masculine plural pronominal suffix* “them” (v7a) to refer to the feminine plural “words of the LORD” in verse 6. It is *eisegesis* to insist that the pronoun “them” must mean “people” only, not “words.”

Anti-preservationists also argue that the pronominal suffix in “preserve them” (v7b) is in the singular, and so the KJV translators were wrong to render it as “them” (plural). It is true that the pronominal suffix for “preserve them” in verse 7b is a third person masculine singular suffix (him). Why did the KJV translators translate it as “them?” The answer is in the attaching of the energetic *nun* (the Hebrew letter *n*) to the pronominal suffix. When this occurs an additional rule applies in the Hebrew language. It is important to note that there is no masculine plural pronominal suffix in the third person when the energetic *nun* is applied to a verb (see *Gesenius*, 157-8,1 sect 4, I). Hence the Scripture writer, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, used the singular masculine pronominal suffix, retaining the same gender as in “keep them” in verse 7a. It is again very legitimate and consistent with Hebrew grammar for the KJV translators to translate the masculine singular pronominal suffix with the energetic *nun* as a masculine plural pronoun — “them.”

When we speak of context, it is the immediate context that is considered first, and not the distant context. The immediate context speaks of the words of the Lord. Hence the preservation and keeping (guarding) would be the words of the Lord. We know that the grammar and syntax allow it. Verse 6 is what is known as an *emblematic parallelism* where the purity of God’s Word is likened to the sevenfold purification (as pure as you can ever get) process of purging silver of every bit of dross leaving behind the purest silver (see Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalms* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988], 100). This verse teaches that the words of the Lord are without error or fallibility and it is 100% perfect.

Verse 7 is known as a *synonymous parallelism* where the second line restates what is mentioned in the first, but using different words (Longman III, 99). As mentioned before, the use of the energetic *nun* emphasises the act of preservation. This preservation is forever. The

relationship between verses 6 and 7 is what we call *synthetic parallelism* where the second verse adds or expands on the teaching mentioned in the first verse. These two verses combined teach that the words of God are forever perfect; like silver purified seven times, they will be preserved by God for eternity.

The contrast within the psalm would be the words of these evil men versus the words of the Lord. These evil men speak vanity and flattery (v2), and boast that their words will prevail and no one is lord over them (v4). The psalmist counters this by declaring that it is the words of the Lord that will prevail over the words of the evil ones. This is the assurance and comfort that the Lord gives to His people. Do not fear the words of these evil flatterers and boasters; trust in the words of the Lord that is purified seven times as opposed to the words of the evil men which are vain, proud and stem from a double heart (v2). God will keep (guard) His holy words and preserve (action is emphasised by the energetic *nun*) them from this generation forever. The Lord gave this verbal assurance to that generation and after because He knew they needed it. God's people were distressed by the many wicked and confusing words that came from proud and evil men. But the thrice holy and perfect God encouraged His people by reminding them that His words and promises are ever true and will forever remain.

Do we have a perfect Bible today? The faith of the believers was put to the test. They had to choose whether to believe and trust in the inerrant, infallible and divinely inspired and preserved Word of God Almighty or the errant, fallible words of sinful men. Decision and decisiveness are needed today. Is your faith based on the pure words of God or the proud words of men? Choose you this day whom you will believe.

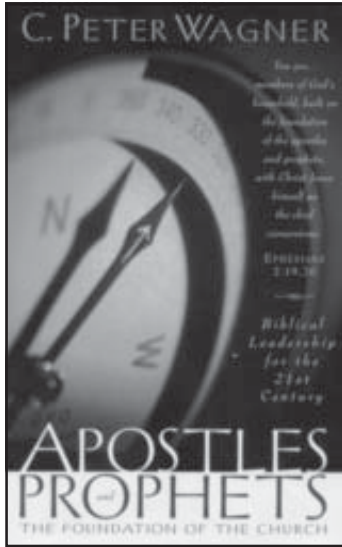
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## APOSTLES AND PROPHETS TODAY?

Ephrem Chiracho Ouchula



This paper is a critique of the book—*Apostles and Prophets: The Foundation of the Church*—authored by C Peter Wagner and published by Regal Books, Ventura, California, in the year 2000. Wagner was former professor of Fuller Theological Seminary. He is the acclaimed leader of the New Apostolic Reformation and Third Wave Charismatism. Wagner is co-founder of the World Prayer Center, and chancellor of the Wagner Institute in Colorado Springs. A prolific writer, some of his other books are *Apostles of the City*, *Churchquake!*, *Acts of the Holy Spirit*, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*, *Lightening the World*, and *Prayer Shield*.

Wagner’s *Apostles and Prophets* seeks to prove that apostles and prophets are needed for the growth and success of the church today based on Ephesians 2:20 (7-9). He asserts that God is still giving “apostles and prophets” to the church, and that these two must work together harmoniously to bring the kingdom of God into fruition. Although both offices receive authentic revelation from God today, the prophets, he says, must subject themselves to the apostles for the latter are the anointed CEOs of the church of Christ. In his book, he lists four categories of apostles, and gives a personal testimony of his calling and appointment as a “horizontal apostle” to give “apostolic covering” to this New Apostolic Reformation movement as well as to the Apostolic Council of Prophetic Elders.

## **Wrong Interpretation**

Is his thesis valid? It ought to be noted that Paul did not say in Ephesians 2:20 that the apostles and prophets *are* the foundation of the church but that the church is built on their foundation. It must be understood that the church is built not on apostles and prophets but on Christ, the Rock (cf. Matt 16:18). Paul himself acknowledged, “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon... For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor 3:10-11). It is thus not the apostles and prophets themselves, but their Christ-centred and Spirit-inspired oral (1 Thess 2:13, 2 Pet 1:20-21) and written (2 Tim 3:16) tradition (2 Thess 3:6), i.e. the Scriptures that constitute the very Foundation of every true Christian church.

Since the Church has the complete and authoritative Scriptures written by the OT prophets and NT apostles with Christ as the Chief Cornerstone, no other foundation is needed today. Since revelation has ceased with the completion of the canonical Scriptures, there is no longer any need for the revelatory offices of apostles and prophets. God has solemnly commanded the church not to add to or subtract from the Holy Scriptures (Rev 22:18-19).

Not only Ephesians 2:20, Wagner also misinterprets Philippians 2:19-29 by claiming that Titus, Timothy, and Epaphroditus were apostles in the same way Peter and Paul were (44-45). He argues that the Greek word *apostolos* as used in the passage to refer to those men proves that they were apostles of Jesus Christ like the Twelve. But this disregards the fact that the word *apostolos* has two meanings: (1) a general meaning of “a delegate” or “messenger,” and (2) a special meaning to mean the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ (cf Acts 1:20-26).

Another serious misinterpretation of Scripture comes from his arbitrary grouping of apostles into four types (vertical, horizontal, hyphenated, and marketplace). Wagner classified Paul as a vertical apostle, and as such “he was not an apostle over the whole Church everywhere” (1 Cor 9:1-2). Unjustifiably, he limits Paul’s apostolic authority to a few local churches. This contradicts the nature of Christ’s calling and appointment of His apostles. Although Paul had a specialised ministry, his authority was universal as witnessed by the authoritative

Scriptures he wrote that are binding on all churches of all ages in all places (cf. 2 Pet 3:15-17).

### **Wrong Theology**

Wagner, believes that the Holy Spirit continues to give the sign gifts of “healings, deliverance, prophecy, miracles, ecstatic experiences” to the church today (15). He believes in the continuity of authoritative revelation through apostles and prophets. He records all such revelation in his “*Prophetic Journal*,” and depends on them for daily guidance (57-58, 78ff). He tells of his experiences with “prophecies,” and how he uses them to build his doctrines (48, 79). He counsels, “Do you want to know how to set a certain situation in order? Ask the apostle!” Wagner does not think the Scriptures to be sufficiently authoritative for he considers his words to be equally authoritative (44). He exalts the words of men above the Word of God.

Wagner’s theology contradicts God’s Word that teaches the cessation of the partial and temporary means of revelation when Perfect Revelation comes, which is the completed and canonical Scripture (1 Cor 13:8-10). The sign gifts were given to the apostles of Christ to authenticate their ministry (Mark 16:17-20), and once their purpose is fulfilled they shall cease (1 Cor 13:8-10). The view that dreams and visions have not ceased and remain authoritative contradicts the written revelation of God in the Scriptures and undermines their sole and sufficient authority for the life and growth of the church (2 Tim 3:16-17, Rev 22:18-19).

Wagner also teaches that without the divine administration provided by the foundation of “apostles and prophets” today, the church cannot achieve what God has purposed for her (7-9). In his view, no living apostles and prophets means no foundation for the church today. Such a view has serious theological implications. It does not only deny the special and exclusive calling of the Twelve to lay the foundation of Christianity, it also replaces Christ and His Word with self-appointed apostles and self-concocted revelation to be the foundation of the Church (cf. 1 Cor 3:10-11).

Wagner promotes a postmillennial view of the end-times, and claims that through the ministry of apostles (especially “marketplace apostles”) God will transform secular society (54). He claims that there are “apostles of finance, technology, medicine, industry, education, the military, government, transportation, nuclear science, and a hundred other

segments of society” (55). Such a doctrine is not only foreign to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, it also demeans the sacred and spiritual office of the original apostles of Jesus Christ.

This grand plan of Wagner for world reconstruction is alien to Scripture. The Bible teaches that in the last days wickedness will increase in both society and church, and there will be an apostasy before the return of Christ (Mat 24:21, 2 Tim 3:1-9, 2 Thes 2:3-4). The world will not get better and better, but from bad to worse, culminating in an end-time judgement. It is quite clear from prophetic Scripture that it will not be so-called “apostles and prophets” that will bring peace to this sin-cursed world, but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Prince of peace, at His return (Rev 20:1-6).

### **Wrong Practice**

Wagner advocates the need to make certain leaders “apostles” in the church. He claims that “there has never been a time in Church history when the Church has been without apostles” (19). He cites the apostolic succession of the Roman Catholic Church to prove his case. He also makes the incredible claim that his New Apostolic Reformation was the goal of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Protestant Reformation. He says that the Protestant Reformation was one of the springboards to usher the church into a New Apostolic Age (22). And so Wagner advocates the need to appoint new “apostles” (72). According to him, apostles are no longer called or given by God but are appointed by a senior apostle. He claims to be the chief “horizontal apostle” (45), and as a horizontal apostle he has the right to ordain other apostles and have authority over them (46). He constantly calls the reader’s attention to what he has accomplished and is accomplishing as an “apostle.” All must listen to him and follow his doctrines and practices.

What has the Bible to say about this practice of Wagner? The Bible teaches that there were only 12 apostles of Christ, no more, no less. The apostles appointed “elders” in every church, not “apostles” (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5). Even mighty preachers such as Stephen and Philip were made deacons not apostles. The apostles of Christ understood the special office of apostleship to be solely from God and not man (cf. Gal 1:1). Therefore, let every church that believes in the authenticity and authority of the Holy Scriptures follow the pattern of the original apostles.



## **Conclusion**

It is the observation of this reviewer that this New Apostolic Movement of Wagner is really an attempt to undo the 16<sup>th</sup> century Protestant Reformation. Wagner's support of apostolic succession in the Papacy reveals his ecumenical bent, and his promotion of new prophecies and revelation undermines the Reformation doctrine of *Sola Scriptura*.

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## WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING

S H Tow

*“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing”* (John 15:5).

By the mercies of God we meet in holy convocation to witness the passing out of 35 workers for the harvest fields. These are unusual, exceptional times—the last of the last days, so the signs tell us. Predictions made thousands of years ago are fulfilled before our eyes like *“flashing amber lights”* warning that the Lord’s return is near, even at the doors! Are you ready?

What signs, you ask? Signs for the seeing few, only the unbelieving see not. Last month a killer quake shook Turkey. In the past hundred years pestilences have claimed millions of lives. Pandemics and epidemics of influenza, AIDs, and now SARs, are not haphazard or without meaning. The Creator in wrath has sent a *“wake up call”*—the Judge of all the Earth is coming to restore order. Man’s rebellion has a limit.

How late is this prophetic day! Just one more sign to confirm: the fourth and final World Power foretold by Daniel and the Apostle John sits enthroned on the world scene. Daniel prophesied: *“... the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms ... shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces”* (Dan 7:23). John wrote of the same Power: *“... Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?”* (Rev 13:4). Answer: on earth no one.

Let the wise understand: this Power is not of God (although some would like to believe that it is, noting the national motto “In God we trust” on every dollar note). But God’s Word is above men’s: Revelation 13:2 identifies the source of the Global Power: *“...the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.”*

## WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING

And just to stress how close is the Momentous Event of our Lord's appearing, read Revelation 13:8: "*And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*"

This verse describes the post-rapture scenario when the entire world falls under the New World Order—the One World Government objective of the Satanic Illuminati-Freemason organisation.

The New World Order will engulf all on Planet Earth, whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Praise God for the Lamb, and for including us who love Him in that Book. Thank God for calling us into His service, for raising up this Church-College Partnership, a spiritual partnership of incalculable blessing and importance.

### **The Church-College Partnership**

Rightly does the Word of God say: "*How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up? For their rock is not as our Rock ...*" (Deut 32:30-31).

Our Rock ordained this blessed partnership of Church and College: the one to initiate and sustain, the other to multiply and supply. Did not our Lord say, "*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few*"? While Life Church gathered in the harvest, the Lord of the harvest also raised up a shepherd to conceive of a training school for the wider harvest fields beyond our walls.

Thus was born the Life Church-Far Eastern Bible College co-operative, all praise to God. In more ways than one, our Singapore Life-FEBC is a replica of Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle-Pastors' College which flourished in London a hundred years earlier.

While Spurgeon is well beloved and remembered for his phenomenal ministry, preaching to weekly congregations of 5,000 for 37 years in the great city, it is less well known that his great contribution to the Gospel cause was the Pastors' College which trained over 800 preachers of the Word—men of strong Biblical convictions and sound theology to bless congregations in churches all over Great Britain and beyond. Spurgeon was raised of God to "*stand in the gap*" against the rising tide of liberalism and ecumenism. So are we.

Since his day, there has not been a college in England which has embraced the same strong Biblical principles of theological training.

Cast in the same mould, FEBC stands today, lone sentinel and lighthouse for God. The College has a Faculty of a dozen, and an enrolment over a hundred. The visionary founder Rev Timothy Tow received his God-given mandate in the fifties, soon after Life Church was founded.

His first students numbered just three. But our Lord did not despise the day of small things. Today FEBC is what it is only because of God's grace. The Lord of the harvest answered our prayers for labourers by giving us a College. Its symbiotic benefits have been proved over and over through five decades.

Of a Truth, God's blessings are shared, as summed up by the Founder of both College and Church: *"When we build the College we build the Church."* That was Spurgeon's genius adopted in Singapore.

Of his own College, Spurgeon said, *"The Church ought to make the College the first object of its care."* What was said of Spurgeon's College a hundred years before FEBC, is a "hundred times" more relevant today, for we are that many years nearer our Lord's return. The days are numbered and Satan's forces of liberalism and ecumenism are a hundred times more active. In the words of the late Rev Paul Contento: *"Without the Bible College the Church will die!"*

And without the Spirit of the Lord we can do nothing.

To faithful B-Ps and Alumni of FEBC *"earnestly contending for the faith of the Gospel which was once delivered unto the saints:"* resolve to make the College *"the first object of your care."* Recall the words of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania State: *"If there is any good which I can do, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again."*

And forget not by any means, that in all our *"doing good"* it is only by God's good grace, for *"without Him we can do nothing,"* which reminds us of one of the Principal's axiom: *"Do something good for Jesus every day."* And why not, in life's short day that we make ourselves fruitful for His name's sake.

### **Parting Word for Departing Workers**

To our friends leaving shortly for the harvest fields, may you go in the strength of the Lord. The College has imparted to you theological

WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING

tools for the job: use them for the advancement of His Kingdom and the defence of the faith.

Ours is no ordinary work: we are in a spiritual warfare and we must use the right weapons: *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds”* (2 Cor 10:4). Man’s intellect and social skills are carnal: the adversary is not unduly concerned with these.

Never underestimate the power of the wily foe, nor forget that he is the father of lies, master of deception and accuser of the brethren. Against him we lose if we rely on our own strength. With him we are engaged in deadly conflict. But thank God, at Calvary our Lord Jesus overcame him, for *through death he might destroy him that had the power of death* (Heb 2:14). Through Christ our Lord you will do valiantly: our Lord has already won victory.

As a parting gift, take with you the text of God’s Word, the Sword of the Spirit: John 15:5. Let not a day pass without the recall and recourse to our Lord’s words: *“Without me ye can do nothing.”* What did our Lord mean by these words? He gives us the explanation.

*“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you ... I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you”* (John 16:7, 14:18).

In the divine scheme and strategy, the Risen Christ, having completed His work of redemption (*“It is finished”*) must return to the Father: His earthly ministry was over. From thence, the work on earth passes on to the Third Person of the Holy Trinity: the Holy Spirit. No more the personal presence of the Son, but the Spirit would perform and perfect the work.

Pentecost marked the commencement of the Era of the *Holy Spirit*, even the *Spirit of Jesus: without Him we can do nothing*. The entire work of the Gospel was to be propagated and sustained by the blessed *Comforter* promised in John 14:16. The *Comforter’s* coming made all the difference.

When the Spirit came, in one day, nay in a moment of time, the disciples were changed—men made new! In an instant their inter-personal strife (Luke 22:24), their fearfulness and disloyalty (Matt 26:58), and

Peter's cowardly denials (Matt 26:69-75)—all these sins and transgressions were cleansed and taken away.

The eleven disciples rose as a man to face the multitude (Acts 2:14), filled with the *Spirit of Jesus*, to be witnesses for their Lord as predicted (Acts 1:8). From then on the disciples cared not for their own safety or interests, but only preached Christ the Saviour and Risen Lord, testifying to His saving power, and fearing no man but God.

Did it ever occur to you that our Lord had committed the immense task of establishing the Church in a hostile world to a motley group of fisher folk and the likes. By common sense reasoning such a proposition would be written off, labeled a failure even before it took off. But God's word says differently: "*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts*" (Zech 4:6). So the rulers and elders and scribes in Jerusalem, witnessing the boldness of the disciples, "*... perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus*" (Acts 4:13). That makes all the difference.

What the establishment did not understand was that Peter and John, and the rest of the disciples, were men filled with the Spirit of Jesus, mighty instruments of God.

### **The Forgotten Third Person**

Reading John 15:5 most times we skim over the text, without much heed to the deeper and hidden meaning, what our Lord meant: "*Without me ye can do nothing.*" Now that we have paused to look deeper into the text, it becomes only too obvious that our Lord meant "*Without my Spirit, you can do nothing.*"

While we preach Christ crucified, the power of God unto salvation to a dying world, we plead with the Lord for the filling of the Spirit, recognising that without Him we can do nothing. For He is the Spirit of truth, our perfect Teacher and Guide (John 14:17, 26; 16:13). Without Him to illumine our darkened minds, and to guide us into all truth, we cannot understand the Scriptures. Without Him to energeise us we are helpless and incompetent for the task ahead.

In all our ministry and all that we do, then, let us pray for the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom, grace, truth and knowledge. No amount of administrative and management skills can ensure success in ministry.

WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING

Without His Spirit we can do nothing. We read Scripture but the truth of it is not impressed upon our mind. We forget to ask His help in trouble, and we sink deeper in despair.

The Lord taught us a precious lesson in our part of His vineyard. We were desperately trying to execute the work. But the adversary had crept in unawares and sowed seeds of dissension and discord. Brethren became suspicious of each other: stopped smiling or talking to one another, began to avoid one another. Emails flew thick and fast. People began to count votes. The Church had become a war zone, all because the adversary, that accuser of the brethren and father of lies had done his work.

We had neglected our Lord's clear instruction: "*If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you*" (John 13:14-15). Instead of washing one another's feet, we were busy washing one another's dirty linen.

In the hour of dark despair, God's light shone through. Much prayer had ascended to the throne: "Lord help! Lord intervene! The unity of the Church is at stake. At all costs, restore and heal Thy Church, for it is Thy body."

Days and weeks and months of earnest fervent prayer ascended to God's throne of grace. Just when the night of conflict was darkest, God sent the light of His Word. Well read, familiar words spoke to us with new meaning. Division and striving over non-essentials does not come of God: it can only come from the accuser of the brethren.

Thank God for the timely intervention, that we heeded the Word, to resist the wily foe "*Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices*" (2 Cor 2:11). Praise the Lord for the two-edged sword of the Word repelling the false *angel of light*.

Reading *Ephesians 4:32*, *Philippians 3:13* and *1 Peter 4:8*, the Spirit opened to us the way of peace. Forgetting those things which were behind (the petty differences and non issues), tenderhearted, forgiving one another, the Spirit enabled us to exercise fervent charity, for charity covered the multitude of sins.

Then we began to see beams in our own eyes rather than motes in others' eyes (Matt 7:1-5). Then we began to exercise fervent charity one to another, and wounds began to heal, all because the Spirit had come to our aid.



*The Burning Bush 10/2 (July 2004)*

To our departing brethren, beware the wiles of the evil one, and be not ignorant of his devices. The accuser of the brethren does not rest or take a day off from his mischief and sowing seeds of discord. No ministry can survive if discord creeps in. A house divided cannot stand.

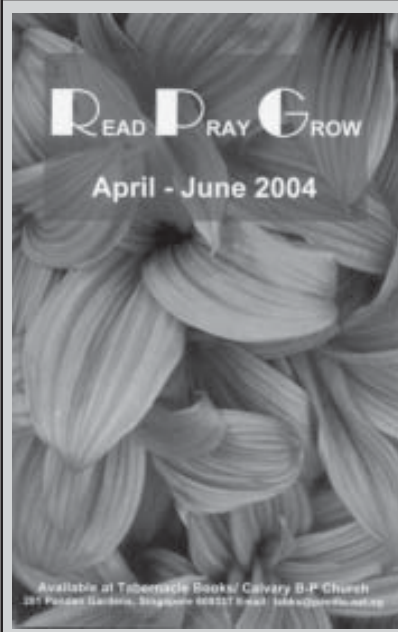
Stay close with the Lord. Remember His words: *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing”* (John 15:5).

Pray daily for the filling of the Spirit and for a mighty Gospel Ministry wherever you go. Without Him you can do nothing. Keep praying, He will answer you. Amen.

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*Dr S H Tow is senior pastor of Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church. The above message was delivered at the 28<sup>th</sup> Graduation Service of the Far Eastern Bible College, May 11, 2003.*

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**RPG (Read, Pray & Grow)** Daily Bible Reading Guide is published quarterly by the Calvary Bible-Presbyterian Church in Singapore. Since 1982, the RPG has been helping Christians around the world to read God's Word regularly and meaningfully. Its writers are conservative Bible-believing pastor-teachers of fundamentalist persuasion, with a "high view" of Holy Scripture. The RPG uses the King James Version of the Holy Bible, the Bible of the Reformation, most loved and trustworthy, and a bulwark in the path of unbiblical ecumenical union.

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## **THE BEGINNING OF THE FEBC WORSHIP SERVICE AT THE RELC**

Timothy Tow

Welcome, welcome all of you. As you all know I have been pressurised to resign from Life Church after 53 years of service as predicted by what an elder told my son last year, “We’ll make your father pastor emeritus.” The word emeritus is a polite word but points to my being now put on the shelf.

For nearly a year a controversy has raged in Far Eastern Bible College between younger lecturers and those who stand with the Principal on the question whether the Bible has some mistakes or without any and absolutely perfect. As I take the view of a 100% perfect Bible and stand with Dr Jeffrey Khoo, more squabble developed on August 20 at Life Church Session meeting which drove me to my resignation.

Not desiring any further contention and following our Lord’s example, I determined to leave Life Church and begin anew with a fresh Service. The Lord wonderfully provided a place not far from Gilstead Road at the RELC (Regional English Language Centre), down Orange Grove Road from Shangri-La Hotel with immediate occupation. We take it as a positive sign from God.

So here you are this morning and following your pastor’s footsteps, and not being forsaken. I am specially delighted that Elder Han Soon Juan is able to chair the inaugural Service. May God unite us together to broadcast the good news of life everlasting to a lost world. We cannot tell how He will increase us in the days ahead, when we serve Him anew to rebuild His Kingdom. Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name (Ps 103:1).

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*From the first weekly bulletin of the FEBC Worship Service, October 5, 2003. We welcome one and all to join us each Lord’s Day at 10.30 am where the Word of life is faithfully preached.*

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From top, L-R, zig-zag: Rev Dr Timothy Tow (principal); Eld Han Soon Juan (worship chairman); First worship service at RELC classroom; Next 3 photos: worship service at the auditorium; Children's section; Greetings after the worship service.

*THE BEGINNING OF THE FEBC WORSHIP SERVICE AT THE RELC*



From top, L-R, zig-zag: first 2 photos: Rev Tow conducting the Lord's Supper with elders; next 4 photos: Adults' choir; FEBC choir; FEBC quartet.

*The Burning Bush 10/2 (July 2004)*



From top. L-R, zig-zag: First baptism; Tithes & offerings; Judith, Deborah, Pauline, Ivy (Mrs Tow) & Hedy; Wendy Teng & Deborah Mae at book table; Whee Kheng, Hedy & Deborah; Rev Tow; Fellowship at auditorium lobby; FEBC students as ushers.



*THE BEGINNING OF THE FEBC WORSHIP SERVICE AT THE RELC*



From top. L-R, zig-zag: 1st row: Children's Sunday School; 2nd row: Adults' Sunday School; 3rd row: Ladies' Fellowship; 4th row: Young People's Fellowship.

## College News

FEBC reopened with a day of prayer and registration on January 2, 2004. **Rev Dr Okman Ki** of Hope Bible-Presbyterian Church, Adelaide, delivered the opening message to the students. The total enrolment of daytime students stood at 128 from 16 countries. There were 8 new students: Chan Sopheak and Liv Rotha from Cambodia; Efendi Ginting from Indonesia; Cho Kun Won, Won Jung Eun, and Kim Han Sin from Korea; Anne Chiam from Singapore, and Le Vu Thien An from Vietnam. Over 200 were registered for the night classes.

On August 20, 2003, **Rev Dr Timothy Tow** resigned as pastor of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church which he founded and served for 53 years. The college is privileged and honoured to have him continue as founding principal of the Far Eastern Bible College and teacher of Systematic Theology. To set up a separated and reformed witness for the perfection of Scripture, the principal started a new worship service at the Regional English Language Centre (RELC), Orange Grove Road. The inaugural meeting was held on October 5, 2003, and chaired by **Elder Han Soon Juan**, a member of the FEBC Board.

The Commissioner of Charities has approved FEBC as a charity under the Charities Act 1994. **FEBC's Charity Registration Number is 01760 dated January 26, 2004.**

The **FEBC Gospel Rally** on March 27, 2004 had Rev Teo See Hock, pastor of Zion Presbyterian Church, preach on "Heaven and Hell."

The Far Eastern Bible College has a **new and improved website** at **<http://www.febc.edu.sg>**. The college prospectus, theological journal, books and lecture notes are downloadable without charge at our new website.

**Elder Sng Teck Leong** and **Elder Khoo Peng Kiat** have resigned from the Board of Directors. We thank them for their contribution to the college during their period of service. **Elder (Dr) Boaz Boon** of Calvary Tengah Bible-Presbyterian Church, and **Elder Wee Chin Kam** of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church are new members of the Board.

The College faculty and students had an **end-of-semester retreat** at our very own Resort Lautan Biru in Mersing, November 17-18, 2003.



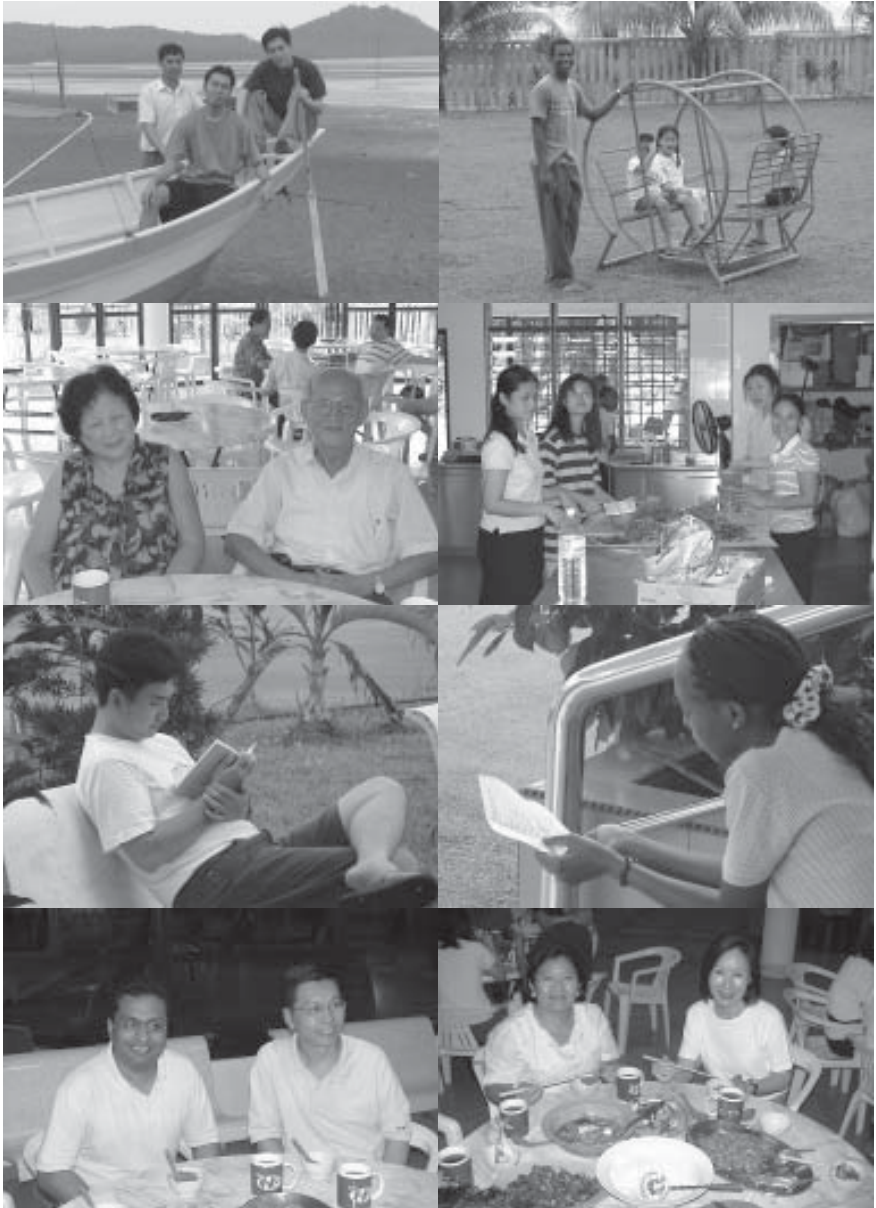
Happy faces in the coach for a 3-hour ride to the Mersing resort. Praise the Lord!

*The Burning Bush 10/2 (July 2004)*



From top, L-R, zig-zag: Resort sign; Waiting for room keys; Principal flanked by Rev Ronny Khoo & Rev Das Koshy; Peter Ty; Bun & Jose; Rio & Ajin; Mrs Tai Mei Lan & daughter; Dn Tai Mern Yee, Barnabas Yap & Lok Kwok Wah.





From top, L-R, zig-zag: Ram, Febian & Bun in sampan; Uncle Nelson with children; Rev & Mrs Koa Keng Woo; Students in kitchen; Richard Tiu; Christine Kendagor; Rev Koshy & Pr Kian Sing; Missionary Roska & Deborah Mae.



From top, L-R, zig-zag: Nagaland students; Rev Quek Suan Yew; Vietnamese students; Indonesian students; Warunee (Thailand); Singapore students; Lillian and Joanne in a skit; Mrs Ivy Tow (Matron).



From top, L-R, zig-zag: 1st 3 photos: Korean students presenting a birthday song to the principal; Janice Lai & Wendy Teng at the lunch table; Group photo.

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# Far Eastern Bible College

"Holding forth the Word of Life" Phil 2:16  
"Holding fast the Faithful Word" Titus 1:9

1A Orchard Road Singapore 238663  
Tel: (65) 234 9396 Fax: (65) 2342 4399

ABOUT FEBC DOCTRINE PERSONNEL CONTACT US

## FEBC End of Semester Retreat at Mersing Lautan Biru Resort

12th - 18th Nov 2003



### FOUNDING ETHOS OF THE FAR EASTERN BIBLE COLLEGE

Theological training is vital for church growth. In his book *Forty Years on the Road to Church Growth*, FEBC's founding principal Dr Timothy Tow wrote: "Without proper Bible training, the church that relies on self-taught evangelists or missionaries will be stilled in growth, inasmuch as the latter of their theological knowledge is short and the ability of their preaching skills is limited."

Many a self-made pastor has lost his way due to a lack of intensive, systematic training in the Word. Even the theologically-trained can succumb to error. So, in obedience to the Pauline mandate, "And the things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2), FEBC was instituted in Singapore.

On 28 April 1962 the late Dr Paul Comento laid the foundation stone of FEBC and prayed to the Lord that he would raise up great Christian leaders and preachers from the college's ranks.

In those days, theology in the seminaries was taught exclusively by modernist professors. There was a crying need for a Bible-believing institute in the Far East for the propagation of the true gospel and the defence of the biblical faith. The stranglehold of modernism and ecumenism needed to be broken.

These needs remain today, made more acute by the emergence of new and virulent isms, like postmodernism, neo-evangelicalism, charismaticism, hyper-Calvinism and neo-Pharisaism.

Moreover, counseling methods, which syncretise Christian truth with heresy, and unscriptural church-growth methods, have added to the deluge of unbelief and apostasy that is drowning many a seminary today. The need for theologically sound Bible colleges has never been so great.

FEBC was constituted to propagate the Reformed faith and is affiliated to the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC). It has a pre-millennial view of the end-times. It endeavours to carry the Reformation torch into this new century by setting high biblical standards and training both men and women to become effective servant-leaders for the church militant.

As published by the *Evangelical Times*, March 2001.

4 Top Commandments of FEBC

4 Semesters' Theology

4 Hours' Theology for Everyone

4 Hours' & 40 Assignments

### WORSHIP SERVICE

FEBC Lord's Day Service at RELO, Auditorium, 10.30am

30 Orange Grove Road  
above Shangri-La Hotel  
Singapore 258112

### Calendar of Events 2004

### Coming Events

Guest Preacher from USA  
a son of Abraham  
**Dr. Raymond Saxe**  
Sat, 17th, 10.30, Debra

April 18 - May 2  
**MY INDESTRUCTIBLE PEOPLE**

May 3 - 8  
**THE IMPENDING RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST**  
(Exposition of 2 Thessalonians)  
[more details...](#)

### FEBC 29th Graduation Exercises



9 May 2004  
at Calvary Pandan  
Sunset Gospel Bible Fellowship Hour  
(5.55pm - 6pm)  
[more details...](#)



### HOME

### COLLEGE

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- Prospectus
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### LORD'S DAY SERVICE

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### WEBLINKS

### FEEDBACK



## Class Notes

**Robert Yeo** (DipTh 83), founder of The Helping Hand, Singapore, passed away on September 18, 2003, at the age of 53.

**S Eman Kumar** (DipTh 87) is pastor of Mount Carmel Bible-Presbyterian Church, 25 Kumavasamy Nagar, Villivakkam, Chennai 49, India 600049.

**Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church** pastored by **Rev Das Koshy** (BTh 92, MDiv 94, ThM 02) dedicated their Church Resource Centre at 510 Geyland Road, #02-06, Singapore 389466 on November 4, 2003. Rev Dr Timothy Tow gave the dedicatory message.



**Seow Kim Guan** (CertBS 02) has published an evangelistic booklet entitled *Salvation is a Free Gift*, the first in a series of four under the theme, *The Way of the Cross Leads Home*. For copies, write to Victorious Living Resources ([victorliving@pacific.net.sg](mailto:victorliving@pacific.net.sg)).

**John Saray** (BRE 03) and **An Sitha** (DipTh 02) were united in Holy Matrimony on November 14, 2003. Both are teaching at the Kampongsom Bible School, Sihanoukville, Cambodia.

**Leni** (DipTh 03) married Tjung Chin Nan on November 8, 2003. Leni continues to serve at the Calvary Batam Bible-Presbyterian Church under **Rev Kiantoro Lie** (BTh 92, MRE 98).

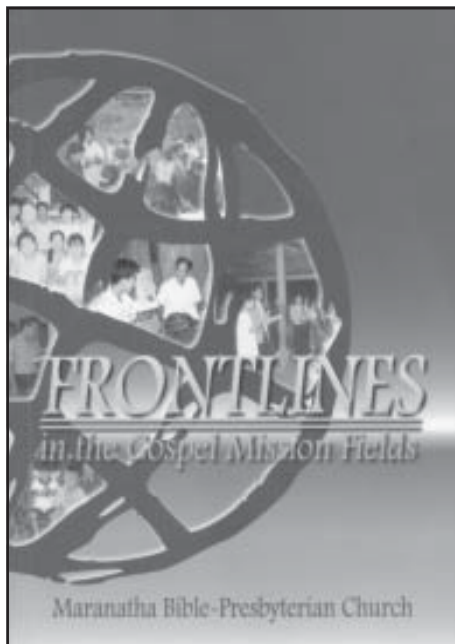


**June Tan** (MRE 03) married Samson Korir in Kenya on March 19, 2004.

**Ephrem Chiracho** (MDiv 03) is a lecturer at the Bible College of East Africa, Nairobi, Kenya. His wife **Gete Sisay** (BRE 03) assists him. The Lord blessed them recently with a baby boy named Daniel.

## Book Notices

Books Available at FEBC Bookroom, 9A Gilstead Road, Singapore 309063  
(<http://www.lifefebc.com/febcbkrm>)



Jack Sin, ed, *Frontlines in the Gospel Mission Fields* (Singapore: Maranatha B-P Church, 2003) “is an unusual and challenging collation of missionary work from ‘frontline’ areas. The various reports it brings are mainly from South East Asia, especially Thailand and Cambodia. But they are not limited to Asia—UK, Israel, Jordan, Australia and New Zealand also feature to varying degrees.

“The (mainly Chinese) contributors are Bible-Presbyterians and Reformed Evangelicals. The debt they owe to Reformation theology is explicitly acknowledged; and unbiblical ecumenism and charismaticism are rejected.

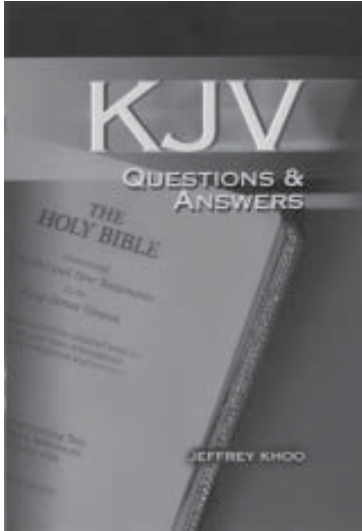
“The editor is Jack Sin, a Bible college lecturer in Singapore, and a frequent contributor to *ET*.

“The book mentions many people and works to pray for, but its thrust is not parochial. It is practical and edifying—rightly recognising that mission is not a matter for academic theorising but an enterprise demanding fervent obedience. The Lord commands, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel’.

“The many contributors freely share their testimony and call to mission, along with various aspects of the work, not least their trials.

“A forcible production like this reminds and encourages us that the whole Evangelical church worldwide—not just the Western church—is called to preach Christ where he is not named.

“It reminds us that the task of rescuing the perishing is not yet finished. In some nations it has scarcely begun.” (Reviewed by Roger Fay in *Evangelical Times*, April 2004.)



**Jeffrey Khoo, *KJV Q&A* (Singapore: Bible Witness Literature, 2003).**

God had spoken: His Word standeth sure, forever settled, inerrant, infallible, perfect. Who dares doubt or question it but the father of lies and enemy of truth. His master stroke “*Yea, hath God said?*” stumbled our first parents and plunged the race into sorrow and curse. That was revisionism of the spoken word at the dawn of history.

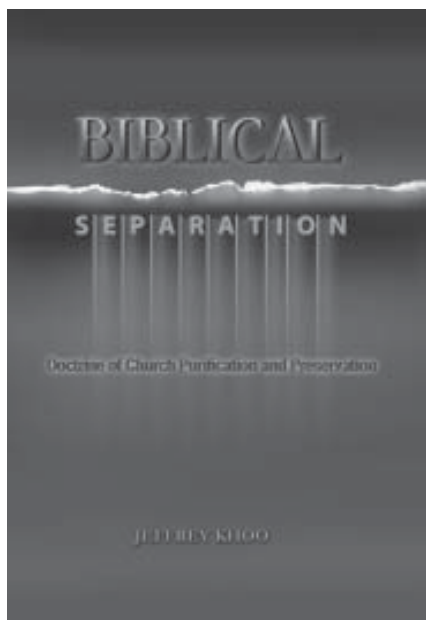
In time God gave the Written Word: holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. That Word was denied to God’s people by unfaithful custodians, until God sent the Reformation and the Bible of the

Reformation—the King James Version (KJV)—to lift the darkness of a thousand years. Lovers and defenders of the KJV affirm with Dean Burgon of Oxford that “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.”

Through three centuries, the KJV reigned supreme, the unchallenged and unrivalled Word of God. But the enemy of truth, with diabolical cunning and subtlety, schemed its overthrow through a “Committee of Revision” headed by Westcott and Hort, masterminds of subversion and champions of corrupted and doctored texts. Their “Revised Version” of 1881, a masterpiece of intrigue, and “secret weapon” of the Counter-Reformation, breached the dike of Holy Scripture, and a hundred corrupt “Modern English Versions” poured through the floodgate of Revisionism. In the century following, corrupt versions had *all but* replaced the King James Bible. Thank God, it was *all but*: He has yet a valiant remnant who stand against the tide of corrupt English Versions, like the faithful *seven thousand in Israel* (1 Kgs 19:18), their knees have not bowed before the Baal of Modern Revisionism.

This Twenty-first Century “Battle of the Versions” intensifies as the father of lies uses every wily stratagem to overthrow the citadel of Biblical fundamentalism, hurling false accusations against the beloved translation and the underlying texts.

But we affirm our unshakable faith in the KJV as the very Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language that is based on God’s infallible, inerrant, inspired and preserved texts. May all who love the Word of God affirm with the Scripture, that “*the law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple*” (Ps 19:7), and that “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*” (2 Tim 3:16, 17). Let God be true but every man a liar. God’s Word is truth. Only the KJV and its underlying texts preserve that truth perfectly. (“Revisionism Ancient and Modern,” preface by S H Tow.)



**Jeffrey Khoo, *Biblical Separation: Doctrine of Church Purification and Preservation* (Singapore: Bible Witness Literature/Reformation Banner Publications, 2004 reprint).**

“Separation in the light of Scripture is not an option but a command.” These words from the opening paragraph of Dr Jeffrey Khoo’s book on the subject express well the theme of his book. This book should be required study for every student preparing for any phase of the Lord’s work.

Dr Khoo quotes Spurgeon who said of the Reformers, “These men loved the faith and name of Jesus too well to see them trampled on. ... It is so today as it was in the Reformer’s Day.” Spurgeon

said these words in the late 1800s!

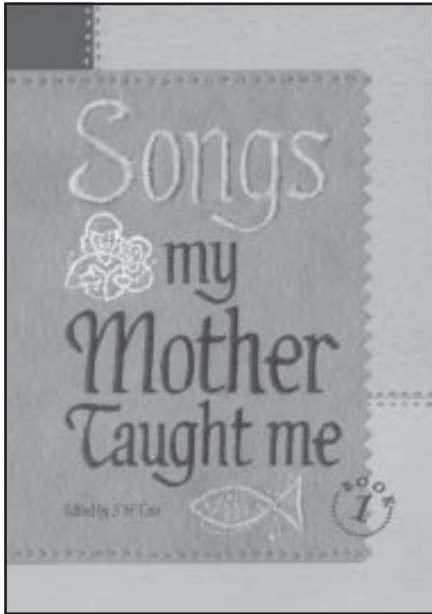
Dr Khoo has carefully and thoroughly analyzed the commands of separation in the three sections of the Old Testament, the commands of the Lord on separation in the Four Gospels, plus the exhortations on separation by the writers of the other New Testament books. He has also researched and given us valuable quotations from God’s servants through the centuries.

In this day, with growing dishonesty in the pulpit, every pastor needs the refresher course this book offers. Every Christian in the pew will be strengthened by



reviewing what God has commanded and preserved for us for our day. Obedience is the test of orthodoxy. The great gulf between belief and unbelief is as great as the gulf between heaven and hell (Luke 16:26; John 3:18).

The following words of Dr Timothy Tow written in the foreword of another of Dr Khoo's books apply well to this incisive study on Biblical Separation: "An unbiased student following that careful study, 'precept upon precept, precept upon precept' (Isa 28:10) cannot help but come to the same conclusion as the author." (Foreword by Dr Arthur Steele, Chancellor, Clearwater Christian College, USA.)



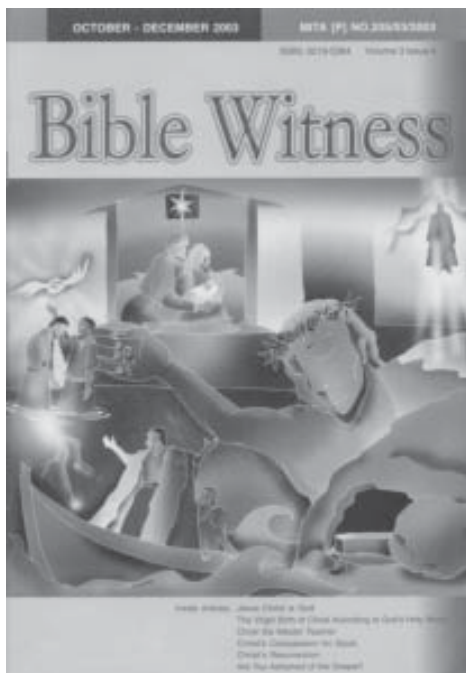
**S H Tow, *Songs My Mother Taught Me* (Singapore: Reformation Banner Publications, 2003).**

As the saying goes, we are young only once, and that only for a short time. Then our children outgrow the shelter of home, and like birds they fly away. Too often young people fall prey to vultures and predators in the evil world. Then how we wish we could start all over again and do what King Solomon said, to "train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov 22:6).

There's no better way to train our children to love God's Word than by singing with them the Songs of Heaven from a very young age, as soon as they

begin to speak. I learned my first Gospel Songs on Mother's lap. Her singing of "God is always near me, hearing what I say ..." remains imprinted in the memory to this day. That laid the foundation for godly instruction through childhood and on to adulthood.

*Songs My Mother Taught Me*, Book One, is the first of four volumes of Gospel Songs specially chosen for building firm Christian foundations for your child. The blessing and responsibility is yours but you must act. Don't let your golden opportunity of a lifetime slip away. Start today, and have no regrets later. Children are precious. Sing with them the Song of Heaven. Sing with them often, many times a day, and they will love you for it. God bless you. ("Young Mothers Heart to Heart," preface by S H Tow.)



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

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# FEBC WORSHIP SERVICE CHOIR





Bible Presbyterian Churches of Australia  
National Youth Camp  
Nanga Bush, Perth, December 8-12, 2003

