



The Burning Bush

ISSN 0219-5984

January 2009

Volume 15 Number 1

| | |
|--|----|
| THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS | 1 |
| Paul Ferguson | |
| BRUCE METZGER AND THE CURSE OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM | 41 |
| Jeffrey Khoo | |
| <i>GOD'S PROBLEM</i> : A REVIEW ARTICLE | 46 |
| Jeffrey Khoo | |
| <i>KING JAMES ONLYISM</i> : A REVIEW ARTICLE | 52 |
| Jeffrey Khoo | |
| INTRODUCING CALVARY BATAM BIBLE COLLEGE (SEKOLAH TINGGI TEOLOGIA CALVARY BATAM) | 58 |
| Kiantoro Lie | |
| MY FIRST THREE MONTHS AT BCEA TANZANIA | 61 |
| Tan Nee Keng | |
| College News | 63 |



THE BURNING BUSH

Theological Journal of the
FAR EASTERN BIBLE COLLEGE
Edited for the Faculty

Rev Timothy Tow, MDiv, STM, DD
Principal, and Lecturer in Systematic Theology

Mrs Ivy Tow, BTh
Matron, and Lecturer in Greek

Rev Jeffrey Khoo, BTh, MDiv, STM, PhD
Academic Dean, and Lecturer in New Testament

Rev Prabhudas Koshy, BSc, BTh, MDiv, ThM, ThD
Dean of Students, and Lecturer in Hebrew

Rev Koa Keng Woo, BTh
Lecturer in Bible Geography and Church Music

Rev Quek Suan Yew, BArch, BTh, MDiv, STM, ThD
Lecturer in Old Testament

Rev Stephen Khoo, BTh, MDiv, MA
Lecturer in Biblical Studies

Rev Tan Kian Sing, BEng, GDBA, MDiv
Lecturer in Biblical Studies

Mrs Jemima Khoo, BTh, MA, MRE
Lecturer in Christian Education

Miss Carol Lee, BBA, DipEd, MEd, MDiv
Lecturer in Christian Education

Editor : Jeffrey Khoo
Publisher : Far Eastern Bible College
Website : www.febc.edu.sg
Permit : MICA (P) 056/03/2008
Printer : Chung Printing

The Burning Bush (ISSN 0219-5984) is published bi-annually in January and July, and contains theological papers, sermons, testimonies, book reviews, College news, and alumni reports. Articles are indexed in the *Christian Periodical Index*. The journal is distributed gratis to the FEBC family and Bible-Presbyterian churches, and available online at www.febc.edu.sg. Local/Foreign subscription rates in Singapore dollars: one year—\$6/\$12; two years—\$10/\$20; back issues—\$3/\$6 per copy. Make cheques payable to “Far Eastern Bible College.”

Please direct all correspondence to:



The Editor, *The Burning Bush*
Far Eastern Bible College
9A Gilstead Road, Singapore 309063
Republic of Singapore

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

Paul Ferguson

Introduction

In September 2008, the *Far Eastern Beacon* published by the Singapore Council of Christian Churches (SCCC), which is the national affiliate in Singapore of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) contained an article titled “On VPP: Kicking against the Pricks” by Joshua Lim and Philip Tang (hereafter “the Beacon Article”). This article was designed to be a rejoinder to an article in *The Burning Bush* of July 2008 by Dr Jeffrey Khoo called, “Kicking against the Pricks: The SCCC Contradicts the ICCC on VPP.” The authors state their conclusion in paragraph one of the Beacon Article by confidently claiming, “Upon reading the ICCC and SCCC Statements, we found that the SCCC and ICCC are consistent in their views regarding the preservation of the Holy Scriptures.”

The Beacon Article by Joshua Lim and Philip Tang is a strange kind of defence and even at first glance is riddled with inaccuracies, inherent inconsistencies and absurd definitions. Paradoxically, it even begins by contradicting and undermining the original ICCC Resolution in 1998 by describing it as “ignorant” and by doing so seems to imply that the ICCC was an extreme King James Version Only (KJVO) organisation.¹ This crass and sweeping dismissal of the ICCC’s General Assembly (which is partly made up of the SCCC’s delegates) hardly is suggestive that the Beacon Article is a reliable advocate of the consistency of the SCCC with the ICCC. It also surely delineates the desperation of the current leadership of the SCCC when it is reduced to utilising authors² to defend it who have such contemptuous feelings towards its sister organisation.

The part of the ICCC Amsterdam Resolution that caught the ire of the Beacon Article was the concluding resolution,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the International Council of Christian Churches, assembled in the historic English Reformed Church in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, observing its 50th Anniversary, August 11-15, 1998, urge all Bible-believing churches worldwide to *use only the Authorized KING JAMES VERSION* in their services and in their teaching ministry.

The authors of the Beacon Article are, however, right in implying that the ICCC in 1998 and 2000 before the passing away of Dr Carl McIntire was strongly KJVO. Indeed, the ICCC Founder—Dr McIntire—in a message delivered on November 1, 1992 (accessible from sermonaudio.com), rejected any belief that we do not have the pure Words of God for us in our Bible today,

Verse 6—*“The Words of the Lord are pure Words.”* Not one of them is mistaken. *“As silver tried in the furnace purified seven times;”* all the dregs are out. Here is a marvelous affirmation and vindication that God’s Word is perfect. *“The Words of the Lord are pure Words”* and that’s the big issue that you and I have in the Christian world today ...

Dr McIntire was also convinced that we have all of these Words available to us and drew not just from Psalm 12 but also the Westminster Confession of Faith,

Verse 7—how I love this. *“Thou shalt keep them O Lord;”* that is keep His Words. *“Thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”* No matter what happens, one generation comes and another passes away, God is going to preserve these Words and they are going to carry their power that He attends with them when they come. From one generation to another the Words of God will be preserved throughout all the generations. Now I am very happy that in the great Confessions of the Christian world, our Confession—the Westminster Confession—has its Chapter One on the Word of God. ... Now the Lord says, “I am going to keep my Word—it is like silver that has been tried. I am going to keep that to all generations, all generations.” That means that no matter what the conditions are, God is going to have on this earth some churches and some pastors until the last generation were taken away who will maintain this Word like we are doing here.

Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) applauds this historic stance of ICCC and seek to uphold this as Dr Jeffrey Khoo explains, “It ought to be made known that the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) has been championing the ICCC resolution on the preservation of Scripture passed at its 16th World Congress in Jerusalem in the year 2000.”³

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

It is regrettable that in recent years the SCCC has departed from both the letter and spirit of these ICCC resolutions. The 1998 ICCC resolution is very clear on its unequivocal rejection of any other English Bible version and the need to militantly defend the KJV when the ICCC stated they,

... urge all Bible-believing churches worldwide to use only the Authorized KING JAMES VERSION in their services and in their teaching ministry, and warn the followers of Christ against these innumerable “new” bibles which are not translations at all, but revisions conforming to the personal bias and views of those who have originated them and who are profiting by commercial sales of such.

A good example of this departure by the SCCC was their utilising guest speakers at recent SCCC rallies in Singapore such as Dr Edward Panosian of Bob Jones University (BJU) in 2005 and Rev Tan Eng Boo in 2008 who both wholly reject and oppose the historic ICCC position. Panosian is a Church History Professor at BJU which openly endorses the Alexandrian Texts as, “a whole, superior to the text based upon manuscripts of the Middle Ages.”⁴ Indeed, BJU was one of the educational institutions to assist the Lockman Foundation’s publication of the New American Standard Version (NASV) in 1971. In a BJU booklet rejecting the KJVO position, Panosian sought to undermine the KJV by arguing that,

Neither the Received Text nor the Westcott and Hort Text is either right or wrong, liberal or conservative. The latter is older and nearer to the original, but both are the Word of the living God.⁵

Panosian’s colleague at BJU, Dr Samuel Schnaiter is even more candid and concedes in his 1980 PhD dissertation titled, “The Relevancy of Textual Criticism to the Modern English Version Controversy for Fundamentalists,” that,

With regard to preservation, however, no Scripture explicitly declares anything of this sort of guidance to apply to the manuscript copyists as far as the precise wording of the text is concerned. Some have deduced such supernatural guidance from Scripture. They note passages that promise God’s Word shall never perish or be lost. However, such promises of preservation in view of the wording variations must apply only to the message of God’s Word, not its precise wording.⁶

The same Dr Schnaiter and his other BJU colleague, Ron Tagliapietra, had even the audacity to accuse our Lord of deception in

citing as the Words of God an imperfect source when they wrote, “It is obvious that Jesus did not consider the lack of the autographs an important matter, and He called the extant copies inspired in spite of any ‘typos’ in them.”⁷

The 2008 SCCC speaker, Rev Tan Eng Boo of Grace Bible-Presbyterian Church, is just as forthright and has publicly stated,

Why should the Church be reading only the KJV when the masses of people today do not understand it? Depriving the lost to understand the Scripture is a sin. It is hindering the unsaved to know the truth. In Grace Church, we must never go to the extreme as these people are doing today. Our official Bible is the KJV, but we will also use the New King James Version (NKJV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), and the English Standard Version (ESV).⁸

The *Far Eastern Beacon* in its September 2008 edition carries an advertisement for its Reformation Rally 2008 which features another non-KJV speaker, Dr Robert Vannoy from Biblical Theological Seminary in USA, who uses all kinds of modern translations in his writings.⁹

In light of these trends, it is surely pertinent to question the sincerity of the current leadership of the SCCC’s commitment to the ICCC resolution to, “urge all Bible-believing churches worldwide to use only the Authorized KING JAMES VERSION in their services and in their teaching ministry,” and in warning “the followers of Christ against these innumerable ‘new’ bibles which are not translations at all.” It seems wholly inconsistent for SCCC to repeatedly pass resolutions against the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) position whilst sponsoring speakers who hold contradictory and openly hostile positions to the ICCC and thereby neglecting their own clear commitments in “warning” the advocates of the modern versions. Indeed, the Rev Tan Eng Boo has even called the ICCC and SCCC position of only using the KJV a “sin” and they feel they can fellowship and use him as their speaker!

ICCC 1998 Resolution

The 1998 ICCC resolution begins in recital one by expressly ruling out any so-called “Majority Text” position of men like Zane Hodges and that of Rev Colin Wong¹⁰ of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (a leading member of SCCC) by expressly stating, “there have been no new discoveries of ancient texts to legitimize this plethora of modern ‘versions’ pouring off the presses and being sold as the ‘latest’ Bible.”

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

The 1998 ICCC resolution also includes an express faith-based presuppositional commitment to VPP not based upon textual criticism but on providential blessing in its recitals when it rejects all other modern versions because it argues, “this same KING JAMES VERSION has been used around the world by an overwhelming majority of Christian Clergymen, Evangelists, Bible Teachers, Missionaries and Youth Leaders to bring millions of people to have a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ for more than three centuries.”

The 1998 ICCC resolution then gives a workable definition of the Textus Receptus (Received Text) that makes it clear that it is an identifiable text and not some uncertain group of words scattered throughout manuscripts or in the Byzantine Family manuscripts. By their choice of words, the ICCC have deliberately restricted the Textus Receptus (Received Text) to the printed texts underlying the KJV when they state, “WHEREAS most of the modern versions are based upon the discredited and perverted Westcott and Hort transcription and not on the Textus Receptus (The Received Text) attested to by scholars for over 300 years, from which the Authorized King James Version was translated by the greatest theologians and textual critics of 17th Century England.”

This ICCC position is not surprising and is identical to groups such as the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) who also state, “The Greek Received Text is the name given to a group of printed texts, the first of which was published by Desiderius Erasmus in 1516.”¹¹

ICCC 2000 Statement

The ICCC builds upon the 1998 resolution by strengthening their KJVO position in a 2000 Statement in Jerusalem. They initially begin by applying the words of inspiration to preservation when they say,

Believing that God not only inspired the Bible without errors in fact, doctrine and judgment but preserved the Scriptures in all ages for all eternity as the Westminster Confession of Faith standard says—“the O.T. in Hebrew and the N.T. in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages are therefore kept authentic. ... they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come,” ...

It should be noted that the ICCC clearly argue that preservation is the exclusive work of God Himself “in all ages for all eternity” so we can only conclude that this work was perfect. The concept of God’s

“imperfect preservation” is an oxymoron. There are no scriptural passages that support a view that God said that He wanted us to have 93-98% of His Word. The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) concurs and states the Bible is “kept pure in all ages.” Any other conclusion as to the perfection of this preservation would explicitly accuse God of being imperfect in His actions and works. Interestingly, the ICCC specifically *link* the inspiring of the Bible “without errors in fact, doctrine, and judgment” with that of preservation in one sentence. No attempt is made by the ICCC (or indeed the WCF) to *distinguish* between the Bible’s perfect inspiration and perfect preservation, which we would expect if this was their belief. It is also interesting that the ICCC here accepts that Bible translations have flowed *directly* from this perfect work of preservation by God. Nothing in these words of the ICCC could be reasonably construed to imply that these Words are still hidden in manuscripts or lost rather than in our Reformation Bibles.

The WCF position is not surprising in light of history as initially, all of the various Protestant Confessional statements (such as the Westminster, the Philadelphia etc.) contain statements about the preservation of Scripture that were written in response to text-critical problems and challenges of the Counter-Reformation. As one commentator put it, “these creeds descriptively appealed to the consensus of history for determining the boundaries of the texts of Scripture.” In the 5th century, Satan in order to destroy the Church had to lead the common man to turn to the Church instead of the Bible for authority. Throughout the next ten centuries of “Satan’s Millennium” the church and society plunged into the Dark Ages because the people were kept from the objective revelation of God. Only a remnant survived thanks to the Received Text in groups such as the Waldensians.

The WCF which the ICCC utilises as its basis for arguing concerning preservation has also a number of other things to say about the subject. In section I (5) of “Holy Scripture” the Confession states,

We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man’s salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the *entire perfection thereof*, are arguments whereby it does *abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God*: yet

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

In effect, the WCF states that the “entire perfection” of the Words of Scripture for us today is to be primarily evidenced by the *internal evidence* of Scripture. This is problematic for anti-VPP advocates such as the current SCCC leadership as they do not believe the Scriptures in our hands is perfect and cannot even identify what imperfections it actually has. The final expression in this section of the WCF also poses a tremendous problem for the SCCC as the WCF states another evidence of Scripture perfection is, “our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.” If the SCCC position is true and we do not have all of the Words of God perfectly preserved in the underlying texts of the KJV, then they are in effect arguing that the Holy Spirit is bearing witness in our hearts with a perfect Word that is different from the imperfectly preserved Bible we have in our hands. This position is dangerously close to the heretical views of the Neo-Orthodox writers such as Karl Barth that the Bible is “the word of God” but not “the words of God” so it is only when one reads the text that it existentially, “becomes the word of God” to him. One of the Beacon Article authors, Philip Tang, implicitly admits his Barthian position when he previously wrote,

The fact that Biblical manuscripts are the *best* preserved of all ancient manuscripts *does not make the Bible infallible and inerrant*; it is infallible and inerrant because God is the author. *It is not the physical letters of the Word that are important but the meaning they convey, the precepts, the sense of it that matters.*

...it is clear that God’s Word shall stand forever, fully preserved (Pro 22:12) and be *written in the hearts of the believers*.¹²

The SCCC and Philip Tang’s position by definition now requires a “charismatic post-canonical” work of re-inspiration in the heart when we receive “an inward message” that we cannot test by the written Word¹³ even though the WCF states that all experiences must be tested by the Bible as, “in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.” We simply ask, how can the Holy Scriptures be a certain and infallible rule if they are based on a fallible text? We cannot appeal to the “pure Word of God” preserved in heaven as it is something that we

cannot use. This dangerous and new “thought preservation” position of the SCCC and its supporters in Singapore such as Zion, Grace and Life Bible-Presbyterian Churches, however, is completely inconsistent with the WCF which rejects any such “new revelations of the Spirit” by stating,

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: *unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit.*

The ICCC also interestingly in their resolution reject the erroneous interpretation of the Board of Elders of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (LBPC), a leading member of SCCC, in respect of Matthew 24:35. LBPC state that,

This verse must be interpreted in the context of the end-time prophecies that Jesus gave in vv.4-34. It indicates the certainty and reliability of all these prophecies. The words of Jesus will continue to be certain, valid and trustworthy even after the universe ceases to exist.¹⁴

The Elders of LBPC believe only “the end-time prophecies,” “all these prophecies” or “the words [of prophecy] of Jesus” are “certain, valid and trustworthy.” They add further in the same statement that this verse is one of a number in which, “what can be understood from these verses is that the Word of God will be providentially preserved rather than exactly preserved.” One is tempted to ask LBPC how they are sure that these are the actual “words of Jesus” and that they “will continue to be certain, valid and trustworthy” if they come from what they accept is an imperfect, inexact and incomplete source? What LBPC are really saying is that, “heaven and earth shall pass away, but most of the words or the general sense of what God said won’t pass away.” In essence, God did not do what He promised He would do. If LBPC believe we do not have an absolutely and entirely infallible text then on what authority do they base their beliefs? Are they appealing, as do the other religions and cults, to a man or a system as our “final authority”? However, the Reformation was predicated upon the presupposition that we are to appeal to the Bible as our “final authority.” How does LBPC know for certain that John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:8-9 are not just the error or corruption of some first century scribe? By their preservation belief system this is a possibility that cannot be discounted as, according to

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

them, it is “heretical,” “false and impractical” to demand an absolutely and entirely infallible and inerrant text!

The ICCC, by contrast, is unambiguous in its 1998 resolution in linking VPP with Matthew 24:35 when they state:

Believing God safeguarded the Bible in times past and will continue to do so in the future and all eternity. He preserved one Holy Scripture, the Bible. “Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away;” Matthew 24:35.

Baptist author, Kent Brandenburg, explains the fallacy of LBPC’s position,

The eschatological context doesn’t affect the teaching on preservation—it enhances it. The Lord Jesus Christ assures His disciples that His promises not only shall certainly be fulfilled but also shall remain available for the comfort of His people during that troubled period which shall precede His second coming. ... His words were preserved because they were written down. Heaven and earth are physical entities that will pass away, that is, disappear. They can be less counted upon in their preservation than Jesus’ Words. Heaven and earth will disappear in the end times, so Jesus’ Words are time sensitive. They’ll be around surely when heaven and earth will not. Why not just take the plain meaning of the text?¹⁵

The fallacy of the LBPC view is also exposed by David Sorenson,

The same critics object that these are His *spoken* words and not His *written* Word. This implied is that though His spoken words may last forever, His written Word will not. However, what these selfsame critics seem to miss is that the Holy Spirit inspired the very words of Jesus which He saw fit to record as Scripture.¹⁶

This typically theologically muddled statement by LBPC exemplifies the confusion at the heart of the SCCC now, as members such as LBPC openly contradict the ICCC resolutions on Matthew 24:35 and come up with nebulous and dangerous statements that cannot be tested or proven such as, “the Word of God will be providentially preserved rather than exactly preserved.” Imagine the outcry against FEBC if they taught that our salvation is not “exactly preserved.” What they really mean is that the “*message*” or “central concepts” have been preserved, independent from the specific words of God’s revelation. However, there are no such things as wordless concepts and repeatedly we are warned against adding to or taking away from the Words (not just concepts or ideas) of the Bible (e.g. Deut 4:2; Prov 30:5-6; Rev 22:18-19).

The very idea that God in a *laissez-faire* manner did something imperfectly either through lack of attention, desire, or power is akin to blasphemy. What passage do they base this on? What verses guide them to take this view? None! The SCCC and LBPC clearly have an unbiblical limited belief in divine providence. They claim to accept that God keeps them secure despite their sins, that God inspired Scripture despite 40-45 authors over 1,500 years, and that our Biblical Canon has been perfected providentially. Somehow the Holy Spirit could perform a miracle of providence in guiding us exactly to 66 books, but He could not do it with Words despite the fact that Scripture promises to preserve “words,” but does not say “books.”

If we are going to start eroding and working down the Words, then why not start working on the Books too? Why 66 of them? They are completely inconsistent in their application of human reasoning. They have no scriptural basis for canonicity as there is no verse in the Bible that says we would have 66 books. Certainly Paul wrote other books not in the Canon. And yet, they are not “heretical” for believing in the canonicity of 66 books for no other reason than because they are the self-appointed arbiters of truth and have made this decision. However, VPP advocates are labelled as “cultists” and “heretics” for using the same reasoning for the Words. They are truly selective in their belief in the power of providence! If the Received Text is not the preserved and inspired Words of God, then LBPC need to tell us where is the text that contains the Words that Jesus said would never pass away?

The SCCC and LBPC position is clearly that there is now no book on earth that is the final and absolute authority on what constitutes truth and what constitutes error. Indeed, Philip Tang has candidly confessed in another article that he totally rejects the ICCC position of preservation,

There is not a single verse in the Bible that says that all the physical letters of the autographa would be preserved (much less preserved in the KJV underlying texts) but rather speaks about the enduring quality of God’s Word. His Word is completely pure, perfect and is absolutely truthful (Psa 12:6; Psa 18:30, 19:7; Num 23:19). Because the Word expresses God’s will and possesses God’s authority, it has eternal validity (Psa. 119:89 ; Is. 40:8; Pro 22:12, Mar 13:31).

The fact that Biblical manuscripts are the best preserved of all ancient manuscripts does not make the Bible infallible and inerrant; it is infallible and inerrant because God is the author. The historical data *only affirms the*

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

truth of God's Word that it stands forever and that His *eyes* [omniscience] preserve it.

... it is clear that God's Word shall stand forever, fully preserved (Pro 22:12) and be written in the hearts of the believers. *What is preserved is not the physical letters that make up the autographa but the knowledge [of God]* as it is stated in Proverbs 22:12.¹⁷

Philip Tang does not explain to us how he determines what is biblical when God's words are hidden from him here on earth. Perhaps he has some sort of personal inspiration. Ironically, Tang in the same article contradicts himself and accepts VPP in the Old Testament Scriptures for the Masoretic apographs during the ministry of Christ,

The Pharisees knew the Scriptures very well, and *the exact number of words and letters of a particular book of Scripture*. They often focused on the minor, and often, unimportant matters of the law. They could not identify Jesus as the Messiah because they sought salvation in their knowledge of the Scriptures. *They had the complete word of God, not one word or letter was missing. Every physical word was accounted for.*¹⁸

Surely, if it is legitimate and non-heretical for Philip Tang to accept VPP of the apographs 2,000 years ago, it is not an unreasonable belief to contend for this today. The manuscripts available to our Lord were likewise copies of copies, yet He never attempted to correct them, or discuss variant readings, or speak of more accurate renditions (Matt 4:4-10, 19:3-5, 21:16, 42; Luke 4:16-17; John 5:39, 10:35 etc.). Christ did, however, correct the Pharisaical interpretations, but not the Scriptures. In doing so Christ declared that the Old Testament text in common use among the Jews during His earthly ministry was an absolutely trustworthy reproduction of the original text. Indeed, if the Bible were inspired only in the original autographs, no one in the entire history of the world has ever had an inspired Bible. The original autographs of Job and the books of Moses had disappeared more than a thousand years before the first book of the New Testament was written, so no one has ever owned a complete Bible made up of "inspired autographs." God certainly went to a lot of trouble for nothing. It is clear that Philip Tang now accepts that copies of copies can indeed be considered the infallible, inspired, inerrant preserved Words of God. Tang correctly uses the scriptural promises to come to this presupposition by faith and then paradoxically rejects it today.

This confusion should not surprise us as the SCCC itself at its Reformation Rally in 2007 openly contradicted the ICCC positions by rejecting that God had perfectly preserved all of His Words. They then retreated from the clarity of the ICCC position to a new and unbiblical formula of “continuing general, but not plenary, preservation” when they stated,

The SCCC hereby re-affirm our stand on the Word of God as above and call upon all our members and all our fellow Bible-believing brethren all over the world to re-affirm our unqualified faith in the inerrancy and infallibility of the Word of God in the original languages, and *in the continuing general, but not plenary, preservation of the “one Holy Scripture, the Bible.”*¹⁹

The SCCC deliberately did not elaborate on the conclusions of this new doctrine they are espousing for fear of letting the cat out of the bag. The truth is that the use of such double-speak in phrases like “continuing, general, but not plenary preservation” is to hide the fact that they do not believe we have all the Words of God preserved and available for us today in a settled text. If God is providentially behind the multitude of conflicting and contradictory opinions about these so-called textual variants, then it would be fair to conclude that this God is very confused about what He said or did not say, and what He meant when He said it. What SCCC truly mean is that if you have a generally but not fully preserved Bible, you will be able to get a drift of most of the message that God was originally trying to convey. However, the ICCC and the WCF, as we have seen above, are very clear that we do have *all these Words* preserved for us. Interestingly, the TBS, using the same logic of faith, also reject this nebulous and inconsistent view of the SCCC when they rejected the concept of a Majority Text,

The Trinitarian Bible Society maintains that the providentially preserved true and authentic text is to be found in the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received Texts. In so doing, it follows the historic, orthodox Protestant position of acknowledging as Holy Scripture the Hebrew and Greek texts *consistently accessible to and preserved among the people of God in all ages.*

Furthermore, as no detailed collation of all surviving manuscripts has taken place, the exact majority text cannot yet be determined; and even if one day that became possible, the resultant text could only be provisional and tentative, because the discovery of further manuscripts might change minority readings to majority readings, or vice versa. *The doctrine of*

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

*providential preservation, however, teaches that the Church is—and always has been—in possession of the true text of Scripture.*²⁰

However, it is by faith that the child of God knows that he *already* has the Word of God at his disposal. Indeed, if we *only* used the majority concept as our standard, we would remain in constant uncertain state of flux. As Dr Floyd Nolen Jones puts it,

But we need not be concerned, for God has not left us depending upon the spade of the archaeologist to determine the true text. Neither are we awaiting his discovering a new papyri hiding in a jar somewhere. If we did so, our faith would always be wavering and we could never be confident that a dealer would not soon appear with something new from somewhere else. We would be wondering if the damming of the Nile River had destroyed some Greek text which would show us a new wonderful truth. We already possess and have had all along the actual TRUTH of Scripture! We have, by faith in God's promises to preserve His Word, an assumed premise, *a priori*, of God's providential preservation of the text. Someone may say "prove it," but this fails to comprehend the nature of *a priori* premise. As Letis has reminded us: "One does not prove a first premise. A premise by definition is something one assumes, not something he proves".... Our confidence is in God's never failing promises and in the text which has been continuously in public usage by the Church. This is why the TR is the true text, not merely because of its great statistical "superiority" or "probability."²¹

The ICCC 2000 statement then turns to discussing where the words of God have been fully preserved. They state,

Believing the O.T. has been preserved in the Masoretic text and the N.T. in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the *complete Word of God*. The King James Version in English has been faithfully translated from these God-preserved manuscripts.

So, it is clear that the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus are stated by the ICCC to give us the "complete Word of God." Lest those, like the Beacon Article authors, try and play with words, helpfully, the ICCC also define the word "complete" when they link it directly to the originals in the first paragraph as, "Believing the Holy Scriptures of the originals to be fully inspired with its words and genders and *being complete* as God's revelation to man without error." The only argument left for the new SCCC position is to argue that the definition of "Textus Receptus" can be stretched to mean the extant manuscripts of the Majority Text or Byzantine Family. However, in the 1998 ICCC resolution (as we have

seen above) clearly defines the Textus Receptus as the printed editions of the Textus Receptus in similar vein to the TBS. This is also helpfully backed up by the clear contradistinction in the ICCC 2000 statement between the Majority Text and the Textus Receptus when they stated, “God preserved *the Textus Receptus in the majority text* with 95%.” This definition of Textus Receptus is also confirmed by the writings of a leading SCCC supporter, Rev Isaac Ong of Calvary Jurong Bible-Presbyterian Church, who accepts it can only refer to the printed text as, “The phrase ‘*textus receptus*’ is derived from an introductory passage to the second edition of Greek New Testament published by the Elzevir brothers in 1633.”²²

The ICCC 2000 statement concludes by condemning the Westcott and Hort texts because they “remove or cast doubt on so many passages and words.” This is a very accurate analysis of the inevitable conclusion of the rejection of the VPP position. Indeed, LBPC has candidly admitted they are also uncertain as to the Words of God today and state, “the Word of God will be providentially preserved rather than exactly preserved.” In a definitive statement on the subject they made the following admissions,

Since preservation of the Scriptures is through providence, copyists’ errors may exist in the underlying texts of the KJV but they are so few and insignificant that they do not affect the integrity of the Bible, nor do they distort the message of God to man.

The word “*closest*” in our Doctrinal Positional Statement is an adjective meaning nearest. It is used to make relative comparison, i.e. among the body of manuscripts, there are those that are close, others that are closer, and the texts underlying the KJV are the closest (compared to the rest) to the original autographs.

The Reformers’ faith in the Bible remained firm because they reasoned that the sovereign God who permitted these few insignificant copyists’ errors to enter in MUST HAVE ensured that *the integrity of the Bible remains intact and completely reliable for man’s use...* Since the position of the Reformers has been accepted to be orthodox and correct even up to this day by the Reformed Community in general, *those who hold the same position* they held should not be considered to be less orthodox and biblical than them, much less be considered as attacking the Word of God.²³

Another leading anti-VPP spokesman, Rev Yap Beng Shin of Olivet Bible-Presbyterian Church, also accepts we do not have all the Words of God available to us and can only hope one day to have them,

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

By the use of external evidence (comparing various manuscripts and ancient translations) and internal evidence (e.g. comparing Kings and Chronicles) *we might finally arrive at the Perfect text*, but without the inspired Autograph to compare with we cannot make such a claim. *We can at best make a speculative statement*, but we have no right to condemn other texts that differ, because the content of the Autograph is in the multitude of manuscripts, not one.²⁴

Using a similar line of reasoning, Fred Moritz, the Executive Director of Baptist World Missions in a BJU Publication also admits, “the debate whether to use the Textus Receptus, the Majority Text, or the Critical Text should not be a source of bitter contention. Neither should it be a test of fellowship among brethren. This is not to demean the textual variants. The issue is worthy of continual study, and scholars *should pursue the accurate wording of the original writings in those areas where uncertainty exists.*”²⁵ Former Central Baptist Seminary professor, Edward Glenn concurs,

In our defense and propagation of the faith the key issue is not whether today we know the *precise form of the words* recorded in the autographa. To make that our focus moves us away from God to concentrate on the process ... The key issue is that God has spoken in the autographa and He has spoken with authority and without error and we are responsible to respond to Him.²⁶

However, the fallacy at the heart of the progressive revelation argument of LBPC and the Rev Yap Beng Shin is that God does not promise to simply preserve “doctrines” or “His message” in any part of Scripture but the “Words” (of course, all doctrines are based upon the Words). Their new version is, “The concepts of the Lord are perfect, converting the soul!” They need to realise that God is not seeking to leave us blindly groping in the dark awaiting a progressive revelation, “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (1 Cor 14:33). Is God the Author of doubt? With respect to their ongoing search to “recover the original text” it has been well noted that no one will know when this goal has been achieved as *there are no “originals” or “autographs” to compare our “reconstructed” texts.*

If God fails to preserve His Words for us today then doctrine is affected as God would have failed to keep His promise. Implied in the doctrine of preservation is the *identification* of those preserved Words. It is useless to SCCC members to have the Bible everywhere and no where!

If every Word is important according to Christ in Matthew 4:4, does it not make sense that God would preserve *all* of His Words so that we might be nourished and strengthened? What father would feed his children with poisoned food or hide the best food from his children? Logically, we have only two choices: either we are unable to live the life of faith, or else God has providentially preserved the only source of authority that He ever gave to us. If we accept that the life of faith is possible, the perfect preservation of Scripture is not merely a historical fact or a theological speculation, but truly an essential doctrine.

Despite the claims of the SCCC that churches are being divided and destroyed by the VPP issue, this does not match the facts. History shows that what has destroyed churches is a rejection of the Words of God. Church members who believe in the inspiration and preservation of the Words of God do not destroy a work, they build it! Faith in the inerrant and preserved Words of God is a mark of orthodoxy and believers need to simply trust God as we are exhorted to, “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward” (Heb 10:35). Interestingly, Satan’s strategy from the beginning was to attack God’s Words by using one of his most potent weapons—doubt. God’s Word says that His revelation to man was preserved for all time, to each and every generation, and in every single Word. You cannot read the Bible objectively without recognising the immense importance the Lord has placed on His Words. Severe punishments are promised to punish anyone who adds to His Words including a promise to remove those who would take away from His Words, from the Book of Life! The Lord Jesus Christ placed the Scripture as our highest authority for faith and life. The Scriptures were the basis of Christ’s theological arguments. He used the very Words, or even parts of words, to make His points.

Problems for the SCCC

The SCCC are now clearly in total confusion on the issue of the ICCC resolutions and VPP. They appear to be stating what they hope the ICCC resolutions had said, rather than what they actually do say. The SCCC even had the *chutzpah* to claim in a logic-deficient statement on 27 October 2007 to believe,

that the constitutional position of the SCCC and the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) remains as our unalterable position, namely, that “Among other equally biblical truths, we believe and maintain the

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

plenary Divine inspiration of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the Word, of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life” (ICCC Constitution, Article 2a and SCCC Constitution, Article 4.1).²⁷

The obvious questions to be posed to the SCCC are that if they reject the VPP of all of the Words of God in the Textus Receptus as the complete perfect Word of God then: How can they prove the Bible is inspired? How can they prove it was once infallible in the autographs? How can they use an imperfect source as “the supreme and final authority in faith and life”? In reality, their statement is utterly meaningless.

The SCCC are trying to convince us that they believe that the Bible is inerrant and inspired, and yet the “inerrant” Bible disappeared shortly after it was inspired. One would suppose the SCCC would be raising funds to begin this immediate work of reconstructing the Bible from the Textus Receptus or the KJV they are confident has identifiable mistakes and in need of research to correct. The reality here is that the SCCC, the supposed bastion of Bible truth, are now boldly admitting that they do not believe God preserves His Words today, that their Bible has mistakes and that they do not know or care to correct these mistakes. Also, as “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17), how can the members of the SCCC “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3) if we do not have all of that faith? In light of 2 Peter 3:2 which says, “That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour” are we excused of this as we do not have all these Words? If a member of the SCCC does not have access to all the “Words of God” today, will God hold him accountable on the day of judgment for rejecting and not receiving them (John 12:48) and not keeping His commandments (Luke 16:10; Rev 22:14)?

The SCCC state that they believe the KJV “to have been faithfully translated from the God-preserved manuscripts of the Hebrew-language traditional Masoretic Text for the Old Testament and the Greek language accepted Textus Receptus for the New Testament.” The challenge for the SCCC is then to explain why we have mistakes and errors in the KJV’s underlying text if it has been “faithfully translated” from the manuscripts that God preserved. Are they going to use the same schizophrenic logic of LBPC who in one sentence say of the KJV’s underlying text that “We do

not ascribe perfection to it,” yet paradoxically maintain that “The KJV is a good, faithful and accurate translation and we have no doubt that we have the *very* Word of God, and it is *fully* reliable”?²⁸ If God has not preserved His Word perfectly, we must assume that we are preaching and teaching from a book that is not completely reliable as the “original” autographs are no longer accessible and there is wide and intense disagreement as to what “the originals” may or may not have said. What is the LBPC definition of “fully reliable”? As they say we equate the Word of God with reliability; do we now equate imperfection with reliability and the Word of God? If they had a bus schedule and were told that it is off in hundreds of places, would they call that reliable? LBPC by adopting this logic of unbelief has substituted a statement of faith for what is in reality a statement of unbelief!

Incredibly, LBPC have argued that they reject the perfection of the underlying KJV text yet when questioned as to demonstrate these mistakes/errors, that they are so confident with the SCCC that are there, piously argue, “there is no need for us to play textual critic to decide which edition is the ‘purest’ of all, or seek to improve the intangible Greek and Hebrew texts which underlie the KJV.”²⁹ In one breath LBPC and their counterparts in the SCCC hypocritically use their elected position to play the textual critic in destroying the textual foundation of the KJV and VPP, yet they do not have the courage to prove their allegations and even worse they have no scriptural foundation for making such outlandish claims! It is also sad to note that they do not feel the integrity of the text of Scripture as an issue worthy of any real investment in time. Another puerile argument LBPC use is that if VPP is correct, then we did not have the pure Word of God until 1611. *What they do not add is that they do not know where it was before 1611, or more importantly, where it is now!*

By these tactics, LBPC have altered the crucial doctrine of “preservation” to that of “restoration”—and most textual critics do not believe that such restoration is even any longer possible (as LBPC implicitly admits in refusing to play the “textual critic”). Textual critics agree such as Rendel Harris in 1908 who declared that the New Testament text was, “More than ever, and perhaps finally, unsettled.”³⁰ In 1910, Conybeare states that “the ultimate (New Testament) text, if there ever was one that deserves to be so called, is forever irrecoverable.”³¹ In 1941 Kirsopp Lake, after a lifetime spent in the study of the New

Testament text, argues, “In spite of the claims of Westcott and Hort and of von Soden, we do not know the original form of the Gospels, and it is quite likely that we never shall.”³²

LBPC are unfairly giving the impression that they know where all these Words of God are, but refuse to tell us where to find them. Logically, even the simplest mind knows that to categorically say there is something missing or added to the underlying text of the KJV must mean the person(s) making such a claim has an objective standard of truth, i.e. a perfect text to make such a bold accusation. However, on their website LBPC boast in their Doctrinal Positional Statement, “We believe in the divine, verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the Word of God, the Supreme and final authority in faith and life.”³³

So, if we take their words at face value it would seem that LBPC believe that there is inerrant and infallible “Scriptures” which they say is our “Supreme and final authority in faith and life.” Could they tell us where this perfect text “in the original languages” is? The reality is that LBPC are posturing a textual position that does not exist, and they knew it did not exist when they said it. The irony in this is that they and the SCCC have the audacity to accuse FEBC of holding a false premise on which to base their conclusions. FEBC, who believe God meant what He said about preserving His Words, are repeatedly slandered as being ignorant fanatics and heretics, while those who deny we have the infallible, inerrant Words of God today are looked upon as great scholars! Paradoxically, LBPC are arguing that the fact that they do not know what the Words of God are or where they are at is actually the safe, edifying, and less dangerous position for their members!

The SCCC and LBPC view of Preservation is like saying God’s Words are preserved in the Oxford English Dictionary—“they are in there somewhere, all mixed up with thousands that are not right and all out of order and we don’t know how to find them, but they are still ‘preserved’ somewhere in there.” It is only but fair for these anti-VPP critics to accept that if the Bible contains any other words than those inspired by the Holy Spirit then what a man holds in his hands is a compilation of God’s Words and man’s words. As they will not point us to any particular text as having all of the Words of God, their target is constantly changing, and is therefore chameleonic. If their theory of preservation is correct a believer would have to have every manuscript and every version of the

Bible to have the “*collective*” Word of God, yet he would still be hopelessly confused about which words were the true Word of God due to the magnitude of the words he had to collect. *Preservation presupposes possession*, for without possession it is not a reality but merely a theory, a hypothesis lacking documentary evidence. These anti-VPP critics seemingly wants to have their cake and eat it too, claiming on one hand God has preserved His Words, but not wanting to produce it in any extant or tangible form.

Another leading supporter of this new SCCC view, Calvary Jurong Bible-Presbyterian Church (CJBPC) has sadly become a victim of the same semantic gymnastics. They argue in a definitive document,³⁴ citing the SCCC as support, without seeing the inherent contradiction, that the KJV translators, “have done a wonderful job in producing for us *the Word of God in its entirety*, the KJV, which is the closest to the original.” Logically speaking, since we do not have the “original” this statement of faith simply confirms a belief that they do not know to what extent the Scriptures that we have are the Word of God since it is impossible for them to see how closely they represent the original. CJBPC with this non sequitur never explain how we have all the “entire” Word of God yet argue in the same document that, “the Hebrew and Greek texts underlying the KJV are perfect has no specific scriptural support” and “there are at least some textual details in regard to which we must be content to remain uncertain.” CJBPC does not use a single verse of Scripture to prove this theory that we cannot have certainty as to the Words of God. The obvious reason is because the Bible does not teach this! God promises in Proverbs 1:23 the exact opposite, “I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.” By their own clever rationalising words, CJBPC have “logically” reasoned themselves into unbelief.

Incredibly, CJBPC after denying we have all of the Words of God preserved perfectly for us today (as the ICCC and WCF teach in respect of Matt 24:35) then state, “We want to assure our members that we can trust our English KJV because all the doctrines, miracles, prophecies, facts of history, geography and science are accurate; and all the promises of God given to men are reliable and trustworthy.”

Realising the problems of the WCF statements, CJBPC try a novel way of getting round the problem by arguing “in declaring that the Old

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek were ‘kept pure in all ages,’ these confessional statements noticeably do not here use the word ‘perfect.’” This is a most dangerous and puerile argument and casts doubt on the inerrancy and inspiration of the originals. If CJBPC is correct, then the WCF is teaching that God preserved His words “pure in all ages” but in doing this keeping He was not “perfect.” CJBPC should not separate the two as both inspiration and preservation are linked to the Work of God alone and in the same clause in the WCF.

This line of reasoning by CJBPC is an example of blatant bi-textualism that cannot possibly be true and must be rejected by true fundamentalists. They have clearly not grasped the logical problem of the Law of Non-Contradiction that if two statements claim two different things, both cannot be correct. However, both can be wrong but both cannot be right. Jesus promised His Words would not pass away and yet they accept dozens of His Words are still missing or we are not sure about. What they are really saying is that, whilst the words originally written down by the prophets and apostles were free from error and inspired, the Bible we have in our hands today has errors in it and so cannot be relied on completely. Now there are two possibilities and only two. One possibility is that all English versions are in error at least in part, or there really is a Bible we can get our hands on that literally fulfils the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:35. If there are errors in *all* texts and versions then we have no objective foundation. Logic dictates that two opposing statements cannot both be true (unless you accept the Hegelian Dialectic). Has the promise of Christ made about two thousand years ago stood the test of time? God is not a liar but the God of truth (John 14:6).

CJBPC concludes by piously challenging, “If the TR underlying the KJV is perfect, God will show us clearly and the Holy Spirit will guide us to this so-called truth, but this is not the case.” The fact is that the Holy Spirit has done this by establishing all the Words of God in a printed edition for almost 400 years and CJBPC have publicly for its entire history endorsed this view by preaching exclusively from those Words. Notwithstanding, the inconsistency of this challenge can also be seen in that CJBPC state in this document that they believe the Holy Spirit can lead them to a perfect text, yet since their founding in 1970 they impliedly admit they have failed to seek this. Do they really believe the Holy Spirit can do this or are they implying that the Third Person in

the Trinity is imperfect? Also, if there are truly “textual details” that they say are “uncertain” why do they not pray to be led to this, “all truth”?

CJBPC need to honestly tell us where in the Bible does it say that we should wholly trust a Bible that sometimes is accurate but at other times is in error? They refuse to follow the illustrious writers of the WCF who clearly believed a text identical to the original manuscripts was accessible to them. They differ from Abraham, who “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God” (Rom 4:20). Instead, they resemble Thomas who cried, “Except I shall see ..., I will not believe” (John 20:25). It is my contention that when CJBPC believe that they can get through this age without “an absolutely infallible text” then, as one wise author wrote, “Satan is just around the corner!” Genesis 3:4 provides a great example as the devil only added one word, yet what a change it had on the “original,” and what a huge impact that one word had on the destiny of man! Founding leader of the Bible-Presbyterian Church in Singapore and Senior Pastor of the Calvary churches, Dr S H Tow presciently warns as to the inevitable consequences of rejecting VPP, “Mark these words: The present attack on the VPP will lead ultimately to a denial and betrayal of the King James Bible.”³⁵ The Bible itself warns that a little error counts a great deal despite CJBPC’s indifference as, “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (1 Cor 5:6).

Conclusion

Fundamentalism is collapsing today from its historic position as a defender of the inspiration, inerrancy and preservation of the Bible. Parallel with its collapse has been the diminishing of its respect for Scriptures and Preservation. As Floyd Nolen Jones observes,

The current vogue in conservative, fundamentalist scholarship will come as a great surprise to the layman. Today, most conservative Protestant clergymen have been brainwashed as mere youths in their late teens or early twenties at the various denominational Bible colleges and seminaries concerning the doctrine of inerrancy of Scripture. As a result, when most of these pastors etc., declare that they believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration and/or inerrancy (or some other similar declaration of faith in the Scriptures) what they really mean is that only the original autographa were inerrant.

Now this is devastating, as we have no originals preserved for our use. But the situation is even worse than that, for neither do the vast majority of

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

these men believe that the text contained in the original autographs has been preserved intact. That is, they have been taught as very young men that for hundreds of years many original readings have been lost to the Church. They have also been taught, hence most subscribe to the teaching, that these lost readings are in the process (and have been so for the past one hundred years) of being *restored* back to their pristine original forms by the use of modern textual criticism techniques and methods. Thus, if we were to ask one of the scholars representing this school of thought whether he could show us the “infallible Word of the Living God,” he would take us to his private study—wave his hand toward between 800-1200 books on his library shelves and reply that somewhere contained within all those volumes exists the Word of God. He would inform us that the problem was very complex, but all was well as he and other brilliant scholars were working on putting the puzzle back together. Besides, he would assure us, no major doctrinal issues are in doubt in the meantime.

If we pressed these men further to better define their position, we would discover that very few believe that there exists on the earth today between two covers such that it could be held in the hand—the Bible. That is—in their view, is that which they hold in their hand having the words “Holy Bible” inscribed thereon and read from the pulpit to their flocks, the inerrant Word of God? If they were honest, regardless of the version to which they personally subscribe, the answer would be “NO”!³⁶

We should not be surprised at this attack on the Words of God as Scripture warns us that God’s true remnant people will be caught out with the end-time deception (Matt 24:24) and there will be a famine amongst some for the words of God, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it” (Amos 8:11-12). A major lie of the devil is that there is no final Bible, which will lead many into profound despair and bondage as they are “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim 3:7-9).

Despite the claims of the anti-VPP critics such as the SCCC, we have no historical record of Christians not believing the doctrine of perfect preservation until the 19th century. Nowhere in any formalised Confession of Faith regarding the Holy Bible will you ever see such common phrases as used by the anti-Preservationists of today like “only in the originals” or “only in the autographs.” This is a new view which appeared at the end of the 19th century from the influence of the apostate

roots of higher criticism. Many reputed fundamentalists like the author of the Beacon Article, Philip Tang, are now openly admitting that they believe there is no scriptural basis for believing God would preserve all of His Words for us today. This is a new view in Fundamentalist circles and has been popularised by leading Neo-Evangelical Dallas Theological Seminary professor, Daniel B Wallace. A prominent anti-KJV writer, William Combs, professor at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, admits the novelty of this new position,

In an article entitled “Inspiration, Preservation, and New Testament Textual Criticism,” by Daniel B. Wallace, we find what is apparently the first definitive, systematic denial of a doctrine of preservation of Scripture. He has been joined in his view by W. Edward Glenny. ... The position of Wallace and Glenny appears to be a rather novel one. ... They have eliminated any vestige of the preservation of Scripture as a doctrine.³⁷

Even some of the most trenchant critics of the *Textus Receptus* have accepted the historical fact of the VPP view as equated with that of historical orthodoxy. Kurt Aland the principal editor of the Nestle-Aland edition of *Novum Testamentum Graece* writes,

Finally it is undisputed that from the 16th to the 18th century orthodoxy’s doctrine of verbal inspiration assumed this *Textus Receptus*. It was the only Greek text they knew, and they regarded it as the “original text.”³⁸

Another critic, Merrill M Parvis states, “The *Textus Receptus* is not the ‘true’ text of the New Testament,” but concedes,

It [the TR] was the Scripture of many centuries of the Church’s life. ... The *Textus Receptus* is the text of the Church. It is that form of text which represents the sum total and the end product of all the textual decisions which were made by the Church and her Fathers over a period of more than a thousand years.³⁹

Another, E C Colwell has admitted that those who are committed to the absolute authority of preservation will ultimately reject textual criticism,

It is often assumed by the ignorant and uninformed—even on a university campus—that textual criticism of the New Testament is supported by a superstitious faith in the Bible as a book dictated in miraculous fashion by God. That is not true. Textual criticism has never existed for those whose New Testament is one of miracle, mystery, and authority. A New Testament created under those auspices would have been handed down under them and would have no need of textual criticism.⁴⁰

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

The SCCC may wish the ICCC resolutions had never been passed and they are at liberty to disagree with them. However, it is surely unethical and unbiblical to simply wrench the statements out of context and retreat behind new formulations such as “continuing, general, but not plenary preservation” without explaining the conclusions of it. Their novel position is basically no position, but an attack on VPP without stating a position that comes from Scripture. Like the textual critics of the mid 19th century, they have simply denied the historic doctrine of preservation. The SCCC should heed the warnings of Richard Capel, one of the Westminster divines, in undermining the preservation of Scripture when he wrote in 1658:

And to the like purpose is that observation, that the two Tables written immediately by Moses and the Prophets, and the Greek Copies immediately penned by the Apostles, and Apostolical men are all lost, or not to be made use of, except by a very few. And that we have none in Hebrew or Greek, but what are transcribed. Now transcribers are ordinary men, subject to mistake, may faile, having no unerring spirit to hold their hands in writing.

Referring to these types of statements, Capel immediately writes:

These be terrible blasts, and do little else when they meet with a weak head and heart, but open the doore to Atheisme and quite to fling off the bridle, which onely can hold them and us in the wayes of truth and piety: this is to fill the conceits of men with evil thoughts against the Purity of the Originals: And if the Fountains run not clear, the Translation cannot be clean.⁴¹

Another of the original members of the Westminster assembly, John Lightfoot, writes, “The same power and care of God, that preserves the church would preserve the Scriptures pure to it: and He that did, and could, preserve the whole could preserve every part, so that not so much as a tittle should perish.”⁴²

The SCCC clearly are embarrassed by the previous strongly KJVO stance of the ICCC and are using all kinds of rhetorical muddle and verbal gymnastics to confuse the gullible. The SCCC are left with a Bible with errors in it; a position that I am confident that the majority of their members in the pew of their churches do not accept or have not historically accepted. One unfortunate consequence of this type of reasoning has opened the door to Islamic scholars and higher critics to undermine the Bible. Leading Islamic apologist, Ahmed Deedat uses this very line of reasoning,

The question before us is: “Do you accept that the Bible is God’s Word?” The question is really in the form of a challenge. The questioner is not simply seeking enlightenment. The question is posed in the spirit of a debate. We have every right to demand in a similar vein—“Which Bible are you talking about?”, we may ask. “Why, there is only ONE Bible!” he mutters.

But what about the Authorised Version of the Bible (AV), the ‘World’s Best Seller?’ These Revisers, all good salesmen, have some very pretty things to say about it. However, their page iii, paragraph six of the PREFACE of the RSV reads;

“THE KING JAMES VERSION (alternative description of AV) HAS WITH GOOD REASON BEEN TERMED ‘**THE NOBLEST MONUMENT OF ENGLISH PROSE.**’ ITS REVISERS IN 1881 EXPRESSED ADMIRATION FOR ‘**ITS SIMPLICITY, ITS DIGNITY, ITS POWER, ITS HAPPY TURNS OF EXPRESSION ... THE MUSIC OF ITS CADENCES, AND THE FELICITIES OF ITS RHYTHM.**’ IT ENTERED, AS NO OTHER BOOK HAS, INTO THE MAKING OF THE PERSONAL CHARACTER AND THE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLES. WE OWE TO IT AN INCALCULABLE DEBT.”

Can you, dear reader, imagine a more magnificent tribute being paid to the “Book of Books” than the above? I, for one, cannot. Let the believing Christian, now steel himself for the un kindest blow of all from his own beloved Lawyers of Religion; for in the very same breath they say:

“yet the King James Version has grave defects.” And, “that these defects are so many and so serious as to call for revision.” This is straight from the horse’s mouth, i.e. the orthodox Christian scholars of “the highest eminence.” Another galaxy of Doctors of Divinity are now required to produce an encyclopaedia explaining the cause of those GRAVE AND SERIOUS DEFECTS in their Holy Writ and their reasons for eliminating them.⁴³

Other groups such as the Jehovah Witnesses have also used the same reasoning to undermine the credibility of the King James Version of the Bible,

Recently a young man purchased a King James Version Bible thinking it was without error. One day when glancing through a back issue of Look magazine he came across an article entitled “The Truth About the Bible,” which said that “as early as 1720, an English authority estimated that there were at least 20,000 errors in the two editions of the New Testament commonly read by Protestants and Catholics. Modern students say there are

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

probably 50,000 errors.” The young man was shocked. His faith in the Bible’s authenticity was shaken. “How can the Bible be reliable when it contains thousands of serious discrepancies and inaccuracies?” he asks.⁴⁴

A leading Roman Catholic apologist also attacks,

The reason this is so intriguing should be obvious, one of the two pillars of Protestantism is “scripture alone” yet these two bibles do not agree. If two bibles disagree, which one is wrong, are both wrong? Both claim that you cannot add to or take from the word of the Lord, yet they differ. Why? Which one is right? How much do they differ? Does it affect doctrine? Who changed it? Some of the verses are total opposites, other verses are simply not saying the same thing.⁴⁵

One of the leading anti-VPP books being promoted by SCCC members is *One Bible Only?* from Central Baptist Theological Seminary which states “the doctrine of preservation was not a doctrine of the ancient church,” and “we might have lost a few words through negligence,” and “not only is Scripture without a verse to explain how God will preserve His Word, but no statement in Scripture teaches that God did preserve perfectly the original text of Scripture.”⁴⁶ These men who deny the preservation of all of God’s Words for us today because of “history” or “textual science” and textual “uncertainties” need to be told, “Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?” (Mark 12:24). A stark warning of the dangers of compromising on the doctrine of preservation is the fact that two of the authors of this book, Edward Glenny and Larry Pettegrew, have subsequently both rejected Fundamentalism completely and now teach at openly Neo-evangelical seminaries.⁴⁷

It is well documented that the vast majority of seminarians and pastors no longer believe in the inerrancy of Scripture. Even in Fundamentalism, in a recent survey of young fundamentalists’ beliefs only 83% of the responders agreed with the statement that “the Bible is the inspired Word of God, not mistaken in its statements and teachings, and is to be taken literally, word for word.” As David Cloud observed, “More than 90% of the responders are graduates of schools that have taken a clear stand against the defense of the KJV, with the largest representation (a full 79% of the total) from Bob Jones University (29%), Maranatha Baptist Bible College (22%), Northland Baptist Bible College (21%), Piedmont Baptist College (4%), and Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary (3%).”⁴⁸ The consequence of this falling away in the pulpit is

that fewer and fewer professing Christians believe in the inerrancy of Scripture every day. This anti-VPP presupposition also affected Princeton graduate and famed textual critic, Bart Ehrman, to the point that he now confesses to being an agnostic. He pertinently observed how the problem of a Bible with errors in it affected him in a recent book *Misquoting Jesus*,

If one wants to insist that God inspired the very words of scripture, what would be the point if we don't have the very words of scripture? ... It's a bit hard to know what the words of the Bible mean if we don't even know what the words are!

This became a problem for my view of inspiration, for I came to realize that it would have been no more difficult for God to preserve the words of scripture than it would have been for him to inspire them in the first place. If he wanted his people to have his words, surely he would have given to them (and possibly even given them the words in a language they could understand, rather than Greek and Hebrew). The fact that we don't have the words surely must show, I reasoned, that he did not preserve them for us. And if he didn't perform that miracle, there seemed to be no reason to think that he performed the earlier miracle of inspiring those words.⁴⁹

One Neo-evangelical writer, Mark Roberts, accepts that we cannot have all of the Words today but tries to make a virtue out of Ehrman's difficulties,

The question Ehrman should have asked was: What does it tell us about God that He inspired the writers of Scripture but did not perfectly preserve what they wrote down? The answer, I think, is that God was looking for something beyond making sure we always had His actual words. God's primary purpose in inspiring the writers of Scripture was not so that people would have His words, but so that they would be drawn into a truthful relationship with Him. The words matter, to be sure, but only as a vehicle for a relationship of faith with the living God. Some modest uncertainty about the words might, it seems, cause one to lean more upon God and less upon the words themselves.⁵⁰

However despite the attempts of obfuscation by the SCCC and their erstwhile allies in Singapore, we believe that God has preserved all of His Words available for us today as the TBS rightly stated, "the Church *is*—and always has been—in possession of the true text of Scripture." It would be surely inconsistent if God had guided His people in regard to the New Testament canon but had withheld from them His divine assistance in the matter of the New Testament text. God promised to

preserve the very Words and Letters of the original manuscripts. He did not promise to preserve ink and paper. There is no biblical warrant for the concept that only the autographs can be true and pure Scripture. Are we to believe that God has preserved the canon of the Bible but not the text? If we are not settled on what the Words of God are on earth, will we ever be settled? If we are not settled on the Words, what is the scriptural basis to be settled on the Books? We do know that other sound orthodox books existed that are mentioned in the Old and New Testament. Where are they? Is it possible that we are not including books that should be there? Why not? So anti-VPP critics are arguing for canonised books (based on words) but not canonised words.

The factual reality is that the present-day copies of the “inspired originals” are the only evidence available to support the inspiration of those originals. A liberal theologian cleverly pointed out the implication of anti-VPP in his review of Harold Lindsell’s *The Battle for the Bible* when he argues that the only real difference between the conservative anti-VPP and liberal positions on the Bible is that the conservatives say the Bible *used to be inspired and inerrant*, whereas the liberal says it *was never inspired or inerrant*. However both positions are in agreement that the Bible is *not now inspired or inerrant*. A leading Neo-evangelical author, Tim Challies, is at least honest as to where rejecting VPP leads,

It is critical to note that, strictly speaking, inerrancy does not apply to the transmission of Scripture through the ages and its translation into other languages. We affirm that only the original autographs, or original manuscripts, are inerrant. What we enjoy today is very good translations of very accurate reconstructions of the biblical text. We do not have any of the original documents—none of Paul’s original letters and none of the actual gospels written by the hands of the Apostles have survived. Yet through the science of textual criticism we have very accurate reconstructions of those texts and through translators we have excellent translations of them. So while we do not affirm inerrancy for any particular English translation of Scripture, we do have great confidence in the best translations available to us.⁵¹

When challenged to prove inspiration the anti-VPPers usually cite 2 Timothy 3:16 (“All scripture is given by inspiration of God ...”), but this passage says nothing about the “original autographs,” it refers to “scripture.” 2 Timothy 3:15 gives us the interpretation of this word “scripture” as it tells us that Timothy “from a child hast known the holy scriptures.” No anti-VPPER would argue that Timothy (or Paul, the

Bereans, or even Christ) was in possession of the autographs, yet Paul calls the copies they possessed, “scripture” and that it was “all” inspired. It is inconceivable that in the middle of an exhortation to cling to his copies that Paul would suddenly change topic and start talking about the originals. Clearly, Paul was not an anti-VPP critic who argued that inspiration and preservation were in the “autographs only.” The context of these words is showing that God’s Words are not lost waiting to be found and *restored* to the believing remnant of the Church. These inspired Words were given by God as a deposit to the Body of Christ “that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” Therefore, for God to realise His stated purpose—it must remain accessible to His remnant! The giving of these Words to the world is by the Church (Matt 28:19-20), and this surely means that the Church must have the Words to begin with. If God cannot preserve His Words as well as He inspired them, He is not omnipotent after all. Did Christ ask the Pharisees to search an impure errant copy in John 5? Were the Bereans searching imperfect Scriptures in Acts 17? Did Philip tell the Ethiopian that his copy in Acts 8 had translation errors?

Dr Thomas Strouse gives an excellent summary of why we can be so confident of the perfect preservation of God’s Words,

For instance Christ reiterated the OT command of Dt. 8:3 by stating,

“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mt. 4:4).

The expression “every word” translates *panti remati*, and it specifically refers to each and every word. Where are these very words by which man is to live? Again, Christ implied the preservation of His very words as a standard of future judgment by stating,

“The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (Jn. 12:48).

The expression “the word” translates *ho logos* and it refers to the totality of Christ’s words (cf.v.47). Where is the totality of Christ’s words by which man will be judged some day? Based on verses such as these, the Christian has a Biblical warrant for expecting to have all of the words of Christ. These passages demand faith in the Lord’s providential preservation of His inspired *autographa*. The clearest passage on Christ’s providential preservation of Scripture and man’s responsibility in receiving it is John 17:8,

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.”

This passage teaches that Christ’s responsibility before the Father is to give His believers the Father’s words.⁵²

Dr Kent Brandenburg also summarises,

Isaac was the seed of promise and Ishmael of human effort. Hagar was doubt and works, and Sarai was faith and trust. The just live by faith. The baby Isaac came by a miracle of God’s providence, the Lord working out the details based upon faith in Him. In this Abraham and Sarah found approval from God. Textual criticism stands in man’s efforts. Man will give his approval (schools, circles, camps, human scholarship, etc.). Receiving the text handed down through the churches stands by faith in the grace of God.

God’s Word says that God will preserve His Word, every and all (Psalm 12:6, 7; Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:23-25; Matthew 5:18; 24:35). I believe God would preserve every One of His Words.

Scripture says that God would make His Words available to every generation of believer (Isaiah 59:21; Matthew 4:4). I believe God would make His Words generally accessible to every generation of saints.

The Bible says that God’s Word is perfect and pure (Psalm 12:6, 7; Proverbs 30:4, 5). I believe that God’s Word is perfect and pure.

God’s Word says that the Bible will be settled to the extent that someone could not add or take away from His Words (Revelation 22:18, 19; Deuteronomy 12:32). I believe that God’s Word would be settled.

The Bible says that God would lead His saints into all truth, that the Word, all of His Words, are truth (John 16:13; 17:8, 17). I believe that God would lead His children to every one of His Words.

When we see what God has taught about His Words and the preservation of them, we choose to believe what He said, despite tangible evidence. Individual hand-copies had errors. God said that men would change the Words of Scripture. He warned of it. We see that this is the strategy of Satan, to amend the Words of God. However, God promised and so we believe that He overcame the work of Satan and preserved His Words so that we would have a settled text that is perfect in fulfillment of His promises. The *textus receptus* of the NT and the Hebrew Masoretic of the OT are the only texts that could have been preserved and available. They are the only texts that believers will claim perfection.

I wasn’t there when God created the world. I believe it anyway. I wasn’t there when God inspired His Word. I believe it anyway. I wasn’t there when

Jesus died on the cross. I believe it anyway. I wasn't there when God preserved His Words. I believe it anyway. God will be pleased with your reception of the Words He preserved.⁵³

VPP advocates readily admit that we do not have all the answers as to how God preserved His Words in every generation. The truth is we do not have the original manuscripts, the first copies of the original manuscripts, and even many of the actual copies from which the KJV translators worked. The best that most textual historians can do today is essentially to speculate on what is the history of the transmission of the text. We cannot prove everything that we believe historically happened with tangible evidence, but enough to satisfy someone who is willing to believe Scripture. After all none of us have seen creation, a worldwide flood or the ark, but we accept the Genesis account of this. We simply cannot assert that this God has revealed Himself in the pages of a book without at the same time implying that such a revelation is necessary to us. As David Cloud explains,

Those who reject the doctrine of preservation mock us because we cannot answer all their questions. Let them mock. We have God's promise on these things. We have an infallible Bible we can hold in our hands. They have one in theory only in the nonexistent original autographs. In my estimation, they have far more problems with that position than I do with mine. What do we care if some think we are foolish or unlearned? Was that not the charge brought against the first Christians by their proud detractors? Dear friends, believe God and do not allow any man to shake your confidence in His perfect, preserved Word...the late Bruce Lackey, a Bible-believing scholar who studied the Greek New Testament every day but who never taught his students to question the Received Text or the King James Bible: "Faith which is based on a clear promise is stronger than objections which are raised by our lack of information. Since God has promised to preserve His Word for all generations, and since the Hebrew and Greek which is represented by the King James Version is the Bible that has been received from ancient tradition, and since God has so singularly used the truth preached from this Bible, I must follow it and reject others where they differ."⁵⁴

Pastor of Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church, Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew, also rejects any undermining of the biblical presupposition on preservation,

To argue that one must know the process first before one can believe that the Word of God is perfectly preserved is very dangerous. This line of

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

argument is based upon modernistic rationalism where man's reason is supreme. If man cannot understand or explain it, then it cannot be true. Man can never understand the process of inspiration, yet it is true because God says that it is true. The final product is not the words of man but the very Word of God. Faith is to believe in what God says, period. There is no necessity to know the process first before believing.⁵⁵

Rev Dr Ian Paisley, Joint Chairman of the World Congress of Fundamentalists and Founder of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster, shows the necessity of believing in preservation and inspiration,

There is no such thing as verbal Revelation without verbal Inspiration and there is no such thing as verbal Inspiration without verbal Preservation. In all cases it is not partial but plenary i.e. full, complete, perfect.

The Divine Revelation, put into writing the verbally Infallible Scriptures though Divine Inspiration, must have Divine Preservation in order to be available to all generations... If there is no preserved Word of God today then the work of Divine Revelation and Divine Inspiration has perished.⁵⁶

The most damning thing in all of this is that when we read the confusing and bewildering statements issued by the SCCC, the Beacon Article and their supporters in Singapore is that nowhere do they posit a positive biblical statement on preservation. This position is ideal for arguing a straw man in misrepresenting VPP and posing inane questions such as: Where does it say God would preserve His Words in the texts of the KJV? The irony is that they themselves have no Scripture to argue that God said He would preserve it as a "work in progress" in many texts and manuscripts in a way that in 2008 we are confused, uncertain and constantly changing our minds as to the true text. They spend their time disingenuously arguing how much they disagree with VPP and criticising its foundations. However, they can only say what they are against but they have no developed biblical framework for their source of authority. If one side has clearly stated scriptural presuppositions and the other does not, save for attacking the former, that surely is suggestive. This is a dangerous approach for as Dr Martin Lloyd Jones warns, "We do not debate the truth, we declare it."

Despite copious writings and resolutions, the sad reality of the position they vehemently argue for results in a Bible text that at best can only be a never-ending work of approximation as we do not have the originals with which to make a comparison. However few the discrepancies they claim are there, we are still left with a Bible that is in

part the work of man and so is uncertain and not entirely reliable. It certainly makes redundant the test, “to the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). However, from the very beginning God revealed His thoughts speaking to Adam in words. Today, God continues to speak to us in Words. God has determined what His Words are, and is man to now do his best to logically guess what they might be? Indeed, the very acknowledgement of a Bible is an admission of God’s purpose in preserving His Words for man to live by.

The SCCC claims to believe what the Bible says about its own inspiration, but virtually ignores the equally direct statements concerning preservation of these same inspired Words. We are kept by the power of God, holy men of God wrote under the power of God, and Scripture is preserved by the power of God. We should simply just receive all three by faith. Without this perfect text we have no authoritative Words—on anything! We say with C H Spurgeon,

We will never attempt to save half the truth by casting any part of it away. The sage advice which has been given us involved treason to God, and disappointment to ourselves. We will stand by all or none. We will have the whole Bible or no Bible. We are told that if we give up something the adversaries will also give up something; but we care not what they will do, for we are not the least afraid of them. ... We shall with the sword of the Spirit maintain the whole truth as ours, and shall not accept a part of it as a grant from the enemies of God. ... God being with us we shall not cease from this glorying, but will hold the whole of revealed truth, even to the end.⁵⁷

Let us determine to believe what God said He would do, “For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor 13:8).

Annexure One: The ICCC Amsterdam Resolution on the Bible (1998)

WHEREAS despite the fact that there are over 150 so-called “versions” of the Bible extant around the world today, there have been no new discoveries of ancient texts to legitimize this plethora of modern “versions” pouring off the presses and being sold as the “latest” Bible, and

WHEREAS a single exception to this has been the discovery of the now-famous Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1940’s in caves on the Judean

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

mountain range and contained in clay jars with the texts written on leather and papyrus, and

WHEREAS fragments of all the books of the Hebrew Bible (except Esther) confirm almost to the letter the accuracy of the Authorized King James Version of the Old Testament, and

WHEREAS most of the modern versions are based upon the discredited and perverted Westcott and Hort transcription and not on the Textus Receptus (The Received Text) attested to by scholars for over 300 years, from which the Authorized King James Version was translated by the greatest theologians and textual critics of 17th Century England, who were academic experts, indeed, in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, and

WHEREAS self-styled theologians who reject the inerrancy and inspiration of the Scriptures have gone so far as to make a looseleaf notebook and tear out those passages they do not accept, even organizing what they designate as “Jesus Seminars” across the United States in which they declare that Jesus never did and said the things recorded in the four Gospels; and that the Gospel of John is the worst and is 90 percent fiction, and the obedient secular press quotes them from coast-to-coast, and

WHEREAS this same KING JAMES VERSION has been used around the world by an overwhelming majority of Christian Clergymen, Evangelists, Bible Teachers, Missionaries and Youth Leaders to bring millions of people to have a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ for more than three centuries,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the International Council of Christian Churches, assembled in the historic English Reformed Church in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, observing its 50th Anniversary, August 11-15, 1998, urge all Bible-believing churches worldwide to use only the Authorized KING JAMES VERSION in their services and in their teaching ministry, and warn the followers of Christ against these innumerable “new” bibles which are not translations at all, but revisions conforming to the personal bias and views of those who have originated them and who are profiting by commercial sales of such.

Annexure Two: The ICCC Jerusalem Statement on the Holy Scriptures and the Bible Translations (2000)

BELIEVING the Holy Scriptures of the originals to be fully inspired with its words and genders and being complete as God's revelation to man without error;

BELIEVING that God not only inspired the Bible without errors in fact, doctrine and judgment but preserved the Scriptures in all ages for all eternity as the Westminster Confession of Faith standard says—"the O.T. in Hebrew and the N.T. in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages are therefore kept authentical.... they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come,"

BELIEVING the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, gave us a supernatural gift, and both inspired and preserved it. By inspired we mean that the Holy Spirit moved in the hearts of its human authors that they recorded the very words that God wanted written in the Bible using the personality and background of its writers but without error. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." II Peter 1:21.

BELIEVING God safeguarded the Bible in times past and will continue to do so in the future and all eternity. He preserved one Holy Scripture, the Bible. "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away;" Matthew 24:35.

BELIEVING the O.T. has been preserved in the Masoretic text and the N.T. in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the complete Word of God. The King James Version in English has been faithfully translated from these God-preserved manuscripts. Other good Protestants versions have been translated around the world in many languages based on the Masoretic and Textus Receptus until 1881 when Drs. Westcott and Hort used a shorter text removing many words, phrases and sections by following the eclectic watered down polluted Vaticanus and Siniaticus manuscripts; These manuscripts differ widely among themselves and with others amount to less than 5% of the manuscript evidence. God preserved the Textus Receptus in the majority text with 95%. This is called the traditional, or majority text. It is also called Eastern Byzantine text and also the manuscripts that have the longer and fuller texts;

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

BELIEVING that these longer texts are corroborated by the early century versions from the Greek that were closer in the time of the original Greek manuscripts that have been lost usage in the providence of God. Some of these are the Armenian, Old Latin, the Siriac Pershita and the Latin Vulgate; these date much before or close to the Vaticanus short version and Siniaticus; Believing the letters that the early church fathers wrote to the churches and to their colleagues corroborate that the 1000's of quotes from the Scriptures they used, are from the traditional longer texts of the Textus Receptus;

BELIEVING the manuscript evidence is on the side of Textus Receptus and with the many new books that explained this better than in times past and give more documentary manuscript evidence, We the International Council of Christian Churches meeting in Jerusalem, 8-14 November 2000 strongly urge the churches in their pulpits and people at large, to continue to use the time honored and faithful longer translations and not the new shorter versions that follow in too many places the short eclectic-texts. These are very similar to the shorter Westcott and Hort texts that remove or cast doubt on so many passages and words. Furthermore we are not against new versions as such but believe all true and faithful versions must be based on the traditional longer texts that the Holy Spirit preserved through the early century versions, the early church fathers and the faithful Textus Receptus.

Notes

¹ The Beacon Article says, "The Bible Resolution appears to be ignorant of the fact that God made use of the Westcott & Hort based Chinese Bible (和合本) in bringing many millions of Chinese Christians to Christ through great evangelists like Wang Ming Dao (王明道), John Sung Shang Chieh (宋尚节) and many others." However, the Beacon Authors do not tell us do they believe God has preserved more of His Words in the text underlying the CUV or the KJV. That is the critical issue.

² Ironically, Joshua Lim decries his ability to give theological and doctrinal analyses in another article which he styles as "An Open Letter to the redeemed of the Lamb of God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ" in which he protests, "I am no theologian and I do not wish to delve with the VPP issue." <http://valiantfortruth.tripod.com/elderappeal.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008. Philip Tang in his own limited description in the Beacon Article does not appear to be any more qualified to speak definitively on theology as his sole qualifications are that he has been a member of the Bible-Presbyterian Church since 1971.

³ Jeffrey Khoo, “Kicking Against the Pricks: The SCCC contradicts the ICCC on VPP,” *The Burning Bush* 14 (2008):71.

⁴ Bob Jones University, “Position of the Bible Department of Bob Jones University on the Scripture (mimeograph).” Office of the President, no date. Printed in Daniel L Turner, *Standing Without Apology: The History of Bob Jones University* (Greenville: Bob Jones University Press, 1997) Appendix D, 322-3.

⁵ Edward M Panosian, “What Is the Inspired Word of God?” *Faith for the Family* (February 1979): 3.

⁶ Samuel Schnaiter, *Relevancy of Textual Criticism*, cited at <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/preservationis.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁷ Samuel Schnaiter and Ron Tagliapietra, *Bible Preservation and the Providence of God* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2002), 25-6.

⁸ “A Forgotten Reformation” at <http://www.gracebpc.org.sg/weekly/Oct2008/1210/gwb.htm>, accessed on 15 October 2008.

⁹ See <http://www.vannoylib.libri.org/OTProphets/hm/doc003.html>, accessed on 13 October 2008.

¹⁰ The Rev Colin Wong stated in his message, “Did God Write Only One Bible?” at Life Bible-Presbyterian Church on 28 October 2007, “Since the translation of the KJV or the Authorized Version of 1611 there has been more concrete manuscript evidence that is available today, which is far superior to that which was available to the King James Version translators in 1611.”

¹¹ Trinitarian Bible Society, “Statement of Faith of Holy Scripture,” Note 3, page 6, <http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org/site/statement.pdf>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

¹² Philip Tang, “The New Pharisees,” <http://www.truth.sg/response/TheNewPharisees1.pdf>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

¹³ Ironically, Philip Tang previously sought to accuse FEBC of doing what in effect he is guilty of when he argues that “FEBC has rejected the reformed position that revelation and miraculous gifts have ceased with the close of the apostolic age.... By so doing they are advocating post-canonical inspiration and progressive revelation” cited from Philip Tang, “VPP: Truth or Lies?,” <http://www.truth.sg/response/vpplies.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

¹⁴ Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, “Our Stand on the Preservation of Scriptures,” <http://www.lifefebc.com/ourstand/godlypath.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

¹⁵ Kent Brandenburg, “Criticizing Professor Wallace: Part Three,” <http://www.kentbrandenburg.blogspot.com>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

¹⁶ David H Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing: The Text Issue and Separation* (Duluth: Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2001), 53.

¹⁷ Tang, “The New Pharisees.”

¹⁸ Tang, “The New Pharisees.”

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

¹⁹ “Re-affirming SCCC Stand on the Word of God,” *Far Eastern Beacon* 39 (Easter 2008): 4.

²⁰ Trinitarian Bible Society, “Statement of Faith of Holy Scripture,” Word List.

²¹ Floyd Nolen Jones, *Which Version is the Bible?*, http://www.bbaptist.org/which_version.pdf, accessed on 8 October 2008.

²² Isaac Ong, “A Response to ‘A Child of God Looks at the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation’,” <http://valiantfortruth.tripod.com/contendfortruth.html>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

²³ Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, “Our Stand on the Preservation of Scriptures.”

²⁴ Yap Beng Shin, “FAQ – Masoretic Text,” http://valiantfortruth.tripod.com/MT_FAQ.htm, accessed on 8 October 2008.

²⁵ Fred Moritz, *Contending for the Faith* (Greenville: Bob Jones University Press, 2000), 92.

²⁶ Edward Glenny, “The Preservation of Scripture,” in *The Bible Version Debate* (Minneapolis: Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997), 82.

²⁷ “Re-affirming SCCC Stand on the Word of God,” 4.

²⁸ Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, “Our Stand on the Preservation of Scriptures.”

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Rendel Harris, *Side Lights on New Testament Research* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1908), 3.

³¹ F C Conybeare, *History of New Testament Criticism* (London: Watts & Co, 1910), 129.

³² Kirsopp Lake, *Family 13, The Ferrar Group* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941), vii.

³³ “A Doctrinal Positional Statement of Life BP Church,” <http://www.lifefebc.com/ourchurch/docpos.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

³⁴ Paper presented on Sunday, 6 November 2005, to the congregation of Calvary Jurong B-P Church by Rev James Chan Lay Seng, Pastor of Calvary Jurong Bible-Presbyterian Church, <http://www.truth.sg/response/caljurong.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

³⁵ S H Tow, “Gospel Safeguard—VPP,” *Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church Weekly* (1 January 2006).

³⁶ Floyd Nolen Jones, *Which Version is the Bible?*

³⁷ William Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 5 (2000): 7.

³⁸ Kurt Aland, “The Text of the Church?,” *Trinity Journal* 8 (1987): 131.

³⁹ Merrill M Parvis, “The Goals of New Testament Textual Studies,” *Studia Evangelica* 6 (1973): 406.

⁴⁰ E C Colwell, *What is the Best New Testament?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 8.

⁴¹ Richard Capel, *Capel's Remains* (London: np, 1658), 19-43.

⁴² John Lightfoot, *The Whole Works of Rev John Lightfoot* (London: J F Dowe, 1822-5), 408.

⁴³ Ahmed Deedat, "Is the Bible the Word of God?," <http://www.jamaat.net/bible/Bible1-3.html>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁴⁴ *Awake* (8 September 1957).

⁴⁵ From http://www.catholicapologetics.net/apolo_84.htm, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁴⁶ Roy E Beacham and Kevin T Bauder, eds, *One Bible Only?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 93, 95, 99.

⁴⁷ Edward Glenny is now Professor of New Testament and Greek at Northwestern College, St Paul's. Larry Pettegrew teaches now at John MacArthur's *The Master's Seminary*.

⁴⁸ A survey of "Young Fundamentalists' Beliefs and Personal Life," <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/survey-young-fund.html>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁴⁹ Bart D Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 11.

⁵⁰ Mark Roberts, "The Bible, the Qur'an, Bart Ehrman, and the Words of God," <http://www.markdroberts.com/htmlfiles/resources/biblequran.htm#jan2006>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁵¹ Tim Challies, "What Does 'Inerrant' Mean?," <http://www.challies.com/archives/articles/scripture/what-does-inerrant-mean.php>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁵² Thomas Strouse, "The Biblical Defense for the Verbal Plenary Preservation of God's Word," http://www.graceway.com/articles/article_007.html, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁵³ Kent Brandenburg, "The Way of Approval," <http://kentbrandenburg.blogspot.com/feeds/posts/default?start-index=26>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁵⁴ David Cloud, "The problems of Bible preservation/Can you answer all the questions?," <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/problemswith.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁵⁵ Quek Suan Yew, "Jesus on the Perfect Preservation of the Bible" *Bible Witness* (March-April 2005): 6.

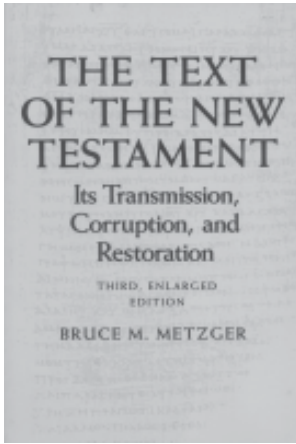
⁵⁶ Ian R K Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword: the English Authorised Version (KJV)* (Belfast: Ambassador, 1997), 102-3.

⁵⁷ C H Spurgeon, *The Greatest Fight in the World* (Pasadena: Pilgrim Publications, 1990 reprint), 33-4.

Paul Ferguson is a graduate of Foundations Theological Seminary (USA) and a ThD student at Far Eastern Bible College.

BRUCE METZGER AND THE CURSE OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Jeffrey Khoo



Bruce Manning Metzger passed away on February 13, 2007 at the age of 93. He taught New Testament language and literature at Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS) since 1938. He is known particularly for his textual criticism of the New Testament. For his textual-critical work, many are now singing his praises, and extolling him in no uncertain terms as one of Princeton’s “greatest intellectual ornaments,” and an “absolutely preeminent New Testament scholar.” Iain Torrance, President of PTS, called Metzger, “the greatest American New Testament critic and biblical translator of the twentieth century.”

Metzger’s Influence

Metzger is adored by modern-day textual critics who hail him as a “legend.” Here is one anecdote that shows how Metzger is practically worshipped, “Kathleen Maxwell told us in her presentation at the SBL in Edinburgh that she had phoned Bart Ehrman concerning a special feature in a manuscript (a red cross marking out the place where there was an illumination in the exemplar of the MS). Ehrman had told her to phone his Doktorvater Metzger to see if he had encountered this feature in MSS. Bart gave her the number and she got Metzger on the line. To us she remarked, ‘I felt like I was calling God!’” If this is not blasphemy (cf Acts 12:20-23), it is surely idolatry! This is the curse of textual criticism—the glorification of the scholar and his mind, instead of Christ and His words.

Although Metzger has died, his books and his students live on. One of his students is bestselling author Bart Ehrman who under Metzger's tutelage ended up an agnostic. Metzger's mantle has fallen upon Ehrman, and the latter will no doubt continue the Bible-denying legacy of his master! Metzger's textbook on textual criticism—*The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*—has just been revised and published with Ehrman as co-author and is likely to remain as the standard for all aspiring textual-critical scholars. Dan Wallace of Dallas Theological Seminary, a Metzger fan and TR/KJV-basher, wrote, "Metzger-Ehrman's *Text of the New Testament* remains the standard handbook on NT textual criticism. Even with its few flaws, this volume should be read, underlined, digested, and quoted by all students of the NT text. It rightfully deserves to be within arm's reach of all who study the sacred Greek Scriptures." Wallace's influence at Dallas will no doubt lead more Dallas students to close textual-critical encounters of the deadly Metzger-Ehrman kind.

At this juncture, let me offer a Biblical fundamentalist perspective of Metzger's contributions to New Testament scholarship. Faithful and true Biblicists ought to be warned that Metzger's scholarship is not one to be desired nor admired. Metzger could well be a gentle, courteous, and nice man as described in many a eulogy, but such adulations are no sure gauge of his biblical and theological orthodoxy. Let us beware lest we fall into the snare of unbelieving scholarship, and the seduction of worldly honour and glory. Every biblical scholar or theologian who is committed to the total infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures, and the authenticity and integrity of the Greek New Testament of the Protestant Reformation which is the *Textus Receptus* must know that the adoption of Metzger's philosophy and methodology will only lead to chronic uncertainty and perpetual unbelief of the total inspiration and perfect preservation of the Holy Scriptures.

Metzger Rejected

Let me share with you my experience. Metzger's book on textual criticism—*The Text of the New Testament*—was introduced to me when I was a student at the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC, 1985-1989). It was required reading for a couple of New Testament courses that I had to take. Those lecturers of mine had earned their theological degrees from top seminaries and universities in the USA and UK. They used and

quoted Metzger favourably. When I myself pursued further studies in the States, at Grace Theological Seminary in the years 1989-1991, I found a modernist like Metzger highly regarded in what was a conservative evangelical and fundamentalist institution. (The Grace Seminary catalogue of 1989-1991 proudly advertised Bruce Metzger to attract prospective students. Page 63 of the catalogue contained a handsome photo of Metzger with this caption, “Dr. Bruce Metzger, one of the dozens of noted authors and theologians who have lectured to Grace Seminary students.”)

By the grace of God, the contents of Metzger’s book, in particular his textual methodology and interpretation of history, never sat well with me. For instance, one lecturer at FEBC during my student days, quoting Metzger, taught that the teachings of Jesus were not unique to Him, but merely an improvement on the existing traditions Jesus had access to in His day. What an attack on the integrity of our Lord and His Word! Also, I was taught the so-called “eclectic” method of textual criticism which favoured the critical theories of liberal Anglicans, Westcott and Hort. It made me proud to think that I could judge or emend the Holy Scriptures based on human reasoning and man-made rules. For over a decade, I had used the modernistic United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament edited by Metzger et al, but am thankful to the Lord for delivering me out of ignorance and error through the writings of J W Burgon, E F Hills and D A Waite. Dr Waite, who is President of the Dean Burgon Society, visited Singapore in 1992. He spoke at Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church and FEBC on the textual issue and defended the KJV and its underlying texts. The glory of God and the logic of faith then led the Rev Dr Timothy Tow, the principal of FEBC and his faculty, to see the wonderful truth of the verbal and plenary preservation of the Holy Scriptures (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35). FEBC now requires the use of only the Traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus published by the Trinitarian Bible Society in its biblical language and literature classes. The KJV continues to be the only acceptable version for use in its English Bible courses.

Metzger’s Myth

Many an evangelical textual critic are impressed by the “awesome” footnotes of Metzger’s scholarly writings. Metzger’s texts and his annotated footnotes are said to be indispensable stuff in scholarly text-

critical research. O, how we must be wary! Metzger's "Bible" of textual criticism is filled with unbelief and deception. One example of deception is the myth Metzger concocted to question the authenticity of the Trinitarian verse called the "Johannine Comma" (1 John 5:7). Metzger in his textbook—*The Text of the New Testament*—pontificated, "Erasmus promised that he would insert the *Comma Johanneum*, as it is called, in future editions if a single Greek manuscript could be found that contained the passage. At length such a copy was found—or was made to order!" For decades, Metzger's story has been parroted by anti-preservationists, TR/KJV opponents as if it was gospel truth. Erasmus expert, Henk J de Jonge of Leiden University, in his paper on "Erasmus and the *Comma Johanneum*" has convincingly proven that Metzger's story on Erasmus is utterly baseless. This was no small embarrassment to Metzger and all his followers. Metzger, however, did not remove his misleading story about Erasmus in subsequent editions of his book, but placed a corrigendum in a footnote on a distant page (p291) in his third, enlarged edition confessing that what he had written on page 101 about Erasmus and 1 John 5:7 "needs to be corrected."

Metzger's Ecumenism

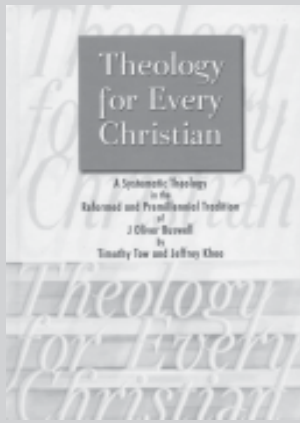
Let it be known that Metzger was a fervent promoter and leader of the ecumenical movement. The ecumenical New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of 1977–1990 was Metzger's baby. Without Metzger there would be no NRSV. Metzger saw no better way to promote ecumenism than to produce a Bible that would unite both Protestant and Catholic elements. Metzger was actively involved in the translation of the Apocrypha and even expanded it to include 3rd and 4th Maccabees and Psalm 151. He did this to please the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church. In 1976, he personally presented the ecumenical edition of the RSV to Demetrios I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and titular head of the several Orthodox Churches. In 1993, Metzger presented a Catholic edition of the NRSV to Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. Why did he do all this? PTS President, Iain Torrance, tells us why, "Bruce Metzger understood and was passionate about the significance of biblical translation for ecumenical dialogue. ... It was important to him that Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Protestant Christians be able to have recourse to a common biblical text as an instrument of unity."

Is such an ecumenical ethos shared by Biblical fundamentalists and separatists? If not, why are fundamentalist pastors and scholars from Bob Jones University, Central, Detroit, Temple and other fundamental Baptist Seminaries which believe and practise separation commending and recommending Metzger, his ecumenical RSV/NRSV and the many modern versions that stem from his corrupt Greek Text? Is this apostasy, hypocrisy, compromise, or what?

Metzger Defeated

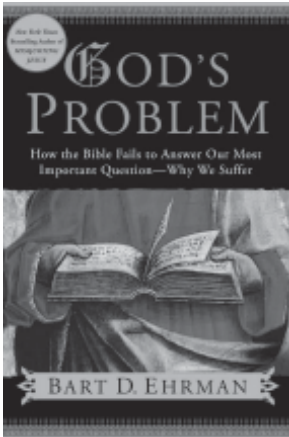
“For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor 13:8). Despite the evangelical/fundamentalist compromise today, and the denial of God’s special providence in the days of the Great Protestant Reformation in the restoration of His true Church and reception of His true Word, **the promise of God holds true for He has supernaturally preserved His inspired Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament words on which the King James Bible—the Reformation Bible—is based, and has surely raised up in these last days a remnant of Biblicists from all over the world who remain true to the spirit of the Reformation, who refuse to kowtow to the ecumenical idolatry and textual-critical scholarolatry of this postmodern and neo-deistic age.** “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal 6:7).

Dr Jeffrey Khoo is Academic Dean of Far Eastern Bible College and Elder of True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church.

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Theology for Every Christian—A Systematic Theology in the Reformed and Premillennial Tradition of J Oliver Buswell Timothy Tow and Jeffrey Khoo ISBN 978-981-05-9034-5 S\$20.00</p> |
| <p>FEBEC BOOKROOM 9A Gilstead Road, Singapore 309063 Tel: (65) 6254-9188 Email: febcbkrm@febce.edu.sg Website: www.febce.edu.sg</p> | |

GOD'S PROBLEM : A REVIEW ARTICLE

Jeffrey Khoo



God's Problem (HarperCollins Publishers, 2008, 294 pp) is the title of a book written by Bart Ehrman. We human beings have problems, but God has a “problem”? What then is “God’s problem”? The subtitle of the book answers: *How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question—Why We Suffer*.

Who is Bart Ehrman?

Bart Ehrman is James A Gray distinguished professor of the Christian Religion at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA. He is someone who professes to know the Bible and theology inside and out. But his story is quite a sad and tragic one. He testified how he became a “born again” fundamentalist as a teenager, and believed in the total infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture. His commitment to the Christian faith led him to study theology at Moody Bible Institute, a fundamentalist school. Later he studied the New Testament and Greek at Wheaton College, a neo-evangelical school. At Wheaton, he began to question the inerrancy of Scripture when one of his teachers commented that the Bible contains mistakes. Finally he went to a notoriously liberal seminary—Princeton Theological Seminary—where the inerrancy of Scripture is totally denied. At Princeton, his study of historical criticism and textual criticism under unregenerate professors like Bruce Metzger led him to reject that Jesus Christ is God and Saviour altogether. Here is a man who started off as a fundamentalist, became a neo-evangelical, degenerated into a liberal, and ended up an agnostic!

Actually it is quite ironical that Ehrman should call himself an agnostic because an agnostic is one who says God cannot be known and

His existence cannot be proven. If Ehrman was asked this question—Does God exist?—he would say, “I don’t know, but if He does exist, we cannot know who or what He is.” Despite his learned ignorance about God, Ehrman says he knows one thing for sure, “This God, if He exists, cannot be Jesus Christ, or the God of the Bible.” Now, how can Ehrman know this for sure if in his mind God cannot be known in the first place? It begs the question: How can you know what something is not when you do not know what it is? Well, this is the self-refuting and self-defeating thinking of Bart Ehrman. God describes such thinkers well, “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Rom 1:22).

Ehrman began his treatise on “God’s Problem” by asking this question, “If there is an all-powerful and loving God in this world, why is there so much excruciating pain and unspeakable suffering?”

Why Suffering?

No one denies that suffering is a fact of life. Why is there so much suffering in this world? Where is God in all this? What is He doing about it? Where are the answers? Only God has the answers and He has given us the answers in His Word. The Bible tells us that suffering in this world is due to a number of reasons: the primary reason being Sin. God created this world very good, but man made it very bad by sinning against God (Rom 5:12). Our first parents—Adam and Eve—broke God’s law by eating the forbidden fruit (Gen 2:16-17, 3:1-7). Their sin and disobedience plunged the whole of humanity into misery, pain and death (Gen 3:16-19, Rom 6:23). Human beings throughout the ages experience suffering because they are living in a sin-cursed world which is populated by sinful people who are bound by sinful thoughts and feelings and bent on doing sinful things (Rom 3:10-18). No one is innocent; all without exception are guilty (Rom 3:23). God, being holy and just, has to condemn and punish sinners, and the judgement began from the time man fell in the Garden, and continues until the present, and will end in the fiery destruction of world, and the casting of the finally impenitent into the lake of fire for all eternity (2 Pet 3:7-12, Rev 20:11-15). “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb 10:31).

The Bible makes it very clear that the problem of suffering is man’s problem, not God’s. Ehrman keeps questioning why the wicked prosper and the innocent suffer? Why do bad things happen to good people? But in God’s sight and by His standard, no one is good or innocent.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. ... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:10-23).

Ehrman's Problem

Who is good? Only God is good and just; all men are bad and wicked. No matter how good any man might appear outwardly, God sees the heart (1 Sam 16:7), and God tells us, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer 17:9). Nonetheless, in Ehrman's mind, there are good people who do not deserve the pain and misery that they go through. Although there are other biblical reasons why bad things do happen to good people (e.g. Job), he questions why God permits suffering and does not intervene to punish the wicked and deliver the righteous immediately. For this reason, Ehrman feels that the God of the Bible cannot be truly almighty, loving and good since He does not intervene to stop all the suffering right here, right now.

The problem of suffering has led Ehrman to lose his faith. What Ehrman thinks is "God's Problem" is actually his very own, which is the problem of not believing what God has said in His written words. He confessed,

I came to a point where I could no longer believe ... I realized that I could no longer reconcile the claims of faith with the facts of life. I could no longer explain how there can be a good and all-powerful God actively involved with this world, given the state of things. For many people who inhabit this planet, life is a cesspool of misery and suffering. I came to the point where I simply could not believe that there is a good and kindly disposed Ruler who is in charge of it.

Ehrman's problem is the same problem of many unbelieving people who do not believe the whole Bible to be the 100% perfect Word of God without any mistake to the last word and letter, and therefore absolutely and supremely authoritative in all matters of faith and life. Ehrman himself confessed that he sees the Bible as "a very human book with all

the marks of having come from human hands: discrepancies, contradictions, errors,”

In an earlier book of his titled—*Misquoting Jesus*—he argued, If one wants to insist that God inspired the very words of scripture, what would be the point if we don't have the very words of scripture? ... This became a problem for my view of inspiration, for I came to realize that it would have been no more difficult for God to preserve the words of scripture than it would have been for him to inspire them in the first place. If he wanted his people to have his words, surely he would have given them to them. ... The fact that we don't have the words surely must show, I reasoned, that he did not preserve them for us. And if he didn't perform that miracle, there seemed to be no reason to think that he performed the earlier miracle of inspiring those words.

In Ehrman, we see a clear case of how the logic of unbelief in denying the Biblical doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) would naturally and eventually result in a denial of the doctrine of Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) of Scripture.

God's Solution to Man's Problem

How do we respond to Ehrman's attack on VPI and VPP? The only biblical way to respond to such an attack is to quote the Scriptures, “let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom 3:4). We will all become like Ehrman if we do not live by faith, and faith alone (*sola fide*). The sinner or the unbeliever lives by sight, or by “science” so called—“I see in order to believe.” But the saint or the child of God lives by faith, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” (Rom 1:17). If we want to see and know God, we must begin with faith, “I believe in order to see.” And the Christian faith is not blind because it is based on the truth. What is truth? God's Word is truth (John 17:17). How can we know the truth about origins: how did the world begin, and where did we come from? It is only by faith, “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). We simply believe the words of our Creator who said that He created the whole universe out of nothing by the power of His Word in the space of six literal 24-hour days, and all very good (Gen 1).

Without the light of God's Word, and without believing in the integrity and veracity of God's Word, man will only misinterpret the facts

and evidences in the world. Man in his intellectual folly thinks that he comes from the apes. He thinks that since he looks like them, he must be in some way related or linked to them. Therefore, based on human observation and reasoning, the apes must have been man's ancestors. Thanks to evolution, human beings are actually glorified monkeys! It is no wonder God says this of sinful men,

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things (Rom 1:21-23).

The only way to please God is by faith, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb 11:6). We must begin with faith and we must end with faith if we are to live and not be lost forever.

The problem with Ehrman is his blindness towards God and His Truth because of his intellectual pride. He gives his own distorted definition of who and what God is; and when his own idea about God does not square with his worldview, he blames God and finds fault with His claims. Indeed, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom 1:22); "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim 3:7). Ehrman has become too clever for his own good.

Logic of Faith

Let us not end up like Ehrman who "lost his faith" (theologically speaking, he never had it in the first place). Let us make sure we have the right starting point which is faith in God's Word. In all our thinking and reasoning, we must begin and end with God's Word, believing in all that it says without question, without doubt. Faith is "God says it, that settles it, I believe it."

God's Word is 100% perfect, without any mistake, forever infallible and inerrant to the last syllable and letter, even today. How do we know this? God says it in Psalm 12:6-7, "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation

for ever.” Jesus 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” (Matt 5:18). “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt 24:35).

Applying the logic of faith based on God’s truthful words and promises, we believe that the Bible was not only very pure in the beginning, but also very pure today. By so believing, we are very sure of the 100% inspired and 100% preserved words of God—what they are and where they are. We are very sure of who God is. He is none other than our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who “died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor 15:3-4).

Let us then live by faith in Christ and His words, and not by “science” or “scholarship” so called. “Let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom 3:4).

Dr Jeffrey Khoo is Academic Dean of Far Eastern Bible College and Elder of True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church.



KING JAMES ONLYISM : A REVIEW ARTICLE

Jeffrey Khoo



King James Onlyism (self-published, 2006, 658 pp), a new book by James D Price of Temple Baptist Seminary, joins the ranks of fundamentalist books like *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* (1999), *One Bible Only?* (2001), and *God's Word in Our Hands* (2003), in attacking the Biblical doctrine of the verbal and plenary preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures, and the faithful, logical identification of the divinely preserved texts to be the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus on which the King James Version (KJV) is based.

Price's *King James Onlyism* book was printed with the help of Rev Yap Beng Shin, a Bible-Presbyterian (BP) minister, who earned his MDiv from Temple Baptist Seminary under Price's tutelage. Rev Yap was one of the 11 signatories to a statement against the VPP of the Holy Scriptures. Besides Rev Yap, the other signatories were Rev Philip Heng, Rev Ong Hock Khee, Rev Tan Eng Boo, Rev Charles Seet, Rev Colin Wong, Rev Anthony Tan, Rev Tan Choon Seng, Rev Eric Kwan, Rev Eddy Lim, and Rev Yap Kim Sin. I would assume that Price's book is not only recommended by Rev Yap but also these other BP ministers who stand with him. For those looking for reasons why the KJV ought to be replaced with modern versions, Price's book is better than most.

Price's involvement in the VPP/TR/KJV debate in Singapore goes as far back as 2002 when he wrote a critique of my paper, "A Plea for a Perfect Bible." His critique was circulated among BP churches and members, and grossly misrepresented my position on the VPP of Scriptures by making it a purely translational (English and KJV) issue when it was primarily a textual and doctrinal one (100% inspired and

100% preserved Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words underlying the faithful and accurate KJV on the basis of the twin doctrines of the VPI and VPP of the Holy Scriptures, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35 etc). Price's critique heightened the confusion among BP members and churches concerning VPP. I wrote a response to Price's review of my paper and clarified what I meant by VPP. But Price does not seem to care about accurate and truthful reporting for he continues to misrepresent and caricature pro-KJV or KJV-superiority advocates as Ruckmanites and Seventh-Day Adventists (SDA) (4, 209, 420). He falsely accuses Presbyterian and Harvard scholar Edward F Hills, and David Otis Fuller, a founding leader of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), and D A Waite, President of the Dean Burgon Society of believing in the inspiration of the English words of the KJV when they are actually talking about the inspiration and preservation of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words on which the KJV is based (17, 18, 131, 132). Such slanders did not begin with Price, but with Doug Kutilek who is quoted and praised by Price in his book (7). If Hills, Fuller and Waite are Ruckmanites and SDAs for promoting the KJV as the best and only faithful English Bible today, then the Trinitarian Bible Society and the Bible League, which promote and defend the KJV and consider not only the modern versions but also the NKJV to be unreliable, should be implicated too. Price unjustly paints with a broad brush, and by so doing creates confusion and scepticism among the believers.

Anyone reading Price's anti-KJV book would likely lose confidence in the KJV and be filled with doubts over the faithfulness and accuracy of the KJV and its underlying Hebrew and Greek texts. If a Multiversions Only advocate wishes to discourage a KJV user from using the KJV, Price's book might just do the trick. Price spared no effort to show that the KJV is full of mistakes. A young or undiscerning reader might be stumbled and deceived, especially if he does not start with Scripture itself and believe in God's promise of special providence in preserving His inspired Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words on which the KJV is based, and how the KJV is a faithful and accurate translation of those providentially preserved Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words.

According to Price, the KJV is only one version among many good and even better versions. To him, the use of the KJV should be a matter of preference and not principle. Price would deem all who affirm the KJV as "the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the

Bible in the English language, and employ it alone as [their] primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible” to be divisive or schismatic (some even say heretical!) (421). Price ought to be reminded that Truth does divide (e.g., John 10:19). For instance, the Biblical doctrine that a man can only be saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, based on Scripture alone, is surely schismatic and divisive. There are no two ways about it. Jesus said, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Matt 10:34). This “sword” is a sword of division or separation. Does Price believe this? Does Price who hails from a fundamentalist seminary not teach separation from modernism, ecumenism, charismaticism, and neo-evangelicalism? Why is he singing an inclusive, pluralistic, and syncretistic tune by commending and recommending the use of ecumenical, liberal, neo-evangelical, and feminist versions of the Bible which will only compromise and confuse the clear testimony of the Word of God and the Lord Jesus Christ? It must be said that the KJV, being a Reformation Bible, is a separatist Bible. No wonder it is so disliked, even hated, by non- or anti-separatists!

Now, we do not discount the fact that the modern, neo-evangelical and ecumenical versions which are based on the corrupt texts and/or use the dynamic equivalence method may contain enough gospel to convict and convert the sinner (according to God’s election), but this does not make them the “Word of God.” They may contain the Word of God like tracts and commentaries do, but they can hardly be regarded as the very Word of God for they stem from the corrupt text of theological liberals, Westcott and Hort, who denied the historicity of the first three chapters of Genesis, the total inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures, and other fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith.

Price wants Christians to be uncertain or agnostic about the precise location of God’s Word. He says, “The Bible, like all other things in life, has a measure of uncertainty associated with the identity, the exposition, the interpretation, and the meaning of its text. Sound reason has shown that this uncertainty provides no practical basis for doubting the authenticity or authority of Scripture; instead, reason provides the stepping stone for faith to move beyond uncertainty to full confidence in God’s Word” (415). In other words, faith must depend on reason (“the stepping stone for faith”) to give it confidence in God’s Word. Such a thinking is unbiblical to say the least. Faith does not rest on human

reason at all, but on the Word of God alone (*Sola Scriptura*). Price has placed corrupt and imperfect human reason above the incorruptible and perfect Word of God. He is calling Christians to have faith in human reason and human methods (e.g., textual criticism) for their faith to be sure, for he reasons that reason can give certainty to faith if only we have confidence in it. Price who adopts human reason as a superior, or an equal/additional authority to Scriptures proves the point that reason will only lead to uncertainty, even unbelief. It goes without saying that Price's epistemology is utterly wrong-headed.

Biblical fideism, on the other hand, gives rise to certainty not to be repented of. The Apostle Peter tells us that our faith and knowledge must be based on the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:68-69). The Apostle Paul likewise said, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17). The Bible is not "like other things in life" as Price would have us believe. The Bible is unique and incomparable; there is nothing like it on earth and God forbid that we should belittle it by making it subservient to human reason and methods, and "other things in life." The Bible is perspicuous and not as "uncertain" as Price thinks. It is unbelief that makes the perspicuous Bible uncertain to man, and may we not be unbelieving (John 8:43-47, Mark 16:14, Luke 24:25, 27).

Price's book rings an uncertain and ungodly sound. It is a mixed bag of truth and error, facts and falsehoods. For example, he states truthfully when he says that Hills, Fuller, Waite and Cloud insist on the Textus Receptus (TR) underlying the KJV as the "providentially preserved authoritative text of Scripture," or what he calls "the autographic text" (16). But the next moment he states a falsehood by saying that those men believe "it is the English words that determine the words of the Hebrew and Greek texts, not the Hebrew and Greek words that determine the English" (17). By so twisting the doctrine of VPP, he makes the above men look like they believe in an "inspired KJV," that the English is superior to the Hebrew and the Greek, a position none of them advocate. Having painted TR-only preservationists unfairly with such ugly colours, he then puts his finishing touches to his distorted picture by making them look like Ruckman (17, 420). Such a below-the-belt tactic Price had well learned from Kutilek.

Price charges the KJV for giving an “uncertain sound” quoting 1 Corinthians 14:8-9, but does not realise that he is guilty of it himself when he insists that there can be no certainty whatsoever as regards the identification of the Perfect Word of God today. Where are God’s infallible and inerrant words today? Well, they are somewhere out there, but nobody can tell for sure precisely where (395-416). Without knowing where God’s infallible and inerrant words are, how can we live by His every word (Matt 4:4)?

Price is annoyed that preachers should have “to waste time explaining archaic words, phrases, and idioms” (421). Singapore’s first chief minister, David Marshall, who had for his English textbook the KJV, would have scorned at Price’s puerile criticisms of the KJV. There are only about 200 archaic words in the KJV. These old words comprise only 0.1% of the KJV. The Oxford, Webster, Chambers dictionaries contain entries for most of these archaic words. *The Defined King James Bible* has the meanings of all the archaic words footnoted. They are not that difficult to look up and learn. Moreover, to be educated with the King’s English is hardly a waste of time.

Price spurns a One Bible or KJV Only position and advocates a Modern Versions or Multiple Versions Only position. To Price, every version has its positive and negative points, and so “it is wrong to suppose that only one translation is adequate for all purposes” (312). I suppose he would spurn an NIV Only, or NASB Only, or NKJV Only position as well, but he does not say so explicitly, but one thing is obvious, he attacks the KJV more than any other version. According to Price’s doctrine of imperfect preservation, every Bible (including the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures) contains mistakes. If there is such a thing as a Perfect Bible, it is only the autographs which no longer exist, or it is in the sea of multiple manuscripts and versions, every one of them different and not the same (128). As far as Price is concerned, no one should presume to know with absolute certainty where the 100% infallible and inerrant Scripture today is. It may be somewhere out there, but precisely where, no believer can tell; the only one who can even come close to telling would be the textual critic, and even then, he cannot be dogmatic or absolutely sure. There is just no perfect standard to judge anything today. This logic of Price is the same kind of logic that turned once-upon-a-time fundamentalist, Bart Ehrman, into an agnostic. Where is the Bible? The Bible is nowhere, and so is God!

This anti-KJV book of Price would be excellent for those seeking to (1) oppose the Reformed Faith, the Reformation Text, and the VPP of Scripture; (2) discourage the use of the faithful and accurate, time-tested and time-honoured KJV; and (3) push for modern versions to replace the KJV in the church. Any anti-VPP church which embraces the anti-KJV views of Price, and sees the use of the KJV as only a matter of preference and not principle, will ultimately give up the KJV to embrace the modern versions which are based on corrupted texts. May true and faithful Protestant, Reformation, and Fundamental believers and churches beware!

Dr Jeffrey Khoo is Academic Dean of Far Eastern Bible College and Elder of True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church.

Continued from page 62

I thank God that He gives me good appetite for food, including the Ugali and beans that we have for lunch. I try to cook dinner for myself, though sometimes, because of time constraints, I take the evening meals served by the college. I had learned how to cut vegetables at FEBC, and this has helped me to prepare my meals quickly before the sun goes down. This is necessary as there is still no electric lighting at the guesthouse and mosquitoes visit the kitchen when it is dark.

I request prayer for my work permit. There has been some delay as the Bible College is still in the process of being registered. As my social visit pass has expired, I am now in Kenya at the Kiluani mission station where Sister Pui Meng is serving as a nurse. It is a break for me, coinciding with the college's mid-semester break. I await the Lord's further direction. Do be in prayer also that the Lord will send more students in the coming semesters. Psalm 136:1, "O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."

Tan Nee Keng (MDiv 08) is an Elder of Berean Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore. His testimony above was written in September 2008. FEBC alumni, Rev Peter Elibariki (MDiv 06) and Rev Judah Pallangyo (MDiv 08) are teaching at BCEA Tanzania, with Rev Dr Mark Kim (DipTh 90, EdD 08) as Principal.

INTRODUCING CALVARY BATAM BIBLE COLLEGE (SEKOLAH TINGGI TEOLOGIA CALVARY BATAM)

Kiantoro Lie

Calvary Batam Bible College was founded on 15 August 1999. At the time of her founding, the school was called Calvary Bible Training Centre, offering two study programmes namely, (1) Bible College Foundation Studies, and (2) Basic Theology for Everyone. The purpose of the first programme was to prepare students for theological training in the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC), Singapore. Classes were conducted in the English language, covering introductory courses in the study of theology and the Bible. The second programme was for the training of laymen to serve in the local church. At the launching of the Foundation Studies, there were five lecturers and seven students. Basic Theology was attended by 25 church members.

One year later, when the new semester began on 1 August 2000, the Foundation Studies programme was replaced with the Diploma in Theology programme in the Indonesian language. Thirteen students were enrolled in the programme. The Basic Theology programme remained as before. The first batch of Diploma students completed their courses on 30 November 2002. Ristawati Saragih and Siti Harapan Sitanggang are now serving in the Lord's vineyard.

The ground-breaking service for the new college building was conducted on 13 October 2002 in conjunction with Calvary Batam Bible-Presbyterian Church's 13th anniversary. The Rev Dr Tow Siang Hwa was the Lord's messenger. The construction of the two-storey annexe for the Bible College took eight months. This new extension at the right wing of the main church building has 10 rooms. In this building are housed the college office, classrooms, library and dormitories.

Mr Mulia Pamadi, a faithful church member and property developer, helped to build the College at cost as a service to the Lord. Calvary

INTRODUCING CALVARY BATAM BIBLE COLLEGE



From top, L-R, zig-zag: Congratulatory Board; Calvary Batam BP Church and Bible College; Processional led by Rev K Lie; College Choir; Classroom; Computer room; Library 1; Library 2.

Jurong Bible-Presbyterian Church supported with a \$40,000 love-gift and the remaining cost of \$80,000 was raised from the members of Calvary Batam Bible-Presbyterian Church. The new building was dedicated on 8 June 2003 with Rev James Chan as the Lord's messenger.

The application to conduct the Bachelor of Theology programme was approved by the regional office of the Religious Department in the provincial capital of Pekanbaru on 26 May 2003. With this provincial registration, Calvary Batam Bible College was inaugurated on 1 August 2003 with the Rev Dr Timothy Tow, our beloved pastor and principal of FEBC, delivering the message. His message consisted of three instructions and principles to run the new Bible College: (1) Go to Ujung Pandang, the graduates are to explore and to go to the uttermost part of Indonesia; (2) "Self-help with God's help is the best help;" (3) Produce Christian literature in the Indonesian language, starting with the translation of FEBC publications. Further registration of the College with the Director-General for Guidance of Christian Community in Jakarta was obtained on 15 October 2005.

The first graduation service was conducted on 26 September 2008 with the Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo as the Lord's messenger. He preached on the theme, "The Great Commission is a Commission of Faith, Hope, and Love" (Matt 28:18-20). He exhorted the congregation to (1) preach the love of God, (2) teach the faith of Scripture, and (3) serve in hope of Christ's return. Four students graduated with the Certificate of Religious Knowledge, four with the Certificate of Biblical Studies, three with the Diploma in Theology, and two with the Bachelor of Theology degree.

Praise the Lord. From its inception as a Bible Training Centre in 1999 to a Bible College now in 2008, the Lord has been good and merciful to sustain and to preserve. May the Lord grant the College many more good years of service.

Rev Kiantoro Lie (BTh 92, MRE 98, MDiv 05) is the Principal of Calvary Batam Bible College (STTCB), and Pastor of Calvary Batam Bible-Presbyterian Church (GAPPI).

MY FIRST THREE MONTHS AT BCEA TANZANIA

Tan Nee Keng

I have been staying at the Bible College of East Africa (BCEA), Tanzania, for three months already. I thank God for keeping me well all these weeks. The Lord continues to teach me to trust in Him and I continue to let Him lead me. Surely it was He who moved the heart of my wife to come with me and stay for a few weeks. Just a few years ago, she would not even consider visiting Africa because she had always been a poor traveller, especially to places where there are no piped water and electricity. It was my dream that she would accompany me to Africa. She did and what a great job she did to help me settle in.

The Lord arranged for us to stay at the home of the Korean principal of the kindergarten for the first weeks, while waiting for the water to be piped into the college complex. However, when it was nearly time for my wife to return to Singapore, we decided to move into the guest house though we had no piped water yet. A few days later, against all odds, God must have moved the contractor to overcome the remaining difficulties to complete his job of laying the pipes that would bring drinking water into the compound. We were overjoyed when the water pressure was enough for the water to go up to the water tank on the roof of the two-storey guesthouse without the need for a pump! My wife unpacked our things and put them in order, and taught me the cooking skills I sorely lacked.

Berean Bible-Presbyterian Church in Singapore has been very supportive, from the pastor and his session to the members of the church. They showed concern for my needs and gave words of encouragement and advice and love gifts. This has helped to make things smooth for me. Two Berean brethren and Apasia (Tanzanian FEBC student who was home during the college break) were also very helpful when they were here. In the first weeks in Tanzania, we learnt how to travel to town by public transport, and where to buy things that are not commonly available, such as sardines and sauces. Apasia's mother helped me to find a barber who knows how to cut my non-Afro hair.

The college environment is pleasant. Though the weather has been rather cold, it is getting warm in the afternoons. One of the first things we did was to drain the field of stagnant water to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes. In spite of this, during these few weeks, two persons staying in the compound contracted malaria. Early detection and medication helped them to recover quickly. The college has a small *shamba* (vegetable garden) and the students had the taste of the first produce last Thursday, 4 September 2008. Saplings of trees that are good for firewood have also been planted around the compound. Three units of the staff quarters are nearing completion. In the photograph, the one on the left is a twin unit. The other unit is on the right of the two-storey guesthouse.



We are praying for more students to enroll in the next semester. Some people have requested for application forms. There are seven students at present. I was glad to see that some of them who were very poor in English the last time I saw them in November 2006 have improved in their English. Besides Biblical studies, they are also taught computer skills and the English language. Other than general cleaning duties, they help in the maintenance of the place as part of their work scholarship. This includes slashing grass, chopping firewood and *shamba* work. Recently, they helped to repair the village road which leads to the main road because it had become too muddy for vehicles.

Continued on page 57

College News

The Far Eastern Bible College opened its **new semester** on July 21, 2008 with a day of prayer and registration at the Shalom Chapel, Calvary Tengah Bible-Presbyterian Church. A total of six vans from Berean, Calvary Pandan, Gethsemane, True Life, and Truth B-P Church, plus FEBC's very own, were profitably used to fetch the students to Calvary Tengah. The Principal—Rev Dr Timothy Tow—in his welcoming word to the students read from 2 Timothy 2:15-18, *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”* He told the students, “You have come to FEBC to study the truth; not to have your faith overthrown but strengthened.” We thank the Lord that our beloved founder and principal at 88 years of age, though physically frail, is still very much alive and alert to share with us his faith and wisdom. The Lord has kept His faithful servant for such a time as this. Dr Boaz Boon, Secretary of the FEBC Board, and Elder of Calvary Tengah, spoke from Romans 8:31-39 on being “more than conquerors” in Christ Jesus our Lord. Mrs Ivy Tow, the College Matron, shared how she was worried for FEBC, but the Lord encouraged her through Deuteronomy 3:22, *“Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you.”*

The new July-November 2008 semester saw the matriculation of 11 **new students** from six countries: Paul Ferguson (UK), Alongkorn Harichaikul (Thailand), Tann Heng (Cambodia), Ho Xiao Wei (Singapore), Tammy Ho (Singapore), Kim Ki Moo (Korea), Kim Ki Yeon (Korea), Kim Mi Gyeong (Korea), Karen Lee (Singapore), Josias Llego (Philippines), and Sun Srei Leakena (Cambodia). The three Singaporean girls are from Truth Bible-Presbyterian Church who have answered God's call to full-time service. **Total enrolment** stands at 276 students from 15

countries comprising 99 day-time students (63 full-time and 36 part-time), and 177 “Basic Theology for Everyone” night-class students.

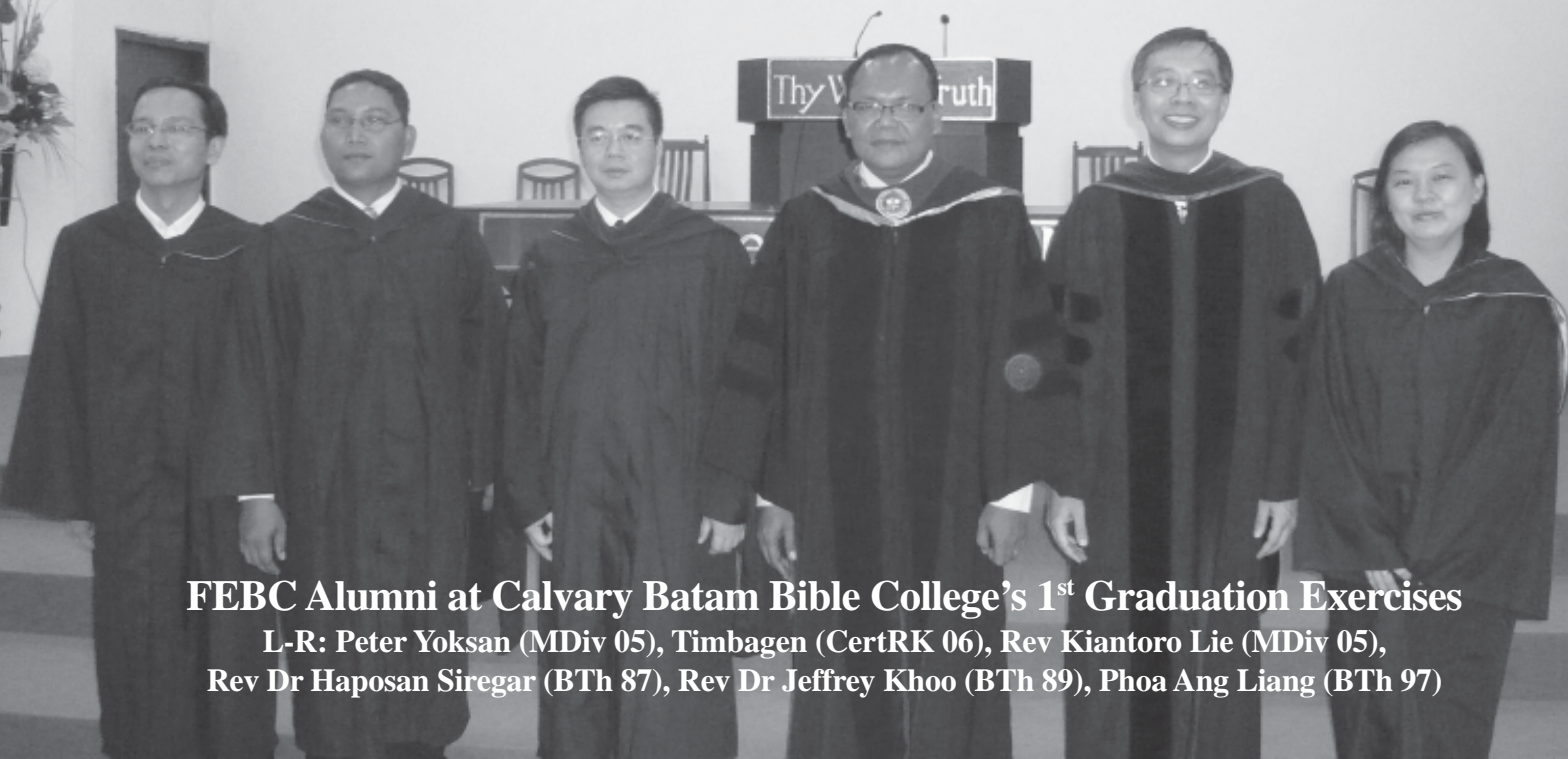
FEBC introduced a **distance learning** or online course last semester. Mr Murray Ong (MSc in Computer and Information Sciences, NUS) serves as FEBC’s IT Manager and Tutor. Murray teaches a new course on “Information Technology in Ministry.” The first course offered through the distance learning mode was “The Apocalypse: A Study of the Book of Revelation” by Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew. FEBC’s distance learning courses will follow the schedule of the regular semesters of weekly lectures and assignments culminating with an exam at the end of the semester. In time, FEBC hopes to offer a wide array of distance learning courses that will allow the laity to work towards their Certificate of Religious Knowledge/Biblical Studies (CertRK/BS) or Diploma in Theology (DipTh) in fulfilment of the teaching aspect of the Great Commission. This is another step of faith on the part of FEBC to advance the Bible College movement worldwide to the glory of God.

A **Writ of Summons** dated 15 September 2008 was issued by Life Bible-Presbyterian Church against FEBC’s Board of Directors (the 1st to 9th Defendants): (1) Dr Jeffrey Khoo, (2) Dr Quek Suan Yew, (3) Dr Prabhudas Koshy, (4) Dr Tow Siang Yeow, (5) Dr Timothy Tow Siang Hui, (6) Dr Boaz Boon, (7) Wee Hian Kok, (8) Rev Koa Keng Woo, and (9) Rev Stephen Khoo. The Statement of Claim #3 states, “This is an action to restrain the Defendants from occupying, possessing or otherwise using the designated part of the Plaintiff’s premises at 9 and 9A Gilstead Road (hereinafter referred to as the ‘designated part of the Church Property’) purportedly to operate the College or in any other manner whatsoever.” FEBC’s directors/trustees have engaged legal counsel—Allen & Gledhill LLP—to represent the College. Pray for the Lord to protect and preserve FEBC’s birthplace and home. “*Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set. ... Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless: For their redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee.*” (Prov 22:28, 23:10, 11).

SUJUDLAH MENYEMBAH KEPADA TUHAN DENGAN BERHIASKAN KEKUDUSAN

Wisuda Sarjana & Diploma Teologia
SEKOLAH TINGGI TEOLOGIA CALVARY BATAM

Jumat, 26 September 2008



FEBC Alumni at Calvary Batam Bible College's 1st Graduation Exercises

L-R: Peter Yoksan (MDiv 05), Timbagen (CertRK 06), Rev Kiantoro Lie (MDiv 05),
Rev Dr Haposan Siregar (BTh 87), Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo (BTh 89), Phoa Ang Liang (BTh 97)

SUKUDLAH MENYEMBAH KEPADA TUHAN DENGAN BERHIASKAN KEKUDUSAN

Wisuda Sarjana & Diploma Teologia
SEKOLAH TINGGI TEOLOGIA CALVARY BATAM

Jumat, 26 September 2008



**Calvary Batam Bible College
First Graduation Service
26 September 2008**