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THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE: PROGRESSIVE CREATIONISM EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE

Quek Suan Yew and Jeffrey Khoo

Progressive or old earth creationists such as Robert C Newman, Herman J Eckelmann, and Robert J Dunzweiler claim to offer the best model for harmonising the Bible with science. According to them, progressive creationism “takes both the Biblical and the scientific data in their integrity, and then attempts a synthesis of them.”¹ Any other view outside of this harmonisation is classified as either non-scientific or anti-scientific.²

Progressive creationists fault Biblical or young earth creationists for rejecting science. Biblical creationism which is against marrying the Bible with science, is thus caricatured,

Having rejected God’s General Revelation of his creative activity as a possible source of truth, in favour of a supposed ideal of objective, certain, clear understanding of God’s Special Revelation in Scripture, this view must of necessity be characterized by a distortion and emasculation of the truth of the doctrine of Creation. Having begun by denying the theological value of God’s Revelation in nature, the Anti-Scientific Creationist View ends by misinterpreting both God’s Revelation in Scripture and His revelation in nature.³

It must be stated that as Biblical creationists we do not reject God’s revelation in nature. What we do reject, however, are man’s subjective interpretations of natural revelation (cf Rom 1:20-22).⁴ General Revelation reveals these two truths: that God exists and that He is Creator (Romans 1:18-20). Man’s subjective and erroneous interpretation of General Revelation should not be equated with General Revelation itself.

What follows is an expose of the biblical and theological fallacies of progressive creationism as propounded by Newman, Eckelmann and Dunzweiler.⁵

Intermittent Day Age View

Progressive creationists agree with evolutionists that the universe is billions of years old. Newman and Eckelmann claim that our “universe and our galaxy would be 15 billion to 20 billion years old, the sun five billion to ten billion years old and our solar system about five billion years old.”⁶ In order to fit their view of an old earth into the Bible, they would have to insert long periods into the creation days of Genesis. According to them, each of the six days can be seen as literal days, but there were gaps of millions or billions of years between those days.⁷ These overlapping periods of creation are still ongoing and will only end when the seventh day arrives. The seventh day is still future; we are still living within the first six days of God’s Creation.⁸

It is a hermeneutical fallacy to interpret the word “day” (*yom* in Hebrew) in Genesis One as having a dual meaning. Progressive creationists compromise the integrity of Scripture by interpreting the Genesis day as both a “24-hour creation day and a creation period.” The word “day” in Genesis One must mean a 24-hour day because it is used with a numerical adjective, first, second, third, etc.⁹ Douglas F Kelly says,

The Bible generally employs the word “day” to signify either a twenty-four hour solar day, or the daylight portion of those hours. When modified by a number or ordinal (as “Day One” or “Day Two”) its universal Scriptural usage means normal solar day.¹⁰

The sabbath commandment provides the infallible commentary on the creation days: “Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: ... For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth (Exod 20:9, 11).” Taking the creation week to be millions or billions of years long would hardly serve as a pattern for the human work week of six literal days.¹¹ Kelly aptly points out,

The crucial point here is that God’s creative work, followed by rest, forms the pattern of wholesome life for His image bearer, mankind. Apparently, mankind is so important to the infinite God that He arranged His creative activity specifically to set the structure for human life. That must be a major reason why God created over six days rather than in a split-second (or a hundred billion years).¹²

Also, the qualifying phrase, “evening and morning,” implies the rotation of the earth in a 24-hour cycle. On the very first day, “God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.” This no doubt was done

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to prevent any confusion between “day” and “light.” “Light” is distinguished from “darkness” or “night.” The word “day” (*yom*) consists of nighttime and daytime, “the evening and the morning.” Henry Morris rightly said,

God carefully defined His terms! Having separated the day and night, God had completed His first day’s work. “The evening and the morning were the first day.” This same formula is used at the conclusion of each of the six days; so it is obvious that the duration of each of the days, including the first, was the same ... It is clear that, beginning with the first day and continuing thereafter, there was established a cyclical succession of days and nights—periods of light and periods of darkness. Such a cyclical light-dark arrangement clearly means that the earth was now rotating on its axis and that there was a source of light on one side of the earth corresponding to the sun, even though the sun was not yet made (Gen. 1:16). It is equally clear that the length of such days could only have been that of a normal solar day.¹³

In the final analysis, it all boils down to how we approach Science and the Bible. Should we put science first, or the Bible? Whitcomb and Morris answer,

... we must approach a study of the work of the six days of Creation strictly from the perspective of Scriptural revelation, and not at all from that of a projection of present natural processes into the past. It is precisely this sort of illegitimate projection that has led to the theory of evolution and to the various theological devices that have been conceived for harmonizing it with the Biblical revelation. Since God’s revealed Word describes this Creation as taking place in six “days” and since there apparently is no contextual basis for understanding these days in any sort of symbolic sense, it is an act of both faith and reason to accept them, literally, as real days.¹⁴

Death Before the Fall

Progressive creationists believe that death preceded the Fall (Gen 3:1-7). Consider the following progressive creationist model of Genesis One:¹⁵

Pre-Day-1 is the creation of primal energy, the structured universe and the Milky Way Galaxy (15-20 billions years ago);

Day-1 is the creation of our solar system (about 5 billion years ago);

Day-2 is the creation of the earth’s atmosphere and the separation of the waters (about 4 billion years ago);

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Day-3 is the creation of dry land, and seas and land plants (about 2.5 billion years ago);

Day-4 is the appearance of the sun, moon, and stars as viewed from the earth (about 1 billion to 600 million years ago)

Day-5 is the creation of aquatic life and birds (between 600-180 million years ago);

Day-6 is the creation of terrestrial animals, the Garden of Eden, man and woman (between 180 to 2 million years ago);

Day-7 is the cessation of immediate creation but mediate creation continues (between 2 million to 10,000 years ago till the present).¹⁶

To fit their view that millions of years transpired between the creation of animals and the creation of man, animals must have suffered death long before man came into existence. Newman accuses young earth creationists for “overinterpreting” Scripture by viewing death as a consequence of the Fall.¹⁷

But what does the Bible say? In Gen 2:15-17, we read,

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

The first mention of death was in the covenant of works that God gave to Adam. Prior to this, there was no talk of death. Notwithstanding, was there death on the earth before the Fall? At the end of all the six 24-hour days of creation, up to the creation of the beasts of the field, God said that what He did was good.¹⁸ But after man was created, He said, “behold, *it was very good*. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day” (Gen 1:31). How could God conclude that all His creation was exceedingly good if death existed within the creation week? Death is not good, even if only animals died.

God gave Adam dominion over His creation. Gen 1:26 says, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” The federal headship principle applies. Man’s actions will invariably affect creation. When man fell, creation fell as well. It was only after the Fall that death entered creation. Hence the whole creation groans together with man. Creation will be restored at the

consummation. The basis for this victory over death is the death, resurrection, and second coming of Jesus Christ.¹⁹ This is precisely what Rom 8:19-22 says,

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

Death was introduced into the earth only *after* Adam's fall into sin. Progressive creationism that teaches otherwise, exalting science above Scripture, has erroneously concluded that millions of animal deaths must have occurred before the creation of man.

Genesis Flood was Local

Progressive creationists view the Genesis Flood to be local and not global.²⁰ They say that the Flood was limited only to the region surrounding Eastern Turkey, or to the Mesopotamian region.²¹

This is not what the Bible says. The Bible speaks of the Flood in universal terms. Firstly, Gen 7:19-20 says,

And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

Since water must seek its own level, the Flood must have been a universal one since all the mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered. Take note of the global expressions, "all the high hills," and "under the whole heaven." Leupold's exegetical comment is noteworthy,

A measure of the waters is now made by comparison with the only available standard for such waters—the mountains. They were said to have been "covered." Not merely a few but "all the high mountains under all the heavens." One of these expressions alone would almost necessitate the impression that the author intends to convey the idea of the absolute universality of the Flood, e.g., "all the high mountains." Yet since "all" is known to be used in a relative sense, the writer removes all possible ambiguity by adding the phrase "under all the heavens." A double "all" (*kol*) cannot allow for so relative a sense. It almost constitutes a Hebrew superlative. So we believe that the text disposes of the question of the universality of the Flood.²²

Secondly, Gen 7:11 and 8:13-14 tell us that the Flood lasted for 371 days. The Flood attained its maximum mountain-covering depth in six weeks, and remained at that level for an additional 16 weeks (Gen 7:17-20, 24). Such a long rain-spell could only have been caused through a supernatural puncturing of the pre-Flood atmospheric canopy.

Thirdly, Gen 6:13-16 reveals the size of the ark.

And God said unto Noah, ... Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

Consider how big the ark was. One cubit could either be 20.4 inches or 17.5 inches.²³ Whitcomb and Morris based their calculation of the ark's dimension by using the shorter cubit. They wrote,

According to this standard,, the Ark was 437.5 feet long, 72.92 feet wide, and 43.75 feet high. Since it had three decks (Gen 6:16), it had a total deck area of approximately 95,700 square feet (equivalent to slightly more than the area of twenty standard college basketball courts), and its total volume was 1,396,000 cubic feet. The gross tonnage of the Ark ... was about 13,960 tons, which would place it well within the category of large metal ocean-going vessels today.²⁴

The ark was thus not a small family-sized boat for Noah and his family, but a large sea-worthy vessel, the size of a Star Cruise ship. Surely the need for such a huge Ark which took over a century to build logically anticipated a global deluge. If it had been merely a local flood, it would have been more reasonable for God to tell Noah to move out of the region of destruction. Even if Noah were required to stay, a small boat would have sufficed. The size and need for the Ark most certainly point to a global Flood.

In Gen 2:6, the Bible says that there was no rain upon the earth as a mist came forth out of the ground to water the plants. When Noah preached to his generation that a global flood would destroy the earth, he preached to a people who had never seen rain. It was Noah's faith in God's Word that caused him to build the Ark in preparation for the judgement to come. Heb 11:7 says, "By faith Noah, *being warned of God of things not seen as yet*, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving

of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

It is also significant to note that there was no rainbow until after the Flood. God gave the rainbow as a sign that He would not destroy the world again by water. Gen 9:12-15 says,

And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

The rainbow undoubtedly points to a global flood. If it was a local flood, then God has broken his promise, for today, we still see various parts of the world being hit by localised flooding especially after heavy rains. God did not promise that there would be no local floods; He only promised that there would no longer be a global flood.

In 2 Pet 3:3-7, the Apostle Peter used the Genesis Flood to warn the people of a future universal destruction by fire:

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. *For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:* But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Peter used the Genesis Flood as an illustration to prove the certainty and universality of the future fiery judgement. Whitcomb and Morris argue,

In speaking of the events of the second and third days of creation, Peter uses the terms “heavens from of old, and an earth” in a sense that is obviously universal. By the same token, no one can deny that Peter also uses the terms “heavens that now are, and the earth” in a strictly universal sense. Otherwise, Peter would be speaking of the creation and final destruction of only a part of the earth!²⁵

The Apostle Peter’s infallible commentary on the extent of the Genesis Flood settles decisively that the waters indeed covered the whole earth.

Conclusion

Progressive creationism is not at all progressive but regressive. It subtly undermines the authority of Scripture by elevating speculative theoretical science to the level of authoritative inspired Scripture. The Biblical doctrine of creation, the fall of man, existence of death, death as a punishment for sin, and the global deluge are some of the doctrines affected by the error of progressive creationism. Scripture has been wrenched out of its textual and theological context to fit science. This is eisegesis not exegesis.

We conclude that progressive creationism is a scientific wolf in theological clothing. This creature undermines the fundamental truth of Genesis that God created all things out of nothing by the power of His Word in the space of six literal days. Beware!

Notes

¹ Robert J Dunzweiler, "A Proposed Creationist Alternative to Evolutionism," Research Report 12 (Hatfield: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1983), 5, available from <http://www.ibri.org/12creationist.htm> (accessed, Sep 24, 2001).

² Ibid., 4.

³ Ibid., 5.

⁴ Ibid. Dunzweiler claimed that God's General Revelation is His source of truth for the interpretation of Special Revelation. This is an unjustified claim. For one thing, Dunzweiler's interpretation of God's General Revelation using the evolution theory as a basis is most unacceptable.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Robert C Newman and Herman J Eckelmann, Jr, *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth* (Hatfield: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1977), 30. Newman adopts the Star Formation Model as his scientific model for the formation of the universe. This was first proposed by Immanuel Kant (late 18th Century) and Pierre Laplace (early 19th Century) and later developed by Thomas Gold and Fred Hoyle (see *ibid.*, 44-53). Dunzweiler proposed a "literal, 24-hour Creation days, separated by intervals of varying length, and marking the stage of essential fulfillment in overlapping creative aspect periods" (Dunzweiler, "Creationist," 19-20.)

⁷ Newman and Eckelmann, *Genesis One*, 83-88. Dunzweiler proposed that, "the first six *yom*'s coincide with six stages of essential fulfillment in six distinct creative-aspect periods" (*ibid.*, 16).

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⁸ Robert C Newman, "Progressive Creationism," in *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, ed J P Moreland and John Mark Reynolds (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 107.

⁹ E.g., first day, second day, third day, etc.

¹⁰ Douglas F Kelly, *Creation and Change* (Great Britain: Christian Focus, 1997), 107.

¹¹ The seventh day was a literal day that typified the eternal sabbath to come (Heb 4:9). The typical use of a literal object is not uncommon in Scripture.

¹² Kelly, *Creation*, 109.

¹³ Henry M Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 55, 56.

¹⁴ John C Whitcomb, and Henry M Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), 228.

¹⁵ Dunzweiler, "Creationist," 18-21.

¹⁶ Dunzweiler's view of the seventh day seems to be different from that of Newman and Eckelmann. Here Dunzweiler says that the seventh day begins after the appearance of humans upon the earth, and during the Pleistocene Epoch (of the Quaternary period which is between 10 thousand to two million years. Newman and Eckelmann on the other hand says that the seventh day is still future (see Newman and Eckelmann, *Genesis One*, 84).

¹⁷ Newman, "Progressive Creationism," 111.

¹⁸ See Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, and 25.

¹⁹ 1 Cor 15:54-57, "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

²⁰ Newman, "Progressive Creationism," 111- 2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

²² H C Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Columbus: Watburg Press, 1942), 301.

²³ R B Y Scott, "Weights and Measures of the Bible," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 22 (1959): 27.

²⁴ Whitcomb and Morris, *Genesis Flood* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), 10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

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DO MISSIONARIES DESTROY CULTURES?

Charles Seet

Need for Cross-Cultural Missions

Cross-cultural missions is defined as “reaching out to a group that is ethnically and culturally different from oneself.” Hence, whenever we attempt to share the gospel with someone who is ethnically and culturally different from us—like a Chinese Christian witnessing to an Indian, this is cross-cultural missions in a very broad sense.

But in Christian circles today when a person mentions cross-cultural missions he usually means overcoming much greater barriers than that; barriers that make the proclamation of the Gospel a much longer and more tedious process than it would take to evangelise one’s own countrymen, and sometimes requires even spending a whole lifetime with them to do this. Here, we are talking about situations where one is reaching out to a people who have traditions, concepts, habits and beliefs so alien to the truths of God’s Word, that it becomes a slow and difficult task to bring them to Christ.

Such groups of people are now known as unreached ethno-linguistic people groups because they have distinct cultures, with their own ethnicity and/or language, quite isolated from civilisation and the rest of the developing world. They usually live in rural areas away from cities and do not have access to mass media. Some of them are tribal groups and some of them are nomadic groups. There are about 2,000 such groups in the world today. None of them have a church planted in their midst yet.

We can cite some well-known examples of missions to these types of people: David Livingston who went to Africa, William Carey who went to India. Adoniram Judson who went to Burma, William Chalmers Burns and Hudson Taylor who went to China. Many missionaries from the west like these, did wonderfully well in bringing the gospel to the ends of the earth. But unfortunately they sometimes did things on the mission field

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they should not have done; things which have long term consequences that are still being felt today.

Problems of Cross-Cultural Missions

One of the mistakes made by many missionaries in the past was that they went into a mission field not only to lead the people to the Gospel, but also to convert them to their own culture. They considered their own culture superior to any other and sought to convert people not only to Christianity but also to their own culture. This is one of the causes of the often-expressed sentiment of some non-Christians today, that Christianity is a western religion. Therefore, in many non-Western countries today to become a Christian is tantamount to disowning one's own cultural and ethnic identity.

Some missionaries went even further than that. Instead of learning the language of the people, they attempted to change the language of the people. They taught them Spanish, or Latin or English first so that they might understand the Gospel in the missionary's own tongue. This was not a good thing to do, because it imposed a double burden on the people. Firstly, they had to overcome a language barrier to get to God's Word. Then, they had to overcome an interpretation barrier to study and understand God's Word. It is like requiring all of us to do all our Bible study in our second language instead of our first language. You know how difficult and frustrating this can be.

Many missionaries found it extremely difficult to overcome culture shock. They were unable to adapt to the different cultures and languages of the people. So they made the people change and adapt to their own culture and language instead. The local people who became Christians also become culturally identical to the missionaries who brought them to Christ—speaking, thinking, and living like them.

These missionaries have destroyed the culture of the people they evangelised, and given a false cultural identity to the Gospel—one which was their own. Instead of being presented with the pure gospel of Christ which is universal, the unreached were presented with a Gospel that was all wrapped up in a culture that was alien and perhaps, even repulsive.

The question comes, "How can we present the Gospel without hindering it with this cultural wrapping?"

Biblical Solution for Cross-Cultural Missions

Part of the answer to this can be found in 1 Cor 9:20-22, “And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; To them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the Law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”

Love Whatever is Good in Their Culture

Look at the last verse again—that is where our important principle is found: “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” Notice how Paul uses the word “all” three times in one verse!—He is definitely driving home a point. The point is: We need to make an effort to understand the cultural background of the people we are reaching out to, and then reach them at their level by using what is familiar to them.

To love the people is to love their culture, and there is much in the culture of the people that we can and must appreciate. Missionaries who had the greatest success in cross-cultural missions were those who learned not only to love the culture of the people they were trying to reach, but who also used whatever is good in the culture to their advantage in communicating the message.

In reaching out to the Chinese, Hudson Taylor and William Burns chose to dress, eat, and live like the Chinese, even using chopsticks for eating, though they were severely criticised by their fellow Englishmen for doing so. They even used certain Chinese characters to communicate the gospel message. (For example, the Chinese word for “righteousness” consists of the character “lamb” placed over the character “me,” thus bringing out the Biblical truth that righteousness of Christ, the Lamb of God, is imputed to me and that makes me righteous in God’s sight.)

The Scriptures provide us with a good example of how this principle can be applied. In Acts 17:16, we read, “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.” What was it that caused Paul’s spirit to be so stirred within him when he was at Athens? Perhaps it was the sight of the many temples, shrines (more than 200 of them) and altars to the Greek gods at every street corner. He saw the idols of Zeus, the very immoral chief god;

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Hera, his wife; Ares, the god of war; Athena, goddess of wisdom; Aphrodite, goddess of love; Dionysius, the drunken god; and a whole host of other depraved gods. He saw the Greeks in their ignorance and fear coming daily in great numbers to worship the idols, without any hope of eternal life at all. In the Greek religion, everyone went to hell, no matter how good or bad he was in this life. There was no place called heaven to look forward to.

Paul probably saw how they worshipped these idols with drunken festivities and orgies, with animals that were sacrificed in honour of these gods. Most of the meat that was sold in the market had already been offered to one of the gods. He saw the people's lives ruled by plenty of superstitious beliefs: not daring to go outside the house on certain days, for fear that something bad would happen to them. The sight of all this may have been the cause of the great stirrings in Paul's heart. His heart was moved because the people were so ignorant of the truth. Although there was much to be admired in Greek culture, there was also much that was very sinful and depraved. This brings out an important lesson for us.

Reject Whatever is Sinful in Their Culture

Many today are buying into a dangerous trend in missions called contextualisation. This means adapting or modifying the message of Christ to make it culturally relevant to the people we are trying to reach. While we ought to learn to love the culture of the people we are reaching, we must be careful not to tolerate nor accommodate anything sinful in the culture.

If we are not stirred up against the sinful and pagan elements in their culture, we might end up doing what the Roman Catholic Church did in many mission fields—they simply baptised an existing ritual of pagan idolatry, changed the names but retained the forms. For example, in South America, the American Indians used to offer blood sacrifices to the image of a pagan goddess and carve out the heart of a victim and offer it to her. After they became Catholics, they did the same thing, but to an image of Mary. And when Jesuit missionaries came to China they also did not speak against the ancestor worship that the Chinese practised but simply adapted it into the doctrine of saying masses for dead loved ones in Purgatory. Let us be careful not to contextualise the Gospel for the sake of making it culturally relevant to the people we are reaching.

The Gospel is a sword that is designed to cut away whatever is sinful and pagan in human culture, and not accommodate it. In our passage of scripture, we see how strenuously Paul wielded this sword in Athens. We see this in v17, “Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.” The word “disputed” means preaching and careful reasoning. Paul evidently did not give himself much time to rest. On the Sabbath day he went to the local synagogue to preach to the Jews. For the rest of the week he went daily to the market place in Athens, to preach at the street corners and meeting places to everyone who passed by. This brings us to a third lesson that we can learn for cross-cultural missions:

Present the Gospel Diligently to Them

Cross-cultural missions always involve much diligent work for success. As Paul preached diligently, people from all walks of life stopped to listen. As a result, he earned the unique opportunity to address the highest assembly of Greeks in Athens. This happened when some students of Greek philosophy who heard him became interested because they had never heard this new strange philosophy of life called the Gospel before (vv18-20). They were so curious about it that they invited him to come and share his views at a meeting of the city council of Athens.

The word “Areopagus” mentioned in verse 19 literally means “The Council of Ares” or “The Council of Mars’ Hill.” This was the highest council or assembly of about a hundred men in Athens who met regularly to decide on matters of importance. Paul found himself with the very unique opportunity to address such a group. In our day, it would be like speaking in Parliament or some other gathering of high-ranking officials.

Now in verses 22-23, we read, “Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ Hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.” Paul was saying that in their zeal to serve all the gods, the Athenians had even set up an altar for an unknown god, just in case they accidentally left one out. They wanted to be absolutely sure that no god would be offended by being left out. Paul then used this as his point of transition to reveal the living and true God to them. He said ‘Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.’”

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Paul then proceeded to reveal basic truths about God that we all know, like His omnipotence, His omniscience, His omnipresence, and His universal claims upon all men regardless of nationality or race. Now, anyone who has ever taken time to study all the speeches made by Paul in the Bible would notice that this particular speech of Paul is quite different from all the others. We must take careful notice of the following differences: Instead of beginning with the promise of salvation made by God, Paul began with religion in general. Instead of leaning heavily upon Old Testament prophecies, Paul cites the writings of two Greek poets.

The question we ask is: Why did Paul use such a different approach to present the truth here? The answer is that different audiences need different approaches to delivering the Gospel. This leads us to a fourth lesson we can learn for cross-cultural missions:

Present the Gospel in a Manner That They are Familiar With

To communicate the eternal truths about God, we need to choose the right means of delivery, and this will depend on the type of audience we have. For instance, when reaching out to children, one useful method of sharing the Gospel is to use “The Wordless Book.” When I conducted a four-day seminar on evangelism some time ago, I presented three different methods of evangelism: using gospel tracts, using a marked Bible, and drawing a Bridge of Life diagram with the help of certain memory verses. Each of these methods have their advantages and disadvantages. Besides them there are other ways of communicating the gospel message, like holding a Gospel rally with a gifted evangelist to speak, or screening a very moving gospel film, or conducting a Bible correspondence course.

I was brought to Christ in my teens as a result of a correspondence course. That method seemed to work well for me, but it might not have worked for you. The point is this: Let us seek to use every legitimate means we can to make Him known.

Now we are going to see how Paul delivered the same truths he had delivered in other cities, but by using a different approach. The audience that Paul had was quite different from the ones he had before. They knew nothing at all about the Scriptures. All that they were familiar with were their Greek poets, and philosophers. They were proud of their philosophers.

By Paul's time, Athens had become famous because of Epicurus and Zeno, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. In fact, many people regarded Athens as the world's centre of learning. In verse 18 two groups of Greek philosophy students were mentioned: The Epicureans and the Stoics. Both believed that the traditional polytheism of the Greeks was not true, but other than this they disagreed on everything else. Epicureans believed that God exists but that He is not concerned at all with what happened to man. To them, the purpose of man's life is pleasure. One Epicurean maxim that has become famous is "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

The Stoics on the other hand had a pantheistic view of God: Everything is God; all of us, together with all the objects and the world together make up God. The Stoics thought that the purpose of man's life is to be contented by attaining harmony with nature through the use of one's sufficient rational powers. Stoics refused to be excited by pleasure or troubled by pain. All must be accepted stoically. A maxim that is very stoic is "Ours is not to reason why, ours is just to do and die."

The point here is that whenever we preach or share the gospel, we must first know our audience well. Endeavour to find out everything you can about your audience's background. Take time to learn about the way your audience views life and the world. The audience that Paul had at Mars' Hill consisted of intellectuals who belonged to one of these two philosophies, Stoic and Epicurean. And he knew that. His message shows that he had more than a passing knowledge of these philosophies. He had probably studied them in order to find the best means to approach them.

We notice one important thing: Paul did not mention anything at all in his speech about God's dealings with Israel. That would immediately turn off the Greeks, who were not interested in Israel. But his main line of attack was to argue against the idea that an idol could be God (vv24-25). This truth would be readily received by the Greek philosophers. He dealt with the purpose of life (vv26-27) which is neither to seek pleasure as the Epicureans believed, nor to seek harmony with nature as the Stoics believed, but to seek God and to enter into a parent-child relationship with Him. He appealed to the sentiments expressed by two well-known Greek poets his audience was familiar with. Although these sentiments were expressed by pagan writers, they had an element of scriptural truth in them, which Paul could now make use of to his advantage.

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The first poet he cited was Epimenides who lived in 600 BC and wrote the words concerning God, “But thou art not dead; thou livest and abidest forever, For in thee we live and move and have our being.” The last line of this can be seen in the first part of verse 28, and it effectively expresses the scriptural truth of depending upon God and trusting in Him.

The second poet that Paul cited expresses the fatherhood of God over all men. This poet was Aratus who lived in about 300 BC and wrote, “It is with [God] that every one of us in every way has to do, for we are also His offspring.” By using the words of Greek poets to express Scriptural truths, Paul was actually showing that these truths are universal. They belong not only to the Jews, but also to the whole world. God’s divine revelation is for all men without distinction.

Paul then proceeds to reason with the same perfect logical reasoning used by the Greek philosophers. In verse 30, he says that this formerly “Unknown God” has now brought an end to the times of ignorance concerning Himself. He has now revealed Himself clearly to all men, and all men should therefore stop their idolatrous beliefs and practices, since the truth is now known. No man can now claim that God has not shown us who He is and how He is to be worshipped, using this as an excuse for carrying on in ignorance. Since God has made Himself known, man has no excuse now for not knowing Him.

Now Paul did not stop there. We observe that in verse 31 he proclaims the fact that God will judge the world one day “by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” This raising from the dead refers to the resurrection of Jesus Christ three days after He had been crucified. This point was actually the whole foundation to Paul’s Gospel presentation. It is the resurrection that validates all the claims of Christ, and ends any question concerning His identity as God. But it was also on this point that the Athenian scholars stumbled. The next verse tells us that “when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.” That brought Paul’s opportunity to witness at Mars’ Hill to an abrupt end.

At this point it may be asked: Did Paul realise that he had made a mistake by bringing up this matter? Should not he have kept quiet about the resurrection? And if he knew that the Greeks would scoff at this teaching about Christ’s resurrection, would he have spoken differently? I

believe that to Paul, the resurrection was so essential to the Gospel, that it could not be left out, even at the risk of losing an excellent opportunity to witness. This brings us to the fifth and final lesson we can learn for cross-cultural missions:

Present the Gospel Fully to Them, Trusting God for the Results

Even though there are different approaches and ways of presenting the Gospel, the message must always be the same, full gospel message. Any method of witnessing that has to dilute the Gospel, or misrepresent the truth, or deliberately conceal certain truths for the sake of not hurting the sensitivities of the people, must be rejected in cross-cultural missions.

Above all things, cross-cultural missions must be faithful to deliver the Word of God fully, even if that will result in obtaining little or no apparent results. We should just trust God for the results of sound biblical preaching. The apostle Paul did not seem to mind the cold dismissal he received at Mars' Hill. But the last two verses of the chapter tells us that after that disappointing event, a few Greeks came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. They are mentioned in verse 34 as Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris and a few others. The scriptures do not mention anything more about Athens, nor about what happened to these new believers after this. But if you were to visit Athens today, you will be pleasantly surprised to find right there on Mars' Hill the remains of a church building, and the name of that church is "the church of St Dionysius the Areopagite."

If Paul had not engaged in cross-cultural preaching in Athens, and had not presented the gospel fully and diligently in a manner that was familiar to the Greeks, that church might not be there today. That church stands as a testimony to God's working through cross-cultural missions that is carried out faithfully according to the principles laid down in the Scriptures.

Paul's example also serves as an encouragement to all who are involved in this oftentimes difficult ministry. As long as our sovereign God is on the throne, there can be no barrier to the gospel—whether lingual, cultural, or ethnic. The success of cross-cultural missions is a foregone conclusion.

Rev 7:9-12 tells us that John the Apostle in his vision of the end times, beheld, "... a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne,

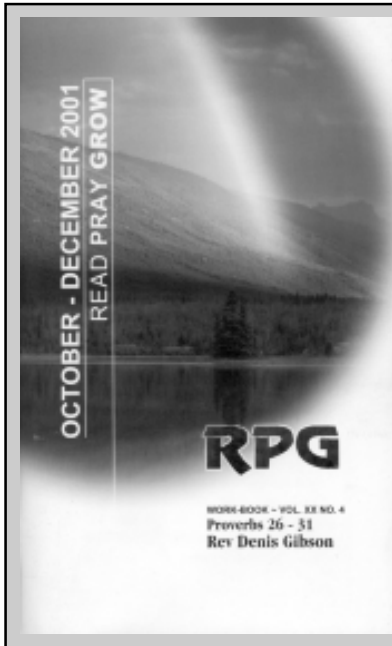
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and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

Conclusion

Therefore, let us not keep the truth only to those of our own culture and our own kind, but keep on crossing cultural barriers to make it known to others, for they need it as much as we did. Hudson Taylor was asked by one of his first Chinese converts, “How long have you people in the West known this good news?” And he had to reply, “We have actually had it for many centuries.” On hearing this the Chinese convert looked painfully at him and said in effect, “Do you mean to say that you Christians in the west had the truth for hundreds of years, but only now you have come to tell us about it?” May the Lord help us to make Him known to all.

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

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AN EVALUATION OF KOREAN BIBLES

Dong Soo Jung

Introduction

The gospel of Jesus Christ was introduced into the land of Morning Calm in April 5, 1885 by missionaries from the United States. Early Korean Christians were persecuted for their faith in one true God as happened in other parts of the world throughout history. They, however, fought a good fight and proclaimed the gospel without fearing the threat from the monarchy. Since 1877, some missionaries had undertaken the translation work of the Bible into Korean and the entire Bible appeared in 1938 and 1961 under the name of *The Korean Revised Version (KRV)*. Since then that Bible with some later revisions has been used predominantly in all Korean churches and has even been regarded as the perfect Word of God for Koreans.

In Korea, Presbyterian churches have become the largest group due to the early mission efforts of many of their missionaries. Traditionally, they have been well characterised by strict observance of certain rules such as the Sabbath keeping on Sundays and abstinence from alcohol and tobacco etc. They have also regarded the KRV as being without error, and accused anyone pointing out the deficiencies of the KRV, such as the omission of entire verses like Acts 8:37, of causing a division among the brethren. Hence, criticising the KRV has been absolutely forbidden for more than half a century. The King James Version was mentioned only in literature and very few people have a copy. In fact, not many people realise that there are serious differences between the texts of the KRV and the KJV until the late 1980s. At that time, some people, not theologians but just ordinary Bible believers, came to realise this difference by reading literature from the United States regarding the KJV issue. There, however, was no response from established theological circles to the KJV issue.

In the mean time, the followers of Peter Ruckman formed the so-called “Word of God Preservation Society” led by Song Lee, and they published the first Korean KJV in the mid-90s. Owing to their extreme position, some bizarre doctrines, and merciless attacks on many Christians and Christian denominations, the goodness of the KJV has been undermined greatly. Their translation was done in haste and contained lots of flaws. Finally, one of the largest Presbyterian groups denounced them as heretics, and the image of the KJV was marred so severely that its recovery seemed impossible.

There was another group of highly educated people of various vocations comprising a medical doctor, a lawyer, a college professor, engineers, and pastors who loved and believed the KJV. After observing the horrible disgrace brought upon the providentially preserved KJV due to some extremists, they felt a strong need to translate the KJV in a more careful manner with the spirit of love rather than one of judgment and condemnation. After spending roughly eight years, they finally published another Korean KJV in August 2000.

The objective of this paper is to analyse the Korean Bibles vis-a-vis the KJV. The differences in the New Testament, found in some Korean Bibles, two modern English versions, and three critical Greek texts as compared to the KJV, will be listed in a tabular format in order to substantiate the fact that all Korean Bibles are as bad as their modern English counterparts due to their use of the same text for translation.

It is hoped the reader will see that there really is a serious textual difference between the Korean Bibles and the KJV. This seeks to warn the Korean believers (as well as others) of Satan’s vicious attack on the inspired and preserved Word of God.

A Brief History of the Korean Bibles

It has been said that the first man to translate the Bible into Korean was a Scottish missionary to China named John Ross.¹ He came to the Korea/China border in 1874 and 1876 to preach the gospel to Koreans using the Chinese Bible but could not satisfactorily accomplish his work. In 1877, he published a small booklet called *Corean Primer* in an attempt to translate the Bible into Korean in Manchuria, a northern part of China. The principles of his translation were as follows:

- (1) Korean translators/helpers were to translate the Bible from the Chinese Bibles.
- (2) The manuscript was to be corrected against the Greek text and English Revised Version.
- (3) The vocabulary of the manuscript was to be set in order using the Greek concordance and some commentaries such as one made by Meyer.
- (4) Idioms found in Korean were to be preferred to the literal rendering for ease of understanding.²

Sujung Lee tried to translate some parts of the New Testament in Japan again using the Chinese Bibles from 1882. His translation of the gospel of Mark was the one carried by the first missionaries to Korea. They were Horace G Underwood and Henry G Appenzeller, sent by the Presbyterian and Methodist churches in America respectively.³

The Korean Revised Version

The first Korean Bible containing both the Old and New Testaments was published in 1911 and the revised edition of this was published in 1938. Finally, the most popular version named *The Korean Revised Version* (KRV) was issued in 1961. Since then most Korean Christians have regarded this version as the true word of God to the jot and tittle, without any problems. The KRV was translated mainly by foreign missionaries with the help of fellow Korean workers using the Chinese Bibles as their basic texts. The missionaries, however, were influenced by the new theories of textual criticism promoted by Westcott and Hort and hence used the critical Greek text, English Revised Version, and American Standard Version as their basic texts.⁴

The literary aspects of the KRV are very similar to that of the English KJV—sentences are short and powerful and hence easy to memorize. Unlike the English KJV, however, this feature comes mainly from the use of Chinese expressions which shorten long sentences into short phrases or idioms since Chinese characters carry meanings singularly. There is no doubt that the literary style of the KRV reflects the emotions and culture of the common people so well that it inspires feelings of majesty and beauty when narrated. Extreme abbreviations, however, often do not reflect the verbal inspiration of the Word of God.

The New Korean Standard Version

The Korean Bible Society (KBS) felt the need for a new translation targeted at a new generation. At the same time, there was a consensus that a version produced purely by Korean translators should replace the KRV, which is largely the work of foreign missionaries. The KBS felt that properly educated Korean men from other countries could undertake this job. The work began in 1983. *The New Korean Standard Version* (NKSJV) was finally published in 1993. It was based on the United Bible Societies' *The Greek New Testament* (3rd ed, 1983) and *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1967/1977).⁵

The Korean Common Translation

In 1968, the KBS formed another committee to produce a new translation named *The Korean Common Translation* (KCT) which was to be the product of a joint effort by Protestants and Roman Catholics. This Bible, in fact, reflected the spirit of ecumenism after the second Vatican Council.⁶

In 1962, Eugene A Nida and Wilfred J Bradnock from the American and British Bible Societies respectively visited Korea and presented a new “dynamic equivalence” method of translation.⁷ KCT adopted this new method in its translation.⁷ The text for the Old Testament was *Biblia Hebraica* edited by Rudolph Kittel (3rd ed, 1937), and for the New Testament it was the *Greek New Testament* published by the United Bible Societies (1st ed, 1966).⁸

This was the second Korean Bible in the world to be produced by the cooperative efforts of Protestants and Catholics. It is also the first paraphrased Korean Bible, and is printed in two different editions: one for the Protestants, and the other which contained the Apocrypha for the Catholics.⁹

The Korean Living Bible

The Korean Living Bible (KLB) is another liberal paraphrase version. It was published by the Book of Life Company which is one of the largest Christian book publishing companies in Korea. This work is said to be based upon *The Living Bible*.¹⁰ It sought to make the Korean Bible easy to read and understand.

Influence of Text and Translators on Korean Bibles

The translator and his text would invariably determine how a Bible version would finally turn out. This section will examine in detail how the philosophy and cultural backgrounds of the translators and the texts used have affected the Korean Bibles.

As shown earlier, all Korean Bibles like most of the modern English versions are based on the critical Greek text. The Korean Bibles unfortunately reflect the deficiencies of the corrupted text on which they are based. It is important that the words of the Bible should be dealt with in the light of biblical concepts in both the interpretation and translation. At the outset, Korean translators, or those who assisted the missionary translators, carried out their work without removing heathen philosophies such as Korean shamanism. As a result, unbiblical words or concepts entered into Korean Bibles.

Specific Verses Showing the Omissions of the Korean Bibles

Key To Tables

Below are the abbreviations and symbols used for column headings representing the Greek, English, and Korean translations:

BS	Bible Societies, 3rd edition, 1976
N	Nestle, 23rd edition, 1957
WH	Westcott and Hort, 1881
NASB	New American Standard Bible, 1971
NIV	New International Version, 1973
KAV	Korean Authorized Version, 2000
KCT	Korean Common Translation, 1977
KLB	Korean Living Bible, 1986
KRV	Korean Revised Version, 1961
NKSV	New Korean Standard Version, 1993
*	Omissions downgrading our Lord God
+	Differences affecting doctrine of our Christian faith
Om	Word(s) omitted
SB	Word(s) in single brackets
DB	Word(s) in double brackets
-	Indicates no omission

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Table 1: Whole Verses Omitted or Enclosed in Brackets

	WH	N	BS	NASB	NIV	KRV	KCT	KLB	NKSV
Matthew 12:47*	Om	SB	SB	-	-	-	-	-	SB
Matthew 17:21	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	SB	Om
Matthew 18:11*	Om	Om	Om	SB	Om	Om	Om	SB	Om
Matthew 21:44	SB	Sb	DB	-	-	-	SB	-	SB
Matthew 23:14	Om	Om	Om	SB	Om	Om	Om	SB	Om
Mark 7:16	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 9:44	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 9:46	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 11:26	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	SB	Om
Mark 15:28*	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 16:9-20*	DB	DB	DB	SB	-	SB	-	-	DB
Luke 17:36	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	SB	Om
Luke 22:20	DB	DB	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Luke 22:43	DB	DB	DB	-	-	-	Om	-	DB
Luke 22:44	DB	DB	DB	-	-	-	Om	-	DB
Luke 23:17	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 24:12*	DB	Om	-	SB	-	-	-	-	-
Luke 24:40*	DB	Om	-	Om	-	-	-	-	-
Luke 5:4	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	SB	SB	SB	DB
Luke 7:53-8:11*	DB	Om	DB	SB	-	SB	SB	-	DB
Acts 8:37*	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	SB	Om
Acts 15:34	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 24:7	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	SB	SB	Om
Acts 28:29	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	SB	Om
Romans 16:24	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
John 5:7	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Verses omitted	18	20	17	16	17	16	17	8	16

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Table 2: Significant Portions of Verses Omitted

	King James Bible / TR / KAV	WH	N	BS	NASB	NIV	KRV	KCT	KLB	NKSV
Matt 5:27	<i>by them of old time</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 5:44	<i>bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 5:44	<i>despitefully use you, and</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 6:13*	<i>For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.</i>	Om	Om	Om	SB	Om	SB	SB	SB	DB
Matt 13:51*	<i>Jesus saith unto them</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	Om	DB	DB	DB
Matt 15:6	<i>or his mother</i>	Om	-	Om	-	Om	-	-	-	-
Matt 15:8*	<i>draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 19:9	<i>and whoso marieth her which is put away doth commit adultery</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 19:20	<i>from my youth</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 20:7	<i>and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 20:16	<i>for many be called, but few chosen</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 20:22*	<i>and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 20:23*	<i>and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 22:13	<i>and take him away</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 23:4	<i>and grievous to be borne</i>	Om	Om	SB	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-
Matt 23:5	<i>of their garments</i>	Om	Om	Om	-	-	-	-	-	-
Matt 25:13*	<i>Wherein the Son of man cometh</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 26:3	<i>and the scribes</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 26:60	<i>yet found they none</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 27:35*+	<i>that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 28:2	<i>from the door</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Matt 28:9*	<i>as they went to tell His disciples</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 1:1*+	<i>the Son of God</i>	Om	Om	SB	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mark 1:14	<i>of the kingdom</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 1:42*	<i>as soon as He had spoken</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 3:5	<i>whole as the other</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	Om	DB	DB	Om
Mark 3:15	<i>to heal sicknesses, and</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 6:11*	<i>Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorha in the day of judgment, than for that city</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 6:33*	<i>and came together unto Him</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 6:36	<i>for they have nothing</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 7:2	<i>they found fault</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 7:8	<i>as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 8:9	<i>they that had eaten</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	-	Om
Mark 8:26	<i>nor tell it to any in the town</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 9:38	<i>and he followeth not us</i>	Om	-	Om	Om	Om	-	Om	-	Om

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	King James Bible / TR / KAV	WH	N	BS	NASB	NIV	KRV	KCT	KLB	NKSV
Mark 9:45	<i>into the fire that never shall be quenched</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 9:49	<i>and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	DB	Om
Mark 10:7	<i>and cleave to his wife</i>	Om	Om	SB	Om	-	Om	-	Om	-
Mark 10:21	<i>take up the cross</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 10:24+	<i>them that trust in riches</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 11:8	<i>and strawed them in the way</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	-	-
Mark 11:10*	<i>in the name of the Lord</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 11:23	<i>whatsoever he saith</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 12:23	<i>therefore, when they shall rise</i>	Om	-	SB	-	Om	-	-	Om	-
Mark 12:29	<i>of all the commandments</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 12:30	<i>this is the first commandment</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 12:33	<i>and with all the soul</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 13:11	<i>neither do ye premeditate</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 13:14	<i>spoken of by Daniel the prophet</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 14:19	<i>and another said, Is it I?</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 14:27*	<i>because of Me this night</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 14:68	<i>and the cock crew</i>	Om	Om	SB	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	Om
Mark 14:70	<i>and thy speech agreeth thereto</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Mark 15:3*	<i>but He answered nothing</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 1:28	<i>blessed art thou among women</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 1:29	<i>when she saw him</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 2:42	<i>up to Jerusalem</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	-	Om
Luke 4:4*	<i>but by every word of God</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 4:5	<i>into an high mountain</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 4:8*	<i>Get thee behind Me, Satan</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 4:18	<i>to heal the brokenhearted</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	Om
Luke 5:38	<i>and both are preserved</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 6:45	<i>treasure of his heart (bringeth forth ... evil)</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	DB	DB	-	-
Luke 7:31*	<i>And the Lord said</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	DB	-	Om
Luke 8:43	<i>had spent all her living upon physicians</i>	Om	Om	SB	Om	Om	Om	-	SB	SB
Luke 8:45	<i>and they that were with Him</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 8:45*	<i>and sayest thou, Who touched Me?</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	DB	Om
Luke 8:48	<i>be of good comfort</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 8:54	<i>put them all out, and</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 9:10	<i>a desert place</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 9:54	<i>even as Elias did?</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 9:55	<i>and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 9:56*	<i>For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 10:38	<i>into her house</i>	-	-	Om	-	-	-	-	-	-
Luke 11:2*	<i>Which art in heaven</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 11:2*	<i>Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 11:4	<i>but deliver us from evil</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om

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	King James Bible / TR / KAV	WH	N	BS	NASB	NIV	KRV	KCT	KLB	NKSV
Luke 11:11	<i>bread of any of you ... will he give him a stone? or if he ask</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 11:44	<i>scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 11:54*	<i>that they might accuse Him</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 12:39	<i>he would have watched, and</i>	-	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 17:9*	<i>him? I trow not</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 17:24*	<i>in His day</i>	Om	-	SB	-	-	-	DB	DB	-
Luke 18:24	<i>that he was very sorrowful</i>	Om	Om	SB	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-
Luke 19:45	<i>therein, and them that bought</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 20:13	<i>when they see him</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 20:23*	<i>Why tempt ye Me?</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 20:30	<i>took her to wife, and he died childless</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 22:31*	<i>And the Lord said</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 22:64*	<i>they struck Him on the face</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 22:68*	<i>Me, nor let Me go</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 23:23	<i>and of the chief priests</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 23:38	<i>written ... in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 24:1	<i>and certain others with them</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 24:36*	<i>and saith unto them, Peace be unto you</i>	DB	Om	-	Om	-	-	-	DB	-
Luke 24:42	<i>and of an honeycomb</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 24:46	<i>and thus it behoved</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Luke 24:51+*	<i>and carried up into heaven</i>	DB	Om	-	Om	-	SB	-	-	SB
Luke 24:52*	<i>worshipped Him</i>	DB	Om	-	Om	-	Om	Om	Om	Om
John 1:27+*	<i>is preferred before me</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
John 3:13+*	<i>Which is in heaven</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
John 3:15	<i>should not perish, but</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
John 5:3	<i>waiting for the moving of the water</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	SB	SB	SB	DB
John 5:16*	<i>and sought to slay Him</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
John 6:11	<i>to the disciples, and the disciples</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
John 6:22*	<i>that one whereinto His disciples were entered</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
John 6:47+*	<i>on Me</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	Om
John 6:51*	<i>which I will give</i>	Om	Om	Om	-	-	Om	Om	DB	DB
John 7:46	<i>like this Man</i>	Om	-	Om	-	-	-	-	-	DB
John 8:9	<i>being convicted by their own conscience</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	Om	-	Om
John 8:9	<i>even unto the last</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
John 8:10	<i>and saw none but the woman</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	Om	Om	Om
John 8:10	<i>those thine accusers?</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	Om	Om	Om
John 8:59+*	<i>going through the midst of them, and so passed by</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
John 9:6	<i>of the blind man</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	-	Om
John 10:13	<i>The hireling fleeth</i>	Om	Om	Om	-	-	-	DB	-	DB
John 10:26*	<i>as I said unto you</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
John 11:41	<i>where the dead was laid</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om

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	King James Bible / TR / KAV	WH	N	BS	NASB	NIV	KRV	KCT	KLB	NKSV
John 12:1	<i>which had been dead</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	DB	Om
John 13:32*	<i>If God be glorified in Him</i>	Om	-	SB	-	-	DB	DB	DB	SB/DB
John 16:16*	<i>because I go to the Father</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
John 17:12	<i>in the world</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
John 19:16	<i>and led Him away</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 2:30*	<i>according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 2:47	<i>to the church</i>	Om	Om	Om	-	-	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 3:11	<i>the lame man which was healed</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	DB	Om	Om	Om
Acts 7:37*	<i>Him shall ye hear</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 9:5	<i>it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 9:6*	<i>And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 10:6	<i>he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 10:12	<i>and wild beasts</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 10:21	<i>which were sent unto him from Cornelius</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 10:32	<i>who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 13:42	<i>the Jews ... out of the synagogue, the Gentiles</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	DB	DB	DB	DB
Acts 15:18*	<i>unto God are all His works</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 15:24	<i>saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 18:21	<i>I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 20:15	<i>and tarried at Trogyllium</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 21:8	<i>that were of Paul's company</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 21:22	<i>the multitude must needs come together: for</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 21:25	<i>that they observe no such thing, save only</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 22:9	<i>and were afraid</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 22:20	<i>unto his death</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	DB	DB	DB
Acts 23:9*	<i>let us not fight against God</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 24:6	<i>and would have judged according to our law</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	SB	SB	Om
Acts 24:8	<i>Commanding his accusers to come unto thee</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	SB	SB/DB	Om
Acts 24:26	<i>that he might loose him</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 26:30	<i>And when he had thus spoken</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Acts 28:16	<i>the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rom 1:16*	<i>of Christ</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rom 8:1*	<i>who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rom 9:28	<i>in righteousness: because a short work</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rom 10:15	<i>preach the gospel of peace</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om

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	King James Bible / TR / KAV	WH	N	BS	NASB	NIV	KRV	KCT	KLB	NKSV
Rom 11:6	<i>But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rom 13:9	<i>Thou shalt not bear false witness</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rom 14:6*	<i>he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rom 14:21	<i>or is offended, or is made weak</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	DB	Om
Rom 15:24	<i>I will come to you</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rom 15:29	<i>of the gospel</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
1 Cor 6:20*	<i>and in your spirit, which are God's</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
1 Cor 10:28*	<i>for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
1 Cor 11:24	<i>take, eat</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
1 Cor 15:54	<i>this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and</i>	Om	-	-	-	-	-	DB	Om	-
Gal 3:1	<i>that ye should not obey the truth</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Eph 3:14*	<i>of our Lord Jesus Christ</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Eph 5:30*	<i>of His flesh, and of His bones</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Phil 3:16	<i>by the same rule, let us mind the same thing</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Phil 3:21	<i>that it may be</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	Om	Om	-	-
Col 1:2*	<i>and the Lord Jesus Christ</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Col 1:14*+	<i>through His blood</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	Om
Col 3:6	<i>on the children of disobedience</i>	Om	Om	SB	Om	Om	Om	-	Om	-
1 Thess 1:1*	<i>from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	Om
1 Tim 3:3	<i>not greedy of filthy lucre</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
1 Tim 6:5	<i>from such withdraw thyself</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
1 Tim 6:7	<i>it is certain</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Heb 2:7*	<i>and didst set him over the works of Thy hands</i>	SB	Om	Om	-	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Heb 3:6	<i>firm unto the end</i>	SB	SB	Om	-	Om	-	Om	-	Om
Heb 7:21	<i>after the order of Melchisedec</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	-	Om
Heb 8:12	<i>and their iniquities</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Heb 10:30*	<i>saith the Lord</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Heb 10:34	<i>in heaven</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Heb 11:11	<i>was delivered of a child</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Heb 11:13	<i>and were persuaded of them</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Heb 12:20	<i>or thrust through with a dart</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
1 Pet 1:22*	<i>through the Spirit</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
1 Pet 4:3	<i>of our life</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
1 Pet 4:14*	<i>on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
1 Pet 5:2	<i>taking the oversight thereof</i>	Om	Om	SB	Om	-	Om	DB	Om	-
2 Pet 3:10	<i>in the night</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
1 John 4:3*+	<i>Christ is come in the flesh</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
1 John 5:13*	<i>and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om

AN EVALUATION OF KOREAN BIBLES

	King James Bible / TR / KAV	WH	N	BS	NASB	NIV	KRV	KCT	KLB	NKSV
Rev 1:8*	<i>the Beginning and the Ending</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rev 1:11*	<i>I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last: and</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rev 1:11	<i>which are in Asia</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rev 5:14	<i>Him that liveth for ever and ever</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rev 11:1	<i>and the angel stood</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rev 11:17*+	<i>and art to come</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rev 14:5*	<i>before the throne of God</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rev 15:2	<i>over his mark</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
Rev 21:24	<i>of them which are saved</i>	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	Om
	<i>Total number omitted</i>	193	191	185	185	180	178	170	160	173

In 1981, Everett W Fowler made an excellent comparison in his book, *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament*, concerning the differences between the KJV and other English versions. In the book, he even compared the critical Greek texts of Westcott and Hort, Nestle, and the Bible Societies against the Textus Receptus that underlies the KJV. The two tables above indicate that all Korean Bibles were based on the corrupted Greek text. These two tables use the same format and content found in Fowler's book.¹¹ Table 1 shows the complete omission of whole verses while Table 2 displays the partial omission of verses. Three critical Greek texts, two English versions (NIV and NASB), and four Korean versions (KRV, NKSV, KCT, and KLB) are compared in both tables.

As shown on Table 1, the KRV, KCT, and NKSV omit whole verses as many times as the critical Greek texts, the NASB, and the NIV. This confirms that these Korean Bibles are based on the same corrupted Greek text, and are therefore as unreliable as their English counterparts. Interestingly, the KLB omits the whole verses only half the time as compared to the other Korean versions.

The omission of significant portions of verses in the Greek texts, English versions, and Korean Bibles as shown on Table 2 averaged 189.7, 182.5, and 170.3 respectively. Although the number of omissions found in the Korean Bibles is 10% less than the Greek and English translations, there is no doubt that they belong to the same line of corrupted translations.

Conclusion

By God's grace, the precious word of God was delivered to the Korean peninsula more than a century ago. At the beginning, missionaries with the help of native Koreans translated the Bible into the Korean language. They produced *The Korean Revised Version* which has been the most loved Bible in Korea for more than half a century. The source texts of the KRV, however, were mainly the corrupted Greek texts and modern English versions (especially the ASV). This resulted in many omissions of God's words in the Bible. These omissions are also found in modern English versions such as the NIV.

A detailed comparison of four Korean Bibles with three critical Greek texts and two modern English versions clearly shows that all Korean Bibles examined are as corrupted as their English counterparts. This is definitely due to the adoption of the corrupt Westcott-Hort text as the source text. Furthermore, the Koreans who assisted the missionaries in translating the KRV were not well grounded in biblical Judeo-Christian theology. This resulted in the use of heathen terms and concepts in the translation work. Consequently, there are many terms and doctrines found in the KRV which are unacceptable from the viewpoint of orthodox Christianity. This makes the faithful biblical-theological indoctrination of Christians very difficult, if not, impossible.

Now is the right time for Korean Bible believers to wake up and preach from the pure Word of God. The Korean King James Version (see <http://www.InChristJesus.net>), published in 2000, shall serve as the Bible of the Koreans in the 21st century, guaranteeing the maximum certainty of the Word of God since it is based upon the correct text and produced by Bible-believing Christians with correct theology. May God bless this Bible to bring honour and glory to His name!

Notes

¹ Chae-woon Na, *A Study of the Korean Translations of the Bible* (Seoul, Korea: The Christian Literature Press, 1990), 36. The author of this book is a well-known professor at the largest Presbyterian theological seminary in Korea. He defends the critical text of Westcott and Hort and opposes the KJV and prefers modern Korean translations. Since this is the most extensive and authoritative compilation of data, it will be frequently cited in this paper.

² United Presbyterian Missionary Record, July 1, 1882, cited by Na, *Korean Translations*, 37.

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³ Ibid, 41.

⁴ Ibid, 50. Na says that the Chinese versions were also based upon the new English versions, not the King James Version, and that Keil-Delitzsch's commentary and the *International Critical Commentary* were referred to frequently by the translators.

⁵ "Preface," *The New Korean Standard Version* (Seoul, Korea: The Korean Bible Society, 1993). See also Na, *Korean Translations*, 460.

⁶ Ibid, 72.

⁷ Ibid, 72.

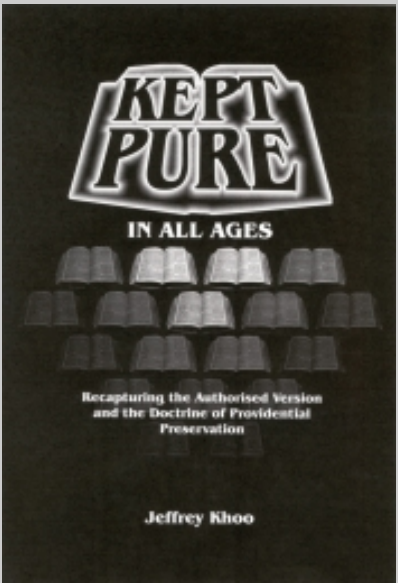
⁸ "Preface," *The Korean Common Translation* (Seoul, Korea: The Korean Bible Society, 1977).

⁹ Na, *Korean Translations*, 75. Na also mentions that the Roman Catholic Church never published any Korean Bible of its own for the past two centuries.

¹⁰ "Preface," *The Korean Living Bible* (Seoul, Korea: The Book of Life Company, 1986).

¹¹ E Fowler, *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament* (Cedarville, IL: Straight Street Inc, 1981), 28-41.

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KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES by Jeffrey Khoo

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

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BIBLICAL MOTHERHOOD (III): A CRITIQUE OF THE SINGAPOREAN SITUATION IN VIEW OF BIBLICAL TEACHINGS

Carol Lee

The Singapore National Presupposition

From the overview of the Singaporean situation with regard to women (see Part I, *The Burning Bush*, January 2001), it is seen that Singapore is extremely driven by economics, in particular national economic development. Uppermost in the minds of the policy makers is national economic advancement. The basic national solution to this (as far as Singaporean women are concerned) is that Singaporean women especially the educated and skilled ones must be in the workforce to make their economic contribution. There is no debate on whether they should work or be full-time mothers. The policy makers' presupposition is that Singaporean women must be in the workforce for the sake of the national economy in view of the scarcity of human resources. Their challenge therefore is to come up with ways and means to make it possible, attractive and conducive for women, especially those married with children, to return and to remain in the workforce.

The various solutions suggested to get mothers into, and remain in, the workforce while still producing children all require the child to be cared for by an outsider. They are not able to allow the mother to keep her career and at the same time look after her own children. Attempts to create an environment where a combination of motherhood and career is possible (although to a limited extent) include extended paid maternity leave, paid leave to look after one's sick child, careers that allow flexible working hours and flexible work locations. One example was recently reported in *The Straits Times* (page one) dated 14 April 2000, where the Ministry of Education is making it easier for qualified teachers who are mothers to remain in the teaching profession by allowing them to do half a teacher's load for half the salary.

All these efforts are very appropriate for a secular government running a secular state with the welfare of the nation at heart. Are Christians in Singapore to accept this national presupposition that women must be in the workforce? Should Christian mothers in Singapore leave their children to be taken care of by an outside party in order to remain in the workforce to meet the expectations of political leaders and to take care of national economic advancement? Or are they to go back to the basic issue of what God's intended role for them is? Christians living in a secular society do benefit from the good that comes through the appropriate actions of their government, but they also suffer from the bad. When it comes to making decisions where a citizen has the freedom of choice, Christians are to look to God for direction and guidance, and be prepared to obey even at the cost of personal, social or economic hardship.

Social Pressures on Christian Mothers in Singapore

There are many factors in the Singaporean society which make it very tempting for the Christian woman to accept and put into practice the national presupposition. Some of them are as follows:

- (1) Educational and training opportunities: With equal educational opportunities available, women can go as far as they are capable of going educationally. It is reported that more women than men in Singapore graduate with a first degree from NUS and NTU in the 1990s¹ and that since 1995 Singaporean women have made up 50% of the annual polytechnic and university intakes.²

With education and training behind her, the Singaporean woman sees it necessary and logical to put these to good use by establishing a career and enjoying the status and recognition as well as the financial independence that come with a career. Being a full-time housewife, by comparison, would be seen as unproductive and wasteful. Work in the home is considered menial and can be performed easily even by the uneducated.

The emphasis on education and training has been so great that it has spawned a whole new industry in Singapore termed the "Master's programmes by distance learning industry."³ Men and women alike in pursuance of higher education through this industry find themselves working a full day's job and studying in the evening leaving little time for family members and everything else.

- (2) Employment prospects and career advancement: With Singapore enjoying almost full employment and still having to look beyond its shores to import foreign labour to meet its shortage of manpower, the job market is always beckoning to the Singaporean women. This is especially true for those who are educated and skilled and companies make it very attractive for their women employees to remain in the workforce. The past ten years have seen the percentage of women in senior managerial and technical positions jump from 20 to 33%.⁴

Employment and promotion prospects make it very attractive and provide the reason for a working woman to just continue working even when baby arrives. In addition, the difficulty of getting back onto the corporate ladder should she stop work for a period of time to look after her children prevents her from stopping work altogether.

- (3) The high cost and standard of living: With the high prices of private properties and cars, coupled with an affluent lifestyle, many families have to be dual-income families in order to afford these things in life. Many families see these material things in life as within their reach so long as both husband and wife work. Once a certain standard of living is achieved, it is difficult for the couple to revert to a lower one. The tendency is that they would want aspire to achieve an even higher standard of living. As a result, they would see reverting to a one-income family as most undesirable, or even impossible.
- (4) Governmental aids: Governmental aids include SDU, tax incentives and subsidies, availability of childcare and household helps, pro-family policies. These encourage people to get married, have children and remain in the workforce. They make it difficult for mothers to say no to a career outside the home. Jennifer Lee, a Nominated Member of Parliament, intends to pursue in Parliament more pro-family policies by different ministries. Examples include:⁵ raise the cut-off age of sick child leave to twelve years from the current six years, encourage more private-sector firms to implement family-friendly practices such as flexible working arrangements like flexi-time, part-time or job-sharing systems, childcare subsidies, on-site childcare centres or services that help employees locate a convenient one, facilitate the re-entry of employees into the

workforce after childbirth, site before-and-after school centres within schools, grant bigger subsidies to parents who place their children in these centres, lower the enrolment age of kids at childcare centres from 18 months to two months and grant bigger subsidies.

With more and more pro-family governmental aids to encourage women to have children and to remain in the job market, the pressure is mounting against working mothers who are considering becoming full-time mothers.

- (5) Highlighting female role models: Singaporean women who are successful in both career and home are often highlighted in the media. For example, the successes of eleven female entrepreneurs were reported in *The Straits Times* of 4 December 1999. Another example is that of Ms Lim Soo Hoon, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Community Development. Her career advancement within the civil service and how she successfully juggled career and home were reported in *The Straits Times* of 3 March 2000. These go to help build the social mentality and norm that it is possible for women to have a successful career and a happy home. The testimonies of these career women of being able to spend quality time with their children also promote the thinking that all career women should be able to do so. Indirectly, women who say they cannot and need to sacrifice career for home, are made to feel, either internally or externally, that they are incapable or are failures. Being a full-time mother in comparison to what these publicised career women are doing in their various careers looks unfulfilling, unrewarding, and boring.

In the face of all these social norms, expectations, opportunities and subtle public pressures, the Christian mother in Singapore finds it easier to go with the flow and make use of the various aids, incentives and helps that are available to her and her family in the Singapore society. Therefore, her decision making is ultimately guided by these norms, expectations and opportunities, unconsciously giving in to subtle public pressures.

The Biblical Response of Christian Mothers in Singapore

The Christian mother in Singapore being part of the Singaporean society cannot escape all these social pressures and expectations to have a

career and the economic need to maintain a dual income family. She shares the same “encouragements” and “helps” of the government to remain in the workforce. She has the same access and rights to these economic and social aids as a Singapore citizen. All these actually go towards helping her to live as her society and country would like her to live. They help her to fulfil her sin-caused desires. That is, it is easier and less of a struggle to give in to her sin-caused desires than to fight or go against them and to fulfil her God-given role.

The Christian mother in Singapore must realise that all these aids are actually pressures to keep her in the workforce in order that national economic advancement can take place. Any societal effects or problems resulting from the mother working (eg, increased rate of juvenile delinquency) are considered secondary and will be looked into but the women must continue to remain in the workforce. The solution of a mother stopping work to be a full-time mother is not considered a viable alternative for the economic well-being of the country. Furthest from the minds of the country’s secular policy makers would be what God’s Word say concerning the role of women and therefore what is more important: national economics or the welfare of the home and its members.

The Christian mother’s preference for looking after her own children, if she has such a preference, is right but not enough. It must be matched by appropriate actions even maybe sacrificial actions in the eyes of the Singapore society. In view of the expectations of society, these appropriate actions may be viewed with disdain by society. The Christian mother in Singapore therefore must be spiritually strong and be prepared to withstand the pressures from all quarters if she wishes to follow her Lord and actually heed His Word concerning her God-designed role.

The God-designed role for the woman is for her to be a suitable help for her husband (Gen 2:18). For the Christian mother in Singapore facing the various pressures of the Singapore society, she must keep this role uppermost in her mind. In all her decision-making, she must be willing to be basically guided by this role.

In her effort to fulfil her role as a suitable help for her husband, the Christian mother in Singapore will very often find that there are areas of conflict between her own needs and those of her husband as well as those of her children. She will then have to heed God’s teaching and submit herself to her husband as she would submit herself to her Lord (Eph 5:22,

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Col 3:18, 1 Pet 3:1). This biblical attitude of submission to one's husband also imply the biblical attitude of obedience to him (Tit 2:5, Col 3:18, Eph 5:33).

In making everyday decisions, whether on her own or with her husband, the Christian mother must hold on to these godly attitudes of submission and obedience and be prepared to exercise them especially in situations where there is a conflict of ideas or opinions.

There may arise the event of the husband failing to see the wife's primary role, and expecting her to take up certain secondary roles at the expense of her primary role even after husband and wife have spent time discussing the issue. In such a situation, the Christian mother in Singapore may have to submit to and obey her husband and commit her dilemma to God in prayer. The mother's performance of her secondary roles will lead to a neglect of her primary role. When this becomes evident to the husband and he begins to feel or experience the results of the neglect, he may then realise that disobeying God's Word will exact a price from him and his family.

Application of Principles Derived from Proverbs 31:10-31

This section looks at how the Christian mother in Singapore can apply each of the principles derived from the study of Proverbs 31:10-31 (see Part II, *The Burning Bush*, July 2001) that will help her be the kind of woman that God wants her to be.

She is a Spiritual Woman

The spiritual woman is one who is mindful of spiritual things (Rom 8:5). To be a spiritual woman, the Christian mother in Singapore must develop a love for the things of God. She maintains a close daily walk with her Lord and Saviour. She treasures her daily quiet-time with her Lord. She reads God's Word and prays to Him consistently. She draws her daily spiritual nourishment from the Lord Himself and seeks her daily portion of godly wisdom and grace to see her through each day. She does not allow the fast-paced Singaporean lifestyle to crowd God out of her life.

She attempts to seek to please God in everything that she does, going to Him for cleansing in repentance when she fails and succumbs to sinning. There may be many ways for her to rationalise away her disobedience or sins, but the spiritual Christian mother will not allow

herself this “privilege,” choosing rather to do what is right in God’s sight even when it means receiving frowns from family, friends or society.

Her Primary Role is That of Wife and Mother

The virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 performs many functions in her life but her primary role is that of wife and mother. Her many functions centre around her primary role. The Christian mother in Singapore very often finds herself stretched as she has also to juggle with the varied demands of Singaporean life. She may, for example, find herself being a grand-daughter, daughter, sister, wife, mother, career woman and Ladies Fellowship chairman all rolled into one. Yet, she must accept that God’s teaching for her as a Christian mother is that her primary role is that of wife and mother. All her other roles, though legitimate and important, are secondary roles. When a conflict or crisis arises, she must look into solving it from this perspective. Her responsibilities as a wife and mother must not be neglected as a result of her other responsibilities.

There may be many temptations to put certain other roles above her primary role. For example, there is the temptation to keep her role as a career woman so as not to waste her educational training or the career advancement she has already made by resigning from her job when the baby arrives. The spiritual Christian mother will bear in mind her God-given primary role and see the temptations for what they are and look to her Lord for strength and wisdom to make decisions that are pleasing to her Lord and not to yield to the temptations.

She Ministers Lovingly and Selflessly

The service of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 reflects her loving and selfless heart. The spiritual Christian mother will look to her Lord to ensure that her heart condition is right in His sight as she busies herself with the various tasks that the Lord has put in her hands. She does not pride on her busy schedule or ability to accomplish many tasks. Instead, she will come honestly to her Lord to examine the motives of her service. Her prayer will be to have a sincerely loving heart that seeks to minister ungrudgingly and selflessly for the good of others. The condition of her heart is of greater importance than the work she can accomplish.

She Ministers to her Husband’s Needs

In the hectic, fast-paced and demanding Singaporean lifestyle, there is always the great pressure on the Christian mother in Singapore to

neglect the needs of her own husband in her effort to juggle her many roles and responsibilities. There will always be tasks needing her immediate and maybe constant attention. It is very easy and tempting for her to appeal to the secular attitude of husbands having to be understanding of the needs of their wives and to share their wives' burdens in order for her to excuse herself from her task of ministering to her husband's needs.

Instead of adopting this secular "liberated" attitude, the spiritual Christian mother will ensure that the needs of her husband are given priority by meeting them first. She will remember that the basic God-designed role of woman is to be an help meet to her husband and she will ensure that other demands on her do not overtake this primary role of hers.

She is a Trustworthy Wife

The spiritual Christian mother in Singapore will be careful to gain her husband's trust by the way she conducts her life and in the way she makes decisions. Her great sense of responsibility and her commitment to take care of the needs of the family (both husband's and children's) will go a long way in gaining her husband's trust. It will do her well too to look to her Lord to guide her in all her decision-making. Her husband, in seeing her godly approach, will increase his trust in her.

She is Careful with Her Money

The dual income family, with both husband and wife holding jobs, has become a norm in the Singaporean lifestyle given the high cost of living in Singapore. In deciding (together with her husband) whether to continue to hold a job outside the home, the spiritual Christian mother in Singapore will consider whether her God-given role of wife and mother will be compromised or relegated to a secondary position. She will be careful to ensure that the economic need of the family does not become a reason for her to forsake or neglect her primary role of wife and mother.

Both father and mother must realise and accept the possibility of a lowering of the family standard of living as children are added to the family. It is well and good if the family can experience an increasing standard of living with both father and mother still fulfilling their God-given roles. This, however, is not always the case. When a choice has to be made between maintaining a high standard of living and the fulfilment of their God-given roles, the spiritual Christian mother will put God first

and choose the latter. She will accept the lowering of her standard of living in order to remain obedient to her Lord. She will develop a thrifty attitude towards the use of funds and will be careful with her expenses without being miserly. She will seek God's wisdom in considering what the necessities are for the welfare of her family and will live within their means. She will accept the fact that what were considered necessities to her as a single woman or as a wife without children may be considered luxury items to her as a mother.

She is Hardworking

In the fulfilment of her God-given role of wife and mother, the spiritual Christian mother in Singapore works hard in all that she has to do in order to please her Lord. She is careful not to use the secular liberated woman's attitude towards equality of man and woman as an excuse to get her husband to do the housework, to look after the children or any tasks that rightly belong to her just because she is too lazy to perform them. There may be times when there are legitimate grounds for her husband to help to perform some tasks but she will be careful that the reasons are really legitimate and right in God's sight.

She Takes Care of Her Health

The spiritual Christian mother in Singapore, without becoming a health freak, sees her physical body as the temple of the Holy Spirit and therefore takes good care of it. She keeps herself healthy and strong. This is being responsible since a fit body will allow her to perform the daily tasks that come with being a wife and mother.

She is careful not to become a health freak or a sports fanatic as this will rob her of her resources (eg, time and money) which would otherwise be used to meet the needs of her family.

She is Diligent and Well-Organised

Diligence and organisation are indispensable to the spiritual Christian mother in Singapore if she is to perform all the tasks that come with the primary role of wife and mother. By being diligent and organised, she is in fact being a good steward of the resources she has at her disposal. This will also promote her trustworthiness thereby increasing her husband's trust in her.

Faced with many daily tasks, the Christian mother in Singapore may feel overwhelmed, frustrated and unable to cope. She has to seek the

Lord's help to keep her focused on her God-given role and to ensure that it remains her primary role. Moreover, she has to pray for diligence and good organisational skills that she may be able to accomplish all that she has to do. There may be times when she needs godly wisdom to discern what are secondary and to give these up in order that she may perform her primary role. She must resist the temptation to give up on her primary role in favour of secondary ones just because the secondary ones are more socially acceptable or more economically viable.

She is a Considerate and Compassionate Employer

In her role as wife and mother, it is not uncommon for the Singapore mother to be an employer of a maid. As an employer, the spiritual Christian mother in Singapore is to be considerate and compassionate. She will ensure that her maid's welfare and physical needs are taken care of. She will be obedient to the fourth commandment (Exod 20:8-11) and ensures that her maid gets one rest day a week. Her compassion will lead her to be concern also for her maid's spiritual life. She will look for opportunities to give her non-Christian maid the gospel message. Or if her maid is a Christian, she will encourage her maid in her Christian growth.

As the spiritual Christian mother in Singapore relates in such a godly way towards her maid, the mother is setting a godly example for her own children thus indirectly promoting their spiritual growth.

She Helps Supplement the Family Income

The spiritual Christian mother in Singapore, having fulfilled her primary role, will find that she still has time to take on certain work to help supplement the family income. For example, she may give tuition, do editorial or computer work from the home. This is possible especially if she is diligent and organised thus managing her time well. She ensures that this work of supplementing the family income remains a secondary work and not allow the attractiveness of the financial reward or the social status that come with the work to tempt her into neglecting her primary role.

As soon as a conflict arises between her primary role of wife and mother and that of supplementing her family income, she must be quick to abandon the latter and fulfil her God-given role.

She is Prudent and Wise

In her judgment or decision-making, the spiritual Christian mother in Singapore is prudent and wise. She is sensible and careful, always seeking the Lord's wise counsel through His Word and through prayer in making everyday decisions. Whether it is with regard to her children's schooling matters and recreation, her own or her husband's physical and spiritual welfare and needs, her decisions and actions are godly and wise. Her husband and children will be able to see her godliness. They will appreciate and trust her judgment.

She is Charitable

In being thrifty or careful with her money, the spiritual Christian mother in Singapore is also charitable to those outside of her own household. She is generous towards those in need and she volunteers help to them. Her charity is not limited to finance, but she is also charitable in spirit. She is willing to give of herself including her time and her love to those in need of these. Her charitable spirit stems from a heart that has itself experienced the charity of its Lord and Saviour. She gives unselfishly, without regard of the life station of the other person nor for reward or selfish gain.

She Has a Good Sense of the Aesthetics

The spiritual Christian mother in Singapore has, or will work to develop, a good sense of the aesthetics. This helps her to perform her primary role in that she will be able to create a home that is comfortable, restful and peaceful for her household. They will find their home a haven that they can look forward to returning at the end of each day. Her good sense of aesthetics will also mean that she has a good dress sense thereby ensuring that she will be physically presentable, doing her family proud. Her husband and children too will benefit from this and not lack good advice on their dressing.

Her frugality will help her balance the need to be physically presentable and the need to be wise in her spending.

She is an Asset to Her Husband

The spiritual Christian mother in Singapore who is mindful of her God-given role of being an help meet to her husband, and strives to glorify God through this role will be an asset to her husband. The secular Singaporean society will have its own definition of what it means for a

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woman to be an asset to her husband. Whatever that definition, the Christian mother's utmost concern must be God's definition. She has to bear in mind the biblical teaching concerning the role relationship of men and women, especially with regard to husbands and wives (see Part II, *The Burning Bush*, July 2001). In obeying God's Word, she serves to promote the good name and reputation of her husband, thereby becoming an asset to him.

She Has Spiritual and Moral Strength

In her effort to live a godly life in obedience to God's Word in the secular and modern Singaporean society, the Christian mother inevitably and invariably faces many reasons to depart from God's Word and be "realistic" in the face of pressures and expectations of modern Singaporean life. These pressures and expectations are there and are real. One can even expect these to increase with time.

The Christian mother, who is committed to putting God first in her life, will seek to draw strength from God to live above the demands of the secular Singaporean world. She will seek to cultivate her spiritual strength and moral courage to live a life that is pleasing to God and that will glorify His name by keeping a close walk with Him daily. She will realise that her life must not be dictated by the norms of the secular Singaporean society. She will be prepared to pay the cost of being a disciple of Jesus Christ who is her Saviour and Lord.

She Guards Her Tongue

The virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 knows too well her own sinful human nature and how the tongue is used for its manifestation. She therefore wisely guards her tongue. The spiritual Christian mother in Singapore, too, is aware of the danger she can land herself, and her family, into if she is not careful with her words and therefore would also guard her tongue.

However, this does not mean that she is to be silent all the time, without a word or opinion. Instead, she seeks to speak words of wisdom and kindness that flow forth from a heart of love. She would seek to encourage, to exhort and to uplift. And at times, when necessary, she would speak to chasten, rebuke or discipline, as in the case of waywardness in her children, for example.

Her children would go to her for words of advice and encouragement, for they know her love for them. Her husband would seek to hear her opinions for he knows that they would be wise and godly ones. She, being an asset to him, would speak words that would promote his good name and reputation. She seeks to ensure that her words will not only benefit her hearers but will also glorify God.

She Fears the Lord

Ultimately, the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 fears the Lord. She has a godly reverence for her Lord. The Christian mother's reverence for her God will guide her thoughts and deeds in the direction of God's will. It will lead her to honour Him with her whole life as a wife and mother.

When the demands of her career comes in the way of her primary role of wife and mother, the Christian mother in Singapore who has that godly reverence for her Lord will put her God first and submit her self-will to God. With such a reverence for her God, she will not be bothered by the demands and expectations of the secular Singaporean society. She will live to ensure that her Lord is pleased with her life, striving to increase her obedience to God daily. She will not allow herself to be dictated to by the world but by God and His Word only.

Conclusion

This paper began with a concern for the increasing rate of juvenile delinquency in Singapore. The role of the Singapore family, especially that of the mother, as the child's first nurturing institution is considered. The Bible, the Holy Spirit inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God, must be consulted to provide the Christian mother in Singapore with the guidance and help that she needs to decide on her response to the demands of modern day living in contemporary Singaporean society.

The problems and pressures of the Christian mother in Singapore were considered in Part I (*The Burning Bush*, January 2001), and the Bible's teachings with regard to women, in particular mothers, were dealt with in Part II (*The Burning Bush*, July 2001). This final part examined the compatibility of the teachings of the Bible and the approach of the Singaporean society, and considered how the principles derived from God's Word can be used as a guide by the Christian mother living in the contemporary, secular Singaporean society. In considering the biblical teachings, the Christian mother in Singapore would realise that her

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biblical priority lies first and foremost with her husband in her home and family.

In order for the principles derived from God's Word to be of any use, the Christian mother in Singapore must be willing to heed them and apply them to her everyday life without making excuses for herself or simply taking the route of least resistance. These being guidelines, however, it is still up to the Christian mother to seek daily the Lord's wisdom to make specific decisions as she meets with specific problems in her own specific situation. When she faithfully appropriates God's Word into her life, she would have taken the first step towards addressing the juvenile delinquency problem in society: that of prevention in the home.

Notes

¹Clarissa Oon, "Rise of Reverse Sexism?" *The Sunday Times*, 26 September 1999, Life Section, 2.

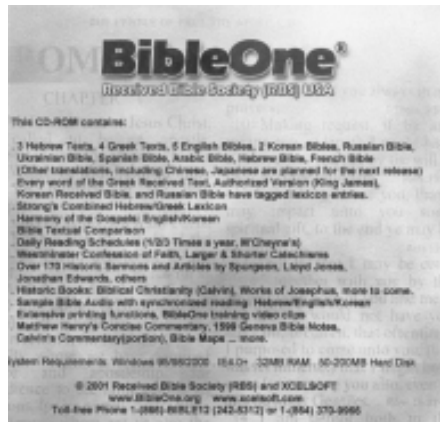
²Teo, "Parenting Tips," 41.

³Wong Chan Kok and Chuck Lowe, eds, *Ministry in Modern Singapore: The Effects of Modernity on the Church* (Singapore: Singapore Bible College, 1997), 176.

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⁵Tee Hun Ching, "Family Development: I Want to Ask for a Bit More," *The Straits Times*, 10 March 2000, Life Section, 2.

This is the third and final article on "The Role of Christian Mothers in Contemporary Singaporean Society." Carol Lee teaches Christian Education at the Far Eastern Bible College.



THE PRAYER OF JABEZ

Charles H Spurgeon

Instead of Bruce Wilkinson's charismatically oriented "health and wealth," "name it and claim it" version of the prayer of Jabez, we recommend Spurgeon's Spirit-filled sermon on the same prayer which he delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in 1871.

"Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!" (1 Chron 4:10).

We know very little about Jabez, except that he was more honourable than his brethren, and that he was called Jabez because his mother bare him with sorrow. It will sometimes happen that where there is the most sorrow in the antecedents, there will be the most pleasure in the sequel. As the furious storm gives place to the clear sunshine, so the night of weeping precedes the morning of joy. Sorrow the harbinger; gladness the prince it ushers in. Cowper says,

*The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the place where sorrow is unknown.*

To a great extent we find that we must sow in tears before we can reap in joy. Many of our works for Christ have cost us tears. Difficulties and disappointments have wrung our soul with anguish. Yet those projects that have cost us more than ordinary sorrow have often turned out to be the most honourable of our undertakings. While our grief called the offspring of desire "Benoni," the son of my sorrow, our faith has been afterwards able to give it a name of delight, "Benjamin," the son of my right hand.

You may expect a blessing in serving God if you are enabled to persevere under many discouragements. The ship is often long coming home, because detained on the road by excess of cargo. Expect her freight to be the better when she reaches the port. More honourable than his brethren was the child whom his mother bore with sorrow. As for this

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Jabez, whose aim was so well pointed, his fame so far sounded, his name so lastingly embalmed—he was a man of prayer. The honour he enjoyed would not have been worth having if it had not been vigorously contested and equitably won. His devotion was the key to his promotion. Those are the best honours that come from God, the award of grace with the acknowledgment of service.

When Jacob was surnamed Israel, he received his principedom after a memorable night of prayer. Surely it was far more honourable to him than if it had been bestowed upon him as a flattering distinction by some earthly emperor. The best honour is that which a man gains in communion with the Most High. Jabez, we are told, was more honourable than his brethren, and his prayer is forthwith recorded, as if to intimate that he was also more prayerful than his brethren. We are told of what petitions his prayer consisted. All through it was very significant and instructive. We have only time to take one clause of it—indeed, that one clause may be said to comprehend the rest: “Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!”

I commend it as a prayer for yourselves, dear brethren and sisters; one which will be available at all seasons; a prayer to begin Christian life with, a prayer to end it with, a prayer which would never be unseasonable in your joys or in your sorrows.

Oh that thou, the God of Israel, the covenant God, would bless me indeed! The very pith of the prayer seems to lie in that word, “indeed.” There are many varieties of blessing. Some are blessings only in name: they gratify our wishes for a moment, but permanently disappoint our expectations. They charm the eye, but pall on the taste. Others are mere temporary blessings: they perish with the using. Though for awhile they regale the senses, they cannot satisfy the higher cravings of the soul. But, “Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!” I wot whom God blesseth shall be blessed. The thing good in itself is bestowed with the good-will of the giver, and shall be productive of so much good fortune to the recipient that it may well be esteemed as a blessing “indeed,” for there is nothing comparable to it. Let the grace of God prompt it, let the choice of God appoint it, let the bounty of God confer it, and then the endowment shall be something godlike indeed; something worthy of the lips that pronounce the benediction, and verily to be craved by every one who seeks honour that is substantial and enduring. “Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!”

Think it over, and you will see that there is a depth of meaning in the expression. We may set this in contrast with human blessings: "Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!" It is very delightful to be blessed by our parents, and those venerable friends whose benedictions come from their hearts, and are backed up by their prayers. Many a poor man has had no other legacy to leave his children except his blessing, but the blessing of an honest, holy, Christian father is a rich treasure to his son. One might well feel it were a thing to be deplored through life if he had lost a parent's blessing. We like to have it. The blessing of our spiritual parents is consolatory. Though we believe in no priestcraft, we like to live in the affections of those who were the means of bringing us to Christ, and from whose lips we were instructed in the things of God. And how very precious is the blessing of the poor! I do not wonder that Job treasured that up as a sweet thing. "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me." If you have relieved the widow and the fatherless, and their thanks are returned to you in benediction, it is no mean reward. But, dear friends, after all—all that parents, relatives, saints, and grateful persons can do in the way of blessing, falls very far short of what we desire to have. O Lord, we would have the blessings of our fellow-creatures, the blessings that come from their hearts; but, "Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed!" for thou canst bless with authority. Their blessings may be but words, but thine are effectual. They may often wish what they cannot do, and desire to give what they have not at their own disposal, but thy will is omnipotent. Thou didst create the world with but a word. O that such omnipotence would now bespeak me thy blessing! Other blessings may bring us some tiny cheer, but in thy favour is life. Other blessings are mere tittles in comparison with thy blessing; for thy blessing is the title "to an inheritance incorruptible" and unfading, to "a kingdom which cannot be moved." Well therefore might David pray in another place, "With thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever."

Perhaps in this place, Jabez may have put the blessing of God in contrast with the blessings of men. Men will bless thee when thou doest well for thyself. They will praise the man who is successful in business. Nothing succeeds like success. Nothing has so much the approval of the general public as a man's prosperity. Alas! they do not weigh men's actions in the balances of the sanctuary, but in quite other scales. You will find those about you who will commend you if you are prosperous; or like Job's comforters, condemn you if you suffer adversity. Perhaps there

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may be some feature about their blessings that may please you, because you feel you deserve them. They commend you for your patriotism: you have been a patriot. They commend you for your generosity: you know you have been self-sacrificing.

Well, but after all, what is there in the verdict of man? At a trial, the verdict of the policeman who stands in the court, or of the spectators who sit in the courthouse, amounts to just nothing. The man who is being tried feels that the only thing that is of importance at all will be the verdict of the jury, and the sentence of the judge. So it will little avail us whatever we may do, how others commend or censure. Their blessings are not of any great value. But, "Oh that thou wouldest bless me," that thou wouldest say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Commend thou the feeble service that through thy grace my heart has rendered. That will be to bless me indeed. Men are sometimes blessed in a very fulsome sense by flattery. There are always those who, like the fox in the fable, hope to gain the cheese by praising the crow. They never saw such plumage, and no voice could be so sweet as yours. The whole of their mind is set, not on you, but on what they are to gain by you. The race of flatterers is never extinct though the flattered usually flatter themselves it is so. They may conceive that men flatter others, but all is so palpable and transparent when heaped upon themselves, that they accept it with a great deal of self-complacency, as being perhaps a little exaggerated, but after all exceedingly near the truth. We are not very apt to take a large discount off the praises that others offer us; yet, were we wise, we should press to our bosom those who censure us; and we should always keep at arm's length those who praise us, for those who censure us to our face cannot possibly be making a market of us; but with regard to those who extol us, rising early, and using loud sentences of praise, we may suspect, and we shall very seldom be unjust in the suspicion, that there is some other motive in the praise which they render to us than that which appears on the surface. Young man, art thou placed in a position where God honours thee? Beware of flatterers. Or hast thou come into a large estate? Hast thou abundance? There are always flies where there is honey. Beware of flattery. Young woman, art thou fair to look upon? There will be those about thee that will have their designs, perhaps their evil designs, in lauding thy beauty. Beware of flatterers. Turn thou aside from all these who have honey on their tongue, because of the poison of asps that is under it. Bethink thee of Solomon's caution, "meddle not with him that

flattereth with his lips.” Cry to God, “Deliver thou me from all this vain adulation, which nauseates my soul.” So shalt thou pray to him the more fervently, “Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!” Let me have thy benediction, which never says more than it means; which never gives less than it promises. If you take then the prayer of Jabez as being put in contrast with the benedictions which come from men, you see much force in it.

But we may put it in another light, and compare the blessing Jabez craved with those blessings that are temporal and transient. There are many bounties given to us mercifully by God for which we are bound to be very grateful; but we must not set too much store by them. We may accept them with gratitude, but we must not make them our idols. When we have them we have great need to cry, “Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and make these inferior blessings real blessings;” and if we have them not, we should with greater vehemence cry, “Oh that we may be rich in faith, and if not blessed with these external favours, may we be blessed spiritually, and then we shall be blessed indeed.”

Let us review some of these mercies, and just say a word or two about them. One of the first cravings of men’s hearts is wealth. So universal the desire to gain it, that we might almost say it is a natural instinct. How many have thought if they once possessed it they should be blessed indeed! but there are ten thousand proofs that happiness consists not in the abundance which a man possesseth. So many instances are well known to you all, that I need not quote any to show that riches are not a blessing indeed. They are rather apparently than really so. Hence, it has been well said, that when we see how much a man has we envy him; but could we see how little he enjoys we should pity him. Some that have had the most easy circumstances have had the most uneasy minds. Those who have acquired all they could wish, had their wishes been at all sane, have been led by the possession of what they had to be discontented because they had not more.

*Thus the base miser starves amidst his store,
Broods o’er his gold, and griping still at more,
Sits sadly pining, and believes he’s poor.”*

Nothing is more clear to any one who chooses to observe it, than that riches are not the chief good at whose advent sorrow flies, and in whose presence joy perennial springs. Full often wealth cozens the owner.

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Dainties are spread on his table, but his appetite fails, minstrels wait his bidding, but his ears are deaf to all the strains of music; holidays he may have as many as he pleases, but for him recreation has lost all its charms: or he is young, fortune has come to him by inheritance, and he makes pleasure his pursuit till sport becomes more irksome than work, and dissipation worse than drudgery. Ye know how riches make themselves wings; like the bird that roosted on the tree, they fly away. In sickness and despondency these ample means that once seemed to whisper, "Soul, take thine ease," prove themselves to be poor comforters. In death they even tend to make the pang of separation more acute, because there is the more to leave, the more to lose. We may well say, if we have wealth, "My God, put me not off with these husks; let me never make a god of the silver and the gold, the goods and the chattels, the estates and investments, which in thy providence thou hast given me. I beseech thee, bless me indeed. As for these worldly possessions, they will be my bane unless I have thy grace with them." And if you have not wealth, and perhaps the most of you will never have it, say, "My Father, thou hast denied me this outward and seeming good, enrich me with thy love, give me the gold of thy favour, bless me indeed; then allot to others whatever thou wilt, thou shalt divide my portion, my soul shall wait thy daily will; do thou bless me indeed, and I shall be content."

Another transient blessing which our poor humanity fondly covets and eagerly pursues is fame. In this respect we would fain be more honourable than our brethren, and outstrip all our competitors. It seems natural to us all to wish to make a name, and gain some note in the circle we move in at any rate, and we wish to make that circle wider if we can. But here, as of riches, it is indisputable that the greatest fame does not bring with it any equal measure of gratification. Men, in seeking after notoriety or honour, have a degree of pleasure in the search which they do not always possess when they have gained their object. Some of the most famous men have also been the most wretched of the human race. If thou hast honour and fame, accept it; but let this prayer go up, "My God, bless thou me indeed, for what profit were it, if my name were in a thousand mouths, if thou shouldst spue it out of thy mouth? What matter, though my name were written on marble, if it were not written in the Lamb's Book of Life?"

These blessings are only apparently blessings, windy blessings, blessings that mock me. Give me thy blessing; then the honour which

comes of thee will make me blessed indeed.” If you happen to have lived in obscurity, and have never entered the lists for honours among your fellowmen, be content to run well your own course and fulfil truly your own vocation. To lack fame is not the most grievous of ills; it is worse to have it like the snow that whitens the ground in the morning, and disappears in the heat of the day. What matters it to a dead man that men are talking of him? Get thou the blessing indeed.

There is another temporal blessing which wise men desire, and legitimately may wish for rather than the other two—the blessing of health. Can we ever prize it sufficiently? To trifle with such a boon is the madness of folly. The highest eulogiums that can be passed on health would not be extravagant. He that has a healthy body is infinitely more blessed than he who is sickly, whatever his estates may be. Yet if I have health, my bones well set, and my muscles well strung, if I scarcely know an ache or pain, but can rise in the morning, and with elastic step go forth to labour, and cast myself upon my couch at night, and sleep the sleep of the happy, yet, oh let me not glory in my strength! In a moment it may fail me. A few short weeks may reduce the strong man to a skeleton. Consumption may set in, the cheek may pale with the shadow of death. Let not the strong man glory in his strength. The Lord “delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.”

And let us not make our boast concerning these things. Say, thou that are in good health, “My God, bless me indeed. Give me the healthy soul. Heal me of my spiritual diseases. Jehovah Rophi come, and purge out the leprosy that is in my heart by nature: make me healthy in the heavenly sense, that I may not be put aside among the unclean, but allowed to stand amongst the congregation of thy saints. Bless my bodily health to me that I may use it rightly, spending the strength I have in thy service and to thy glory; otherwise, though blessed with health, I may not be blessed indeed.” Some of you, dear friends, do not possess the great treasure of health. Wearisome days and nights are appointed you. Your bones are become an almanac, in which you note the changes of the weather. There is much about you that is fitted to excite pity. But I pray that you may have the blessing indeed, and I know what that is.

I can heartily sympathise with a sister that said to me the other day, “I had such nearness to God when I was sick, such full assurance, and such joy in the Lord, and I regret to say I have lost it now; that I could almost wish to be ill again, if thereby I might have a renewal of

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communion with God.” I have oftentimes looked gratefully back to my sick chamber. I am certain that I never did grow in grace one half so much anywhere as I have upon the bed of pain. It ought not to be so. Our joyous mercies ought to be great fertilizers to our spirit; but not infrequently our griefs are more salutary than our joys. The pruning knife is best for some of us. Well, after all, whatever you have to suffer, of weakness, of debility, of pain, and anguish, may it be so attended with the divine presence, that this light affliction may work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and so you may be blessed indeed. I will only dwell upon one more temporal mercy, which is very precious—I mean the blessing of home. I do not think any one can ever prize it too highly, or speak too well of it. What a blessing it is to have the fireside, and the dear relationships that gather round the word “Home,” wife, children, father, brother, sister! Why, there are no songs in any language that are more full of music than those dedicated to “Mother.” We hear a great deal about the German “Fatherland”—we like the sound. But the word, “Father,” is the whole of it. The “land” is nothing: the “Father” is key to the music. There are many of us, I hope, blessed with a great many of these relationships. Do not let us be content to solace our souls with ties that must ere long be sundered. Let us ask that over and above them may come the blessing indeed.

I thank thee, my God, for my earthly father; but oh, be thou my Father, then am I blessed indeed. I thank thee, my God, for a mother’s love; but comfort thou my soul as one whom a mother comforteth, then am I blessed indeed. I thank thee, Saviour, for the marriage bond; but be thou the bridegroom of my soul. I thank thee for the tie of brotherhood; but be thou my brother born for adversity, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. The home thou hast given me I prize, and thank thee for it; but I would dwell in the house of the Lord forever, and be a child that never wanders, wherever my feet may travel, from my Father’s house with its many mansions. You can thus be blessed indeed. If not domiciled under the paternal care of the Almighty, even the blessing of home, with all its sweet familiar comforts, does not reach to the benediction which Jabez desired for himself. But do I speak to any here that are separated from kith and kin? I know some of you have left behind you in the bivouac of life graves where parts of your heart are buried, and that which remains is bleeding with just so many wounds. Ah, well! the Lord bless you indeed!

Widow, thy maker is thy husband. Fatherless one, he hath said, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” Oh, to find all your relationships made up in him, then you will be blessed indeed! I have perhaps taken too long a time in mentioning these temporary blessings, so let me set the text in another light. I trust we have had human blessings and temporary blessings, to fill our hearts with gladness, but not to foul our hearts with worldliness, or to distract our attention from the things that belong to our everlasting welfare.

Let us proceed, thirdly, to speak of imaginary blessings. There are such in the world. From them may God deliver us. “Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!” Take the Pharisee. He stood in the Lord’s house, and he thought he had the Lord’s blessing, and it made him very bold, and he spoke with unctuous self-complacency, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are,” and so on. He had the blessing, and well indeed he supposed himself to have merited it. He had fasted twice in the week, paid tithes of all that he possessed, even to the odd farthing on the mint, and the extra halfpenny on the cummin he had used. He felt he had done everything. His the blessing of a quiet or a quiescent conscience; good, easy man. He was a pattern to the parish. It was a pity everybody did not live as he did; if they had, they would not have wanted any police. Pilate might have dismissed his guards, and Herod his soldiers. He was just one of the most excellent persons that ever breathed. He adored the city of which he was a burgess! Ay; but he was not blessed indeed. This was all his own overweening conceit. He was a mere wind-bag, nothing more and the blessing which he fancied had fallen upon him, had never come. The poor publican whom he thought accursed, went to his home justified rather than he. The blessing had not fallen on the man who thought he had it.

Oh, let every one of us here feel the sting of this rebuke, and pray: “Great God, save us from imputing to ourselves a righteousness which we do not possess. Save us from wrapping ourselves up in our own rags, and fancying we have put on the wedding garments. Bless me indeed. Let me have the true righteousness. Let me have the true worthiness which thou canst accept, even that which is of faith in Jesus Christ.” Another form of this imaginary blessing is found in persons who would scorn to be thought self-righteous. Their delusion, however, is near akin. I hear them singing:

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*I do believe, I will believe
That Jesus died for me,
And on his cross he shed his blood,
From sin to set me free.*

You believe it, you say. Well, but how do you know? Upon what authority do you make so sure? Who told you? “Oh, I believe it.” Yes, but we must mind what we believe. Have you any clear evidence of a special interest in the blood of Jesus? Can you give any spiritual reasons for believing that Christ has set you free from sin? I am afraid that some have got a hope that has not got any ground, like an anchor without any fluke—nothing to grasp, nothing to lay hold upon. They say they are saved, and they stick to it they are, and think it wicked to doubt it; but yet they have no reason to warrant their confidence. When the sons of Kohath carried the ark, and touched it with their hands, they did rightly; but when Uzzah touched it he died. There are those who are ready to be fully assured; there are others to whom it will be death to talk of it. There is a great difference between presumption and full assurance.

Full assurance is reasonable: it is based on solid ground. Presumption takes for granted, and with brazen face pronounces that to be its own to which it has no right whatever. Beware, I pray thee, of presuming that thou art saved. If with thy heart thou dost trust in Jesus, then art thou saved; but if thou merely sayest, “I trust in Jesus,” it doth not save thee. If thy heart be renewed, if thou shalt hate the things that thou didst once love, and love the things that thou didst once hate; if thou hast really repented; if there be a thorough change of mind in thee; if thou be born again, then hast thou reason to rejoice: but if there be no vital change, no inward godliness; if there be no love to God, no prayer, no work of the Holy Spirit, then thy saying, “I am saved,” is but thine own assertion, and it may delude, but it will not deliver thee. Our prayer ought to be, “Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, with real faith, with real salvation, with the trust in Jesus that is the essential of faith; not with the conceit that begets credulity. God preserve us from imaginary blessings!”

I have met with persons who said, “I believe I am saved, because I dreamt it.” Or, “Because I had a text of Scripture that applied to my own case. Such and such a good man said so and so in his sermon.” Or, “Because I took to weeping and was excited, and felt as I never felt before.”

Ah! but nothing will stand the trial but this, “Dost thou abjure all confidence in everything but the finished work of Jesus, and dost thou come to Christ to be reconciled in him to God?” If thou dost not, thy dreams, and visions, and fancies, are but dreams, and visions, and fancies, and will not serve thy turn when most thou needest them. Pray the Lord to bless thee indeed, for of that sterling verity in all thy walk and talk there is a great scarcity.

Too much I am afraid, that even those who are saved—saved for time and eternity need this caution, and have good cause to pray this prayer that they may learn to make a distinction between some things which they think to be spiritual blessings, and others which are blessings indeed. Let me show you what I mean. Is it certainly a blessing to get an answer to your prayer after your own mind? I always like to qualify my most earnest prayer with, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Not only ought I to do it, but I would like to do it, because otherwise I might ask for something which it would be dangerous for me to receive. God might give it me in anger, and I might find little sweetness in the grant, but much soreness in the grief it caused me. You remember how Israel of old asked for flesh, and God gave them quails; but while the meat was yet in their mouths the wrath of God came upon them. Ask for the meat, if you like, but always put in this:

“Lord, if this is not a real blessing, do not give it me.” “Bless me indeed.” I hardly like to repeat the old story of the good woman whose son was ill—a little child near death’s door—and she begged the minister, a Puritan, to pray for its life. He did pray very earnestly, but he put in, “If it be thy will, save this child.” The woman said, “I cannot bear that: I must have you pray that the child shall live. Do not put in any ifs or buts.” “Woman,” said the minister, “it may be you will live to rue the day that ever you wished to set your will up against God’s will.”

Twenty years afterwards, she was carried away in a fainting fit from under Tyburn gallows-tree, where that son was put to death as a felon. Although she had lived to see her child grow up to be a man, it would have been infinitely better for her had the child died, and infinitely wiser had she left it to God’s will. Do not be quite so sure that what you think an answer to prayer is any proof of divine love. It may leave much room for thee to seek unto the Lord, saying, “Oh that thou wouldest blessed me indeed!”

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So sometimes great exhilaration of spirit, liveliness of heart, even though it be religious joy, may not always be a blessing. We delight in it, and oh, sometimes when we have had gatherings for prayer here, the fire has burned, and our souls have glowed! We felt at the time how we could sing:

*My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this,
And sit and sing herself away
To everlasting bliss."*

So far as that was a blessing we are thankful for it; but I should not like to set such seasons up, as if my enjoyments were the main token of God's favour; or as if they were the chief signs of his blessing. Perhaps it would be a greater blessing to me to be broken in spirit, and laid low before the Lord at the present time. When you ask for the highest joy, and pray to be on the mountain with Christ, remember it may be as much a blessing; yea, a blessing indeed to be brought into the Valley of Humiliation, to be laid very low, and constrained to cry out in anguish, "Lord, save, or I perish!"

*If to-day he deigns to bless us
With a sense of pardon'd sin,
He to-morrow may distress us,
Make us feel the plague within,
All to make us
Sick of self, and fond of him.*

These variable experiences of ours may be blessings indeed to us, when, had we been always rejoicing, we might have been like Moab, settled on our lees, and not emptied from vessel to vessel. It fares ill with those who have no changes; they fear not God. Have we not, dear friends, sometimes envied those persons that are always calm and unruffled, and are never perturbed in mind? Well, there are Christians whose evenness of temper deserves to be emulated. And as for that calm repose, that unwavering assurance which comes from the Spirit of God, it is a very delightful attainment; but I am not sure that we ought to envy anybody's lot because it is more tranquil or less exposed to storm and tempest than our own.

There is a danger of saying, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace, and there is a calmness which arises from callousness. Dupes there are

who deceive their own souls. “They have no doubts,” they say, but it is because they have little heart searching. They have no anxieties, because they have not much enterprise or many pursuits to stir them up. Or it may be they have no pains, because they have no life. Better go to heaven, halt and maimed, than go marching on in confidence down to hell. “Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!” My God, I will envy no one of his gifts or his graces, much less of his inward mood or his outward circumstances, if only thou wilt “bless me indeed.” I would not be comforted unless thou comfortest me, nor have any peace but Christ my peace, nor any rest but the rest which cometh from the sweet savour of the sacrifice of Christ. Christ shall be all in all, and none shall be anything to me save himself. O that we might always feel that we are not to judge as to the manner of the blessing, but must leave it with God to give us what we would have, not the imaginary blessing, the superficial and apparent blessing, but the blessing indeed! Equally too with regard to our work and service, I think our prayer should always be, “Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!” It is lamentable to see the work of some good men, though it is not ours to judge them, how very pretentious, but how very unreal it is. It is really shocking to think how some men pretend to build up a church in the course of two or three evenings. They will report, in the corner of the newspapers, that there were forty-three persons convinced of sin, and forty-six justified, and sometimes thirty-eight sanctified; I do not know what besides of wonderful statistics they give as to all that is accomplished. I have observed congregations that have been speedily gathered together, and great additions have been made to the church all of a sudden. And what has become of them? Where are those churches at the present moment? The dreariest deserts in Christendom are those places that were fertilised by the patent manures of certain revivalists. The whole church seemed to have spent its strength in one rush and effort after something, and it ended in nothing at all. They built their wooden house, and piled up the hay, and made a stubble spire that seemed to reach the heavens, and there fell one spark, and all went away in smoke; and he that came to labour next time—the successor of the great builder had to get the ashes swept away before he could do any good.

The prayer of every one that serves God should be, “Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed.” Plod on, plod on. If I only build one piece of masonry in my life, and nothing more, if it be gold, silver, or precious

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stones, it is a good deal for a man to do; of such precious stuff as that, to build even one little corner which will not show, is a worthy service. It will not be much talked of, but it will last. There is the point: it will last. "Establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." If we are not builders in an established church, it is of little use to try at all. What God establishes will stand, but what men build without his establishment will certainly come to nought. "Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!" Sunday-school teacher, be this your prayer. Tract distributor, local preacher, whatever you may be, dear brother or sister, whatever your form of service, do ask the Lord that you may not be one of those plaster builders using sham compo that only requires a certain amount of frost and weather to make it crumble to pieces. Be it yours, if you cannot build a cathedral, to build at least one part of the marvellous temple that God is piling for eternity, which will outlast the stars. I have one thing more to mention before I bring this sermon to a close.

The blessings of God's grace are blessings indeed, which in right earnest we ought to seek after. By these marks shall ye know them. Blessings indeed, are such blessings as come from the pierced hand; blessings that come from Calvary's bloody tree, streaming from the Saviour's wounded side—thy pardon, thine acceptance, thy spiritual life: the bread that is meat indeed, the blood that is drink indeed thy oneness to Christ, and all that comes of it these are blessings indeed. Any blessing that comes as the result of the Spirit's work in thy soul is a blessing indeed; though it humble thee, though it strip thee, though it kill thee, it is a blessing indeed. Though the harrow go over and over thy soul, and the deep plough cut into thy very heart; though thou be maimed and wounded, and left for dead, yet if the Spirit of God do it, it is a blessing indeed. If he convinceth thee of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, even though thou hast not hitherto been brought to Christ, it is a blessing indeed. Anything that he does, accept it; do not be dubious of it; but pray that he may continue his blessed operations in thy soul. Whatsoever leads thee to God is in like manner a blessing indeed. Riches may not do it. There may be a golden wall between thee and God. Health will not do it: even the strength and marrow of thy bones may keep thee at a distance from thy God. But anything that draws thee nearer to him is a blessing indeed. What though it be a cross that raiseth thee? Yet if it raise thee to God it shall be a blessing indeed. Anything that reaches into eternity, with

a preparation for the world to come, anything that we can carry across the river, the holy joy that is to blossom in those fields beyond the swelling flood, the pure cloudless love of the brotherhood which is to be the atmosphere of truth for ever—anything of this kind that has the eternal broad arrow on it—the immutable mark—is a blessing indeed. And anything which helps me to glorify God is a blessing indeed. If I be sick, and that helps me to praise him, it is a blessing indeed. If I be poor, and I can serve him better in poverty than in wealth, it is a blessing indeed. If I be in contempt, I will rejoice in that day and leap for joy, if it be for Christ's sake—it is a blessing indeed. Yea, my faith shakes off the disguise, snatches the vizard from the fair forehead of the blessing, and counts it all joy to all into divers trials for the sake of Jesus and the recompense of reward that he has promised. “Oh that we may be blessed indeed!”

Now, I send you away with these three words: “Search.” See whether the blessings are blessings indeed, and be not satisfied unless you know that they are of God, tokens of his grace, and earnest of his saving purpose. “Weigh”—that shall be the next word. Whatever thou hast, weigh it in the scale, and ascertain if it be a blessing indeed, conferring such grace upon you as causeth you to abound in love, and to abound in every good word and work. And lastly, “Pray.” So pray that this prayer may mingle with all thy prayers, that whatsoever God grants or whatever he withholds thou mayest be blessed indeed. Is it a joy-time with thee? O that Christ may mellow thy joy, and prevent the intoxication of earthly blessedness from leading thee aside from close walking with him! In the night of sorrow, pray that he will bless thee indeed, lest the wormwood also intoxicate thee and make thee drunk, lest thy afflictions should make thee think hardly of him. Pray for the blessing, which having, thou art rich to all the intents of bliss, or which lacking, thou art poor and destitute, though plenty fill thy store. “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.” But “Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!”

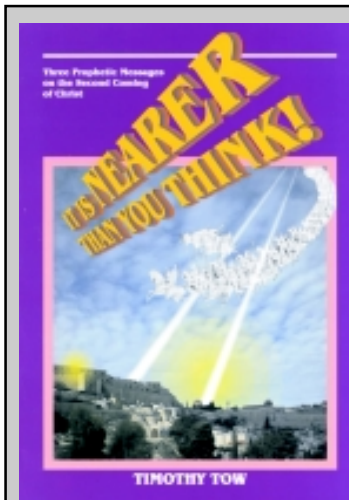
College News

FEBC reopened July 16, 2001, for the 40th Academic Year with an enrolment of 17 new students from the following countries: *Cambodia*: Kin Bopha; *Canada*: Esther Chew; *Indonesia*: Famachoi Wa'u; *Malaysia*: Joshua Khoo Boo Huat, Robinson Anyi Jau; *Nepal*: Lama Kancha; *Philippines*: Edsel Locot, Richard Murcia Tiu, Eio Lequin Espejon; *Singapore*: Dennis Kwok, Lee Hsien Lung, Serena Tan Hwee Khim; *South Korea*: Kim Hee Nam, Oh Ji Eun, Song Suk Kyoung; *Thailand*: Phairot Songsawadwong; and *USA*: Josh Glenn Klumb. This brings the total full-time enrolment to 116.

The ***Basic Theology for Everyone*** night courses offered last semester (July-November) were: (1) *Theism* by Rev Dr Timothy Tow, and (2) *Epistle to the Hebrews* by Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo. We thank the Lord for the increasing enrolment among lay students.

Rev Dr Timothy Tow, the principal, led a mission team of eight to Cambodia to dedicate Rev Jonathan Lee's (BTh, 1994) Hope B-P Church and Orphanage, Phnom Penh, September 29-October 3, 2001.

The **FEBC Gospel Rally** last semester was held at the Life Church Sanctuary on Saturday, October 6, 2001, 7.30 pm. Tang Chee Keong, lecturer at Chin Lien Bible Seminary and preacher of Xi-An Chapel in Hougang, spoke in Mandarin on the topic, "Where Art Thou, O My Soul?" (Luke 15). Preacher Calvin Loh (MDiv '00) was the translator.



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Class Notes

Rev **Timothy Chong** (BTh '84), pastor of St Peter's Church, earned his MCS from Discipleship Training Centre in 1999, and MRE from Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary in 2001. Email: timchong@pacific.net.sg.

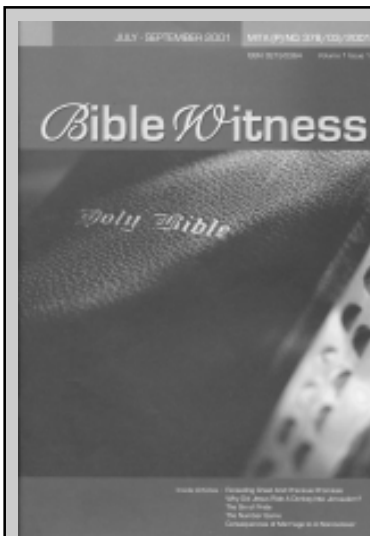


The Chinese Christian Church of Saipan has published a new book by Rev **Pang Kok Hiong** (BTh '92) entitled, *Light and Darkness*, June 2001. It examines the many dangerous cults infiltrating the churches of Mainland China. The Saipan church recently dedicated her new church building.

Address: Chinese Christian Church of Saipan, P O Box 10,001, PMB 466, Saipan, MP 96950, USA. Email: pang@saipan.com.

Phairot Songsawadwong (BTh '01) has returned to Thailand to serve as a preacher of Glory Church, 128/84 Ramkamheang 24, Huamark Pangapi, Bangkok 10240. Tel: 001-662-3005774.

Paul Cheng Heng Fook (BRE student) and **Ha Hye Young** (DipTh student) were joined in holy matrimony on May 12, 2001 at Life B-P Church.



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