



# The Burning Bush



50 FEBC's Golden Jubilee (1962-2012)  
YEARS  
Holding Fast the Faithful Word



# THE BURNING BUSH

Theological Journal of the  
FAR EASTERN BIBLE COLLEGE

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# The Burning Bush

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## **FAITHFULNESS IN HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE**

Jeffrey Khoo

We thank the Lord for His good hand upon the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) over the last 50 years. Our God is the King of kings and Lord of lords. As King, He is sovereign, and as Lord, He is faithful. Our God is the sovereign and faithful God. He has power over all. He keeps His promises. He never forsakes His own. He has protected and preserved His school of prophets in these last days *"for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ"* (Rev 1:9).

Since God is ever faithful to us, we must always be faithful to Him and His Word. Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."* This verse is used by many a Bible College as a motto. Faithfulness is vital for effectiveness and success in the Christian ministry. Many Bible colleges begin well, but after one or two generations they backslide and even apostatise. How to prevent FEBC from following the same downward spiral? Faithfulness I believe is the key watchword.

For FEBC to survive, and not just survive but succeed, we need, first of all, the faithful Words of God.

### **Faithful Words**

The Apostle Paul says, *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men ..."*. The Apostle Paul tells Timothy to commit the things he has learned to others. What are these things? Comparing Scripture with Scripture, we see that these things are the words of Holy Scripture and the life and example of the Apostle Paul. 2 Timothy 1:13 says, *"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."* The sound words must be the words of the Gospel and of Scripture. *"But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience. ... But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them."* (2 Tim 3:10, 14).

## FAITHFULNESS IN HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE

FEBC has the highest view of the Holy Scriptures. Our founding principal—the late Rev Dr Timothy Tow—chose these two watchwords for FEBC, *“Holding forth the word of Life”* (Phil 2:16), and *“Holding fast the faithful word”* (Tit 1:9). It is only the Word of life that can give life, not our good thoughts, good heart, intelligence or eloquence, not our own philosophy or psychology, human reasoning or methods that will change a person’s life for eternity. It is only the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Words of everlasting life that will do that. The source of life is in the Word of life, the living Word—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It is also the written Word—the Holy Scriptures. Do we have them? Yes we do—the living Word who lived for us, died for us, and rose from the dead for us; who is now in heaven as our Great High Priest interceding for us. We also have all the Words of Holy Scripture which were breathed out by God in the beginning and then supernaturally preserved throughout the ages by “His singular care and providence”, and do certainly have them in our hands today.

We have a faithful God who is true to His promises. As such, *“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)”* (Heb 10:23). It is important that faithful Words of God be handled by faithful teachers.

### Faithful Teachers

Paul was a faithful teacher who entrusted the faithful Words of God to faithful Timothy—his son in the faith. Both Paul and Timothy were faithful teachers of the Word. How we need such faithful teachers today! Timothy was well trained by Paul and well tested in ministry and found worthy to be ordained as a minister of the gospel. Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:6, 11-16, *“If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. ... These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”*

We thank God for the late Rev Dr Timothy Tow who taught us good and sound and God-honouring theology. He taught us what the Reformed faith is—which is true to the gospel—that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, based on Scripture alone and to the

glory of God alone. The Reformed Faith rightly emphasises the sovereignty of God and the faithfulness of God which are soundly expressed in the Westminster Standards of 1648. We also learned the premillennial faith from him which stresses the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Are we ready for His return? Have we been faithful?

Thank God we have directors and lecturers at FEBC that are of the same mind and spirit as our founding principal, the Rev Dr Timothy Tow. FEBC has a most united faculty and board who are committed to the Dean Burgon Oath, and take it without reservations.

Yes, we need faithful teachers, but we also need faithful students.

### **Faithful Students**

Paul tells Timothy, *“the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”* We thank God if He were to give us many students to disciple and train for the ministry of the Word; but our desire is not so much for many students but for good and faithful students who are truly called by God and sincere to serve the Lord humbly and unconditionally. We pray for students who will become faithful teachers and not traitors of the faith.

All students and graduates of FEBC need to be tried and tested before they can be ordained as ministers of the Gospel. Paul warned Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:22, *“Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.”* It is important that teachers make sure they take in students and ordain graduates who have proven themselves to be faithful and true in ministry. That is why we do not ordain our graduates on the spot. They have to prove themselves out in the field. Will they be faithful? Or will they be failures? Time will tell.

How many have fallen because of sin? The temptation to sin is very great and the tempter is always out there using all kinds of ways and means to tempt us to fall—the main ones being money, women, and pride. Don’t ever preach for money! Don’t ever fall into the sin of pornography and adultery! Don’t ever seek the power, popularity and fame of the world! Paul was faithful for he sought to please God and not man. Paul says in Galatians 1:10, *“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”* Be a politician if you want to please men; don’t be a pastor!

If we are to be faithful servants, then we must be prepared to suffer for the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord says in Revelation 2:10, *“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of*

## FAITHFULNESS IN HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE

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

I am very encouraged by members of the Church, lay people, who come so faithfully semester after semester, year after year to study God's Word in our night classes and through distance learning courses online. We see so many of them graduating tonight with their certificates. Many of them have taken four, five, six, eight, even ten years to earn the required credits for their certificates. They have persevered in their studies and have seen their lives transformed by the power of God's Word.

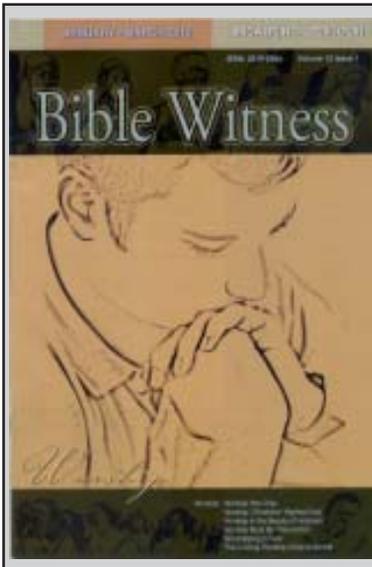
Graduands, you have the faithful Words of God taught to you by faithful teachers. May you continue to be faithful students when you leave the College. We never stop studying God's forever infallible and inerrant Words. For those who will be commencing full-time service in their respective countries, may the Lord mould and make you to be faithful ministers in the days to come.

My prayer for all of you is that at the end of the day, you might hear our Saviour's commendation, *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."* (Matt 25:21). Amen.

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*A message delivered by the Principal at the 37<sup>th</sup> Graduation Service of the Far Eastern Bible College, May 6, 2012.*

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

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## **A SHORT HISTORY OF FAR EASTERN BIBLE COLLEGE**

Like the sowing of the grain of mustard seed (Matt 13:31-32), Far Eastern Bible College had sprung from an idea first implanted in the mind of its principal as early as 1954. This idea arose partly from a pressing need to train a new generation of “evangelists, pastors, and teachers” (Eph 4:11) for the Church of Jesus Christ in the Far East, and partly from a theological confrontation with certain institutions in Singapore that had apostatised from the Faith. Setting up a biblically fundamental, and positionally conservative School is one way of earnestly contending for the Faith once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

Thus when the Rev Timothy Tow was delegated in 1958 by the Bible-Presbyterian Church of Singapore and Malaysia to the Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches in Brazil, this was deemed a golden opportunity to pursue further studies at Faith Theological Seminary, USA, in order to equip him better for the teaching ministry.

The burden of founding a theological school increased steadily after the principal’s return to Singapore. This was reflected in a leading article in the *Malaysia Christian*, captioned, “The Trend is Toward the Trained.” In the meantime, interest in the proposed Bible College grew so strong that an evening school was launched in July 1961. This evening school, offering courses in Old Testament History and Christian Doctrine, was housed at the old Life Church, Prinsep Street until the College formally opened on September 17, 1962 at Gilstead Road. The evening “Basic Theology for Everyone” classes which were opened to the public continue to this day on Monday and Thursday nights without a break.

The decision to establish a Far Eastern Bible College was made by leaders of the Bible-Presbyterian Church on September 19, 1960. This decision was precipitated by the visit of Dr Philip Clark, General Secretary of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, USA. The General Secretary’s promise to send qualified teachers to help in this ambitious national undertaking was crucial to the founding of the College.

The location of the Bible College was providentially included in a new building project by Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (LBPC). The spacious, sylvan site of the new church about to be built at Gilstead Road was chosen as the College campus. This choice was made possible by Life

## *A SHORT HISTORY OF FAR EASTERN BIBLE COLLEGE*

Church's willingness to relinquish her original plan for a kindergarten in favour of a Bible College annex. (Incidentally, such a Church-and-College complex is in the good tradition of no less a stalwart than Pastor C H Spurgeon.) In view of the College's central position in the metropolis of Southeast Asia, being easily accessible to prospective students from all parts of the Far East, the name "Far Eastern" was chosen.

The College was purposely constituted an autonomous institution, independent of ecclesiastical control. A Board of Directors was to be elected from men of faith and wisdom within the Bible-Presbyterian Church and from our cooperating missionaries. An interim, three-man committee was appointed to draft a constitution and prospectus for the College, and to serve as liaison between the Bible-Presbyterian Church and the Mission Board. The three men were the Rev Timothy Tow, the Rev Quek Kiok Chiang, and Dr Tow Siang Hwa.

When the Board of Directors was formed, the Rev Timothy Tow was given the onerous task to head the College, both as its principal and president of the Board, but relinquished the presidency after five years to the Rev Quek Kiok Chiang, which office the latter held till September 1977. Dr Tow Siang Hwa was elected to the presidency in September 1977 which he served with distinction till 1989 when Dr Tow Siang Yeow took over as fourth president. In May 2012, Dr Tow Siang Yeow stepped down as President of the Board of Directors after 22 years of distinguished service. He was FEBC's longest serving President. On 6 May 2012, the Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo was appointed interim President.

Missionaries who had played a vital role in the planting and nurture of the FEBC vine from 1964 to 1980 were the Rev and Mrs John E Grauley, Dr Synesio Lyra (loaned from Shelton College), the Rev and Mrs Burton Toms, and the Rev and Mrs Edward Paauwe. In the last couple of decades, we had several distinguished visiting professors, namely, Dr John J Davis and Dr John C Whitcomb from Grace Theological Seminary; Dr Peter Masters, Pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle (Spurgeon's); the Rev Dan Ebert III, Founder and Director of Christian Training and Missionary Fellowship, and President Emeritus of The Center for Biblical Studies, Philippines; Dr Arthur E Steele, Founder and Chancellor, Clearwater Christian College, Florida; Dr D A Waite, President of the Dean Burgon Society, and The Bible For Today; Dr Howard J Carlson, Pastor of Suncoast Bible-Presbyterian Church, Florida; Dr Gary G Cohen, President of Cohen Theological Seminary; Dr Paul Lee Tan from Bible Communications; Dr Morris McDonald from the Presbyterian Missionary Union; and Dr Raymond Saxe, Pastor of Fellowship Bible Church (Ann Arbor, Michigan).

From its inception, the College has provided a standard four-year training leading to the Bachelor of Theology (BTh). A three-year course

granting a Diploma in Theology (DipTh), and a one-and-a-half year course awarding a Certificate in Religious Knowledge (CertRK) were simultaneously given. From 1991, the Master of Divinity (MDiv), and Master of Religious Education (MRE)—graduate programmes requiring three years, and two years of studies respectively—were offered. In 1995, the off-campus certificate and Bachelor of Religious Education (BRE) programmes were added. In 1996, the certificate programme was revised to include the Certificate of Biblical Studies (CertBS). In 2001, in cooperation with the Bible College of East Africa, the Bachelor of Ministry (BMin) degree was introduced. The Master of Theology (ThM) and Doctor of Theology (ThD) degrees were introduced in 1997 and 2002 respectively to equip those specifically called to the teaching ministry. In 2005, FEBC opened the BMin programme to its DipTh graduates who are already in ministry, and introduced the Master of Ministry (MMin) and the Doctor of Education (EdD) programmes to its alumni. In 2009, FEBC replaced its off-campus, correspondence courses with distance learning courses through the internet.

In 2005, FEBC was awarded accreditation by CaseTrust for Education, the very first Bible College in Singapore to obtain this award. This recognition by an external, secular agency proves FEBC's commitment to basic educational standards comparable to other accredited institutions without compromising its Biblical-fundamentalist faith and ethos. With effect from January 25, 2006, FEBC is exempted from CaseTrust for Education.

Life Book Centre opened in January 1976. In May 1996, the Book Centre became FEBC Bookroom. Apart from catering to the Christian public, the Bookroom is also the purchasing agent for the College Library, publisher of literature produced by the faculty, and supplier of textbooks to our students.

In conjunction with LBPC, the College has maintained a ministry of hospitality all these years to passing-through missionaries, pastors, and church workers. With the Lord's help, the Church and College acquired 10 Gilstead Road in 1989. Beulah House, as it is named, serves as hostel not only to strangers passing through Singapore, but also to increasing numbers of married students coming to the College.

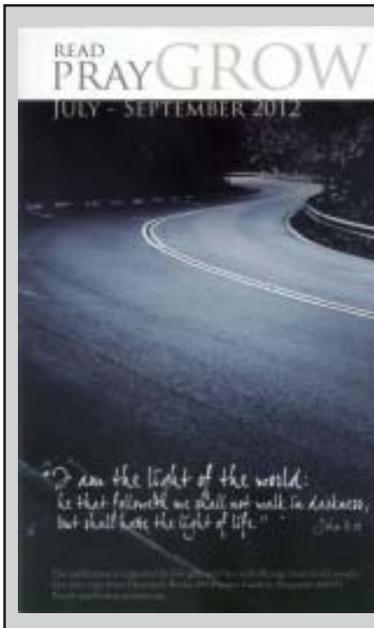
On 15 September 2008, LBPC instituted a lawsuit to evict FEBC from 9 and 9A Gilstead Road because of FEBC's belief in the verbal and plenary preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures. On 8 October 2008, Dr Boaz Boon, Dr Quek Suan Yew and Dr Jeffrey Khoo, acting on behalf of the Board of Directors of FEBC, received the Attorney-General's consent to seek a declaration from the High Court that the registered proprietors of 9, 9A and 10 Gilstead Road hold the properties on a charitable purpose trust

## A SHORT HISTORY OF FAR EASTERN BIBLE COLLEGE

for the benefit and use of FEBC. An originating summons was duly filed on 6 January 2009. The High Court heard both parties in a five-day trial from 25-29 January 2010. On 30 June 2010, the High Court ruled in favour of LBPC. FEBC appealed. On 26 April 2011, the Court of Appeal allowed FEBC's appeal and dismissed all the claims of LBPC. The Court of Appeal found that FEBC (1) did not become a new college after its registration as a Charity in 2004, (2) was constituted an independent college free from ecclesiastical control since its founding and not a ministry of LBPC, (3) did not deviate from the Westminster Confession of Faith by believing in the VPP of the Holy Scriptures. As such, under the law of charitable purpose trusts, FEBC has the right to possess and use the premises at 9, 9A and 10 Gilstead Road

On 20 April 2009, the founding Principal—the Rev Dr Timothy Tow—was called home to be with the Lord at the age of 88. On 1 May 2009, the Board of Directors appointed the Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo as the new Principal of FEBC.

Beginning with three students and two teachers, FEBC has, by the grace of God, steadily grown to about 300 in the student body today and over a dozen on the faculty. After five decades, the College has graduated more than 700 men and women who are now serving in the harvest fields around the world.



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## **THREE EARLIER CRISES IN THE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH THAT AFFECTED THE FAR EASTERN BIBLE COLLEGE**

The 2002 battle for the verbal and plenary preservation of the Bible and the Hebrew and Greek Texts underlying the King James Version was not the only crisis to hit the Bible-Presbyterian Church. There were three earlier crises, all three documented in the writings of the founding pastor of the Singapore Bible-Presbyterian Church movement himself—the Rev Dr Timothy Tow. The first happened immediately after FEBC was founded in 1962, the second in 1968 which led to the 1970 Agreement between Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (LBPC) and the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC), and the third in 1986 which led to the dissolution of the Bible-Presbyterian Synod and the Neo-Evangelical slide of certain Bible-Presbyterian Churches.

### **1962-1966: A Difficult Period that Led to the Penning of the College Anthem<sup>1</sup>**

There is a Chinese saying, “It takes a decade to plant a tree; it takes a century to nurture a man.” The planting of the FEBC, a prophets’ school for the nurture of a new generation of preachers and teachers for the Church in the Far East, is necessarily a slow, painstaking process. Indeed, it is a miracle how it could have been planted at all—a school to teach the Bible at the College level—by one or two young men, with no guarantee of financial support from any church organisation whatsoever. In fact, there were church leaders who questioned the need for FEBC since there was already the Singapore Bible College set up for the training of full-time ministers.

Despite the detractors who opposed the setting up of the FEBC, the founding Principal pressed on with his vision to establish a new Bible College for the Word of God and for the Testimony of Jesus Christ. At eight in the morning, on September 17, 1962, the College opened its halls of majestic emptiness to a first class of three students with the Rev Dr Timothy Tow as the lone principal and teacher delivering the chapel message. Seated on three picnic chairs and a kitchen stool which the principal had brought from his house, that first student body learnt a first

### THREE EARLIER CRISES IN THE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

spiritual lesson—to trust God solely for the supply of their material needs. “The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing” (Ps 34:10).

The early years of the College were difficult years, like the train churning on an uphill climb before reaching the Malaysian capital. Our resources in manpower and finance were taxed to the limit. There were dissenters even from within the faculty who told the students that FEBC was a sinking ship, and that they better jump ship before it sinks. In no time, FEBC which began with three students was reduced to one—Miss Ivy Tan—who persevered and did not lose faith in the Lord nor in FEBC. She became FEBC’s first BTh graduate in 1966.

Those early years of hardships and difficulties moved the founding Principal to pen the lyrics, “O Father Thou Almighty Art” to the music written by Mrs M D Buell. This became the FEBC Anthem which the Principal composed while on a train journey from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur in 1966.

#### **1968-1970: A Dissentious Spirit that Led to the 1970 Agreement<sup>2</sup>**

Hitherto, the witness of separation from modernistic unbelief and ecumenical apostasy had received full support of the Church. However, when evangelical leaders like Dr Billy Graham began to fraternise with the apostate ecclesiastical powers for the sake of “cooperative evangelism” and the pastor—the Rev Dr Timothy Tow—pointed out the unscripturalness of such a relationship (2 Cor 6:14-18), one or two Session members who differed with the pastor introduced a dissentious spirit into the Church, the first time in 18 years. On and off the problem of Dr Billy Graham cropped up while the *Far Eastern Beacon* serialised J A Johnson’s book on *Billy Graham—The Jehoshaphat of Our Generation*.

The opposition in Life Church Session against the pastor increased from one or two dissenters to several when the pastor published two news reports in the *Far Eastern Beacon*, November and December 1968. These reports were written in the capacity of special correspondent of *New Life*, Australia’s Christian Newspaper, to the Billy Graham-sponsored Asia-South Pacific Congress of Evangelism, Singapore, November 5-13, 1968.

These reports were made in a sincere spirit for fairness and accuracy and were well received by the *New Life*. The editor-in-chief thanked his pastor-correspondent in a letter enclosing a cheque,

Please accept my grateful thanks for your helpful and informative reports of the Singapore Congress on Evangelism. I was most grateful to you for your kindness in undertaking this assignment on our behalf, and can

assure you the reports aroused much interest. As may be expected we had one or two letters from Congress delegates who were not in agreement with some of your comments at the conclusion of the second article, but in view of the difference of viewpoint amongst evangelicals on such issues as separation from apostasy, this is not surprising.

The spirit of dissension against the uncompromising, separatist stand of the Church manifested itself in a new building project. When the plans for a three-storey Church-and-College extension were approved in February 1968, the same Session members, who were unhappy over the Billy Graham issue, opposed the launching of building operations. This opposition was of no avail, for God's good hand was upon His own work. A sister's gift of \$50,000 to this \$120,000 project was a sign of the Lord's approval.

One year after building operations began, this new Kindergarten and College block was dedicated by the Rev Jason Linn, founder of Zion Kindergarten and veteran missionary to Dyak Borneo.

The brotherly love that once so sweetly prevailed over the Life Church tree like the sparkling dew of morning all but evaporated. The climax of dissension was reached when the assistant pastor was invited to preach at a Methodist Church in early July 1969, for which campaign he appended his name to a letter cyclostyled on paper bearing the letterhead of the said Methodist Church. This gave the impression that he was in close fellowship with a Church in the Ecumenical Movement.

Controversy over this matter flared up at Presbytery. There the question of whether a Bible-Presbyterian minister, when invited to preach by a Church in the modernist Ecumenical fold had a duty to warn against the dangers of Ecumenism, was discussed. The opinion of the Presbyters was about equally divided, resulting in a contention so sharp that they left in bitterness of spirit. When that spirit of dissension began to spread from Church to College, the FEBC Principal found himself deserted and all at bay. Nevertheless, the Lord Himself had set before the College an open door, and no man could shut it.

Since the relationship between the pastor and the assistant pastor and certain Session members was stretched to breaking point, the pastor decided to take five months' vacation leave away from Singapore. At this juncture a double invitation from Dr Lynn Gray Gordon, General Secretary and the Rev Howard Carlson, missionary in Bethlehem of the Independent Board, came to him to spend that vacation as a short-term missionary to Israel. This was gladly accepted and seen as an act of God's deliverance.

Before he left, the pastorate was committed to the assistant pastor's charge. Deacon Patrick Tan, a director of FEBC, was elected Dean of

### THREE EARLIER CRISES IN THE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Students and requested to stay in the “Grauley Apartment” to supervise the students. The Rev Quek Kiok Chiang, President of FEBC Board, was appointed Acting Principal. Deacon William Seah, who had moved into the “Missionary Apartment” on the top floor of the new extension, was made Church Warden.

Accordingly, the pastor and his wife and little daughter Jemima left Singapore July 28, 1969 for the Holy Land. The love for the pastor and family, however, was manifested by a big turnout to wish them Godspeed. The five-month vacation spent in the Holy Land as a short-term missionary was perhaps the most fruitful period in the pastor’s life. While discharging his duties as a missionary, he found time to join the Rev Howard Carlson in a five-month “Ulpan” Hebrew course at the American Institute of Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem. What he considered a prize from the Lord, however, was the composing of songs and verses inspired by “walking today where Jesus walked”. These songs and verses, illustrated with Howard Carlson’s photographs, were printed into a book with a sister’s help. Thousands of these sent to the United States are an extension of the Gilstead Road Testimony.

As the Church-and-College Family grew in numbers, so increased the problems of administration. To forestall further problems that should arise in the days to come, an Agreement between Life Church and FEBC was drawn up and signed on March 4, 1970.

### 1986-1988: A Dissentious Spirit that Led to the Dissolution of the Synod<sup>3</sup>

In a message the Rev Dr Timothy Tow gave to the students at the FEBC morning chapel, 10 October 1988, he said,

Now the influence of the Ecumenical Movement has come right into our B-P Church. ... **the situation has become worse and worse in the B-P Church since two years ago. At every Synod meeting there was a tussle between those who want to remain true to Christ, to the standard of the Cross, and those who want a different standard; between Fundamentalism and New Evangelicalism.** We came to a time when nothing could be done, and so a moratorium was imposed. However, we are not only individual churches—registered, autonomous and in fact quite independent—we are also registered with the Registry of Societies as a family of churches called *The Bible-Presbyterian Church of Singapore*. According to Government regulation, we have to meet whether we like it or not on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October, because the rule of Societies is that every society must meet at least once a year.

So when we met at last night’s Standing Committee Meeting (including junior pastors), our desire was to remain united. But I stated that unless

the Holy Spirit worked and melted us down, and those erring brethren would return to the original stand of the B-P Church, there was no solution. Dissolution was the only way out. So one group of churches, seeing that they were not able to remain in the Synod, hinted at dissolution. These were those who tried to save the Synod, but they also saw that there was no other solution. Finally we came to a consensus, a unanimous consensus, that for us to go we would have to dissolve.

But now, the cross is a sword that divides. Divides what? Cutting off the cancerous tissues from the living tissues. I said everything would run its natural course: water will mix with water and oil with oil. Whatever happens, those that are for the truth will stand together and those that are not for the truth stated in the foundation of the B-P Church, they will also conglomerate and come together. This thing does not bring any stigma to the B-P Church. No morality is involved; but dogma, doctrine.

Writing in the second edition of *In His Good Time: The Story of the Church in Singapore, 1819-1992*, Dr Bobby E K Ong commented:

One of the saddest episodes in the '80s must surely be the dissolution of the Bible-Presbyterian Church of Singapore. Begun in the '50s, this church played a historic role in battling liberal theology. Its crusading spirit and strong evangelistic stance ensured rapid growth in the '60s and '70s. By the late '80s, it had started 25 churches with a total membership in excess of 6,000. However, with growth, internal differences also arose. Its relentless call for believers to separate themselves from what it considered to be non-fundamental churches and new-evangelicals, brought a mixed response. Not all agreed on the rigid, narrow definition of 'separation'. In a statement issued on 30 October 1988 describing its voluntary dissolution, the B-P Church declared:

"The decision was arrived at after much prayerful consideration and discussion over certain protracted issues. These issues centred mainly on strong differences in interpreting the Doctrine of Biblical Separation, Fundamentalism, and Neo-Evangelicalism. Concerted attempts were made during the past two years at reconciliation through personal discussions and formal meetings. Even a moratorium failed to resolve these differences and break the impasse. Dissolution is accepted as the last resort."

Responding to the Dissolution in "Carmel Weekly" November 6, 1988, the Rev David W F Wong writes:

The Synod at its meeting last Sunday night accepted, by an overwhelming majority, the proposal to dissolve the Synod and the B-P Church of Singapore.

However, the individual B-P churches, being separately registered with the Government, will continue to exist with their respective names and autonomy. Because the B-P Church has, from its inception, practised a strict policy of decentralisation, the dissolution of the denominational body does not spell the end of the individual churches. Mt Carmel B-P Church

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and our congregations will go on without any structural disruption or change. In fact, the dissolution is seen as the breaking of a deadlock so that our churches can move ahead with the Lord's work without being bogged down by controversy.

We have simply agreed to disagree, and to part in peace. The question has been raised as to whether dissolution is ever a biblical answer to a problem. Is dissolution like divorce a sin? The answer is No. While divorce is a violation of the marriage vows before God, dissolution is no breach of any such vows. The coming together of individuals or organisational bodies is so that we may serve God more effectively. If that purpose is lost, and we find we can serve God more effectively apart, then so be it.

In Scriptures we have examples of the parting of ways of people who are no longer able to work together: Abraham and Lot (Genesis 13:5-11), Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-41). Even the two great apostles, Peter and Paul, agreed they should concentrate on different fields as the Lord had called them (Galatians 2:6-10). As one B-P minister rightly puts it, "It is no shame to tell our people that we have tried our best to resolve our differences, and we have failed."

Now, while the "decision was arrived at after much prayerful consideration and discussion over certain protracted issues, these issues centred mainly on strong differences in interpreting the Doctrine of Biblical Separation, Fundamentalism and Neo-Evangelicalism." But there were other issues accumulated that must be recalled "for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor 10:11).

The first of these accumulated issues was "tongues." In the words of Dr Tow Siang Hwa:

From May 1986 to Dec 1987 Synod committees studied, met, debated through a dozen or more meetings. The matter even became a major item on the agenda of the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual B-P Conference on Cameron Highlands Sept 7-11, 1987. For three days it was a ding-dong battle. The outcome of these long and tedious debates was this: The Zion-Carmel combination maintained that tongues had not ceased, and that these were "meaningful ecstatic utterances."

Subsequent Synod meetings produced no satisfactory outcome. As it became increasingly clear that a liberal faction was firmly entrenched within the Synod, and no solution could be made, Calvary BPC decided to withdraw from Synod in March 1988.

As for the Rev Dr Timothy Tow, he was so moved by the Cameron Highlands ordeal that he wrote a 126-page book to refute tongue-speaking from the autobiography of Wang Ming Tao. In the preface to this book, *Wang Ming Tao and Charismatism*, he says:

The tide of Charismatism is coming in so strong today that it has splashed into the Bible-Presbyterian Church of Singapore. At its Annual

Pastors and Leaders Conference on Cameron Highlands September 1987, certain younger leaders maintained that while the tongues of Pentecost (Acts 2) had ceased, those mentioned of the Corinthian Church (I Cor 12 and 14) have not. Today they continue in the Church as “meaningful ecstatic utterances.” Now, these tongues are required by Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal Churches of their members as evidence of baptism by the Holy Spirit, but are repudiated by Fundamental Churches that hold to the Reformed tradition.

Insofar as the writer is concerned, he and senior colleagues of the B-P Church had gone through the mighty revival meetings led by Dr John Sung in Singapore 1935. The working of the Holy Spirit was so manifest that hundreds came to the Lord, confessing their sins in tears of repentance and restitution. Drunkards and opium smokers, cigarette chain-smokers, were delivered snap from their iron-clad shackles. Feuding elders and deacons were melted down in mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. The Church Hall at Telok Ayer Street, where John Sung preached, suddenly became a powerhouse of prayer and praise, of hearty singing and joyful release—but there was no speaking in tongues.

As the Almighty Father has favoured the Chinese Church with several such visitations of Holy Spirit Revival, the writer made a thorough search into the ministry of other mighty evangelists beginning from William Chalmers Burns to Jonathan Goforth, to Miss Dora Yu and to Ting Li Mei, known as the “Moody of China, With One Thousand Souls a Month.” In none of their Spirit-filled ministries was there any mention of tongues.

As he further researched into the life and work of Wang Ming Tao, China’s greatest saint and living martyr still going strong at 89, he was delighted to discover how though Wang Ming Tao was immersed by a Pentecostal preacher, he soon repudiated his teachings, especially visions and tongues. This he has testified in his autobiography, “These Fifty Years,” which is recently translated by Arthur Reynolds into English under the title *A Stone Made Smooth*, and published by Mayflower.

In making known Wang Ming Tao’s deliverance from Charismatism to the English world we have chosen a Reynolds’ translation than making our own. Obviously, such third party witness adds credence to our report.

Indeed, the issue on tongues, unless restated here, would soon be forgotten. Alas, those younger leaders who spoke for tongues have not receded. One of them now sits in high council with them who are well known charismatic leaders (1995).

Other deviations from plain Bible truths taught by the same B-P minister in the name of “scholarship” (see *Focus*, 1974), that shook the faith of the Church are, to quote just a few, as follows:

**Quote A:** “Some of the OT accounts have parallels in other literatures. These in no way detract from the truth of the OT account because it was most likely the true one.”

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**Comment:** The Bible's absolute inerrancy is destroyed by the words "most likely the true one."

**Quote B:** "... there must be some other explanation for 'years' in Genesis. eg if years = months, then Noah's 950 years were in fact 950 months."

**Comment:** God's Word said "years," but FOCUS says "months." Who is speaking the truth?

**Quote C:** "There are some matters which cannot be ascertained because we have no way of determining the facts of the case ... was the Flood over the whole world or only on a part of it?"

**Comment:** Genesis Chapters 6, 7, 9 stated the "facts of the case" ten times and more, in words which even a child understands, allowing no room for doubt. Further, read 2 Pet 3:1-13 whose inspired commentary on the Flood, is it not in cosmic dimensions? FOCUS has undermined the clear record of God's Word and evidently had not read 2 Pet 3:1-13!

The Statement on Dissolution of the B-P Synod continues where Dr Bobby Sng left off:

With the dissolution of the B-P Synod, each B-P Church nevertheless continues to retain its autonomy by virtue of its individual registration with the Government. Each B-P Church is answerable to God Almighty and to the Lord Jesus Christ, Head of the Church Universal. May this parting of ways bring an end to a deadlock that has hindered the progress of the BPCS. And may God help each individual B-P Church hold fast to the precious Biblical Separatist and Fundamentalist position, till He comes. Amen.

The B-P Churches now parted each to her own way, there is one who having repudiated B-Pism is bold enough to state her as an "Independent." If B-Ps are true to their name they will heed the words of Dr Tow Siang Hwa in the Annual Record of Calvary Bible-Presbyterian Church (1994), as follows:

#### **WHAT'S A "B-P"?**

The name of the game today is to play by rules of one's own making. Time-honoured names continue to be worn by those who play a different game.

...

The B-Ps originated from Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (1950) to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

The B-P founding charter was "Biblical Separation" (article 6 of the B-P Constitution). Parts of Article 6 are quoted below to aid our present discussion.

#### **Article 6 – Principle and Practice of Biblical Separation**

6.1 The doctrine of separation from sin unto God is a fundamental principle of the Bible, one grievously ignored in the church today.

6.5 It is the duty all true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ to make a clear testimony of their faith in Him, especially in these darkening days of apostasy in many professing churches, by which apostasy whole denominations in their official capacity, as well as individual churches, have been swept into a paganising stream of modernism under various names and in varying degrees.

6.9 We are opposed to all efforts to obscure or wipe out the clear line of separation between these absolutes: truth and error, light and darkness. (See Jer 5:20, 2Cor 6:14-18). We refer to such efforts by New Evangelicals, Charismatic Christians, promoters of ecumenical co-operative evangelism and of the social gospel, and all churches and other movements and organisations that are aligned with or sympathetic to the Ecumenical Movement.

At the risk of being repetitious, let the B-P position be reworded:

A true B-P is opposed to all efforts to obscure or wipe out the clear line of separation between B-Ps and New Evangelicals, Charismatics, promoters of ecumenical cooperative evangelism, promoters of the liberal-modernist social gospel, and all links with the Ecumenical Movement.

As the B-P Movement grew, and younger men went overseas and imbibed liberal and New Evangelical theology, a deviant spirit began to creep into the B-P Church. While wearing the B-P name these were playing the New Evangelical game.

Reasonings and persuasions fell on deaf ears. "The situation became worse and worse," said the B-P founding pastor (*Banner*, Oct-Dec 1988). "At every Synod meeting there was a tussle ... it was a tussle between Fundamentalism and New Evangelicalism."

In October 1988 it was breaking point: the B-P Synod was dissolved, bringing to a close a chapter of the B-P Movement.

It was the "Day of Drift"—October 30 1988. Freed from all constraints each B-P Church hewed its own line, mapped its own course. As in the days of the Judges, "... every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg 17:6).

### **Six Years after Dissolution**

Six years after their Biblical fundamentalist moorings were cut, some B-P ships are sailing with the New Evangelical current into the ecumenical mainstream—an inevitable "sea change" for those of a different spirit.

We see, then, the emergence of a different brand of B-Ps, perhaps best called "New B-Ps" who continue to wear the B-P name but play the New Evangelical game.

Unless these new players have altered their Constitution Article on Biblical Separation, they are playing a double game.

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The *Singapore B-P Church Story* resembles the years of Israel's Wilderness Journey, though short, but full of exploits and mighty outworkings of the Almighty God. Lest Israel "forgot his works and his wonders that he had shewed them" (Ps 78:11), Asaph the Psalmist said:

*I will open my mouth in a parable:  
I will utter dark sayings of old:  
Which we have heard and known,  
And our fathers have told us.  
We will not hide them from their children  
Shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,  
And his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done...  
That the generation to come might know them  
Even the children which should be born  
Who should arise and declare them to their children:  
That they might set their hope in God,  
And not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:*

*Psalm 78:2-7*

For the same reasons the Rev Dr Timothy Tow had been moved to relate *The Singapore B-P Church Story* to students at the Evening Class of Far Eastern Bible College that "they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments" (Ps 78:7). For when the B-P Church came to her 38<sup>th</sup> year as did Israel from Kadesh Barnea to the brook Zered (Deut 2:13), the Synod was dissolved, because of dissensions and deviations. Freed from all constraints each B-P Church hewed its own line, mapped its own course. As in the days of the Judges, "... every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg 17:6). If this statement is challenged, it is good to be reminded that we tend to grow cold from our initial enthusiasm, to deviate from the original pathway. Hence this history of the Singapore B-P Church with its many precious lessons to keep us and our children from straying. It is said that if we do not study history, history will repeat itself.

Although Israel's Wilderness Journey covered a period of 40 years, her roots were deep. Israel before the Exodus were reminded of their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God instructed Moses to speak to the children of Israel, "The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you" (Exod 3:15).

Although our history is only 60 years, yet our roots of which there are seven reach down to our ancestors in South China, yea, through William Chalmers Burns to Scotland and England in the 1800s, and to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation, to Knox and Calvin.

Then there is a big American root that gave birth to our B-Pism, traced through the Bible Presbyterians (USA), to her battles with modernism and liberalism through Carl McIntire, and J Gresham Machen going back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

As B-Pism was introduced to Singapore by the Rev Dr Timothy Tow in 1948, and as he belonged to the bridge generation that spanned Singapore and China, he was obliged to relate the works of God from days of yore to sons of the Singapore soil. If this history is not put to ink and paper it will soon fade into oblivion.

Now there were two who fully followed the Lord against the ten who gave a dismal report on the Promised Land. Those who “did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD” (Num 14:37). How many in the B-P Church Movement who should remain to this day in the forefront of battle have left us and are little heard of? “Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart” (Judg 5:16).

“It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not” (Lam 3:22). According to God’s mercies, according to His promise to the two who followed the Lord fully, Joshua and Caleb both lived to a ripe old age. As mentioned earlier, Caleb testified to his comrade-in-arms, “And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in” (Josh 14:10-11). By the mercies of God showered upon them so that they are enabled to stand as examples to the new generation after them, the accounts herein of their exploits must be told to their children’s children. And let it be repeated:

*That they might set their hope in God,  
And not forget the works of God,  
But keep His Commandments. Amen.*

Update: The Rev David Wong, former pastor of Mt Carmel B-P Church, later went on to head the ecumenical Haggai Institute, and obtained a DMin degree from Neo-Evangelical Fuller Theological Seminary. He is now Senior Pastor of Zion B-P Church in Bishan previously led by Dr Quek Swee Hwa. Dr Quek Swee Hwa, the B-P minister who had questioned the literalness of the “years” of Genesis and the universality of the Genesis Flood in *Focus*,<sup>4</sup> went on to found and head Biblical Graduate School of Theology (BGST), a non-separatist school, whose successor—

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Dr Philip Satherthwaite—recently questioned the literalness and historicity of certain Old Testament narratives and events.<sup>5</sup>

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Timothy Tow, “The Planting of Far Eastern Bible College,” “The FEBC Anthem,” in *Training Labourers Together with God*, Silver Jubilee Magazine, Far Eastern Bible College (1962-1987), 37-39, 54-55.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy Tow, “The History of Life Church in the Bible-Presbyterian Church Movement in Singapore and Malaysia, 1950-71”, in *The Bible-Presbyterian Church of Singapore and Malaysia 1950-1971*, a Commemorative Volume Published in the Bible-Presbyterian Church of Singapore and Malaysia on the Occasion of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Church, 17 October 1971, 45-47.

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Tow, *The Singapore B-P Church Story* (Singapore: Life Bible Centre, 1995), 215-230.

<sup>4</sup> Bob Phee, Anthony Tan, Tan Eng Boo, et al, “New Evangelicalism in the Bible-Presbyterian Church”, October 1988.

<sup>5</sup> Edmond Chua, ed, “Commands to Kill Canaanites Not Literally Meant?”, *The Christian Post*, Singapore edition, February 25, 2012. The article quoted Dr Satherthwaite as saying, “In other words, ‘the commands in Deuteronomy were not intended to be taken literally, and perhaps never were,’ concluded Dr. Satterthwaite. Similarly, ‘the narratives in Joshua were not meant as a factual account of what happened to the Canaanites, but as a warning to the Israelites to beware of Canaanite religion,’ he added.” See <http://sg.christianpost.com/dbase/education/931/14%7C24/1.htm>, accessed on April 27, 2012.



**Calling All Alumni!**  
Come & Rejoice with Your Alma Mater at Her  
50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Thanksgiving Week  
September 17-23, 2012

Thanksgiving Retreat: Mon-Wed, Sep 17-19, Resort Lautan Biru, Mersing  
Alumni Thanksgiving Dinner/Service: Fri, Sep 21, Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, 6 pm  
Golden Jubilee Thanksgiving Service: Lord's Day, Sep 23, Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church, 6 pm

## **THE BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE BETWEEN FAR EASTERN BIBLE COLLEGE AND LIFE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b>July 17, 2002</b>	The Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (LBPC) Session requested the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) faculty to study the position paper on the KJV that they had drafted during their Session retreat.
<b>July 18, 2002</b>	In conjunction with the LBPC Session, Dr Jeffrey Khoo and the Rev Charles Seet co-wrote a paper entitled "KJV-Only Q&A" in reply to critics of the KJV.
<b>July 19, 2002</b>	The Rev Colin Wong wrote to say that he was much enlightened by the paper and that he had no problem subscribing to it. Dr Jeffrey Khoo replied by saying that he was glad that the Rev Wong had no problems subscribing to the paper, but wanted to know what he meant when he said that. Dr Khoo posed him 10 questions.
<b>July 21, 2002</b>	The Rev Colin Wong replied saying that he had no problems answering the 10 questions and would like to meet Dr Khoo personally to discuss this.
<b>July 22, 2002</b>	At the FEBC opening day of prayer, the Rev Colin Wong informed Dr Khoo that the meeting would be held after the LBPC prayer meeting on July 23, and that he had invited Eld Lim Teck Chye and Eld Khoo Peng Kiat to join in.
<b>July 23, 2002</b>	During the 1½-hour meeting with the Rev Colin Wong, Eld Lim Teck Chye and Eld Khoo Peng Kiat, the Rev Wong said he could not answer the question on whether he had a perfect Bible or not. Eld Lim said that to be fair,

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the 10 questions should also be answered by the rest of the FEBC faculty. Dr Jeffrey Khoo agreed to his suggestion.

**July 24, 2002** Dr Jeffrey Khoo emailed the 10 questions to the whole faculty to be discussed at the upcoming faculty meeting. However, the Rev Charles Seet emailed his answers to the whole faculty before the meeting which led to a debate via email.

**July 30, 2002** Following the different views taken in the email debates on whether the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures underlying the KJV are infallible and inerrant, there was a split in views on this issue during the faculty meeting.

**August 8, 2002** Architectural plans from M/s Ang Kheng Leng & Partners for the construction of a Bible College on 10 Gilstead Road, with a 470-seat auditorium, lecture hall, tutorial rooms, classrooms, college library, students' lounges, lecturers' rooms, dormitories and Principal's quarters were submitted to the Project Management Committee of LBPC, which had been set up in 2000 to oversee the development of New Beulah House.

**August 11, 2002** Dr Jeffrey Khoo preached a message on inspiration and preservation (Ps 12:6-7) at LBPC, teaching that God's people have a perfect Bible not only in the past but also today, and warned against the modern perversions of the Bible.

**August 17, 2002** The Rev Charles Seet, Mr Calvin Loh and Mr Mark Chen presented two papers challenging and misrepresenting the views held by certain faculty members of FEBC. These two papers were distributed to the LBPC Session.

**August 18, 2002** The Rev Quek Suan Yew preached on "The Insidious Influence of Leaven" in LBPC and warned against the book—*One Bible Only?* This book by Baptist fundamentalists in the USA undermined the KJV which has been the Bible of the B-P Church since its founding. Eld Lim Teck Chye had promoted this anti-KJV book among the leaders in church.

- August 21, 2002** Mr Calvin Loh and Mr Mark Chen after a fruitful discussion with the Rev Prabhudas Koshy and Dr Jeffrey Khoo realised that they had misrepresented certain members of the faculty in their paper. They apologised and willingly signed a retraction and a clarification which was submitted to the LBPC Session that same night.
- August 27-28, 2002** The Rev Charles Seet emailed to Dr Jeffrey Khoo questions from LBPC Session members regarding the KJV.
- September 13, 2002** Dr Jeffrey Khoo emailed to the Rev Charles Seet his answers to the questions from the LBPC Session. There were no further questions.
- October 3, 2002** Dr Jeffrey Khoo presented his nine-page paper "A Plea for a Perfect Bible" to the FEBC's Basic Theology for Everyone night class on Soteriology. This paper was published in the January 2003 issue of *The Burning Bush*.
- October 29, 2002** In a faculty meeting, the Rev Colin Wong and the Rev Charles Seet declared that they would resign from FEBC because they could no longer take the Dean Burgon Oath.
- November 14, 2002** Eld Sherman Ong Eng Lam sent an email to all Fellowship leaders regarding the banning of the Rev Prabhudas Koshy, the Rev Quek Suan Yew and Dr Jeffrey Khoo from speaking in LBPC, including at all fellowship meetings. All three B-P ministers did not protest the ban. They did not want to be divisive. They respected the decision made by Eld Sherman Ong to ban them from speaking.
- November 15, 2002** The Rev Charles Seet tendered his letter of resignation to the Academic Dean of FEBC, and requested "not to be represented as a member of the FEBC faculty in any publication that is issued by the college from now on."
- November 17, 2002** The Rev Charles Seet and the Rev Colin Wong's resignation from the FEBC faculty was announced in the LBPC weekly.

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- November 24, 2002** Chairing the 10.30 am service, Eld Sherman Ong Eng Lam read from Titus 3:1-15 and referred specifically to verse 10 (“A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject”) as a basis for “church discipline” against heretics. At the Sunday School Annual General Meeting, Eld Sherman Ong accused Dr Jeffrey Khoo and Pastor Timothy Tow of adopting a “heretical” and “untenable and extreme position.” Eld Ong could not accept that there was a “perfect Bible” and wanted to avoid becoming “the laughing stock to the world for having blind faith.”
- November 25, 2002** The Rev Colin Wong tendered his letter of resignation from the FEBC faculty.
- November 27, 2002** In a Combined Fellowships Meeting, co-chaired by the Rev Charles Seet and the Rev Colin Wong, and attended also by Eld Sherman Ong Eng Lam, the banning of the three ordained ministers (Dr Jeffrey Khoo, the Rev Quek Suan Yew, the Rev Prabhudas Koshy) was made known to all. They also presented their Bible position which denied its perfect preservation, as a preview to the paper which was distributed on December 1 at the Adult Sunday School.
- December 1, 2002** Eld Lim Teck Chye spoke to the Adult Sunday School in the sanctuary. A paper entitled “Preserving Our Godly Path” signed by 21 Lifers comprising the Assistant Pastors, Elders, Deacons, and Preachers was distributed. Eld Lim spent the hour maligning and ridiculing the Perfect Bible position. Dr Jeffrey Khoo raised his hand to clarify matters at the end of Eld Lim’s speech but was not given a chance to respond.
- December 8, 2002** Pastor Timothy Tow’s letter written from Perth on December 3 was printed in the church weekly, commenting on the “Preserving Our Godly Path” paper.
- January 2003** Dr Jeffrey Khoo’s article “A Plea for a Perfect Bible” was published in *The Burning Bush* (Vol 9 No 1). This article was a paper defending the infallibility and inerrancy of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures on which the KJV is based.

**January 5,  
2003**

Statement of Reconciliation (dated January 1, 2003) by the LBPC Board of Elders (BOE) was printed in the LBPC Weekly. The statement which was acceptable to both sides read, "For the past 52 years, Life B-P Church has been holding forth the Word of Life, and upholding the use of the King James Version (KJV) which is the best English translation of the Scriptures, made by godly translators from the best Greek and Hebrew texts.

"Among all English Bibles today there is none that can surpass the KJV. We believe that this statement on the KJV being the very Word of God, and fully reliable, which was arrived at after the careful deliberation of the Board of Elders, is acceptable by all other members of the Session.

"And thus we should continue to exclusively use the KJV for all ministries of the church and for our members' use, and refrain from all Modern English versions, like the RSV, NASV and NIV. One of the many deficiencies of these Modern English versions is that they are based on the corrupted Westcott and Hort Greek and Hebrew Text; whilst the KJV is based on the uncorrupted family of the Greek Received Text and the Masoretic Hebrew Text.

"In the last few months, a debate has arisen within our church concerning the Greek Received Text and the Masoretic Hebrew Text underlying the KJV. We have come to the conclusion that neither of the views propounded is dogma but personal conviction or preference. We confess our sins and repent before God that we have caused grief, consternation and confusion. We pray that God will forgive us, and that He may enable us to serve Him more lovingly and zealously till He comes."

**January 19,  
2003**

Statement of Clarification by the contributors of "Preserving Our Godly Path" paper on the LBPC BOE's Statement of Reconciliation was distributed to the congregation. The Statement of Clarification by the two Assistant Pastors, four Elders, 12 Deacons, and three Preachers declared, "While agreeing wholeheartedly the KJV Bible to be the very Word of God and fully reliable,

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the contributors of 'Preserving Our Godly Path' paper do not believe that the Hebrew and Greek texts that underlie the KJB are perfect."

- March 27, 2003** Dr Jeffrey Khoo submitted to the LBPC Session a Statement of Agreement entitled, "A Plea for a Perfect Bible Again so as to Preserve Our Godly Path," together with a letter of plea for peace and cooperation on the basis of truth.
- April 16, 2003** LBPC Session rejected Dr Jeffrey Khoo's Statement of Agreement and letter of plea.
- August 20, 2003** Pastor Timothy Tow was lambasted by the LBPC Session on a number of issues relating to his church administration, but especially for allowing Dr Jeffrey Khoo to publish his booklet *KJV Q&A*. Under tremendous pressure and great duress, Pastor Tow announced his resignation.
- August 22, 2003** Pastor Timothy Tow sent his letter of resignation to the BOE of LBPC.
- August 24, 2003** Pastor Timothy Tow's resignation was announced in the LBPC Weekly.
- August 27, 2003** At the Combined Fellowships Meeting, in a reply to a question about Pastor Timothy Tow's resignation, the Assistant Pastors—the Rev Colin Wong and the Rev Charles Seet—brought up the same administrative issues as sources of disagreement between the Pastor and the Session.
- September 23, 2003** One month after Pastor Timothy Tow's letter of resignation was submitted, the LBPC BOE convened a meeting to discuss the matter. No consensus was reached to accept Pastor Timothy Tow's resignation.
- September 28, 2003** The same litany of faults allegedly committed by Pastor Timothy Tow was itemised in the "Summary of Facts" issued by the Session and published in the LBPC weekly on September 28, 2003.

- October 5, 2003** Pastor Timothy Tow's response to the "Summary of Facts" was published in the LBPC weekly.
- October 5, 2003** First FEBC Worship Service held at the RELC officiated by Pastor Timothy Tow with about 170 Lifers in attendance.
- October 9, 2003** Eld Han Soon Juan, Eld Koh Kim Song, Eld Eric Mahadevan, Eld Geoffrey Tan, Eld Tan Nee Keng and Eld Wee Chin Kam issued a four-page statement regretting the publication of the "Summary of Facts" and rejecting the resignation of Pastor Timothy Tow from LBPC. The Rev Charles Seet refused to publish the Elders' statement in the LBPC Weekly.
- November 19, 2003** FEBC submitted its application to the Commissioner of Charities to be registered as a charity. This was prompted in no small measure by LBPC's repeated requests that FEBC register itself as a charity under the Charities Act, as LBPC did not want to be accountable for the actions of FEBC. As early as April 4, 2001, during a LBPC Session meeting, FEBC had been encouraged to register as a charity. This matter was further discussed at subsequent Session meetings held on May 2, 2001, July 16, 2003 and November 19, 2003.
- January 2004** Dr Jeffrey Khoo's paper critiquing Central Baptist Seminary's anti-preservation and anti-KJV book was published in *The Burning Bush* (Vol 10 No 1) entitled, "The Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism: One Bible Only? or 'Yea, Hath God Said?'"
- January 27, 2004** FEBC received a letter from the Commissioner of Charities approving its application as a registered charity (Registration Number: 01760 wef January 26, 2004).
- February 18, 2004** Since there was no consensus in the LBPC BOE to accept Pastor Timothy Tow's resignation, LBPC Session met and the majority voted to accept Pastor Timothy Tow's resignation.

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- March 8, 2004** LBPC Session sent letter to Pastor Timothy Tow informing that his resignation has been accepted “with regrets”.
- April 25, 2004** In the LBPC Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM), the congregation was asked to choose which group of Elders should “rule” the church. The reason given was that there was an alleged “deadlock” in the BOE meetings that “blocked” the Session from making decisions. A paper on the preservation of the Bible issued by LBPC was distributed to members who attended the ACM. The paper was worded in a manner which appeared like the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) position.
- June 21, 2004** FEBC Worship Service became True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (TLBPC) when its registration as a Society was approved by the Registrar of Societies (letter dated June 21, 2004, registered on July 2, 2004, and gazetted July 23, 2004).
- May 1, 2005** The LBPC Weekly announced the Rev Charles Seet as “Pastor,” and the Rev Colin Wong as “Associate Pastor” of LBPC.
- July 2005** Dr Jeffrey Khoo’s paper entitled “Bob Jones University, Neo-Fundamentalism, and Biblical Preservation” was published in *The Burning Bush* (Vol 11 No 2).
- September 25, 2005** The LBPC Weekly published a statement against VPP calling it a “theory” and “schismatic” signed by 11 pastors (the Rev Philip Heng, the Rev Ong Hock Khee, the Rev Charles Seet, the Rev Tan Eng Boo, the Rev Colin Wong, the Rev Anthony Tan, the Rev Yap Beng Shin, the Rev Tan Choon Seng, the Rev Eric Kwan, the Rev Eddy Lim, the Rev Yap Kim Sin) from seven B-P churches (Galilee, Grace, Life, Nazareth, Olivet, Shalom, Zion).
- October 29, 2005** The Singapore Council of Christian Churches (SCCC) in its 49<sup>th</sup> AGM passed a resolution against VPP entitled “Inspiration and Translations of the Holy Scriptures.” This resolution was published in the *Far Eastern Beacon* (November-December 2005).

- November 8, 2005** The BOE of LBPC published “Our Statement of Faith on the Preservation of God’s Word” which appeared like the VPP position. This was the same paper released on April 25, 2004.
- July 2006** Dr Jeffrey Khoo published two papers entitled “Truth or Lies?” and “In Defence of the Far Eastern Bible College, the Reformed Faith, and the Reformation Bible” in *The Burning Bush* (Vol 12 No 2). The first paper was a reply to false allegations about what FEBC believes about the KJV, and the second was in response to anti-VPP articles in the internet.
- January 2007** Dr Jeffrey Khoo published a paper entitled “Inspiration, Preservation, and Translations: In Search of the Biblical Identity of the Bible-Presbyterian Church” in *The Burning Bush* (Vol 13 No 1). This paper was written in response to SCCC’s anti-VPP resolution of October 29, 2005.
- February 27, 2007** The FEBC faculty issued a statement signed by all the lecturers and tutors reaffirming VPP and the College’s Statement of Faith as contained in its Constitution.
- March 18, 2007** Dr Jeffrey Khoo’s article “Multiversions Onlyism” was published in the TLBPC Weekly. It was a critique of Dr James D Price’s anti-KJV book—*King James Onlyism: A New Sect*—published in 2006. The book was partially financed and promoted by the Rev Yap Beng Shin, pastor of Olivet Bible-Presbyterian Church.
- April 25, 2007** In an article published by LBPC entitled “A Founding Leader of the B-P Movement in Singapore Replies to a Query on the Church Constitution,” the Rev Dr Quek Kiok Chiang, a founding elder of the B-P denomination, wrote an email letter to criticise the VPP position. In that letter, he grossly misrepresented VPP by claiming that VPP upholds the KJV to be equal with the original language Scriptures. Nevertheless, in the same letter, he conceded, “I do not see ‘main contradictions’ between the clause 4.2.1 in the existing Constitution of our B-P Churches and the VPP theory.”
- July 17, 2007** Letter from LBPC to FEBC dated July 17, 2007 (Re: Use of Premises at 9A Gilstead Road, Singapore [“the

Premises.”)). In this letter, LBPC claimed that FEBC was established as an extension of the Church, and since the College has been registered as a charity on January 26, 2004, it is deemed to be no longer affiliated with the Church. As such, the College was informed that the Church would “no longer be able to extend to the College the continued use of the Premises under the previous arrangements.” It called for the College to “relocate to some other premises” and to submit a written proposal to facilitate discussion concerning this matter.

**August 3,  
2007**

Letter from FEBC to LBPC dated August 3, 2007 (Re: Use of Premises at 9 & 9A Gilstead Road, Singapore). In this letter, FEBC reminded LBPC that the College was “founded and established as an autonomous institution, free of ecclesiastical control” and gave evidence how it was so and remains so. The letter also stated that the College had contributed financially to LBPC by paying for certain renovations and maintenance expenses over the years, including an interest free loan of \$200,000 in 2001. It was also stated in the letter that LBPC had “benefited from the presence of the College as the substantial funds given to LBPC for the acquisition and the rebuilding of Beulah House at 10 Gilstead Road was based on LBPC presenting to the congregation plans that Beulah House would be developed for the FEBC.” The College asked to be relocated at 10 Gilstead Road (Beulah House) if it was to relinquish its rights to 9 and 9A Gilstead Road.

**August 29,  
2007**

Letter from FEBC to LBPC dated August 29, 2007 (Re: Use of the Premises at 9 & 9A Gilstead Road, Singapore). This letter sought to ensure that LBPC had received FEBC’s letter of August 3, 2007. The relevant part states, “It is more than 3 weeks since we handed our letter to LBPC, and we have not had any written acknowledgement or reply. As such, we are compelled to write this letter and send it by ‘A.R. REGISTERED MAIL,’ together with a copy of our letter of August 3, 2007.” Without any news from LBPC, this letter had to be sent because the College was expected to respond to the Church’s letter of July 17, 2007 before the end of

August or else the Church would assume that the FEBC no longer needed 9 & 9A Gilstead Road.

**October 5,  
2007**

Letter from LBPC to FEBC dated October 5, 2007 (Re: The Use of the Life B-P Church Sanctuary for Night Lectures). This letter sought FEBC's "written unconditional undertaking" to respect LBPC's non-VPP position, and not to promote the VPP doctrine in the night classes, failing which the College would not be allowed to use the church sanctuary for FEBC's Basic Theology for Everyone night classes from January 2008.

**October 24,  
2007**

Letter from FEBC to LBPC dated October 24, 2007 (Re: The Use of LBPC Sanctuary for Night Lectures). This 10-page letter sought to clarify FEBC's position on the doctrine of VPP, and its consistency with Article 4.2.1 of the LBPC Constitution, and its right to conduct classes in the sanctuary. The letter then dealt with the Rev Timothy Tow's resignation from LBPC in 2003 against his wishes, and urged the BOE of LBPC to work towards the healing of the relationship between LBPC and FEBC by affirming VPP. The letter also asked why there was no reply to FEBC's letter of August 3, 2007 requesting for Beulah House, and reiterated FEBC's equal stake on Beulah House, and calling for an agreement on the usage of the properties on both sides of Gilstead Road.

**October 28,  
2007**

The Rev Colin Wong preached a sermon to the congregation of LBPC. He said in his sermon, "On this Reformation Sunday, I would like to declare unto you what is Life B-P Church's position on the Word of God. Thus I have entitled my message, 'Did God Write Only One Bible?'... Since the translation of the KJV or the Authorized Version of 1611, there has been more concrete manuscript evidence that is available today, which is far superior to that which was available to the King James Version translators in 1611." This contradicts the LBPC Statement of Reconciliation of January 5, 2003 which had declared the KJV's Hebrew and Greek texts to be "the best."

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- November 5, 2007** Letter from LBPC to FEBC dated November 5, 2007 (Re: The Use of Life B-P Church Sanctuary for Night Classes). In this letter, LBPC repeated its requirement that FEBC should sign an unconditional undertaking not to promote VPP in its sanctuary, failing which the sanctuary would no longer be available for its use from January 1, 2008. As to FEBC's questions on what their non-VPP position meant, LBPC replied, "As much as we cannot dictate your views on VPP, we owe you no duty to justify our non-VPP position." FEBC chose not to strive with LBPC for the use of the sanctuary, and thus decided to hold its classes at the FEBC Hall instead. In order to accommodate 200-300 students comfortably, the College employed an electrician to lay a cable from the FEBC Hall to its Greek/Hebrew classrooms (located at the Church-and-College Extension Block) so that it could screen its lectures on TV, but the electrician was ordered to stop work by a LBPC staff on January 2, 2008.
- January 2-3, 2008** Emails between FEBC and LBPC on January 2 and 3, 2008 (Re: FEBC Monday & Thursday Night Classes). Mr Steve Chng, FEBC's administrator, in an email (January 2, 2008) to Eld Tan Yew Chong, informed him that the College would be wiring up the FEBC Hall and Greek/Hebrew classrooms for its night lectures. In an email reply (January 3, 2008), Eld Tan Yew Chong, acting for the Estate Management Committee of LBPC, asserted LBPC's ownership of the premises and FEBC's need to seek "permission" from LBPC for the use of the premises. Eld Tan wrote that permission was not granted for the use of the Hebrew/Greek classrooms, but only for the "Chinese Service Hall" (which is actually the FEBC Hall) which was to be used only for its night lectures on Monday and Thursday evenings. It went on to state, "This permission is valid up till 30 Jun 2008; and further extension is subject to review."
- January 4, 2008** Letter from the Rev Timothy Tow to Eld Tan Yew Chong (copied to the Rev Charles Seet, pastor of LBPC) dated January 4, 2008. This letter by the founding pastor and

principal of LBPC and FEBC respectively pleaded with LBPC to live peaceably with FEBC at the Gilstead premises. He informed the Church of the College's right to use the church sanctuary which the Lord had used him to build, calling for LBPC to heed God's command not to remove ancient landmarks (Prov 22:28).

**January 5,  
2008**

Letter from the Rev Charles Seet (on behalf of the BOE of LBPC) to the Rev Timothy Tow dated January 5, 2008. In this letter, it was stated, "As the Board of Elders of LBPC, we exercise sole jurisdiction over the use of the Sanctuary. ... Unless expressed permission is granted by LBPC, any unauthorised use of our Sanctuary would be a trespass on our property and we would not hesitate to take necessary actions against trespassers."

**January 13,  
2008**

The Rev Charles Seet and BOE of LBPC published a paper "Mark Them Which Cause Divisions" in the LBPC Weekly labeling VPP a "heresy".

**January 20,  
2008**

Open Letter on "The Life BP Church-FEBC Matter" by Dr Tow Siang Hwa, Senior Pastor of Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church dated January 20, 2008. Dr Tow Siang Hwa testified in reply to "the serious error and injustice" contained in a letter dated January 5, 2008 from the LBPC BOE, signed by the Rev Charles Seet, addressed to the Rev Timothy Tow, FEBC's Principal. In regard to the 1970 Agreement between LBPC and FEBC, he wrote as Chairman of the Joint LBPC-FEBC Committee which drew up the Agreement, and as one of the founders of LBPC (1950) and FEBC (1962), and President of the FEBC Board (1977-1989).

**January 25,  
2008**

The BOE of LBPC issued a statement on the relations of LBPC with FEBC. It was a statement against VPP and FEBC's uncompromising belief and defence of VPP. The statement declared that due to irreconcilable differences, "The time has come for us to part ways as Amos 3:3 says, 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?'"

**January 27,  
2008**

The Rev Charles Seet's article "Bearing False Witness," and the LBPC BOE's statement "An Appeal to VPP Proponents" was published in the LBPC Weekly.

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- January 28, 2008** Letter from LBPC to FEBC dated January 28, 2008 (Re: The Use of Life B-P Church Premises at 9, 9A and 10 Gilstead Road [“the Premises”]). In this letter, LBPC disputed and rejected all the College’s claims to co-ownership of the Premises with LBPC. The Church is prepared “to consider granting the College continued use of the Premises (on terms to be agreed) provided the College gives the Church a written unconditional undertaking, in form and substance agreeable to us, that the College will not teach and promote the VPP doctrine ....” The Church required the College to seek relocation if such an undertaking was not given to them by February 15, 2008.
- January 29, 2008** Letter from FEBC to LBPC dated January 29, 2008. In this letter, FEBC reaffirmed its biblical and lawful rights to the possession and use of the premises at 9, 9A and 10 Gilstead Road. The letter further said, “The Board of FEBC is prepared to sit down and discuss terms of agreement with you on a date convenient to both parties. A God-honouring solution could be made for the peaceful co-existence of both LBPC and FEBC and to the glory of God.”
- February 3, 2008** Dr Jeffrey Khoo’s paper “Did God Write Only One Bible?” was published in the TLBPC Weekly. This paper was in response to the Rev Colin Wong’s sermon at LBPC on October 28, 2007, and LBPC’s statement of January 25, 2008 against VPP and FEBC.
- February 10, 2008** Dr Jeffrey Khoo’s paper “Why Undertaking Not Undertaken” was published in the TLBPC Weekly, which gave reasons why FEBC cannot sign an undertaking not to teach VPP as demanded by LBPC.
- February 12, 2008** Letter from LBPC to Dr Tow Siang Hwa dated February 12, 2008 (Re: The Agreement made on 4 Jan 1970 between Life Bible Presbyterian Church [“the Church”] and Far Eastern Bible College [“the College”]). In this letter to Dr Tow Siang Hwa, Senior Pastor of Calvary Pandan BPC and the Chairman of the committee which drafted the 1970 Agreement between the Church and the College, LBPC claimed that 1970 Agreement was

“nothing more than a Memorandum of Understanding.” A letter signed by the Rev Quek Kiok Chiang, the Rev Dr Patrick Tan, and Eld Joshua Lim, who were three of the five committee members of the 1970 Agreement was attached. This letter stated that the Agreement was “no more than a Memorandum of Understanding,” and that “The Church was and is the sole legal owner of the Church property, namely the Church Auditorium, the College Annex, and the Church-College Extension.”

- February 12, 2008** Letter from FEBC to LBPC dated February 12, 2008 (Re: LBPC and FEBC at 9, 9A and 10 Gilstead Road). In this letter, FEBC maintained that the properties on both sides of Gilstead Road are owned by both LBPC and the FEBC. The FEBC is not a “tenant” of LBPC as alleged. To avoid a costly confrontation, FEBC proposed that a mediatorial meeting be convened to arrive at an amicable solution to the satisfaction of both parties.
- February 17, 2008** Dr Jeffrey Khoo’s paper “Making the Word of God of None Effect” was published in the TLBPC Weekly. It was a paper in response to the Rev Charles Seet’s and the LBPC BOE’s paper of January 13, 2008 calling VPP a “heresy”.
- February 24, 2008** Dr Jeffrey Khoo’s paper “Bearing True Witness” was published in the TLBPC Weekly. This paper was written in response to the Rev Charles Seet’s article “Bearing False Witness” and the LBPC BOE’s statement of January 27, 2008.
- March 1, 2008** Letter from LBPC to FEBC dated March 1, 2008 (Re: Notice to Vacate and Deliver Vacant Possession of Premises at of [sic] 9 & 9A Gilstead Road [“the Church Premises”]). In this letter, the College was served with a notice to vacate and hand over possession of the Gilstead premises to the Church by June 30, 2008.
- March 1, 2008** Letter from LBPC to FEBC dated March 1, 2008 “Without prejudice to our Notice To Vacate dated 1<sup>st</sup> March 2008” (Re: Use of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church Premises at 9 & 9A Gilstead Road [“the Premises”] by Far Eastern Bible College). In this letter, LBPC wrote,

“The Church’s ownership of the premises is clearly and irrefutably recognised even in the College’s prospectus, from which we quote from page 14 as follows: ... ‘While Life Bible-Presbyterian Church is the legal owner of the College property, inasmuch as she is also the prime mover of the founding and building of the College ...’.” It went on to state, “With respect, we are therefore of the view that no meaningful, amicable and lasting solution can be arrived at unless the College recognizes and respects the Church’s sole ownership of the Premises and our rights to determine and regulate the use thereof. If the College accepts our rightful position, we would be happy to meet with the Board of the College ... Please let us have your written agreement to our above conditions for a meeting by 15<sup>th</sup> March 2008.”

- May 27, 2008** Letter from FEBC to the Commissioner of Charities dated May 27, 2008, appealing for his intervention under the Charities Act (Re: Far Eastern Bible College, Properties Known as 9, 9A, and 10 Gilstead Road).
- May 30, 2008** Letter from LBPC to FEBC dated May 30, 2008 (Re: Handing Over of Premises at 9 & 9A Gilstead Road [“the Church Premises”]). LBPC reminded FEBC of its letter dated March 1, 2008 notifying FEBC to vacate and hand over its possession of the premises at 9 and 9A Gilstead Road by June 30, 2008.
- June 16, 2008** Letter from FEBC to the Commissioner of Charities dated June 16, 2008, appealing for his intervention under the Charities Act (Re: Far Eastern Bible College, Properties Known as 9, 9A, and 10 Gilstead Road). This letter sought to inform the Commissioner of LBPC’s letter of May 30, 2008, and requested him to look urgently into our appeal for his intervention under the Charities Act.
- June 16, 2008** Letter from FEBC to LBPC dated June 16, 2008 (Re: The Inexorable Law of Filial Piety and of Ancient Landmarks). Employing biblical injunctions, FEBC pleaded with LBPC “to honour their founding pastor and spiritual father with a sincere heart, and his desire that FEBC should continue to remain at and operate from the

Gilstead premises.” The letter also reaffirmed FEBC’s right to her birthplace and home at 9, 9A and 10 Gilstead Road, and her right to possess and use the premises. It reiterated FEBC’s openness to a conciliatory meeting for a charitable and equitable resolution.

- June 25, 2008** Letter from LBPC to FEBC dated June 25, 2008 (Re: Obstruction to Fire Exit). This letter required FEBC to vacate the “room” used by Miss Wendy Teng, FEBC’s webmaster, because “it impedes free passage of the fire exit route.” The “room” had been occupied by Miss Teng/FEBC for five years, without incident. The “room” was to be vacated by July 7, 2008 to facilitate removal works. Miss Teng vacated the “room” on July 7, 2008.
- June 25, 2008** In the afternoon of June 25, 2008, contractors from LBPC knocked out the old handles and locks of the doors to the FEBC Hall. No prior information was given to FEBC about this matter.
- June 26, 2008** Letter from FEBC to the Commissioner of Charities dated June 26, 2008 appealing for his intervention under the Charities Act in view of the sudden removal of the handles and locks of the doors to the FEBC Hall (Re: Far Eastern Bible College, Properties Known as 9, 9A, and 10 Gilstead Road).
- June 27, 2008** Letter from Commissioner of Charities to FEBC dated June 27, 2008 (Re: Far Eastern Bible College [Charity Registration No. 1760]). In this letter, the Commissioner requested from FEBC a trust deed to substantiate “that one of the intended purposes of the property at 9A Gilstead Road, Singapore is to be used by your College or to be used for educational purposes.” The Commissioner said that he might not have the capacity to intervene if FEBC “does not have the legal title to the property,” and suggested that FEBC seek legal advice since he might not have the capacity to decide on this matter which might have to be decided in court.
- July 1, 2008** Letter from FEBC to the Commissioner of Charities dated July 1, 2008 appealing for his intervention under the Charities Act (Re: Far Eastern Bible College, Properties Known as 9, 9A, and 10 Gilstead Road). In

response to the Commissioner's request for proof of a trust deed, the College submitted to him the 1970 Agreement on "the use of the Church and College Property" signed between LBPC and FEBC which acknowledged that "the buildings situated at 9 and 9A Gilstead Road (i.e. the College Annex and Church-and-College Extension) were built partly for the purpose of the FEBC and that substantial sums were given by friends of the FEBC with the understanding that the buildings were to be used by the FEBC." The letter included a brief chronology of events which formed the backdrop to the 1970 Agreement, and two photographs of the foundations stones of the College Annex and of the Church-and-College Extension laid on April 28, 1962 and June 7, 1968 respectively. In view of LBPC's eviction notice, requiring FEBC to vacate the premises by June 30, 2008, the letter urged the Commissioner to prevent LBPC from acting contrary to the declaration of trust. It also sought the Commissioner's order to complete the execution of this trust.

**July 2, 2008** Letter from FEBC to LBPC dated July 2, 2008 (Re: The Use of the Church and College Property at 9, 9A and 10 Gilstead Road). This letter expressed FEBC's hardships and its intent to engage counsel to appeal to the government for protection while remaining open to a conciliatory meeting with LBPC.

**July 2, 2008** Letter from LBPC to FEBC dated July 2, 2008 (sent by registered mail postmarked July 3, 2008) (Re: Failure to Vacate and Deliver Vacant Possession of Premises at 9 & 9A Gilstead Road ["the Church Premises"]). This letter said, "As of the date of this letter, FEBC has no lawful status nor any right to remain on the Church Premises and are therefore trespassers. The Church will commence action to recover possession of the part of the Church Premises used by FEBC, if it fails to peaceably vacate the premises forthwith. ... the FEBC is not to advertise nor hold any public lectures in our premises from 1 July 2008 onwards. If you ignore this notice, you will be held liable for misleading the public and instigating them to trespass into our premises."

- July 10, 2008** Allen & Gledhill (A&G), law firm appointed by FEBC, wrote a letter informing LBPC that FEBC would be applying to the High Court “to seek a declaration, amongst others, that the buildings situated at 9 and 9A Gilstead Road are held on trust for our client to use as a Bible College.” The letter also requested that LBPC maintain the status quo pending the Court’s determination. A&G lawyers acting for FEBC: Mr Ang Cheng Hock, Mr Tham Wei Chern and Mr Vincent Leow.
- July 13, 2008** In response to A&G’s letter received on July 11, 2008, LBPC published in its weekly requesting as a matter of urgent prayer the Session’s decision to appoint a legal counsel to act on behalf of LBPC and with regard to whether the decision “violates 1 Cor 6 which teaches us not to take fellow Christians to court”, LBPC said that “[its] conscience is clear because [it] did not initiate the legal suit.”
- July 14, 2008** LBPC’s lawyers Lee & Lee (L&L) wrote to A&G indicating that LBPC would maintain the status quo provided that FEBC removed from their website all “disparaging, defamatory or otherwise derogatory statements against [LBPC] and further undertake to cease and desist from making/publishing such statements.”
- July 16, 2008** A&G wrote to L&L asking LBPC to clarify by 3 pm which statements on FEBC’s website were alleged to be “disparaging, defamatory or otherwise derogatory” of LBPC. The reason for this urgency was that there was still no certainty that LBPC would not evict FEBC from the Land, and FEBC needed to be able to confirm on an urgent basis that it would be able to meet LBPC’s demands, failing which it would be necessary to make an application to the High Court for interlocutory injunctive relief.
- July 16, 2008** L&L wrote to A&G indicating that they were taking LBPC’s instructions and would respond as soon as possible.
- July 17, 2008** A&G wrote to L&L stating that FEBC had of its own accord reviewed its website and removed certain

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articles as a gesture of goodwill. It was emphasised that this was not to be construed as an admission that the said articles were “disparaging, defamatory, or otherwise derogatory” of LBPC. A&G also indicated that FEBC believed that this should be sufficient to satisfy LBPC’s condition, and that FEBC hoped that LBPC would reciprocate by confirming that it would maintain the status quo.

- July 23, 2008** A&G received a letter dated July 21, 2008 from the Commissioner of Charities indicating that he would not take any action pending the outcome of legal proceedings.
- July 25, 2008** L&L wrote to A&G stating that, without prejudice to LBPC’s rights, LBPC was prepared to maintain the status quo on the removal from FEBC’s website all statements and articles against LBPC and undertaking to cease and desist from publishing such statements. In addition, LBPC required FEBC to relocate FEBC’s clerk, Ms Janet Lim, from the Church-College office.
- July 30, 2008** A&G wrote to L&L stating that FEBC was willing to relocate Ms Janet Lim from the Church-College office, but requested that alternative space be provided for her in the tape library. A&G also set out a list of the articles that FEBC had removed from its website, and indicated that FEBC was willing to undertake not to republish these documents until the resolution of the dispute. In return, LBPC should maintain the status quo (including allowing FEBC to use the Main Sanctuary for FEBC’s night classes).
- August 5, 2008** L&L wrote to A&G in response to A&G’s letter of July 10, 2008. In L&L’s letter, LBPC took the position that FEBC was a ministry of LBPC, and that FEBC had no legal right to remain on the land.
- August 11, 2008** A&G wrote to L&L, denying that FEBC was a ministry of LBPC. A&G asserted that there was a charitable purpose trust over the properties at 9, 9A and 10 Gilstead Road for the purpose of enabling FEBC to operate a Bible College independent of the Bible-Presbyterian Churches in Singapore. A&G also

informed L&L that FEBC would be requesting the Attorney-General to commence proceedings, or alternatively, give consent to certain members of FEBC's Board of Directors to commence proceedings under section 9(1) Government Proceedings Act (Chapter 121), to enforce the said charitable purpose trusts. A&G also reminded L&L that LBPC had not responded to FEBC's proposal to maintain the status quo.

**August 19,  
2008**

A&G wrote to the Attorney-General requesting that the Attorney-General institute a suit, or grant consent to Dr Boaz Boon, Dr Quek Suan Yew and Dr Jeffrey Khoo to institute a suit in the High Court for a declaration that the registered proprietors of 9, 9A and 10 Gilstead Road hold such properties on a charitable trust for the benefit and use of a Bible College administered by the Board of Directors of FEBC.

**August 21,  
2008**

Despite FEBC complying entirely with LBPC's demands set out in L&L's letter dated July 25, LBPC did not act as it had promised. L&L wrote to A&G denying that LBPC was in breach of any charitable purpose trust, or that FEBC was the beneficiary of any such charitable purpose trust. L&L indicated that LBPC was not agreeable to maintaining the status quo as indicated in A&G's letter of August 11, but would for the time being not insist on the relocation of FEBC's clerk, and allow FEBC to continue using the hall and classrooms. L&L also indicated that they had instructions to commence eviction proceedings against the Board of Directors of FEBC.

**September  
15, 2008**

LBPC commenced Suit 648 to evict FEBC despite LBPC's announcement in its weekly of July 13, 2008 regarding "1 Cor 6 which teaches us not to take fellow Christians to court". The Statement of Claim states, "This action is to refrain the defendants from occupying, possessing, or otherwise using the designated part of the Plaintiff's premises at 9 and 9A Gilstead Road ... purportedly to operate the College or in any other manner whatsoever." The defendants named were: (1) Dr Jeffrey Khoo, (2) Dr Quek Suan Yew, (3) Dr Prabhudas Koshy,

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(4) Dr Tow Siang Yeow, (5) Dr Timothy Tow Siang Hui, (6) Dr Boaz Boon, (7) Mr Wee Hian Kok, (8) Rev Koa Keng Woo, (9) Rev Stephen Khoo.

- September 18, 2008** By a letter dated September 18, 2008, L&L wrote to the Attorney-General to dissuade him from commencing proceedings or from giving consent to FEBC's Board of Directors to commence proceedings.
- October 2, 2008** L&L wrote a follow-up letter to the Attorney-General dated October 2, 2008 giving reasons why he should not commence proceedings or grant consent to the Directors of FEBC to commence proceedings.
- October 8, 2008** The Attorney-General gave his consent for Dr Boaz Boon, Dr Quek Suan Yew, and Dr Jeffrey Khoo to institute a suit in the High Court for a declaration that the registered proprietors of 9, 9A and 10 Gilstead Road hold such properties on a charitable purpose trust for the benefit and use of Far Eastern Bible College.
- October 24, 2008** In her Statement of Claim filed on October 24, 2008, LBPC alleged that FEBC's registration as a charity was done without their knowledge. See entry above—November 19, 2003.
- April 20, 2009** Pastor Timothy Tow, Founding Principal of FEBC, was called home to be with the Lord.
- January 25-29, 2010** The case was heard in the High Court before Justice Judith Prakash. Representing LBPC as plaintiffs were Mr Quek Mong Hua and Ms Esther Yee of L&L, and representing FEBC as defendants were Mr Ang Cheng Hock SC, Mr Tham Wei Chern and Mr Ramesh Kumar of A&G. LBPC's witnesses were the Rev Charles Seet, the Rev Quek Kiok Chiang, the Rev Philip Heng, Eld Joshua Lim, and Eld Khoo Peng Kiat. FEBC's witnesses were Dr S H Tow, Dr Jeffrey Khoo and Mr Wee Hian Kok.
- June 30, 2010** The honourable Justice Judith Prakash ruled in favour of LBPC. FEBC appealed the decision.

**December 3, 2010** The Court of Appeal comprising the honourable Justices of Appeal Chao Hick Tin, Andrew Phang and V K Rajah heard FEBC's appeal.

**April 26, 2011** The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal and dismissed the claims of LBPC. The Court directed: "... to give effect to the relief claimed by the Appellants in Suit 278. In order to avoid further controversies, the parties may consider it necessary to draw up a more detailed arrangement than that set out in the 1970 Agreement, as to how the Premises are to be maintained and used by the parties."

The learned Judges of Appeal, after examining Article VIII, Chapter I of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the part "that is relevant for our purposes" with regard to the VPP doctrine, concluded: "Having carefully considered the position, it seems to us that the College, in adopting the VPP doctrine, has not deviated from the fundamental principles which guide and inform the work of the College right from its inception, and as expressed in the Westminster Confession ... It is not inconsistent for a Christian who believes fully in the principles contained within the Westminster Confession (and the VPI doctrine) to also subscribe to the VPP doctrine. In the absence of anything in the Westminster Confession that deals with the status of the apographs, we hesitate to find that the VPP doctrine is a deviation from the principles contained within the Westminster Confession."

## GOD IS NO MAN'S DEBTOR!

Han Soon Juan

I would like to begin by praising and thanking Almighty God for His love, grace and mercy in allowing and enabling me with good health and strength to have taught an English course in Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) for the past 35 years. That's exactly half "*the days of (my) years (of) threescore years and ten*"!

Old age has not diminished my cognitive well-being; I feel as alert and lucid today as I was in my mid-twenties (Josh 14:11)! I attribute this blessing to the opportunity the Lord has accorded me to teach and interact with our cosmopolitan college students.

As I subscribe to the Socratic persuasion in teaching, I encourage my students to speak their mind and to ask questions. Once a senior Korean student asserted that he and his church pastor in Korea were of the opinion that a preacher should not prepare a sermon beforehand in order not to stifle the Holy Spirit from giving him utterance on the pulpit. He was objecting to my urging the class to thoroughly prepare their sermon long before the speaking engagement. My advice: Write out the complete sermon and lock it in a drawer. After a few days, take it out again to read and edit it. This process should be repeated several times.

I told the class that, without preparation, the preacher would be talking gibberish. My class was on a Monday, and having made that pronouncement, I worried the whole week that I might have stated something unbiblical! On the next Lord's Day morning, our late beloved pastor gave me a copy of his latest book *My Homiletic Swimming Pool*, hot from the press! On returning home, I began to read the book. Lo and behold, page 20 states: "*Did I hear you retort, 'With the help of the Holy Spirit, I will open my mouth and preach'. If you do that without serious preparation, He will fill your mouth with sand.*" I was vindicated!

As teaching is in my blood, it is always a joy to come to FEBC, more so when I sometimes receive feedback from students confiding in me that the English course is of tremendous help to them in their study and understanding especially of *Calvin's Institutes* and *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. They find their new-found knowledge helpful in

unravelling the often long, involved sentence structures in them. However, the year 2002 saw this happy state of affairs in the symbiotically-intertwined school of prophets and the church being disrupted and marred by a dissentious and fomenting spirit, symptomatic of and probably worse than the dissolution of the Bible-Presbyterian (B-P) Synod in 1988.

The very foundation of our faith was shaken, culminating in the Lord's anointed being "lambasted"<sup>1</sup> to resign from the church he had founded. This was uncharacteristic of fundamentalist Christianity which holds fast to the separatist stand. Unlike the liberals, fundamental Christians do not take over the leadership with which they disagree. They themselves leave and move on to serve God elsewhere. *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord"* (2 Cor 6:17). Instead, since they refused to budge, our beloved Pastor, fully submissive to the teaching of His Holy Word, separated himself from them and left to establish the True Life B-P Church with those of the Lord's blood-bought children who stood firmly and obediently with him in upholding the perfectly inspired and perfectly preserved Word of God.

Meanwhile, we were branded heretics<sup>2</sup> simply because we boldly declared God's words in Matthew 5:18 and Luke 16:17 and other related verses to be the truth for our VPP (Verbal Plenary Preservation) stand. Contrarily, they declared the Word of God is not perfectly preserved to the 'jot and tittle'. As a former tutor of General Paper which is essentially a two-year course on Critical Thinking, I humbly submit that their assertion fails the scrutiny of simple logic and common sense. I think whoever commits heresy deviates from His Holy Word, not those who faithfully follow it. For judging us guilty of heresy, were they not usurping the power of God to damn us to hell?

What is even more bewildering is that they maintain that the King James Bible is the very Word of God; yet, they believe the texts it was translated from contain errors, albeit too minor to be of significance. It escapes me how the translation could be superior to the original texts. More importantly, I find it difficult to believe that a perfect God could be so slipshod in His declaration (Matt 5:18; Luke 16:17).

The contention continued with the school of prophets in FEBC being given an ultimatum to stop teaching and propagating the verbal and plenary preservation of God's Word or face eviction from the home of its birth. Our resolute stand on His Holy Word not to be cowed into submission to their demands precipitated their disobedience in ignoring God's injunction in 1 Corinthians 6. They commenced legal proceedings in the High Court on 15 September 2008 by filing a Statement of Claim against the FEBC directors and serving on them a Writ of Summons.

## *GOD IS NO MAN'S DEBTOR!*

In retrospect, I praise and thank Almighty God for the trials and tribulations suffered by His children in FEBC. Our omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent God often brings good out of evil for our good and to His glory (Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28). Imagine this frightening scenario: Should our Persecutors not defy His Holy Word in 1 Corinthians 6 by instituting legal proceedings to evict FEBC, we will continue to wander in the 'Wilderness' for the next 40 years or so, being a subject and subservient people to their patronising ways. Also, we will be living a paranoid existence in constant fear and trembling of being evicted from our God-ordained abode.

The Verdict of the Court of Appeal was indeed a marvel with the Lord bestowing upon us the Victory of victories when all the three learned Judges of Appeal in the three-judge Court of Appeal ruled in favour of our case and declared FEBC to be a joint beneficiary of the charitable purpose trusts over the premises at 9, 9A and 10 Gilstead Road. Indeed, God is great! We are no longer in Gilstead Road "at the pleasure of" our Persecutors. The Lord has set us free to joyfully serve Him in His school of prophets to help fulfil the Great Commission till He come.

Obviously, the Lord had found favour in our steadfast uncompromising stand for a Perfect Bible that He presented His faithful longsuffering servants a compensatory Perfect Verdict. God is no man's debtor! To God be the glory!

Praise the Lord. Amen and amen.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> This is well-documented in the writings of the late Rev Timothy Tow.

<sup>2</sup> Historically, heretics were the worst of criminals, excommunicated, condemned to eternal hell fire and publicly executed by being burned at the stake.

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## **KNOWING BIBLE-PRESBYTERIANISM**

John Leong Kit Hoong

It is a great blessing to study Bible-Presbyterian (B-P) history and doctrines. I would like to share three lessons I have learned from the history, people and doctrines of the B-P Church and conclude with her present condition.

### **Bible-Presbyterian Church History**

After I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, I attended Life B-P Church in 1976. This was the first church I attended and I thank God for enabling me to learn many biblical truths from the then pastor, the Rev Timothy Tow. At worship service, we would often hear his narration of the B-P Church history and the lessons learned from it. To hear from the man himself whom God had used to start the B-P Church here was a great blessing and much wisdom was gained from the Rev Tow's sharing.

Though I had heard much over more than 30 years from the Rev Timothy Tow and various B-P Church ministers and read to some degree the B-P Church history in various books and articles, it was only through a formal course of scheduled assignments and proper study at the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) that I gained a good understanding and a real grasp of the entire B-P Church history from its beginning in 1950 when the first B-P Church, Life B-P Church, was formed. The lectures on the seven roots of the B-P Church truly opened my eyes to see that God is sovereign and He is really the One who had planned and willed the formation and growth of the B-P Churches in Singapore.

The B-P Church is like a small mustard seed which has grown to more than a hundred B-P Churches not just in Singapore but all over the world. This can only happen because it is the work of God. Men can never plan and build the B-P Churches to what we see today. From the history of the B-P Church, we must learn not to repeat the mistakes that were made—the failure to take the biblical separatist stand.

It is important that the history of the B-P Church be taught and repeated often to new generations of believers in the B-P Churches. They must know the B-P Church is the sovereign work of God and each generation must be faithful to God by earnestly contending for the faith as

the B-P Church was established by the Lord for this very purpose in this age of great apostasy.

### **People in the Bible-Presbyterian Churches**

God uses people to do His work and the B-P Church is no exception. The man that God used to found the B-P Church is none other than the Rev Timothy Tow. He was the man that God had called for the great responsibility to start the B-P Church. Reading his life's testimony, one is very sure God had called and equipped the Rev Tow for this task. Like many of us, the Rev Tow tried to run away from God's calling to be a pastor, but God's higher hand was there to lead him back to His calling. The Rev Tow was faithful to the end, till the day God called him home. His legacy ought not to be forgotten by all true B-Pers. I am one who has been taught by him and has received great blessings from the Lord through his life. The humility and faithfulness of the Rev Timothy Tow and his courage to defend the Word of God are lessons I have learnt and will remain with me all my life.

Thank God that there are other faithful ministers of God in the B-P Churches that stand with the Rev Timothy Tow and fight the battle together. It is marvellous to see how God used each of them to establish churches and missions. I am thankful to God for Dr Tow Siang Hwa whose preaching of God's Word especially in the area of biblical separation has enabled me to imbibe this truth even when I was a young believer.

One thing that touched my heart is the commitment and zeal demonstrated by every Christian in the early days of the B-P Church. I would read of them willing to sacrifice their time and energy to extend the Kingdom of God. There were those who were so willing to open their homes for Sunday School classes which eventually became churches. The spirit of giving to build the B-P churches was also very encouraging. Only God knows each one of these pioneers by name who had laid such a godly foundation for all of us today. How I wish that today we have the same zeal and passion for souls!

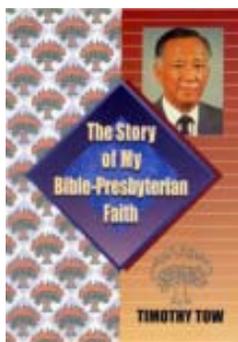
### **Doctrines of the Bible-Presbyterian Church**

I have benefited much from the ten audio lectures on the major and distinctive doctrines of the B-P Church. These doctrines include the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures, Separation, Covenant and Premillennial Theology etc. The B-P Church was founded on these doctrines but sadly many B-P Churches have departed from them to various degrees. It is important to know that all these B-P doctrines are not based on tradition or the teaching of men, but are all from the Word of God. The Bible is the standard for the B-P

Church's doctrines and thank God the pastors who teach them all make reference to God's Word to support the doctrines of the B-P Church.

FEBC is an important institution that God had raised in the B-P Church to enable pastors to be trained and lay people to learn God's Word in depth. God is so good to give us a faithful Bible College and faithful teachers of God's Word in the College. I have learned much from the College through the evening classes. The online courses have allowed me to learn at my own time too. I have learned to treasure God's Word and hold it highly in my life. The doctrines of the B-P Church will always bring glory to God and hold His Word to the highest degree above the words of men.

### **Present Condition of the Bible-Presbyterian Church**



When I read the book by the Rev Timothy Tow written in 1999 on *The Story of My Bible-Presbyterian Faith*, I was very grieved reading page 3 in which the Rev Tow wrote these words: *"To the Session of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church who have stood with me through thick and thin for the Faith of the Gospel this book is affectionately dedicated. SOLI DEO GLORIA."* Alas, how men have changed so quickly and how they have rejected Timothy Tow their pastor. It was all because he took the biblical stand of VPP.

It is with sadness in my heart to know that today so many B-P Churches attack the doctrine of VPP and even go to the extent of wanting to remove the Bible College from its rightful premises at Gilstead Road. VPP glorifies God for He has the power and wisdom to preserve all His words in the Bible and there are no mistakes in God's Word.

By the grace of God, I will continue to pray for God's preservation of the remnant B-P Churches which hold to the VPP doctrine and FEBC. Also that God will enable us to be faithful and to preach His truth always. God willing, I will continue to teach the pure doctrines of the B-P Church as taught in God's Word and to share her wonderful history of God's sovereign work in raising the B-P Church to earnestly contend for the Faith in this apostate age.

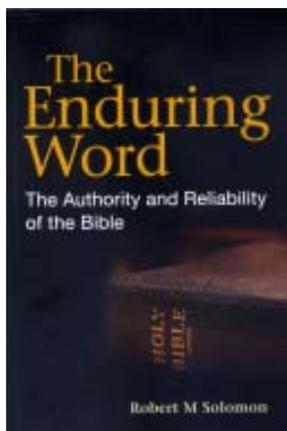
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## **THE ENDURING WORD: A REVIEW ARTICLE**

Clement Yiming Chew



*The Enduring Word: The Authority and Reliability of the Bible* (Singapore: Armour Publishing, 2011, 206 pages) is a new book written by Robert M Solomon, Bishop of the Methodist Church in Singapore and President of the National Council of Churches in Singapore. He is a prolific author, having written 12 books previously, and contributing articles to various theological journals and dictionaries.

In his latest offering, Solomon responds to the challenge posed by the relativism concerning the authority and reliability of the Bible. He is deeply concerned about authors such as Bart Ehrman and Dan Brown who have written books to attack the divine nature and trustworthiness of the Bible. He remarks that a lack of knowledge on issues raised by such men can lead one's faith to be "vulnerable" (17). Hence, Solomon seeks to increase the awareness of the laity concerning the credibility of Scripture so that their faith may not waver in the face of incessant assaillment by opponents of the faith.

The book is divided into ten chapters. In the first chapter, Solomon introduces the reader to the saints of old who fought to bring God's Word to the people in their own language, such as Wycliffe, Tyndale and Martin Luther. In chapters two and three, he proceeds to establish the doctrines of inspiration, preservation and canonicity of the Scriptures. Following this, the author goes on to deal with the finer details of textual variations and selection of texts for translation in chapters four to seven. Finally, he ends off by dealing with the problem posed by the proliferation of modern English versions and differing translation techniques in chapters eight to ten.

The purpose of the book is most noble and needful considering the increasing hostility towards God and His Word. The question is: Did the book fulfil its aim?

### ***Sola Autographa or Sola Apographa?***

The author began well by stating and defending the doctrine of the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) of the Scriptures (22-9), quoting appropriate Scriptures such as 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 3:15-16, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Peter 1:20-21 and 1 Timothy 5:18. He also made the effort to distinguish the Scriptures as being divinely inspired (ie, “God-breathed” from the Greek *theopneustos*) and not naturally inspired like the works of literature made by men. Thus, the Words written by the biblical writers can be regarded as authoritative because the source of these Words is God Almighty Himself. A perfect God must give us perfect Words.

However, the author views the verbally and plenary inspired Scriptures to be only the “original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts” (ie, the autographs) and not to the copies (ie, the apographs) (29). In other words, Solomon affirms *Sola Autographa* and not *Sola Apographa*. This is despite the author’s admission that Jesus promised in Matthew 24:35 that His words shall not pass away (31). In support of *Sola Autographa*, Solomon quotes recent scholars such as Michael Harding, Bruce Metzger and Gordon Fee. He then proceeds to explain in the rest of the book how one can come to a very close approximation of the original autographs through an examination of the textual variations.

However, the determination of the truth ought not to be based on men’s words, but on the very Words of God. For instance, when Jesus stated in Matthew 24:35 that His Words shall not pass away, the autographs were already no longer existent. This was also the case when Jesus declared in His Sermon on the Mount that “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matt 5:18). What Jesus had in His hands were the apographs, and He considered them to be inspired Scripture.

Matthew 4:4 is another biblical support for the position of *Sola Apographa*. In this verse, Jesus is seen resisting the devil, saying, “It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” The phrase, “it is written”, is the Greek *gegraptai*, which is the perfect passive indicative of the Greek verb *grapho* (“to write”). The perfect tense carries with it the idea of a past completed action with continued results. In other words, the Scriptures which were written in the past (ie, in the autographs) continue to stand written today (ie, in the apographs). As a testimony of the present infallibility and inerrancy of God’s Words, Satan was successfully resisted and repelled.

It is interesting to note that the Reformers in their support of *Sola Scriptura*, regarded the apographs to be equivalent to the original texts.

One example is Francis Turretin, who wrote in his *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*,

By original texts, we do not mean the autographs written by the hand of Moses, of the prophets and of the apostles, which certainly do not now exist. We mean their apographs which are so called because they set forth to us the word of God in the very words of those who wrote under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Turretin affirmed that the providence of God “could not permit” the sources to be corrupted.<sup>2</sup> The concept of *Sola Autographa* was actually alien to the Reformers as they defended the authenticity and authority of Scriptures they had in their possession from the attacks of the Roman Catholic Church.

As such, Solomon’s position of *Sola Autographa* is not the historical position of the Protestant Church as regards the authentic and authoritative Scriptures.

### **Certain Text or Evolving Text?**

The next question that needs to be addressed is the identification of God’s Words. Where are God’s Words today? According to Solomon, textual criticism (or lower criticism) can be employed to determine the original biblical text. Some of the criteria he proposed are: (1) the antiquity of the manuscripts where older is generally accepted as better, (2) the geography and quantity of the manuscripts, where a larger quantity and wider spread of the manuscripts is generally favoured and (3) other critical methods which the author only describes superficially.

The author acknowledges that the Byzantine Greek manuscripts (from which we get the Traditional Text or the Textus Receptus) which amount to about 90 percent of the total number of manuscripts (94) far outnumber the Alexandrian Greek manuscripts. He also admits that the Byzantine manuscripts have a far wider geographical spread than the Alexandrian manuscripts. However, he also states that many scholars regard the Alexandrian manuscripts to be far more reliable because they are older. He directed the reader to identify God’s Words through textual criticism, stating that 97 percent of the New Testament words are the same in all manuscripts, and claiming that the rest of the variations are mainly typographical errors which do not affect the doctrines of the Scriptures (95). Despite Solomon’s assurances, the facts just do not square with what he has asserted. It is quite clear that textual variants do affect doctrines as Ehrman in his textual critical writings have shown.

Just like Ehrman, Solomon favours the Alexandrian manuscripts. In chapter seven, the author casts doubt over whether passages like Mark

16:9-20, John 7:53-8:11 and 1 John 5:7-8 (Johannine Comma) are in the original text. He promotes the Nestle-Aland text over against the Textus Receptus. Surely, this contradicts the author's earlier suggestion that the variations do not affect doctrinal or ethical teachings. The omission of Mark 16:19-20 takes away important teachings on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and His role in the fulfilment of the Great Commission. The omission of John 7:53-8:11 takes away from us the doctrine of the nature of Christ for therein we find a most powerful demonstration of the justice and mercy of our Saviour. The omission of the Johannine Comma removes the clearest proof text in the Bible for the doctrine of the Trinity.

The author's bias towards the Alexandrian texts is further seen in chapter eight as he evaluates the merits of the English Bible translations. For example, the author defends the Revised Standard Version's omission of "through his blood" in Colossians 1:14 on the account that "this phrase is missing in the oldest and best manuscripts". No reason was given as to why older is better. Neither is there any explanation as to why these manuscripts are to be regarded as the best. It looks like Solomon is simply parroting the textual critical dictums of Westcott and Hort. Solomon ought to have known that Dean J W Burgon who took Westcott and Hort to task for the revision of the traditional Greek Text and the English Bible in 1881 had proven with indisputable evidence that the manuscripts which Westcott and Hort relied on (and on which the modern versions are based) are actually very corrupt and hence unreliable. In his book, *The Revision Revised*, Burgon masterfully exposed the Alexandrian manuscripts to be the most "scandalously corrupt" and "shamefully mutilated" manuscripts in existence.<sup>3</sup> According to Burgon, one was more likely "to find two consecutive verses in which these two MSS differ the one from the other, than two consecutive verses in which they agree entirely."<sup>4</sup>

Solomon's uncertainty with regard to the Scriptures is due to the human reasoning he has employed in determining God's Words. These humanistic principles he uses are very subjective. German textual scholar—Eta Linnemann—who was once an avid practitioner of textual criticism wrote a book entitled *Biblical Criticism on Trial*. In that book, she debunked the myth that textual criticism is scientific and God-honouring.<sup>5</sup> The adoption of all these subjective principles results in a text that is constantly evolving. For example, the Nestle-Aland text produced by the United Bible Societies is now into its 27<sup>th</sup> edition with the 28<sup>th</sup> in the pipeline. How then can a believer's faith be secure if it is based on words that are constantly changing based on the conjectures of these textual-critical scholars who are unbelievers or apostates like Ehrman?

How then can one identify God's inspired Words today? To do this, one must be guided by principles grounded on Scripture itself, which alone is our sole and supreme authority of doctrine and practice. Based on the teaching of God's Word, Jeffrey Khoo submits seven biblical axioms which will help the believer know for certain and be sure of God's inspired Words. They are (1) the epangelical axiom (Ps 12:6-7), (2) the linguistic axiom (2 Tim 3:16-17), (3) the temporal axiom (Matt 24:35), (4) the ecclesiastical axiom (Rom 1:17; John 10:27; Acts 2:41), (5) the evangelistic axiom (Matt 28:18-20), (6) the doxological axiom (John 3:30) and (7) the historical axiom (Deut 10:4-5; Jer 36).<sup>6</sup>

In summary, the axioms state that the inspired Words of God are supernaturally preserved by God Himself and are faithfully received throughout the ages by God's people who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Applying these axioms and the logic of faith consistently, one arrives at the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus underlying the King James Version as the text which accurately reflects the original autographs.

### **King James Version or Other Versions?**

In the introduction to his book, Solomon says that his book is published in the 400<sup>th</sup> year of the King James Bible "with gratitude to God for the translators of that great English Bible". As it turns out, chapters eight and nine are more of a dispute with and not a tribute to that "great English Bible". Solomon promotes the corrupt Alexandrian manuscripts and is sympathetic towards the dynamic equivalence method of translation.

The dynamic equivalence method of translation is a "thought for thought" method as opposed to the verbal equivalence method which is a "word for word" method. God inspired the Words, not just the thoughts (the thoughts come from the Words), and that is why Bible-believing Christians uphold the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Since Words are very important in the Holy Scriptures, the correct method of translation has to be the verbal equivalence method if one wants to be faithful to the Words God had originally breathed out (2 Tim 3:16).

D A Waite, in his book *Defending the King James Bible*, rightly points out that the dynamic equivalence method dangerously allows anyone to change God's Word "at will".<sup>7</sup> This is not a translation technique but rather "pure paraphrase".<sup>8</sup> It certainly contravenes the commandment found in Revelation 22:18, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."

The translators of the King James Bible certainly employed a superior translation method. It was superior not just because verbal equivalence was employed, but because it was also a team technique. The translation teams consist of 54 translators spread among six companies. Each company was assigned to translate specific books of the Scriptures. Every member of the company was expected to produce his own translation of the text. Following this, all the members of the company would go through the translations and agree on one particular translation. This translation would then be sent to all the other companies for verification and comments. Finally, two men from each company would sit together and come to a consensus on the final translation of the book. This meant that every translation of the Scriptures was gone over no less than 14 times before it reached its final revision.<sup>9</sup> Such meticulous and careful work ensured a most faithful and accurate translation of the Bible.

Solomon concludes in chapter nine that a believer should consult multiple versions of the Bible because “it is akin to hearing the whole orchestra—you get to experience the full power of the music.” (165). This can only be true if they are playing in harmony, but the many versions today are not a harmonious lot for sure. Not only do they differ from the KJV in many areas, they are also not entirely in agreement among themselves—in fact, these modern versions are competing against one another and critical of one another, and all for the consumer’s dollar. That being the case, the Christian who reads multiple versions containing different noises and disharmonious voices is unlikely to be edified but confused by them all. The many versions which do not read the same give an uncertain sound to God’s Word. “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (1 Cor 14:8).

## **Conclusion**

*The Enduring Word* is a sincere attempt by Solomon to assure the Christian that the Bible is reliable and authoritative. This is to be commended. However, his dependence on human or humanistic authority, namely, textual critics like Metzger (who was Ehrman’s teacher) and their rationalistic methods, leaves much to be desired since it effectively clouds the clarity of God’s perfectly inspired and preserved Words. Instead of being illumined and edified by the truth of God’s forever infallible and inerrant Words, the Christian might end up being misinformed and misguided by man’s fallible methods and mistakes, the same methods and mistakes that led Ehrman to abandon Christianity and embrace agnosticism or atheism. As such, it is the opinion of this reviewer that the author has failed in his goal to assure his readers that the Bible is indeed wholly credible and utterly reliable.

In fact, if logically and consistently followed, the textual criticism that Bishop Solomon endorses and promotes will lead to a dead end of uncertainty and unbelief that Prof Ehrman eventually found himself in. Ehrman as a textual critic was just being honest with the science and scholarship of modern academia. The Bible-believing Christian need not and should not follow that way. There is another way, a better way, the good old way, the only way to biblical faith and certainty which is wholly honouring and pleasing to God—*Sola Fide, Sola Scriptura*. “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” (Jer 6:16). “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (Matt 11:15).

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol 1 (Philipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992), 106.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>3</sup> J W Burgon, *The Revision Revised* (Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society, 2000 reprint), 16.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Eta Linnemann, *Biblical Criticism on Trial: How Scientific is “Scientific Theology”?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey Khoo, “Seven Biblical Axioms in Ascertaining the Authentic and Authoritative Texts of the Holy Scriptures,” *The Burning Bush* 17 (July 2011):74-95.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>9</sup> D A Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, (Collingswood: Bible for Today, 2004), 83-9.

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*Clement Chew is a Master of Divinity student of Far Eastern Bible College in his final year.*

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## College News



**The Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) reopened with a day of prayer** on Tuesday, January 3, 2012 on home ground. The college family comprising—board, faculty, students, alumni and friends gathered together from 8.30 am to 12.30 pm for a time of worship, Bible study, fellowship and prayer in the sanctuary of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church. The Principal had asked for the Multi-purpose Hall of Beulah House, but was turned down though we had every right to use the premises at Beulah House as judged by the Court. Nevertheless we are thankful for the old church sanctuary. Our gathering therein brought back fond memories of the day of prayer and daily chapel services when our late founding Principal and Pastor—the Rev Dr Timothy Tow—was at the helm. The Lord does all things well. The Principal led the congregation in the responsive reading of Psalms 12 and 13, and in the singing of the hymn, “He Leadeth Me.” Joshua Yong, an FEBC alumnus (MDiv 2010) and missionary lecturer at the Bible College of East Africa (Kenya) spoke from 1 Samuel 7:12 reminding all that it is the Lord Himself who is FEBC’s Ebenezer, “Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.” The Principal followed up with a word from Nehemiah 2:8 highlighting that it is all because of God’s good hand upon us that we are delivered from

the lawsuit instituted by the Board of Elders of Life BPC to evict FEBC from her birthplace and home. We must always be thankful and grateful to God for His grace and goodness upon us and never forget how He saved us.

**In the January-May 2012 semester**, the College saw a total of 426 students enrolled in its various programmes. These students consist of 107 day-time students (55 full-time, 52 part-time) from 14 countries (Australia, Cambodia, China, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Tanzania, Vietnam), and 252 lay students in the Basic Theology for Everyone (BTFE) night classes on Mondays (“Charismatism Q&A” by the Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo) and Thursdays (“The Names of God” by the Rev Dr Prabhudas Koshy), and 67 distance learning students taking the online courses. What is heartening is the doubling of distance learning students, quite a number from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian Church in Melbourne and the Bible-Presbyterian Church of Western Australia in Perth. There is also Dr Wee Tiong Soon from Kemaman Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, Terengganu, Malaysia. A good number of young people who have just completed their junior college studies are investing their time well by taking up a full-time load of classes and working towards their Certificate of Religious Knowledge (CertRK) while they wait for their National Service enlistment or their university matriculation.

**Congratulations to two of FEBC’s alumni** who were conferred the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) recently: **Mrs Jung Nyun Kim Cho** (MRE 2002) earned her PhD in Intercultural Studies from Torch Trinity Graduate University, and the **Rev Park Seung Kyu** (BRE 2000, ThM 2010) earned his PhD in History from Kyung Hee University. Dr Cho is serving with Biblical Education by Extension (BEE) in Korea, and the Rev Dr Park is currently pursuing his Doctor of Theology (ThD) degree at FEBC.



Prof Tan Yock Lin

**The Daily Vacation Bible College (DVBC)** of FEBC was conducted from April 30 to May 5, 2012. The Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew taught a course on the “Theology of Giving”, and Prof Tan Yock Lin, who is distinguished Geoffrey Barthomolew Professor of Law at the National University of Singapore Law School gave a special lecture on what pastors and churches ought to know about

Charitable Purpose Trusts.

**Elder Dr Tow Siang Yeow** has stepped down as President of the FEBC Board of Directors due to health reasons wef May 6, 2012. Elder Tow was appointed 4<sup>th</sup> President of the Board in 1990 and has served the College with distinction all these years. In the meantime, the Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo has been appointed interim President until a suitable replacement is found.



Rev Lee Kim Shong flanked by Mr and Mrs Raymond Tan, managers of Resort Lautan Biru

**FEBC Annual Retreat** was held at the Resort Lautan Biru in Mersing, Johor, from May 7-9, 2012. The Rev Lee Kim Shong, pastor of Calvary Jaya Bible-Presbyterian Church, was the speaker for the Retreat.

**FEBC will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary (Golden Jubilee)** in the week commencing September 17, 2012 with a thanksgiving retreat in Mersing, from September 17-

19, and culminating with an Alumni Thanksgiving Service on September 21 at the College campus at Gilstead Road, Singapore, and a Golden Jubilee Thanksgiving Service on the Lord's Day, September 23, at Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church. All alumni and friends of FEBC are invited to attend. Check the FEBC website for further details.

**FEBC's 37<sup>th</sup> Graduation Service** was held on the Lord's Day May 6, 2012 at Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church. A total of 41 graduands received their respective diplomas and degrees: **Certificate of Religious Knowledge (CertRK)**: Andrew Kan, Choong Kai Shuin, Chua Peng Hwa, Elizabeth Mok Yuen Mei, Kiky Erni Siagian, Ko Lingting, Lee Kim Lei, Lee Li Mei, Lee Yu Jie, Leow Beng Wee, Liew Yong Fu Jason, Lim She Beng, Martin Cheong Foo Hoong, Ong Qiaoyan, Park Saem, Rebecca Chan Taw Wun, Sharon Poon, Tan Sok Sin, Yap Ming Shan Jan; **Certificate of Biblical Studies (CertBS)**: Doreen Chin Li Seong, Herbert Goh Guang Yang, John Leong Kit Hoong, Joycelyn Chng Siew Miang, Ye Zuyi, Wong Song Ung; **Diploma in Theology (DipTh)**: Chun Hae Jung, Sun Sreileakena, Tan King Hwa; **Bachelor of Religious Education (BRE)**: Rajan Shrestha, Tammy Ho Pei Lyn, Yap Kim Chuan; **Bachelor of Theology (BTh)**: Alongkorn Harichaikul; **Master of Ministry (MMin)**: Michael Accadio, Anya Kera; **Master of Religious Education (MRE)**: Desnauli Ambarita, Karen Lee Chew Hong, Lin Yang, Febian Christopher Natanael Siregar; **Master of Divinity (MDiv)**: Joseph Poon Chew Khim (*magna cum, laude*), Lo Su Shiang (*cum laude*), Tinipilo Garsuta Lagapa.



FEBC's 37<sup>th</sup> Graduation Service: Processional

*The Burning Bush 18/2 (July 2012)*



Top: The graduation service at the John Sung Memorial Hall of Calvary Pandan BPC.  
Bottom (from top left clockwise): Rev Dr Prabhudas Koshy, Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew, Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo; Eld Dr Boaz Boon, Mr Wee Hian Kok, Rev Stephen Khoo; Dr S H Tow (Graduation Service Chairman); Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew (Academic Dean)



Top: True Life BPC Choir. Bottom: Calvary Pandan BPC Choir



The Principal presenting diplomas to graduands (from top left clockwise):  
Rajan Shrestha (BRE), Yap Kim Chuan (BRE), Lo Su Shiang (MDiv, *cum laude*), Joseph Poon (MDiv, *magna cum laude*)

**Far Eastern Bible College  
Class of 2012**



**Far Eastern Bible College  
37<sup>th</sup> Graduation Service, 6 May 2012  
Board, Faculty, Graduates**

