



# The Burning Bush

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MITA (P) 291/02/96

July 1996

Volume 2 Number 2

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# THE BURNING BUSH

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Editor : Jeffrey Khoo  
Publisher : Far Eastern Bible College  
Printer : Chin Chang Press

*The Burning Bush* is published bi-annually in January and July, and contains theological papers, sermons, testimonies, book reviews, College news, and alumni reports. It is distributed *gratis* to the FEBC family, Bible-Presbyterian Churches, and friends of the College and Church. Interested parties are cordially invited to a complimentary subscription renewable on a yearly basis.

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## Editorial

A total of 650 conferees from the Far Eastern Bible College, Life and Calvary Bible-Presbyterian Churches, and friends from Australia, Korea, New Zealand, and USA enjoyed a mountain-top experience during the inaugural 21<sup>st</sup> Century Reformation Missions Conference at Awana in Genting Highlands, Malaysia, June 3-7, 1996. The theme was: “Accelerated Missions into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” and Rev Dr Howard Carlson, pastor of Suncoast Bible-Presbyterian Church, Florida, was our honoured speaker. The conference reached a climactic end when several indicated publicly that they would serve the Lord full-time.

Accelerated missions into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century not only involves the preaching of the gospel, but also a defense of the Faith. The FEBC faculty is committed to writing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Reformation Bible (KJV) with the help of likeminded scholars. The Reformation Bible will promote the KJV as the most accurate and faithful translation of the Holy Scriptures, and expose the poison contained in neo-evangelical and modernistic study Bibles which flood our bookshops today.

This issue of *The Burning Bush* is dedicated to the cause of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Reformation movement. Dr Howard Carlson’s message at FEBC’s 21<sup>st</sup> Graduation Service captures the Reformation spirit. The article by Dr Timothy Tow takes the NIV to task for twisting the Hebrew “Sinim” into “Aswan” (Isa 49:12). The word “Sinim” is particularly important to the Chinese people. The Lord has not left the Chinese out of His salvation plan. Find out what the Bible has to say about the Chinese in Dr Tow’s article. Other pertinent articles on the sufficiency of the Bible (Rev Ed Paauwe), on the health and wealth gospel (Dr Christian Wei, Pr Charles Seet), and on the Church and evangelism (Rev Das Koshy), are most worthy of your perusal. I am sure you will appreciate the story of Lim Puay Hian, and the testimony of Tan Koh Teck.

In appreciation for this journal, Dr Bob Jones in a recent letter to the principal included this wonderful poem on Biblical Inspiration,

*Divine Inspiration*

*How great an honor to be chosen so—  
A channel for His Truth, a voice to cry,  
“Behold your God,” to write and writing know  
The words not mine but thundered from on high.  
Swept up in Inspiration’s rushing tide  
Like ancient prophet in the whirlwind caught,  
Or in dank prison, sensing Him beside,  
Hold clanking chains and headsman’s sword as naught.  
For Spirit’s breathing wafts the dark aside  
To show skies red, as clashing armies meet,  
Revealing wrath-crowned King, all blood-drenched, ride  
Across the carnage of His foe’s defeat.  
  
But no such honor is accorded men,  
Since John on Patmos laid aside his pen.*

*Bob Jones*

May all Bible-believing and Bible-defending Christians stand firm on the verbally and plenarily inspired Word of God until Jesus returns.

J K

# **SOLDIERS EQUIPPED TO GUARD AND TO DO GOD’S WILL**

Howard J Carlson

Far Eastern Bible College is a military college. It has been preparing the graduating class to be soldiers for the greatest and deadliest war of all history. The enemy is the most powerful and cunning enemy any army ever faced. The dangers are the most fearsome. The eternal state of souls is the issue. Many casualties, some of them the most promising warriors, lie fallen. Others adorn the camp of the enemy and lay snares for the unsuspecting troop. “Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30). This is what lies before those of the graduation class of 1996.

But the message does not stop there. Yes, the enemy is great, the battle is truly great, and the dangers are unspeakably great. However, we have as our Commander the Creator of the universe. In His death, burial, and bodily resurrection, He has broken the back of the enemy. He gives us, His servants, superior power and superior weapons. He has equipped you, the graduating class of 1996, with all the equipment to be absolutely unstoppable and unconquerable. Our text, Ezekiel 36, tells us: what our Commander has done for us, and what He expects of us.

## **What Has God Done For Us?**

“I will take you from among the nations, and will gather you out of all countries” (v 24). This passage has meaning for the Jewish people in the last days, but truths are found here for all of God’s people in all time. God calls His own to salvation. I was raised in a home with a Swedish Lutheran father and a Methodist mother. My parents were not believers. We were Christian only in name. Then when I was about two years old a little lady—Miss Perkins—came to our home from the Tacoma Bible

Presbyterian Church. That was the beginning of my family's attending that great evangelistic powerhouse church. It was there that God took me out of the "nations" and brought me into His kingdom. I am sure that many here tonight have a similar story of being "called out" of the world and unto Christ. When one looks around this assembly he sees clear proof of "all countries." Think of the greatness of the mighty Creator intervening into our lives to bring us to Himself. If there is one this evening who has never heard the call of God to leave the world and follow Him, pray for mercy. Pray that He will come into your empty existence and give real, eternal life.

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (v 25). God clearly tells us here that we are not chosen because we were holy, but chosen in order to become holy. See also that God declares us holy because of His work in us, not our work for Him. This is His merciful act of justification—a forensic, legal term; we are declared without guilt because Christ bore our guilt and punishment for all our wretched sins. Romans 4 uses the term *logizomai* 11 times to speak of "reckoning" the faith of Abraham and king David for righteousness. Happy the day for us and Christ's Church when God opened Luther's eyes to Romans 5:1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." That was the beginning of the Reformation. Finally the Church was to be free from the papal distortion of salvation by faith plus works. Note also in this passage that we are not cleansed or justified through an outward ordinance, but by the blood of Christ. "Without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb 9:22). Oh my friends, have you been cleansed from your sins and guilt? Graduates, are you absolutely sure that you are clean in God's sight?

God gives a new heart (v 26). How many have entered the ministry without a new heart? But a new heart is absolutely essential. Christianity is not a philosophy, a moral renewal or some sort of reform. It is a revolution! Old things passed away, all things became new (2 Cor 5:17). Thomas Guthrie, that fiery Scotch Presbyterian puts it thus: the new heart "changes the reigning dynasty, wrenches the sceptre from the usurper's hand, and banishing him forth from the kingdom, and in restoring the throne to God, restores it to the rightful monarch." We find here the condition of man's heart without Christ. It is like a stone. A stone is cold. Sin has extinguished the fire of God and left only the charred clinkers

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behind. A stone is hard like rock, and a stone is dead. A dead heart has no feeling for God, it has no power over temptation. Weep over this stone and there is no effect. Love that heart of stone and there is no response. I remember when I was saved. I was in my first year of engineering studies. I was the warden of my church, even living in the church. I had heard the Gospel call every Sunday for most of my life. I was an officer in our Youth Group. Every Sunday I went to town to bring military men to our church services. But I was not saved. My heart was that stone. I wondered why Christianity brought no joy. I wondered why I had no power in my life. What is wrong? Then, through reading a simple Gospel tract, "Why all good people will be lost." God gave me a new heart. Finally, I became a new creature. The sins I once loved I now hated. That which I once dreaded now was my joy. Now joy, power and purpose entered my life. With that heart of stone the sinner will sink into the depths of eternal damnation forever. If your heart is this heart of stone, come to Jesus. He will save you even now.

We must note also that this new heart is a result of the work of God the Holy Spirit (vv 26, 27). Oh what a gift is this Spirit of God in us! He is the *Parakletos* of John 14:26. I remember in my first church in California that a number of our community were trying to get a godless, Communistic teacher out of our school. This teacher got her powerful politician friends to come to our town to hold legislative hearings on the matter. I prepared my case well. God, however, overruled. He sent an advocate who worked with the California Legislature to give us guidance. He said, "Don't you know that the committee has already written its verdict and you are all conspirators?" During the hearing he was my counsel. He sat beside me and advised me on what to say and what not to say. He prevented the enemy from using my ill-advised words against me. That is a picture of what the Holy Spirit does for us. The *Parakletos* is the "one called beside" to direct and instruct through the Word He has given us through the prophets and apostles. Graduates, do not quench the Spirit of God. Do not grieve Him so that He withdraws His aid and power from you. Your Bible will become a mystery, your life will become sterile and lifeless without His work in you. But with His help you will have the wisdom of God and the comfort and peace only He can give.

## **What Does God Require Of Us?**

That we keep His ordinances (v 28). The word for “keep” is the word that is used to “guard” or “defend.” It is the word from which “watchman” comes. This is the crying need of the Church today; for those who will “guard” God’s Word. It is not popular to “keep” or “guard” the truth of God. One of the most vigorous movements in the world today is Promise Keepers. They profess to be discipling the men in our churches, and yet have stated that doctrinal matters are to be excluded. How can one disciple others without solid, biblical teaching? Can shouting slogans alongside Catholics, Charismatics and Mormons help one to be faithful to God’s message in the last days? Their theme song is “Break Down The Walls.” One of their goals is to break down the walls of separation between denominations. But are we to break down the walls between belief and unbelief? Are we to merge light with darkness? Some of these leaders even speak of the great Reformation of the 16th century as a “mistake.” The Spirit of God instructs us through the Word He has given: “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph 5:11). How are we to guard the Gospel? Is there a biblical way to guard God’s Word? Hear God: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” Pastor Carlson, that is so unloving and judgmental. No, obedience is not judgmental. Furthermore Jude commands us: “. . . earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints” (v 3).

Merle D’Aubigne the great professor of Church History in Geneva had written of the great reformers of Switzerland. He wrote of Farel who rose up and called all sinners to repentance. He judged all by the Scriptural measure. Had Farel not stood so vigorously against error, the Reformation in Switzerland might have been merely another humanistic movement inside the apostate church. Had Farel not done his work, there might not have been the opening for Calvin and his cleansing work. An interesting letter is quoted by Prof D’Aubigne from Oecolampadius to Luther: “Some could wish that this zeal against the enemies of the truth were more moderate; but I cannot help seeing in this very zeal an admirable virtue, which, if reasonably displayed, is no less necessary than gentleness.” Farel cleared the way for Calvin his successor. Lord, give us more Farel! Graduates, be obedient in guarding God’s Word!

## *SOLDIERS EQUIPPED TO GUARD AND TO DO GOD'S WILL*

There is a last requirement of you from God. In verse 27, God says we are to “keep (guard) my judgments and do them.” Graduates, there have been times in my own country when Bible Presbyterians have gotten things out of focus. Keeping, they seemed to think was all God wanted. We cannot be faithful without obedience to both. “Do my judgments.” That certainly must mean being “fishers of men.” Christ indicates that if we are not fishing we are not following. Paul tells Timothy with his last words, “Do the work of the evangelist” (2 Tim 4:5). The doing of God’s will, however, is much more: “Love the brethren;” “Flee fornication;” “Watch in all things, endure afflictions, make full proof of thy ministry.” You will spend your lives finding what God’s judgments are, and how to obey them.

The cost of your spiritual forefathers in slaughtered missionaries, untold sacrifice and suffering is impossible to add up. To you is passed the mantle. Do not let all of the sacrifice and heroic suffering drop to the ground. Jesus is coming again! Our Master is soon coming to inspect His troops. Be ready! Be faithful! Receive the “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”



Dr and Mrs Howard Carlson

*Dr Howard Carlson is the pastor of Suncoast Bible Presbyterian Church in Florida. The above message was preached during the 21st Graduation Exercises of FEBC on June 9, 1996 at Life Bible-Presbyterian Church.*

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## NIV TURNS “LAND OF SINIM” INTO “REGION OF ASWAN” BY A TWIST OF THE BALL-PEN!

Timothy Tow

The translation of KJV of Isaiah 49:12, “Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim” from the Hebrew text,

"מִן־עֵלָא־בְּרָכִי לְאֶרֶץ־כְּנַעַן מִן־מִצְרַיִם וּמִן־בְּרָכִי לְאֶרֶץ־כְּנַעַן

is correct. How does the NIV differ to translate מִן־עֵלָא into “from the region of Aswan”?

The word “Sinim” in Hebrew is מִן. And the word for “Aswan” according to the NIV in Ezekiel 29:10 and 30:6 is אֲשׁוּר. Now מִן is pronounced “Sinim” but אֲשׁוּר which is pronounced “Seveneh” is translated “Aswan.” But why is מִן at Isaiah 49:12 by a twist of the NIV’s ball-pen also become “Aswan?” Even the non-Hebrew reader can see that Sinim (מִן) and Aswan (אֲשׁוּר) are two different words. Perhaps the NIV translators think they can palm off their ware to the unwary non-Hebrew English reader.

Another difference between the KJV and NIV translations is the NIV rendering of אֶרֶץ into “region” whereas אֶרֶץ has almost always been translated “land,” “earth,” or “ground.” Now if the NIV translates “the *land* of Zebulun and the *land* of Naphtali from the word אֶרֶץ (Isa 9:1) and Zebulun and Naphtali are small tribes, why does not NIV use the word “region” here? The right word for “region” in Hebrew is מְדִינָה according to the Hebrew lexicon.<sup>1</sup> There is no valid reason to translate אֶרֶץ as “region” except for the sinister purpose of demoting the Land of Sinim into some Egyptian outback.

The land of Sinim, according to Hastings’ *Dictionary of the Bible*, from the context, must have been the extreme south or east of the known

world.<sup>2</sup> The LXX favours the view that a country in the east is intended, and some modern commentators have identified Sinim with China, the land of the Sinae. The ancients' view that Sinim refers to China is attested overwhelmingly by continuing modern Hebrew usage. My English-Hebrew, Hebrew-English lexicon by Prof M Segal and Prof M B Dagut, says China is **סין** (Sin) and Chinese is **סין**.<sup>3</sup> The root of "Sinim" is "Sin," so "Sinim" points most assuredly to China and not to Aswan, which is translated from a different word **אסוּן** as stated above. Thus, one who is well-versed in Chinese is called a sinologue and sinology is the study of Chinese language, history, customs, etc; and the war between China and Japan was called the Sino-Japanese war.

Let me quote from Dr Allan A MacRae my teacher on the above subject under discussion. In his *Studies in Isaiah*, Dr MacRae says as a matter of fact:

In verse 12 the remarkable extent of the work of the servant is clearly indicated with people coming to his light from the north and from the west and even from the land of Sinim (China). What a marvelous prediction of the extension of the gospel of deliverance from sin through the servant of the Lord to the very ends of the world! How wonderfully it has been fulfilled in these days when groups of believers have come to the Savior from so many sections of the earth, even including this very land of China, which must have seemed in the days of Isaiah to be the utmost fringe of civilization. Truly He has become "a light to the Gentiles."<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, let us see how the translators of the Chinese Bible (和合本) treat the Hebrew text. They translate the land of Sinim as 秦国, the Kingdom or Country of Chin, and "Chin" is a root word for China, verily, as it was Chin Shih Hwang Ti the first Emperor who united the many ancient states into one China. This is a good translation in the tradition of the LXX, and in line with time-honoured Hebrew usage to this day.

Speaking from my experience as a Certified Chinese Interpreter of the Supreme Court, Singapore in my young days, whenever there was any doubt in the translation of a Chinese document into English, the Judge would know exactly and objectively what the original says, and not some dynamic equivalent, the subjective NIV style. The KJV renders the Hebrew and Greek of the Bible without subtraction or addition, least by

juggling, when ~~מִן~~ מִן can be twisted to read “from the region of Aswan.” Let us have an answer from the learned NIV translators.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> BDB, 286.

<sup>2</sup> *Dictionary of the Bible*, ed James Hastings, s.v. “Sinim.”

<sup>3</sup> *Merriam-Webster's English-Hebrew Dictionary*, s.v. “China,” “Chinese.”

<sup>4</sup> Allan A MacRae, *Studies in Isaiah* (Hatfield PA: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1995), 237. See also MacRae's *The Gospel of Isaiah* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977): 109-12. Edward J Young wrote likewise, “In any attempt to identify the land of Sinim we must look for a place far from Palestine. An ancient interpretation would identify it with China, . . .” (Edward J Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1972], 3:282, 294).

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## **THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE**

Edward Paauwe

The sufficiency of Scripture is one of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith that is being attacked today. It is necessary for all Bible-believing and Bible-defending Christians to understand what the Bible says about itself, and to identify the attacks against its sufficiency, both past and present.

### **Inspiration**

We are all well aware, I am sure, that “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim 3:16). The phrase “is given by inspiration of God” is one word in the original, and means literally, “God-breathed.” The Bible is our God-breathed Book—it is given to us by the very breath of God. But what exactly is meant by this? What does the word “inspiration” mean?

The Swiss Reformed pastor and professor of Systematic Theology in Geneva, Francois Samuel Louis Gaussen (1790-1863), is best known for his book *Theopneustia*, “a statement of verbal biblical inspiration.”<sup>1</sup> He said that inspiration is “that inexplicable power which the divine Spirit put forth of old on the authors of Holy Scripture, in order to be their guidance even in the employment of the words they used, and to preserve them alike from all error and omission.”<sup>2</sup>

Another definition of inspiration acceptable to Bible-believing Christians is that given by Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield (1851-1921), professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology in the Theological Seminary of Princeton, New Jersey. He said, “*Inspiration is that extraordinary, superatural influence (or, passively, the result of it,) exerted by the Holy Ghost on the writers of our Sacred Books, by which their words were*

## THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

*rendered also the words of God, and, therefore, perfectly infallible.*”<sup>3</sup> Warfield adds:

In this definition it is to be noted: 1st. That this influence is a supernatural one—something different from the inspiration of the poet or man of genius. . . . 2d. That it is an extraordinary influence—something different from the ordinary action of the Spirit in the conversion and sanctifying guidance of believers. . . . 3d. That it is such an influence as makes the words written under its guidance, the words of God; by which is meant to be affirmed an absolute infallibility (as alone fitted to divine words), admitting no degrees whatever—extending to the very word, and to all the words. So the every part of Holy Writ is thus held alike infallibly true in all its statements, of whatever kind.<sup>4</sup>

When we talk about Scripture then, we mean the complete written revelation of God—infallibly true in all its statements.

### Sufficiency

What about the word “sufficiency?” It has been defined as “the state of being sufficient or adequate.”<sup>5</sup> “Sufficient” is further described as being “equal to the end proposed; adequate to wants; enough.”<sup>6</sup> In theological context, it means that the entire Holy Bible—all 66 books, as they have been given by inspiration of God—is sufficient/enough/adequate for our spiritual needs. Nothing needs to be added to it, and certainly, nothing ought to be subtracted from it. Moses said, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Deut 4:2). And we also have the warning in the Book of Revelation: “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: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev 22:18-19).

This view of Scripture was consistently held before the Reformation and was also the view of the great Reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin. However, since the days of the sixteenth century Reformation, there have been a number of departures from the historic Christian view of

the sufficiency of Scripture. We cannot look at all these departures, but we shall look at some of them.

## **Errors on the Sufficiency of Scripture**

### **Of the Quakers**

Let us consider, for instance, George Fox (1624-1691). Fox was born in Leicestershire, England, and was apprenticed to a shoemaker. He apparently had no formal schooling. In 1643, he parted from family and friends and travelled in search of spiritual enlightenment. After several years of internal struggles, he found this spiritual enlightenment in “the Inner Light of the Living Christ.”<sup>7</sup>

In 1647, Fox “began to preach that truth is to be found in God’s voice speaking to the soul—hence ‘Friends of Truth’, later abbreviated to ‘Friends’.”<sup>8</sup> Fox taught his followers that “men should be guided in their conduct by an inner light—that is, by the Holy Spirit that dwells within each person and gives him a spiritual source upon which he may draw to direct his thought and action.”<sup>9</sup>

Robert Barclay (1648-1690) became the theologian of the Quakers.<sup>10</sup> He wrote, *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity: Being an Explanation and Vindication of the People Called Quakers* (1678). Barclay insisted upon “divine inward revelation as necessary for true faith.”<sup>11</sup>

Quaker meetings are still conducted for the most part in the traditional manner. There is no prearranged programme. The members gather and sit in silence until one of them is led by the “Inner Light” under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to rise and offer a prayer or perhaps read from the Scriptures or relate some spiritual experience. This “Inner Light” is as important as, if not more important than, the Scriptures.

We see then from the teachings of both Fox and Barclay, that, to the Society of Friends (Quakers), Scripture is not a sufficient revelation from God; they need an “Inner Light,” a divine inward revelation from the Holy Spirit in addition to the Word of God. We believe, as explained earlier, in the sufficiency of Scripture. Hence, we must reject this teaching of the Quakers.

## Of the Charismatics

Another example of those who have departed from the traditional and Biblical view of the sufficiency of Scripture is the modern-day Charismatic movement. J Rodman Williams, professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy of Religion at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Texas, writes in a manner which is typical of so many charismatic authors when he insists that God is still speaking through tongues and prophecies. In his book, *The Era of the Spirit*, he writes,

In prophecy God speaks. It is as simply, and profound, and startling as that! What happens in the fellowship is that the Word may suddenly be spoken by anyone present, and so, variously, a “Thus says the Lord” breaks forth in the fellowship. It is usually in the first person (though not always), such as “I am with you to bless you . . .” and has the directness of an “I-Thou” encounter. It comes not in a “heavenly language,” but in the native tongue of the person speaking and with his accustomed inflections, cadences, and manners. Indeed, the speech may even be coarse and ungrammatical; it may be a mixture of “King James” and modern; it may falter as well as flow—such really does not matter. For in prophecy God uses what He finds, and through frail human instruments the Spirit speaks the Word of the Lord.

What is distinctive in prophecy is that the words do not issue from human reflection or premeditation. Indeed, there may have been much time given to prayer, study of Scriptures, waiting upon God; but when the Word of God goes forth it is the operation of the Spirit upon and within the human mind so that the message spoken, while in the language of man, is the direct utterance of God. The prophet actually does not know what he will say in advance of saying it, nor can he be sure just when the moment will come—or even *if* it will come—but he speaks when and as God wills. Thus in the fellowship there is no “scheduling” of prophecy: it just happens.

All of this—to repeat—is quite surprising and startling. Most of us of course were familiar with prophetic utterance as recorded in the Bible, and willing to accept it as the Word of God. Isaiah’s or Jeremiah’s “Thus says the Lord . . .” we were accustomed to, but to hear a Tom or Mary today, in the twentieth century, speak the same way . . . ! Many of us also had convinced ourselves that prophecy ended with the New Testament period . . . until suddenly through the dynamic thrust of the Holy Spirit prophecy comes alive again.<sup>12</sup>

In their book, *The Charismatic Phenomenon*, Peter Masters and John C Whitcomb comment on what Williams has said. They write,

Charismatic teachers protest that their prophecies, visions and “words of knowledge,” though direct messages from God, do not undermine Scripture because all of them must be tested by the Scriptures. But the simple fact is that countless prophecies and visions “received” by charismatic believers are not tested by the Bible, and vast numbers of revelations are received which *cannot* be so tested because they are about current affairs in the believer’s church or circle. How can a message be tested when it simply accuses someone of insincerity, or declares that someone will recover from a very ordinary illness?

Even where modern prophecies are simply restatements of biblical Truth, they undermine the Scripture, for God has said that the Bible is the sole vehicle of revelation, and it is completely sufficient for all our needs. God has said that there will be no more Truth revealed by direct messages or voices on occasions when we need guidance, comfort or encouragement. We will not be provided with extra revelation of any kind, for we are to use the doctrines, promises and comforts already revealed in the Scripture to guide us in every case.

It is not good enough for charismatic teachers to say that their “extra” messages do not actually contradict the Bible. They certainly undermine it in another way—they provide an alternative fountain of light and help, and they train the people away from the one source of objective Truth. The Lord has spoken to us clearly through Paul in *Romans 15:4*—[*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*].

The fact is that charismatic teachers do not grasp that the Scriptures are (a) complete, (b) totally sufficient for all our needs, and (c) deep and profound enough for every possible problem and situation. Whether they have done it consciously or not, they have joined the ranks of heretics in their downgrading of the Word of God. The Roman Catholic Church has added to the Bible by trusting her own church traditions and leaders as authoritative. Liberal theologians have placed their reason and science of the day on a par with Scripture. Heretical “pietistic” movements have put their own “inner light” on the same level as Scripture—and that is exactly what countless charismatic leaders do to an ever increasing extent.<sup>13</sup>

The Scriptures are complete, and as *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647) puts it, “The whole counsel of God, concerning all things

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necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men."<sup>14</sup>

### Of Neoorthodoxy

Referring again to Williams' book, *The Era of the Spirit*, we should note that this work includes "views on the Holy Spirit held by four eminent theologians: Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Paul Tillich, and Rudolf Bultmann."<sup>15</sup> Most of you will recognise these names, but in case you are not familiar with them, let me say that all of these men deny the great fundamentals of the historic Christian faith, beginning with the infallibility and inerrancy of the Word of God. The fact that Williams refers to these theologians is significant.

In an article on "Neoorthodoxy" in *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, all four of these men are mentioned. Although they differed in some of their detailed beliefs, they were all associated with "the Dialectical Theology or Theology of Crises of the twenties and thirties."<sup>16</sup> It may be an over-simplification, but to put it in simple words, Neoorthodoxy holds that those parts of the Bible which speak to your heart become the Word of God to you. As such, the whole Bible is potentially the Word of God, but in actuality, none of it is the Word of God.

I am sure you can understand why Williams would refer to Barth, Brunner, Tillich, and Bultmann in a favourable manner. These men all allow for extra-biblical revelation, and that is exactly what the charismatics do. As we have said before, the Bible is complete and totally sufficient for all our needs. We, therefore, reject not only the teachings of Barth, Brunner, Tillich, and Bultmann, but also the teachings of the charismatics.

### Neil Babcox

The testimony of Neil Babcox is worth noting. Neil Babcox was a charismatic pastor of a charismatic church. But the Holy Spirit whom He called, "the God of great surprises," slowly illumined his mind to ask the question: "How authentic are the gifts of prophecy and tongues I have been preaching and practising?" Babcox points out that his testimony is just that—a testimony; it is "not the product of abstract, theological reflection,

but of inner conflict.”<sup>17</sup> At the conclusion of his testimony regarding “The Burden of the Prophets,” Babcox states,

Thus saith the Lord. How I struggled with these words! As Jacob wrestled with the angel in the dark of the night, so I wrestled with these words. As the angel wounded Jacob, so those words wounded me. And as Jacob’s defeat became his victory, I thank God those words—so right and unfathomable in their significance—defeated me.

The moment of truth came when I heard a prophecy spoken at a charismatic church I was visiting. I was sitting in the church trying to worship God while dreading the approach of that obligatory moment of silence which signaled that a prophecy was about to be spoken. The silence came, and soon it was broken by a bold and commanding “thus saith the Lord!”

Those words triggered an immediate reaction. Conviction like water rising against a dam, began to fill my soul. “Listen my people . . .” Until finally, the dam burst: “This is not my God,” I cried within my heart, “This is not my Lord!”

As Bunyan’s Pilgrim was freed of his burden at the foot of the cross, so at that moment, I was freed of mine: I would never prophesy again. Now there would be no more rationalizing. No more closing my eyes. The burden of the prophets was gone forever.<sup>18</sup>

While this is only the personal experience of one man, it nevertheless clearly points out that this one man came to realise that this whole concept of “prophetic utterances” or “prophetic messages” is totally contrary to the teachings of the Word of God.

## **Conclusion**

As we conclude, let us look once more at the words quoted earlier from *The Westminster Confession of Faith*: “The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.”

G I Williamson, in his well-known work, *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes*, says, “This section teaches (1) that

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God's finished revelation (now inscripturated) is entirely sufficient for all of man's spiritual needs, (2) that it is sufficient for all time (it cannot be added to) . . . ."<sup>19</sup>

And Archibald Alexander Hodge (1823-1886), the son of Charles Hodge, observed that this section teaches the following propositions,

1. The inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are a *complete* rule of faith and practice: they embrace the whole of whatever supernatural revelation God now makes to men and are abundantly sufficient for all the practical necessities of men or communities.

2. Nothing during the present dispensation is to be added to this complete rule of faith, either by new revelations of the Spirit or by traditions of men.<sup>20</sup>

Well, we could say more, much more, on this subject of "The Sufficiency of Scripture." But what we have said should give us some idea of what is meant by the phrase, "The Sufficiency of Scripture." It should also give us some idea of the Quakers, the Charismatics, and the Neoorthodox theologians who have departed from the conservative doctrine of the Word of God. But, above all, it is my prayer that we will all have a better understanding of the teachings of the Word of God. The Holy Bible is the only infallible rule for faith and practice. The Bible is in its every word the Word of God, inerrant, complete, and totally sufficient for all needs. Thank God for His infallible, inerrant, and inspired Word—the Holy Bible. Amen.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>*The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s.v. "Gausсен, Francois Samuel Louis," by Robert P Evans.

<sup>2</sup>H C Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), 107, citing L Gausсен, *Theopneustia* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, n.d.), 34.

<sup>3</sup>B B Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1948), 420.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>*The Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. "Sufficiency."

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, s.v. "Sufficient."

<sup>7</sup>J N Bakhuizen van den Brink, and W F Dankbaar, *Handbook der Kerkgeschiedenis* (Den Haag: Bert Bakker/Daamen NV, 1968), 37.

<sup>8</sup>*The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s.v. "Fox, George," by J D Douglas.

<sup>9</sup>*Britannica Junior Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Friends, Society of."

<sup>10</sup>In 1650, at Derby, Fox was imprisoned as a blasphemer, and there a judge nicknamed the group "Quakers," after Fox had exhorted the magistrates to "tremble at the word of the Lord." S.v. "Fox, George," by Douglas.

<sup>11</sup>*The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s.v. "Barclay, Robert," by Robert G Clouse.

<sup>12</sup>J Rodman Williams, *The Era of the Spirit* (Plainfield: Logos International, 1971), 27-8.

<sup>13</sup>Peter Masters, and John C Whitcomb, *The Charismatic Phenomenon* (London: The Wakeman Trust, 1988), 41-3.

<sup>14</sup>Philip Schaff, ed., *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 3:603.

<sup>15</sup>Williams, *Era*, front cover.

<sup>16</sup>*The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s.v. "Neoorthodoxy," by Colin Brown.

<sup>17</sup>Neil Babcox, *A Search for Charismatic Reality* (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1985), 9.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 58-9.

<sup>19</sup>G I Williamson, *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1964), 10.

<sup>20</sup>A A Hodge, *The Confession of Faith* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1964), 37-8

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# **PAUL YONGGI CHO'S THEOLOGY AND CHURCH GROWTH METHODOLOGY**

Christian Wei

One of the most dangerous and confused issues in contemporary Christianity is on the nature of the Christian's success or prosperity. People in our success-oriented generation are always attracted to successful methods or prosperous phenomena. If a particular method works, a great multitude will follow and exalt it, regardless of its philosophy or theological accuracy. It is very disheartening to know that many people in modern Christianity have discarded God's Word and Christian doctrine in favour of these so-called "successful methods" in their pursuit for more success in this world. One of their favourite arguments is based on Gamaliel's philosophy (Acts 5:33-40). Thus, they argue that one indication that their activities are of God is the presence of large crowds. They forget, however, that there are many false religions in this world with innumerable adherents.

Paul Yonggi Cho, a very influential person in the Christian scene today, is a leading proponent of the above-mentioned concept. He is the founder and pastor of the world's largest church—Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea. The problem that the true believer faces today is the dangerous concepts and movements that Cho is advocating. The phenomenal success in the growth of his church has attracted many people, both laymen and leaders. His involvements in the movements of positive thinking, prophesying and miracle healing, charismatic practice, prosperity theology, and world-wide evangelism have caused him to be held up as an example of "success" or "prosperity" today. Because he has achieved remarkable success in church growth, a large number of Christian leaders are recommending and using many of his books. Even some leaders in the fundamentalists' camp are attracted by his methodology and ideology. This problem is further complicated by the fact that people today are reluctant

to criticise a famous preacher or a successful minister like him, possibly because of three reasons. First, they are afraid of his followers and his influences. Second, they intentionally neglect the truth. Third, they have already been deceived.

It is always a temptation for a pastor or minister to accomplish his goals with regard neither for God's Word nor for Biblical methods. Cho fails to realise that the Lord does not merely demand His servants to finish their jobs, He also requires them to discharge their responsibilities by complying to His will and His way. Cho apparently desires to enjoy great success in this world, and hence he substitutes the Biblical God-centred teachings with a worldly man-centred system of prosperity gospel, positive confession, visualisation, fourth dimension concept, and other dangerous ideas. His theology and methodology on church growth have deviated from the truths of the historic Christian faith.

## **Cho's Theology**

### **His Doctrine of the Bible**

There are two main erroneous areas in Cho's bibliology: the extent of revelation and the method of interpretation. He fails to realise that the conclusion implied in his teaching of the continuity of God's special revelation causes him to violate the historical, orthodox belief of the doctrine of the Bible. This is because he subscribes to an impossible position—the mutually exclusive view of the close of the canon and the view of the continuity of special revelation. In so doing, he undermines the authority and sufficiency of God's Word. Cho's method of interpretation is so allegorical, arbitrary, and subjective that he virtually distorts Biblical truths and textual meanings.

### **His Doctrine of God**

In the doctrine of God, Cho's man-centred philosophy causes him to deviate from the Biblical teaching in the areas of God's goodness, God's will, and God's sovereignty. He fails to realise that God's goodness must accord with His severity and justice, and he overemphasises both the terror aspect of fearing God as well as human potential. When he insists that God's will for His children is prosperity and health, he disregards the clear Scriptural teaching regarding Christian suffering and contentment. By

emphasising health, he overlooks three factors: first, reality shows that many good Christians do suffer sicknesses; second, church history supports the view that God's will for His people is not always health; and finally, Scripture teaches the fact that God does not always heal. Cho organises his teaching around a man-centred theology when he asserts that God cannot do anything unless man cooperates with Him. Thus, he seriously undermines God's sovereign will, power, and position.

### **His Doctrine of Christ**

Cho commits two doctrinal errors in his teaching on Christ. In promulgating the idea that Christ can never be present unless believers do their duties to release His presence, Cho destroys Christ's divine sovereign nature. His view literally denies Christ's omnipresence, omnipotence, Lordship, and autonomy. In advocating the concept that Christ's atonement provides both health and prosperity for man, Cho not only neglects the essence of Christ's atoning work, but also disregards clear Biblical teaching in at least two areas. First, man's poverty and sicknesses are not necessarily derived from the curse on man. Second, all the promises and benefits of God in the atonement, including physical perfection, will be fully appropriated only at the end of time.

### **His Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**

The three major fallacies of Cho's pneumatology lie in the work, baptism, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Cho's teaching of the work of the Holy Spirit is closely related to panentheism. This concept is totally unbiblical because the Bible teaches that God is distinct from and transcendent over all His creation. By insisting that man can obtain and manipulate the power of the Spirit, Cho repudiates the sovereignty of the Spirit and virtually dabbles in occultism. Not only does he deny that the baptism of the Spirit is regeneration, he also confuses the baptism of the Spirit with the fullness of the Spirit. He also strongly believes that the sign of Spirit baptism is speaking in tongues and refuses to acknowledge that the evidence of such an experience lies in moral virtues, not miraculous proofs (Gal 5:16-25). By contending that God still grants His children miraculous and supernatural gifts, Cho fails to discern the purpose of the supernatural gifts, and their necessary cessation. Since the Holy Spirit divides gifts as He

wills (1 Cor 12:11), Cho violates clear Scriptural teaching when he encourages his people to pursue miraculous gifts.

### **His Doctrine of Salvation**

In soteriology, Cho's teachings on the nature of the Gospel and the doctrine of faith have departed from the truth. He insists that the Gospel includes more than the forgiveness of sins. This idea violates directly the precise definition of the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1-5. He also fails to distinguish between salvation and discipleship. Consequently, he has to add other steps to round up his "full gospel" and "Fivefold Gospel." He is clearly teaching that the Gospel alone is not enough, and hence he falls under Paul's serious rebuke (Gal 1:6-9, 5:2-12). Cho's view on faith is rather radical since he believes that a "usable" faith will definitely experience miracles; if there is no miracle, there is no faith. He misunderstands the meaning of faith. He also confuses the different kinds of faith in the Bible. This is because Christian faith is not necessarily miraculous faith (cf Matt 7:21-23, 1 Cor 13:2). Moreover, he also confuses faith with man's will-power. Faith is God's gift; thus the power of faith resides within God, not in the one who receives faith, nor even in faith itself.

### **His Doctrine of Sin**

With respect to the doctrine of sin, Cho overlooks man's sin nature when he insists that man is able to attain his own unlimited potential simply by exercising a positive attitude, which includes imagination and thinking. This concept ignores Paul's emphasis that even the believer cannot escape the conflict between his old sinful nature and new nature (Rom 7:15-24). Cho also overemphasises man's free-will by ignoring the fact that unless man submits himself to God (Rom 7:25), he cannot change his own destiny through will power or any other means. Therefore, it is clear that in Cho's harmatology human sin is substituted with human sovereignty.

### **His Doctrine of Man**

The two major problems in Cho's anthropology lie in the constitution and the authority of man. Cho holds strongly to the trichotomous view. By overemphasising this trichotomous position, he errs Scripturally, analogically, and theologically. Cho mistakenly draws an analogy between

the tripartite nature of God and man without realising the essential differences between them. He also makes a sharp distinction between soul and spirit with complete disregard to Scriptural data. The Bible shows explicitly that the terms spirit and soul are often used interchangeably (cf Luke 1:46-47). Moreover, the fact that God has a soul (Heb 10:38) and animals have spirits (Eccl 3:21) leaves no room for Cho's assertion. Through Cho's overemphasis on man's authority, he has shifted from theocentrism to anthropocentrism, with an excessive focus on man's importance and man's works.

### **His Doctrine of Angels**

Cho's doctrine of angelology is based on his theory of the fourth dimension, a concept which ultimately leads him into dualism. He believes that the evil fourth dimension is able to do what God does. The Scripture, however, teaches that the devil is in no way equal to God because God created him (cf Gen 3:1 and Rev 20:2), cast him out of heaven (Isa 14:12), and let him fall into the depths of the pit (Isa 14:15) and the lake of fire (Rev 20:10). Since Cho confuses demonic influence with demonic possession, he insists that all unsaved persons are possessed or indwelt by demons. That there is a difference between the two is obvious. For example, when Peter tried to stop Christ from going to Jerusalem to die (Matt 16:22-23), he was not possessed, but influenced, by Satan. Cho also attributes all sins and sicknesses to the devil. This concept is unbiblical because not all sicknesses are initiated by demons (cf Matt 8:5-13; 9:9-20, 27-30; 14:35-36). Neither are all sins initiated by demons (cf Rom 7:18, Gal 5:16-24). If this were not true, it would be unfair to punish man for sins that are actually attributable to the devil or his cohorts.

### **Cho's Methodology**

#### **His Method of Visualisation**

Cho claims that if there is no visualisation, there will be no church growth. He insists that every minister needs to have visualisation, the process in a person's mind through which pictures in visions or dreams bring about miracles and powers. This method, however, is unbiblical. First, its foundation is unbiblical because Cho misinterprets Bible verses to fit his peculiar theory. He also ignores God's warning regarding the dangers

and deceitfulness of dreams and visions (Deut 13:1-5; Jer 23:25-32, 27:9-10). Second, it is an unsound practice since it relies on the human mind and is related to the occult. Hence, the Scripture condemns the practice. Third, it is biased because Cho relies on his own interpretation of Biblical examples and his personal experiences. He also neglects the Biblical truth that only God, not man, can produce results in the Christian ministry (1 Cor 3:6-7).

### **His Method of Healing**

Divine healing is another method which Cho uses to generate church growth, and he claims that this is the most essential element to successful church growth. This teaching, however, reveals many methodological weaknesses. First, it rests on a false premise. The Bible shows explicitly that healing or miracles do not necessarily bring a person to the saving knowledge of Christ (cf Matt 9:22-25, 32-34, 11:20-24; John 9:1-41; Acts 4:5-22). Second, it fosters wrong motivation since it encourages the crowd to come to church with ulterior motives. Third, it obscures the true purpose of healing, which in the Bible authenticates the messiahship of Christ and the apostleship of apostles. Finally, Cho's concept conceals the true nature of healing since he confuses functional disorders with organic illnesses. Furthermore, contrary to the Biblical pattern, Cho also fails to "heal" some who desire healing.

### **His Method of Hope**

Cho himself admits that his message of hope always exalts people and focuses solely on prosperity, health, and a problem-free life. This teaching is erroneous in two ways. First, it promotes the deceitful message of selfism. The Bible teaches emphatically that man needs to deny self (Matt 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23). Second, it advocates the dangerous message of uplifting man. The Bible teaches that God's Word is profitable not merely for instruction in righteousness, but also for reproof and for correction (2 Tim 3:16). Paul also teaches that one of the duties of a pastor is to rebuke the sins of man (2 Tim 4:2).

### **His Method of Prayer**

Because Cho teaches that prayer will definitely alter the material world and lead to church growth, his method of church growth through

prayer is unsound. Cho fails to realise that true prayer does not necessarily demand the changing of circumstances or the material world for man; rather, it requires the changing of the attitude of the believer and the submission of his will to God's will. Cho misunderstands the Biblical goal of prayer, which is the glory of God, rather than the benefits of man. By insisting that prayer provides conditions for God to move into human affairs, Cho not merely undermines God's sovereignty, but also overlooks God's initiative in prayer. He also ignores God's principle in answering prayers. For example, God does not always answer prayers even though sometimes all the conditions to effective prayers have been met (cf Matt 26:36-44, 2 Cor 12:7-9). He only answers prayers which correspond to His will (1 John 5:14-15). Cho also twists the meaning of praying in the Holy Spirit when he insists that it refers to speaking in tongues. When Paul and Jude encouraged believers to pray in the Holy Spirit, they were referring to the assistance, the influence, and the intercession of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26). It has nothing to do with speaking in tongues.

### **His Method of Church Growth**

Cho's teaching of church growth through organisation has two major flaws. First, he neglects God's will by concentrating too much on mechanical organisation. God does not designate everyone to have a big church. Besides, He has the sovereign will and authority to choose and act differently in the lives of various people. Second, he violates the Biblical role of women by appointing them to be leaders or pastors to teach and preach to men. This distinctly violates Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 14:34-36 and 1 Timothy 2:9-14.

### **Biblical Response**

Although the Bible shows explicitly that men will resist the truth in the last days (2 Tim 3:8), it does not mean that the true believer has to give up and surrender to the devil and his deceitful schemes. The Apostle Paul admonishes Timothy to preach the Word at all times, regardless of how evil the circumstances may be (2 Tim 4:2, 5). Jude also encourages the believers to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). The words "earnestly contend" denote the great inner strength required in fighting for something by means of rational and scriptural arguments. Thus, Bible-believing Christians today must hold fast to sound doctrines, maintain

Biblical teachings, and defend the truths of the Christian faith. To accomplish the task, God demands His servants to be faithful (1 Cor 4:1-2). To be a faithful servant of the Lord, Cho needs to give up all his wrong teachings and submit himself totally to the Word of God. He also needs to repent and return to the sovereign triune God Himself, who is the sole object of all men's faithfulness and loyalty.

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## THE DOCTRINE OF HEALING IN THE ATONEMENT

Charles Seet

The subject of healing is a major biblical concern. Charismatics have recently made healing their main attraction. They claim that every Christian should not be sick, but can claim healing by faith because Christ died for our sicknesses as well as for our sins. They use the Messianic passage of Isaiah 53:4-6 as their proof text: “Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed . . . .”

The basis for healing in these verses, according to T J McCrossan,<sup>1</sup> is found in taking the literal meaning of the original Hebrew text, which would render verse 4 as “surely He hath borne our *sicknesses* and carried our *pains*.” They strengthen this proposition by citing Matthew 8:16-17 that sees Christ’s healing ministry as a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4—“When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”

If this interpretation of Isaiah 53:4 is correct, then Christians who are not healed would have considerable reason to doubt their salvation also, since both healing and salvation are, by this interpretation, derived from the same atonement. One who is truly saved should never fall sick or suffer pain, since Christ has endured all of these for us. A debt which has already been paid by Christ does not need to be paid again by us. How then should we regard Christians who seem to be paying the debt again, by falling sick or suffering pain? It is evident that the right interpretation of this passage is crucial.

## The Context of Isaiah 53:4-6

The first important consideration is that the passage belongs to a segment of Scripture known as the Fourth Servant Passage, which was written in Hebrew poetical form.<sup>2</sup> Hebrew poetry requires much care and effort to study, as it is often full of intricacies, complexities and figures of speech. Many elements in poetry are not meant to be understood literally. The proper understanding of the figures of speech used in Isaiah 53:4-6 can be easily obtained by seeing the verses as a series of three parallel couplets, expressing one essential idea—the suffering due to our sins that was endured by the suffering Servant.

Seen in this light, the words “sicknesses/pains,” and “healed” in them, are metaphors for “sins/transgressions” and “forgiven” respectively. Sin is aptly portrayed as spiritual sickness. Forgiveness then follows in being portrayed as the healing of the soul. That this was the way the Jews interpreted the words, is apparent from the Septuagint (LXX) rendering of the text, “He bears our *sins*, and is pained for us.”<sup>3</sup>

This same metaphor of sickness for sin was also used by Isaiah in the first chapter of his prophecy: “Ah sinful nation, a people laden with *iniquity*, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is *sick*, and the whole heart faint” (Isa 1:4-5, emphasis added). This metaphor is used again in Isaiah 33:24 to indicate a change of Israel’s future condition: “And the inhabitant shall not say, I am *sick*: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their *iniquity*” (emphasis added). Other Old Testament writers also used this metaphor (Cf Ps 41:3, 4; Hos 5:13, Jer. 6:7; 10:9).

The metaphorical usage of the word “heal” to mean “forgive” is likewise used extensively by Isaiah and other writers of the Old Testament. One example is found in Isaiah 6:10—“Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be *healed*” (emphasis added; see also Isa 19:22; 30:26; 57:17-18; Ps 47:3; Jer 3:22; Hos 14:4; Mal 4:2).

## The Suffering of the Servant

It is clear that at least verse 5 of our passage must be referring to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, since the apostle Peter provides this link: “Who His own self bare our sins in His body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: *by whose stripes ye were healed*” (1 Pet 2:24, emphasis added). No part of the gospels can be adduced, however, to prove that Jesus literally became sick and suffered pain from literal disease for us when He was crucified, and then endured rejection on account of that. From Mark’s use of Isaiah 53:9 (“He was numbered with the transgressors”—Mark 15:25, 27-30) it is clear that Jesus was despised and rejected when He was on the cross because the act of crucifixion itself implied *bearing the punishment for wrongdoing*. This would tend to rule out the literal interpretation of “pains” and “sicknesses” in Isaiah 53:4.

### Matthew’s Special Usage of Isaiah 53:4

Unlike the apostle Peter, Matthew did not link the passage with the crucifixion, but with the time of Christ’s healing ministry (Matt 8:14-17). Can this mean that the passage encompasses two separate events in the life of Jesus, that perhaps verse 4, which Matthew cited, refers to the event of Christ’s healing ministry, while verse 5, which Peter cited, refers to the event of His crucifixion?<sup>4</sup>

Although this view seems to provide a safe way to maintain the integrity of both Peter’s and Matthew’s usage of the same passage, it unfortunately cannot fit into the context of Isaiah 53. A careful reading of the verse used by Matthew (v 4—“Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted”) shows that at this event Christ was already enduring the kind of rejection where men considered Him as bearing God’s punishment (which happened only at the Cross). To make even the first part of verse 4 refer to a different event would also break the continuity between verse 3 and verse 5, both of which speak of his rejection by men. Furthermore the words “bear” and “carry” in verse 4 happen to be the same words Isaiah used in verses 11 and 12 for the vicarious bearing of sins.

We would save ourselves from this perplexing situation if we consider that Matthew was not using the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4 in the same way that Peter used it. There are some clues that suggest this:

(1) Matthew's quote of Isaiah 53:4 deliberately departs from the LXX translation of the passage. This is significant because, with a few exceptions, Matthew usually employed the LXX text when citing OT passages. We had seen earlier that the LXX rendering of Isaiah 53:4 ("He bears our sins . . .") leaves no doubt at all that literal sickness is excluded. But Matthew's rendering is his own translation which deliberately goes back to the literal translation of 'sickness' in the Hebrew text. Matthew's Jewish readers who were familiar with the LXX would have noticed this deliberate change.

(2) It is also significant that Matthew's choice of a word to translate "bear" is different from the word used in the LXX. The word used by Matthew is never employed in the New Testament to refer to the substitutionary atonement. This confirms that Matthew's changes were done deliberately, to show that he was applying the prophecy in a unique way, different from its original context of the atonement.

(3) There is at least one other passage in the Gospel of Matthew where the author quoted from an Old Testament passage without intending to represent the intended meaning of the original context. According to Matthew 2:14-15, the time that Jesus spent in Egypt as an infant fulfilled Hosea 11:1—"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." This verse, in Hosea's context, is not a reference to Christ at all, but to God's redemption of Israel out of Egyptian bondage in about 1440 BC. Matthew was therefore using Hosea's text in a unique manner, based on the correspondence of Israel and Christ. Israel's 400-year sojourn in Egypt becomes a coincident illustration or type of the short period of time Christ would spend in Egypt.

In the same way, when Matthew quoted Isaiah 53:4, he was using the text illustratively by linking the figure of healing found in it to the literal healing of Christ's ministry before He made atonement at the Cross. There is a typological warrant for this, as the healing of sicknesses by Jesus, in which He dealt with the consequences of sin, looks forward to the atonement, in which Christ dealt once and for all with sin itself. For Matthew therefore, Jesus' healing miracles pointed beyond themselves to the Cross.

By thus demonstrating the special use of Isaiah 53:4 in Matthew 8:14-17, we confirm the intended interpretation of Isaiah 53 given above, which comprehends the suffering of the Messiah, and his atonement for sins only.

## **The Absence of Healing in NT Teaching of the Atonement**

The atonement is perhaps the most important theme of the New Testament.<sup>5</sup> If healing is indeed promised in the atonement, one would therefore expect more teaching on it than just the alleged interpretation of one verse by Charismatics. And yet every NT passage that has teaching on the atonement is significantly silent about healing. When Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, for example, He said, "Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many *for the remission of sins*" (Matt 26:27b-28, emphasis added). The apostle Paul also states only one single purpose for Christ's death: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that *Christ died for our sins* according to the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3, emphasis added).

The question that may be asked is: "Why is there no part of Scripture which may be legitimately interpreted to teach that Christ died for sicknesses?" The answer lies in the fundamental differences between sin and sickness. Sin is an affront to God's holiness and deserves the penalty of death. In no sense can the same be said for sickness. The absurdity of applying to sickness, all that applies only to sin, is evident. Christ never forgave disease. He forgave sin. "The death of Christ as our Substitute was penal, not pathological."<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to this, we note that God's dealings with sickness were entirely different even from the very beginning. After the first sin, God dealt with sin by the promise of deliverance from the "seed of the woman" (Gen 3:15) and the provision of skin coverings for Adam and Eve, which symbolise the institution of the atoning sacrifice by substitutionary death. But He did not deal likewise with the consequences of man's sin (which includes disease). The corrupted state of nature, and also of our bodies, has not changed, and will not change until it "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation *groaneth and travaileth in pain* together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also . . . groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"

(Rom 8:21-23, emphasis added). In the meantime, we have been given the Holy Spirit as a foretaste of the blessed state that we will have in eternity, and also the means to cope in life with our present corrupted physical state: “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Cor 4:16).

The healings performed by Christ and the apostles in the New Testament do not contradict this. The only purpose for their miraculous healings was to bear testimony to the person and message of Jesus Christ (Heb 2:3-4). The only spiritual prescription in the New Testament given to saints for their diseases is *prayer* to entreat God’s mercy or favour, together with the use of appropriate medication:<sup>7</sup> “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord” (Jas 5:14).

## **Conclusion**

Isaiah 53:4-6 cannot be used as a basis for the Faith Healing Movement’s teaching of ‘Healing in the Atonement.’ Jesus Christ only bore our sins on Calvary, and not our sicknesses. Healing is not a right that believers can claim. Sickness is to be accepted by Christians as a normal part of life, that will only be decisively dealt with by God in the future. The primary concern for us in this present age is God’s dealing with sin through the atonement. Disease, like death and the corrupted state of all creation, is merely the consequence of this pernicious problem. But in the meantime, believers who are sick may seek God in prayer while receiving medical treatment, since healing and the preservation of life are God’s prerogatives alone.

God may use sickness and pain as opportunities to build in us the virtues of humility and dependence upon Him. Many have testified how sickness afforded them opportunities for proving their faith as well as proving God’s love and faithfulness to them.

If the passage of Isaiah 53 is studied merely to fathom the physical benefits that we have now, the whole thrust of the message will be lost. We would have missed the sense of awe and wonder at beholding with amazement the Lord of glory laying aside His heavenly estate to descend to the very depths of human existence, despised, rejected, smitten of God and afflicted. We would have missed the realisation of our Saviour’s wonderful

love for us that was willing to bear the awful wrath of God upon our sin and to endure the death we should have endured.

Why should we be disappointed that God has not provided us healing in the atonement, when He has provided us with a great loving Saviour who will be with us always through every “Valley of the Shadow of Death” experience in life? May Jesus Christ be praised.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>T J McCrossan, *Bodily Healing and the Atonement*, edited by Roy H Hicks and Kenneth E Hagin, (Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, 1986), 10.

<sup>2</sup>F D Kidner, “Isaiah,” *The New Bible Commentary*, revised and edited by D Guthrie and J A Motyer (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 588-625.

<sup>3</sup>Lancelot C L Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1851), 889.

<sup>4</sup>This was the opinion of Dr Alan A McRae in his article, “Does this Passage Promise Physical Healing to All Believers?”

<sup>5</sup>J D Douglas, ed, *New Bible Dictionary*, 2d ed (England: InterVarsity Press, 1982), s.v. “atonement.”

<sup>6</sup>Alva J McClain, *Was Christ Punished For Our Diseases?* Grace Journal (Spring 1965): 5.

<sup>7</sup>Peter Masters, *The Healing Epidemic* (Great Britain: The Wakeman Trust, 1988), 220-7.

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## **SHEEP STEALING OR SHEEP SAVING?**

Prabhudas Koshy

The Great Commission of Jesus Christ (Matt 28:18-20) spells out the main tasks which constitute evangelism. The main tasks are (1) Going, (2) Discipling, (3) Baptising, and (4) Teaching. All these four tasks are essential to any evangelistic effort. However, the teaching aspect of evangelism is by and large neglected today.

Evangelism is more than just sharing the gospel. Jesus said that we should teach “them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Therefore, faithful evangelism includes teaching all that Christ had taught so that believers might be filled with the knowledge of God. This obviously entails correcting those who have wrong beliefs or are engaged in wrong practices so that they will be led to a correct understanding and observance of the truth.

The Apostle Paul was actively involved in the teaching aspect of the Gospel ministry. To the Galatians who were misled by false teachers, he said, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal 1:6-7). The Galatians had received from false preachers a perverted gospel that cannot save. Paul spared no effort to remind them that salvation comes by way of grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and not by means of good works (Gal 2:16). Paul further warned that those who preached a false gospel would be cursed by God (Gal 1:8-9). Just as Paul called on believers to reject false teachings, so must we (1 Cor 11:1).

However, telling a Christian to reject falsehood and join a Bible-believing and Bible-practising church has been branded as “sheep stealing.” So, many Christians stop short of exposing serious doctrinal errors in false churches. Their negligence show how miserably they have forgotten the biblical doctrine of “sheep saving.”

## SHEEP STEALING OR SHEEP SAVING?

The ministry of evangelism is not only to the unsaved, but also to the saved. There is no sin in redirecting a believer away from falsehood by teaching him the truth. It is thus wrong to call this aspect of evangelism “sheep stealing.” John Murray wrote,

The word “evangelism,” has generally been understood to apply to the propagation of the gospel among the unsaved. In dealing, however, with the obligation that rests upon the church of Christ to witness to the gospel it does not appear that the various activities of the church that may properly be embraced in the work of evangelism have exclusive reference to those who are reckoned, in the judgment of the church as without God and without hope in the world. Particularly is this true when it is remembered that *many believers in Christ have so inadequate a knowledge of the Gospel, and so impoverished a conception of the Christian life, that a considerable part of the work of the church, properly regarded as evangelism, must needs have as its aim the instruction and edification of such believers. The evangelism that the true church of Christ undertakes must therefore contemplate the bringing of the gospel in its full import and demands to those who, though believers, are nevertheless the victims of ignorance, unfaithfulness, and compromising associations.*

The sixteenth century Reformation under Martin Luther and others, was an enterprising evangelistic effort. If the Reformers had not protested against the teachings of Rome, most of today’s Christendom would still be under the unbiblical practice of idol and Mary worship.

Evangelism, therefore, includes the reforming of ignorant or errant Christians. Many Christians today are being seduced and led astray by Roman Catholicism, Ecumenism, Modernism, Charismaticism and other false ‘isms.’

In this era of growing apostasy, it is the duty of all Christians who have received the truth of God’s Word to call others to depart from false pastors and churches in obedience to the Lord (2 Cor 6:14-7:1, 2 Thess 3:6-14). First Timothy 4:1-6 reminds us, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; . . . *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.*” Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and

I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27). Calling God’s people out of falsehood is not sheep-stealing, but sheep-saving.

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## **“WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE?”: LIM PUAY HIAN’S STORY**

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Extracted by “Christ is Victor” from *In John Sung’s Steps: The Story of Lim Puay Hian* by Timothy Tow, published by Far Eastern Bible College Press.

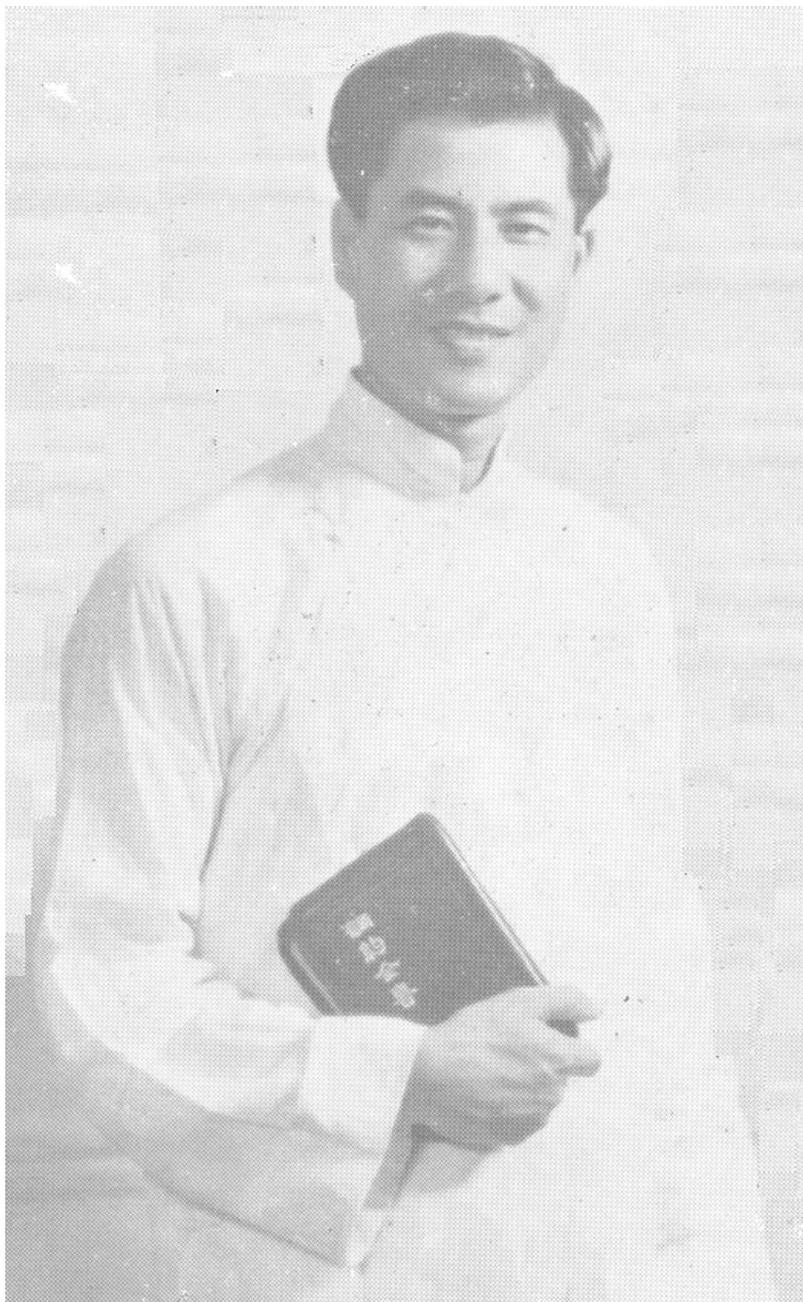
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Lim Puay Hian’s father Rev John Lim Moh Tee, was a hothead in his younger days until the saving grace of God enlisted him. By the further tutelage of the Holy Spirit, he became a meek and saintly man. Daily he would lead his family in worship, and when he prayed, he would bow over earnestly clasped hands. Yet this spiritual exercise failed to prevent Puay Hian from becoming a youthful rogue.

When Puay Hian was twelve years of age, he was obliged to leave home for his education. At first he progressed in his studies, but without parental control, he quickly backslid from any Christian convictions he had held. He soon picked up every vice a teenager could—smoking, drinking, gambling, theatre-going, lying, cheating, quarrelling, fighting . . . .

Expelled for rowdy behaviour from the protective confines of the mission school where he had spent several years, Puay Hian soon was plunged into the May 4, 1919 Boycott of Japanese demonstrations. His tall, lean figure could be seen darting in and out of the demonstrations amidst roars of “*Down with Japanese Imperialism! Burn Japanese goods! Catch Chinese traitors!*”

When the fervour of the movement was spent, an indescribable vacuum gripped Puay Hian’s heart. His was made more empty by a study of godless science and humanistic philosophy. Groping in such chaotic darkness, Puay Hian began to contemplate suicide. His innermost being cried out, “*What is the purpose of life? Whither the soul’s destiny?*”



Lim Puay Hian

Having turned from his father’s pious teachings to find his own way, Puay Hian’s life became a constant struggle. He managed to get a high school education and supported himself with a lowly teaching job.

### **Bitter Trials Abound!**

Soon his life became a series of painful ordeals, starting with the Typhoon of August 2, 1922.

On that fateful night, a howling hurricane broke loose over Swatow. A churning, boiling tidal wave poured in like a thousand roaring sea-monsters. The city was submerged in many feet of water. Homes and cottages along the open Sandy Coast collapsed like cardboard houses. In one night forty thousand perished in the deluge. Puay Hian listed thirty-six dead from his clan, including two younger sisters. Some weeks later, his father died.

At the senior pastor’s deathbed, Puay Hian sobbed, “*Papa, are you going to leave us now? What should I do?*”

“*My son,*” he uttered with his remaining strength, “*serve the Lord with all your might!*” These words made an indelible impression on Puay Hian’s heart.

No sooner was his father’s body laid to rest than death caught up with his third and youngest sister and younger brother. The grief was intense. “*What is the purpose of life?*” “*Whither the soul’s destiny?*”

But life must go on in spite of so many deaths in the family. Puay Hian’s mother hastened her son into marriage with 19 year old Hui Lan (Gracious Orchid). A true Christian girl, she was undoubtedly prepared by God to become the life-partner for this hothead.

Now as a family man, Puay Hian began to think of settling down and supporting his wife. But his hot blood could not be cooled, for when Chiang Kai-shek’s army marched through town, Puay Hian wildly determined “to throw away the pen and take up the sword!” It was only the hand of God that kept him from joining Chiang’s army. Suddenly he was seized with a high fever. Totally helpless he lay down to sleep. And lie down he did for the next two months. “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer 10:23).

After this, his mother was struck down by cholera. At her deathbed, Puay Hian could do little to restrain the flood of tears. For the first time in his life he prayed, bowing to God's sovereign power: "*O God,*" he cried, "*Thy will be done.*"

After the funeral, Puay Hian sat a dumb man all to himself. Overwhelmed with grief after grief in his short existence, life was a dark riddle.

Over the next few years Puay Hian settled into his work. However, he also turned violently against God.

## **The Winds of Change**

But God had not turned against Puay Hian!

In August 1933, the evangelist, John Sung, came to Swatow. The whole Christian community was stirred by the winds of revival, and Puay Hian decided to take a look and see what all the fuss was about.

He expected to see in John Sung, who held a Doctor of Philosophy degree from an American university, a refined scholar and cultured orator. Instead he found Sung attired in a coarse white Chinese gown, his hair shabby and unkempt. And when he started to preach, he dashed about the pulpit like a crazy man. Puay Hian scoffed at the theatrics and left for home.

He determined not to see this strange preacher again, but suddenly his conscience gripped him. He was unable to eat, sit, or work. Sinking into a terrible depression, the dark cloud of his futile life enshrouded him. He felt as if the evil hordes of hell had been let loose and were swarming him. All night he groaned and in the morning he felt an irresistible urge to hear John Sung again.

He went hours before the meeting to secure a seat at a good vantage point. He saw hundreds of others who had also come early and were engaged in earnest prayer. "*O God! Break my hardened heart!*" Puay Hian groaned.

But when John Sung came out and started to deliver his sermon, hopping about like a giant grasshopper, Puay Hian again revolted and quickly left.

He resorted to paying his brother a visit. Puay Hian found him completely changed after attending two of John Sung’s meetings. The earnest transformation in his brother made a solemn impression upon his heart. He decided to give John Sung one more chance.

He was amazed to see the radiant faces and hear the heavenly voices of the many who had been changed in the revival, but he was engulfed in his own swelling tide of woe. He went away miserably a third time.

But he could not escape. The growing burden of his sin was crushing him. Rushing to his room, he fell on his knees like a sobbing child. “O Lord, be merciful to me, this condemned sinner! As You forgave that thief on the cross, You can save this robber chief today. I have fought You. I even doubted Your existence. O Lord, I now repent. I come back to You. Be merciful to me!”

Confessing and weeping, weeping and confessing he recalled a preacher’s words: “*When you feel miserable, then read your Bible.*” Turning to God’s Word, the Lord spoke to his heart. He suddenly realised that God had already forgiven him for Jesus’ sake. His sins were washed away by Christ’s precious blood, and the living waters of His life gushed in. Joy flooded his whole being as Puay Hian burst into this John Sung chorus:

*How bountiful His grace,  
How bountiful His grace!  
From deepest sin He ransomed me,  
How bountiful His grace!*

As he began to taste the sweetness of God’s grace, a question suddenly entered his mind: “*How must I repay my Saviour’s love?*” Then he heard a still small voice within, “*When you were in your mother’s womb, I had prepared you to preach my Word.*”

“*Yes, Lord, I give you all my heart, I will serve you till I die.*” Puay Hian’s struggle of many years was over. He had finally found the purpose of his life. He entrusted the destiny of his soul to God.

## **Discipleship**

After his conversion, Puay Hian gave hour after hour to sweet communion with his Lord. Between long stretches of Bible-reading and prayer on bended knee, mingled with tears of joy and songs of gladness, he

began to make outlines of sermons. God had clearly called him to preach the Word. Through a dream, the Lord told Puay Hian to close up his business and enter immediately into full-time ministry.

Having waited upon the Lord for forty days, the time of his launching out was come. As churches heard of his conversion and his call, he began to receive invitations to minister.

The question remained: Dressed like John Sung in a white Chinese gown, would Puay Hian possess the same power as his mentor, like Elisha after Elijah? Being new and inexperienced in this ministry, he needed the local pastor's help and the prayers of the Lord's people. Nevertheless, what was lacking in experience was compensated by the higher virtues of his exceptional faith and courage.

His first mission was at Maple River where he preached for seventeen days. The experiences here, including a miraculous healing in response to prayer, laid the foundations of future work.

Having spent nearly a month at two churches, Puay Hian returned to his family like a soldier coming home from the field. He needed not only physical rest, but also spiritual recuperation. He needed quiet time with the Lord and therefore went up the mountain daily to pray and seek God's will.

God had prepared Puay Hian for the task of extending the revival to the smaller towns and villages which John Sung could not reach. Soon, China would be embroiled in a war with Japan (1937) and the whole Far East drawn into the Second World War (1941). Before war and destruction caught up with the Church of God, the souls of Her children must be safely garnered in. The Lord was reaping in early anticipation of a greater catastrophe to befall China, the "liberation" by Mao Tse Tung (1949) when Christians would be ruthlessly persecuted.

Puay Hian realised the need of the hour was not so much evangelisation of "outsiders" as revivalism to "insiders." These were days when the church needed to be purified in order to receive power from on high to withstand the onslaughts of a stormy future. His was to be a voice like John the Baptist, calling wayward people to repentance.

## Launching Out

As he launched out to the scattered churches in the vast Teochew field, he fearlessly attacked sin by name. To put his whole energy into the revival ministry, he fought shy of any social function before or after the campaign. He gave much of his time after the pulpit to prayer on bended knee and to the study of the Word. Puay Hian like John Sung was a man of one Book. The remainder of his time he made available to pray with people seeking the Lord.

In the first two years, he held missions in over sixty towns and villages. Puay Hian suffered many hardships as he travelled through very primitive areas, trusting the Lord to provide his needs. *“To the hardest of places He calls me to go, not thinking of comfort or ease.”* Sometimes he would not have a dollar in his pocket nor could he afford a hot meal or a warm blanket. To kill the wintry cold and gnawing hunger, he resorted rather to feeding upon “the meat that perishes not,” reading the Bible in place of warmth and food.

Once the Sino-Japanese war started in 1937, Puay Hian began to minister to Chinese communities in other countries such as Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Burma. When WWII caught up he had left his wife and five children in Burma on a preaching tour to Sarawak. As his steamer slid out of Rangoon harbour, he waved a final farewell to his beloved wife and children. Suddenly his spirit groaned within him. *“Shall we meet again, my Hui Lan?”* He did not hear of his family for four years . . . .

After the war, the terrible news reached him: his wife and three daughters had been killed in the bombing of Rangoon. As Puay Hian wept and mourned over such an unhappy destiny, he had no complaint against his Lord. Surrendered to His will since August 1933, he was prepared even to lose his own life for the Gospel’s sake.

*Hui Lan, are you gone  
To your heavenly home?  
Hui Lan, hear my cry:  
Every tear a sigh!*

So mourned a bereaved husband for the wife of his youth.

Now that the war was over, Puay Hian felt all the more committed to the unfinished task of his revival ministry. On wings as eagles, he mounted to finish the third and last part of his life ministry. He travelled to many countries preaching the Word of God and teaching Christians to follow the Lord with all their heart.

At one church in Surabaya, Indonesia, he taught the believers:

1. Pray and read the Bible everyday.
2. Separate yourself from the world.
3. Do not conform to the world.
4. Keep your body holy.
5. Let suffering draw you closer to God.
6. Forget the past, press on to the future.
7. Faithfully attend church.
8. Be patient in hopeful service.
9. Know that God is our co-worker.
10. Know that our labours are not in vain in the Lord.

One church reported the following:

Rev. Lim Puay Hian came to our city at the invitation of the Chinese Christian Church and held a nine-day campaign, preaching 15 times. Every preaching session lasted two hours. The Holy Spirit worked mightily and gave us results never seen before. All the Christians rejoice in this bountiful grace of God that the Church has been thoroughly revived. Rev. Lim stresses the salvation doctrine and holiness. Finally, he exhorted the believers to work for the Lord and to await His coming. Five preaching bands were organised. May all glory redound to God.

As he neared the end of his course, Puay Hian said,

Despite my illness these many years, I have covered many countries. Although not a few have been saved, there are many who reject the Word. Alas, for the church of today! *More and more are stopping their ears to the Truth, but delight to hear things that are weird and funny. Nobody would want to hear any sermon on 'sin' and 'repentance.'* No wonder many preachers today are silent on the Cross and the precious blood. These preach from their own imaginations, flowing with the tide.

Puay Hian died in Singapore in 1975. He served the Lord till the end of his life.

# **I FOUND THE ONLY LIVING AND TRUE GOD**

Tan Koh Teck

I was brought up in a non-Christian family. My family was religious and since young I worshipped idols.

In 1987, I was working as an assistant manager. One day, an Indian monk visited me in my office. During our conversation, he told me that I should worship his god. He explained that his god was the god that Christians, Chinese, and Muslims actually worship in their own respective ways. He also gave me a religious book and asked me to read it for myself.

Out of curiosity, I began to read the book. It contained some unusual and mysterious teachings. There was a section on spells which could be used to gain wealth and power. I was very fascinated, and began to chant the spell 50 to 100 times a day, and later increasing it to almost a thousand times. Gradually, there seemed to be a voice ringing in my ear telling me that it is a great god. It urged me to give up my job and concentrate on serving this new found god. Initially, I resisted the call, wondering how it could provide for the needs of my family. But soon I was convinced when it was impressed upon my mind the winning numbers for the lottery's first prize before the results were even announced. This happened five or six times.

Eventually, I did give up my job for a period of time. My money began to run out. I started to buy lottery but it did not strike. The god I served was not very helpful. I began to suspect that the problem must be because my wife was not a believer. I believed that my god would not help me until I got my wife converted. I began trying all means to get her to believe. But no matter what I did, my wife would not believe. I was unaware of what was happening to me. But my wife saw changes in me; I had a good job yet resigned from it, and my behaviour had become strange. She refused to follow me in worshipping that false god. During that time, I persecuted her to the point of suicide.

Thank God, “man’s disappointment is God’s appointment.” One day, in desperation, my wife suggested that we go to church. I thought that since my god was also the God of the Christians, there was no harm in going. So I went with her to church for a few weeks. When I attended the church, I sensed a special peace. My wife felt the same. The pastor’s message ministered to my heart deeply. Soon I began to realise that there is only one living and true God, the God revealed in the Bible. I learned that there is only one way of salvation, that is, faith in Jesus Christ.

The god that I used to worship was a false god. It almost destroyed my life and my family. I had no peace and was not even supplied financially as earlier promised. But God by His grace pulled me out of darkness into His marvellous light. I began to see the truth and was delivered from my blindness. Thank God that after much searching of the Scriptures and prayer, my whole family came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. After believing in Jesus, our lives were changed and now we are happily living together. Most of all, we thank God for giving us eternal life and the opportunity to serve Him. Through God’s preservation, I was able to handle life’s difficulties. God has never failed. We know He will never fail us. This is because He is the only living and true God. All praise and glory be to the Lord. Amen.



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## College News

**FEBC has revised its Certificate of Religious Knowledge programme.** The 40 credits needed for the Certificate of Religious Knowledge is now reduced to 20. Those who earn 40 credits will receive the **new Certificate in Biblical Studies.**

Representatives of **The Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian General Assembly of Korea**, namely, Rev Chang Keun Ahn (President), Rev Won Kyu Jung (Academic Dean), Rev Jung Hee Kwon (Dean of students), and Rev Kwang Sik Moon (Pastor, Korean Presbyterian Church of Adelaide), visited FEBC in December 1995 to explore the possibility of affiliation with FEBC in our Master of Divinity programme.



**New students** admitted in January 1996 were: Ahn Jung Kee (Korea), Bai Eun Mi (Korea), Go Za Sum (Myanmar), Hwang Jong Sun (Korea), Karuna Sitthisakthanakul (Thailand), Khup Lam Thang (Myanmar), Kim Hee Nam (Korea), Koo Kyen Hoe (Korea), Kwa Ah Boon (Singapore), Seo Jeong Hwan (Korea), and Tan Koh Teck (Singapore),



**Dr Paul Hoole**, who has a PhD in Engineering from Oxford, was a guest student of FEBC in January-February, 1996. He is a leader of six Bible-believing Churches in Sri Lanka. He is deeply impressed with the reformed faith, and with the separatist stand.

**Dr Mark Lehman** gave a lecture on “When Did the Chinese First Hear about Christ?” to FEBC students on February 16, 1996. Dr Lehman, a graduate of Bob Jones University, teaches at Orient Fundamental Bible College, Taiwan.

The students organised a **Gospel rally** on March 30, 1996. The speaker was Rev Stephen Khoo on “Do You Know That God Loves You?” The message was translated into Mandarin by Mr Calvin Loh of the Evangelistic Band. Four received Christ as their Saviour.

Fifty pilgrims including 11 students participated in the **Seventh FEBC-Life Holy Land Pilgrimage**, April 26-May 13 1996, led by the principal.

**Dr George Stiles**, vice-president of Trinity College & Seminary (Indiana, USA), visited FEBC from March 30 to April 1, 1996. He preached at the Second Anniversary Thanksgiving of the Burmese Service (Life B-P Church) on March 31.

**The Twenty-First Century Reformation Missionary Conference** under the theme “Accelerated Missions for the 21st Century” was held at Awana, Genting Highlands, June 3-7, 1996. Dr Howard Carlson, pastor of Suncoast Bible-Presbyterian Church, Florida, was the theme speaker.

**The Twenty-first FEBC Graduation Exercises** was held on June 9, 1996 at Life Bible-Presbyterian Church. The graduates were: **Certificate of Religious Knowledge:** Bong Thang, Mabeline Koh Siew Keng, Henry Tan Kiat Siong; **Certificate in Biblical Studies:** Alan Chia Boon Siong, Hsu Tzu Hui, Lee Sau Loong, Esther Limin, Seah Seow Hock, Jenny Woo Mei Kheng; **Diploma in Theology:** Yusniar Lumbatoruan, Priscilla Nwe Yin Mon, Conrad See Teck Hup, Mariana Siregar; **Bachelor of Religious Education:** Subramaniam s/o Karoonpan; **Bachelor of Theology:** Kim Jae Eun, Lazum Lonewah, Lim Jit Thye, Alvin Tan Yeow Liang, Kenneth Darrell Womeldorf, Jr; **Master of Religious Education:** Bessy Geevarghese, Hpung Raw Hpung Seng, George Lim Keow Ker; **Master of Divinity:** Prateep Cheepnirand, Jack Sin Yeow Keong, Georgekutty Skariah, Yiew Pong Sen.

A one-credit hour course on **Archaeology and the Bible** was conducted by Dr Howard Carlson (BA, Highland College; MDiv, Faith Theological Seminary; MA, American Institute of Holy Land Studies, Jerusalem; DD, Shelton College), June 10-15, 1996.

**Basic Theology For Everyone** evening classes for July-November 1996 are: The Minor Prophets I on Mondays by Dr Timothy Tow, The Gospels in Unison on Wednesdays by Dr Jeffrey Khoo, and Hermeneutics on Thursdays by Rev Quek Suan Yew.

*The Burning Bush 2/2 (July 1996)*

**21<sup>st</sup> FEBC Graduation Exercises  
(June 9, 1996)**



Board of Directors and Faculty



Faculty, Graduates, and Students



Clockwise from top left: Dr Tow Siang Yeow, President of the Board; Eld E Mahadevan, Board member; Dr H Carlson; Rev Koa Keng Woo, choir director.



Clockwise from top left: Seah Sew Hock, CertBS; Conrad See, DipTh; Mariana Siregar, DipTh; Jemima and May Ann with Dr and Mrs Carlson.



Clockwise from top left: Students singing the College Anthem; Faculty and Board taking the oath of allegiance to the inerrant Bible; Eld George Lim receiving MRE; Recessional; Kim Jae Eun (BTh) with Mrs Ivy Tow; Yew Pong Sen (MDiv) with Rev Bob Phee; Dr Tow Siang Hwa; Rev Burt Subramaniam receiving BRE.

## **Class Notes**

**Rev Bob Phee** (BTh '77) was conferred the Doctor of Ministry degree by Temple Baptist Seminary on May 5, 1996.

**Betty Mui** (BTh '77) has resigned as editor of "Pray for China," a bulletin of Christian Communications Limited based in Hong Kong.

**Rev Stephen Khoo** (BTh '85) has passed Pensacola Christian College's comprehensive examinations for his PhD (Biblical Studies) in November 1995. He is now writing his dissertation.

The new building of the Far Eastern Fundamental School of Theology headed by **Rev Robert Thawm Luai** ('86), was dedicated by Rev Dr Timothy Tow on February 18, 1996. The Fourth Graduation Exercises of the FEFST was held in conjunction with the Dedication where 12 received their Bachelor of Theology, and three the Graduate of Theology. Rev Thawm Luai also moderates the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Burma (1983) which today has grown to 53 congregations with a membership of 8,000.

**Esther Chai** (DipTh '87), is programme coordinator and counsellor at the Kampong Kapor Family Service Centre.

**Rev Haposan Siregar** (BTh, '87) is pastor of Bethany Bible-Presbyterian Church (Medan, Indonesia), as well as principal of a Christian School with 600 students. He is planning to build a three-storey Church complex in pursuance of "Accelerated Missions."

**Rev Peter Chng** (BTh '88), pastor of the Bible-Presbyterian Church of Western Australia, preached on Chinese New Year Day at Life Bible-Presbyterian Church. He also went on a missions trip to Ghana.

**Rev David Wong** (BTh '89) was chairman of the General Assembly of Pastors and Leaders of the Bible-Presbyterian Churches of Malaysia when it convened at Kelapa Sawit Bible-Presbyterian Church on October 23, 1995.

*Class Notes*

**Ev Roska Choi** (DipTh '89) planted another Bible-Presbyterian Church in Batam at Tanjung Piayu. The dedication of the church was conducted by Rev Timothy Tow on March 31, 1996, witnessed by 47 Lifers. Recently, she has added to the Church a parsonage and kindergarten which will begin to receive students in July. Similarly, a kindergarten of three classes will be inaugurated at Batu Aji, the first church Roska founded. One hundred are expected to register also in July 1996.



Batu Aji B-P Church



Tanjung Piayu B-P Church and Kindergarten

**Rev John Ling** (Cert '90) has resigned as pastor of the Chinese congregation of Life Presbyterian Church in Kemaman. The English service continues under his supervision with help from FEBC. He is now director of the new Kuantan Life Kindergarten under Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore.

**Charles** (BTh '90, MDiv [c]) **and Frieda Seet** (BTh '87), Life B-P Church's missionaries to the Philippines, have returned for a year's furlough (June '96-June '97). Charles is presently teaching at FEBC, and writing his MDiv thesis.

**Ricky Ho Kuek Min** (BTh '91) was conferred the Master of Divinity degree by Singapore Bible College on May 10, 1996.

**Rev Joshua Wonsia** (BTh '92) is pastor of Grace Bible-Presbyterian Church in Ivory Coast. He reports that Catholicism and certain cults are spreading fast in West Africa. He requests for relevant books that will help warn believers of false Christianity. If you want to assist him in any way, please write to BP 112, Danane, Cote d'Ivoire.

**Rev Kim Kah Teck** (BTh '94) having served as assistant pastor of the Church of Grace and Glory, Taipei, has now returned to Malacca, waiting for new posting by Life Bible-Presbyterian Church.

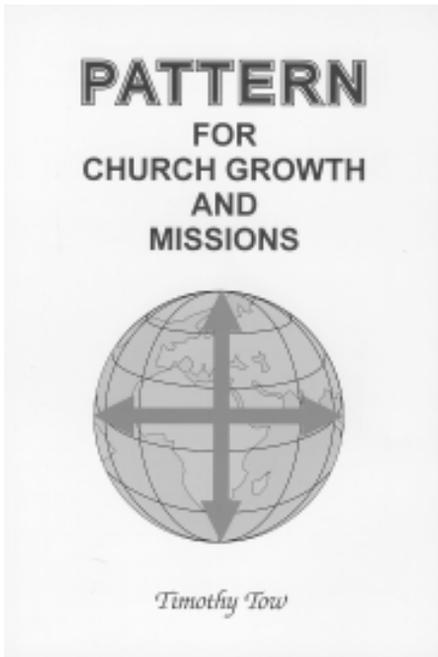
**Andrew Kam** (DipTh '94) is director of the Yangon Bible-Presbyterian Orphanage and Church. Two of his fellow workers, Amos Go Za Sum and Khup Lam Thang, are under training at FEBC. With help from Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, he has built Grace Bible-Presbyterian Church in Tui Khal Village, Chin State. His singing orphans accompany him in his evangelistic outreach to the surrounding villages.

**Rev Jo Young Chun** ('96), after a year's graduate study, was called to pastor a Korean Church, and manages a Christian book store in Kuching, April 1996. He is agent for books published by FEBC Press.

**Yusniar Lumbatoruan** (DipTh '96) is commissioned missionary to Jakarta by Life Bible-Presbyterian Church through the Indonesian Service. Her address is: Jalan Kwitang 22-23, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta, Indonesia.

## Book Notices

*Pattern for Church Growth and Missions*, by Timothy Tow.  
Singapore: Life Book Centre, 1996. 136 pages.

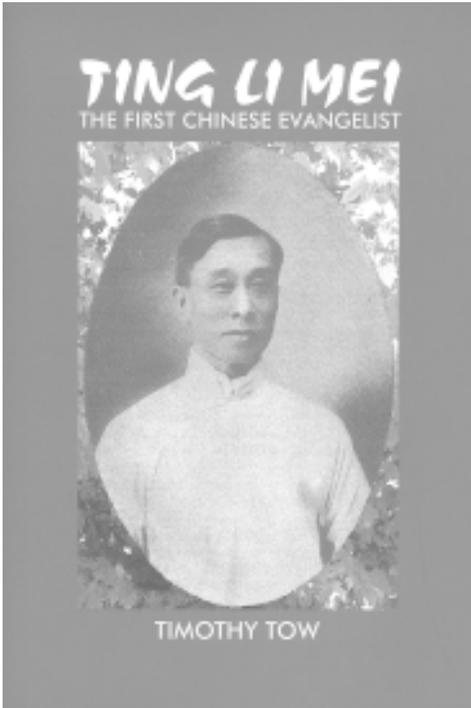


Dr Timothy Tow has written an important book. Bible Presbyterians, and especially those in the USA, should put this book on their “MUST READ” list. In a sense this book is an autobiography. Here we are able to see into the soul of the author, and find out how he has responded to and implemented the Book of Acts into his own ministry. What has Dr Tow done to be so successful in God’s service? We find many valuable pointers in these pages.

Many US pastors have fallen into the trap of relying upon “modern techniques” and gimmicks rather than the working of the Holy Spirit. Many of the larger churches depend upon a non-biblical view of the Holy Spirit, with sensational signs and claims to increase their growth. Others of us organize our churches so carefully that we think we can get along quite well without the working of the Holy Spirit, and we might not even recognize His work if He did anything major in our churches. Dr Tow’s emphasis is on better men, not better methods and programs. He stresses a close relationship to God, and serving Him diligently according to the Scriptural truths with a great sense of urgency. He points out that relying on “modern techniques” leads to the increase of the destructive inclusivism, while relying upon the Holy Spirit leads to a forgotten purity. There is much here that we pastors need as we face the year 2000.

Dr Howard Carlson

*Ting Li Mei: The First Chinese Evangelist*, by Timothy Tow. Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 1988, 1996. 64 pages.



There is no one in all China so well known as he. Whenever the Church of China is mentioned the name of Ting Li Mei immediately comes to mind. He is a devoted, humble, honest, reverent, persevering servant of Christ. He is beloved and well commended by everyone who knows him. The Presbyterian Church, USA has his portrait hung in the Conference room of its headquarters in New York City to show him respect.

He is China's first independent evangelist, who blazed a trail for those after him. He was most well versed in the Bible, one instructed by the Holy Spirit Himself. He was a man of great spiritual eloquence. When he ascended the pulpit he exuded an air of loveliness, mingled with

mekness and joy that spoke of Christlikeness. His face shone forth the fulness of the glory of Christ. He was one of a very lowly heart, a man devoted to prayer. He prayed for hundreds, yea thousands of people by name, who are recorded one by one in his book of prayer. His prayers circled the earth.

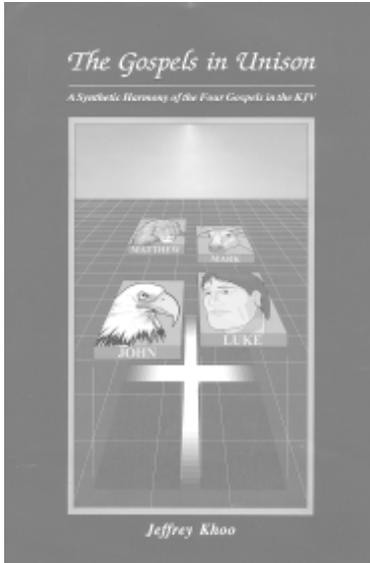
He was a man of fearless loyalty. In the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 he was beaten for taking a stand against his anti-Christian persecutors.

He was the first general secretary of the All-China Student Volunteers for Evangelism. Today, many well known pastors and preachers and co-workers in Christian organisations were moved by his appeal to High School and University students twenty-five years ago. He is a spiritual leader of China's home missions, and was the first Evangelistic Band that evangelised the borders of Yunnan.

Whoever came in contact with him, Chinese or Westerner, would be influenced by him for good.

Dr Hopkins, 1936

*The Gospels in Unison: A Synthetic Harmony of the Four Gospels in the KJV*, by Jeffrey Khoo. Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 1996. 224 pages.



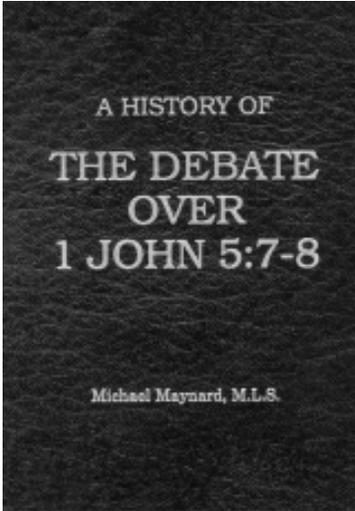
The four gospels are actually One Gospel. Just like a four-part choir singing in harmony, the biblical gospels offer four complementary perspectives of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The faces of the cherubim in Ezek 1:10 and Rev 4:7, namely, the lion (i.e. Matthew: Christ as the Davidic King fulfilling Jer 23:5), the ox (i.e. Mark: Christ as the Suffering Servant fulfilling Zech 3:8), the man (i.e. Luke: Christ as the Perfect Man fulfilling Zech 6:12), and the eagle (i.e. John: Christ as the Divine Son fulfilling Isa 9:6), illustrate the distinctive purposes of the four gospels.

This harmony of the gospels is in no wise an attempt to replace the individual gospels. Although it is necessary to study each of the gospels separately in order to appreciate their distinctive contribution to the life of Christ, it is equally important to study the gospels as a whole so as to obtain a complete or fuller view of Christ's life.

It is without question that a valuable tool for the study of the life of Christ is a gospel harmony. There are, however, two types of gospel harmonies: the synoptic, and the synthetic. The synoptic harmony displays the four gospels in parallel columns, while the synthetic harmony weaves the four gospels into a single narrative where everything is included, and nothing repeated. Historical-critical scholars employing source, form, or redaction criticism prefer the synoptic harmony. Its side-by-side layout, however, makes a study of the life of Christ trying. The complete historical-contextual settings surrounding Christ's words and works in a more readable format provided by a synthetic harmony makes it a better textbook for Life of Christ studies.

Augustus H Strong has rightly advised, "As the Parisian sculptor chisels his statue with the aid of many photographs, taken from different sides of his subject, so we are to construct from the four pictures of the Evangelists the solid symmetrical life of Christ." *The Gospels in Unison* is a fresh attempt in constructing, from the combined testimonies of the four gospels, such a "solid symmetrical life of Christ."

*A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*, by Michael Maynard. Tempe AZ: Comma Publications, 1995. 383 pages. The following book introduction is by the publisher.



Did you know that an article in German was published in 1959 by the world's foremost scholar of Latin manuscripts of the Bible, who argued for the antiquity of 1 John 5:7 as being present in the very text that Cyprian (d 258) held in his hands? Not even the Harvard-Yale scholar, Edward F Hills noted it. Did you know that three myths about 1 John 5:7 promoted by Metzger in 1964 were so soundly refuted in 1980 that Metzger admitted in 1992 that what he wrote "needs to be corrected"? Did you know that the myth of the so-called "promise" of Erasmus was refuted? Did you know that it evolved into a challenge myth in 1986, and was refuted in 1995 by a renowned specialist in Erasmian studies? Many Christians are not at all aware of these facts. The recent book by J R White, filled with attacks on the KJV, reveals that he was not even aware that these myths had been refuted. Did you know that a volume published in Germany in 1987, provides the exact number of Greek manuscripts that omit 1 John 5:7? Metzger taught in his books that there are "thousands." But the manuscript institute in Germany indicates there is not even *one* thousand. The author met face-to-face with James R White in July 1994 in Gilbert, Arizona, and challenged him to indicate the quantity. He was not able to provide even a rough estimate of the quantity!

Not only is this the first book of the twentieth century, written in English, in defense of the celebrated passage "*in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth,*" but this is also **the first attempt in any century and of any language to provide a detailed history of the debate over 1 John 5:7.** The author has observed that many opponents of the King James Version begin their attack on the entire version by claiming that this verse is spurious. With all respect to many noted defenders of the

Authorised Version, many have not been able to adequately respond to this attack. Thus, the attacks have continued. The author, a librarian, has uncovered a wealth of forgotten articles and books on this subject. He compiled 137 bibliographic books, each one devoted exclusively to the topic of 1 John 5:7! Have you ever felt undecided about the verse? Have you come across footnotes in modern versions that say no Greek manuscript before the 16th century contains the verse and did not know how to respond? This resource of over 400 pages (383 numbered pages plus illustrations), a 19 page index, and 582 footnotes, responds to this and to many more attacks on the verse.

The author, Michael Maynard, earned a cum laude BA in German from Arizona State University, in Tempe. While in graduate school in Tucson, he was appointed Graduate Assistant in Teaching Classics (Greek and Latin). He studied in Leipzig and in Tübingen, Germany. In 1991, he delivered the message "In Defense of 1 John 5:7-8" at the 13th annual Dean Burgon Society. He then earned the MLS degree from the ALA accredited Graduate Library School at the University of Arizona.

What people are saying about the book:

**"Maynard's *tome* is a 'must' for Bible believers" and "it is a vast resource tool."** Thomas M Strouse, MDiv, PhD; Seminary Dean, Tabernacle Baptist Theological Seminary, Virginia Beach VA. (Book review in Tabernacle Baptist Theological Bulletin, 1 [Fall 1995]).

**"In the things that count most, it is one of the finest examples I can think of in 'standing in the gap' Ezekiel 22:30. It is a gold mine!"** (September 18, 1995). J A Moorman, prolific author on the subject of the Authorised Version; Pastor in Harrow, Middlesex, England.

**". . . [A *History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8*] will serve a real purpose to fill some gaps . . . In years to come, I will add, you will find the book quoted by these men as they find the information vital to the arguments involved."** (September 30, 1995). C Ken Johnson, BD, MDiv, DMin; Pastor in Ft Collins, CO.

**"Powerful new release."** (November 1995). Catalogue of AV Publications, Ararat, VA.

**". . . a classic study that ought to be in the hands of every serious honest student and scholar of Scriptures."** (Book review in November-December 1995 issue). Dr Don Jasmin, editor of *Fundamentalist Digest*, Elkton, MD.

**“At long last we have a scholarly work that gives us the ammunition to answer these attacks upon God’s Word.”** (Book review in January 1996 issue). E L Bynum, editor of *Plains Baptist Challenger*.

**“What a monumental task of research! . . . There is not a pastor who should not have this book, if they are at all interested in the Scripture preservation issue.”** (January 24, 1995). John M Krinke, instructor of Biblical Greek, Heritage Baptist University, Greenwood, IN.

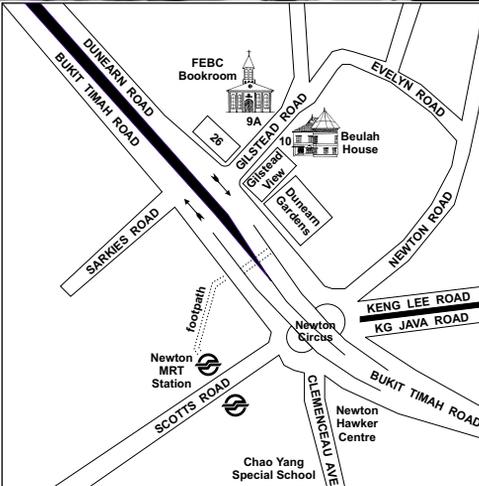
**“Maynard compiled 137 bibliographical items (37 journal articles, 50 essays from books, and 50 entire books) in pursuit of his subject. Those who think there is no textual defense of 1 John 5:7 should read this book.”** David W Cloud, editor of *O Timothy!*, Oak Harbor, WA.

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*To order write to Comma Publications, P O Box 1625, Tempe AZ 85281-1625, USA, Phone: (602) 968-3865; E-mail: <mmaynard@imap2.asu.edu>. Singapore readers may purchase it from FEBC Bookroom, 9A Gilstead Road, Singapore 309063, tel: 2549188; or Tabernacle Books, 201 Pandan Gardens, Singapore 609337, tel: 5601111.*

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