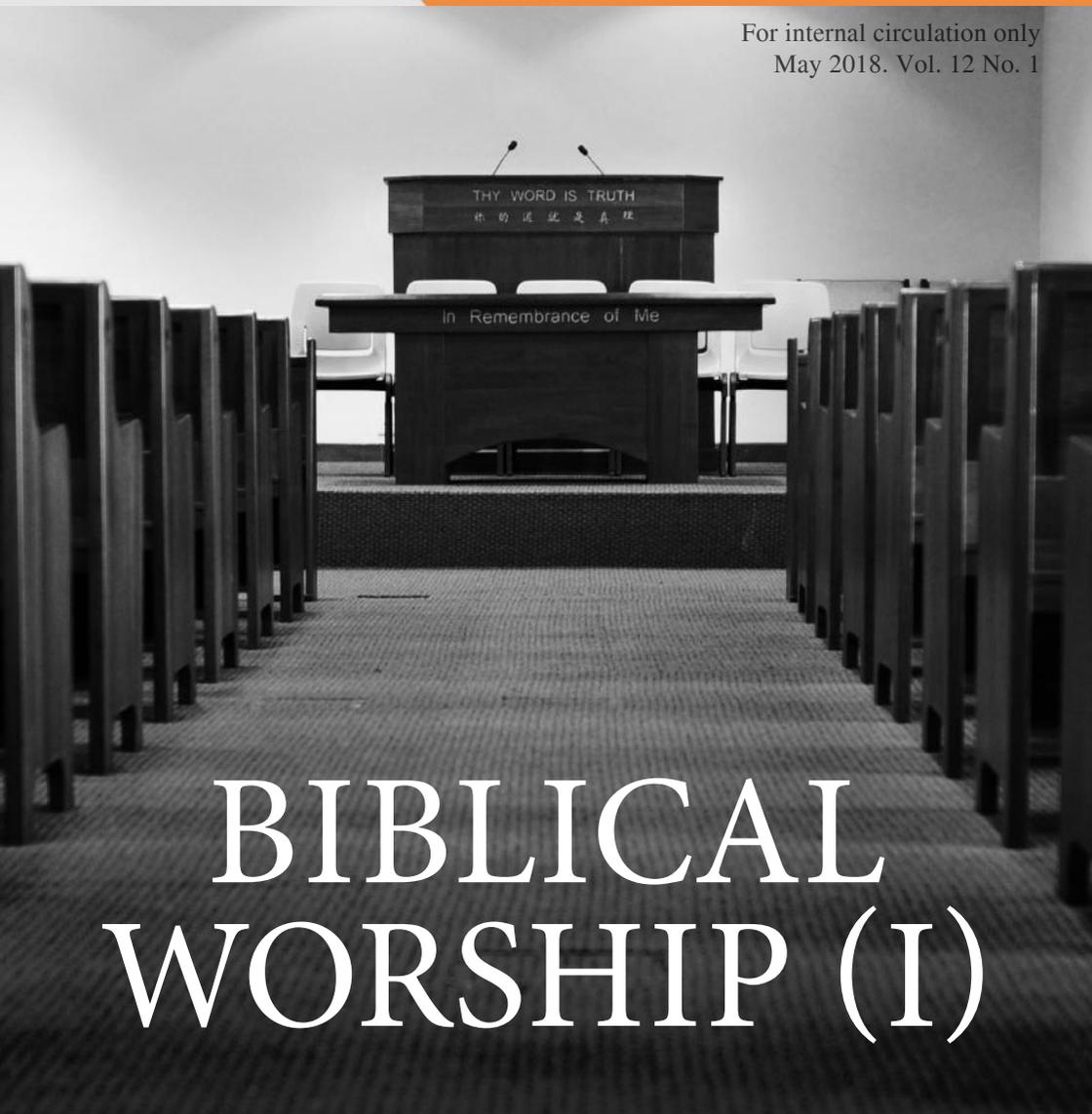




# Shine forth

TRUTH B-P CHURCH  
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# BIBLICAL WORSHIP (I)

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# ***FOREWORD***

The kind of worship seen in many churches today is evidently different from the kind of worship that the Bible teaches. Perhaps, the leaders are trying to raise the attendance at worship service. Perhaps, young people are no longer impressed by the traditional and conservative worship, thus pastors and preachers are trying to lure them back to the services of their church with a more contemporary kind of worship. For some reason (which could be because the people are not moved by the worship services of the church), dramatic presentations are offered, movies are shown, talented singing groups are asked to lead in the worship, and even liturgical dances are offered as worship to God. Very often, the time for the preaching of God's Word is also either shortened or totally removed. Instead of a God-centered worship, the worship of God becomes a man-centered one that is often sensual and appealing to the flesh, and blatantly done in the sacred Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Every God-fearing, true, sincere and seeking Christian must ask this question, "What is the worship required by my Lord?" With the Scripture opened before him, with an eye on the Reformed confessions, and a finger on the history book of the Church of Jesus Christ, this question should be in his mind, "What is the true worship that I must render to God?" God does command His church to worship Him. "*Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice,*" the Psalmist says in Psalm 55:17. The people of God do not wait until the Lord's Day to worship God in church. True worship of God begins at home, when father and mother lead their children in true worship in the living room or around the dinner table, reading the Scripture and explaining it to them, teaching them to sing songs of praise, and offering prayers for the family and the church. All that will come to focus when families gather together for public worship as a congregation. The public worship of the church is vital for obedience to the will of our God who saved us, for the universal church will be worshipping God for eternity.

The Bible teaches that our worship is to be just what God commands it to be -- nothing more, nothing less. It is of utmost importance that we understand what is biblical and reformed worship. It is not for man to determine how one should worship God. God's Word regulates us in how we must worship Him. The Regulative Principle of Worship is taught in the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 21, Section 1b: "But the

acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture."

Two main things must result from our worship in order for it to be true: 1) God will be glorified, and He receives the praise, honour and glory due to Him alone; 2) We will be blessed and strengthened in our faith and knowledge in God. And at the same time, we will learn to enjoy God forever. May we always rise from our heart a constant flow of true worship to God that will delight His heart and bring glory to His holy Name. Let us seek to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever in our worship to Him.

In this issue, there are several articles on the topic of "*Biblical Worship*". These articles (based upon God's Word) will help us to understand what is true biblical worship that we are to follow in contrast to the false worship found in many so-called Christian churches today. This is to prevent us from falling into their errors. Besides these articles, there are also testimonies and missions reports to update us on what is happening in the missions fields. The section on missions needs is for our prayer and support. Enjoy reading. Amen.

Yours in Christ,  
Rev Dennis Kwok  
Chairman  
Truth Missions Society (TMS)

"The Devil has seldom done a more cleverer thing than hinting to the church that part of their mission is to provide entertainment for the people, with a view to winning them. Providing amusement for the people is nowhere spoken of in the Scriptures as a function of the church.

The need of the hour for today's ministry is **earnest spirituality joined with Biblical doctrine, so understood and felt, that it sets men on fire.**"

(Charles Spurgeon, *Feeding Sheep or Amusing Goats?*)

**ARTICLE:**

# **“WHAT IS BIBLICAL WORSHIP?”**

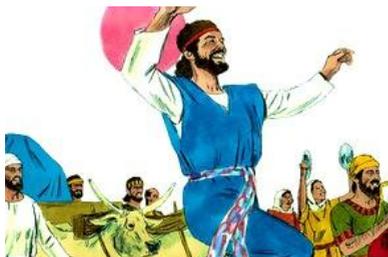
**BY REV (DR) QUEK SUAN YEW**

*“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.”  
(1 Chronicles 16:29)*

Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, “Christianity” is thriving in carnality. The Christ of the Bible is presented as an entertainer. “Pastors” and “worshippers” are dancing and gyrating to high-decibel music that is ear-shattering. The music and lyrics are deliberately chosen to mesmerize the people into a trance-like state in order to loosen their purse strings and cause them to come back for more. Thousands, if not millions, are lured to this 21<sup>st</sup> century brand of Christianity all over the world, and into believing, with all their hearts, that a carnal and lust-filled “Christ” (concocted by sinful professing Christians) will bring them to heaven! This is the delusion of the last days. They will not receive the truth that is able to save them but will believe a lie that will destroy them (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12).

The manner in which we worship reveals our view of God. If the manner of our worship is reverential, our view of God is God-fearing. If our worship of God is carnal and man-centred, our view of God is sensual. The context of 1 Chronicles 16 is that David had just brought the Ark of the Covenant into

The manner  
in which we worship  
reveals our view of  
God.



**David praising the LORD for His goodness and mercies**

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the city of Jerusalem successfully. He and the people of Israel were rejoicing and praising the LORD for His goodness and mercies towards Israel. Israel was united and had a good spiritual king in King David. David's worship in the new spiritual capital of Israel, i.e. Jerusalem, was God-honouring. We have much to learn from David's worship of the one living and true God.

## 1 Chronicles 16:7-30

*"Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren. Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth; O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones. He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth. Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations; Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac; And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, Saying, Unto*



**Give unto the LORD the glory  
due unto His Name!**

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*thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance; When ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it. And when they went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people; He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes, Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm. Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; shew forth from day to day his salvation. Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations. For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the people are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.*

*Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place. Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. Fear before him, all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved." [Emphasis added]*

The worship of God is based entirely upon the covenant that God made with Israel. The title of God used by David here is "the LORD" which is a covenantal Name. No man can worship God without this established covenant with God in his life. This covenant is salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord. All true believers in Christ have entered into a covenant with

God. God made this covenant with sinful man when He sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross of Calvary for mankind. He accepted all that Christ did as sufficient when He raised Him from the dead on the third day. This covenant is from God to man. All who have believed in Christ can worship God in the manner as described by David in 1 Chronicles 16.

Our worship of God is based entirely upon the covenant God made with us.

**The focus of worship is on God.** There is no focus on carnality. There is a tone of reverential fear as David and Israel approached God. The phrase "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His name" in v29 points us to this truth. The glory due to God's Name is based upon what God has done on earth and in heaven, as revealed in Holy Scriptures and in the personal lives of all believers who have tasted God's goodness in Christ when they were saved from their sins. This personal experiential knowledge fills all believers with the knowledge of God's Word where the love for God and His holy and perfect Word burns in their souls for life and into eternity. The glory and praise that is due to God alone is real in the believer's life, and he knows it. He will not want to take this glory from God. He ascribes all glory to God, for he knows that what he is and is able to do for the LORD comes from God. He knows that he is nothing without God and Christ, and he does not come before God empty-handed.

Focus of our worship must be on God.

**He brings an offering and comes before God.** This offering is more than just a sacrifice of animals; it is a spiritual exercise of thanksgiving from the heart based upon a deep sense of gratitude to his LORD. It is more than just a reference to the offerings such as sin offering, burnt offering and peace offering; it is a necessity prescribed by God, for the offerings represent Christ before Christ comes to offer His body once-for-all to save us. The word "offering" used in v29 also refers to a free-will offering from the heart given not by necessity but by love for the LORD. How can a believer not bring a love-gift to his LORD in worship when the LORD has given everything to him!

Worship God with our offering.

Worship is a time of praise when we approach God even though we know that every moment of our lives is a form of worship. The word "worship"

used in v29 is a specific and particular worship before the Ark of the Covenant which was the most sacred of all the items found inside the Tabernacle. It is likened to all believers coming to church for worship on the Lord's Day. Such worship is unlike the worship that we are supposed to have when we study in school or work in the office. To bring a love-gift to the LORD means that the believer is walking closely with the LORD. His love for the LORD is healthy and burns brightly in his soul. His life is righteous and lived in holiness.

Worship God with clean hands and a pure heart.

David, therefore, says in this verse that all believers are to "worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." Holiness is beautiful to God but ugly and hated by the world. Holiness simply means to live a life where sins are repented of. The child of God will not regard any sin in his heart. He knows that if he does, God will not hear his prayers and receive his worship. He does not just prepare his heart for worship at the last minute (like on a Saturday night) but his whole life is a life of holiness. He obeys the Word of God diligently. He prays without ceasing. He witnesses for Christ faithfully. He serves God all the days of his life. The joy of the LORD is his strength. He gives thanks to God for all things because he knows that it is the will of his loving Heavenly Father concerning his life. When he comes to God in worship, his conscience is crystal clear like the living water. His relationship with God in all areas of his life is one of holiness and righteousness according to Holy Scriptures. He approaches God with clean hands, and purity of heart. He praises the LORD with sincerity of faith, and love for his LORD God Almighty. This is the manner of worship for all children of God, and not reserved only for a select few.

The way we worship the LORD reveals how much we know or do not know God. It also reveals the genuineness of our salvation in Christ, for the Holy Spirit who indwells all believers will not tolerate any form of worship that is man-centred and carnal, and will cause them to flee from such worship. Do not regard the worship of God as a small matter. It reveals your relationship with God, and hence your destiny, which is either heaven or hell!

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**ARTICLE:**

# **“HOW TO WORSHIP GOD BIBLICALLY?”**

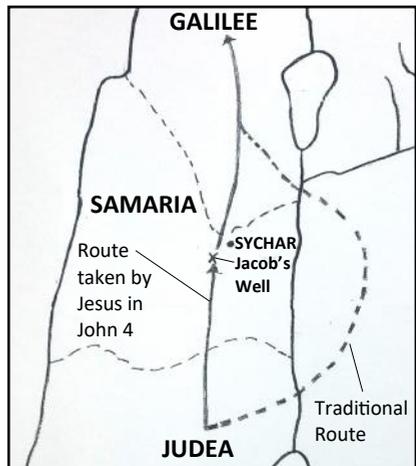
**BY DR JOSE LAGAPA**

*“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23-24)*

Worship is an integral part of the Christian faith. It is the response of believers to the greatness and awe of their Creator, Provider and Saviour. The manner of worship is a reflection of the believer's understanding towards his God, and how he worships the Lord reveals who he is before God.

The Hebrew word for worship is *shachah* which is equivalent to the Greek word *proskuneo* in the New Testament. In Greek, the word for worship is “frequently used to designate the custom of prostrating oneself before persons and kissing their feet or the hem of their garment” (BDAG). It, therefore, describes “an attitude or gesture of one's complete dependence on or submission to a high authority figure.” Worship is a reverential acknowledgment of God who is worthy of all our praises. He deserves the exaltation and glory for all that He has done.

We will consider the above passage from the Gospel of John to answer our question of what it means to worship God biblically. This Gospel presents Jesus as God Himself who is worthy of man's worship. In John 4, Jesus departed out of Judea, and He passed through Samaria. His coming into Samaria opened the opportunity for a Samaritan woman to have a discourse with the Saviour. This meeting is significant because it was known, during those days, that the Jews did not have any dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus is revealing here the universal accessibility of worshipping the only Living and True God.



**Jesus passes through Samaria**

## Worship God "in Spirit"

The conversation between the Lord Jesus Christ and the Samaritan woman had its setting beside Jacob's well. Strangely, the woman came to draw water at around 12 noon. While Jesus' disciples were in a nearby city purchasing food, the Lord opened a conversation with the Samaritan woman by asking water to drink. Out of the exchange of queries and answers, the woman perceived that Jesus was a prophet. She proceeded to enquire about the place of worship, whether it was in Jerusalem, since her forefathers worshipped God on the mountain of Gerizim.

The Lord told the Samaritan woman that the time will come when they shall worship the Father neither in Gerizim nor in Jerusalem. This He spoke to prophesy of the church age where believers all over the world shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Lord also emphasized the misunderstanding of how God must be worshipped. He reiterated that true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

### (I) Worship is from the Spirit-born Believer

What did John mean to worship in spirit? This means **the person who worships God must first be born of the Spirit and indwelt by the Spirit.** *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"* (John 3:5-6). *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"* (Romans 8:9). *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"* (Romans 8:15). This implies that only born-again Christians who are indwelt by the Spirit of God can worship God in the spirit. A believer indwelt by the Spirit of God is guided into the truth. He alone can worship the Father in a manner that is acceptable by God. For only those whom the Holy Spirit quickened have the desire to worship God biblically. Those who are still in their depravity will never seek after God in His way (Romans 3:10-11).

Jesus highlights the worship of the Father. The word in Greek signifies the supreme Deity, who is responsible for the origin and care of all that exists. This points to God not only as Creator but also as the Governor of the life of a believer, and his Provider. The phrase emphasizes a personal relationship. One who worships the Father must have a personal

relationship with Him, acknowledging that He is the Creator and Governor of his life. Worshipping God without this relationship is worship in vain.

## (II) Worship is from the Spirit-filled Believer

*"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). Spirit-filled believers worship God in the true manner for they are under the Spirit's control.*

The Lord declares biblical worship as one found in the believer filled with the Spirit of God. *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).*

The Lord reproves their way of worship which was carnal or in the flesh. The people were concerned of the external and earthly requirements of worship, such as their *what, when, where* and *how* they worship but had no understanding of *why* they had to worship God. This is also true today where many churches worship God according to the dictates of the world. They may use words from the Bible but the pattern, fashion, setting and the mode of worship is of the world. The emphasis of the Spirit in worship involves the mind and the heart. It has nothing of the outward frivolities of worship styles (as expressed in their carnal and lustful form of worship) that conform to this evil world which Christians should not follow.

### Worship God "in Truth"

Biblical worship is expressed and practiced by true worshippers. It is opposed to the kind of hypocritical worship where focus is on the external and physical factors. It is neither induced worship engineered by emotionalism and mind conditioning. The whole blueprint of worship is already recorded in the Bible and it is only the prescribed form of worship that must be kept by the Spirit-born and filled believer.

## (I) Worship is Based on the Written Word

Worship in truth. Jesus affirms "*sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*" (John 17:17). The only absolute truth available for believers to follow in the pattern of worship is God's Word. It provides the complete instruction against false worship. The Lord Jesus Christ accentuates the pattern of how to worship God by stressing that God is a Spirit. If God is a Spirit, there must, therefore, be no representation of what and who God is. The Word of God strictly forbids the worship of images. "*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments*" (Exodus 20:4-6). Since God is a Spirit, a born-again believer can worship God everywhere and anytime without the need of physical symbolism. This demands worship to be done in simplicity and sincerity.

There are many forms of worship in the Bible. It is important to consider the context of worship and God's purposes for that worship. Believers should not apply a blanket application of all forms of worship especially from the Old Testament to the New Testament church period. For example, sacrificial worship according to Mosaic Law pointed ahead in time to the ultimate sacrifice of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, we do not have sacrificial worship today. The calendar of regular worship events during the Jewish feasts are no more applicable in the church today as well.

## (II) Worship is Centred on the Living Word

"*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him*" (John 14:6-7). To worship in truth is to worship in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the truth. "*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14).

Worship must be God-centered. It is a reverential worship to God the Father led by the Holy Ghost in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, "*For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*" (Colossians

2:9). It is worship with understanding of the Trinitarian roles of the Godhead. *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one"* (1 John 5:6-7). *"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen"* (Revelation 7:9-12).

### Summary

The Bible tells us that Christians must worship the Father in spirit and in truth. This signifies only spiritual persons (being born-again) can truly worship God the Father. This worship is not in accordance to whatever way man likes to do it but in accordance to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Worship is based on the Scriptures. Worship is biblical when it follows the Bible. It centres on the Lord Jesus Christ in whose name all the earth shall bow down in worship.

Pure and genuine worship is accorded only to spiritual people. It includes a willing reverence, and brings along with it such legitimate worship as prescribed by God's Word. It is opposite to what worship is today where there are abundance of ostentatious ceremonies but sincerity of heart is absent. Biblical worship must be faithful to the biblical standards set by the Lord Jesus Christ in the whole counsel of God.

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# **“BEWARE OF RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM! (EXODUS 32)”** BY PR JOSHUA YONG

Religious syncretism is essentially the blending or fusing of two or more beliefs into one new form of worship. In our context, a syncretistic form of worship is the attempt to join or fuse various forms of false worship together with the worship of Jehovah, who is the one living and true God.

Religious syncretism can take many forms today. At the church level, it can take on a form where some churches incorporate a worldly or idolatrous form of worship into the worship of God. This is sometimes expressed in the kind of music used. Religious syncretism can also take the form of the health-and-wealth gospel, where the attempt is to fuse the worship of mammon together with the Gospel. On a personal level, it can take the form where a person lives in spiritual idolatry, while still professing to worship Christ.

Religious syncretism is very dangerous as it sometimes may sound and look like true Christianity, where it appears to be teaching the true Gospel and to be worshipping the true Christ. Yet, upon closer evaluation based on God's Word, one will see that it is actually a compromise of the faith, the propagating of another gospel, and is not the worship of Christ. It is dangerous as it may give a person a false sense of religiosity, yet in reality, all his worship is in vain. The Bible strongly condemns such kinds of religious syncretism for it is opposed to the true worship of God.

The account in Exodus 32 took place shortly after the LORD delivered Israel out of Egypt. The LORD led Israel out of Egypt and they were now at the foot of Mount Sinai. Moses, in obedience to God's command, had gone up to Mount Sinai to receive the commandments of God for the nation of Israel. The problem arose when the people thought (from their selfish perspective) that Moses had delayed in coming down from Mount Sinai. The people soon grew impatient and they asked Aaron to make unto them gods. Aaron then made them a molten calf.

## **(I) Religious Syncretism Arises Out of Impatience and a Fear of Man**

Impatience was one trait which plagued the nation of Israel. The Lord had led Israel out of the land of Egypt but when they came to Marah

(Exodus 15:23-24) they started to murmur and complain against God. The Lord provided for them, and made the water sweet. However, as they continued their journey from Elim, they were hungry and they started to complain against God again (Exodus 16:3). In this account in Exodus 32, Moses had gone up to Mount Sinai, and not knowing what had happened to Moses, they grew impatient. This time, their impatience did not just lead them to murmur and complain, it led to idolatry.

What the Bible recorded regarding their demand is most shocking. It revealed their unbelief and their rebellious nature. They said to Aaron, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us" (Exodus 32:1). Their demand was for Aaron to make them gods, even declaring that these will be the gods that will continue to lead them in their journey. They also said that they did not know what had happened to Moses, "...the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt" (Exodus 32:1). They had forgotten that it was not merely a man who brought them out of Egypt, but it was the LORD who had brought them out of Egypt.

The problem here was two-fold: Firstly, they thought that these false gods will be able to go before them. Secondly, they failed to remember and acknowledge that God was the One who brought them out of Egypt.

Such is the nature of religious syncretism today. It arises out of the impatience of man. People today often make decisions and choices based on the results or the outcome they hope to get. They make decisions in a "pragmatic way." Sadly, this kind of philosophy is often brought into the church as well. Some are unable to trust in the Lord's timing. The Lord may require God's people to remain and wait patiently upon Him, but some rush in to take matters into their own hands, making unto themselves "gods," hoping that these "gods" will lead them forward. These "gods" are patterned after the idols of the world, so are some of the philosophies and ideas that man may have in doing God's work or in living the Christian life. It is important to evaluate the ideas and philosophies which we live by. We must be careful not to use any means which will produce "results" just because the Lord has called us to wait.

Another striking observation is that Aaron, the High Priest, was the one who made the golden calf for the people. The Bible does not explain why Aaron acceded to the request of the people. One possible clue is highlighted in verse 21, where Moses asked Aaron, "what did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?" It is possible that the people had pressured Aaron, and he gave in to them,

but in so doing caused the people to sin. We learn an important lesson here - religious syncretism sometimes arises out of a fear of man. Aaron should have followed the principle: "we ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). A church which sets her direction or governs based on a fear of man will often fall into the sin of religious syncretism. When the church decides on how she ought to worship, or the sermons which should be preached based on a fear of man, she will soon depart from what God's Word teaches. The Word of God must always be the standard the church uses to govern herself.



The Making of the Golden Calf

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## (II) Religious Syncretism Sounds Like True Religion

The dangerous thing about religious syncretism is that it often sounds and may have the appearance of true worship. Notice in verse 5, the Bible describes how, "when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD." Aaron not only built an altar before the golden calf to offer sacrifices before it (v6), he even identified this golden calf with "the LORD." The name "the LORD" here refers to the covenant name of God - "Jehovah." This was the name God used to identify Himself before Moses and the children of Israel.



Worshipping Jehovah in a False Form

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Aaron took the laws concerning the sacrifices which God had earlier prescribed (Exodus 20:24) and applied it to the worship of the golden calf. What Aaron had done was to fuse the worship which God had prescribed together with the worship of the golden calf. Religious syncretism is dangerous as it maintains some elements of true worship, but it brings in other elements of idolatry. These other elements of idolatry may be easily identified with the truth of God's Word.

Religious syncretism may even attribute its worship to Jehovah, the one living and true God, yet in reality it is a denial and rejection of God's person, His nature and His Word.

We see religious syncretism today especially in the form of worship in many churches. They have taken the "idol" of pop and rock music, which does not glorify and honour God, and incorporated it into the worship of God. This form of worship is commonly known as Contemporary Christian Music (CCM). The form of music CCM employs often has strong association with sex, drugs and rebellion. Yet some think that if they merely put Christian words into these modes of worship, it will be pleasing unto the Lord. In some churches, their worship is filled with dancing and noise that is not unlike the rock concerts of the world. Adding or using Christian words or terms in this form of worship does not make it pleasing to the Lord. One has to evaluate if this form of worship is consistent with what the Bible says concerning worship.

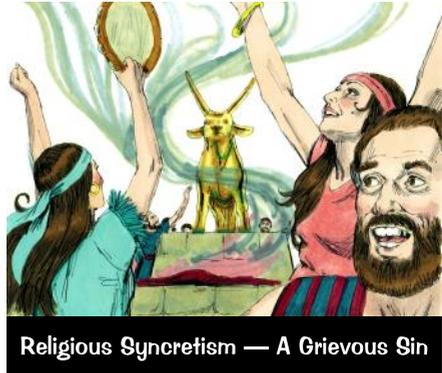


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Another example of religious syncretism is the joining of worldliness together with the Gospel. This is best represented by the "health-and-wealth" gospel that is preached today. This "health-and-wealth" gospel is where a person wants the Gospel, and the promise of eternal life on the one hand, and also health and wealth on earth on the other hand. This is a false gospel which the Bible does not teach, yet some trust that if they believe in the Gospel, they will also be healthy, rich and successful. Such people want the world, but they also want the hope of eternal life. This is religious syncretism. The Lord Jesus Christ tells us that we cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).

### (III) Religious Syncretism Condemned

There are serious consequences to religious syncretism. If it is not rooted out, it will not only affect the present generation, but also the generations to come. The image of the golden calf will be patterned after by Jeroboam nearly 400 years later (1 Kings 1:26-30) during which he would erect two golden calves and make the claim that these are the

gods which brought Israel out of Egypt. It is important to realise the serious consequences religious syncretism will have in the lives of God's people.

In this golden calf incident, the sin of the people had to be rooted out most swiftly and decisively. The LORD knew of the transgression of the people (v9), and Moses had to deal with this sin. Moses asked a very simple question: "Who is on the LORD's side" (v26). The sons of Levi answered this call and were commanded to take their sword and go throughout the camp and slay those who had participated in this sin. The Bible says that there were three thousand who were killed that day (v28). After the sin was dealt with, Moses commanded the people to consecrate themselves unto the LORD (v29).



About 3,000 men killed that day because of their idolatry

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The consequences and punishment meted out highlights and shows the severity of the sin that was committed. God will not allow His worship and His Name to be profaned.

Sin has to be rooted out swiftly and decisively. Dealing with sin may not be easy. It may involve people who are close to us, and sometimes the discipline that has to be carried out is painful. Yet God's people must have a serious view of sin. We should not wait until we experience the consequences of sin before realising how serious sin is. Religious syncretism is especially deadly in this regard, for the consequences are often not realised or noticed immediately. It is like a rot or decay which slowly spreads. By the time the rot is noticed outwardly, the rot has already destroyed all that is within.

Religious syncretism cannot be tolerated in God's church today. The same call "who is on the LORD's side" is issued out today. Who will answer this call today? Recognising the causes and the nature of religious syncretism, we need to know how to deal with religious syncretism. The only way is to remove the idolatry in obedience to God's Word.

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# **“JEHOVAH VS BAAL — WHO WILL YOU FOLLOW?” (1 KINGS 18:1-39)**

**BY PR CLEMENT CHEW**

Deuteronomy 6:4 declares, *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD”*. It is part of the passage famously known as the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) which is recited by the Jews as a prayer every morning and night. It affirms that the LORD is unique and stands alone. All the gods of the world are false. The LORD is the only one worthy of all worship. Thus, the first of the Ten Commandments demands that there must be no other gods before Jehovah (Exodus 20:3). He must be our sole object of devotion and worship.

Alas, if we do not guard our hearts, we can be easily taken by idolatry. While we proclaim to be desirous of Christ, our hearts wander after the bright lights of the world. We become like the proverbial saying, having our feet in two boats, one in the Christ boat, and the other in the boat of false gods!

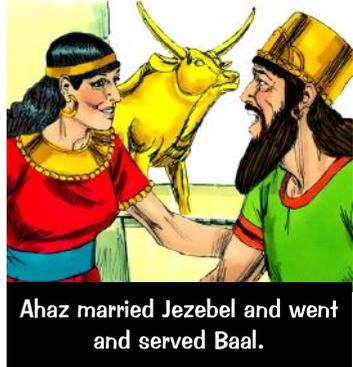
On the other hand, God's Word declares, *“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon”* (Matthew 6:24). It is impossible to follow Christ and the world at the same time. *“... know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God”* (James 4:4).

## **The One God Rejected!**

When the children of Israel were about to enter the Promised Land, God commanded them to exterminate the people in the land. If they failed to do so, the people of the land would soon turn them away from Jehovah to follow other gods. *“When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter*

*thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly." (Deuteronomy 7:1-4)*

However, the children of Israel disobeyed God. They allowed the people to remain in the land and sought to enslave them. They were soon besotted by the gods of the nations, thinking that the false gods were responsible for bringing prosperity to the land. There were even intermarriages with unbelievers. They still proclaimed to worship Jehovah, but they also followed after Baalim and Ashteroth. Instead of serving the one living and true God, they now wanted many masters in their lives. They tried to paint a veneer of religiosity by marrying the worship of Jehovah with that of Baal but it was actually an outright rejection of Jehovah. It was gross hypocrisy.



Ahaz married Jezebel and went and served Baal.

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The spiritual malaise of the children of Israel is presented vividly in 1 Kings 18. The king of the Northern Kingdom, Ahab, saw no problem marrying the unbelieving Jezebel of Sidon. The result was disastrous. Jezebel began promoting the worship of Baal, and cut off the prophets of the LORD. Thankfully, the LORD raised up Obadiah to protect a hundred of His prophets, or it would have been much worse for the Northern Kingdom.

In His wrath, the LORD judged the Northern Kingdom with three years of famine and drought. This was to tell Israel that they had disobeyed Him and must quickly repent of their sins (Deuteronomy 28). However, instead of returning to the LORD, the people persisted with the worship of Baal. This revealed the hardness of hearts of the children of Israel, and how steep they were in their idolatry.

The massive lack of spiritual understanding in Israel is exposed in Ahab's exchange with the prophet Elijah. When Elijah appeared before Ahab, Ahab falsely accused him of being the one that troubleth Israel. The truth was that Ahab's promotion of idolatry caused Israel to fall into the judgement of God. It was Ahab who was the troubler of Israel, not Elijah!

Similarly, when a person is steeped in idolatry, he may find means to justify his rebellion. While he may try his best to appear like a worshipper of Jehovah, his actions reveal that his heart is with mammon. When rebuked of his idolatry, he may blame the messenger for being the source of his troubles rather than repent of his sin. In fact, it is his devotion to false gods that had landed him in hot soup.

### **The One God Vindicated!**

It is impossible for Israel to serve two masters. They must either choose to serve between Baal or Jehovah. Their religious hypocrisy must stop. Thus, Elijah confronted the people - *"How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him."* (1 Kings 18:21) The people did not answer Elijah because they knew he was right.

Elijah proposed a challenge between Baal and Jehovah. There would be two bullocks. Each bullock would be placed on a separate altar. The prophets of Baal would call on Baal to set their sacrifice on fire. Likewise, Elijah would call on the LORD to set his bullock on fire. The bullock that was consumed by fire will therefore serve as evidence that the God called on is living and true.

The prophets of Baal started first in this epic confrontation. They cried unto Baal from morning till noon. But Baal did not answer with fire. To win the favour of their "deity", they proceeded to cut themselves with knives so that blood gushed out from their wounds. However, it was to no avail. There was no answer because Baal was no different from the false gods of the nations. *"Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them."* (Psalm 115:4-8)

When it came to Elijah's turn, he made sure that the sacrifice was thoroughly soaked with water. This was to demonstrate that the fire consuming the sacrifice must truly be from God. And with just a simple prayer from Elijah, fire came from the LORD to consume wholly the drenched sacrifice and altar. This proved two things about Jehovah. Firstly, He is the living God, since He hears the cry of His servant and

responded accordingly. Secondly, He is the Almighty God, and thus setting a drenched sacrifice on fire is but a light thing to Him.



"... The LORD, he *is* the God; the LORD, he *is* the God." (1 Kings 18:39b)

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### Conclusion: Follow the One God!

What is most shocking about the whole incident is that it took a miracle for the children of Israel to confess that the LORD is THE God. Did they not have the oracles of God which declare that He is the one living and true God? Have they not been reciting the *Shema*? Yet it took a stupendous miracle on Mount Carmel for them to confess that Jehovah is the one God that they should follow. Sadly, after this miracle, when Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah, few stood with Elijah, causing him to flee from the presence of Jezebel. The confession of the people on Mount Carmel is but an empty confession!

Today, there is no longer the need for a miracle because we have the more sure Word of prophecy teaching us that Jehovah must be worshipped exclusively as the one living and true God. You can only serve one master. Make sure He is Jehovah, and not the false gods of the world!

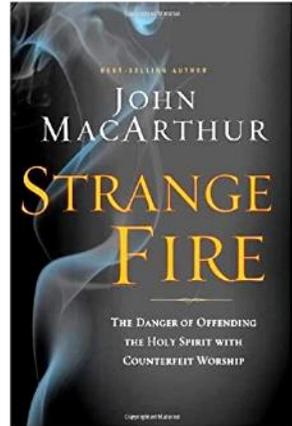
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*Pr Clement is serving the Lord as a preacher in Tabernacle Bible Presbyterian Church (Singapore), and as a tutor of Elementary Hebrew in the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC). He will be ordained as a minister of the Gospel at the FEBC's 43<sup>rd</sup> Convocation service on 6 May 2018.*

**BOOK REVIEW:**

**JOHN MACARTHUR'S  
"STRANGE FIRE: THE  
DANGER OF OFFENDING  
THE HOLY SPIRIT WITH  
COUNTERFEIT WORSHIP"**

**BY DAVID CHEW**



*Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship.* Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013. 333pp. ISBN 978-1-4002-0641-4.

In this book, John MacArthur uses the account of Nadab and Abihu (Numbers 9), Ananias and Sapphira, and Simon Magus, to warn his readers against a false kind of worship. MacArthur rebukes, "The real Holy Spirit is not an electrifying current of ecstatic energy, a mind-numbing babbler of irrational speech, or a cosmic genie who indiscriminately grants self-centred wishes for health and wealth." (xii-xiii). MacArthur minced no words in calling Charismatic preachers "spiritual swindlers, con men, crooks, and charlatans" (xiii). The error of the Charismatics is that they have infused their own theology of human experience into the Bible and have preached such under the guise of the Holy Spirit. As such, MacArthur sounds the clarion call for all evangelical churches to take a stand, and to recover a proper focus on the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

**Part 1: Confronting a Counterfeit Revival**

MacArthur recounts incidents of "bizarre spirit-possession", questioning, "how could the Holy Spirit be responsible for this kind of mayhem?" (4) God cannot be honoured by confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33, 40). Furthermore, the testimonies of their leaders have not been good. J. Lee Grady, contributing editor to *Charisma* magazine, comments that many well-known leaders have had moral failures, greatly stumbling the church. MacArthur argues that if such people claim to have the Holy Spirit, He should empower them to overcome sin and such scandals would be rare. In addition to these scandals, violent assaults have also been attributed to the Holy Spirit. How can such brutal and barbaric activity

be of the Holy Spirit? Others hawk the Gospel, swindling the people to give under the guise of the promise of monetary returns. This is not the Biblical Gospel. All this stems from a gospel that is not based on Scripture, a different gospel (Galatians 1:6-8). They reinterpret verses to fit their own monetary and selfish agenda. Experience is elevated above the Scriptures.

The Pentecostal movement began in 1901 when Agnes Ozman reportedly spoke and wrote Chinese under the supervision of her teacher, Charles Parham. She used Acts 2 to explain this phenomenon. The students of Parham were given a Bible study assignment prior to this and they concluded that speaking of tongues were a sign of the baptism of the Spirit, and that this gift can still be experienced today. However, they soon realised that they were unable to speak in tongues, especially so when Parham insisted that Pentecostal missionaries could go to foreign missions without going to language school. A study by Bible Missionary Society found that Pentecostals who went to Japan, China, and India had no single instance where they were able to communicate the Gospel to them (23). However, some years later, Parham found a disciple in William J. Seymour, who sparked the Azusa Street Revival.

Many have compared the Charismatic movement to the Great Awakening, with seemingly similar emotional responses. But the Bible also warns of false teachers who will creep into the church, bearing fruits of the love of money, sexual sin, arrogance, hypocrisy, and aberrant theology (Matthew 7:16; 2 Peter; Jude). Jonathan Edwards gives five Biblical tests according to 1 John 4 to evaluate whether a revival is true or not, namely 1) Does the work exalt the true Christ? 2) Does it oppose worldliness? 3) Does it point people to the Scriptures? 4) Does it elevate the truth? 5) Does it produce love for God and others? MacArthur argues that the Charismatic movement fails this fivefold test, promoting spiritual gifts and the Holy Spirit instead of Christ, being scandal-filled, and pointing others to themselves, loving a false God, or falsely loving God.

## **Part 2: Exposing the Counterfeit Gifts**

The Charismatics seek to restore the office of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. Peter Wagner is one of its strong proponents. He calls this the "New Apostolic Reformation". However, MacArthur argues that it is a "deformation". MacArthur clearly lays out the Biblical qualifications of an Apostle to expose these false apostles: 1) Physical eyewitness of the

resurrected Christ, 2) Being personally appointed by Christ, and 3) Apostolic appointment backed by miraculous signs. Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 12-14 explains very clearly that such Apostleship has ceased, among other miraculous gifts. But alongside this, the Charismatics also seek to restore the office of the Prophets. To this, MacArthur explains what the Scripture says about false prophets: 1) They will lead others into false doctrines (Deuteronomy 13:1-5), 2) They live in unrestrained lust, and 3) They give inaccurate or false revelation. The fullness of the revelation of God's Word is found in the Scriptures and we do not need to add to it.

Another error of the Charismatics is their speaking in tongues. Unlike the tongues of the Bible, the Charismatic tongues are "making up languages and talking in gibberish" (134). This is even admitted by the Charismatics themselves. They feel so close to God when they speak in tongues, however, such a practice is also common in pagan religion. The so-called tongues of the Charismatics fall short of the tongues described in the New Testament - known languages. MacArthur compares 1 Corinthians 12-14 with Acts 2 to prove this. Biblical tongues were spoken, and they transmitted a message that could be translated by one with the gift of translation. The fact that interpretation is needed also implies that it is a known language.

The purpose of the Biblical gift of tongues is twofold: 1) As a sign to the unbelieving Jews (1 Corinthians 14:21-22; Acts 2:5-21), and 2) For the edification of the church (1 Corinthians 12:7-10). One can only be edified when he understands the language. Moreover, in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul explains how all believers have been baptised with the Holy Spirit (v13), but not all have the gift of tongues (vv28-30). Furthermore, in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul laid out some stipulations for tongue-speaking in the church: 1) No more than three people should speak, 2) They should speak one at a time, 3) Their message must be translated, 4) If no one could interpret, they are to remain silent, 5) Women are not allowed to speak. By these guidelines, the Charismatic churches have already failed as a whole.

Oral Roberts was one of the famed faith healers of his time, following in his tracks were Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Ted Haggard, Kenneth Copeland, Carlton Pearson, Billy Joe Daugherty, and most notably, Benny Hinn. Scriptures clearly teaches against seeking signs and wonders (Matthew 16:4), but Charismatic preachers insist on divine healing, often blaming the individual for his lack of faith when the preacher is unable

to heal him. However, a careful study of Scriptures will show that healings did not depend on the faith of the recipient (162-165). Furthermore, Jesus' healing miracles was never for material gain or publicity, quite contrary to that of Benny Hinn. While Christ's miracles were always immediate and successful, Hinn's were less than successful - not having one verified healing, but having some even dying at his healing crusades. MacArthur comments that if Hinn truly had the gift of healing, he could "empty hospitals and curb disease in Third World countries... But...he does not possess the true gift" (173).

### **Part 3: Rediscovering the Spirit's True Work**

Since the Charismatic movement gained momentum, many have lost the true, biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit. They have believed in a counterfeit Holy Spirit. In this section, MacArthur seeks to properly explain the Holy Spirit and His work. The primary work of the Holy Spirit is to point men to Christ. Those who are Spirit-filled, and Spirit-led will be Christ-centred. It must be clear that the Holy Spirit is not a force or influence but a *person*. This same Spirit can consume those who disobey His Word (*Genesis 6:3; Acts 5:3-5*), and is also active in the salvation work. He 1) convicts unbelievers of sin, 2) regenerates sinful hearts, 3) brings sinners to repentance, 4) enables fellowship with God, 5) indwells believers, and 6) seals salvation forever. Just as we are thankful to the Father for His love for us, and to the Son for His atoning sacrifice, we should be as thankful to the Holy Spirit for working in our hearts, causing us to place our trust in Him.

Some Charismatics use Bible passages of people falling before God to support their "slaying of the spirit". MacArthur observes three main differences: 1) There was no middleman involved, 2) It was rare, and 3) It was controlled, with the person being sober-minded. MacArthur further observes that being filled with the Spirit is always contrasted with drunkenness (*Ephesians 5:18*), a blow to the Charismatics who claim to be drunk on the Holy Spirit. The true filling of the Spirit leads to a person pursuing practical holiness (cf. *2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Peter 3:18*). Furthermore, one who walks in the Spirit will not fulfil the lust of the flesh (*Galatians 5:16-17*). The Spirit also helps a believer to be conformed to the image of Christ.

MacArthur concludes in his final chapter by issuing the plea for all who are in the Charismatic movement to submit to the authority of Scriptures and to come out from it.

This writer thanks God that he has been much blessed by the reading of this book. MacArthur gives very Bible-based arguments against the Charismatic movement, citing relevant examples to further reinforce the error of the Charismatic ways. MacArthur does not use bombastic theological terms, thus making it an easy read for the lay Christian. That being said, one has to be discerning with regard to MacArthur. Having said all this regarding Charismatism, Grace Community Church (where MacArthur currently pastors) invited Lecrae, a Christian Hip Hop artiste, to perform at their 2010 Regeneration Camp (a high school summer camp to reach out to young people nationwide). Although this book may be a good addition to one's theological library, MacArthur's position on Contemporary Christian Music (which is often employed by the Charismatics in their worship) is questionable.

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**SERMON EXTRACT:**

## **“FALSE WORSHIP WARNED”**

### **(DEUTERONOMY 11:1-17)**

Worship is something that every man does. And the one you worship is the one that you are going to spend your time serving. If you serve money, money will be your god and money will be that which you worship because you cannot separate the two words, “service” and “worship”, as you can see in Deuteronomy 11:16, “... and ye turn aside, and **serve** other gods, **and worship** them”. Service means you spend your time, and you and I know how precious our time is. Our precious time is limited on this earth. If it is threescore years and ten, you only have threescore years and ten (of time) to serve and to worship.

False worship today is global. It is more frightening than you and I would care to admit. And the Bible-Presbyterian churches are not spared. If you were to look at the Bible-Presbyterian churches, do not be shocked or surprised to find that in some of these Bible-Presbyterian churches, their worship is very similar to the Charismatics. They use drums, they use electric guitars, they use synthesizers, and the hymns that they used to sing (which you would find in our hymnal) are no longer used by them. Many of their songs are choruses that are sentimental in nature, and they keep repeating them. The way they worship is very similar to the Charismatics but the name of the church is still Bible-Presbyterian.

False worship is very common today, so much so that people do not regard them as false because of its commonality. It is now worshipping God according to what is right in man's eyes and God has no choice but to accept. But please understand what worship means -- you are spending your time, your resources, your life and above all these, from out of your own mouth, you are singing praises to someone whom you call “God”, to someone whom you call “Jesus Christ”. But if it is not the One Living and True God according to the Scriptures, if it is not the Jesus Christ of the Bible, but only sounds the same, spelt the same, you are experiencing false worship. And the false worship will *not* be to the One Living and True God, *not* through the Jesus Christ of the Bible, but to Satan, who is the “prince of this world”. If you are not worshipping God of the Bible, you

**“If you are not worshipping the God of the Bible, you are worshipping Satan.”**

are worshipping Satan. It does not matter whether you are aware of the delusion, you are still worshipping him. That is how clever he is. He makes you think that you are worshipping the One Living and True God whom you are going to spend your time and resources on, whom you are going to serve with your energy, and to praise, but in fact *he* is the one being praised, not the God of creation.

Moses was burdened by God and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gave this warning of false worship in Deuteronomy 11 to the people of Israel before the LORD took him home. Who were the people whom Moses addressed as the guardians of true worship? Who were the candidates that must be warned of the importance of true worship, and be careful of false worship?

Look at v1, *"Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway. And know ye this day: for I speak **not with your children.**"* So Moses said, "I'm *not* talking to this particular group of people who are known as the *children* of the people of Israel which have *not* known, and which have *not* seen the chastisement of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand and his stretched out arm and His miracles and his acts which he did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh, the king of Egypt and unto all his land." Why did Moses make a clear delineation? "I'm *not* talking to these children. They have *not* seen, they have *not* known, they do *not* know. I'm speaking to those who *have* seen and those who *have* known." Soon after they came out of Egypt, God told Moses to number the people of Israel while they were encamped at Mount Sinai, and the total number was 603,550 (20 years and above, men only). These were the adults whom God held responsible for the direction and holiness of the people of Israel as they sojourned from Egypt to the Promised Land.

About a year and a half after they came out of Egypt, they arrived at the Promised Land (southern portion), where they sent in spies (one spy per tribe, so 12 of them). The spies spent 40 days to survey the land, to see whether it was all that God has promised them (a land flowing with milk and honey). It was, because when they brought back the bunches of grapes, the grapes were so heavy that they needed two persons to carry them. The spies were supposed to evaluate the land, but they (except Joshua and Caleb) did not stop there. After evaluating the land that it was truly flowing with milk and honey, they said, "We also saw huge cities and in these huge cities, there were giants". These were the sons

of the Anakims and they were giants. Most of them, perhaps, were the size of Goliath who was nine feet tall, or more. And they said, "We are like grasshoppers, we cannot go in, we will die." Except for Joshua and Caleb (who) said "No, we can go in, we must go in", the majority of the people (20 years and above) took the side of the 10 faithless spies. Joshua and Caleb gave them one final warning, "Don't listen to them, we can go in, we must go in." (Moses did not say a word because he was not part of the 12 spies.) These 603,548 of them (minus Joshua and Caleb) did not realise that when they did not listen to the counsel of Joshua and Caleb who told them, "We can go in", it was the last word that God gave to the people of Israel. Because they said, "We cannot go in", God said, "You will all *not* go in." Every day that they used to survey the land will be one extra year that they were going to wander in the wilderness (i.e. 40 years). Minus the  $1\frac{1}{2}$  years that they had already used up in the wilderness, they would now spend  $38\frac{1}{2}$  years walking in the wilderness until all 603,548 of them die in the wilderness. Therefore, just before they arrived (in the Promised Land), they had another numbering and this is the new generation of people that Moses was referring to (in Deuteronomy 11). The oldest person at that time (excluding Joshua, Caleb and Moses) would be  $(19+38\frac{1}{2})$  years old, so just under 50 years. And so those 20 years and above, right up to those just under 50, were are now held responsible because they were old enough to see and to understand. They were the adults whom God warned because the younger ones would depend upon their faithfulness and their spirituality, just like today.

Parents, you are responsible to make sure that your children are found in a church that is God-honouring. The adults in the church, you are responsible to make sure that this church that you are in is God-honouring. And when it is time for you to leave this world, you must leave this church just as God-honouring as when you first received it from the previous generation. That is why God said, "I'm not talking to the children who do not know better. I will not hold them responsible; I will hold those who are older, those who know better, those who have seen, those who have tasted, those who have experienced My presence and My goodness and My power responsible." You are the ones to whom God said, "I want you to, (v1) *love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, (for how long?) alway.*" Always. Never, never stop keeping God's Word because that is the measure of true worship. When you obey God's Word, and keep God's Word, that means you know the Word of God and that is the only protection against false worship. When you do not know God's Word, you

do not know what is true and what is false worship.

Why do you think in many of these Charismatic churches, the Word of God is kept from the people? The people do not carry the Bible into the church, they go empty-handed. The Bible verses are projected on the wall, and you and I know how dangerous that can be when you just project a Bible verse up there, you can make a Bible verse say whatever you want it to say. Because if they do not have the Bible to check the context, to make sure that what you preach is according to the context in which the verse appears, you can turn the Bible into silly putty and you can mould it, and shape it into whatever you want. And the people do not know better. They just trust blindly, foolishly and we are talking about worship, we are talking about you spending your time, your resources, we are talking about you praising someone whom you call God but in reality he is not the God of the Bible. You know how deadly and how dangerous that is for you and for me? To worship someone is the highest adoration that you could ever give to someone. To respect a person is one thing, to be devoted, to be loyal to a person is another. But to bow down and worship one who is supposed to be God Almighty, you and I cannot be so naïve and so foolish not to do our due diligence to make sure that the one that we worship is truly worthy of our worship. Only our Creator who made us, is worthy of our worship, nobody else, because everyone else, everything else, are not creators, they are all creatures, including Satan. And why would you want to bow down to another creature, when you could, in Christ Jesus, bow down to the One Living and True God, who will receive you in Christ? That is why the target audience Moses warned about true worship (in Deuteronomy 11) is the adults.

**“Only our Creator who made us is worthy of our worship.”**

V7 *“But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the LORD which he did. Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments.”* The word “keep” here is mentioned in v1, *“keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it. And that ye may prolong your days in the land ...”* (so that you may continue to be God’s people, a witness to a world that is dying in sin) *“... which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey.”* That is the purpose -- that you will remain strong and holy, to be a godly witness to a world that is dying in sin, and that is now the responsibility of the church.

That is why it is so important that you are not found in a false church, a church that is part of the ecumenical movement. The Methodists, Anglicans, most of the Baptists, Evangelicals, and the parachurch groups (Navigators, Campus Crusade for Christ), they are all official members of the World Council of Churches (WCC). And if your church supports these parachurch groups and if your church continues to give money to them, if your church continues to invite these parachurch groups into your church to run Bible study courses and programs, you are inviting members of the WCC into your church. And you are giving tithes and offerings to support these movements that will one day be owned by the Anti-Christ. Your church may not be officially named as a member (of the WCC), but by supporting these parachurch groups, are you not supporting them (the WCC)? They (churches and parachurch groups that are members of the WCC) dare to put their name on the front door, you are just entering in by the back door when you support these parachurch groups.

**To be a godly witness to a world dying in sin is now the responsibility of the church.**

God warns the adults (i.e. those who know better) that you are responsible to make sure that you and your family are not worshipping false gods; the leaders of the church, you are responsible to make sure that the people are not worshipping false gods. And you have to make sure that you are in a church that is not deceiving you. The Word of God will reveal; it is the litmus test to measure every church, every worship, and if you do not know God's Word, how are you going to help? Why do you think Moses made it very clear, "I'm not talking to the children, I'm talking to the adults who were supposed to know me"? They were the ones whom Moses challenged and charged to keep the commandments of God. You keep, you guard, because you have a duty and responsibility - v10-12: the duty and responsibility to be a witness because prior to this time before the nation of Israel was formed, the witness of God on earth to a world that was dying in sin was only through individual godly families like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Job. How many more there were, we do not know. Before the formation of the nation of Israel, the witness of God's grace and God's mercy to a world that was dying in sin would be through godly families sprinkled all over the world. The mediators of God's family are

**God's Word will reveal if our worship is true or false. It must be used to measure every church and every worship!**

the head of every home, and they offered offerings on behalf of the family (which was what Abraham and Job did).

After the formation of the nation of Israel, God made sure that the priests were the ones who would do it, because this land would be THE land that would shine forth brightly that this is the nation of Israel who are God's people. That was why God said to them, "*For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt*" (v10a) What was the land of Egypt? The land of Egypt was not God's land, the people of God were in Goshen (part of Egypt). Israel could not bear a godly witness as a nation. In order for one to become a nation, there must be **people, constitution and land**. And so God used Egypt for the past 430 years to turn 75 souls (the families of Israel or Jacob) into 2 million plus **people**, and when they were in Mount Sinai, God gave them the **Constitution** (the moral laws, the laws of the land, the civil laws and the Levitical laws).

Now the last piece of the puzzle was the **land**. That was why the land was not like Egypt; it was different. The Land of Promise was going to be their land where the whole nation would become God's bright light to a world that was dying in sin. That was why God wanted to impress in the hearts and minds of all these adults who must fulfil His purpose to conquer the land. Their sons and daughters would depend on what they were doing then. That was how important it was.

"...[F]rom whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven (i.e. It will suck up all the rain water)." (v10b-11) "How you are going to plant, how you are going to grow, you trust Me," God said. The Land of Promise would be a land flowing with milk and honey, a land God would always care for and watch over 24/7.

"A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." (v12) The Promised Land would not be like Egypt with a lot of flat land, and with the River Nile always there to irrigate it (where it would always be green and fertile). The Land of Promise is very hilly; there is no river flowing through it the way that you have in Egypt. Although there will be one small little river called the River Jordan, it is nothing compared to the magnificent long and huge River Nile.

But don't worry, it is not the land itself that will be very fertile, it is God who will make it fertile even though it is very hilly. No big flat pieces of land for them to plant acres

## **Trust in God — Don't use gimmicks for the church to grow!**

of crops. Don't worry; God is the One who will provide. "You must trust Me." All they needed to do was to obey the Bible. And they must trust God to provide for all that they need even though the land may look as if it is impossible to plant. God cares for it. God will always watch over it. "You just trust in Me." The same for the church — don't use gimmicks for the church to grow.

It is the adults' duty and responsibility to protect the younger ones against false worship. The reason is our witness. We have a spiritual reason and purpose and that is to tell the world that this is the truth, that in this church, Jesus Christ (the Son of God and the Son of man) is still being taught faithfully according to the Scriptures; that when you come to this church, you are worshipping the one living and true God. That when you come to this church, you will be given the pure Gospel according to the Scriptures. Now I know that many churches, including the charismatic churches, they are also saying the same thing. And you are right, they will always say the same thing. If I were Satan, if I want to deceive you and to create churches that are false, do you think I am going to say anything different? He will use the same words (as us), he will use the same jargon, the same Christian terminologies. You study the Bible and you will find that the method has always been the same.

When Jeremiah was ministering, he said to the king, he said to the people of Judah, "Thus saith the LORD, 70 years you've been in captivity. Thus saith the Lord, Nebuchadnezzar is God's servant. Surrender. Do not fight. This is God's will." False prophet, Micaiah (good name) said, "Thus saith the LORD, two years you've been in captivity. You must fight. We are God's people. He's an enemy of God. You must fight." And you have the rest of the people torn. Who would you believe, Jeremiah or Micaiah? Micaiah (with all the beautiful prophetic garments, who works for the king and has a big group of other prophets) saying, "Thus saith the Lord, two years", versus Jeremiah (one man) saying, "Thus saith the LORD, 70 years" — how are you going to know the truth? First year came and second year, you are still in captivity, "Ah, now I know Jeremiah is telling the truth". But it's too late, isn't it? Too late. You are supposed to believe before it happens because your life depends on it, your children's life depends on you. Satan will

continue to use the same jargon as the true church, just as in the past. He did the same then and it was successful, he will still do the same today. He will sing the same kind of hymn that sounds biblical; he will use the same words, definitely; he will use God; he will use Christ; he will use the Holy Spirit; he will use all the biblical jargon; he will use the Bible; he will even use the King James Version (of the Bible) in English-speaking churches, in order to imitate, and to make sure that the false is as close to the real, in order to deceive. And that is what he has done. So what should your response be?

The answer is found here, from v13 onwards. *"And it shall come to pass, if (i.e. a condition) ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul..."* -- remember chapter 11 verse 1, it is the same thing -- *"... to love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, always."* And here, He said the same thing, *"that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain (that may help you to grow your corn, your wine and your oil). And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full."* Because it is a national witness, the blessing upon the nation of Israel is both spiritual and physical. The church now worships God only in spirit and in truth; the blessing today is only spiritual, not physical. But for the nation of Israel, it is both physical and spiritual. That is why God said this to Israel, *"And I will send grass ..... Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived"*. The word "take heed" is exactly the same as the word "keep" in v8. In v16, the response God gave to the people of Israel was, "if you will hear and listen and obey God's Word, this time now, you must keep, take heed, guard yourselves. Guard yourselves that your heart (because that is the beginning of the deception) will not be deceived. When you keep God's Word, and keep your heart, you will not be deceived. That means you are on guard.

With the Word of God inside of you, you will be on guard, and will be able to evaluate every church, every speaker, every pastor, every thing that you do inside the church if it is Bible-based. Please understand this. You cannot do whatever you like inside God's church because it is God's church. If you do something and a member asks you, "Why are you doing this?" I cannot reply to him, "Show me a Bible verse that I cannot do this". It is my responsibility and duty to say to him, "Let me show you a verse to explain to you why I can do this." I cannot shut his mouth up and say "Show me a Bible verse (why) I cannot". There are many things that

you cannot do that the Bible does not cover and so you do what is right in your own eyes? It is your responsibility as a leader to make sure that everything inside the church is based upon Bible teaching. The only protection for you is God's Word. Keep God's Word with all your heart. Listen and obey God's Word always, and then guard your heart and protect it. Don't let your heart be easily moved. Guard your heart well.

**God's Word inside of us  
will guard us against false  
worship.**

Guard your heart, but do so with a mind that is filled with the Word of God. Only then you will not turn aside to serve other gods and worship them. Because if you do, *"the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you"* -- that means exile. Because if you bow down to idols, and you still bear the name of Israel (people of God), you think God is not angry when you misrepresent Him that way, bowing down to idols, the golden calf and all those Baal gods? You think God does not care? If you don't carry God's Name rightly, don't call yourself Israel. Call yourself "Philistines", "Moabites", "Edomites", so when you bow down to all these gods, you at least do not tarnish the Name of Christ. But when you call yourself Christian, and when you say that this is a church that promotes Christ, but it is *not* Christ of the Bible, do not think that God is deaf and blind and that He does not know. Each and everyone will be severely judged by God. And this time, it is not just exile from the good land, it will be in hell, it will be in the Lake of Fire. Do you think God will deal with these people who are deceiving the thousands lightly? Of course, each and every one, every member, is responsible for his own destiny. They cannot blame their pastor for teaching them falsehood. It is their responsibility to make sure they know the truth. But God has also warned the teachers, "be ye not many teachers for greater will be your condemnation." (cf. James 3:1)

Why do you think in the last days, the Anti-Christ and the false prophet — when they, being energized by Satan, deceive the whole world — are the only two human beings that the Bible says God will send to the Lake of Fire in this mortal flesh (Revelation 19)? Everybody else will die and be sent to hell and then they will be resurrected before they are sent to the Lake of Fire. What kind of resurrected body are they going to receive before they are sent to the Lake of Fire, we do not know. But the Anti-Christ and the false prophet will be the only two human beings

God will send into the Lake of Fire in their mortal flesh where they will burn and burn for eternity because they deceive the whole world in the last days. Perhaps the excruciating pain will be far more intense when they are being punished in this mortal flesh, in the Lake of Fire. Don't play the fool with the souls of men, women and children. We are talking about worship. We are made in God's image. Worshipping someone is the greatest honour you can bestow to someone and if that someone is not God alone, do not worship him. Do not worship falsely. Know the truth and the truth will truly set you free. Guard your mind and guard your heart so that you will not be deceived, especially in these last days. Amen.

**“Do not worship falsely.  
Know the truth and the truth  
will truly set you free.”**

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*The above sermon was preached by the Rev (Dr) Quek Suan Yew at the Calvary Pandan's Sunset Gospel Hour (SGH) on 14 February 2016 under the series "The Christian and Worship"; transcribed by Haw Hui Jen, and edited for publication by Karen Lee. Full sermon is available at <http://calvarypandan.sg/sermons/sgh>.*

“The Lord is not going to use a testimony until it is raised up. God is not going to give victories until men are engaged in battles. Satan will not leave unless men resist. Light is more powerful than darkness, and truth is more powerful than error, and the Word of God is the  
**Sword of the Spirit.”**

- Carl McIntire (1906 - 2002)

**TESTIMONY:**

## **“WORSHIPPING GOD IN AN IDOLATROUS WORLD”** BY PR CHAN SOPHEAK

Cambodia has an estimated population of 16.25 million, and over 95% of them practices Theravada Buddhism, which is the official religion. There are approximately 300,000 Muslims in Cambodia, and Christianity is considered the minority, comprising of only about 1% of the population.

There are about 4,400 monastery temples in Cambodia, and it is common to see idols everywhere when one travels in Cambodia. Nevertheless, we would like to praise and thank God for the freedom to worship Him. Even though we can worship Him freely in Cambodia, there are also many struggles and temptations.

### **Worshipping the Living and True God**

These are some of the ways we help our congregation at True Gospel BPC (Kampot, Cambodia) to worship God rightly according to God's command:

#### **(I) Helping Believers to Look to God**

As a preacher, I am helping my congregation to look to the Lord Jesus Christ who is their good Shepherd. Jesus said in John 10:11, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." My duty is to lead them to Christ and teach them to follow the way that He wants us to walk in. I must be willing to help them spiritually in their walk with the Lord, since church members always look to the preachers as their spiritual fathers. It is important that I also help them to make sure about their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to ensure that they are truly born-again in the first place. Therefore, I include the Gospel message in my sermons all the time. They need to know that only Jesus Christ can save them from their sins.

#### **(II) Helping Believers Not to Commit the Sin of Idolatry**

I am also helping my congregation not to worship idols, ancestors, and burn joss sticks. We are living in a country with different religions. Besides the native Khmer people, there are also the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Malays living in Cambodia. Each of them have their own

religion taught to them (passed down from their forefathers), and there is a tendency to mix.

I am helping God's people to understand that, as Christians, we are supposed to worship the only living and true God. The prophet Isaiah declared in Isaiah 2:8 that idols are only *"the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made."* God also warned His people against idolatry, *"There shall no strange god be in [them]; neither shalt [they] worship any strange god."* (Psalm 81:9)

Burning of joss sticks is very common in Cambodia. I am helping them not to do that anymore after they have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. I always point them back to the Scriptures, which is the infallible Word of God. As Christians, we cannot worship idols, ancestors, or burn joss sticks to them because these are practices of the unbelievers.

### (III) Helping Believers to Know God and His Word Better

I am encouraging God's people to read God's Word daily so that they may have a clearer understanding about Christianity. Only God's Word can help them to know God better. Christians are the only ones who can know God correctly. I am helping them to know that there is only one living and true God. And Jesus Christ is the only Saviour who has come to save us from hell fire. (John 4:42, *"And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."*) Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. He is our Saviour and He can save us from our sins. Knowing Christ and Christianity well is very important.

### (IV) Helping Believers to Worship God in Spirit and in Truth

The Bible tells us that we must worship God in spirit and in truth. John 4:24 states, *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* It is very important to help our members understand that our God is a Spirit. This is because in the past, before they became Christians, they are used to worshipping things that they can see with their eyes. However, as Christians, they now worship a God that is invisible, and they must, therefore, do so in spirit and in truth. It is important to remind them of this truth repeatedly.

It is important that God's people worship Him in spirit and in truth in a world that does not worship the one living and true God, even in

Cambodia. This can only be possible if they look to God, and not worship false gods, and know God's Word well.

### **Freedom to Worship**

Thank God for the freedom of worshipping God, and for the law of the land that protects us in worshipping Him in Cambodia. Without the law of the country protecting us, we cannot worship God freely. We continue to pray that the Lord will open the hearts of the leaders to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour.

### **Struggles and Temptations**

It is not easy to worship God in Cambodia. Some of our youths face opposition from their unbelieving parents who do not want them to come to church to worship God. Others are struggling because their friends have stopped coming to church and there is no one to accompany them anymore. Because of these, we have lost some of them to the world. Moreover, the rest are concerned with looking for jobs, or are struggling with their old habits from their old lives.

The temptation to be like the world is very real in this present day. There is the temptation to be rich and to have power, even among Christians. There is also the temptation to spend too much time on the smartphone and on playing games, especially among the youths. There are even some who want to imitate movie stars.

### **Conclusion**

To be able to worship God in Cambodia is a blessing from God. With help from God and His Word, we, as a church, can worship Him in spirit and in truth. To do so, we must keep ourselves away from any form of idolatrous practices because these are practices of unbelievers. We must know our Saviour and His Word well, and worship God rightly according to His Word.

We thank God for the freedom of worship, and for the law of the land which protects us as we worship Him in Cambodia. May the Lord continue to help us worship Him in spirit and in truth!

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**TESTIMONY:**

## **“WORSHIPPING GOD IN AN IDOLATROUS WORLD”** *BY PR LIV ROTH*

I praise and thank the Lord for raising up True Faith BPC (Kampot, Cambodia) to be His witness in these last days. We live in a country that has Buddhism as her national religion. This was also the religion of many in True Faith BPC before they came to know the one living and true God. When they were still followers of Buddhism, they practised a form of worship that was totally different from our worship of God. It is not easy to lead them to worship the one living and true God, and to do so rightly, because they were very strong in their former beliefs. However, with God's help, we can still guide them step-by-step to worship Him in the right way.

Firstly, we help them to know the one living and true God personally and deeply. Once they have a deeper knowledge of God, it would help them to have a right understanding of worship, which is to be done according to His Word and His nature. For instance, the Bible tells us in John 4:24 that *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”* It is important for them to understand this fact. When they first came to church, they would look for something for them to worship because their mindset is that whenever they come to worship, there must be something in front of them for them to do so. This had been deeply rooted in them since young as they grew up worshipping idols. Therefore, for them to worship the one living and true God in the right manner, they need time to grasp the truth that He is a Spirit, and has no corporeal body. As we help and guide them in the way of Biblical worship, we ourselves also have to be patient with them. We must do so slowly and gently, like a parent guiding a young child; we cannot rush, and cannot be harsh in leading them to the Lord in worship.

Secondly, we help them to be firm and sure in their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This work is not easy at all. In fact, without the help of God, it is impossible. This is because their forefathers worshipped other “gods”, but not the living and true God. We have to let them know that all these so-called “gods” cannot save them from their sins; it is only when they put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ alone that they can be saved.

Thirdly, we lead them to worship our living and true God, who is also a triune God. We teach them to sing hymns of praise, and we also explain to them why we sing. We let them know that when we sing, the God whom we worship can hear our praises. We also guide them in the reading of God's Word. We remind them that when we read the Bible, we are reading the pure words of God. We must read God's Word carefully, and with an obedient heart. Furthermore, we teach them about giving tithes and offerings. Giving tithes and offerings is also another aspect of worship. Through this, they can learn to thank the Lord for His goodness and blessings in everything that they have.

There are some who really need help in worshipping the Almighty God. We have to guide them slowly by teaching them bit by bit, step by step, and be patient with them because some of them cannot even read. Thus, their understanding is also limited. They can only learn of the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the things God wants to tell them in His Word by hearing.

"Worship is the mother of all virtues" (Augustine). I pray that, through True Faith BPC, the Word of God will be taught and learned continually, and our worship service will be acceptable in the sight of God. All glory be to God and to Him alone.

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**TESTIMONY:**

## **“WORSHIPPING GOD IN AN IDOLATROUS WORLD”** BY PR JOHN SARAY

The twenty-eighth verse of Colossians chapter 1 is the verse that has been constantly on my mind since the Lord called me into His vineyard. This verse from the Apostle Paul which says, “...whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom: **that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus**” (emphasis in bold added) is the motivation for our preaching and teaching at Lively Hope BPC (Sihanoukville, Cambodia). It is my desire to present every believer perfect in Christ Jesus. To fulfill that heart's desire is not easy since many come from idol-worshipping family. There are, however, a few things that I have been doing, by God's grace, since the genesis of our church, which I would like to share with the readers of this testimony:

### (I) Emphasis on the Creator-God

There is a strong tendency for people who live in a Buddhist country to embrace Jesus into their life as an “extra” deity for the sake of protection and prosperity. One of the van drivers whom we used to hire whenever our Truth BPC missions teams visit us had, for example, many objects representing various “gods” or religious beliefs on the panel in front of his steering wheel. Among these objects was also the cross (representing the Christian faith). It could be because he was trying to please his customers who have different beliefs, or that he has added another deity into his belief. It is important, therefore, to always emphasize in our teaching and preaching that the Lord Jesus Christ alone is our Creator-God (John 1:3, Colossians 1:16-18), and not these idols. When Christ is hailed to be the God of Creation, the worship of the creation will become void and nonsensical. The teaching and preaching about creation and the origin of man is essential to help every believer grasp the supremacy and imminence of the Lord Jesus in their life of worship. Genesis is, therefore, the book we will begin with when we teach the new babes in Christ. Lively Hope BPC upholds Christ to be the Lord of creation, “**For by him were all things created ...**” (Colossians 1:16, emphasis added).

### (II) Emphasis on Worshipping God “in Spirit and in Truth”

The churches in Cambodia are not spared from the influence of contemporary Christian music, which is sensual and carnal. This is seen in the worship service of almost every evangelical church here today. The essence of worship which is to be "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) is gradually being neglected, and replaced by worldly entertainment, for the purpose of "marketing" Jesus. Unlike these churches, Lively Hope BPC has, by God's grace, been leading believers to Christ-centered worship. We want to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word, and let them take centrality in our worship. The good old hymns are still being sung in our worship services today even though many churches have regarded them as obsolete. We do praise the Lord for sustaining us, thus far, in our heart's desire to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

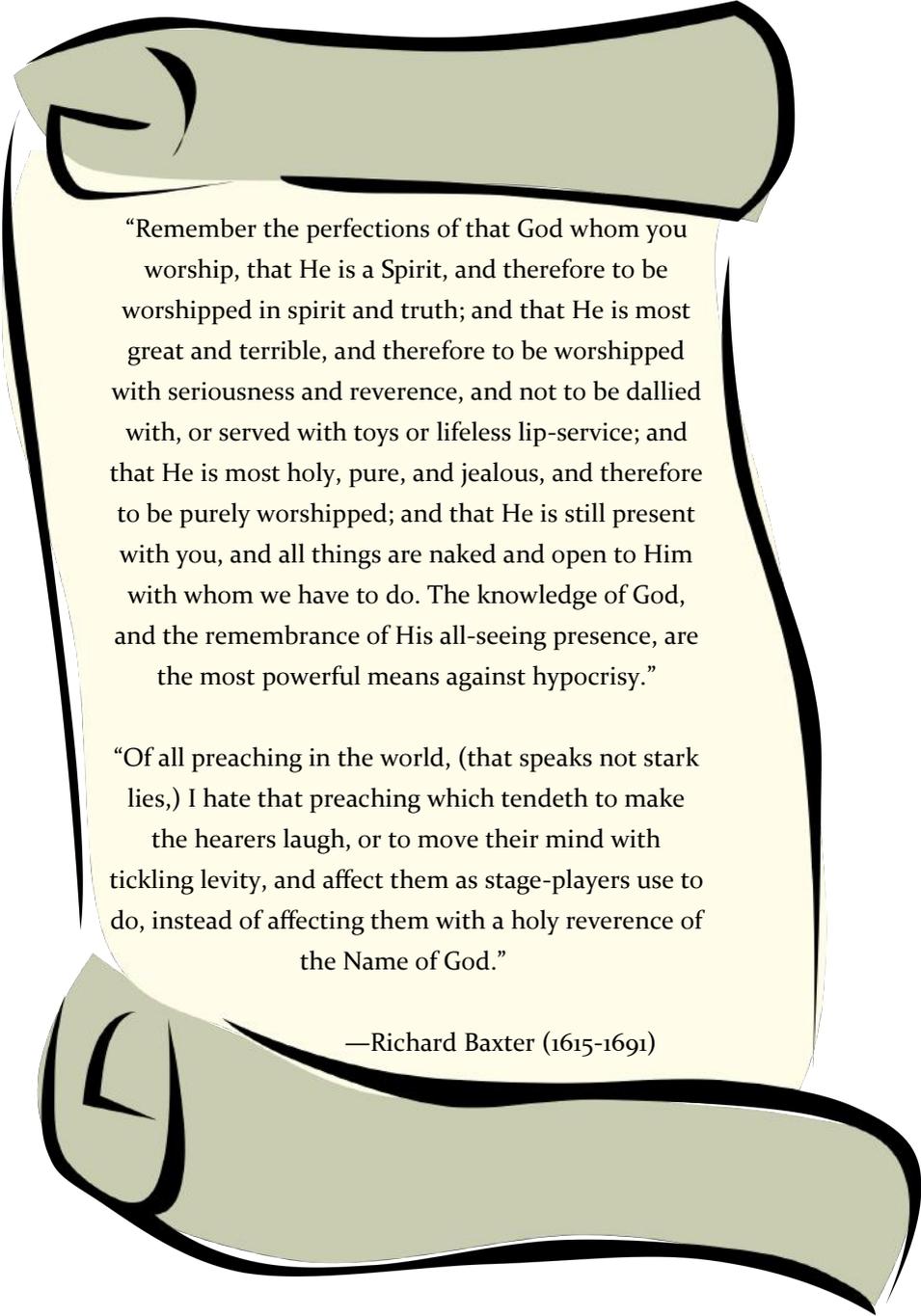
### (III) Emphasis on Biblical Separation

Separation is needed for the believer's spiritual purity. Separation is not isolation, but is practiced in order to preserve the purity of church. Hence, we exhort every worshipper to keep away from every form of idolatry and superstition that they used to practice before they became Christians. It is a challenging work, but it is important to make sure that they have truly "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thessalonians 1:9). I also have to warn them of the danger of spiritual compromises during festivals such as the Khmer or Chinese New Year. It is easy for new believers to commit sinful activities against the true and living God. This separation for consecration is really needed among the Khmer Christians, just like it is also needed for believers in other countries.

### Not Without Challenges

One might ask about the challenges Lively Hope BPC faces. Indeed, the Devil will not spare us who want to have the kind of worship that God desires of us as revealed in His pure Word. Our church has been marked as a traditional church due to our emphasis on the centrality of the Bible, and the conservative hymns that we sing in our worship service. Our way of worship does not attract the young people for we do not have music that will appeal to their flesh. However, that will not discourage us from what we believe in and stand for. The church in an idolatrous country needs to stay different or else there will be religious syncretism. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." (1 John 5:21). May the Lord keep us and our worship here on earth pure and true.

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“Remember the perfections of that God whom you worship, that He is a Spirit, and therefore to be worshipped in spirit and truth; and that He is most great and terrible, and therefore to be worshipped with seriousness and reverence, and not to be dallied with, or served with toys or lifeless lip-service; and that He is most holy, pure, and jealous, and therefore to be purely worshipped; and that He is still present with you, and all things are naked and open to Him with whom we have to do. The knowledge of God, and the remembrance of His all-seeing presence, are the most powerful means against hypocrisy.”

“Of all preaching in the world, (that speaks not stark lies,) I hate that preaching which tendeth to make the hearers laugh, or to move their mind with tickling levity, and affect them as stage-players use to do, instead of affecting them with a holy reverence of the Name of God.”

—Richard Baxter (1615-1691)

**MISSIONS TRIP REPORT:**

**“KENYA, 14 NOVEMBER TO 5 DECEMBER  
2017” BY CAROL LEE**

All praise and thanks be unto our all-sovereign God for this Kenya missions trip 2017. Truly, it was a vivid experience of how our LORD orders our steps as we delight in His way (Psalm 37:23).

This year's trip was planned with Pokot (Kenya) as an added destination so that I can visit the new missions station of the Africa Gospel Unity Church (AGUC). As a result, I bought my air ticket scheduling to arrive in Nairobi on Wednesday 15 Nov (earlier than my usual Friday arrival). However, bad weather (causing roads to be slippery, rivers to overflow, bridges being swept away, etc.) led us to cancel the trip to Pokot. Unable to amend my flight departure date, I went ahead and arrived in Nairobi on Wednesday 15 Nov, and travelled to Bomet. All this happened under the watchful eye of our heavenly Father and His controlling hand. As it turned out, on Friday, the Kenyan opposition presidential candidate arrived in Nairobi Airport from the US. There were riots, looting, clashes with the police, etc., with differing reports on the number of deaths. Roads leading to the Nairobi Airport were also closed. By then, I was already in Bomet! Praise the Lord!

This year, again through the kind invitation of, and arrangement by, Rev Michael Koech (Chairman of the East Africa Christian Association, Vice-Bishop of the Africa Gospel Unity Church, Principal of Bomet Bible Institute and Pastor of Kapkwan AGUC), I taught two 20-hour Vacation Bible Courses in the Bomet Bible Institute (BBI):

- (a) "Biblical Missions" from 20 to 23 Nov (Mon to Thur), and
- (b) "Sunday School Curriculum Development" from 27 to 30 Nov (Mon to Thur).



Students of "Biblical Missions"

These courses were attended by 22 and 21 students respectively. One of them was 17-year-old Elijah who travelled 16 hours by public transport from his home in Pokot to Bomet to attend the two courses. He desires to study in BBI when he finishes with his secondary school education in a



year's time. The students sat for their examinations on the Fridays after the courses ended. On 1 Dec (Fri), after the examination, we held a simple ceremony where the students were presented with their certificates. This year, both courses were held in BBI. The course at the Kisumu Bible School had to be cancelled as it was wisely deemed unsafe for me to be in Kisumu due to the Kenyan presidential election.



Small-Group Discussion



"Sunday School Curriculum Development" Class

I had the privilege of being invited to give two messages on 2 Dec (Sat) to the Children's Fellowship of Longisa AGUC (a newly planted church). The children's ministry started only in July this year, while Worship Service started two months later in September. This infant church will be inaugurated on 17 Dec. They meet under a zinc-roofed shelter, on a plot of land that has been donated by an AGUC leader.



Longisa AGUC (5-month-old church)

As our AGUC brethren forge on with their church-planting efforts, bringing many villagers, young and old, under the convicting sound of the Gospel message, there is the accompanied problem of labour shortage: who will pastor these newly planted churches? *"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few"* (Matthew 9:37). The AGUC continues with their efforts to train labourers for the field through the

BBI, trusting that the Lord of the harvest will send forth labourers into His harvest. What about us? How are we obeying the Great Commission? Are we accelerating or decelerating our missions efforts? Let us accelerate our praying, our giving, our going. Will you?



Green Woods AGUC (1-year-old church)



Kesabita AGUC

In ministering to the needs of the flock, and for its protection, the AGUC leaders have planned the theme "Bible Versions and Perversions" for their Youth Conference (Dec 2017), Pastors' Conference (April 2018) and Ladies' Conference (August 2018).

Planning ahead, Rev Michael has invited me to return in 2018 to co-labour with them again, the Lord willing. God has blessed me much through our Kenyan brethren: their warm welcome, sweet fellowship, kind hospitality, and most of all to see our Lord blessing them with many saved souls as they labour to reach the lost!

May all glory be unto our God!

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**MISSIONS TRIP REPORT:**

**“CAMBODIA, 15 TO 19 DECEMBER 2017”**

**BY TIMOTHEUS CHUA & ERNEST KWOK**

Team Members: Rev Dennis Kwok (Leader), Chua Beng Choon, Mrs Kwok Yee Min, Mrs Carine Chua, Thaddeus Chua, Timotheus Chua, Titus Chua, Ernest Kwok, Caius Kwok, Charissa Kwok

Friends: Yee Boon Cheow, Mrs Yee Yoke Fun, Tiffany Yee and Yee Jia Rui



Objectives of the trip:

1. To encourage our Cambodian brethren.
2. To rejoice with True Gospel BPC on their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
3. To visit church members at their homes.

The team gathered at Changi Airport on Fri (15 Dec) for our flight to Cambodia. Our luggage was overweight by 19kg. The excess weight would cost us nearly S\$300. However, the luggage check-in staff was very kind to allow us to check in the extra baggage without additional cost when she heard that our luggage was filled with books and clothes to be given to the needy Cambodians. Praise the Lord!

Thank God we arrived safely in Phnom Penh. After lunch, Uncle Sothy drove us to Kampot. By the time we reached True Gospel BPC, it was about 8pm. Uncle Beng Choon led us in the outlining of the picture of Noah's Ark on the church wall to prepare for the painting the next day.

We had morning and evening devotions daily on Psalm 130 led by Pstr Dennis. This psalm helped us to prepare our hearts to seek God and to commit ourselves to Him, so that God may be pleased to use us to be a blessing to our Cambodian brethren. We learnt that we must not allow sin to hinder God's work. We must always be against sin, and help others to turn to God.



**Pstr Dennis leading in daily devotions**

After breakfast on Sat (16 Dec), we headed to two homes for visitation. The first belongs to an alcoholic man (Uncle Rinah) who had been drinking for more than 10 years. Thank God he came to believe in Jesus recently. Through God's Word, he came to know the evil of drinking and stopped immediately. However, he experienced serious withdrawal symptoms. He became very ill. He was then advised by the doctor to slowly wean off his drinking habit and not immediately. Pr Sopheak has Bible study with him every Friday. Together with his wife and two children, they attend worship service regularly. During our visitation, Pstr Dennis shared from Psalm 27:1 to encourage him to look to God for strength, not only to overcome his alcohol addiction but also to walk faithfully before God. We were warmly treated to refreshment (a cool coconut drink) by the host. Thank God for their hospitality.



Visiting an alcoholic who came to know Christ recently



Ministering to those still outside God's Kingdom

Next, we visited an elderly couple who have been attending church but have not believed in Christ. The wife will be going for an operation to remove a lump on her neck in January 2018. She was worried about it. Pstr Dennis prayed for her and also for their salvation.

After lunch, we went to True Gospel BPC where Uncle Beng Choon and team painted the picture of Noah's Ark on the wall. It was tedious but, thank God, we managed to complete the painting before dark. At the same time, Pstr Dennis conducted a 3-hour youth seminar on "Boy-Girl Relationships" which was attended by seven youths, two children and six adults. The seminar focused on godly relationships that will eventually result in Christian marriage. Today's youths are greatly influenced by the world and



The completed Noah's Ark Mural

had taken marriage lightly. Sexual immorality is also common among the youths today. It is important that Christian youths are aware of the spiritual dangers and keep themselves away from any sexual sins. We pray that the youths will share with other youths what they have learnt through the seminar. This was followed by dinner in church with Pr Sopheak and some church members. After dinner, we visited True Faith BPC and had good fellowship with Pr Rotha and his family.

On the Lord's Day (17 Dec), we celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of True Gospel BPC. The service was attended by 17 adults and 11 children (excluding the Singapore team). Pstr Dennis preached from Psalm 146, exhorting us to keep praising God in our lives. The Singapore team presented a song item of praise, "Amazing Grace," in both the English and Khmer languages, while our brethren from True Gospel presented "Silent Night, Holy Night" in Khmer. We were invited by Pr Sopheak's friend to her place for lunch. We were served with delicious chicken and beef curry with bread. At 5pm, we went back to True Gospel BPC for the Christmas Praise cum Gospel Service. After the service, the children had a gift-exchange activity.



by Pr Sopheak's friend to her place for lunch. We were served with delicious chicken and beef curry with bread. At 5pm, we went back to True Gospel BPC for the Christmas Praise cum Gospel Service. After the service, the children had a gift-exchange activity.



We thank God for this opportunity to serve God in the missions field. We are also thankful that God has kept all of us safe and in good health throughout the entire trip. This trip helps us to know more about the Cambodia missions stations and their preachers. We learn to appreciate and to be thankful for what God has blessed us with in Singapore.

On Monday (18 Dec), we set off for a 2-hour journey to Sihanoukville to visit Lively Hope BPC. Met by Pr John Saray at the church, he brought us to a restaurant for lunch before we checked into the guesthouse. After a short rest, we visited Auntie Lydia's mother (an unbeliever) at her rice stall in the wet market. She was happy to see us and communicated with us in Mandarin. Auntie Lydia is still trying to share the Gospel with her. May God be merciful to save.



Visiting Auntie Lydia's mum

We then visited Uncle Matthew whose house is beside a primary school near the seaport. On our way there, we had an accident with a motorbike. Thank God that no one was seriously injured. The motorist was a young boy about 15 years old. He suffered some abrasions on his right leg. The small light on his motorbike was damaged, but overall the motorbike was functional. We were told to move off quickly. We awoke to the thought that we are not to take anything for granted. Our life is in God's good hand. We met Uncle Matthew and his daughter at their home.



Visiting Uncle Matthew at his home

Pstr Dennis shared from John 14 in Mandarin to encourage them to keep believing in Jesus and find peace in Him. Thank God for the opportunity to fellowship with them before we left with Pr Saray and family for dinner at the beach restaurant belonging to Pr Sopheak's parents.



Blessed fellowship with Uncle Matthew & his daughter

We were surprised to see Pr Sopheak, his mother, Pr Thaven and Auntie Sok Mey there. We did not expect them to be in Sihanoukville as we have already met them in Kampot. We thank God for every opportunity

that we can have to fellowship with our Cambodian brethren. Thank God for a fruitful missions trip. May God continue to bless the ministry in Cambodia. Amen.

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**MISSIONS TRIP REPORT:**

**“CAMBODIA, 26 TO 30 JANUARY 2018”**

**BY REV DENNIS KWOK**

On 28 January 2018, Lively Hope BPC celebrated her 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. I am glad that Bro Anthony Cheng was able to join me this time (as Truth BPC's representative) to rejoice with Pr John Saray, his family and church in this memorable event. The Thanksgiving Service was well attended by more than 50 worshippers including children. Among them were Pr John's friends from Canada, United States and Australia. We thank God for blessing and sustaining Pr John's ministry in Sihanoukville for the past seven years. God has been using us to fully support and co-labour with Pr John since



**At the Anniversary Service**



**Children's Song Presentation**

2011. Lively Hope has moved only once since the church started. However, the owner of this current premises (which is a 4-storey building) has decided not to renew the lease which will expire in April 2018. Pr John and his family would, therefore, have to vacate this place by then. We are still praying for the Lord's leading in this matter. Surely God will provide for both the church and Pr John's family.



**Lively Hope BPC 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Sihanoukville Province (also known as “Kampong Som”) has a population of about 100,000 people. This is a coastal city, and her seaport serves as the gate to global connection for business and trading. However, Sihanoukville has changed much in the past year in terms of its economic development. About a year ago, there was a sudden influx of Chinese businessmen who began to take over almost every business in every sector ranging from hotels to restaurants, including casinos. Many of them, having taken up Cambodian citizenship, are allowed to purchase land and properties. Crime rates have also increased as there are now higher unemployment among the native Cambodians. Those who are unable to cope with this would have to resettle themselves in provinces that are smaller and less developed than bigger cities like Sihanoukville. Pr John’s ministry is also affected since the landowner is attracted by the potential of higher rental rates he could get by leasing the place to the Chinese rather than to the locals. It is our prayer that God’s work in Cambodia will not be hindered but will continue in greater speed to spread the Gospel to the lost there. In terms of spirituality, Cambodia has become worse than ever before. May God be merciful to help our Cambodian brethren stand firm in the faith, and use them to faithfully teach and preach the true Gospel to the lost.



In this missions trip, we joined Pr John in his regular home visitations. We visited two homes and invited the families to attend the Anniversary. We also visited Leak (Pr Thaven’s brother) who was



Home Visitations

hospitalized due to stomach pain. Thank God he was much better when we visited him after the service. He was discharged the next day. As Pr John had to teach in True Gospel Bible School on Monday, we travelled together to Kampot on Monday morning. Upon arrival, we alighted at the Sonya Kill Memorial Hospital, near the famous Bokor Mountain. We had arranged to meet Pr Sopheak there in order to accompany Bro Rinah to see the doctor about his drinking problem. The doctor advised him to stop drinking completely as his liver is swollen. Thank God it was discovered early, otherwise his life would be in danger. As a result of his abstinence, Rinah developed epilepsy which caused him to go into fits whenever he stopped drinking. The doctor informed him that his epilepsy can be cured once he overcomes the drinking habit completely. He is now under observation for two weeks. The following is an update from Pr Sopheak: "In the beginning, there were frequent fits, however as the days go by, the frequency dropped. And now after more than a week, Rinah has no more fits." We thank God for answering our prayers. God is merciful. Do continue to pray for Rinah as he prepares for water baptism by attending weekly catechism classes under Pr Sopheak.

We thank God for this short missions trip, and for the kind hospitality of our Cambodian brethren. May God be pleased to continue to bless the ministry here. All glory be to God.

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**MISSIONS TRIP REPORT:**

**“CAMBODIA, 23 TO 27 MARCH 2018”**

**BY REV DENNIS KWOK**

Pr Rotha and his mother received me at the Phnom Penh International Airport on Friday (23 Mar) morning. They were there also to apply for their passports. We then proceeded to meet with a French lawyer who was based in Cambodia. The appointment was arranged earlier so that we could find out more about the legal procedures for land purchases in Cambodia. Thank God for a fruitful meeting. Do pray for the Truth Missions Society (TMS) as we, together with Pr John Saray, seek God's will concerning the purchase of a piece of land to build a church for Lively Hope BPC in Sihanoukville. This would be the long-term plan for the church; we must be prayerful and not rush into the purchase. The more urgent need at the moment for Lively Hope BPC is to find a suitable place to rent as the deadline for the church to move out of her present premises is the end of April. May God grant Pr Saray wisdom to find a suitable place on time.

I conducted a church seminar on Saturday (24 Mar) morning on "The Beatitudes." About ten adults attended the seminar.



**Church Seminar on "The Beatitudes"**

There were two services on Sunday (25 Mar). The morning service was a regular worship service. There were three adult

baptisms and one transfer of membership. The Lord's Supper was also administered. I spoke on "True Faith Works" based on James 2:17-26.



**Morning Baptismal cum Lord's Supper Service**

The evening service was the Anniversary cum Gospel Service. We thank God for sustaining True Faith BPC for the past six years. Many came for the Gospel meeting. I spoke on "Praising God" based on Psalm 115:1-8, 18. May the Gospel seed yield increase in due time upon all who have heard the Gospel that evening.



Evening Anniversary cum Gospel Service



Praising the Lord on this Joyous Occasion



True Faith BPC 6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

I thank God for the opportunity to gather the four preachers together to pray that same evening. It was a wonderful time that we were able to encourage one another to press on in the work of the ministry. May God continue to use Truth BPC to support the Cambodian missions churches and the Bible school effectively. They not only need our support in terms of finance, but also in prayer, fellowship and encouragement. All glory be to God. Amen.

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# **MISSIONS NEWS**

## **Overseas Missions**

### Cambodia

Thank God for the Lord's protection and safe-keeping. On 2 October 2017, a mini truck rammed into a food stall by the roadside where Pr Sopheak and Pr John were having their lunch. This was the same stall that the September Missions Team had visited during their time in Kampot recently. The driver had just learnt how to drive, and the accident caused many (including the driver) to be admitted to the hospital. Thank God for leading Pr Sopheak and Pr John to sit at a place where they could run out for their lives, and not at the back of the stone table, where they might be killed by the crash. Pr Sopheak and Pr John thanked Truth BPC for praying for them as they travel about for the work of the ministry, and for the Lord's daily care and protection.



Damage caused by the crash

Pr Thaven also thanked the Lord for safety and protection as he travels on the road. On 8 October, he saw two motorbikes collide, and also another accident that caused a car to overturn, while he was on his way to preach at the youth meeting in Phnom Penh. Let us continue to pray for the **safety of our preachers** in Cambodia as they travel on the road.

**Uncle Korn (of True Gospel BPC) was admitted to the hospital on 22 October for breathing difficulties.** Thank God for His mercies upon Uncle Korn, and that he is much better now. Continue to pray for his health.



Thank God for His mercies upon Uncle Korn

**We rejoiced with True Gospel BPC on the occasion of her 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 17 December 2017.** A team of 10 (with four accompanying friends) went to rejoice with our brethren with a love-gift of S\$200 from the church to encourage them in the work of the ministry. May the Lord multiply this gift for the furtherance of His Kingdom.

**Pr Sopheak continues to preach and teach at the Saturday youth meetings and prayer meetings, and at the Lord's Day service and Adult Sunday School.** He also conducts small-group Bible studies and home visitations during the weekdays. His wife (Thavy) assists him in the Sunday School ministry, both in the church and in their new outreach at Andong Khmer. There are currently about 23 adults attending the Lord's Day service, and 21 children attending the Junior Sunday School.



**Pr Sopheak thanked the Lord for the opportunity to conduct Bible studies with Ranny's father** at their home on Friday afternoons. Ranny's family has been coming to church with her to worship the Lord together. Pray for her father (Rinah) to give up his drinking habit. He had become addicted to the Cambodian wine many years ago before he came to know Christ. Although he was able to overcome his alcoholism, as testified by Pr Sopheak earlier in the January missions trip report, he returned to drinking again because of his friends' influence. Pray for Pr Sopheak as he counsels Rinah, and as he checks on his salvation.

Thank God for bringing another family to join the Bible studies on Friday. It is Pr Sopheak's prayer that he can reach out to more people near Ranny's house. Pray for the Lord to open the way for him to do so. Pray also for Pr Sopheak and Sis Thavy as they reach out to the parents of the youths at True Gospel.

**At present, there are about seven to eight youths** attending the Youth Fellowship and the church prayer meetings every Saturday evening. They are studying the topic on preaching Christ and sharing the Gospel of Christ this quarter. Continue to pray for Pr Sopheak as he ministers to the youths.

**Pr Sopheak and Sis Thavy continue to share God's Word** with the English class students with every opportunity they have. Thank God for some who have come to a saving knowledge of Christ. Pray for more to believe.

**Continue to pray for Uncle Korn** as he has become very weak these days, and was, sometimes, not able to go to church for worship. Thank God that when he could not do so, Pr Sopheak and some of the church members went to his home in the evening to worship the Lord with him.

**True Gospel Bible School began her new semester on 22 January 2018 with a total of six returning students:** Peit Sok & Yuth Linah (both in their 7<sup>th</sup> semester), Yem Vanna, Phu Kok Orng & Kol Rith (in their 2<sup>nd</sup> semester), as well as Hen Sokmey (Pr Thaven's wife, 1<sup>st</sup> semester again), Except for Sis Sokmey, the rest worship in a Presbyterian church in Kampot and do not require financial assistance for their studies. God-willing, Yuth Linah and Peit Sok will be graduating this December.



**The courses offered this semester are Old Testament History II, Bible Geography II, Homiletics, and English Part of Speech** by Pr Chan Sopheak; **Systematic Theology IV, and The Ten Commandments** by Pr Liv Rotha; **The Doctrine of Prayer, and New Testament Survey II** by Pr John Saray; **The Book of Daniel, Youth Education, and Preparing Bible Memory Verses** by Pr Kiet Thaven. There will be a final examination and a Bible verse memorization quiz at the end of the semester (21 to 25 May). Apart from their classroom learning, the Bible School students also go out for evangelism every Monday afternoon.

**Thank God for Lively Hope BPC's 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 28 January 2018.** A love-gift of S\$200 has been given to them from the church to encourage them in the work of the ministry. May the Lord continue to use Lively Hope BPC to shine forth His Gospel light in Sihanoukville.

**Pr John Saray continues to preach and teach** at worship services and prayer meetings, while his wife (Lydia) teaches at the children Sunday School with the assistance of Sis Yi Leang, and Mey Hiek. The number of

adults attending the Lord's Day service, and children at the Junior Sunday School remains the same at about 20 and 50 respectively.



**Lively Hope Worship Service**

**Praise God for the successful renewal of church permit that has been granted to Lively Hope BPC in**

Feb 2018 to continue with the work of the ministry. This permit is valid for two years before the need to renew again. May the Lord use Lively Hope BPC to accomplish much for Him in these two years.

English classes (for youths and children) are held every weekday evenings. Pray for Pr John, Sis Lydia, and Sis Yi Leang as they reach out to them with the Gospel. May God be merciful to save.

**Continue to pray** for the work in Sihanoukville as evangelism becomes increasingly difficult. With more and more casinos being set up at a rapid rate in Sihanoukville, pray that the Lord will protect His people from temptation and sin, and that His Word may have free course.

**We rejoiced with True Faith BPC on the occasion of her 6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 25 March 2018.** A love-gift of S\$200 has been given to them on behalf of the church to encourage them as they do God's work. May the Lord use True Faith BPC mightily in these last days. Pray for them as they await the approval of their **church permit**.

**We continue to pray for Pr Rotha** as he takes turns with Pr Thaven to preach and teach at the Lord's Day services, and as he leads in Bible studies and prayer meetings. Pr Rotha also teaches at the Adult Sunday School after the Lord's Day service, and takes turns to teach at the Junior Sunday School and at the two children's outreaches on



**True Faith Easter Sunrise Service**

Sunday (one in the afternoon and the other in the evening). On Saturday mornings, he will go for evangelism

and visitation before the church prayer meeting in the afternoon. In the evenings, he will have Bible studies with Bolen's family.

Thank God for Pr Rotha's wife (Saron) who is assisting him in the Junior Sunday School ministry and in the English class. There are currently about 15 adult worshippers in the church, and 25 children attending Sunday School. Thank God for Sis They Chann who helps to maintain discipline during Sunday School, and assists in logistics. Sis Sokmey (Pr Thaven's wife) also assists in the Sunday School ministry by leading in Singpiration and Bible verse memorization.

**Pray also for Pr Thaven** as he takes turns with Pr Rotha to preach and teach at the Lord's Day service, Junior Sunday School, and once a month at the children's outreach. He will also go to Phnom Penh three times a month to minister to the youths there.

Thank God that Pr Thaven was able to conduct Basic Bible Knowledge class with Uncle Kang and his wife at their home. Uncle Kang and his wife are Vietnamese, and Uncle Kang had come to know the Lord not too long ago when the September Missions Team visited him in hospital and Bro Van Hieu shared the Gospel with him in Vietnamese. Thank God that although Uncle Kang had been sick in bed, he is much better now. Pray that he can join them for their Lord's Day service, and that he will be able to sit through the service. Pray also for his wife who follows him to church, but has not forsaken the worship of idols and the offering of incense to them. May the Lord be merciful to save.



**Bible Study with Uncle Kang and his wife**

**Continue to pray for the outreach in Phnom Penh.** This outreach was started primarily to minister to the youths from True Faith who are currently studying in the universities. However, the attendance of the youths has not been regular. Sim Dara who had been joining the meetings will also be leaving Phnom Penh (at the end of April 2018) to work in another province at the border of Thailand. Pray for Pr Rotha and Pr Thaven to press on in this important work, and for their safety in travel as they take turns to go there after their worship service in True Faith. May the Lord be merciful to protect the youths from things that might draw them away from Him, and help them to live for their Saviour.

Thank God that we will be having Pr Rotha and family with us at our church camp in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 11 to 16 June this year. Let us prepare ourselves to fellowship with them and to encourage them in the work of the ministry.

Pr Sopheak, Pr Rotha, and Pr Thaven have signed up for the FEBC online courses for the January-May semester: Pr Sopheak & Pr Rotha (Eschatology), Pr Thaven (Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther). May the Lord bless their studies, and use it to help them in the work of the ministry.

### Missions Needs

#### ♦ True Gospel BPC (Kampot, Cambodia)

Since 2007, Truth BPC has been supporting True Gospel BPC fully in the rental of church premises, utilities (electricity, water and internet facilities) and other miscellaneous expenses related to the church ministry such as the tuk-tuk and other transport costs. We continue to pray for the Lord's provisions in these areas, especially for the **maintenance of the tuk-tuk**. In view of its high maintenance and repair cost, True Gospel BPC is also praying for the provision of a **second-hand church van** to replace the tuk-tuk.

#### ♦ True Gospel Bible School (Kampot, Cambodia)

A Student Welfare Fund has been set up in 2015 to support the students in their tuition fees and food. The students also receive a monthly allowance to cover some of their miscellaneous expenses. The TMS decided in 2016 to contribute to this Fund on a half-yearly basis. God's people are also welcome to give towards this Fund to help with the **student scholarship**.

Presently, there are three computers for the students to use to do their written assignments and research papers. There is also a resource library to provide the students with more reading materials to widen their knowledge. The Bible School welcomes Biblically sound Christian **books** in good condition (for children, adults and Bible School students), as well as **used laptops** (in good working condition) for the students' use.

#### ♦ True Faith BPC (Kampot, Cambodia)

Pr Rotha is also building up their church resource library to encourage church members to read Christian literature for their edification. Biblically sound **Christian books** in good condition (for children, youths, and adults) are welcome.

◆ **Lively Hope BPC (Sihanoukville, Cambodia)**

Like the two churches in Kampot, Truth BPC has also been supporting Lively Hope BPC fully in the rental of the church premises, utilities (electricity, water and internet facilities) and other miscellaneous expenses related to the church ministry. However, the current landlord has decided not to renew the rental contract (due April 2018) with Lively Hope BPC, and there is a need for Pr John to look for another place to stay, and to continue with the ministries of the church in Sihanoukville. Thank God that the landlord has given Pr John one month's extension (till end May) to vacate. Pray for the Lord to provide a new place.

Pray also for the provision of a **second-hand church van** for Lively Hope BPC to ferry the children from various locations. **Good Christian books** are also needed for the church resource library.

**Others**

**In commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation**, a conference was held for pastors during the month of October 2017 (9 to 13 October) at Faith College of the Bible in Eldoret to explain the purpose of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation, and to emphasize the need to carry on the aims of that historic event. The local Roman Catholic leadership had tried to play-down the importance of the separation, causing many ecumenical-minded Protestants to be deceived. **Pray for our brethren in Kenya** that they will always raise the banner of the Reformation.

The Bible Society of Kenya had recently published (in 2017) two editions of the Bible in the Kalenjin language, namely the Roman Catholic edition (which contains the Apocrypha), and the Protestant edition (comprising only the 66 books of the inspired Scripture, but with many discrepancies). This raises the need for a **new translation of the Bible in the Kalenjin language**. **Pray for Rev Jonathan Langat** who is working on a new translation based on the trusted texts, so that God's perfectly inspired and perfectly preserved Word can be made available to the Kalenjin people in their own language.

**The Africa Gospel Unity Church (AGUC) had also conducted camps to educate their youths**, and the theme of the youth camps that they had in the two weeks of December 2017 was on **Bible Versions**. The theme was chosen because of the pressing need to warn the young people about the Revised Standard Version that many schools in Kenya

recommend as their school text for Christian Religious Education. Not only were the youths encouraged during the camp to use the King James Version (KJV) as the trusted translation, they were also informed of the discrepancies of the new ecumenical Kalenjin translation published by the Bible Society of Kenya.

**Bomet Bible Institute (BBI) continues to have a low enrolment** despite the fact that there is always an increase in the need for pastors to fill the pulpit ministry, and to pastor the growing number of churches. **Pray that the Lord will call more to serve Him.**

**A new church was inaugurated on 17 December 2017 at Longisa.** This church was started by one of the students in BBI earlier in the year as a Sunday School, and it now has more than 10 adults. Sis Carol was able to visit this church (Longisa AGUC) on 2 December, and she taught two Bible lessons to the children. **There are also other potential places for church planting. Pray for the Lord's guidance and leading.**

The **Vacation Bible Training Centre (VBTC)** is an extension ministry of BBI, and it continues in many centres, with their pastors teaching there three times a year for a week. After three years, the students will graduate with a certificate. In November 2017, Sis Carol was able to offer two courses in two weeks on **Christian Education** and **Missions**. Most of the students who attended the course(s) are in need of the **KJV Bible** which is not always available.

**The AGUC continues to assist the Pokot's boys, Daniel and Moses, in their education. Pray that the Lord will continue to provide for their needs.** We continue to pray for **Mrs Evaline Tanui** as she tries to trace the whereabouts of the girls who had gone back to Pokot in 2016 and did not return.

Praise God that one of the boys from Pokot (Elijah) was able to travel to Bomet to attend Sis Carol's classes. The AGUC desires to visit Pokot at least three times every year, and for a church to be established there. **Pray for the Lord's leading and provisions.**

**Thank God that the AGUC churches in Tanzania are continuing well,** and will soon have registration with the government. Praise God that two of their pastors were able to attend the Reformation conference that was held at BBI in October 2017, and that the Tanzanian children are continuing their studies in their Christian schools in Kenya.

**Thank God for the reaffirmation of faith for 12 of the youths in the Holy Trinity Church of Africa (Eldoret) on 24 December 2017.** This was the first batch of youths from their children's Sunday School, and Rev Nelson thanked the Lord for the privilege that they had to be able to nurture these youths in the faith. **Continue to pray for the church ministry, and building project.**

**Thank God for the planting of the church at Rongo,** which is a town about 6-hour drive from Eldoret, en-route to the Kenya-Tanzanian border town of Sirare. The Kenyan presidential elections and the ensuing circumstances in 2017 had hindered the trip to Rongo for evangelism. **Pray for the evangelistic work in Rongo this year,** and for the **political situation in Kenya.** The recent instability has made it difficult for the church to carry out some of her ministries. Pray that things may settle down, and that the Word of God may continue to have free course. Pray also that God may help Rev Nelson to still **co-labour with Pr George Orwa** even though Pr George is now pastoring a church in Nairobi.

**Rev Nelson spoke at a youth camp in Marsabit (north of Kenya) on the theme "The Sufficiency of Scripture,"** and considered the sufficiency of the Scripture in light of its authority, as well as its relation with the Christian faith, and the Christian's practices. The camp was initially scheduled to be held on 8 to 15 December 2017, but opposition to the work had caused it to be postponed to the 15 to 19 December. Thank God for bringing about 70 youths from the Rendile community to attend the camp, and for the testimonies of many of these youths who exhibit steadfastness of faith in the midst of challenges and obstacles. Some of these youths have been disowned by their families because of their Christian faith, and have been "adopted" by Christian brethren. Exams were held at the end of the camp, and the best students were offered scholarships.

**Pray for Baalah Bible-Presbyterian Church in Korr Marsabit,** that they will be steadfast in the faith, and will exhibit Christian patience and endurance. **Pray that God will also raise up the locals to do the work of the ministry.**

**Thank God also for the preaching and teaching of God's Word through the radio ministry.** Rev Nelson has been doing a series of messages on **Nehemiah**, entitled "The Character and Kind of Man God Would Use," drawing lessons from the character of Nehemiah, and how God used him to build both the city wall and the people of Jerusalem.

There was a break during Christmas, and God-willing, Rev Nelson will resume to complete the series this year. **Pray for God's Word to have free course** through the radio ministry.

**The ministry to the university students** has stopped for a long time. **Pray that the Lord will open the door** for Rev Nelson to reach out to the university students again.

**Thank God for helping Rev Michael Koech, Rev Nelson Were and Rev Jonathan Langat with their FEBC online studies.** We continue to remember them in prayers as they complete their dissertation. God-willing, they will be graduating with their Doctor of Religious Education (DRE) degree next year.

**Thank God for preserving Rev Daniel Yaban's life in a motorbike accident** on 17 November 2017. His motorbike skidded, and he fell, twisting his foot in the process. He was admitted to the hospital, and was only attended by the doctor the next day (18 Nov) for his fractured bones in right foot and ankle. Thank God for a smooth operation, and discharge on the same day. Continue to pray for Rev Yaban as he travels on the road, and as he serves the Lord.



Rev Yaban with his brother Simon and wife

**Pstr Benard Too (of Tenwek AGUC, Kenya)** thanked the Lord for answered prayers and for His kind provisions. The Lord had provided them the funds for the building of new latrines and to renovate the old sanctuary for Sunday School's use. They are waiting on the Lord to provide them the **timber** needed to fill the gaps on the walls of the old church building, as well as **tables and chairs** for the children's use.



Newly-renovated Church Sanctuary



New Latrines (in front)



**Old Church Building  
(Timber needed to patch up gaps on walls)**

**Thank God for answered prayers concerning Ongata Rongai AGUC (Kenya) Church Land Project** and for His kind provisions. By God's grace, they had recently completed payment for the plot of land, and are now awaiting the transfer of ownership to the church. They had also managed to start a **children's ministry** last year, despite facing some difficulties earlier. Praise God for His goodness.

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*For more information on overseas missions needs and how you can support God's work, pl refer to the **Missions Noticeboard** for details.*

## Local Missions

**E-Band meets every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month** to reach out to the Clementi neighbourhood with the Gospel of Christ. Thank God for the opportunity to give out Christmas tracts in December as we remember the birth of our



**E-Band Chinese New Year Tracting in February**

Saviour, and to bring a blessing to the homes, in February, with the 福 (Fu)/祥(Xiang) tracts. God's Word tells us, "*How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*" (Romans 10:15b) If you would like to join us to bring the Gospel to unbelievers, pl contact Dn Franco Wong or the church office.

**The Vietnamese Fisherman Ministry (VFM) was renamed Vietnamese Ministry (VM) in January 2018** due to fewer Vietnamese fishermen

stopping by Singapore. Despite not being able to reach out to Vietnamese fishermen at the moment, Bro Van Hieu was able to reach out to Vietnamese workers working in shops near the shipyard. The Lord had also opened the way for him to conduct Bible studies with them at the dormitories in the shipyard. Bro Van Hieu



**Vietnamese Ministry (VM)**

thanked the Lord for their interest in God's Word, and for bringing some of them to join us in our worship services when they were able to.

Thank God for drivers serving in this ministry, who had also co-labored with Bro Van Hieu in reaching out to the lost. May the Lord continue to open doors for His Word to be preached, and may the seed sown in the hearts of the hearers bring forth good fruit in time to come.

**Thank God for helping Bro Van Hieu and Bro Bun Kouy with their theological training at FEBC.** God-willing, they will be completing their studies this May. Let us continue to remember them in our prayers as they seek the Lord's leading and as they do His will.

**Continue to pray for Bro Lukas** as he waits on the Lord to return to FEBC for his theological training. He was not able to return to the College to continue with his studies this semester (January-April 2018) due to parental objection, and is currently taking up courses in Miri Bible College instead. Thank God he was able to take up the online course on *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* with the scholarship provided by the TMS.

**Truth Missions Society (TMS) continues to do her part to increase missions awareness** among Truth members. We thank God for –

(i) **Publication of October 2017 Shine Forth Missions Journal** (Vol. 11, No. 2) on *"God's Word in Missions – Ministering to the Elderly"* which has been distributed not only to our church members and friends, but also in limited copies to like-minded B-P churches and Bible colleges in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, Kenya and Tanzania. Apart from increasing missions awareness, the bi-annual missions journals also seek to encourage and to equip those who are serving the Lord in the Gospel ministry. We thank God for all who have contributed to this important work, and we pray that the Lord will continue to help His people to shine forth His Gospel light. **October 2018 issue** (Vol. 12, No. 2) will be a continuation of the two-part series on *"Biblical Worship."*

(ii) **Missions Noticeboard and Webpage** which update members and friends on missions-related news. The Missions Noticeboard features pictures of God's work (both local and overseas) and will seek to do so thematically with its quarterly update. Up on the Noticeboard (from **January to April 2018**) are pictures of the December Kenyan missions trip as well as trips made to rejoice with our Cambodian brethren at their church anniversary this year.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Church Evangelism Workshop** (29 May 2018, 8.30am to 1pm)

"Fulfilling Our Role in the Great Commission"

(Romans 10:14-15)

Speaker: Pr Ko Ling Kang

(Children's program available for children aged 5 to 9.)

- **Church Gospel Night** (15 September 2018, 7pm)

- **Missions Sunday** (14 October 2018)

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TMS was established in May 2006 to encourage and to provoke our members in Truth B-P Church to be more proactive in the advancement of the Great Commission, in obedience to Jesus' command (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15).

The **TMS Committee in 2018** comprises:

Rev Dennis Kwok (Chairman, Cambodian Missions i/c), Eld Winston Chew (Vice-Chairman), Dn Franco Wong (Secretary, E-Band i/c), Dn Emerson Ang (Treasurer), Benjamin Yeo (Member) and Karen Lee (Publication i/c).

Our **objectives** are:

- a) To inform church members of local and overseas missions activities
- b) To encourage, support and pray for local and overseas missions
- c) To inspire interest and missions awareness among church members
- d) To initiate and co-ordinate missions trips

If you would like to know how you can play a part in missions work, feel free to approach the TMS members for assistance.

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# THE LORD, HE IS THE GOD

FROM 1 KINGS 18:1-39

RETOLD AND ILLUSTRATED BY JOAN LOO

King Ahab was a very wicked king. He married an idolatrous woman named Jezebel, and served Baal. He made a house for Baal in Samaria, and built an altar there for him. He also made a grove there. Ahab provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger more than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

Obadiah was a God-fearing man who took care of God's servants when they were persecuted.



Elijah

Obadiah, I want you to tell Ahab that I am here.

As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day.

Are... are you sure? What if the Spirit of the LORD carries you somewhere else? Then King Ahab will kill me!



Obadiah

Obadiah obeyed, and told King Ahab...

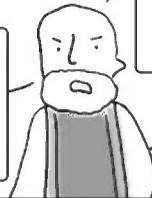
...and King Ahab went to meet Elijah.



King Ahab

Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.



Now gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal, and the 400 prophets of the groves, which eat at Jezebel's table.

Mount Carmel



At Mount Carmel...

Elijah said to the people:

How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.



And the people answered him not a word.

And so the showdown concerning the true God began...



Instructions:

1. One bullock each.
2. Cut it in pieces.
3. Lay the pieces on fire, but DO NOT light the wood on fire.

Call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answers by fire, let him be God.



Elijah

And all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

Elijah let the prophets of Baal go first because there were many of them.

The prophets took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon.



O Baal, hear us! O Baal, hear us!

But there was no voice, nor any that answered.

O Baal, hear us!

And the prophets leaped upon the altar which was made.



It came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them...

Cry aloud! for he is a god; either he is...



- ☞ talking?
- ☞ pursuing?
- ☞ in a journey?
- ☞ sleeping?

The prophets of Baal cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.



The prophets prophesied till evening... but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

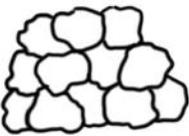
So Elijah said to all the people,

Come near unto me.



This was what Elijah proceeded to do...

1. Elijah repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.



Elijah took 12 stones, one for each tribe of Israel. With the stones, he built an altar in the name of the LORD.

2. Elijah made a trench around the altar.

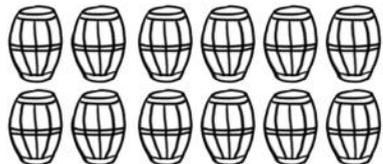


a trench that could contain two measures of seed

3. Elijah put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood.



4. Elijah said, "Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood." This was done two more times.

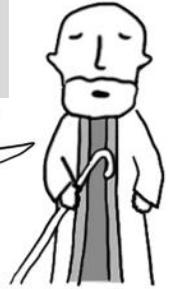


After pouring the 12 barrels of water onto the sacrifice, the water ran around the altar. Elijah then filled the trench with water also.



And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near.

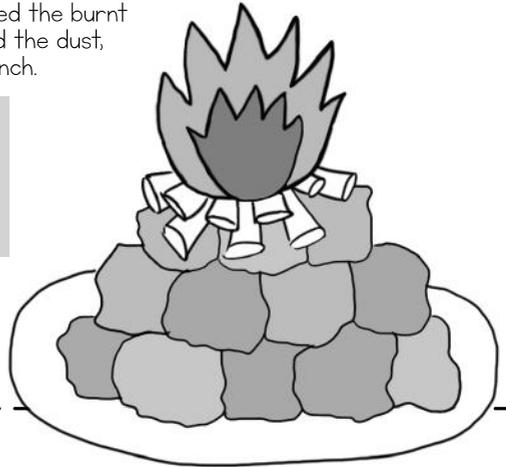
LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.



Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.



## ACTIVITY TIME

WHO IS THE TRUE GOD?

THE

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Instructions: Find the answer to the question above by completing the crossword puzzle on the next page.

- And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to \_\_\_\_\_ in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. (Hint: vl)

2. And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a \_ \_ \_ \_ famine in Samaria. (Hint: v2)
3. For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with \_ \_ \_ \_ and water. (Hint: v4)
4. And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I \_ \_ \_ \_ , I will surely shew myself unto him to day. (Hint: v15)
5. And they took the bullock which was \_ \_ \_ \_ them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. (Hint: v26)
6. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of \_ \_ \_ \_ , unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: (Hint: v31)
7. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The \_ \_ \_ \_ , he is the God; the LORD, he is the God. (Hint: v39)

Crossword Puzzle

1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								
7.								

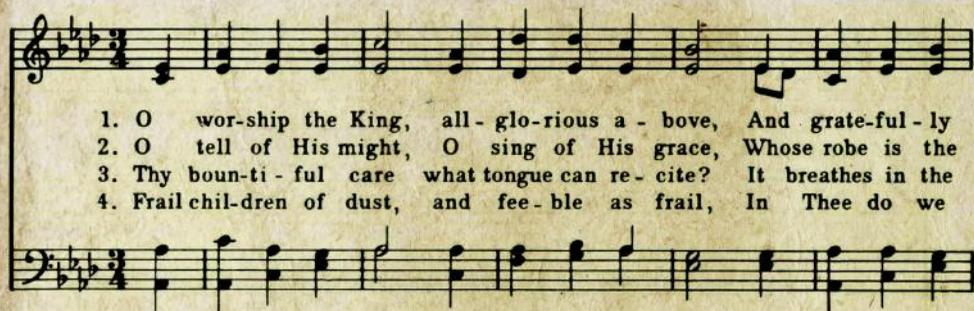
Answers: 1. Elijah / 2. sore / 3. bread / 4. stand / 5. given / 6. Jacob / 7. LORD

# O Worship the King

LYONS

Robert Grant, 1779 - 1838

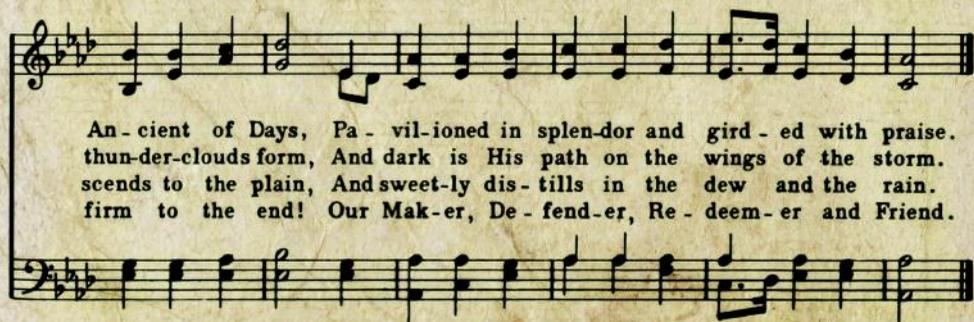
Arr. from J. Michael Haydn, 1737 - 1806



1. O wor-ship the King, all-glo-rious a - bove, And grate-ful - ly  
2. O tell of His might, O sing of His grace, Whose robe is the  
3. Thy boun-ti - ful care what tongue can re - cite? It breathes in the  
4. Frail chil-dren of dust, and fee-ble as frail, In Thee do we



sing His pow'r and His love; Our Shield and De - fend - er, the  
light, whose can - o - py space; His char - iots of wrath the deep  
air, it shines in the light; It streams from the hills, it de -  
trust, nor find Thee to fail; Thy mer - cies how ten - der! how



An - cient of Days, Pa - vil - ioned in splen - dor and gird - ed with praise.  
thun - der - clouds form, And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.  
scends to the plain, And sweet - ly dis - tills in the dew and the rain.  
firm to the end! Our Mak - er, De - fend - er, Re - deem - er and Friend.



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