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## **Church Weekly for 3 April 2005**

My dear readers,

### **1. TIME AND TIDE, AND SIA, WAIT FOR NO MAN**

This latest missions trip taught me a lesson, not soon to be forgotten: I missed my flight on Friday morning 18 March. While doing "last minute shopping" (something I rarely do) the PA system suddenly announced the names of passengers on SQ217 to report immediately. Despite my utmost effort hurrying, the flight was closed. *"Sorry, you are too late! Your bags have been off-loaded."*

Fortunately SIA was able to get me on the night flight. When I got home, one sister from the church phoned: *"What a surprise to find you still in Singapore. I have a matter. Please pray for my daughter and me."* So we had a time of sharing and prayer. Naturally my wife and granddaughter were delighted to see me for the extra day.

Today (Tuesday 22 March) I walked my host to the train station. She got on board just in time with barely five seconds to spare. One latecomer arrived to see the carriage door close in her face. She tugged and tugged to no avail. Another reminder: be in time!

For readers' information: our Lord's coming will be no less decisive and final in effect. Sadly, so few take His words seriously. For your sake, let me repeat: *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away ... Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come ... for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh"* (Matt 24:35, 42, 44).

### **2. TWO BLESSED DAYS AT EBENEZER**

Saturday 19 March the Lord gave us a blessed gathering at the Southern Community Centre. I spoke on *"Footprints on the Sands of Time"* to some sixty persons. The thrust of the message was: **Have faith in God.** He who led and fed Israel forty years in the wilderness is our God still, and He changes not. He is the same yesterday, and today and forever. He who sent a great fish to save Jonah from drowning in the Mediterranean Sea, was also the God who sent ravens to feed Elijah, and caused an ass to save the disobedient prophet Balaam from the angel's drawn sword. Today, he is our God still, and His power has not waned, neither is His care for His own diminished.

**Question:** How well do we know Him? Are we trusting in Him for all our needs, our daily business, our exceptional problems? *"Footprints"* were real life experiences of God's wonderful care over seventy years in the life of one who is still experiencing and

learning that our God is worthy of our complete confidence and trust, in ordinary life as well as in unusual circumstances.

### **3. WORSE THAN TSUNAMI**

December 26, 2004, left a trail of death and destruction in Southern Asia, with repercussions around the world. In our recent visit to Sri Lanka we had a first-hand contact with people in the disaster zone.

But worse things than Dec 26 demand our attention. The day before I left Singapore, *The Straits Times* (17 March) reported that seismological studies revealed that tension was building up in N. Western Sumatra which could trigger another earthquake and tsunami in the near future. The same newspaper reported widespread drought affecting seven SE Asian countries: Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, South China, Indonesia. If prolonged, famine will set in. At the same time, there are fears of bird flu reviving, not forgetting the SARS outbreak of two years ago, and the simmering AIDS plague that could get out of hand. These fearsome and deadly "*pestilences*" are included in our Lord's warning of Matthew 24:7: "... *and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places*" - **before His return.**

But far worse than these is the outbreak of godless utterances from the head of the Anglican Church. Whereas tsunamis, AIDS, SARS, and famines can kill the body, the archbishop's words can lead countless men and women to lose their faith in God. What actually did the archbishop say? Listen to this: Dr Rowan Williams said, "The Asian tsunami disaster should make all Christians question the existence of God ... It would be wrong if faith were not upset by the catastrophe which had already claimed more than 150,000 lives ---- How can you believe in a God who permits suffering on this scale --- Every single random accidental death is something that should upset a faith bound up in comfort and ready answers. Faced with the paralyzing magnitude of a disaster like this, we naturally feel more deeply outraged, and also more deeply helpless." (*The Telegraph, London*)

**Question:** What does the archbishop believe in?

While tsunamis kill bodies, Dr Williams' words destroy faith in God and send souls to eternal destruction. But this also is one of the signs of our Lord's return.

### **4. BRETHREN PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER**

This is the best thing to do in a world of great distress and unbelief. Pray also for me as I go on my way: Singapore - London. God bless all readers.

*Lovingly in the Lord*  
*Dr SH Tow, Senior Pastor*

## Church Weekly for 10 April 2005

My dear readers,

### 1. ECHOES OF EASTER AT LONDON NEW LIFE

Easter week in London calls me to New Life B-P Church to consider with God's people the ever pertinent question: "*O death, where is thy sting?*" While the living know little from experience the effects of the sting of death, nevertheless none would deny that death's sting is inexpressibly painful when it strikes. The forceful wrenching away of a life-long companion, the sudden parting of some close-bound relative is grievous and painful beyond words.

Preparing to speak, I pray our risen Lord to look with favour upon the congregation gathering here at Queens Park on Good Friday, 25 March. Readers worldwide will be pleased to know that God has been blessing the ministry here, under His faithful servant Dr Patrick Tan, ably assisted by Dr Teo Chong Gee, Dn Daniel Poh, Bro. Mok Chee Cheong, Bro. Seetoh Yong Chiang, and Bro. Jonathan Kim.

Back to our theme: the sting of death. Allow me to repeat: the pain of death is not felt except when someone close is taken. The recent Tsunami took over 200,000 lives, causing grievous hurt and anguish to hundreds of thousands, nay, millions more. Outpourings of sympathy and relief missions flooded into S E Asia from the international community, a commendable response from men of compassion everywhere. But the wounds left by departed loved ones, time only will heal.

### 2. WHO CAN FACE THE "KING OF TERRORS"?

Wisdom demands: In life think death. It is never too soon to prepare for that unwanted caller described in Arabian folklore as a black-hooded galloping horseman whose night visits may stop your way. You never know, he comes unannounced, with fateful finality, an unwelcome but irresistible visitor.

*"But I don't want to think of death!"* That's true, but death may be thinking of you. Years ago, my former student, also a gynaecologist, said to me, "Dr Tow, I have learnt a lesson from my late father. He worked himself to death, at fifty-seven, delivering babies day in day out – what's the point? I am going to go slow, take it easy, enjoy life."

So he joined the famous Singapore Island Country Club. One day, taking it easy, he went for a jog in the early morning dew. After that a hot shower, then off to office, he thought. Stepping out of the shower, he collapsed with a massive heart attack, at thirty-six. *That's life.* In life think death: be prepared!

### 3. HOW SHOULD ONE PREPARE?

Let me put it simply: death is not the end. Beyond death there's more, much more in store for the departing soul. Man is not the master of his destiny, no, not at all. We were all sent into Planet Earth without our consent or knowledge. One day we depart the same way. **Question:** Who really is in charge? **Answer:** The Giver of life, our Creator, is in charge. One day He will call us to give an account of our doings in this life. *"As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (Heb 9:27).

For that, be prepared. How? Just three steps.

### **a) Acknowledge the Giver of Life**

Listen to Him: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me"* (Jn 14:6). *"I am come that (men) might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"* (Jn 10:10).

Apart from Jesus, the Son of God and Saviour of the world, there is no life, no true life, no desirable life. He alone gives life that overcomes death. *How do we know?* Simply because He came from heaven for that purpose: to lay down His life on the cross, to die and be buried, and to rise from the grave on the third day, triumphant over death.

Now He offers that life to whosoever will. He says, *"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"* (Jn 11:25, 26).

### **b) Believe on the Giver of Life**

The way of life is now freely offered to all who are afraid of death, who are concerned about life's destiny, who are seeking the true meaning of life. The Gospel of John says, *"...as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."*

The same writer adds: *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."* (1 Jn 5:11, 12)

Question: Have you received Jesus, the Son of God, as your Saviour? In Him, you have victory over death.

### **c) Live for Him daily who died for you**

Believing on Jesus and receiving Him into your life admits you into the service of the Most High. In His service, there is the promise of an everlasting abode with God in heaven. Then, like the apostle Paul, you can say, *"For to me, to live is Christ, to die is gain....and to be with Christ; which is far better."* (Phil 1:21, 23)

Furthermore, you may live each day confident and rejoicing, that "...to be absent from the body" is "to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor 5:8).

**Conclusion: In Christ death has lost its sting.**

## **POSTSCRIPT**

### **"After-shock and After-thought"**

29 March 05. Ten days after the Straits Times' warning that the N. Sumatra earthquake of 26 December 04 was not altogether over, but underground tensions were mounting again, another quake measuring Richter 8.7 has erupted in the same area. Death and destruction, all over again, has hit the poor people of Indonesia. Pray, Lord, have mercy.

Yesterday (Monday 28 March) New Life's Easter Camp was brought to a happy conclusion with a Gospel Rally by Dr Patrick Tan: "*The Gospel shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations*" (Matt 24:14).

Praise God for the four days' ministry of the Word. Readers, please pray the Lord to send a pastor of His choice to shepherd the flock, now numbering 50-60. Precious souls coming from many distant lands to the capital city of the world need to be cared for. Who will come to be the resident pastor? Please pray!

I fly for Toronto tomorrow Wednesday, 30 March. Thank you all for remembering me in prayer. The Lord has preserved my health; He has work for me still.

*Lovingly in the Lord*  
*Dr SH Tow, Senior Pastor*

## **Church Weekly for 17 April 2005**

My dear readers,

### **1. CANADIAN COLD CATCHES ME OFF GUARD**

My last two days in Toronto saw a downturn in the weather and a dazzling display of dancing and flying snow, leaving the housetops white-capped and the meadows likewise. One little exposure to the cold air at an unguarded moment was enough to let some alien virus breach my body defences. Today, five days later, a fierce battle rages between this *perishing outer man and the bondage of corruption within. "Lord, help!"*

I thank all of you for praying. May the mercies of the Lord and His grace be sufficient to see me through the next five days and five preaching opportunities. By faith, I say, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" (Phil 4:13).

### **2. IN WEAKNESS CONSIDER THE APOSTLE PAUL**

As I ponder my vulnerable body defences, I truly thank God, "**It could have been worse.**" The Lord has preserved me, free from all ills for six years (no cold, no cough, no 'flu'). He has work for me, that's why. Then I consider the Apostle Paul and turning to 2 Cor 11:23-28, the recital of his immense sufferings puts me to shame. By comparison (there is no comparison), I have not even begun to suffer. Readers who are in the Spirit, pray to consecrate yourself, and "... *present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*" (Rom 12:1). Serve the Lord now!

The Apostle did so much for the Lord, we so little.

Let us consider one another, how little we give of ourselves for God's service. Then let us *provoke one another unto love and to good works* (Heb 10:24).

### **3. PRAISE AND PRAYER FOR LONDON NEW LIFE**

For the interest of readers, the past eight months have brought a revival to New Life BPC, London. With the new team in charge (Dr Patrick Tan at the helm) things have begun to look up, old members have returned and new friends have discovered us. A vibrant spirit prevailed over the Easter period. Our Fellowship Hall was a "*hive of activity*," and the attic was inhabited once more. Over all, the attendance has almost doubled, all praise to God.

Readers, please make New Life London an item for prayer. "... *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*" (James 5:16). Pray for a faithful resident pastor to come and build on the good work. Pray the Lord to send faithful members to co-labour and extend our gospel outreach. Together, let us build on the Rock our Lord Jesus Christ, so *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it* (Matt 16:18).

### **4. CALVARY CANADA, TORONTO, LATEST**

During the past year, the church premises have downsized from six to three units. The essential areas are fully preserved: Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. Elder Daniel Chew has re-deployed the furniture in a judicious and functional manner, retaining useful display and storage space, so that every essential need is provided for. Thank God for so great a deliverance. Also, there is a new toilet added, which is very necessary.

I am much encouraged by what I saw and heard. The Chew family members continue to serve faithfully. Mother Chew, by God's grace, maintains her health reasonably well. The brothers Daniel and Andrew persevere in their leaders' roles. The other families (Teohs, Layus, Niles) are steadfast. Attendance on Lord's Day is in the low twenties, thank God. (Some fundamental churches are plodding on with a near dozen to fifteen members).

Encouraging developments to share with our readers: a) Brother Jimmy Pang (Calvary Pandan) an active leader of the YAF is due to emigrate to Mississauga in August / September 2005. He is earnestly preparing himself for the new ministry. Please

remember him in prayer. b) The Niles children, Johan, Vijay, and Cynthia, are exemplary young people whom the Lord sent to the Church. Pray that with Jimmy's coming, a new youth work will flourish and become an instrument of Gospel outreach. c) Lately, a new Chinese family, the Zhangs from Shanghai, have come to seek the Lord. d) The possibility of gathering a team of pastors for a period is being explored. May God move the right persons to accept the challenge. Our God is able, please pray.

## **5. VANCOUVER "BREAKING FORTH, RIGHT AND LEFT"**

Since its founding, Vancouver BP Church has been growing steadily. Isaiah's words are very appropriate: "*Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations ... For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left ...*" (Is 54:2,3).

Many groups are active and growing, with Pastor Isaac in charge. **AWANA Club**, which won first prize in Bible knowledge in the province, British Columbia; **Ladies' Bible Study Group**; **Men's Bible Study Group**; **Choir, Congregation** looking to break the hundred mark.

Readers, add to your Prayer List, Vancouver BP Church, hoping to start a pre-school ministry. With the steady rate of growth, extension of the physical space will become necessary shortly. Our God is able. Please pray.

## **6. FINALLY, "WILL YOU COME TO PANDAN'S ACM?"**

**When? you ask. Saturday 30 April, 7.30 pm. Every member is expected to attend.** Make God's business your delight. Honour the Lord, and He will honour you. I am writing in Vancouver 4.30 am on Tuesday 5 April. God bless all readers.

*Lovingly in the Lord*  
*Dr SH Tow, Senior Pastor*  
*Writing in Vancouver*  
*4 April 2004*

## **Church Weekly for 24 April 2005**

My dear readers,

### **1. HOME TWENTY-SIX DAYS AFTER!**

This morning Pastor Isaac & Rebecca sent me to the airport and saw me safely checked in. They have been my perfect hosts these past nine days, seeing to my every need, including sending me to their Family Physician (a young Chinese GP) who diagnosed "acute laryngitis" and gave me a course of antibiotics plus a cough depressant. My voice disappeared on Sunday (3 April) on the flight from Toronto to Vancouver. The treatment proved instantly effective and my voice returned. Thank God I was able to preach five times.

As I review this trip, I find that by the time I touch down at Changi Airport, I would have been on the move for 26 days. By God's wondrous grace, not one day was wasted, and the desired objective was accomplished in each Church: Ebenezer Melbourne, New Life London, Calvary Toronto and Vancouver. *"The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad"* (Ps 126:3).

### **2. FINAL REMINDER: ACM 7.30 PM 30.04.05**

Members, please block out in your diary for our once-a-year Congregational Meeting this Saturday night. Except for members who are sick, out of town, or on essential duty (nurses, doctors, shift workers, etc) the Lord's business requires your attendance. It should be the delight of every one of God's redeemed people to be counted as an active, concerned, and caring member of Christ's body.

There is joy in serving Jesus.

### **3. MEDITATIONS FROM A GODLY MAN OF SCOTLAND**

Andrew Bonar (1810 - 1892), the great Scottish saint left behind a refreshing collection of devotional readings *"Heavenly Springs"* which I intend to share with readers of our Calvary Weekly (with some editorial expansion). These readings, eventually will (DV) be published as a handy "Daily Devotional" for the blessing of our extended family of readers worldwide.

### **4. FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: WHAT IS IT?**

*(Adapted from Heavenly Springs)*

This is the best thing, next to heaven itself. It is your privilege as a child of God.

It is such a natural, and beautiful thing, for a child to seek the father's fellowship first thing in the morning, before any other business begins, before the world comes knocking on the door.

So with the filial child of God. Are you one?

How much time did you spend with the Heavenly Father this morning? Ponder over this. Pray the Spirit to touch your heart and speak to you.

God never withdraws from fellowship with us. It is we who cut short our fellowship with Him. In this, do you think we disappoint Him?

Did you ever think of coming to God's House an extra hour before time, to sit in God's tabernacle under the shadow of the Almighty, and there enjoy the comfort and shelter under His wings?

When you leave home to go into the world, did you go forth with prayer, asking the Saviour to walk by your side? Did you ever think to ask the Lord to shine over your pathway with the light of the glory which hovers over the mercy seat?

In fellowship and with fervent prayer, you will grow "perfect and complete" in all the will of God. Let this fellowship be "*without ceasing*," ever conscious of His presence.

*"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"* (Jn 15:7). This is fellowship, to abide in Jesus always.

Fellowship with God means assurance: confidence to face any problem or difficulty. But be careful to keep away from sin, even the smallest and least obvious. Sin will mar your fellowship with God, and break that precious bond and relationship. Strive therefore to overcome every sin and to thank God for every victory.

Fellowship with God means unction of the Spirit indwelling. Such holy unction and filling shows in our attitude, words, and actions.

Fellowship with God means more wisdom from God, more knowledge of God, and more grace to do His work.

By fellowship with God, we grow more like the Master. Finally, a verse from the Apostle John: *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (1 Jn 1:7).

*Lovingly in the Lord*  
*Dr SH Tow, Senior Pastor*

## Church Weekly for 1 May 2005

My dear readers,

### ON "LIFE AND DEATH"

I write with the experience of years. In 1942 I delivered my first baby and since then forgotten thousands more. In a few months, I shall say goodbye to the Clinic I built, leaving it in the capable hands of my Christian partners who will, without doubt, raise the practice to greater heights.

As a child I grew up in Father's Clinic, the Nanshan Dispensary, first in Kluang, later in Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia. In a sense, medicine flowed in my veins. No surprise, that I followed in the steps of Father, Eldest Sister and Second Brother when I enrolled in the King Edward Seventh College of Medicine, Singapore, in 1947, graduating in 1953.

While I pursued a career in Obstetrics and Gynaecology with complete devotion to the specialty, nevertheless, my first love from my original calling was, and is, the salvation of souls. But having attained to the much coveted Chair of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the University of Singapore, I poured every ounce of energy in the build up of the specialty and the Department while I held the reins of administrative responsibility.

In 1962, during my three-month study tour of the United States of America, I had the privilege of visiting the world-renowned Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. That visit left a deep impression on me, how the Mayo brothers, Dr William J Mayo and Dr Charles H Mayo built a clinic in 1919 by turning over the bulk of their life savings, to a private *not-for-profit*, charitable organization known as the Mayo Foundation. *"We want the money to go back to the people, from whom it came, and we think we can best give it back to them through medical education,"* said Dr Will Mayo.

From this point on the Mayos, their partners and all future Mayo Clinic physicians, would receive a salary and would not profit personally from the proceeds of the practice. All proceeds beyond operating expenses were contributed to education, research and patient care. The brothers established a board of governors and a committee system to provide effective oversight of many aspects of Mayo life, thereby reinforcing the cooperative spirit of the founders.

The Mayo Clinic was founded on five principles:

- a) A "not-for-profit" philosophy
- b) The patient's interests are paramount
- c) Practice based on "team work"
- d) Education and Research for excellence
- e) Philanthropy for relief of the needy.

Founded on these noble principles, the Mayo Clinic prospered over the years attracting patients from every corner of the globe.

My observations of the Mayo Clinic spoke to me: if a philanthropic institution can make such a great contribution to the advancement of Medicine in a world of suffering, can a Christian clinic, with committed Christians, in a private practice, do any less?

In our clinic practice we have followed clear Christian principles. To prescribe treatment for a patient, especially where an operative procedure is involved, we go through a mental "Check List." We ask ourselves four questions:

1. Is the procedure necessary?
2. Is it something I would have for myself?
3. Is it compassionate?
4. Is it the best?

It is important, in all cases, to bear in mind: money must never be the decisive factor in determining treatment. It is immoral to wax rich on people's misery. The real satisfaction in practice is to alleviate human suffering and not to accumulate wealth.

I take a close look at the medical scene. While advances in knowledge and techniques in recent decades have totally revolutionized the practice of medicine and enlarged the prospects of cure for many diseases, yet the spectre of death has not been erased or even shaken one bit. With masterly indifference, with time as its ally, death continues to claim victims with effortless ease, for no doctor or medicine has yet invaded its domain.

What then must we do? Let doctors continue to strive their utmost: their efforts have a certain value. But we must look beyond doctors, to the long term, to more lasting solutions. Our thoughts turn to the Gospel offer of Jesus Christ.

Consider this statement of Gospel truth:

Life is short —  
Death is sure;  
Sin the curse —  
Christ the cure.

The answer to life's Number One Problem is Jesus Christ the author and giver of life. While on earth, our Lord demonstrated His divine power by healing every disease and raising the dead. Above all this, He by death overcame the power of death by rising from the dead (Heb 2:14).

My life calling is to the Gospel of life, to turn people to the life-giving Gospel of Christ, to invite men and women to receive Jesus who is the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 14:6). He says, "... *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*" (Jn 10:10).

**Obstetrics is for time; the Gospel is for eternity.**

*Lovingly in the Lord*  
*Dr SH Tow, Senior Pastor*

## **Church Weekly for 8 May 2005**

My dear readers,

### **1. CHINA MISSIONS UPDATE APRIL 2005**

This week we follow Pastor Pang on his 23rd trip to China.

Dear prayer partners for China Missions,

Thank God for a safe trip back to Singapore after a ten-day visit to China. I traveled to six cities/towns in three provinces where the believers were waiting eagerly for us (a brother and I).

Brother Yu (former Saipan Church member) traveled with me to AA city for my first stop. It was to encourage a house Church started one and a half years ago by brother Guo who returned from Jordan a couple of years ago. Amazingly, the Lord uses this brother to reach out to his subordinates/colleagues in the factory that he works in. Later, a sister Chen returned from Jordan and joined him in this ministry. The Lord continues to save those who believe by listening to the Gospel through their preaching/sharing. Exactly a year ago, I visited them the first time and there were 14 baptized but this time there are 35 young converts added to this house Church. The sureness and joy of salvation shown by these young believers are great encouragement to all of us who came to attend the two days of meetings. Please pray for brother Guo for he longs to be equipped theologically so that he can be more effective. He shared with me how burdened he is especially when he finds it hard to 'pastor and feed' these 50 members every week when he himself is only a young Christian of about four years! Truly, 'the harvest is plenteous but the workers are few!'

The police chief did not object to her wife and mother's belief but he even volunteered to send us back to the city late in the night. On the way in his car, this uniformed officer with three 'stars' on his shoulders confessed sheepishly that: "you know, my job was to 'get these illegal house churches registered!' I used to go after them... but now my wife and my own mother believe it and I cannot stop them!" After much discussion during the journey, he admitted that "Christianity is a good religion! People who believe and accepted 'Yesu' will generally behave better." Amen. The Lord be praised!

### **2. GOD'S WONDERFUL PROTECTION**

Thank God for His wonderful protection and provision in my recent trip to China. This was my 23rd trip to visit our Saipan/Jordan returnees, yet it was one of the most eventful as we were almost pick pocketed (robbed) in Shenzhen city on my last night there. Upon coming down from the airport bus to our hotel, a group of youngsters pretended to distribute business cards but crowded around us to go after our pockets and bags! The luggage I was towing was unzipped but thank God, I did not lose anything after those hassles! The Lord sent a seasoned Hong Kong businessman whom I met on the plane

when we sat next to each other to 'protect' me. He shouted at them and pushed them away as he was a soldier in the sixties with the Liberation Army! He volunteered to accompany me after knowing that I am a pastor transiting in this modern city for the first time. Dear reader, please pray for China! The gap between the rich and the poor IS getting bigger and bigger. There is great dissatisfaction among the lower class because many cannot find a decent job to make a living. Most of all, they need Jesus as their Saviour, whether rich or poor!

Finally, our dear brethren in the Lord, please pray for us who are in the mission fields. We continue to reach out to the Mainland Chinese workers in Saipan and Jordan. The entering of China into WTO has made garment manufacturers in Saipan less competitive. Though the factories in Saipan are beginning to downsize or close down, we continue to reach out regardless of the shrinking numbers.

Please pray for our family especially Guek Mui's health. She is experiencing occasional pain on the liver and chest, and weakness in her heart. We are seeking God's direction for our lives to whether to stay on or to take a break back in Singapore. Please pray with us and may God's will be done!

*Gratefully yours in His service,  
Kok Hiong, Guek Mui and boys  
27th April, 2005, Singapore*

*Lovingly in the Lord  
Dr SH Tow, Senior Pastor*

## **Church Weekly for 15 May 2005**

My dear readers,

### **1. THE WORLD SYSTEM GATHERS MOMENTUM**

Men's first attempt to form a ONE WORLD SYSTEM was frustrated when God confounded their language and they were scattered abroad. Babel became an instant fiasco (Gen 11:5-9). That is the sobering testimony of God's power over men.

God's Word foretells that in the endtimes an attempt to unite the peoples of the world will succeed. Babel will regather as Babylon, with the acclaim of "... *peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*" (Rev 17:15). "*Babylon the Great*" is shaping up before our eyes as the religious WORLD SYSTEM.

### **2. "A VOW TO TRY AND UNITE ALL CHRISTIANS"**

A fortnight ago, 18 April 2005, Pope Benedict XVI was elected to succeed John Paul II. His top priority, among others, is to press on with the ecumenical process, to create a ONE WORLD SYSTEM, starting with the re-unification of Christendom. Associated Press report from the Vatican City (Straits Times 19.04.05) is reproduced hereat:

POPE Benedict XVI yesterday pledged to work to unify all Christians and reach out to other religions.

He also outlined his goals and made clear that his pontificate would follow closely the direction of his predecessor, Pope John Paul II. He listed his top priorities in a message read in Latin to cardinals gathered in the Sistine Chapel for the first mass celebrated by the 265th leader of the Catholic Church.

He said his primary task would be to work to reunify all Christians, and that sentiment alone was not enough. He said he wanted to continue "an open and sincere dialogue" with other religions. (*End of report*) That is the religious component of the WORLD SYSTEM.

### **3. PERILS OF INTEGRATED RESORTS**

On the socio-economic front, global forces press on with ever increasing momentum to form a WORLD SYSTEM. Singapore must strive to be part of this system.

The promise and the prospect are painted and rosy: more business, more tourists, more jobs, more money, Singapore will keep pace with the competition. Singapore must reinvent itself for the sake of the future generation.

I write for the sake of the Christian future generation. God's word paints another picture, sees another perspective. Things are not what they seem. There are values beyond dollars

and sense. God's Word focuses on lasting values, beyond economic common sense and social sensibility. For the serious-minded and far-sighted, read on.

*"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4). "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mk 8:36, 37).*

**Integrated Resorts** are inevitable resorts, meaning to say, unavoidable recourses and expedients for Singapore's economic and social competitiveness. This world view is necessary to keep Singapore in the mainstream of the **WORLD SYSTEM**. We await the arrival of **super mega projects** before the end of the decade as Singapore strides boldly forward, reinventing itself.

But, let the understanding reader take note: God's Word deals with the real values, the enduring considerations. Perilous times have come, the **WORLD SYSTEM** will engulf the world: the end thereof is destruction (1 Jn 2:17). We are not of the world: we belong to the Kingdom of Heaven.

*Therefore, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 Jn 2:15-17).*

#### **4. PLAYING CARDS ARE NO PLAYING MATTER**

See para 3 on "**INTEGRATED RESORTS**." Here and there, some of our B-P young people join in the worldly game of **CARDS**. This identifies with the **world of gaming or gambling**.

If we believe, and practise **Biblical Separation**, should any B-P member, old or young, participate in this worldly and unwholesome pastime? While our BPs are very strict with mahjong, strangely the same rule is lifted with **PLAYING CARDS**, which are no less harmful.

May all God-fearing readers and **BP Fellowships** take note and pass on the message to those who truly love the Lord. Let us take heed of God's words: "**Abstain from all appearance of evil**" (1 Thess 5:22).

God bless all readers.

*Lovingly in the Lord  
Dr SH Tow, Senior Pastor*

## Church Weekly for 22 May 2005

My dear readers,

### 1. THE HIGH COST OF GAMBLING

After months of debate our Government finally took the decisive step of welcoming the casino business into Singapore, and not one but two. There is a Chinese saying that "*good things come in pairs.*" Now, it seems, bad things also come in pairs.

Singapore has taken a step of no return.

Does Government know the social consequences of gambling? Without a doubt. Why then did our rulers, highly intelligent and experienced men, allow this acknowledged social malady to become part of Singapore life? The answer is: the *economic benefits* outweigh the *social consequences*. The argument goes something like this. Whatever social problems may arise will be contained and coped with by Singapore's various agencies, and will be more than balanced (and neutralized?) by the significant benefits to the economy. There will be more jobs, more overseas visitors, more money, and more happiness to more people.

### 2. LEARN FROM OTHER PEOPLE'S MISTAKES

Mistakes on a national scale are very costly. They also provide useful lessons, if one will take the trouble to learn. To learn from one's own mistake is usually very painful and costly; to learn from other people's is less painful and costly. Undoubtedly many Singaporeans will be caught in the snare of greed and come to misery and grief.

The apostle Paul has pertinent warning in 1 Tim 6:9-10: "*But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*"

Be wise, therefore. Readers, remember, "*Prevention is better than cure.*" Prevention comes by heeding God's word, "*But godliness with contentment is great gain.*" (1 Tim 6:6)

### 3. GAMBLING IS ADDICTIVE AND BURNS LIKE A HIGH FEVER

It is no light matter to be bitten by the gambling bug. The delusion of "*getting something for nothing,*" driven by greed, grips like cocaine and heroin, binding *hand and foot*. The prisoner of greed cannot shake loose its binding tentacles like those of an evil octopus.

When I was a boy in Grandfather's church a man showed us his left hand minus four fingers. His story: "*I was so mad with myself, with these gambling hands, I took a*

*chopper and chopped off those evil fingers."* But that did not cure his greed. Without four fingers he still gambled. The problem was not in the hand but in the heart.

A few years ago, the taxi-man driving us to Awana said, *"Look, on the roadside a little shrine with candles, joss sticks and offerings put up for the soul of someone who jumped from the casino in Genting."* Then he said, *"Only last night I drove a man from Jakarta to pawn his jewelry, after he lost \$10,000 the day before."*

Such stories will be told a thousand times over, as long as greed burns in men's hearts. And not men only, but housewives and young people, even boys and girls will be caught in the gambling craze.

#### **4. COUNTING THE SOCIAL COST**

Let us not be blinded by statistics and rosy pictures painted by the promoters of gambling. Look not at the profit supposed to be generated (from desperate foolish people). But be wise. At stake are homes, families, bread-earners, housewives, students. The whole fabric of society is at stake. But guard yourself, your home, your children. They are precious beyond price.

Look at another set of statistics, of rising numbers of suicides, crime, underworld extortion and protection syndicates, loan sharks, blackmailers. Think of the enormous losses and debts, dissipated life savings, children's education money, credit card fraud, cheating, stealing, bad cheques, embezzlement, domestic upheavals, etc.

#### **5. ANSWER: GOD'S WORD**

*"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."* (1 Tim 6:6-8)

*Lovingly in the Lord*  
*Dr SH Tow, Senior Pastor*

## **Church Weekly for 29 May 2005**

My dear readers,

### **ANGLICANS INVITED TO TAKE A CATHOLIC VIEW OF MARY (TIMES ONLINE MAY 16, 2005)**

*By Ruth Gledhill, Religion Correspondent of the Times*

Members of the Anglican Church are being asked to accept that controversial Roman Catholic teachings regarding the Virgin Mary are 'authentic expressions of Christian belief'.

The proposals, which came under immediate attack from senior evangelicals, come in a document agreed by leading theologians and prelates of both churches and published in America tonight.

Mary: Hope and Grace in Christ was launched at a Roman Catholic Mass in Seattle by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (Arcic). It is to be published in the UK at Westminster Abbey on Thursday.

The long-awaited document, published after six years of discussion, effectively seeks to backtrack on centuries of Anglican dissent over the place of Mary in the Catholic Church by giving new credence to dogmas that helped inspire the Reformation.

It states that there is 'no continuing theological reason for ecclesial division' over the role of the Virgin Mary. 'We do not consider the practice of asking Mary and the saints to pray for us as communion dividing,' it says. The document also describes private devotions inspired by apparitions of Mary as "acceptable".

In the passage likely to cause most dissent, the document says the infallible dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption - the teachings that Mary was herself conceived 'without sin' and that on death she was 'assumed' body and soul into Heaven - are 'consonant with the teaching of the Scriptures'.

The document is not intended itself to be authoritative but to be a basis for discussion, yet its authors admit openly to the hope that the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion will recognise a 'common faith' concerning Mary as outlined in the paper.

## **2. EVANGELICAL ANGLICAN CONCERNS**

The Mary document will reinforce growing fears among evangelicals that the Catholic church is prepared to consider unity with the Anglicans once more, but strictly on its own terms.

The Reverend Rod Thomas, a leading evangelical cleric who acts as spokesman for the Reform conservative grouping, said the document represented an attempt to 'shoehorn into Scripture' the Marian dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.

He said: 'If Mary has been wholly and completely assumed into Heaven and we are able to pray to her, it goes completely against the grain of Jesus Christ being our great high priest who intercedes on our behalf with the Father.'

He said he had a lot of sympathy for the members of the commission as they struggled to find common theological ground. 'But it has become clear that we can only find common ground through theological fudge. That can never be a basis for moving forward in unity.

'The document goes nowhere near addressing the understandings of revelation, of scriptural authority and the uniqueness of Christ that were the cornerstones of the Reformation and are the cornerstones of evangelical faith today.

'It is not so much an attempt to turn the clock back as a demonstration that to move forward would require compromises on our understanding of the Bible's teaching that, however courteously expressed, are still issues that divide us.'

### **3. "TOTUS TUUS" - LATE POPE'S MOTTO**

The late Pope John Paul II was a life-long devotee of Mary. When he began his reign as pope, he dedicated his papacy to Mary and adopted as his Episcopal motto "*Totus tuus*," meaning "*Totally Yours*." His devotion was totally given to Mary, a dead person represented by an idol-image.

To manifest his devotion, "*Totus tuus*" was embroidered on his papal robes. This devotion began some sixty years ago. In his 1994 autobiography John Paul II relates how he began to venerate Mary. "*During the Second World War, while I was employed as a factory worker, I came to be attracted to Marian devotion ... Mary is the new Eve, placed by God in relation to Christ, the new Adam, beginning with the Annunciation, through the night of his birth in Bethlehem, through the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee, through the Cross of Calvary, and up to the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Mother of Christ the Redeemer is the Mother of the Church ... the Mother of God shares in a unique way in the Resurrection and in the Glory of her own Son ....*

*John Paul II venerated Mary on every occasion, private and public. It was his custom to pray the Rosary before an image of Mary on the first Saturday of every month.*

John Paul's worship of the image of Mary was a total devotion. He worshipped at Marian shrines all over the world. He exalted Mary in his sermons. He consecrated nations to Mary. He dedicated one entire year 1987 to her as the "Marian" Year. When he died, a large "M" was engraved on his coffin. In all his life he demonstrated utter and total veneration before Mary's image. (... *to be continued*)

## Church Weekly for 5 June 2005

My dear readers,

### 1. NOW THE RCC INVITES ANGLICANS TO ACCEPT MARY

In the centuries following the 16th Century Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church by violence, torture and suppression failed to turn the Church of England back to Rome. Today things are different. The climate is no more one of repression but reconciliation. Whereas **Inquisition** had failed miserably, **invitation** will succeed.

Today's conciliatory climate will cause the ecumenical flower to bloom. The return of apostate Protestantism, including evangelicals, liberals, charismatics and all the rest to "Mother Rome" is inevitable. It is only a matter of time, predictably within a decade or two.

The end time Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots (Rev 17), is rapidly taking shape.

### 2. WHAT DOES GOD'S WORD SAY?

*"Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 Jn 5:21). "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? ..." (2 Cor 6:16). Our God hates idolatry and imagery. Remember the holy Commandment Number Two? "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image ... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God .." (Ex 20:4,5) . And all idolaters shall have no place in heaven. Their part is in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone (Rev 21:8).*

Dear reader, be faithful until the Lord returns. Amen.

*Then Exodus 20:4,5 - "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."*

### 3. MATTHEW HENRY'S COMMENTARY SAYS:

The second commandment concerns the ordinances of worship, or the way in which God will be worshipped, which it is fit that He Himself should have the appointing of.

The prohibition: we are here forbidden to worship the true God by images. The Jews thought themselves forbidden by this commandment to make any image or picture whatsoever. It is certain that it forbids making any image of God or the image of any creature for a religious use. It is called the changing of the truth of God into a lie (Rom 1:25), for an image is a teacher of lies; it insinuates to us that God has a body, whereas he is an infinite Spirit. Our religious worship must be governed by the power of faith, not by

the power of imagination. They must not make such images or pictures as the heathen worshipped, lest they also should be tempted to worship them.

They must not *bow down to them* occasionally, that is, show any sign of respect or honour to them, much less serve them constantly, by sacrifice or incense, or any other act of religious worship. When they paid their devotion to the true God, they must not have any image before them, for the directing, exciting, or assisting of their devotion. Though the worship was designed to terminate in God, it would not please him if it came to him through an image. The use of images in the church of Rome, at this day, is so plainly contrary to the letter of this command, and so impossible to be reconciled to it, that in all their catechisms and books of devotion, which they put into the hands of the people, they leave out this commandment.

The reasons to enforce this prohibition which are, God's jealousy in the matters of his worship: "*I the Lord Jehovah, and thy God, am a jealous God*, especially in things of this nature." This intimates the care He has of His own institutions, His hatred of idolatry and all false worship, His displeasure against idolaters, and that He resents every thing in His worship that looks like, or leads to, idolatry.

The punishment of idolaters. God looks upon them as haters of Him, though they perhaps pretend love to Him; He will *visit their iniquity*, that is, He will very severely punish it, not only as a breach of His law, but as an affront to His majesty, a violation of the covenant, and a blow at the root of all religion.

*Lovingly in the Lord*  
*Dr SH Tow, Senior Pastor*

## **Church Weekly for 12 June 2005**

My dear readers,

### **1. REMEMBERING OUR SCOTTISH ROOT**

John Knox, the Scottish reformer, may be regarded as "Father of English Presbyterianism." In our Weekly, for the next two weeks, we shall remember the life and works of this great saint of God by an article from "The Reformer."

#### **JOHN KNOX**

*by Chris Richards*

### **2. ONE WHO NEVER FEARED THE FACE OF MAN**

2005 marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of Scotland's leading Reformer, John Knox. He was born at Haddington in East Lothian of respectable parents who were able to afford the cost of educating their son. In 1522 he entered Glasgow University where John Major was lecturing. Major was calling for a reform of the Church to curb the corruption of the clergy. He did not question the theological position of Roman Catholicism. From Major, John Knox received his political education and later would forcefully uphold the sovereignty of the nation. Power was in the nation not in the Pope or the King.

In 1528 Patrick Hamilton was burnt at the stake for preaching Lutheran doctrine. Knox in his account of these times said, "the reek of Patrick Hamilton infected all on whom it blew." The burning of Hamilton therefore did not suppress the teachings of the Reformation but actually spread these more widely.

### **3. A LIVELY IMPRESSION OF TRUTH**

Despite the stirrings of the Reformation in Scotland, Knox was not affected and by 1540 had been ordained as a Roman Catholic priest. The first trace of change in Knox's theology was in 1543. At this time the Scottish Reformers had the favour of the governing Regent, The Earl of Moray. He had appointed Thomas William as one of his chaplains. While listening to William preach, Knox recorded that he first "received a lively impression of truth." This was furthered by Knox's conversations with George Wishart who in 1544 and 1545 travelled about preaching Reformation truth.

Knox heard Wishart preach his last sermon before his arrest and subsequent martyrdom. Although keen to accompany Wishart, Knox was sent away by Wishart who knew his fate, telling him to "return to his bairns" (Knox was a tutor), "one is sufficient for a sacrifice." Wishart was burnt in 1547 and in revenge Cardinal Beaton was assassinated.

The assassination troubled the authorities and the political and religious reformers gathered at St Andrews Castle for safety.

#### **4. RUNNING WHERE GOD HAD CALLED HIM**

At St Andrews, Knox was urged to preach. Knox refused, saying he "would not run where God had not called him." A call from the congregation of St. Andrews however was presented to Knox who after several days of prayer eventually accepted the call. He commenced preaching and it was said that other preachers struck at the branches of the Papacy, but Knox struck to the root. At St. Andrews he introduced a service of Holy Communion so the Reformation movement now had become a Reformed Church outside of Roman jurisdiction.

St. Andrews was besieged but was able to hold out until the French fleet came to assist in the siege. Knox had warned the inhabitants and exiles in St Andrews that the corrupt lives of some of them would bring God's judgment. In July 1547 the Castle was forced to surrender. The punishment on the besieged was harsh. Knox was forced to labour as a galley slave aboard a French vessel. Here he remained for 19 months.

#### **5. IN EXILE**

In 1549 he was liberated from the French in an exchange of prisoners with England. At this time Edward VI had come to the Throne and the English Reformation was advancing rapidly. For two years Knox ministered at Berwick on Tweed. In 1551 he moved to Newcastle upon Tyne and was made a Royal Chaplain, but refused the Bishopric of Rochester for he disapproved of prelates. Sometime during this period he married Marjory Bowes.

As Royal Chaplain, Knox played a major part in the revision of the Prayer Book and Articles. Through Knox's influence the so-called "Black Rubric" was placed in the Prayer Book. This was the denial of the worship of the elements in the service of Holy Communion. It was called the black rubric because the other rubrics (directions on use of liturgy) were written in red ink, the black rubric was in black ink.

When Mary Tudor came to the Throne, Knox did not initially flee but eventually was persuaded by friends to leave England. He travelled to Switzerland where he met John Calvin and the Reformer of Zurich, Bullinger. Later he moved to Frankfurt where he spent a controversial few months as minister to the English Protestant exiles. For several months he then resided in Geneva before returning to Scotland in September 1555. (... *to be continued*)

*Lovingly in the Lord*  
*Dr SH Tow, Senior Pastor*

## **Church Weekly for 19 June 2005**

My dear readers,

### **JOHN KNOX - II**

*By Chris Richards*

#### **7. A NATION BORN IN A DAY**

Knox returned to Scotland because of correspondence with friends who told him of the rise in opinion favourable to reform. Mary of Guise was now Regent and was protecting Protestants from persecution to win their support for the marriage of her daughter, Mary, to the Dauphin of France. Using this period of protection Knox travelled far and wide preaching. He exhorted Reformers in Scotland to cease attending Mass and to celebrate the Lord's Table according to the pattern he had conducted communion at St Andrews.

The Romanist party cited Knox to appear before the Bishops hoping Knox would flee. Bravely, however he appeared at Edinburgh to answer charges against him. The Bishops, confounded, boycotted the trial on a technicality involving procedure. Knox returned to Geneva in 1556 and remained away from Scotland until 2nd May 1559.

During the three years of Knox's absence he taught and advised Protestants in Scotland by letter. He felt that his absence would allow the Reformation to develop quietly yet solidly. This indeed happened. On his return the forces of Reformation and Counter-Reformation were clearly discernable. The Regent, once she secured the marriage of her daughter, discarded any pretence of support for the Reformation. To suppress the Reformation she invited French troops on to Scots soil. To answer this the Reformed nobility invited English forces to aid them. In 1560 the Regent died. On her deathbed she advised that both French and English troops be asked to depart.

Roman Catholic and Reformed leaders heeded her advice, the result being the signing at the Treaty of Leith on 6th July 1560. A Parliament was summoned for the peaceful settlement of ecclesiastical affairs. Knox, during the whole of the period from his return, had been a leading voice on the side of the Reformation. From St. Giles Church his sermons inspired and aroused the population in Reformed truth.

The Parliament's first acts were to accept the Reformed Confession of Faith drawn up by Knox and to outlaw Papal jurisdiction over Scotland. Scotland is said to be one of the few countries to experience such complete reformation. It was as it were "A Nation Born In A Day."

#### **8. MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS**

Mary, Queen of Scots, realised Knox was her chief opponent in seeking to reinstate Romanism. For his part, Knox discerned in Mary a crafty spirit not found usually in one so young. Mary was popular and secured the right to have Mass in her Chapel at

Holyrood. This, despite Knox's protest that one Mass in the land was more fearful than if 10,000 armed enemies were landed. Mary was able to advance her Counter-Reformation and even Knox retired to Ayrshire. This was after preaching before Lord Darnley, Mary's second husband, on Ahab and Jezebel.

Mary, though, lost all public support by her open immorality and the assassination of Darnley in which Mary seemed compliant. Her subsequent marriage to the assassin of Darnley, Lord Bothwell, sealed Mary's fate. She was imprisoned and forced to abdicate. In 1568 she escaped and gathered an armed force but this was easily defeated at the Battle of Langside after which she fled to England.

## **9. PERFECT LOVE CASTETH OUT FEAR**

John Knox preached at the coronation of the Infant James VI of Scotland. Cordial relations between Court and Church now were established and remained for the rest of Knox's life. Although Knox had many battles to fight in establishing a thoroughly reformed church he did leave behind principles and teachings from Scripture to which his successors would remain faithful. Knox's last sermons were during the time when news arrived in Scotland of the terrible massacre of Huguenots in France on St. Bartholomew's Day. Knox foretold Divine judgment on the King of France for this persecution.

Dying on 24th November 1572, Knox departed happy that God had raised up one, James Lawson, in his place for his flock. The Regent, Lord Morton, said at Knox's funeral *"Here lieth a man who in his life never feared the face of man."* Mary, Queen of Scots feared Knox's prayers more than anything else. It has well been said *"Those that fear God should have no other fear."* This can certainly be said of John Knox. *(End of Excerpt)*

*Lovingly in the Lord*  
*Dr SH Tow, Senior Pastor*

## Church Weekly for 26 June 2005

My dear readers,

### 1. A VOICE FROM THE PAST

This week we reprint a pastoral which I wrote in 1988 for Calvary Weekly of Lord's Day 13 November. The 17-year-old article has useful practical lessons for all who love God's house. All too often we lack the warmth of welcome for visitors and newcomers, or we fall short in the area of reverence for the holy Sanctuary.

May we be reminded by this *voice from the past* of the need to honour the Lord in His House so that we may receive His approval and blessing.

### 2. "WHY I LEFT ANOTHER CHURCH TO COME HERE"

No church is perfect, but this does not mean we should not strive for perfection. A church which fails to provide a quiet and worshipful atmosphere in the Sanctuary will cause members to become dissatisfied, and some will leave to look elsewhere. Recently a new friend told us why she came to us: *"In the other church there is chit-chatting in the Sanctuary, and disrespectful behaviour. I found it hard to concentrate on worship."* Another visitor said, *"For 45 minutes we sang, clapped hands, prayed and shouted Hallelujah, as well as held hands or raised hands and swayed the body."*

While we may marvel at the defects in other churches, we might well be guilty of other sorts of defects ourselves. As I meditated on the matter, I am persuaded to write for the benefit of all. Surely YOU and I ought to be concerned that we do not "put off" new friends by our commissions and omissions. It is already not easy to get people to come to church, and to drive our visitors away by our defects (which are largely avoidable) must be something most thoughtless and foolish. Let us all examine ourselves: do I do things which dishonour God in His holy Sanctuary?

### 3. DISHONOURING GOD IN HIS HOUSE

It is a strange fact that men of the world honour their politicians and musicians more than we honour our great Omnipotent God. People are seated **15** minutes before some VIP politician or minister arrives to give a speech. At musical performances (eg of SSO at the Victoria Concert Hall) latecomers are shut out and not allowed to enter to disturb the audience while a performance is on. This is the RESPECT the world shows to VIPs and music lovers. Everybody observes these rules of common courtesy. But in God's House it seems we have no rules and no respect for God or others. Consider these 10 ways of dishonouring God in His House:

- (1) Habitual and careless latecoming.
- (2) Coming without heart preparation.
- (3) Irreverent attitude toward Sanctuary.

- (4) Chatting and casual talking.
- (5) Reading things not related to worship.
- (6) Indifference in prayer / singing / listening.
- (7) Walking in and out at will.
- (8) Falling asleep during worship.
- (9) Allowing children to disturb the peace.
- (10) Disrespectful attire, casual, worldly.

When you consider the above account carefully, you will surely say: "*These things ought not so to be.*" All of us would agree too.

#### **4. HONOURING GOD IN HIS HOUSE**

Of course we all want to honour God, in His House and elsewhere, at all times. However, due to thoughtlessness, or lack of discipline on the part of some church leaders, the Sanctuary is allowed to degenerate into a club house or social meeting place, sometimes even into a market-place. (Calvary is **not** any of these, thank God.) Nevertheless it is needful for us to take stock and IMPROVE the SANCTITY in the SANCTUARY:

- (1) Lord's Day worship should be seen as the CLIMAX to a week of devotion toward the Lord. We must therefore come with adequate heart preparation.
- (2) Let us keep an early Saturday night so as to be able to get up early on Lord's Day morning.
- (3) We must LEAVE home EARLY (making allowance for traffic delays, etc) aiming to ARRIVE 15 minutes before time.
- (4) Approach the Sanctuary **reverently** and observe SILENCE.
- (5) In the Sanctuary: no casual talking, no unnecessary moving about (Do not walk to toilet! Go **before** service).
- (6) In worship, do it heartily with ALL our HEART / SOUL / MIND / STRENGTH.
- (7) Keep young children RESTRAINED.
- (8) Come to God's House properly attired: no flashy or fleshy clothes. We must **All** learn to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.
- (9) For today (17 years after) we need to add: check your handphone, etc, and switch off! Let us observe sanctity in the Sanctuary.

*Lovingly in the Lord*  
*Dr SH Tow, Senior Pastor*

---The End---