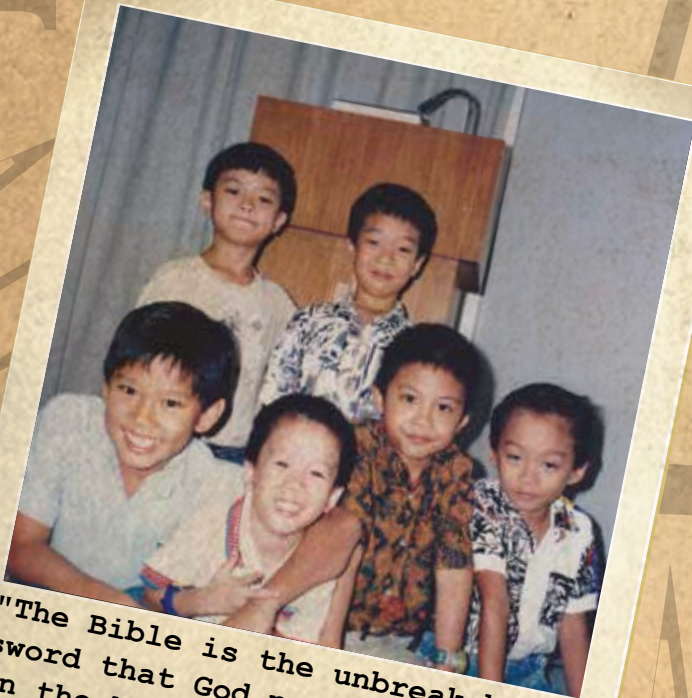


**"...we need to wait patiently  
for God and His timing."  
Trusting in God's Timing, by  
Jessica Smits**

**joel 3:16 matthew 5:16**

Issue 26 | May 2014



**"The Bible is the unbreakable  
sword that God puts in our hand  
in the battle against sin."  
Temptation Through Time, by  
Pastor Andrew Lanning**



**"Let time not serve a pointless  
cause, nor let it serve the  
cause of sin." Redeeming the  
Time, by Ivan Chew**

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Welcome to the 26th Issue of Salt Shakers!

We are glad, as the Salt Shakers committee, to once again be of service to you. May you be blessed by God's Word as it is brought to you through the articles that follow.

The theme of this Issue is "Time". Such a theme is especially relevant to us because we are creatures of God, bound by space and time. Man has something to do with time, whether he likes it or not; he is affected by it, whether he is aware of it or not. One thing is for sure—and it certainly strikes fear into the hearts of sinful men—we are all running out of time.

For the heathen, this is indeed a matter of concern. Whether rich or poor, healthy or sick, everyone drifts towards the inevitable end of death [Ecclesiastes 8:13]. There is no exchanging of health or wealth for time, and subjecting oneself to poverty and afflictions cannot add a second's worth of time to a person's life. Whether borne out of fear or logic, the best outcome for them is simply to eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die [Luke 12:19, 1 Corinthians 15:32].

As God's children, we are also running out of time. However, this phrase has a wonderfully different meaning for us! We do not run out of time in the sense that we have lesser and lesser time of existence left; instead, we are running—or moving—out of the realm of time! That, in other words, is the comfort that we daily draw nearer to eternal life with God because of the work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross [Romans 6:23]. Each day brings us closer to the time when we shall be freed from time itself, and dwell eternally with God in Heaven.

Another important comfort that we have in the passing of time is that the Bible tells us that God works all things for our good. In a way, we are happy for time to pass faster so that we can see how God is going to work everything out for our good. Time is simply the flowing stream that brings along the untold blessings that God has prepared for us [Ephesians 1]!

Because of this, Christians know that the apparent afflictions and sufferings of this life are always only "a matter of time". Why be unduly anxious about better health and longer life for your dying body when eternal life in a perfect body is just a matter of time?

But, our comfort is more than that. Our God who works all things for our good is also the almighty Creator who made the heavens and the earth. Before you think that our only comfort lies beyond this life, God reminds us, "Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee..." [Genesis 18:14] In this life, God mercifully appoints grace and strength along the way. And even that, God tells us, is a matter of time.

Are you waiting on the LORD in your afflictions? Do your trials seem to have no end? Do you struggle with sin with no end in sight? Only be patient, for nothing is too hard for our LORD. Look forward in hope, and in time, God will reveal His goodness to you!

That's all the time I have for now! ;) Blessed reading, and remember to pass the Salt!

Christ regardless

paul

# Bleeding but Protected

>> Josiah Tan



*Josiah Tan* is a confessing young adult in CERC. He heads the Salt Shaker's committee and is actively serving in the young people's committee (Covenant Keepers).

*Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

As teenagers, we often feel invincible and invulnerable. "What possible harm and danger can come upon us?" We often think this way when our parents caution us. How about feeling like we would live forever; feeling like our life is eternal in an earthly sense? Our parents tell us, "Don't waste your time, quick, hurry up do this and that," but we don't feel like time is limited. We have all the time in the world; all the time to do what we want and enjoy! We crave the surge of excitement and seek out every ounce of fun.

Yet sometimes as youth, we feel life is completely bleak. In a moment, it feels as if everything is crashing down on us. We become lost and confused, unsure of even the most familiar things. We start to wonder, "Who am I?" or "What am I?" We feel like we have no control over the tides in our lives.

God's Word tells us that we are invincible and invulnerable. We are untouchable and forever blessed. But it is quite different from our earthly ideas of being invincible and invulnerable. We can think of many times, probably even now, when we feel like our heart is bleeding out and everything is in utter turmoil and chaos. How can we be forever and infinitely blessed, and yet have the sharpest pain in our heart at the same time? We are bleeding, but protected.

**We are protected by God's unbreakable covenant.**

*Eze 36:28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.*

With the same authority and power in which God spoke the universe into existence, God declares, "You are My people! I will be your God! In this covenant I make with you, I give myself to you. I lay down my life for you. Nothing will come in-between us. Nothing will pull you away. You are mine. I am yours. You shall have the deepest bond of love and intimate fellowship with Me. You are safe in My Covenant of unbreakable love."

Circumstances seem to turn against you and terrifying trials are placed in your path. Burdens that weigh on you feel like they are crushing your very heart and soul. Yet, you are forever blessed. Father God is sovereign. Every morning, God brings the sun up to rise for you. Every night, God makes the sun to set, brings the moon out,

and unfurls a canvas of stars to fill the night sky. Deep breath in, deep breath out. Every breath you take, God moves your lungs to expand and contract, causing the air to flow in and out. Your heart, heavy though it seems, is still beating because God's hands are massaging it to keep you alive. God has ultimate control over everything in the universe, in your life, and in mine. The problems that you are experiencing, though hard to believe, are in God's control. The sovereign God is our providential God.

*Jer 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

God has plans for you, especially in the trials we are facing now. Those plans are for your welfare and for your highest good. They are not evil plans. God's plans for us are bright plans! They are plans bursting with hope! God is in full control, and He has planned great things for us! He protects us!

A best friend promises to his best friend that he will always protect her, stay with her, and love her no matter what happens. We call that kind of promise a vow. It is the vow of the unbreakable bond of marriage. God seals that kind of vow Himself. God says to best friends that promise to be with each other till death, that they are put together by Him, joined together by Him, and fused together to be one flesh. When Almighty God does

that, He also declares, “Let NO man put them asunder.” These two best friends will now be united as one. It is a mystery that two people can become one flesh.

We fall into the most grievous sins. Grievous sins over and over and over again—all hope seems lost. Previously, we felt invulnerable. But now, we feel like we are smashed to bits. Worms probably feel better than what we are feeling. Yet, nonetheless, God’s love for us remains. Unwavering, steadfast, and unmovable. Like a husband that stays with his wife even though she has repeatedly committed adultery against Him. Cheated, lied, hurt, and even insulted His very name. His love for her remains as strong as it first was. He swore once, by His one blessed and holy name—because He could not swear by anything more powerful, so he swore by Himself—that “surely in blessing, I bless thee, I will never leave nor forsake you.”

**The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.**

You are forever blessed. You are the apple of God’s eye. You are eternally loved by God. God says that to you and I, Face to face. Yet when He tells us this, we feel a sharp pain on our heel. We turn and look to see it is bleeding badly. We have left a long trail of blood in the narrow path we journey on. “Father God, you tell me I am protected and loved by You, then how can this pain still remain? How can such great sins still seem to enslave me? How can you let me be excruciatingly lonely when I obey you?”

In all these questions, we must still say, “blessed be the name of the LORD God.” For out of our mother’s womb we came out ugly, naked, and helpless.

That is what we were, and that is what we still are. We are ugly and in a bloodied mess. There was nothing lovely in us. Yet God took us as His child and said, “In My blessed family will this child be.”

Naked we came out of the womb. No iPhones, clothes, education certificates or grades. We like to think our clothes, bank accounts, and gadgets define us. We think that reputation with people in school will offer us some kind of protection. But really, they don’t. We came a naked baby into this world; naked we will return. All our pain over material things and earthly pleasures will look most silly as we draw our last breath and return naked into the ground.

Yet we are wearing the robes of righteousness. Robes that protect us; robes forged by the blood of the Lamb, the Son of God. God gave these robes to us. In your struggle with sin and its guilt and shame, never forget this precious robe God has given you to wear. It is the only thing that protects and truly defines you.

Helpless like a baby: crying till it is fed and defecating without any control. Unable to comprehend dangers and powerless over all circumstances—that is what we were and still are. We started by foolishly thinking that we were invulnerable and invincible in ourselves. Our prideful flesh tells us that. This is what the world sings about in its songs. “Believe in yourself!”, “You are great, awesome and... a firework?” Every drama lets you escape into a made up reality in which you have power and control to turn bad into good. Yet, we are actually helpless like a baby. Man is nothing. People say that is extreme, “Don’t we have earthly wisdom, science, and education?” Yet, we must still face the Truth: even

though we feel like we have all the energy, adrenaline, and excitement, we are nothing.

God is everything. Everything. He is Creator, Saviour, and King over all. We are protected! While on this earth, we bleed. But we must remain humble and never blame God—never rebel against Him in sin. We are ugly, naked, and helpless; that is the truth. Man will confess that when everything has been stripped from him. We sometimes continue to complain about our bleeding because we are so fat with the material comforts of this world, or with our good physical health. But, strip it all away, naked, and we say, “Blessed be name of the Lord.” God is good. In all my trials, God is Good. In all my joy, God is Good.

We bleed, but we are always protected. God has never left us and never will. But we still bleed because God ordains it to be so. We will fall, but we will never be utterly cast down. That is God’s promise. God will uphold you in the darkest night. When we feel like collapsing from being bled out, God will uphold us by His hand. Don’t expect your life to be without suffering, don’t be shocked by pain. But don’t be paralyzed by it too, don’t ever be hopeless. His Covenant of love with you is unbreakable. He is turning all circumstances for your good. He swore by His own name that He will never leave you.

Leave your sin, hopelessness, and pride. Get up by His power, and continue your limping, with a bleeding heel, on the narrow path. Press on till we draw our last breath and fall into our Saviour’s arms in heaven. God, keep us as the apple of Your eye, and hide us, always, under the shadow of Your wings.

# Public Confession of Faith (IV)

>> Aaron Lim



*Aaron Lim* is a confessing young adult in CERC. He has been studying in the Protestant Reformed Seminary since August 2013.

*3. Will you submit to church government, and in case you should become delinquent (which may God graciously forbid) to church discipline?*

On March 1, 2011, the Session of CERC adopted the Church Order of Dordrecht with a few minor revisions. This was done after the Session had studied the document for a year with a view to adopt it for our local situation in Singapore.

The adoption of this Church Order marks a significant advancement in the reformation of CERC. As a Reformed church, CERC is always reforming according to the Word of God. The adoption of the Church Order is significant because it is grounded in the principles of God's Word. This ensures that CERC is always governed by God's infallible Word.

Equally important in the adoption of the Church Order is that it connects us to our Reformed history and heritage. Not only do we have the creeds that faithfully express what the Reformed churches have taught doctrinally,

the Church Order also helps us to maintain what the Reformed churches have practiced in the past. This is what the Scriptures call "the old paths, where is the good way" (Jeremiah 6:16).

In our discussion of the questions in the form for public confession of faith, we have treated the first two questions. The first question concerns doctrine, the second life, and the third church government. All three questions are inseparably connected to each other, and the latter two essentially flow from the first. Godly living and government in the church flow from right, Biblical doctrine.

The third question asks the young person making public confession of faith whether he will submit to church government. Church government is the rule of Jesus Christ in His church through His office-bearers. Christ Himself appoints and ordains these men into office as His faithful representatives. Their rule is His rule.

The New Testament church maintains the three separate offices of minister, elder, and deacon. These three offices have been transferred over from the three offices in the Old Testament church. The office of prophet has been transferred over to the office of minister, the king to the elder, and the priest to the deacon.

It is interesting that each of these New Testament offices is very closely connected to the Old Testament offices. The office of prophet in the

Old Testament was to declare the Word of God to God's people. He may never declare his own word to the people, but only what God has spoken to him. The same is true of the office of minister in the church today. He may never bring his own opinions to the pulpit on the Lord's Day, but only the very Word of God. When he speaks, Christ speaks.

The office of king was to rule over Israel faithfully. The king was to ensure that Israel obeyed the will of Jehovah in all the spheres of their lives. Elders receive that office today to rule over God's church according to His will. In their Session meetings, family visitations, and personal contact with the people, they maintain the rule of Christ faithfully. When they rule, Christ rules.

Priests occupied an office of mercy in Old Testament times. They performed the sacrifices on behalf of God's people, sacrifices which pointed to the one true sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of his people. The deacons today discharge an office of mercy in the church. They see to it that the poor and needy are taken care of, not only materially, but also spiritually. In that way, the mercies of Jesus Christ are faithfully dispensed to His sheep. When they minister, Christ ministers.

God in His wisdom specially instituted these three unique offices for the care of His church. These offices

“ Our submission is never merely an outward conformity or a grudging compliance. ”

are concerned with the instruction, discipline, and needs of the individual believer. God knows that as sheep, His people are bound to stray and walk in the ways of sin. So He graciously uses His representatives in the church to guide His sheep back to the sheepfold.

It is important for us to understand what submission to church government is. Submission is an attitude of the heart. We submit willingly and cheerfully because we recognise that God has placed these office-bearers in the church to rule over us. Our submission is never merely an outward conformity or a grudging compliance. But we submit to our office-bearers with meekness because God is pleased to use them for our spiritual and eternal good. We bear patiently with their faults and love them as God's faithful ministers.

There are times when God's people become delinquent in their confession or walk. They may be attracted to false doctrines, or they live in a way that is contrary to God's Word. At such times, God uses His faithful officers in the church to exercise discipline against them. He uses their admonitions and rebukes to bring the straying sheep back into the sheepfold. At times, formal church discipline and even the extreme remedy of excommunication from the church are necessary for the spiritual good of the church and the impenitent sinner.

Church discipline is necessary because it is one of the three marks of a true church. Church discipline works hand in hand with the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments to distinguish a true church. Where the true church is, Christ is present in her midst. When faithfully exercised, church discipline ensures that God's church is kept pure and obedient to His will.

The young person making confession of faith submits to church government and church discipline only insofar as they are in accordance with the Word of God. When the officers of the church make decisions that are clearly contrary to the Word of God, the young person is duty bound to protest against those unbiblical decisions. The reason for that is that the young person occupies the office of all Believers. He is a prophet, priest, and king of God. He has the Holy Spirit living within him so that he is able to know and discern the will of Christ as He has revealed in His Word. He is able to speak God's truth as a prophet, minister it to his neighbour as a priest, and rule over himself and others by it as a king.

In our struggle over the controversy of divorce and remarriage nearly ten years ago, church government and

church discipline were important factors. When the elders of First Evangelical Reformed Church (FERC) in Singapore made a decision to allow the remarriage of the innocent party after a lawful divorce, they made an important decision regarding the government of the church. Remarriage was not judged to be sinful, and remarried people could be members of the church in good standing. Church discipline would not be exercised against remarried members.

Judging this decision to be false and contrary to the Word of God, many members of FERC protested against the elders' decision. Those protests were rejected.

For the truth's sake, these protesting members were compelled to leave. They desired a church that would be faithfully governed according to the Word of God. They desired a church where discipline would be faithfully exercised against remarried adulterers.

The split was heartrending, but necessary. For these members, God graciously provided CERC, where the Word of God governs the church. In this church, Biblical and Reformed church government is maintained and faithful church discipline is carried out. By God's grace, we must be careful to maintain that.

# THE PINK DOT MOVEMENT

>> Jemima Lee



*Jemima Lee* is a confessing young adult in CERC.

“Freedom to Love”, “Tolerance”, “Openness”, and “Acceptance”. These are the common taglines of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) movements around the world. And Singapore’s very own Pink Dot movement is no different. Pink Dot, started in 2009, is an annual event organised by the LGBT community in Singapore where people gather at the Speaker’s Corner in Hong Lim Park to form a pink dot by donning pink T-shirts. This year, organisers plan to hold the Pink Dot movement on 28 June 2014. According to the Pink Dot SG website, pink represents the colour of our identification card and is also the colour you get when you mix red and white, the colours of our national flag. Thus, Pink Dot symbolises “an open and inclusive society within our Red Dot, where sexual orientation represents a feature, not a barrier.” This Pink Dot movement which started in Singapore has spread to many other major cities in the world such as New York, Hong Kong, and London. In a relatively conservative Asian society such as Singapore, is it surprising that

the LGBT community has dared to step up and start such a movement to urge Singaporeans to be more open to homosexual relationships? Maybe not. This is a sign that the end times are coming and as stated in Matthew 24:12, “iniquity shall abound”. Hence, it is not surprising that more Singaporeans are willing to step forward to promote LGBT ‘rights’.

## The Government’s Response

A survey done on more than 4000 Singaporeans with regards to social morality was conducted by the Institute of Policy Studies and released in January 2014. It was found that 72.8% of respondents felt it was wrong to have sexual relations between people of the same gender and 72.9% did not agree with gay marriages. With a society that is still largely conservative, the Singapore government has so far tried to remain neutral on this issue.

On one hand, they have refused to heed calls to repeal Section 377A of the penal code which criminalises sex between two consenting male adults. It is through God’s sovereignty that the government still recognises that the family is the basic building block of society. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has also stated that “by family in Singapore we mean one man, one woman, marrying, having children and bringing up children within that framework of a stable family unit.” With Singapore’s total fertility rate still well below the replacement rate of 2.1, I suspect that the government is in

no rush to change its stance on what constitutes a family, nor are they keen on legalising gay marriages yet.

On the other hand, the government has given space to the LGBT community, in recent years, to champion their agenda as can be seen in allowing the creation of the Pink Dot movement. In addition, the Health Promotion Board has, in its webpage of Frequently Asked Questions, stated that homosexual and heterosexual relationships are not much different as both require commitment from two people and are based on values such as love, trust and support. Realizing that a younger, more vocal, and more open generation has risen up, the government has tried to accommodate and be more receptive towards them.

## The Biblical Response

Many in the LGBT community have derided traditional morals as backward, exclusive, and discriminatory against human rights and equality. We live in a post-modern era where there is no more respect for any moral and Biblical standards. People live according to their own standards and what they feel is right. We can see that the wicked world in this post-modern era have become “vain in their imaginations”, and their foolish hearts have been “darkened” (Romans 1:23). For them, as long as there is a feeling of love between two people, regardless of the gender, it should be seen as normal and legal. Hence, the ‘freedom to love’ is propagated by LGBT activists.

“...legitimacy and acceptance does not equate to being forgiven and standing as righteous before God.”

Many in the LGBT community claim that they have had their sexual orientations from young—though there is little scientific evidence, if any, to support their claims. At the end of the day, LGBTs are sinners who give in to their lusts and “vile affections” (Romans 1:26). Romans 1:24 also clearly states that “God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves”. We have to be wary of the homosexual agenda that tries to sexualise children. Such arguments are made to silence their own consciences and to gain empathy and acceptance in society.

While people in the LGBT community refuse to admit it, I reckon that deep down in their hearts they know that homosexual relationships are unnatural and thus they come up with movements such as the Pink Dot to try and legitimise these relationships. Legitimacy is key for them in feeling accepted into society. However, legitimacy and acceptance does not equate to being forgiven and standing as righteous before God. What does God say in His Word?

Homosexuality “is abomination” (Leviticus 18:22), whereby “women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use

of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly” (Romans 1:26-27). The Bible is clear in stating that homosexual relationships are sinful, against nature, and corrupts the marriage bond that is meant to be between a man and a woman. We can see that all these are also part of Satan’s plan to pervert God’s creation.

Gay rights have been championed all over the world calling for the equality of all men. While we must not discriminate against LGBTs, we must also make it clear that no man has any “right” to live in sin and rebellion against God. No one, us included, has any rights before God. We merit nothing before the Creator of the heavens and earth, and our only rightful place is as obedient servants of the Most High. And when man fails to love and obey God, he is deserving of death and the wrath of God—for that is the wages we have to pay for our sinful nature and actions. “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matt 15:19). As there is nothing good that comes out of our thoughts and actions, the only way to be right with God—and living aright—is in Christ Jesus our Saviour. By championing gay rights, the LGBT community does not submit to God; and instead, it destroys the family institution and inadvertently promotes the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. The wicked world is blind to all these repercussions, only wanting what is desirous for itself.

### Our Individual Response

The sin of homosexuality is not new—it was already present during the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

However, it is even more prevalent now and the voice of the LGBT community is getting louder. The world will not become a better place, and I will not be surprised if there are more movements like the Pink Dot happening in Singapore in the near future. I know of many schoolmates who are homosexuals and are openly ‘dating’ people of the same gender. It is so common to see such people around schools and workplaces that if we are not careful, we may trivialise the sin and start to treat it as a normal occurrence.

What then should be our response to such individuals? As we fulfil our daily callings in life, it is inevitable that we will come across homosexual individuals. It is definitely not wrong to interact with them. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5:9-10, “I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.” In fact, such interactions are opportunities for us to bring the Word of God to them. We can show them that being able to freely love anyone regardless of gender is not true freedom. In reality, they are in the bondage of sin and are slaves to their own lusts. We can only have true freedom from sin when we seek for forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

As it is not an easy task to talk to those in the LGBT community, we must come to them with humility. After all, we are also sinners like them—constantly breaking the seventh Commandment and always giving in to our sinful lusts. May God give us grace and humility to deal with homosexual individuals in true Love when we encounter them.



# Public Schools (II)

>> Noelene Wong



Noelene Wong is a confessing young adult in CERC.

In the previous article, we tested our public schools with the Word of God. Is the Truth taught in them? Is God always in the forefront and centre of everything that is being taught? Sadly, only the opposite is true. God has been kicked out of education and, instead, man is glorified. How about the philosophies taught there? Does ‘You can do it’, ‘Believe in yourself’, or ‘You are the author of your life’ sound very familiar? I am very sure they all do! For they are common ‘motivational quotes’ our teachers use, isn’t it? But if we test them with Scripture, they are all false teachings. They are the Lie. Public schools are ultimately a very godless environment. We sometimes spend more than half of the time in a day there and virtually have no opportunity for spiritual things! If we also take into account the hefty workload from our teachers that must be done by the next day, where can we find any time for quiet time? We do not have time for ourselves—let alone time for personal devotions, family devotions, church youth group, and Sunday worship! We need the time to do our homework, catch up with

the school’s syllabus, revise for exams, and if there is just a small fraction of time left, to surf the internet too! By the time we are done with all those, we are too exhausted to read God’s Word. Even if we do it, we might just end up falling asleep halfway or so—what is the point then? Oh, how we sometimes groan, “I hate Singapore’s education system! How I wish I can get out of it...”

But dearly beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, do we really lack the opportunity and time? Is Singapore’s education system really the cause of us having less time to spend with God and the saints? Can we blame the education system? Or maybe God made a mistake! How can He send us, His beloved children, to such godless schools? Who, or what, is really to be blamed?

The LORD has been pleased to place most of us in public schools. This is His sovereign, gracious, merciful Will for us; “he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.” (Psalm 115:3) But how can this be if it causes us to suffer so much, you may wonder. Furthermore, it is not helping me spiritually! Rather, it causes me to draw further away from Him! Beloved, “Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?” (Isaiah

40:13-14) Do you think you know what is better for you than the Wise LORD? “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8-9) Though we cannot fully comprehend God’s reason for putting us in public schools, we willingly and humbly submit ourselves to His Will. We satisfy ourselves with the knowledge that God knows best. He is the Almighty One, the Wisest. We may not doubt God and His doings. He is LORD, we are subject to Him, and we obey Him.

Well, so it has to be our education system’s fault since it cannot be God’s, right? It has to be it, isn’t it? Wrong, we may not blame the education system too! It is created and modified to serve man. It is specifically for the ungodly. Man did not create it with a goal to serve the believer’s soul. However, the LORD still uses it as a means to sanctify us and to prepare us for Heaven! Just like how He uses and causes everything to work for our good!

We ought to view our public schools like how Job viewed his trials. Job did not blame others when trials came. He did not blame the Sabaeans and Chaldeans for taking all his belongings. Neither did he find fault with Satan. No, not once! Instead, he rests in the truth of God’s sovereignty.

He realized and confessed that God is in control. And we ought to be like him with regards to our perspective of public schooling. We humbly submit to His Providence for us and trust in Him to provide for us.

Yet, truly, there are difficulties that we students of public schools face. Some have already been mentioned earlier. For instance, we have little time to do personal or family devotions and to attend youth group activities or Sunday worship services. However, is that truly the case? How do you spend your God-given time? Try putting away your mobile phones, iPads, iPods, computers, and all the other distractions right after you come home from school, and be marvelled at how much time you have! Oftentimes, the majority of our time is spent on distractions that eat up precious time! How often can you get quality work done with your phone right beside you, beeping ever so often and grabbing your attention away? Be disciplined and put all distractions away! Which is more important? Your God-given work or godless entertainment? If you want to give God your best in your work, “do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Colossians 3:23). Pray for the desire to do it and put your whole heart into doing it. Note that God is watching us every second in a day. He knows when we are lazing, skiving off, and not giving our best; He knows when we are giving our best. Note that God judges and ‘grades’ all our work too! “Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.” (Colossians 3:24-25) Yes, our teachers grade our assignments; but the Lord does too.

And His judgment is weightier. How does that change how we view all our work and how we do it? Does that make us more conscious that He indeed is God? He is all-knowing, sovereign, and He deserves the best. Stay away from the works of the priests in Malachi who gave lame and blind sacrifices, profaned the Lord’s table, and yet they did not repent but spoke against the Lord. (Malachi 1-3) We, as His servants, give our BEST to our Master, for He deserves it. Then we will be able to have peace with God, and usually, adequate amount of time to read His Word, meditate upon it, and pray. It is also profitable if we set aside some time for devotions, for example, half an hour before we start work, or at a certain specific time every day. And when this becomes your routine, it will become more of a joy than a chore. You will also find God’s blessings which are always desired by His children (Psalm 1:3). Pray, prioritise and plan!

Another challenge we face is not being sensitive to worldly things. The things we learn are godless. The company around us seek not after God’s ways. We tend to be sucked into godless living. Our spiritual antennas are not working too well and we have to do something about it lest we unknowingly fall deeper and deeper into worldliness! How do we mend it? We must frequent the house of God and the gathering of His people. His way is in the sanctuary (Psalm 77:13). We learn of our sins and the evil doings of the wicked there. We learn of how to walk in this world and how to avoid the many dangers and temptations that lurk. Do not forget, we also learn of our gracious God who will provide for us. This can also be done through attending church youth group

activities which are specifically catered to you! Workshop topics are relevant and chosen according to your interests. Bible studies are good systematic studies of God’s Word. Outings are for you to strengthen the bond between us brothers and sisters in Christ, that we may encourage one another, give and receive godly counsel from each other, and have a foretaste of eternal Glory! There are also the Chinese class, Old Testament History class, informal meet ups, Gospel meetings, and so on. Never neglect the different means of grace that the LORD provides for us to grow in knowledge and faith in Him. For ultimately, we have to answer to God when He asks us how we have used all these means. Remember, we are His. As His vessels, we serve Him, not ourselves; we cheerfully and humbly do as He says.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” (Psalm 1:1, 2) Truly we will be blessed as we do His law.

There are also other challenges which we face in public schools. Such as being a godly example to our schoolmates and teachers, living antithetically, seeing God in everything we study, and so on. I believe these can be overcome by keeping close to God through His Word and prayer. As mentioned earlier, this can be done by making good use of the means of grace. Also, seeking for help and counsel is wise. The Lord reminds us prideful and stubborn people in Proverbs 11:14 “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.” Thus, do not be afraid

to seek counsel, for we are all sinners saved by grace.

Moreover, parents have a great responsibility in leading and guiding their children in the way of the Lord, especially when they are in public schools. Like little seedlings with shallow roots, they require a lot more care and guidance. We must remember that bringing children into public schools is like putting little seedlings to weather the howling wind, stormy rain and scorching sun. Parents, “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” (Deuteronomy 6:7) It is a command of God to provide Christian education for your children—whether

it is by your own hard labour of closely guiding them through public schooling, or by putting in the effort to home-school them, or by sending them to a God-fearing Christian school. Your children are God’s children. They are His possession in Christ. Because they are God’s, they must be “piously and religiously educated” (as mentioned in the Baptism Form). God’s children must be taught in a godly way. This instruction is essential for it is the means of God to train up the children to godliness, to a mature man or woman of God. Such is the importance of this teaching that it is part of the vow at baptism: parents promise to give this teaching. Hence the nurturing of children’s spiritual well-being falls upon their parent’s shoulders.

We all know how often we fail in our various callings. Thus, I would like to remind us to constantly keep one another in prayer. If the LORD gives us opportunity to encourage each other, do so! May we as Christ’s body serve one another and grow together with each other for the glory of our King.

“My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart. Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman: That they may keep thee from the strange woman (world), from the stranger which flattereth with her words.” Proverbs 7:1-5.

## Lessons from the History of the Beloved Church of Jesus Christ Now Among Us

>> Pastor Arie den Hartog



*Pastor Arie Den Hartog* is a minister of the Word at Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Wyoming, Michigan.

I intend this to be the last chapter of my series of articles on the history of CERC in Singapore. This last chapter involved the labours of three ministers of the Word of God from the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. We are thankful for the labours of all of these men of God. This last chapter also included the labours of Pastor Cheah Fook Meng. Pastor Cheah was dearly loved among us for his youthful and vibrant ministry. Covenant learned a very difficult lesson about the providence of the Lord when He suddenly took Pastor Cheah from us and brought him to glory. There are mysteries in the providence of God that are sometimes so deep that we cannot fully understand them. We only rest assured that God does all things well in His perfect wisdom. He always remembers His love for His church and works all things for the good and salvation of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

During the period of time in the history of CERC, of which I am writing, other significant things were taking place. The event that brought the greatest sorrow was the breakup of the (Evangelical Reformed Churches of Singapore) ERCS as a denomination. We wondered about the purpose of God’s providence and

why we were being so deeply tried. But through all these events, our faith was purified and strengthened so that we are what we are today.

Important discussions were being held concerning some of the doctrinal positions of ERCS as a denomination. Not all might realize the significance of this fact. The church of Jesus Christ is founded on Truth. She is called to confess this Truth in a world where God has planted her. In the world, there are many different churches and different opinions regarding the Truth. The church of Jesus Christ is called to maintain His Truth in this world and defend it against the many false teachings that arise in every age. She must be strong and mature in her faith. See Ephesians 4: 11 to 16; the church must perform her calling in love for the Truth and for the glory of her Lord. She must continue to

God hates a religion that is merely formal and ceremonial. In standing for and fighting for the truth, the church receives her courage and strength from the Lord. She is completely dependent on Him. The members of the church must find their comfort and hope in the Truth as they face many trials and persecutions in this ungodly world. Through this process, and by the Spirit of Jesus Christ in their hearts, members are drawn closer and closer to each other, experiencing the blessed reality of the communion of the saints in their fellowship together.

Every new church in various places of the world must learn to appreciate the history and development of the Truth that has taken place in other churches among God's people in other lands and cultures. Each new church needs to remember that she is not the first to face the challenges of knowing,

had to take a position on. Failure to take a stand will often result in falling into the same errors which have led many in the church through history astray. Those called to oversee and lead the church have an especially great responsibility in this regard.

One of the doctrinal controversies ERCS faced involved the truth of the sovereign particular grace of God. By this grace, God saves and preserves His chosen people and glorifies His own name in the midst of His church. The question that was faced was whether God, in addition to sovereign and particular grace, also has a universal grace to all men showing a kind of common favour to all men. Does God show His favour to all men without the purpose of saving them from sin and death and hell but only to do them temporal earthly good?

“ There are mysteries in the providence of God that are sometimes so deep that we cannot fully understand them. ”

search the Scriptures to grow in her understanding of the glorious Truth of Jesus Christ. She must maintain a lively and zealous interest in this Truth. Her members must always guard against allowing themselves to be so caught up in the things of this world that they lose their first love for her Lord. The church must also be on guard against the evil of dead orthodoxy. The hearts of God's people must be guarded against becoming cold and sterile.

understanding, and defending the truth of God. Each new church that appears in history must be ready to learn much from those who have gone before. God uses churches who have been through the battles of defending the faith to instruct and encourage churches who are still young in their faith.

Especially in the late 1990s and the early 2000s, ERCS faced a number of important doctrinal issues that she

Does God through His “common grace” to all men, in the preaching of the Gospel, reveal the desire on His part to save all men? Is the preaching of the Gospel a general well-meant offer of salvation to all those who hear the Gospel? Scripture clearly teaches that not all men are saved. Does the unbelief of man frustrate the desire of God to save them? Is the preaching of the Gospel not only the power of God to save those who believe but also the

means whereby the ungodly reprobate are hardened in their sin and left without excuse before God? Does the preaching of the Word of God need to include the warning that Jesus gives in John 3:17 that those who do not believe are condemned already and the wrath of God abides on them?

Questions regarding these important truths of the preaching of the Gospel have troubled Reformed churches everywhere in the world for a long time. Ministers of the PRCA emphasised in their preaching the truths of sovereign and particular grace, and distinguished these truths from the false teachings regarding “common grace” which are maintained in many other churches. The leaders of the ERCS were challenged to take a position. In trying to do this, the leaders of ERCS were reading the writings produced within the PRCA and also those produced in other denominations. It was not wrong for these men to study the teachings of others. However, what troubled the church was that for a long time the doctrinal controversy was not settled clearly on the basis of the Word of God—in the hearts and minds of both the members of ERCS and of the leaders. This created confusion and left members of the church being “tossed to and fro” as Ephesians 4 warns about.

In the years of the controversies, many left the church. Some returned to churches they had come from originally, not wanting to be engaged in the conflict. In some cases, they returned to churches where there were even more serious doctrinal errors.

Another doctrinal question came into the ERCS from various sources. This was related to the important Biblical doctrine of God’s Covenant of grace. One of the main questions

faced was whether God’s Covenant is conditional, based on the faithfulness of His people themselves. Do children born to believing parents have to fulfil a condition in order to merit salvation—failing which they will be lost? Or does God sovereignly maintain His own everlasting Covenant of grace with His chosen people, never failing to realise and fulfil it? History shows that God cuts off unbelieving generations from the Covenant who show

“ His Covenant is from everlasting to everlasting; it will never fail. ”

themselves reprobate, impenitent, and unbelieving. But our faithful Lord preserves His Covenant of grace with elect believers even in spite of the many weaknesses and failings of these people. The PRCA maintains that God is faithful to His Covenant. His Covenant is from everlasting to everlasting; it will never fail. God maintains His Covenant with believers and their children by His sovereign grace alone. This is not dependent of the faithfulness of His people themselves. If the Covenant of God were dependent on our faithfulness it would certainly fail because of our own sins and weaknesses. God Himself always turns His elect again unto repentance and to Himself in the greatness of His unfailing love and mercy. Our salvation as members of God’s Covenant of grace is all of grace, and grace alone. To God be the glory!

Our trust is in Him alone and not in ourselves.

In the midst of many discussions regarding the doctrines mentioned above, there also arose an important question in the application of the Truth in the lives of God’s people. This truth has to do with the permanency of marriage. Christian marriage is so important for the continuation of the Covenant of God with believers

and their children, and for the continuation of God’s church among them. Every church, no matter where it is in the world, will be faced with the awful reality of the corruption and destruction of marriage by this ungodly world. This corruption also often enters into the church if she is not on guard. The PRCA earnestly desired for the ERCS to stand with her on this practical question of such great importance—both for her future and for the good of the families in the church.

In the next issue, I shall conclude this last part with a discussion on the above question.

*City of Destruction*

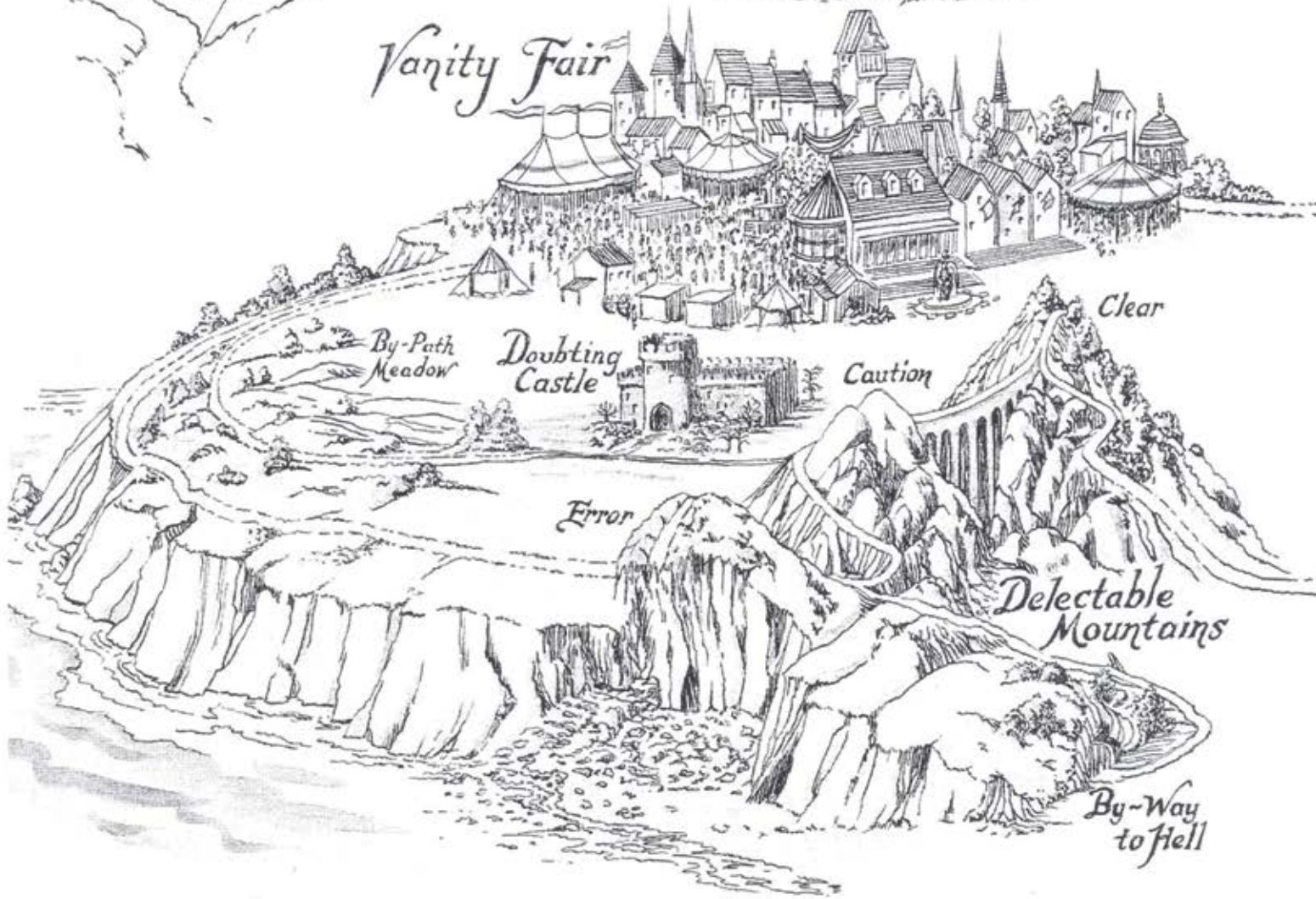


*Morality*

*Slough of Despond*



*Vanity Fair*



*Clear*

*By-Path Meadow*

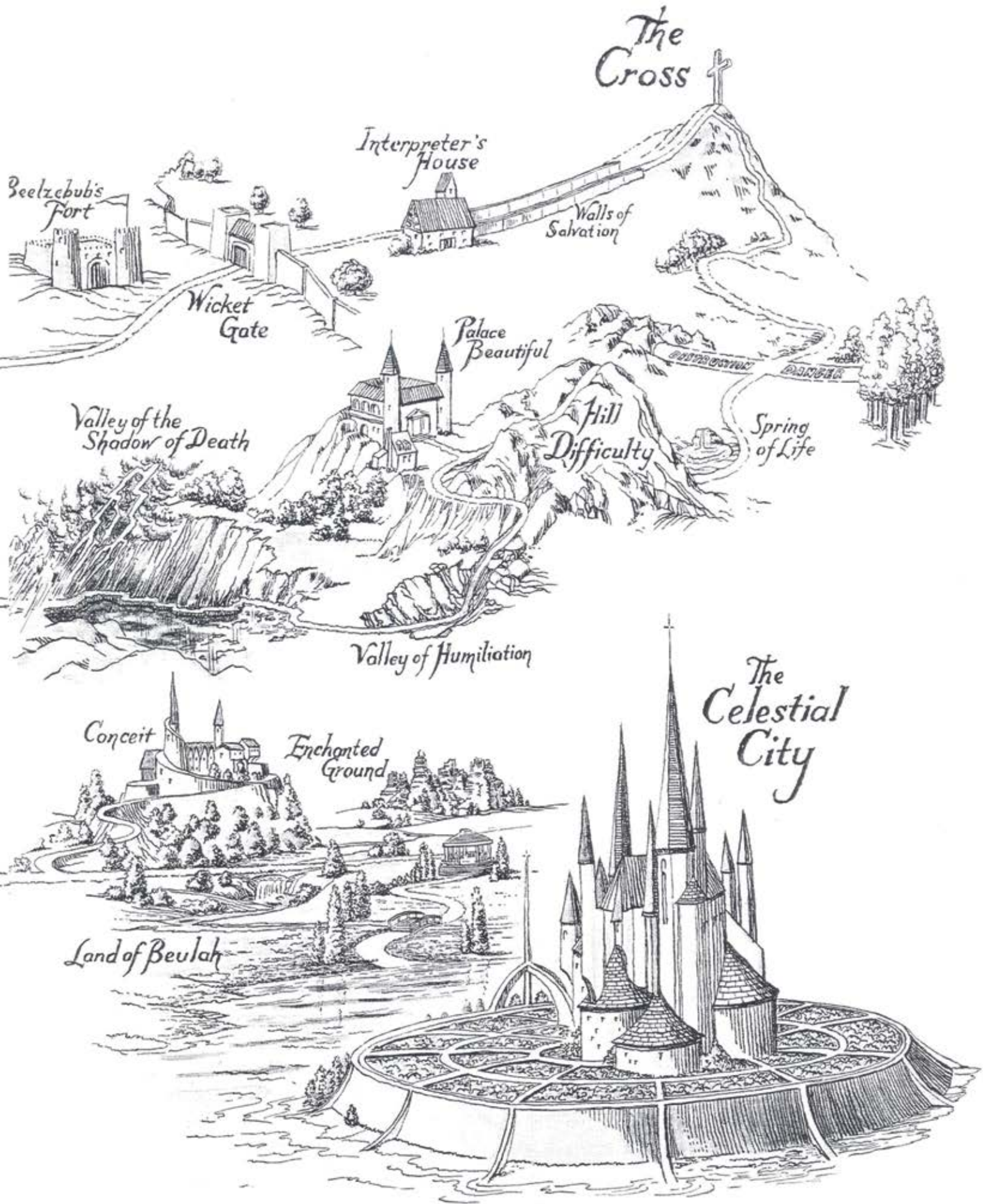
*Doubting Castle*

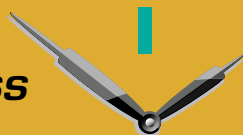
*Caution*

*Error*

*Delectable Mountains*

*By-Way to Hell*



**Pilgrim's Progress**

&gt;&gt; Lim Yang Zhi

**Book Review**

Lim Yang Zhi is a youth in CERC.

Dear Fellow Youths,

By now, you would have probably seen the special portion of this *Salt Shakers* issue: a map portraying a number of places from the book *Pilgrim's Progress*. The map is artistically drawn, portraying the condition of each location in the book, from the Sloughs of Despond to the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

But the map serves a greater purpose than to merely fascinate you with nice drawings. The map serves to aid you in visualising all the events that happen in *Pilgrim's Progress*. Perhaps some of you have already read the whole book, or maybe some of you do not know about the book at all. If you have never read the book, now is *the* time to do so! I hope this letter will encourage you to read. Reading the book is a good way for you to take your mind off school-work, and it is my prayer that this book will work for your spiritual benefit.

I should mention a few things about the book as an introduction for those of you who have not read the book. *Pilgrim's Progress* was written in the 17th century, the same century in which the Canons of Dort was written. The writer, John Bunyan,

was an English preacher who was imprisoned by the king of England for rightly standing against the king's command. While in prison, he wrote a number of books—one of which is *Pilgrim's Progress*.

*Pilgrim's Progress* is an allegory. An allegory is a type of fiction containing characters and events that point to a deeper meaning beyond the literal level. That definition sounds terrifyingly complex, but the definition will make sense when I explain more about the book's plot. The book has two parts, but we shall look only at the first part.

In the first part, a man named Christian is on a journey to a city called Celestial City. As Christian travels through various places (which you see on the map), he meets with various difficulties and temptations prepared by the Devil to stop Christian from continuing in his pilgrimage. But, by the grace of God, Christian makes it through these difficulties to Celestial City. This book records the many ups and downs of Christian's journey.

However, there is more to the story. Christian, the main character, represents you. Even as Christian is a child of God on his pilgrimage, so you are children of God on your spiritual pilgrimages on this earth. Christian's difficulties along the way represent difficulties you face while on this earth. Even as the Devil tries to stop Christian from reaching Celestial City, so the Devil tries to turn you away from your pilgrimages. He presses you with physical trials and spiritual temptations to take God out of your minds and to stop you from doing what God calls you to do. But

Christian, preserved solely by the hand of God, arrives at Celestial City; and in the same way, you will reach heaven because the Lord guides you with His Word and Spirit.

Simply put, *Pilgrim's Progress* is an illustration of your spiritual pilgrimage. This illustration is the deeper meaning of the book. Christian's various difficulties while on the way to his final destination are all representations of the difficulties you face.

I have two pieces of advice to give to you. First, though this book is an allegory, do not try to link every minute detail in the story to a spiritual truth in the Bible. Bunyan did not intend his reader to do that. Rather, keep that broad, deeper meaning in your mind as you read through the various incidents Christian goes through and his responses to them.

Second, read an accurate, modern-English edition of the book. Many editions of *Pilgrim's Progress* have been published. Some editions stick to the same kind of English Bunyan wrote in, called 'Old English'. But Old English is rather different from the English we use today, so reading an Old-English edition can get quite difficult. Getting a modern-English edition will be a much easier read without the need to get tangled up in Old English!

With all that said, what are you waiting for? Read the book! Yes, the book is over 300 pages long. But don't be bogged down by the size of the book; take your time to read it. Use the map to guide you along the book. That's what the map is for!

However, don't just read the book; *enjoy* it. Enjoy reading how Christian



makes his way out of one trial after another through the various means God prepares. Be assured that God will deal with you as He dealt with Christian: with grace! Not only enjoy the book, but *learn* from it too. Learn how Christian trusts in the Lord, but also take note of how he fails to trust in the Lord at times. Learn of the victories Christian has in the Lord, but also be aware of how his flesh is weak and prone to fail.

So read, enjoy, and learn! As you do these, my earnest prayer is that you be spurred on in your pilgrimages on this earth. The half-way mark of the year is approaching. Perhaps the first half of the year has been difficult for you. Perhaps the Lord has given you many trials to bear. You may be physically and

spiritually worn out by now. You may be too tired to keep up with catechism assignments, to come for Bible studies and workshops, and to pay attention during sermons. But *Pilgrim's Progress* will remind you of this one comfort spoken by the Lord through Paul: we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us!

With that comfort, will you continue

your pilgrimage in the next six months following the godly example of Christian? Or will you stop and turn around, slumping into the sinful ways of Slothful?

Wait, who's Slothful?

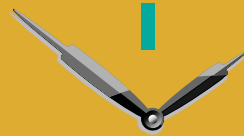
That's for you to find out! Happy reading!

In Christ,

*Your fellow youth*

“ Learn of the victories  
Christian had in the Lord... ”

TRUSTING IN



GOD'S TIMING

>> Jessica Smits



Jessica Smits is a confessing member of Crete PRC. She is the oldest of seven and is currently studying for a degree in Elementary Education and Special Education.

As youth, we face some daunting questions. Should I go to college? What should I go to college for? Who should I date? Where should I work? Many of us are unable to answer one or more of these questions and so we search until we finally can. But are we searching in the right direction? Looking to ourselves or men for answers and solutions brings nothing but sorrow and unrest. However, looking to the Lord brings peace and joy to our lives. God's Word gives us many examples of saints who had to look to God for guidance.

In Genesis 12:9-20, a famine drove Abram and Sarai to the land of Egypt. Sarai was the beautiful wife of Abram, and Abram knew other Egyptians would see and admire her beauty. He was afraid that the Egyptians would

kill him so that they could marry Sarai. Abram pondered this situation and came up with a solution of his own. He decided to tell the Egyptians that Sarai was his sister. Pharaoh heard of her beauty and took her into his house. The LORD sent a great plague on Pharaoh and his entire house because Sarai was the wife of Abram. This angered Pharaoh and he had Abram and Sarai sent away.

Abram forgot God's promises in Genesis 12:2, "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing". God had not blessed Abram with a son yet. Therefore, God would not have allowed the Egyptians to harm or kill Abram. If Abram would have looked to God for guidance, God would have given Abram the assurance

“ God makes known a path that He has chosen for us, we must listen...”

that no harm would come to him and his wife. Instead, Abram looked to himself for safety and answers. God is using Abram to show us that we need to look to Him and He will give us the direction we so desperately need.

We should be like Ezra and the Jews that returned to Jerusalem, who sought the will and the guidance of the LORD. These Jews were the second group of Jews to return to Jerusalem. “Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us” Ezra 8: 21-23.

When God gives us guidance and shows us the path He wants us to take, we have to listen and obey. God gives us the example of the prophet, Jonah, who did not listen to God’s command and wanted to go his own way. The LORD had spoke to Jonah and said, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me”, Jonah 1:2. Jonah knew the path he was supposed to take, but he disobeyed the LORD. Jonah 1:3 records, “But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to

Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.” Two times in this verse, we read that Jonah went from the presence of the Lord. Going our own way and disobeying God leads us from His presence. As His children, going away from His presence means falling into sin and not living the antithesis.

God will use His means to bring us back into His presence. In Jonah’s case, God sent a great and terrible storm to the sea. The sailors casted lots to see who did evil to cause this terrible storm. The lot fell on Jonah. Jonah told the sailors that he “feared the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land” and that he also “fled from the presence of the LORD (vs 9,10).” Jonah was thrown overboard and was swallowed by a fish for three days and nights. After the fish spat Jonah out on dry land, Jonah followed the path the LORD made for him. We should learn from this account of Jonah’s disobedience to God’s command. If God makes known a path that He has chosen for us, we must listen. If we fail to heed God, we will be fleeing from His presence.

Sometimes, even when we do look to God for guidance, He does not always give us the answer or direction right away. We have to wait patiently for Him.

Jacob and Rebekah knew that God promised Jacob that Esau would serve him. This meant that Jacob would receive the birthright blessing. When Rebekah heard that Isaac was going to

bless Esau, she and Jacob came up with a plan to deceive Isaac into blessing Jacob. Neither Jacob nor Rebekah thought to wait for the LORD’s timing. Jacob not only deceived his father, but also angered his brother.

Jesus Christ, the perfect example, sought God’s will and waited for His timing every single day. Even during His sufferings in Gethsemane, He prayed “O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” and again “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done”. (Matthew 26:39, 42) Jesus shows us that we need to look to God in everything, including our decision making; and not only that, but also that we need to wait patiently for God and His timing.

By nature, we have a hard time waiting patiently for God. Romans 15:5a talks about God being the “God of patience”. God will grant us the patience that we need if we pray to Him and ask for patience from Him. If we trust and seek the Lord and wait patiently, then we can say with David in Psalm 40:1, “I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me and heard my cry.”

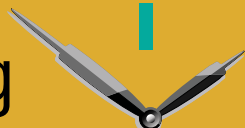
## WORD OF THE DAY

Antithesis: “...a term which signifies contrast or opposition...the contrast or opposition as being that ‘between light and darkness, between good and evil, between God and the devil, between the Church and the world’”  
[From *For Thy Truth’s Sake*, RFFPA, 2000, p. 183]

See 2 Corinthians 6:14-16;  
1 John 1:5.

*Quoted from Herman Hoeksema*

# — Redeeming



# The Time —

>> Ivan Chew



Ivan Chew is a confessing young adult in CERC.

Dear Students,  
Holidays!

The best time of youth.

No lessons to attend, no homework the complete, no project deadlines to meet and most importantly; so much more time to spend.

So what are you going to do?

I hope that you have made good plans, because whether you like it or not, time will not stop for you. Every passing day is time spent.

No plans? Read Ephesians 5:16.

The text contains a calling to redeem the time. Doesn't that sound like an awkward phrase? We often hear "Redeem your prize" or "Redeem your free burger". And very often on Sundays, "Christ has redeemed us". The word "Redeem" used in Ephesians 5:16 has the same meaning as that in all three examples.

Redemptions always comes with a "price". We redeem a prize with a winning ticket, a burger with a newspaper coupon. And Christ redeemed us with His blood. So what do we need to redeem time with?

We redeem time with good planning, diligence, and punctuality. A careless man without a plan for his money can easily squander his hard-earned savings. We can easily squander our time in the same way. So, start planning.

You will make plans tomorrow? Do it now!

Just as a rich man forgets the value of a dollar, you too will easily forget how valuable a single day is with so much time on your hands.

The redemption of time is urgent and pressing because the persecution of those faithful to Christ will eventually come. This is what "evil" in Ephesians 5:16 refers to. In the midst of persecution, there will not be an abundance of time to fellowship with the saints or to visit the sick and lonely. Neither will there be an opportunity to learn a new skill or to enjoy a good book.

I do hope you realise what a blessing it is to have all this time available. Time is the opportunity given to the servant of one *Talent*. To waste this time and opportunity is to bury the *Talent* in the ground. It is better to use this opportunity wisely that you may present more *Talents* back to your

Lord.

You have plans? Good!

But also consider if the things you choose to spend your time on is redeemed to the correct end.

From Ephesians 5:16, we are called to redeem our time from something. We may redeem our burger from McDonald's, or a prize from an event organiser. Christ redeemed us from our sins, that we may serve sin no longer. Redemption requires us to remove the possession of an object from someone or something. So what are we to redeem our time from?

After the fall, time became the slave of sinful man, used to propagate and develop sin evil. Time that rightfully belonged to godly sweet communion and fellowship ended up belonging to death and corruption. Do you now see how we can redeem our time?

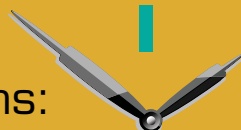
Therefore, let time not serve a pointless cause, nor let it serve the cause of sin. Do not indulge in the world's entertainment and be not deceived by pleasurable distractions. Rather, redeem time from the curse and use it to serve the purpose of our Redeemer!

With Love,

*Fellow Student*

“ The redemption of time is urgent and pressing because the persecution of those faithful to Christ will eventually come. ”

## Why I Love Singing the Psalms:



>> Daniel Tang

## Psalm 90



*Daniel Tang* is a confessing young adult in CERC.

It is a distinctively Reformed practice to sing the Psalms, particularly at the worship services. The Psalter—versifications of the 150 Psalms—occupies a place not only on the shelf of every Reformed believer, but also in his heart. The Reformed believer does not sing the Psalms because it is an old habit (although it is indeed a habit to sing the Psalms), but out of a love for those Psalms. Why do we love singing the Psalms so much?

There are many reasons to love Psalm singing. Perhaps one of my favourite reasons for singing Psalms, and I daresay one of the best reasons to sing Psalms, is that the Psalms resound with the praise of a God who reigns sovereignly over us in His love and grace. That is illustrated simply yet beautifully in Psalter 247, a versification of Psalm 90.

Let us pause a brief moment to take a look at some background information about this Psalm. Psalm 90 is titled “A Prayer of Moses the man of God”. It is believed that Moses wrote this prayer about the time that God pronounced the judgment upon Israel that all those above twenty, except Joshua and Caleb, would not enter the Promised Land, but would wander in the wilderness for forty years and die because of their rebellion and unbelief (Numbers 14). Forty more years in the wilderness without coming into the Promised Land! You would certainly expect Psalm 90 to be a song of mourning, despair, maybe even anger against this harsh, cruel and unloving God.

Instead, Psalter 247 opens with a line of confident praise to God:

*O God, our help in ages past,  
Our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast,  
And our eternal home.*

What? Look what God just did! He condemned every Israelite above twenty to wander and die in the wilderness. How could the Israelites call God a help and hope, a shelter from the storm? How could Moses pen these lines, after God made him wait forty more years to see the Promised Land?

The second stanza then chimes in quickly:

*Under the shadow of Thy throne  
Thy saints have dwelt secure;  
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,  
And our defense is sure.*

And this is the beautiful part. This opening stanza is a solid confession that a child of God makes: whatever happens, I know that my God is sovereign! He controls everything. Even though life seems weary and without hope, I rest in the fact that this God has already been my help in times past. Under the shadow of His throne the Israelites were preserved in the perilous wilderness, and under that same shadow I sit secure. I know that there is hope in the future, not because of the world’s promises that everything will be all right, but because I know that my God holds the future in His hands. And through

all of life's trials and difficulties, Joshua 1:9 reminds me that "the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest". God does not promise to take away my afflictions right away—the Israelites still had to spend forty more years in the wilderness—but He does promise that "my grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12:9). And finally, I am assured that my eternal home is in heaven, where God has prepared a place for me (John 14:2-3).

What a wonder that is. If anyone could still have any doubt that God's promises for his people are sure, stanza 3 would help him out:

*Before the hills in order stood,  
Or earth received her frame,  
From everlasting Thou art God,  
To endless years the same.*

Before the mountains were brought forth, before the world was formed, God was there, and will ever be there. These promises are not those of some quick-witted salesman out to make a quick buck, here today but gone tomorrow. These are the promises of God who is from everlasting to everlasting, and who has made heaven and earth. The child of God knows that, and therefore can confess that God is his help and hope. In fact, there is hope in none other. We would be most miserable if we had to hope in ourselves or some other man.

And lest we think we could perhaps do a little something for ourselves, along comes stanzas 4 and 5:

*A thousand ages in Thy sight  
Are like an evening gone,  
Short as the watch that ends the night  
Before the rising sun.  
Time, like an ever rolling stream,  
Bears all its sons away;  
They fly forgotten, as a dream  
Dies at the opening day.*

Perhaps the Israelites, too, might have entertained the thought that since God would not bring them into the Promised Land, they could probably do it themselves. Maybe we think that our works could merit something. So let us start listing what we have. Maybe long life? Improvements in medical science are allowing us to live longer. According to statistics in 2011, the average life expectancy of a Singaporean is 81.89 years. Compare that to the patriarchs, some of whom lived almost a thousand years. But even the patriarchs' thousand years were nothing to God! Psalm 90:4: "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." So you think your long life can give you time to achieve much? That is just like the evening past when compared to God's everlasting power!

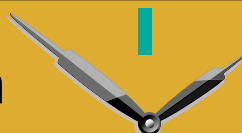
On the contrary, we spend our days accumulating more and more sin, and more and more of God's wrath. Verse 9: "For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told." And when our seventy or eighty years on this earth are up, we return to the dust of the earth, gone and forgotten like a dream when we awake.

There is a lesson for us here. We realize that our time on earth is far too short. And 1 Corinthians 3:13 also reminds of the day when all our works will be judged, tried by fire for what it is. Is there even a need to try our works? Our works are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), they will not survive that fire. We have to wake up to the reality that there is no hope for us in ourselves. There is absolutely nothing that we can achieve to merit salvation with God—no matter how long we might live. We are humbled. We can only submit to God's sovereign direction for us. In that sovereign grace He has saved us to be His people, and as His people we spend our lives as His servants, doing His bidding. Only then, as His servants, can we sing with confidence the closing stanza of Psalter 247:

*O God, our help in ages past,  
Our hope for years to come,  
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,  
And our eternal home.*

“ In fact, there is hope in none other. We would be most miserable if we had to hope in ourselves or some other man. ”

## Temptation



## Through Time

&gt;&gt; Pastor Andy Lanning



*Pastor Andy Lanning* is minister-on-loan to CERC. He began his official labours here in end November 2012.

This special issue of *Salt Shakers* is about time. In this article, let us consider how time relates to temptation. Especially, we want to know: Does temptation decrease over time?

We face many temptations in the days of our youth. Scripture speaks about the youthful temptations of pride (Ecclesiastes 11:9, 10), violence (Proverbs 1:10-19), fornication (Proverbs 7:7-27), disobedience (Jeremiah 3:25), and lust (2 Timothy 2:22), among others. Our own experience is in harmony with these passages, as we daily fight against all of these temptations and more.

In fact, it often seems that Satan designs snares especially for young people. Scripture often emphasises how important the days of our youth are as a time of spiritual formation. For example, Proverbs 22:6 calls parents to “train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” The devil knows those Scripture passages, too, and makes the young people of the church his particular target. By mixing the pleasure of sin into their spiritual foundation, Satan hopes to weaken

and ultimately destroy the youth.

In the Old Testament, Satan designed the temptation of intermarriage with the heathen to entice the youth. The result was that the hearts of God’s people were drawn after the idols of the wicked. Even the heart of godly King Solomon was turned to idols for a time because of the wives he married in his youth (1 Kings 11:3, 4). Satan also designed the temptation of spiritual negligence on the part of parents in rearing their children. The result was a generation that knew not Jehovah and that did not remember Jehovah’s saving work of saving His people (Judges 2:10).

In our own day, Satan has designed the promise of pleasure to entice the youth. The godless music and entertainment of the world promise a few hours of relaxation, with sounds and images that appeal to the youth, especially the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). Even apostatizing churches recognize the appeal of worldly entertainment for youth, and infuse their worship with current music and entertainment in an attempt to attract and retain young people.

As if that were not enough, the youth must withstand a barrage of temptations of backbiting, slander, laziness, disobedience to parents, envy, discontent, taking God’s name in vain, not keeping the Sabbath, and on and on.

Under such a massive assault of temptation, youth experience their Christian battle against sin to be difficult and wearisome. Many times they fall, sustaining spiritual wounds

that may last their entire lifetime as spiritual scars and sensitive spots on their souls. Remembering the days of his own youth, David wrote in Psalm 25:7, “Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness’ sake, O LORD.” David’s confession about his sins of youth is striking, because David was godly as a young man. Still a youth, he obediently cared for his father’s sheep, defended the flock from a lion and a bear, defeated the Philistine giant Goliath, and honoured God’s appointed king at risk to his own life. And yet, even godly David had to confess sins of youth. If a godly young man such as David found the battle that difficult, then it is no wonder that we also experience the struggle against sin to be fierce.

As we struggle against sin in our youth, we might be tempted to think that the battle will become easier as we get older. Or, to put it in a different way, we may think that temptation will decrease over time. Perhaps we come to this conclusion as we observe the mature saints around us. Their conduct is holy, humble, and spiritually happy. We cannot imagine the elderly saints struggling with pride, lust, and hatred the way that we do. And so, we conclude that the battle becomes easier over time.

But if that is our conclusion, we have made a serious mistake! Consider these four biblical truths to see that temptation does not decrease with time.

First, Scripture testifies that the battle against sin is intense and fierce

all through our days. 1 Peter 5:8 describes the devil as a “roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour.” Hungrily, he stalks his prey throughout life. He will make a meal of the old man just as well as the young. Ephesians 6:10-18 calls the entire church, including the aged saints, to “put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” On earth, the saint knows no retirement from battle, but must wear his armour until his death bed. Speaking of death, 1 Corinthians 15:26 calls death “the last enemy”. The aged saint wages war against the enemy, death, as he falls asleep in Jesus. His battle is not so much to stave off death as it is to remain courageous and believing in the face of death. Until our dying day, there is a battle to fight against a fierce enemy.

Second, the example of God’s saints shows that the battle against temptation and sin remains strong throughout life. Consider Moses, who, as an old man, struck the rock in disobedience to God and unrighteous anger against God’s people. Consider David, who stole Uriah’s wife Bathsheba and then murdered Uriah to hide the sin. Whatever David’s sins of youth may have been, his sins of manhood were vile. Consider Paul, who, as a mature Christian wrestled so violently with sin that he said, “For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do . . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:19, 24). The examples of God’s saints do not show a life of decreasing temptation, but increasing!

Third, assuming that the struggle against sin becomes easier over time may lead to spiritual complacency and carelessness during our youth. If the struggle is difficult now, but easier later, why fight now? Why not just wait until we are stronger to fight? Such is the thinking of the careless

youth that is so often warned against in Proverbs. That youth wandered into every way of sin his heart could wish, but he was a fool. The days of youth are not for indulging the sinful desires of our flesh (Ecclesiastes 11:9, 10), but for remembering and loving our Creator (Ecclesiastes 12:1)!

Fourth, the assumption that time will make the battle against sin easier leads to idolatry. We begin to trust time to give us the strength and holiness that only Jesus Christ can give through His Spirit. This trust in time is really

“ The days of youth are not for indulging the sinful desires of our flesh... but for remembering and loving our Creator (Ecclesiastes 12:1)! ”

the idolatry of self. In this idolatry of self, one thinks that his future self can resist the temptations that his current self cannot. This is the mistake of thinking that sanctification means getting to a point in our lives where we are strong enough to stand against sin by ourselves. Maybe we need God’s help now, but we hope to arrive at enough strength to stand alone. But there is no such point in our lives! Not now in our youth, and not someday in our old age. Always, we depend upon the Rock that is higher than us: Jesus Christ (Psalm 61:2).

For all of these reasons, the notion that temptation decreases with time is wrong. Instead, we must expect the battle to remain a struggle all our days.

If that were all there was to say, this would be discouraging news. But there is yet this glorious piece of news: in this battle, both in our youth and in our old age, we are victorious through Jesus Christ! We battle, but we do not fight alone, and the outcome has

already been decided by the Captain of our salvation.

How are we victorious in this battle? Jesus Christ died upon the cross for our sins, thereby removing all our guilt. David’s sins of youth were covered in the blood of Christ, as are ours; and David’s sins of manhood were covered in the blood of Christ, as are ours. The temptations may be fierce, and we may fall, but we are never cast away.

What is more, our Lord speaks to us by His powerful Word. In the Scriptures, we are told how to live a

life of gratitude to God. As a lamp unto our feet and a light upon our pathway, the Scriptures enlighten us so that we more and more learn what is pleasing to God. The Bible is the unbreakable sword that God puts in our hand in the battle against sin. The battle will always remain fierce, but as we learn to wield God’s Word, we become experienced in answering temptation with Scripture. The Scriptures were the instrument that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself used to turn away the temptation of the devil, as He repeatedly answered Satan, “It is written” (Matthew 4). By that example, our Lord taught us how to fight. Though Satan keeps up his assault, we can answer that assault blow for blow with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17).

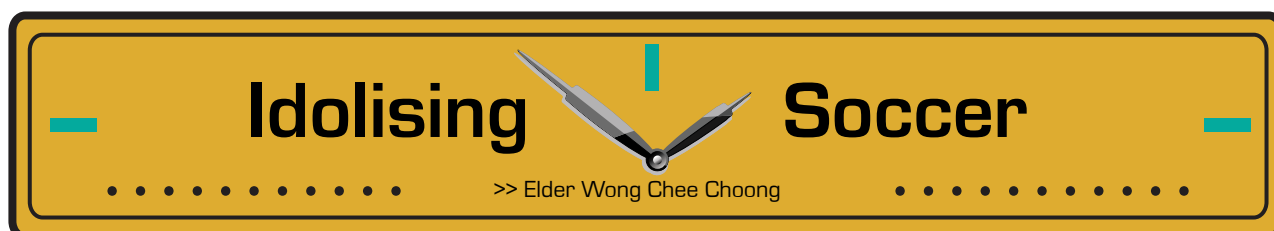
And even more yet, our Lord pours His own Spirit into our hearts. That Spirit takes the Word of God and applies it to us so that we can hear

and understand it. As the Spirit works throughout our lives, we become more sensitive to the words of the Bible and more horrified at the ugliness of sin. Progress in sanctification does not mean progress in perfection. That waits until Heaven. But it does mean we more and more hate our sins and more and more cleave to Christ. We cry with Paul, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But we also answer

with him, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 7:24, 25).

Therefore, beloved youth, be encouraged in our battle against temptation. First, let us place our hope and trust in Christ alone in the battle against sin and temptation—not in the passing of time, or in some future version of ourselves. Second, let us prepare for our lifelong battle against sin by preparing now in our youth,

holding the Word of God in our hearts and mouths and becoming familiar with its use in combatting sin. After all, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Psalm 119:9). Finally, do not despair in the fierceness or the length of the battle, but rejoice that the Captain of our salvation makes us more than conquerors all our days and finally calls us home!



*Wong Chee Choong* is an elder of CERC.

This year is certainly a great year to be watching soccer (or, football) on television! With the defending champions of the Barclays Premier League, Manchester United, already out of the title race, three teams are battling hard to take the title this season. European Champions League games are also heating up with great competition. To top it all off, World Cup 2014 in Brazil will be starting this June! What a great footballing event it will be for fans all over the world to enjoy watching and supporting their favourite teams. Football fans in Singapore are not exempted from this excitement; many will forgo their sleep to watch these games into the wee hours of the morning, in addition to the occasional side betting by some. If you are one of these fans who are caught up with the excitement and are going to sacrifice a few nights of sleep to watch these games, I encourage you, dear Christian readers, to count

your cost and consider your calling carefully.

### Football Addiction

Surely we are not one of these football fanatics! We may ask, “Is there anything wrong with enjoying watching football and supporting our favourite team while they play?” Well, there is a difference between enjoying watching football and allowing the game to take over one’s life. For some, it can be an addiction which endangers their relationships with the people in their lives. These have succumbed to addiction which results in abnormal behaviour in their real lives. But, why are some addicted to watching soccer while others are not? How can we tell if a person is addicted to it? The signs of football watching addiction are these:

- a) Thinking about football all the time.
- b) Rushing home to catch the game on TV, and on the way back, listening obsessively for radio coverage.
- c) Becoming irritated when a friend or a family member interrupts a game to

get the person involved with another activity.

- d) Missing family or other important events to watch a game.
- e) Reacting with anger or violence when their team loses.
- f) Spending time at work or at home surfing football sites to stay on top of what’s going on.
- g) Calling in sick to work or school in order to watch games.

If one is not careful, the innocent enjoyment of watching football can become an obsession and addiction. There are implications to enjoying watching football that we must consider carefully. Football addiction is real and conflicts with our many God-given relationships.

### Biblical Perspective

As Christians, we can be influenced and slowly succumb to the lusts and pleasures of the world in this area of enjoying watching football. The reason is because we live in a global culture that is more than just intrigued by





Therefore, our calling as God's people is to pause and consider our involvement and interaction with sports through the lens of Scripture.



sports—it is obsessed with it. Because football is a huge and influential part of our culture, it is important that we as God's people develop and maintain a proper Biblical perspective of football and examine all things through the lens of Scripture.

### Pros and Cons of Football

In any sport, there are always the upsides and the downsides; football is no exception. There are many positive aspects of football, for example:

- a) Participation in football can be a good primer in the development of moral character. For example, learning to be a member of a team, learning discipline, learning to properly handle disappointment and praise, learning to sacrifice for the good of the team, learning the value of hard work and perseverance, and learning to respect and obey authority.
- b) Participation in football can be a way to use God-given abilities and talents for His glory (1 Cor 10:31).
- c) Participation in football can aid in maintaining the health of our bodies, which are the temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19).
- d) Participation in football can provide an avenue to serve God and have an impact on the lives of others (teammates, coaches, and fans).
- e) Participation in football can aid in keeping children from being involved in ungodly and detrimental activities.
- f) Football can build team spirit, and aid in unifying a school, a community, a state, and even a nation.

g) Football provides jobs and pours significant amounts of money into the economy.

However, there are also these growing number of troubling aspects to football that we as God's people must honestly consider:

#### *i) The glorification and idolisation of men*

While it can be appropriate to rightly appreciate a footballer's skill and propensity to achieve certain goals, to elevate a man to godlike status is an affront and an insult to the one true and living God who alone is worthy of our worship. Thus, this pursuit of fame is unbiblical and is spiritually dangerous.

#### *ii) Unhealthy time commitment and misplaced priorities*

Today, many ardent football fans spend much of their time following the success of their favourite player(s) and team(s). Many spend the majority of their free time playing and watching football at the detriment of personal Bible study, prayer, church attendance, evangelism, and Christian fellowship and worship. Countless marriages and families have been adversely affected by an obsessive commitment to football. A good barometer of whom or what we worship is to look at how much time and finances are spent on it.

#### *iii) The propagation and reinforcement of ungodly pursuits*

Someone once said that "football does not necessarily teach character—

football reveals it". While that may be inherently true, the greater concern is the residue that often remains from the explosive world of competitive football. There often is an "anything goes" mentality associated with football. Supposedly because "winning is everything", some even wrongly rationalise that Christians are exempt from acting "Christian-ly" during a football game. A coach once said, "Football is not a game for sissies. It's kill or be killed. Anything goes inside the lines of that field." Often, sinful values like self-centeredness, pride, greed, anger, and violence are the unfortunate result of the dog-eat-dog world of football. The secular media, which has exacerbated the problem, even seeks to glamorise and hype the life of footballers, and popularises their misbehaviour both on and off the field.

### The Legitimate Place of Entertainment in the Life of God's People

But, may God's people spend time enjoying a football game on TV? I believe there is a legitimate place for that entertainment based upon these two scriptural principles:

- a) "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim 4:4-5)

This verse warns us against legalism and an unbiblically strict view of the Christian life. It tells us that we can use all things that God has made,

keeping two things in mind:

- i) First, that God's Word instructs us how to use God's creatures and gifts,
  - ii) Second, that by prayer in respect to this use, His gifts are sanctified unto us. Then can we use this world, and not abuse it.
- b) *"Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."* (1 Cor 10:31)

This verse teaches us that entertainment should not be an end in itself and should not be divorced from our calling as Christians to serve and glorify God at all times. Instead it should only be used as a means to serve a higher end and purpose. But if it goes beyond that and consumes us, then we abuse God's good gift and our life will not be a life of balance and moderation, but rather of excess and imbalance.

### **Biblical Guiding Principles That Affect The Way We Live**

Finally, I close with these Biblical guiding principles, taken from "Sports & the Christian"—an article that I found to be helpful, on how we should go about enjoying watching football. The antithesis means that we separate ourselves from sin, but not from the world itself.

- a) The Westminster Shorter Catechism reminds us that the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever (1 Pet 4:11; 2 Cor 5:9). As God's people, we are to bring glory to Him in all that we say and do (Col 3:17; 1 Cor 10:31). Therefore, our interaction with and involvement in must be brought under the Lordship of Christ.
- b) While there are some profitable benefits from physical exercise and bodily training, Scriptures teaches us

that its benefits are of limited value in comparison to the wonderful and glorious benefits of godliness (1 Tim 4:8).

c) We have been "fearfully and wonderfully made" by our loving and gracious God, who created us with the capacity and desire for physical pleasure (play, work, sex, eating, etc). Within His stated parameters, it pleases God for Him to see His children using the physical gifts and talents that He gave them for His ultimate glory (Jas 1:17; Psa 139:13-16; Acts 14:17; 1 Tim 6:17; 1 Cor 4:7; Col 3:23).

d) Because of sin, our desires for pleasure is generally impure, distorted, and out of balance. Therefore, our desire for pleasure must not supersede our desire to please and obey God (Gen 3:6; Ecc 2:1-11; Rom 5:12; 6:14)

e) There is nothing intrinsically sinful about competing, participating in sporting activities, or enjoying watching football as long as we do not compromise our God-given priorities laid out in Scripture (1 Cor 6:12; 9:24; 2 Tim 2:5; Matt 6:33)

As God's people, our priorities should be

To love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30).

To pursue and practice Christlikeness (Phi 1:21; 1 Jn 2:28-29).

To bring the Gospel to the lost (Acts 1:8; Matt 28:19-20; Lk 24:46-48).

To use our spiritual gift(s) as a part of a local body of believers (Eph 4:7-16; 1 Cor 12:12-31; Rom 12:3-8).

To fellowship with, build up, and disciple other believers (1 Jn 1:7; 1 Thess 5:11; Matt 28:19-20).

To have the earthly relationships that God intends (parent, child, spouse, friend, employee, employer, etc.).

To know, understand, and apply God's Word (Psa 119:11; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Tim 2:15)

f) While it is true that God is sovereign over all things, man's way of measuring success is in winning and losing. Even though there is nothing wrong with striving to win, God's ultimate concern and desire for His children is that we display exemplary character as participants, coaches, officials and fans (Psa 139:1-6; Jas 4:6; Gal 5:16-26).

I do hope we understand that football or enjoying watching football is not the ultimate thing in life. It is of small importance in comparison to the total life we live. There is only one kind of life that truly succeeds, and that is the one that places faith in the hands of the Saviour. Until that is done, we are on an aimless course that runs in circles and goes nowhere. Material possessions, winning scores, and great reputations are meaningless in the eyes of the Lord, because He knows what we really are and what we really can be—and that is all that really matters.

With that right perspective, football—or sports in general—can be a wonderful source of exercise, enjoyment, and even employment for the committed child of God. Yet, as with every good thing, it can have negative effects if sinful pursuits prevail. Therefore, our calling as God's people is to pause and consider our involvement and interaction with sports through the lens of Scripture. The bottom line is this: while the world is fanatically obsessed with sports, we as God's people are to be passionately and singularly obsessed with God.



# News from the Churches

## **SINGAPORE**

Thank God for the time Pastor Angus and Mary Stewart were able to spend in Singapore, from 29th April to 6th May. It is truly a precious gift to enjoy the communion of saints with brothers and sisters in Christ. Though separated by vast distances, we are nevertheless united as one in Christ.

## **PHILIPPINES**

Pastor and Sharon Kleyn, Lord willing, are scheduled to fly to the USA on 2nd June for a six week furlough. Their schedule includes visiting many of the PRCA congregations in the USA and Canada in order to give presentations on the work in the Philippines.

In addition to some time for vacation, Pastor Kleyn will also meet with Doon PRC and the Foreign Mission Committee, attend Synod, and preach in some of the churches. We pray that God will bless his furlough as he spends time with his family members together with his wife.

The Federation of Protestant Reformed Churches in the Philippines was formed during a meeting on 9th April, 2014. It was held in Maranatha PRC, Valenzuela, Manila, The Philippines. This meeting marked the formation of this federation by the two joining churches, namely: The Berean Protestant Reformed Church, and The First Reformed Church of Bulacan. The new denomination had their first meeting after that. We marvel at the work the LORD has done in establishing this new denomination.

## **USA**

By God's grace, Peace PRCA now has a Sermon Audio Page through which we can listen to their worship online. To find our more, do visit: [www.peaceprc.org](http://www.peaceprc.org).

Georgetown PRC in Hudsonville, MI invited all PR congregations in the area to join them on Sunday night, March 23rd, for a programme on the January 2014 trip to the Reformed Christian Church of Vellore, India, made by Prof. Barry and Lori Gritters and Deane and Donna Wassink. We thank God for the mission work in India.

## **INDIA**

This year, the Reformed Christian Church of Vellore, India conducted the Vacation Bible School programme from 21st to 28th April, 2014. This was carried out both in the church and in four of their village outreaches. The children of Grace Foster Home also participated.

The Vacation Bible School programme reached and benefited about 350 to 400 children. Thanks be to God for the opportunity to share the Gospel with children and families in the villages through this means.



With missionaries in the Philippines, the Smits and Kleyns



Showing appreciation to mothers on Mother's Day



Learning a new sport in CK/CKS outing: Tchoukball



A sister in Christ from the Philippines who visited CERC for the first time



Kapteins trying out new delicacies in Singapore

Have you spotted the big "S" in CERC? Well, there's a Part 2 coming up real soon, and it involves a competition with attractive prizes! Stay tuned!

**Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church**

We are a Reformed Church that holds to the doctrines of the Reformation as they are expressed in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordt.

Place of Worship  
11, Jalan Mesin #04-00  
Standard Industrial Building  
Singapore 368813

Time of Worship  
Morning Service:  
9:30am to 11:00am  
Afternoon Service:  
2:00pm to 3:00pm

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