



# NEW LIFE

## BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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*"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)*

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### **Declaring and Defending the Most Holy Faith**

*By Rev Jack Sin, pastor of Maranatha B-P Church, Singapore*

*Adapted from Maranatha Messenger bulletin dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 2009*

#### **Introduction**

The church has an important duty and responsibility in the last days. It concerns not just preaching the everlasting gospel of Christ but also defending it as well. Every church should be a gospel driven, Christ centred and bible grounded church. It should be Apostolic, bible-based, confessional (Westminster Confession of Faith), doctrinal (calvinistic and covenantal), evangelical and fundamental in its convictions. We assess a church on their doctrinal stand based on the Word of God and not the size and grandeur of the church. E.g. some churches are large in attendance and membership and some cathedrals are beautiful and grand on the outside but may be spiritually bankrupt in its doctrinal professions and practices. It is possible to have a form of godliness but denying the power thereof (2 Tim 3:5).

#### **Purity of the faith**

Who are to proclaim the Words and defend the faith? From Jude 1-2, we can find 3 adjectives to describe the redeemed. They are Sanctified, Preserved and Called. Sanctified and Preserved means kept holy and kept safe and Called means predestinated and chosen by God before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4). These three adjectives refer to the elect of God, (which include us today) which was also the target audience whom Jude was writing to.

From Jude 3, it was written *"it was **needful** for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should **earnestly contend** for the **faith** which was once delivered unto the saints"* To understand this better, consider the following.

**It was Needful** because Jude felt a pressing burden or duty to tell / remind the elects of the first century the importance of common salvation and the spiritual heritage of the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

**It was done Earnestly** depicting the spirit, attitude, interest, to give all our energy in preserving and protecting the faith. The precious faith that is passed down to us which should be jealously guarded so that it would not be corrupted or perverted.

**To Contend** symbolizes a spiritual fight, vigorous activity, making a case for Christ.

**It is for the Faith** and not for selfish reasons - the word 'faith' is normally used in 3 ways in the bible:

1. Trust in God (Heb 11:1, 6)
2. Faithfulness (Gal 5:23)
3. Objective Faith i.e. a body of Divinity (Jude 3, 4)

Jude reminded us that it is of utmost importance to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (i.e. objective faith). The best defence is a good offence and that means the preaching the true gospel of Christ first to dispel darkness and ignorance, and to save souls. That is the primary duty and privilege of the church.

From Jude 4, it is written *"For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our god into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Verse 4 provides us with the historical context as well as the doctrinal struggle in the early church. They...

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are some who have crept in stealthily with a hidden agenda of undermining the soundness and effectiveness of the church.

These are identified as Ungodly men (or women) and they planned to corrupt and pervert the teachings and grace of God through their false teachings, seductive practices, heresies, grapevine of tale bearing, idle talk and spiritual deception. We need to be vigilant and alert to all these subtle infiltrations to the undermining of the church in the end times.

### **Doctrinal Truths Defended**

Both Jude and John warn of the seriousness of undermining the deity of Christ (2 John 9-11). In the first century, Gnosticism (i.e. access to a secret esoteric knowledge of God) and docetism which is dualistic which taught that matter was evil, were rife. There are people who deny Christ in flesh, hence saying that Christ is only a bodiless spirit, a phantom flying around. However this accusation seriously undermines the atonement at the Cross and humanity of Christ which is the fundamental and basis of our faith (1 John 4:1-3).

In the early Church, asking a person what he thought of Christ was a test of a person's salvation. For e.g. in Acts 8: 37-38, when Philip asked the eunuch *"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest"*, and the eunuch answered *"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"*. And the very next instant, Philip baptized the eunuch in the water for it is the most important confession of faith to be a true Christian.

The doctrine of Christ is a non-negotiable doctrine on which Jude and John stood strongly and would not compromise, as the Christian faith is defined by who Christ is, His resurrection and His vicarious effectual death for us at the cross (1 Cor 15:15-19). From Acts 20:17 onwards, we can see the context in which Paul had spent 3 years in Ephesus and was leaving then. Timothy would be taking over from him as the pastor and Acts 20:28-32 were the instructions Paul gave to Timothy before leaving.

From Acts 20:28, we learn from Paul that pastors and elders are responsible for the wellbeing of the flock and that included the defence of the faith that starts from feeding the flock with the pure milk and meat of God first. From verse 27, it is stated *"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God"*, hence we can see the importance of not only learning but learning the whole counsel of God i.e. all the important doctrines of His Word, so that we our understanding of our faith is clear and complete (Eph 4:13-16). E.g. the infant or toddler must eat well to fight against viruses and diseases, so every child of God needs to feed on the sufficient Word of God to be able to defend against the spiritual attacks of the evil; effectively by putting on the full armour of God (Eph 6:10-18).

### **Potential Dangers Identified**

Daily devotion, fervent prayer and edifying fellowship are also important aspects / ways of declaring and defending our faith. In Acts 20:29-30, we can identify two dangers to our faith.

1. External dangers - occultic and cultic teachings from without like the mormons, moonies, unitarians, JWs, freemasons, SDAs (Seventh Day Adventist) Christian science and groups from other sects or churches may infiltrate the church and hope to eventually convert the whole church into their erroneous doctrines and practices (baptismal regeneration or salvation by works).
2. Internal dangers. E.g. in AD 325, a presbyter of the ancient church questioned the deity of Christ while a deacon, Athanasius defended the true doctrine of the deity of Christ. Eventually over a historic church council in Nicea, the deity of Christ was affirmed, and Arius eventually left to start his own group which is succeeded by the JWs today. This same heretical view was exposed by a former elder of a reformed church as well. A former youth leader of a BPC was caught up with the Greek orthodox church over the internet and proposed the worship of icons to the other youths. He was warned and counselled by the leaders but refusing to heed wise and godly admonition, he finally left the church.

From **Acts 20:31-32**, we understand the importance of watching and warning the flock to protect them from error and false teachings. Not only be conscious of impending dangers but to spread the biblical knowledge to others as well. We are to warn members of false teachings or any diabolical activity that undermine the unity and ministry of the church.

From **1 Timothy 1:3-4**, we could see how Paul's admonition of impending dangers to the Church at Ephesus came true, as there were Jewish genealogies (Jewish legalistic practices) invading the Church and creating doubts and confusion, undermining the teachings of Christ.

From **1 Timothy 1:18-20**, we can see that Timothy had identified the names of those who blasphemed against Christ so that they should not continue to deceive and mislead others and disrupt the church with their false teachings and deceptive nuances.

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From **Romans 16:17**, we are told to *"mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrines which ye have learned"*.

In these last days, it is important for us to declare our faith in effectual gospel preaching and evangelism and missions and to also contend for and defend our faith. Below are examples of things that had or are infiltrating the world today, contradicting the doctrines of the bible.

1. Holy (or godless) laughter by Rodney Howard Browne in the mid 1990s.
2. The Bible code book by Michael Drosnin that was read by many. It claimed to be able to predict the future events by cracking mysterious codes apparently hidden in the Hebrew Bible. This had been found to be false and misleading.
3. Da Vinci code by Dan Brown with half truths and seducing intrigues – undermining the moral integrity and deity of Christ and subtly undermining the authority, canonicity and sufficiency of the bible.
4. Harry Potter, the subtle teaching of witchcraft, magic and spell casting through Joanne Rowling's books and movies.
5. The Alpha course invading every denomination of Churches in the world, with a compromised gospel without repentance that is widely accepted especially among Roman Catholics and procharismatic main line denominational churches.
6. Yoga - with its religious eastern mysticism and philosophy which is enamoured of and practiced by many today
7. The practice of seeking spiritual guidance through Fengshui (or geomancy), tarot cards, new age music and medicine, astrology, necromancy, spell casting, Halloween, witchcraft and other occultic practices prevalent today.
8. False teachings concerning the sacraments i.e. baptismal regeneration and the supposed physical healing by partaking of the Lord's Supper.
9. Charismatic practices of so called prophecies, miraculous healing by faith healers, ecstatic tongue speaking, being slained in the spirit, signs and wonders movement dancing in contemporary worship and other extra biblical teachings and practices.

Rev. James Smith of the Remembrancer adds this, "FAITH has to fight with the deep and direful depravity of the heart; with error and superstition; with despondency and early prejudices; with unbelief and carnal reason; with Satan and the world at large."

Faith has to fight for victory, for a crown, for God's glory. True faith fights in God's strength; with certainty, arising from the faithful promise; in holy fear, produced by grace taking advantage of our weakness; with courage; principally on the knees; and looking to the Captain of our salvation, the end of the conflict, and the design of the combat.

Believer, *"Fight the good fight of faith."* Thy God bids thee. His promises are intended to encourage thee. The example of Jesus should animate thee. The coward's doom should alarm and instruct thee. The connection between conflict and conquest should impel thee.

Jesus says, *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."*

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the Word of God in Jude, Acts and Timothy instructs us the importance of the purity of biblical doctrine and the necessity in protecting this purity of the Church and in the vigilant defence of the most holy faith.

Jude 20-21 tells us 4 important things that we must do in effectively defending the faith. Namely, there is a grave need for us to build on our faith, always to pray fervently in the spirit, to keep close to the Lord and to expectantly look forward to the coming of Christ.

Our Lord Jesus had already warned us that in the last days, there will be ecclesiastical chaos and confusion as charlatans, false teachers and diabolical practices will continue to invade the church (Mt 24:1-24). We must always keep close to the Lord and be in careful study of His Word (Acts 17:11), in the straight and narrow way be knowledgeable of what you believe and why, and be founded in the inspired and sufficient Word. Let us stand up for Christ our Lord and Saviour in the propagation of the pure and everlasting gospel and the defence of the most holy faith in these last perilous days where devastating natural disasters and the signs of the end times abound, reminding us of the soon coming of Christ.

# WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME	
<b>Morning</b>	<i>Today: 15/11/2009</i>	<i>Next Week: 22/11/2009</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Claudia Su to our worship services last Lord's Day.	
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	John Poh		
<i>Preacher:</i>	Eld George Chew	Eld George Chew	<b>NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>	
<i>Message:</i>	Moving On	The One and Only Name		
<i>Text:</i>	Acts 3:1-20	Acts 4 : 1- 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Church Resident Minister:</b> Thank God for sending Pastor Ki to minister to us for the past two Sundays. Pray for journey mercies as he returns this evening to Australia. Continue to pray for Pastor and Mrs Ki's preparation to return to London in December.</li> <li>• <b>Bible Study:</b> Today, we will cover Lesson 25 (Genesis 32 &amp; 33). Please spend the upcoming week preparing for DHW Lesson 26 (Genesis 34).</li> <li>• <b>Pray for those who are sick:</b> - Yetta's mum (recovery from stroke &amp; cancer), Constance (ankle), Douglas (knee pain), Barbara (Alzheimer's), Prema (thyroid &amp; skin condition), Eld Jack Ford (old age and knees), Margaret (asthma), Mrs Ki's father (lung cancer), Eld Chew (recovery from shoulder injury), Mrs Ki (recovery from back pain),</li> <li>• <b>Pray for those who are away or on travel:</b> Pastor Ki (S'pore/M'sia/South Korea), Mrs Ki (Australia), Nicolas (Belgium), Anthony &amp; Helen (Hong Kong &amp; S. Korea)</li> <li>• <b>Pray for those seeking employment/new opportunities:</b> Joy, Brian, Yetta, Jennifer</li> <li>• <b>Latest catalogue and price list for Tabernacle Bookshop available:</b> this is the bookshop of Metropolitan Tabernacle and a copy is available at the back noticeboard.</li> </ul>	
<i>Organist:</i>	Grace	Joy		
<b>Evening</b>				
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	John Poh		
<i>Preacher:</i>	Eld George Chew	Eld George Chew		
<i>Message:</i>	Why Do We Pray?	The Purpose of Prayer		
<i>Text:</i>	Ephesians 6:18-24	1 Timothy 1 :1-8		
<i>Pianist:</i>	Joy	Sophia		
Other Duties				
	<i>Today: 15/11/2009</i>	<i>Next Week: 22/11/2009</i>		
<i>Ushers:</i>	John / Constance	Joey / Evelyn		
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen	tbd		
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers		
<i>PA Crew:</i>	Lee Wei	Joshua		
<i>Bible Study:</i>	Lesson 25 (Gen 32 & 33)	Lesson 26 (Gen 34)		
Appointments of the Week				
Fri 20 Nov	7:30pm	<b>Young Adults Fellowship:</b> Old Testament Messages		
Sat 21 Nov	4:00pm	<b>Prayer Meeting &amp; Bible Study:</b> Led by John		
Worship Service Collections				
<b>Offering:</b> £589.36		<b>Lunch:</b> £45.50		
<u>Looking for Blessings</u>				
<i>Adapted from "In Green Pastures" by J.R. Miller, D.D.</i>				
<p>Do we take the blessings that the common days bring to us? Do we extract the honey from every flower that grows by our path? Do not angels come to us unawares in homely or unattractive disguise, walk with us, talk with us, and then only become known to us when they have flown away — when their places are empty? Shall we not learn to see the goodness and the beauty in the gifts that God sends to us? Their very commonness veils their blessedness. Let us seek for the good in everything. Then, though we see it not, let us never doubt that it lies hidden in every gift of God to us. Every moment brings us some benediction. Even the rough hand of trial holds in its clasp for us some treasure of love.</p>				