

Regarding the Inspiration of the Bible

TO ALL WHO LOVE GOD, GOD'S WORD, THE B-P CHURCH AND THE FEBC....

REGARDING THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

1. It is with heavy heart that I write on a very important matter that has engrossed and embroiled several B-P churches and the Far Eastern Bible College [FEBC]. There has been a lot of discussion, debate, dissension, dispute and division among brethren about what is the original position of the B-P Church and the FEBC, regarding the Inspiration of the Bible, and regarding the King James Version [KJV]. I feel the burden to write in order to make clear my understanding and belief regarding the Inspiration of the Bible and the KJV, and what I have always understood about the position of the B-P Church and the FEBC, with regard to the Inspiration of the Bible and the KJV.

The Bible says:

- Prov 22:28 Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.
- Prov 23:23 Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.
- 2Cor 13:8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.
- 3Jn 1:4 [The Apostle John said...] I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.
- Matthew 5:37 Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.
- James 3:17-18 The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

2. What is the original B-P position regarding the Inspiration of the Bible? What is the doctrinal position of the FEBC on Inspiration from the beginning? **I feel duty-bound to write the truth as I know it although I have not been requested by anyone. I feel sad to see brethren whom I love and respect on both sides of the issue, tussle over the position which has been precious to me. Lest historical facts be distorted or dimmed, I write what I understand and know of the true situation, lest an untrue position be passed off as the truth. I also appeal to other B-P Pastors, Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses & members, FEBC Faculty and Board members and lecturers who have been there right from the beginning or close to the beginning, to speak up. Let us refresh ourselves and re-state clearly the original position of the B-P Church and the FEBC as we know it. If we, who have the knowledge of the original position, do not write or speak up, some who have a position different from us, may claim their new position to be the Gospel truth. By God's grace, may the truth prevail and not the beliefs of those who talk the loudest, or write the most.**

3. **Rev (Dr) Timothy Tow is the original and first Pastor of the B-P Church since Oct 1950. Rev (Dr) Quek Kiok Chiang was ordained next in August 1956. By God's grace, I was ordained in August 1966. I feel duty-bound to speak my understanding of the B-P position, lest I be lumped with those who differ from me, because I failed to speak up.**

4. I was in the Life BPC since its inception at the Say Mia Tng in Prinsep Street, October 1950. I loved to hear Rev Tow preach from the Bible. He taught us that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and it was very clear to me that the Inspiration of God's Word was only in the original languages – the Greek and Hebrew. This position is stated in our B-P Church Constitution right from the beginning. I have always understood Inspiration to refer only to the original manuscripts, the Autographs – that they were inspired by God, that they were special, unique, and the only one of a kind. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2Pet 1:21). The Scriptures are God-breathed and hence, inspired. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all

good works” (2Tim 3:16-17). The Holy Scriptures are unique and incomparable. The Inspiration of Holy Scriptures covers only the original manuscripts. There can never be another like it. That, **I faithfully believed when I went for theological studies in America** in 1958. Whilst there, **I was taught** the same position, that **the Bible is God’s Word, and that Inspiration was only** in the original copies in the Greek and Hebrew languages. **Never once did I hear** my teacher **teach otherwise**.

5. I returned to Singapore in Sept 1963, and later became **Assistant Pastor to Rev Tow at the Life BPC, as well as at Galilee BPC**. I preached and taught the same thing, that **the Bible is God’s Inspired Word, fully inspired in the original Greek and Hebrew languages**. Later, **I became Lecturer** at the FEBC and was **Member and Vice-President** of the Board. I believed and taught the **same thing**, that **the Bible was inspired** only in the Greek and Hebrew languages. **Never did I hear** any other position **being taught, talked about, stressed, highlighted, suggested, reminded or discussed, or even hinted by the Principal, fellow-Faculty members, or the President and Board Members, that the Bible was inspired in any version or translation or manuscripts other than the original manuscripts**. Even when we had **visiting preachers and lecturers**, I had never heard of **any other** view on Inspiration being presented. We had always **talked about Plenary Verbal Inspiration** of the Bible in the **original** languages, and only in the original manuscripts.

6. **Indeed, up till the time I resigned as Assistant Pastor** from the Life BPC in **August 1970**, I had never heard of any other view of the Inspiration of the Bible taught or preached by Rev (Dr) Timothy Tow its Pastor, or by any other B-P Pastor or visiting preacher or teacher. Similarly, I never heard of any other view of Inspiration being taught, preached, discussed or suggested at the FEBC.

7. In January 1973, Calvary BPC was inaugurated at 1 Tao Ching Road, Singapore, and I was appointed as its first pastor, on loan from and shared with Galilee BPC. Dr Tow Siang Hwa was the Elder and Moderator of the Session. At no time did we ever talk about, suggest or propose any view regarding the Inspiration of Holy Scriptures, other than what we had always believed, that Inspiration was only in the original Greek and Hebrew languages, in the original manuscripts. That was what I continued to believe, and that was what I continued to preach and teach. Never at any time was there any dispute about that view. Nor was there discussion about any new view. **As far as we Bible-Presbyterians were concerned, there was only one view regarding the Inspiration of the Holy Bible. We also believed that the KJV was the best, the most accurate, the most faithful and closest to the original Word of God. From this description of the KJV, it is clear we never believed the KJV to be 100% perfect, equivalent or the replica of the original Word of God.** No translation of the Bible could ever claim to be 100% the equivalent of the original.

8. From 1983-1985, I returned to the U.S.A. for post-graduate theological studies. Whilst there, I never heard any of my teachers talk, teach, preach or discuss any view regarding Inspiration, other than what I had always believed. Preachers at Chapel Devotions and seminars that I attended never discussed, suggested any other view of Inspiration. My theological books, both from 1958-1963, and during 1983-1985, only talked about Inspiration in the original languages.

9. I returned to teach at FEBC in 1986-87. I also taught there from 1964-69, and from 1978-82. During the years between 1964 and 1987, I was also a board member and Vice-President of FEBC’s Board of Directors. During these periods, I never heard, taught or discussed the Inspiration of the Bible, except that it was in the original languages, in the original manuscripts. That was our theological position regarding Inspiration in FEBC from the time I taught there. That was our position all along. Until the time I stopped teaching in FEBC in 1987, I had not heard a different view.

10. I first heard of the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) versus the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) controversy in the Life BPC and suggestions that the King James Version is the perfect Bible, around 2002. As far as I am concerned, VPP is a new teaching, and not in the original beliefs of the B-P Church, or the FEBC.

11. I continue to believe with all my heart that God’s Word was inspired by God only in the original languages, in the original manuscripts. There is no copy of manuscript or translation that is equal or can be equal to the original Bible given by God. That is the original position of the B-P Church and of the FEBC as I know it.

Rev Philip Heng

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