

**46th Anniversary of Zion B-P Church Message  
21 June 2003 at Zion B-P Church (Serangoon)  
Text: 2 Cor.6:14; Jn 4:23-24; Ps.29:1-2**

**2 Cor. 6:14** Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

**John 4:22** Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.**23** But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. **24** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

**Psalms 29:1** Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. **2** Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Zion BP Church is 46 years old today. Through those 46 years, God has been with us. He has been bestowing upon us grace and power and blessing. Hence we have been able to persevere faithfully and steadfastly, in the pure preaching and teaching of His Word, and the disseminating and establishment of His Word here and abroad.

We know for certain that it was in His eternal plan to have Zion BP Church for that was certainly not in Life Church's plan. Yet it became Life Church's first local major outreach. How did it happen?

In **1955** the Christian Stewardship Foundation headed by Rev. Jason Lin of Indonesia acquired this land here. By **Oct 1966**, the Foundation had constructed the present Kindergarten Building and started running a Kindergarten which they called Zion Kindergarten..

The Stewardship Foundation invited Life Church to establish a Sunday School in the premises. The invitation was readily accepted and on **7 April 1957** Zion Sunday School was started, taking the name Zion after the Kindergarten name.

The Foundation soon suffered financial setback as funds from the businessman in Indonesia were not coming because Indonesia mounted a Confrontation against Singapore. Relationship with Singapore was severed.

The land and the Kindergarten project cost \$170,000. This was big money at that time. (To give you an idea of how big it was, let me tell you that the purchase price of a new terrace house in Serangoon Garden then, was \$12,900. The starting monthly salary of a non-graduate teacher was \$211.) The Foundation had sunk in more than \$90,000 and needed another \$75,000 to clear the debt.

The financial situation became acute. The Stewardship Foundation had no choice but to go offering the property, lock stock and barrel, to various Christian Churches, Institutions and Societies at \$75,000. All of them turned it down for various reasons.

Life Church was approached. Life Church, at that time, was functioning in the premises of the Life Chinese Presbyterian Church in Prinsep Street. It had no money, not a cent to take over the property. A \$200,000 property inclusive of a viable and functioning Kindergarten going for \$75,000! This once in a life-time opportunity to take over the Foundation property could not have come at a more hopeless moment. Life Church had just purchased land in Gilstead Road,

and was feverishly raising funds for the building of its own Church. The construction was about to begin. How was it to take on another project requiring more funds which was not planned for?

The Christian Stewardship Foundation then planned to dispose the property by public auction. It was its last resort. That would mean the end of Zion Sunday School which was already flourishing. Was it to be the end of gospel work in Serangoon Gardens? There must be a way out. The solution surely had to be the founding of a church on the groundwork of the Sunday School. The Life Church Session went into emergency meeting and on their knees to the Lord.

**What did the Lord say in Jeremiah 33:3?** Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

And in **Jeremiah 32:17** Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

Taking hold of that promise of God and faith in God in those two verses, the Life Church Session together with the Central Christian Church, headed by the late Elder Quek Kiok Meng, unanimously decided to take over the property.

The late Elder Quek Kiok Meng worked out the potential profits that could come from running the Kindergarten. But that could not provide the immediate solution. About \$2000 was collected in one day from mainly Christian friends. Interest-free loans were obtained from believers. Many Christian brethren pledged to work for the liquidation of the rest of the debt. An immediate repayment of \$30,000 was made to the bank. The property became ours. We knew, however, we had to completely rely on God and faithfully labour in His strength. Today we know that the promise that God made in Jeremiah 33:3 on which we placed our faith, has been fulfilled.

On **23 June 1957** Zion B-P Church was inaugurated. Zion Church was God's eternal plan accomplished. But who was to pastor Zion Church?

Rev Quek Kiok Chiang, then a leading elder in Life Church, was ordained a pastor in **1956**, a year earlier. It was not that there was another church or a plan to have another church for him to pastor. Now we know. God had prepared him to pastor Zion B-P Church that then had yet to exist.

In **Oct 1961** i.e 4 years later, Life Church relinquished all rights to and ownership of the property and Zion Church came into its own. It became self-supporting and autonomous.

In **1964** Zion Church had outgrown the makeshift sanctuary in the Kindergarten Building for worship service. We planned to build this present sanctuary at a projected cost of \$92,000.

The building took three years to complete. Then in **June 1967** we had our proper church building. It cost well over the \$92,000 we projected, even though the architect, the late Mr Quek Kiok Boo, waived his professional fees. It was his free-will offering to God.

The building cost over \$200,000 including furniture and other paraphernalia. But every cent was paid through free-will offerings. We ended with no debt. Even those who had given interest-free loans turned them into free-will offerings. The inaugural service was held on **23 June 1967** with untold joy. The Lord had fulfilled the promise He made in **Jeremiah 33:3** "Call unto me, and I

will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not". He had honoured the faith we placed in Him. The Lord GOD made the heaven and the earth by His great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Him.

Our Senior Pastor Rev. Quek Swee Hwa, on his return from his theological studies abroad, succeeded Rev. Quek Kiok Chiang, his father, as pastor in **1970**. Rev. Quek Kiok Chiang had been pastoring both Zion and Faith B-P Church which was started in Jan 1960 when the Chinese congregation of Zion and Central Christian Church merged as one here. He then became solely pastor of Faith and advisory pastor of Zion.

And we whom God has brought into this Church, must know that God has a work for each one of us to do. Zion Church is not just bricks and mortar and the product of an architect's professional skill. Bricks and mortar can do nothing for lost souls. Zion Church is made of living stones. We are the living stones. God has given each of us a spiritual gift which He wants us to exercise. So Zion Church may grow and flourish to His glory, and in His Name, many souls may be brought into His kingdom.

When we began building this sanctuary in 1964, it was because there was no more space for the fast growing congregation in the two combined kindergarten classroom-sanctuary. Now our planned redevelopment to take place next year, and to complete in 2005, is to provide all the ancillary space we sorely need for the office, the Sunday School, the Youth Fellowship, the Awana Club and other activities that promote spiritual growth. If we expect that our new imposing building would certainly attract people into our church, and even if such expectation proves right, and there is growth in numbers, we will fail in God's commission to bring souls into His kingdom. The field must be ploughed, the seed must be sown and the growth must be nurtured. It needs labouring hard in the strength of the Lord and in His Word. Only then will there be a harvest for the kingdom of God.

Zion Bible-Presbyterian Church! Why do we call ourselves Bible-Presbyterian? After all we believe in Presbyterianism as biblical and carry out the Presbyterian Form of Church Government. It is because we need to differentiate ourselves from Presbyterian Churches that have gone into the Ecumenical Movement that started in the fifties. This Movement seeks to establish a one-world church comprising all churches, regardless of whether their faith is true or false. We choose to stand firmly on God's Word, the Bible, that clearly commands His people NOT to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. "What communion" God says "has light with darkness"? We therefore stand firmly for biblical separation from Apostasy. We choose to be pure in faith and practice according to God's Word. We want to attest that in our name.

The vital part of a Christian's life is worship of God. The Lord's Day is when the Lord's people assemble for public and corporate worship. Let us remember on this 46th Anniversary of our Church, that worship of God must be in Spirit and in Truth and in no other way.

A new form of worship has been introduced in churches today. Thousands are drawn to these churches which are organised around the charismatic power of one or more pastors who command an enormous amount of authority. These churches are mini-personality cults.

Worship in these churches is dramatic and entertainment-oriented. It incorporates pop-culture, congenial and popular music and musical instruments that are not associated with traditional

worship. The music is loud and deafening with heavy drumbeats, much like that of the entertainment world today. It is an upbeat style of worship.

The preaching is lively. The preachers exude dynamic charisma and showmanship. The messages tend to be earthly and pragmatic. They have less to do with historic Christian doctrine and more to do with emotions and feelings and individualistic thinking. The very concept of church and its functions is changed. The ways of the world are brought into the church. One has to wonder how then is the church to bring lost souls out of the world. How can believers keep themselves from the world when they embrace the world in their worship?

The congregation is turned into an audience. They applaud performers in their worship service. The worship is personal-pleasure worship. It places personal enjoyment in first place. It is ecstatic in parts. The audience is worked into emotional and even semi-hypnotic states.

God called Abraham out of a culture of a pagan world to live a life in an altogether distinctive way for the Lord. God severely punished the Israelites for wanting to return to the pagan land of Egypt from which the Lord had removed them. The Lord wanted them to be a distinctive people that could distinguish between holy and unholy. Many examples abound in the Word of God of God's anger at any form of blending with culture of the nations around for worship. In Nehemiah's time, a foolish and corrupt high priest gave Tobiah, the Ammonite, a room in the temple. Nehemiah threw all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the room and thoroughly cleansed the whole place like the cleansing of SARS-infected areas today.

God demands purity and separation in worship. There must be a marked distinction between the sacred and the secular. There must be a distinction between the spiritual and the worldly. When a pastor is at the same time a famed pop-singer and perform before screeching, screaming, jumping pop-music and song lovers in the entertainment world, the message is given that the church and the world are one. And that ought not to be.

Why don't we have hand-clapping, hand raising, hand-waving, body-swaying, feet tapping and tongue-speaking such as are found in the new form of worship? Some people have remarked that our way of worship is dull and boring. You know what? The important question is does God think it is boring.

God's Word in Rev. 4 and 5 reveal what worship of God should be like.

The 24 elders (representing OT & NT BELIEVERS) sit around God on the throne and the four beasts or living creatures, day and night, say: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

They are giving **glory and honour and adoration to God** on the throne.

The 24 elders **prostrate themselves** before God seated on the throne, and worship him and **cast their crowns** before him, (a picture of reverence, humility, lowliness, adoration and self-effacement). They give praise to God, saying:

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

And **they sing** a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; they sing of God's redemption of sinners.

Angels round about the throne, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of them, **say** with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, join John saying,

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne,  
and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. They worship God and the Lamb jointly.

And the four beasts say, Amen. And the 24 elders prostrate themselves again and worship him that liveth for ever and ever.

They exalt God's name in speech and in song continually. They adore Him. They glorify Him. They focus their attention on the Lord God Almighty. That is true worship.

### **What is a church?**

A church is not a social institution. It is not a convenient meeting-place where people with individual interest and religious experience, gather together.

A church is the body of Christ in the world. In that body are many members. Each has its God-given function.

A church is the people of God called out from the world by Him. They are called to glorify His Name, to offer themselves as spiritual sacrifices and to proclaim God's wonderful works of grace.

A church is to worship God.

To worship God is to ascribe to Him supreme worth for He alone is worthy. It is His excellent worthiness which makes worship of Him possible.

When we assemble on each Lord's Day to worship Him, we should offer him our devotion, our praise, our thanksgiving and our prayers. This is the thought and the primary purpose of worship.

Worship is the response we make to God's gifts to us. We acknowledge that He is the Giver of every good and perfect gift and thank Him for His care and His promises of provision for our daily needs.

We approach God, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the sovereign Lord, with submissive lowliness and deep reverence. When the call to worship is given, we should respond with reverential awe and awareness of His holy presence, a presence that makes us deeply conscious of His mercy and of our redemption from our sins through Jesus Christ, His Son. We should then delight in communing with Him.

Late-comers miss this segment of the worship. They miss this initial blessing. Instead they cause disruption and distraction although they try not to draw unintentional attention to themselves.

To leave before the benediction is to deprive oneself of the end blessing of God. It is a discordant note of irreverence even though not deliberate. If we believe that the message is the only essential or vital part of worship, we fail to understand the fulness of worship of God.

Let us remember, for surely we know, that true worship is in spirit and in truth. It comes from the heart and the soul. We give praise and thanks to our Almighty, all gracious, all merciful God on this the 46th Anniversary of Zion B-P Church which was established by His eternal will.

We pray that we may remain faithful to Him and fulfill the purpose for which He has set us here and in Bishan.