



# Promoting the Scripture, Renewing the City

I just returned from attending the Malaysia "Sarawak Chinese Methodist Conference". The sharing from speakers was enlightening and encouraging to me.

The theme of the conference was: "Uphold the Bible and Holiness — Bring Renewal to the Nation". The Methodist Bishop of Malaysia, Rev WAH Yung pointed out that most Christians do not want to participate in politics for reluctance to get involved in the public sector — thinking that it is filthy and that it contradicts with Christian belief. According to Wah, the main reason lies in the deep-rooted Chinese culture and traditional teaching and theology. Most Chinese are more concerned about the welfare of one's own family and clan. Traditional church's teaching emphasized in sharing the Gospel and frowned upon social or political involvement. Even though in the Lausanne Conference saw "evangelism and participation in society and politics to be every Christian's duty", but it has been brushed aside by the dominant mentality of minding one's own business.

In Amos 2:6, it mentioned "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment; because they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals." Facing the ever increasing gap between the rich and the poor, is this not a timely warning? God also cares for the hungry, those who are in bondage and all those who are oppressed. But who will stand up to fight for their justice?

Mr Ho Han NGAI, a devoted Christian the leader of the opposition party in the Malaysian government emphasized that the main function of the church is to spread the Gospel and evangelize all nations. If the church is hooked up with political parties, it will inevitably bring severe differences in view and the hostility accompanying of the parties. The process will jeopardize the Church's role of expressing love and fairness to all people. However, **if individual Christians serve in the political arena with a clear conscience and minimal self interest, politics can be an opportunity to serve the community — Christians can help raise a new social standard of fairness, kindness, justice, protection of the innocent and assistance to the poor in the public arena.** This kind of political involvement is pleasing to the Lord, as expounded in Isaiah 58:6: "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?" God will also provide us with strength to take action and go forward, just as He promised in Isaiah 58:8b: "... your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of

the Lord shall be your rear guard."

**We are to serve the Lord with simple heart and mind, to understand His Word through reading the Scripture and adhering to all Bible teaching. When we are close to God's heart, we then shall know what He is asking of us: to be salt and light in the community and uphold justice for His name sake.**

Today, Hong Kong Bible Society is promoting the Scripture as well as encouraging believers to read through the Bible with a simple heart. On the other hand, Hong Kong is a very competitive cosmopolitan city with a strong emphasis on making profit through any means. Therefore we must try hard not to treat the Scripture as a mere commercial commodity. This means the avoidance of using flamboyant titles or extravagant marketing schemes to increase our sales! We should also guard against the development of hostility toward other publishers. All these attitudes are against the Scripture's teaching, which is revealed in 2 Corinthians 2:17 "For we are not peddlers of God's word like so many ..."

There are still more than 90% of the population who do not know the Lord in HK. How do we share God's heart with them? But now man seems to be captivated by the electronic world — many people spend hours in front of the TV monitors, all their thoughts have been dominated by popular culture. These people refuse to develop independent thinking and as a result, they care little about others or justice. It is indeed not easy to remind people to return to the Bible, not to mention the difficulties to invite people to meditate on its truth day and night! We must seek the Lord's wisdom and discern the way so people can turn back to find their true selves, take time to develop their character and to begin to care for others too.

Dr Mary Leung