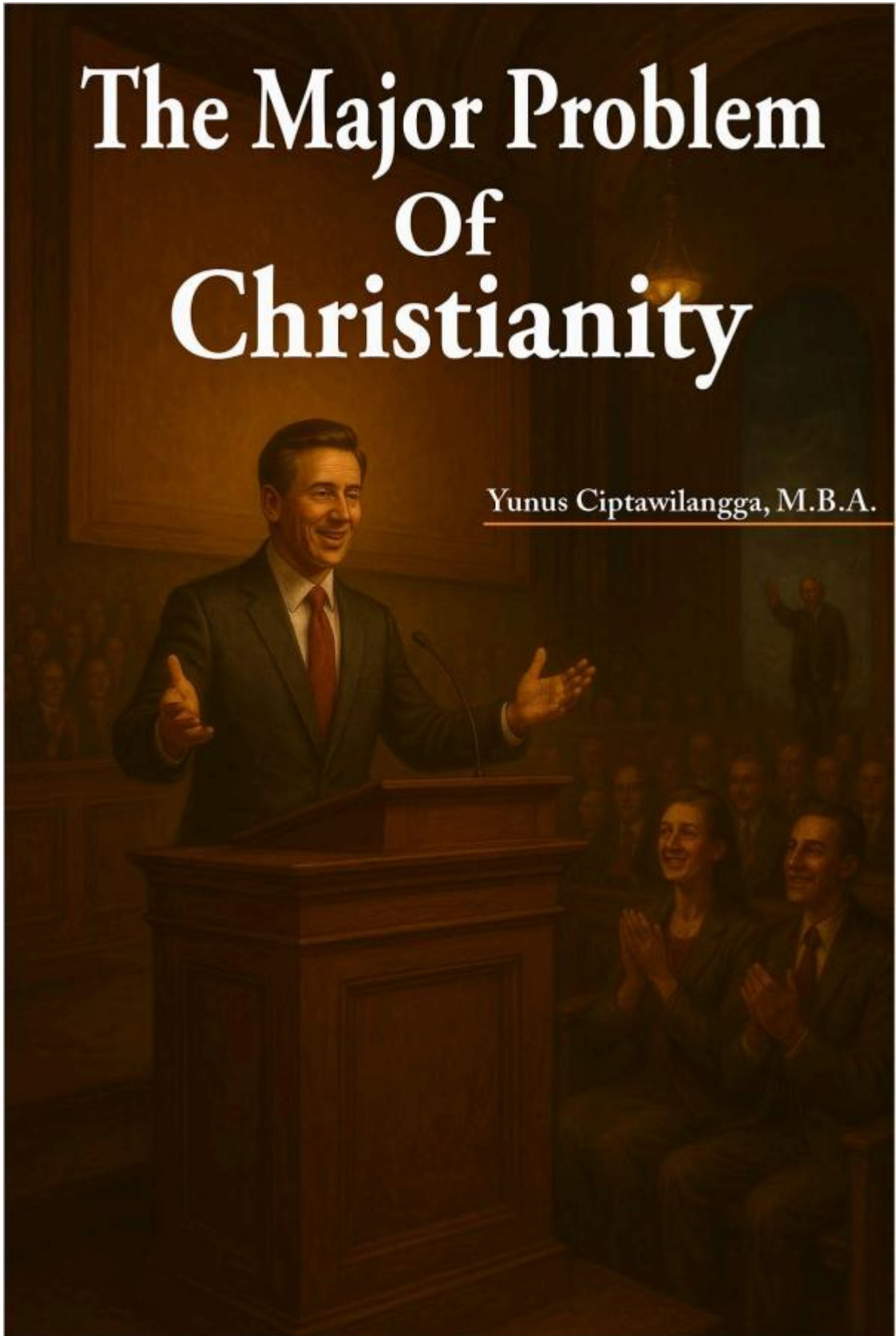


The Major Problem Of Christianity

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FOREWORD

The material of this book was once presented at a theological school some time ago. However, the author was reluctant to publish it because the author felt he did not have the position to “reprimand” God’s servants.

However, the death of two highly respected senior servants of God prompted the author to publish it. This was not because of the death of the two servants of God, but because of the impressions conveyed by the family to the mourners, which in essence stated that the deceased was a good servant of God, but not a good father, husband, and head of the family. This situation shows that there is **a fundamental problem in the concept of Christian theology at this time.**

This condition is actually written in the book of Revelation which relates to the letter to the church of Ephesus, where they **have left their first love**, which has caused various fundamental problems in Christianity.

*Nevertheless **I have somewhat against thee**, because thou hast **left thy first love**. (Rev. 2:4 KJV).*

When talking about the major problems of Christianity, every servant of God may have his or her own views. In this book, the author puts forward four things that the author

considers to be the major problems of Christianity, namely as follows:

1. SERVING GOD
2. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
3. THE DAMAGED BIBLE
4. MAMMON IN THE CHURCH

Hopefully what the author describes in this small book can make us aware to immediately return to our first love, so that God does not take away our lampstand,

Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. (Rev. 2:5).

Soli Deo Gloria,

Author

THE MAJOR PROBLEM OF CHRISTIANITY

READ THE BIBLE

The Bible is the most numerous books bought in the world. Unfortunately, the Bible is often the book that is read and implemented the least due to lack of understanding as well motivation from the reader. Since the Old Testament this phenomenon has been happening for a long time. Ezekiel

33:31 said,

*My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to hear your words, but **they do not put them into practice**. Their mouths speak of love, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain.*

In today's modern world, there are also things that are often used as reasons why Christians do not read the Bible, such as being busy with work. In fact, interestingly, there are also those who argue that reading the Bible makes them uncomfortable because 2 Timothy 3:16 said,

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

It is undeniable that **the word of God is the benchmark for the truth of a Christian's life before his Lord**, which will

automatically rebuke or correct and at the same time straighten out our path as Christians **so that we are pleasing to Him.**

Another reason is the assumption that the Bible is difficult to understand. However, on the other hand, we are also often not disciplined in reading it. People often think that the Bible is stale and outdated reading. In fact, Hebrews 4:12–13 says that **the word is living and powerful,**

¹²For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

In the end, from the discussion, it all refers to one thing, namely "**How is our relationship with God!**"

A few years ago a servant of God who was very close to the author came to visit. We had a discussion. Then, he asked, "*According to you, what is the main problem with Christianity?*" The author answered, "*Many servants of God are busy serving a God they do not recognize.*" Yes, many children of God are busy serving, but do not know or do not recognize their God. They may be very active in serving, however, **when**

asked about divinity, they do not understand because they rarely or never read the Bible.

The author once worshiped at a church, where the greeters wore neat suits. At that time the author sat in the row to the right. When the sermon was delivered, the writer accidentally looked behind the middle line. What did the author see? The greeters were sleeping!

At one time the author met guests at a hotel. When going to the toilet, the author passed by a room that was being used for religious services. At that time a sermon session was going on. However, the author saw that outside the room greeters, band players, song leaders, and the pastor wife were having breakfast. Apparently, physical nourishment was more important than spiritual food.

When talking about reading the Bible, deacons and church elders, even servants of God, nowadays many have never read the Bible, meaning reading the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. If only reading a few verses, a few passages, or a few chapters, it must often be done to prepare a sermon.

A few years ago there was a new pastor in a church and he wanted to make a change. So, he formed a think tank group, which is a group of people who gather to discuss a theme or a certain problem, and the author was invited as a resource person.

In one of the discussions, which finally related to the problem of reading the Bible, the author asked, *"Who among you has read the Bible 25 times, 20 times, or 15 times?"* No one raised their hands. Then, the author continued, *"Who has read it 10 times, 5 times?"* There were one or two people who raised their hands.

When the question was continued, the author found that there were those who had never read the entire Bible even once! In fact, his position was an elder, one of whose duties was to supervise the teachings or theology of sermons delivered by God's servants, both internally and externally. He was tasked with supervising every sermon delivered, whether or not it was in accordance with the theological beliefs of the church. So, the author asked, *"If you have never read the entire Bible, how can you know or determine whether the sermon is in accordance with the teachings of the Bible or not?"* The elder replied, *"That's easy, logically we can know whether the sermon delivered is true or not."* How to do so?

ASSESSING SERMONS LOGICALLY

Human logic and the Word are two different things. God's plan is beyond human understanding and cannot always be fully understood through human logic. Isaiah 55:9 says,

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

The difference between God's plan and thinking ability and human thinking ability is like the heavens and the earth. Our reasoning ability is far from God's reasoning ability. So, can we judge it logically? Proverbs 3:19 and 20 says,

¹⁹By wisdom the Lord laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; ²⁰by his knowledge the watery depths were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew.

God created the universe in such a way. For humans, let alone thinking about how to create it, they are unable to even think about simple things. For example, why can the earth stay in place without falling even without support? Because of human inability, **a legend was made** that the earth remains in place because **it is supported on the shoulders of the god Atlas**.

We will be very surprised to know **how accurate** God's creation is, even down to the **smallest details**. The smallest part of an object is **an atom** consisting of protons, electrons, and neutrons. In Physics, we know water as H₂O, a molecule composed of 2 hydrogen atoms and 1 oxygen atom. If we examine it more deeply, it turns out that every H atom and every O atom in the molecule each has exactly the same

weight and size. In fact, the distance between the two H atoms and the distance between the H atoms and the O atoms in H₂O are all exactly the same.

Actually, there are many things that we cannot understand. For example, how does our brain work so that we can think? How can plants grow roots, then grow, flower, and bear fruit?

Moreover, if we look at the sky signs related to the coming of the Lord Jesus, as written in Acts 2:20,

The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

The verse explains that before the second coming of the Lord Jesus, God will give a sky sign in the form of a **solar and total lunar eclipse**.

In **2014**, God gave two total lunar eclipses that occurred on **Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles**. In the following year, **2015**, God also gave two more total lunar eclipses that also occurred on **Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles**. In addition, God also gave **a total solar eclipse** at the beginning of the year **1 Nisan** and **a partial solar eclipse** on the **Feast of Trumpets**.

2014		2015				
Apr - 15	Oct - 08	Mar - 20	Apr - 04	Sep - 13	Sep - 23	Sep - 28
		Sabbatical Year				
Nissan 14	Tishri 15	Nissan 1	Nissan 14	Tishri 1	Tishri 10	Tishri 15
Passover	Tabernacles	1st Cal. Year	Passover	Trumpets	Yom Kippur	Tabernacles
						
						

Paul Grevas, a statistician from Greece, explained **that the possibility of 4 total lunar eclipses like the one in 2014-2015** (the first 2 eclipses that occurred on Passover and Tabernacles and 2 other total lunar eclipses that occur the following year on the same two feasts, namely Passover and Tabernacles) is **1.8×10^{139}** .

Many experts state that the age of the earth is several billion years. If the age of the earth is even 1 trillion years, that is equal to 365 trillion days or 3.65×10^{14} . **That is much smaller than the probability of four total lunar eclipses.**

To get a broader explanation of the extraordinary discovery of Paul Grevas related to the four total lunar eclipses such as those that occurred in 2014-2015, please readers see the writing of the author and two other servants entitled ***God's Perfect Signs***.

Isiah 40 :18 = "To Whom Shall we liken God?"

3,463 days

3,214 days

3,084 days

1,136 days

1,138 days

1,122 days

1,299 days

3,477 days

1,477 days

1/4/2011

6/1/2011

11/25/2011

1/25/2012

4/11/14

5/8/14

6/4/15

9/28/15

10/1/18

5/1/18

2/1/18

9/28/15

10/1/18

7/1/12

10/10/19

Blood Moon

4/11/14

5/8/14

6/4/15

9/28/15

10/1/18

7/1/12

10/10/19

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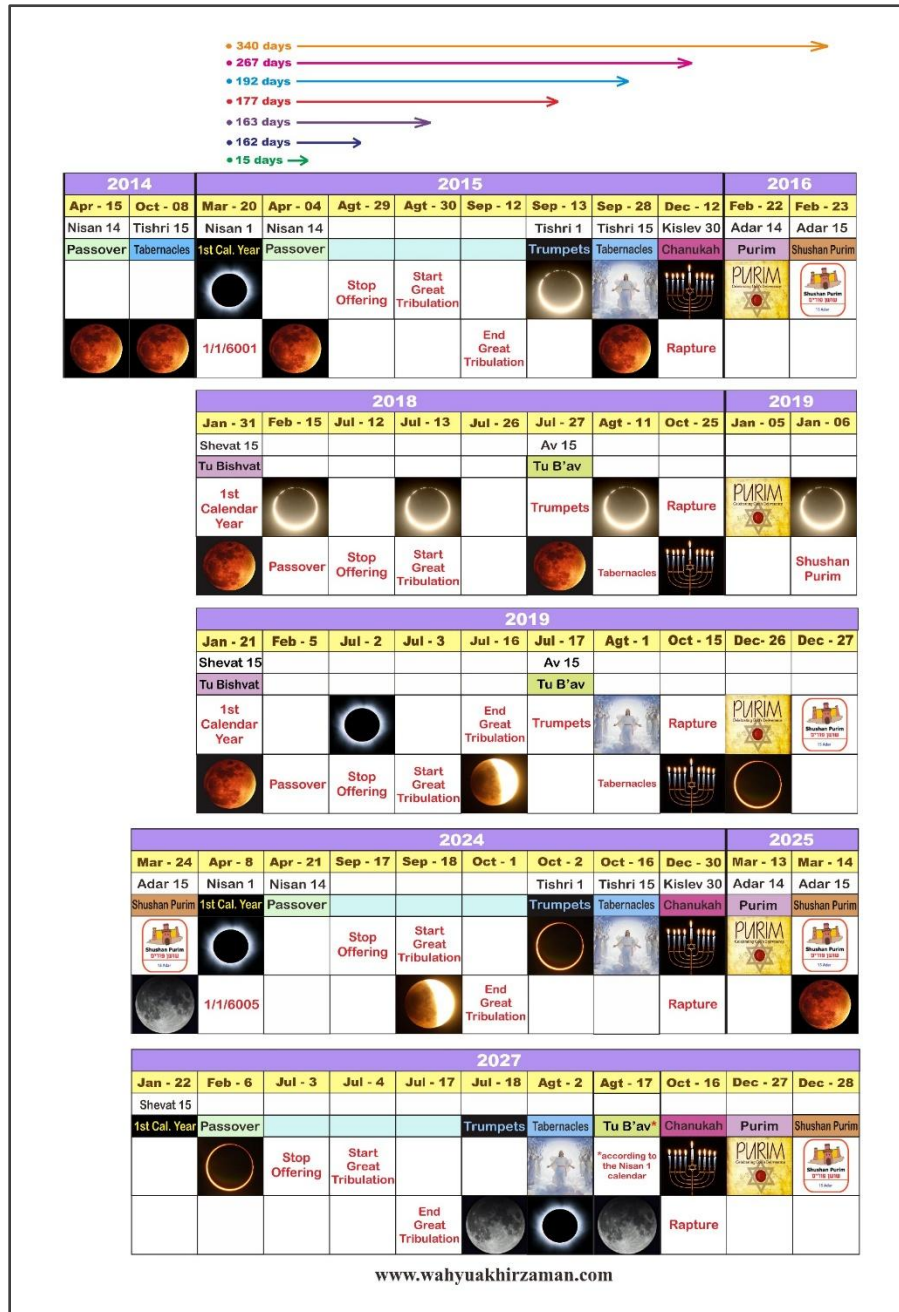
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*Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, **and you will***

suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.



If the probability of four total lunar eclipses as explained is 1.8×10^{139} , we can imagine how small the probability of the formation of eclipses from 2014-2027 is, which we may not even be able to calculate, let alone create. Therefore, if we do

not understand even simple things, let alone interpret God's word using our logic.

To get a more complete explanation related to the sky signs of the coming of the Lord Jesus, please read the book written by the author and two other servants of God, entitled RAPTURE, Fulfillment: Signs in the Sky, the Summer Feast, and Parables of the End Times.



Apart from the unreachable power of God by human logic, we cannot be separated from the Word which is the basis of our lives.

GOD'S WORD IS GOD'S CHILDREN GUIDANCE

Our current condition has actually been stated in one of the letters to the seven churches, namely to the church of Ephesus, which is written in the book of Revelation 2:1–7,

*¹ “To the angel of **the church in Ephesus** write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. ²I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ³You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.*

At first the leader of the Ephesian church was a leader who was diligent and did not mix with bad people. They could differentiate between right apostles and false apostles. In fact, they were the leaders of the congregation who endured suffering. However, God still reproached them,

*⁴Yet **I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had atfirst.** (Rev. 2:4 NIV).*

*⁴Nevertheless **I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thyfirst love.** (Rev. 2:4 KJV).*

Leaving the first love was considered as an extraordinary mistake, an extraordinary fall.

Therefore, in the following verses (verses 5–7) are reminded,

*⁵**Consider how far you have fallen!** Repent and do the things you did at first. **If you do not repent**, I will come to you and **remove your lampstand from its place.** ⁶But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.*

Leaving the first love was thought as an incredibly deep fall and God asked them to repent because, if they didn't, God would take their lampstand.

What is meant by "lampstand" is congregation,

*The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels[a] of the seven churches, and **the seven lampstands are the seven churches.** (Rev. 1:20).*

That is, if the church leaders don't want to repent, God will take His church.

The letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation are addressed to different groups. As for the church at Ephesus, it is specifically addressed to the leaders of the church, who are told that if they do not repent, their church will be taken away. That is, they will become church leaders without having congregation or God will revoke their status as church leaders. They are no longer worthy of being considered church leaders because they have left their first love.

FIRST LOVE

The rebuke to the church leaders in Ephesus was about “first love,” which refers to the initial, passionate love to know God and Christ better, which believers experience when they repent and are born again in order to please God.

When dating, we are eager to get to know our partners. For example, we ask, *“What do you like and dislike? When you watch movies, what kind of movies do you like to watch?” Do you like watching horror movies? What do you do every day? When you are not working, what do you do?”* In essence, we learn to get to know our partners better.

However, after going through the dating and family period, sometimes this is no longer done because we are busy and

because **we feel that we have known our partners**, as in the following illustration.

There was a husband who had been married for 10 years and had a child. He noticed that his wife had been acting unusual lately because her face was unpleasant, she was sullen, and her speech was short. Then, he increased the shopping money for his wife because he was sure that it was because of financial problems. However, his wife's attitude did not change. So, he added to his wife's shopping money because prices might have gone up. Unfortunately, even though he felt that he had increased the shopping money enough, his wife was still cold.

He began to think that it might be because the air condition at home was not cold enough, as it was quite old and the weather like now made the air even hotter. Therefore, he bought a new one. However, these efforts did not seem to satisfy his wife.

In his confusion, the husband asked his friend about his wife who was always sulking. After chatting, his friend suggested that he buy a new bag. The husband realized that he had not bought a new bag for his wife for a long time. However, even though he had bought a new bag, his wife was still gloomy.

The husband asked his friend again why his wife was still sulking. Then, his friend suggested that they have a housekeeper. The husband thought that maybe his wife was tired of taking care of the household alone. Therefore, not long after he brought in a housekeeper to lighten his wife's workload. However, his wife was still sulking so he was really confused.

If we study the illustration, actually the problem is simple. Why doesn't the husband ask his wife directly why she has a gloomy face?

Likewise, in living this life, rather than dwelling on our limited thoughts, why don't we ask God directly by reading the Bible to get answers to every struggle in our lives?

ASK GOD DIRECTLY BY READING THE BIBLE

There may be many challenges and problems in the church, such as problems with doctrine, ministry, finances, disturbances from the environment, and others.

In general, when these problems occur, we tend to ask the "successful pastors", seniors, or read books. We rarely ask God directly.

To the author's knowledge, the Bible is very complete, not only containing things about faith. In fact, when the author was invited as a resource person to discuss church structure, it

turned out that the church structure is also in the Bible: what it looks like, who the leaders and subordinates are, and what the hierarchy is like.

Most of the problems that occur in our lives can be solved in the Bible. The problem is, we rarely read the Bible.

FOUR MAJOR PROBLEMS OF CHRISTIANITY

When talking about the major problems of Christianity, each servant of God may have his own views. In this book, the author puts forward four things that the author considers to be the major problems of Christianity, namely as follows.

1. SERVING GOD
2. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
3. THE DAMAGED BIBLE
 - A. THE DAMAGE TO THE PHYSICAL BIBLE
 - B. THE DAMAGE TO THE CONTENT OF THE BIBLE
 - 1) THE WORD OF THE SERPENT
 - 2) INCORRECT BIBLE VERSES
4. MAMMON IN THE CHURCH

1. SERVING GOD

The author has been going to church since Sunday School. As far as the author can remember, church services in the past were not as exciting and numerous as they are now, which have so many programs to serve the church and God.

The matter of serving God grew when Rick Warren's book entitled ***The Purpose Driven Life*** became famous. The main concept is that God created us to serve Him. The book begins with the idea "What on Earth Am I Here For?", which is then explained that God created us for a purpose, namely to serve God for His glory. The book explains dozens of ways to serve God.

However, the question is, is it true that what God wants most from our lives is for us to serve Him? Actually, it is not difficult to answer that question.

GETTING TO KNOW GOD BY DRAWING CLOSE TO HIM

The passage about Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38–42 explains what is most important for His followers to do,

³⁸As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.

³⁹She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰But **Martha was distracted by all the**

preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked,

"Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work

by myself? Tell her to help me!" ⁴¹**"Martha, Martha,"** the Lord

answered, **"you are worried and upset about many things,** ⁴²**but**

few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen

what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

In the passage it is discussed about Martha and Mary, which clearly explains **"Martha was busy serving"**. Then, Martha approached the Lord Jesus and said, *"Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"* Martha said this because she felt that she was very busy, while she saw Mary sitting there, at the feet of the Lord Jesus.

If it were true that what the Lord wanted was service, He would have told Mary to help Martha because Martha was already very busy. However, the Lord did not answer like that. He said, *"Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or **indeed only one.**"*

Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her. ”

So, God says that we actually don't need to be that busy, but just do what Mary did, which is sit at the Lord's feet and keep listening to His word. Actually we do not need to be that busy, but simply do as Mary did, which is to sit at the Lord's feet and keep listening to His words because that is the best. Not serving, but sitting at the Lord's feet and listening to His words is the most important thing.

Mary sat at His feet and listened to Him to know God better. If Martha had not been close to God and listened to His words, how could she have known God?

DID GOD CREATE US FOR SERVING HIM?

If we talk about service, which in The Purpose Driven Life says that God created us to serve Him, it doesn't make sense. Instead, the question arises: What is the reason God created us to serve? God already has thousands of angels to serve Him. In fact, their abilities are far above humans. That is why, if we look at the Bible, for very important tasks, which must not be wrong, God sends angels, not humans.

In the Old Testament, for example, we can see that God sent an angel to Abraham and Gideon. The most obvious, in

the New Testament God sent an angel to Maria to deliver the news that she would conceive of the Holy Spirit. For such an important matter, God does not order humans, even the greatest prophets, but sends an angel.

Likewise, when God wanted to destroy some places, like Sodom and Gomorrah, God too ordered the angel. Why? Because God wanted to save Lot and his family members. If told by people, Lot would not necessarily believe it.

What's interesting is when David sinned because he had ordered his commander to calculate the population of Israel. As a result, David chose three days of plague, which resulted in the death of seventy thousand people. If we note, it turns out that for this punishment, God only needs to order **one angel**!

*¹⁵So the Lord sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and **seventy thousand** of the people from Dan to Beersheba died. ^{16a} When **the angel** stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, (2 Sam. 24:15–16a).*

God has so many servants and a great army that, in essence, God no longer needs human help. Therefore, it is impossible for God to redeem humans from their sins by sacrificing His Son just to make humans His servants! If God created that many angels with just a word, **how could God sacrifice His Son for servants with such low abilities?**

When discussing with several servants of God or church elders regarding the matter, namely that God redeemed us not to make us His servants, some of them could accept it. However, they still held the principle that the theological concept of God redeeming us to become His servants was a good concept. They argued that church service was a good activity. In this way, they could get to know the congregation better so that they could build intimacy, and their spirituality would also increase.

Basically, the author does not oppose service because the author himself is a servant of God. What the author disagrees with is the theological concept that God redeems us to become His servants or that what God wants most from us is to become His servants.

To make it clearer, the author provides an illustration. There was a man who was very concerned about street children. Then, he brought those who wanted to be his children to his house to be cared for and educated. One day there were guests from outside, and one of the children came to serve drinks. However, then a commotion arose and it went viral that the man accepted the street children not to be his children, but as his servants. He redeemed the children so that he could have free servants for life, who only needed to be fed.

We can imagine how sad it would be if we were in his position. Actually, he told the child to serve drinks to teach him how to work because he could actually order his servants. He gave orders to his children because they also had to learn such things. So, it was not as if he wanted to exploit the child.

GOD REDEEMED US TO BECOME OBJECTS OF HIS LOVE

As illustrated above, if we assume that God redeemed us so that we can become free servants for life, we are actually grieving God. In fact, we are insulting God because we consider the verse in John 3:16 **as a lie**. It says,

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

When we think that God redeemed us to become His servants, we assume that God redeemed us not because He loves us, **but rather as a trick** so that God can have free servants.

For families who have children, try to remember when you didn't have children or now who want to have children, try to reflect on what the purpose of having children is, is it because we want to have free servants? Definitely not! So, what is the

purpose of having children? **We want to have children so that our children can become the object of our love.**

That is why, if the author looks at the author's family, from the children and in-laws, when they plan to get pregnant, they will check their health first so that their children can be born healthy. Then, once pregnant, they will pay close attention to their food and activities so that their children can be born healthy. For example, the author's daughter consumed green bean boiled water, certain milk, and all foods that are good for her pregnancy. They do not consume alcohol and avoid slippery places.

In addition, they also look for good doctors and hospitals. After birth, the child is dressed in good clothes, given breast milk, immunizations, and other things so that the child is healthy. In fact, the father and mother will be stressed when their child is sick. When they start to grow, their child will certainly be sent to a good school.

If the goal is only to have a free servant, the parents certainly don't need to be that bothered, as long as they are born, they can eat normally, and their school doesn't need to be too high or they don't need to go to a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degree. For a servant, graduating from elementary school is enough because most of the work can be done well

as long as he can write, read, and count because the rest is more physical work.

Likewise, God, why did God redeem us? **To make us the object of His love.** If God only wanted to make us His servants, God would not have to redeem us by **sacrificing His Son.**

³⁰And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. ³¹What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?(Rome 8:30—32).

These verses explain,

*³⁰And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, **he also glorified.***

God redeemed us not just to become a servant. Besides we are justified and our sins are washed away, the goal is that we may be glorified, **to become noble people.**

*³¹What, then, shall we say in response to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us?***

We actually don't deserve to be glorified, so, many people oppose it. However, if God has decided so, no one can oppose him.

³²***He who did not spare his own Son**, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*

If God was willing to give His Son to die to redeem us, **there is nothing else which God could not possibly give to us.**

Every day there are several friends or groups who send daily reflections. One of them is Daily Devotion by Rick Warren. The author observes that Rick Warren's concept has also changed, namely from the concept of "We were created by God to serve Him" to "We were created by God to be the object of His love" although not explicitly, for example in the daily devotional on February 3, 2024, entitled "How to Defeat Despair". It is written there that "The number one goal in your life is to allow and let Him love you. When you do and feel His generosity and grace, you will be free to carry out all His plans in your life."

However, if we read the Bible, God also calls His children "servants"

*For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is **Christ's servant**. (1Co 7:22).*

ONE CANNOT HAVE TWO STATUSES

The Bible states that we who have been redeemed are called children of God and also servants. In fact, one cannot have two statuses, namely as a child and as a servant, to one person. So, my son, Alvin, cannot have the status of being the son of Mr. Yunus, but also the servant of Mr. Yunus. In terms of status, this is impossible because, if he is the son of Mr. Yunus, he lives in the room upstairs; if he is a servant, he lives in the maid's room at the back. So, the status given to a person can only be one, except in relation to more than one person, for example Agus is the son of Mr. Joni, but is the servant of Mr. Johan.

If so, what is our status, children of God or servants of God? Actually, our status has been stated very clearly, among others, in the Lord's Prayer, which begins with "**Our Father who art in heaven**". Our calling God as Father makes it clear that we are God's children, not His servants, because **a servant has no right to call his master Father**.

So, what is meant by servant? The word servant is a title, just as Simon was called Peter, which means 'rock'. Servant

here is related to, among other things, “obedience and helplessness.”

Matters related to our status as God’s children, followers of Christ, centered on “**obedience to all the commandments and examples set by the Lord Jesus.**”

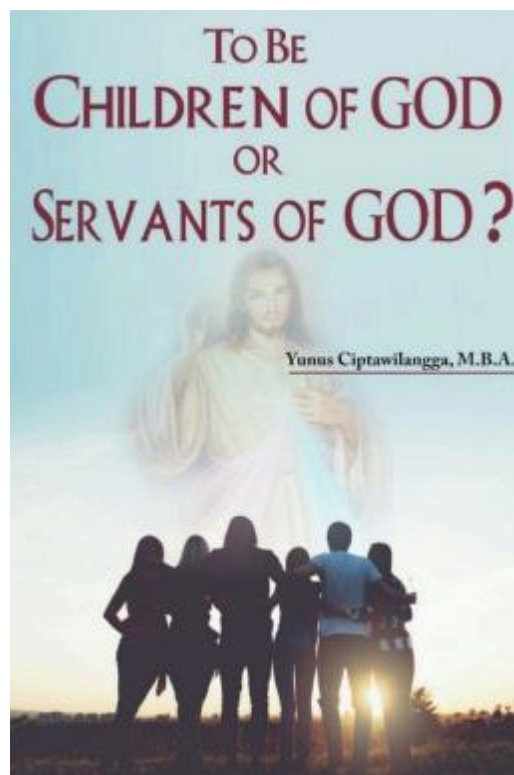
Obedience and likeness to God are explained, among other things, in the following verses.

- *He replied, “My mother and brothers are **those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.** (Luk. 8:21).*
- *¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵**I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.** ¹⁶Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, **you will be blessed if you do them.** (John. 13:14–17).*

Our helplessness is explained, among other things, in the following verse.

*I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.** (John. 15:5).*

For a more comprehensive explanation, please read the author's book entitled *Becoming a Child of God or a Servant of God?* Which **explains the different focus, life priorities, and daily activities** of a follower of Christ who has the principle of **being a child of God** and as a follower of Christ who has the principle of **being a servant of God**.



LESSONS FROM RICK WARREN

The author does not know for sure why Rick Warren is now starting to change. Maybe one of them is related to the death of his son who committed suicide. When his son died, Rick Warren said that he was subjected to a trial. Without meaning to disrespect him, the author does not agree that what

happened to him was a trial. According to the author, it was the price he had to pay for his theological concept.

What is the difference between a trial and a price to pay? Trials usually only happen to a few people. Not everyone experiences the same thing, not everyone's child dies. However, if that is the price to pay, whoever practices Rick Warren's theological concept will pay the price. The price is not always the death of his child, but it can be the loss of a family member because of apostasy or refusing to be a child of God, loss of income, loss of respect from family members, loss of health, or it can also be various disasters.

FOUR CASES OF SERVANTS OF GOD'S FAMILIES

Recently, the author has been somewhat saddened by the passing of two very famous servants of God. The author is sad not because of the passing of the servants of God, but rather because of the impressions conveyed by the families to the mourners, which in essence felt that their fathers were so busy serving that they did not take good care of them. They did not feel the love and education of their fathers. They may have been good servants of God, but they were not good fathers, husbands, and heads of families.

Next, a businessman who believed that what God wanted most was to serve Him. For that, he left his family to serve in the hinterland. He left his family, and his business was handed over to his wife. Unfortunately, his business did not work out so that economic difficulties arose which caused them to be unable to pay for their children who wanted to go to college.

The fourth is related to someone who is quite close to the author. The deceased was very active in ministry, both in church and in Christian organizations. The deceased once said that his household was less harmonious because his wife and children did not respect him. As the head of the family, he was unable to support his family so his wife had to work and needed to ask for help from his extended family if there were other expenses.

The author can understand why his wife and children were disappointed because, as a husband and father, he was not financially responsible. In fact, the deceased had good skills as a photographer.

Honestly, the cases that befell the four servants of God were what finally encouraged the author to write this book. Previously, the author had delayed writing this book because he felt he was not in a position to write a book that “rebuke” God’s servants.

TWO TYPES OF SERVICE

The Bible records many commands from God for all of His children to serve. Basically, there are two types of service, namely general service and special service.

General service, among others, is recorded in Romans 12:11,

*Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, **serving the Lord.***

If we pay attention to this verse, it can be seen that there is no additional explanation related to “serving the Lord”, either before or after these words. Therefore, the author interprets that serving the Lord in this verse is related to **general service**. General service is **a service that must be carried out by all of God's children** with the aim of ensuring that our children become **Godly offspring** or become **children of God**, as recorded in Malachi 2:15a,

*Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? **Godly offspring.***

In the Old Testament, this was commanded by God in Deuteronomy 6:4–9 or so known as **Shema Israel**.

⁴*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.* ⁵*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and*

with all your strength. ⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

God also confirms this in the New Testament, which is found in the Great Commission,

¹⁹Therefore go and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. ”
(Matt. 28:19—20).

Next, Acts 1:8 adds,

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses **in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria**, and to the **ends of the earth**.*

It explains there that “*make disciples of all nations*” starts from the city of Jerusalem, to Judea (the province where the city of Jerusalem is located), then to the neighboring province, namely Samaria, then spreads out to the ends of the earth. This gives us an understanding that God wants us to carry out

His commands in a hierarchical and continuous manner, namely from a small scope first, such as **to our wives and children**, then to Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

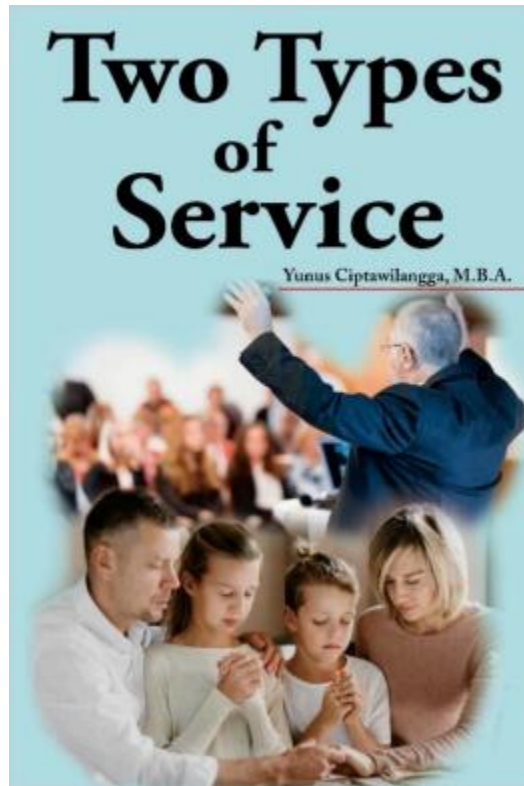
The second type of ministry is special service, which is recorded, among other things, in Romans 12:6–8,

*⁶We have **different gifts, according to the grace** given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷**if it is serving, then serve**; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.*

These verses describe the various types of gifts that God gives to his children, one of which is related to the gift of serving. Where the gift of serving is included in **special ministry because each person can have a different ministry**.

Special ministry is a gift. Therefore, not everyone gets the same thing and not everyone gets it at the same time. It is different from the general service assigned to all of God's children.

For a more complete explanation, please read the author's book entitled *Two Types of Services*.



There are theologians and writers who associate gifts with talents. They state that if we have a certain talent, it means that we have been given a gift that corresponds to that talent. Therefore, we should use that talent to serve God.

TALENTS ARE DIFFERENT FROM GIFTS

In the Old Testament, God told Noah to build an ark. Did Noah have the talent to build an ark? The author is not sure because Noah did not live in a coastal area. That is why the

verse says, after the rain, the ship would rise. If Noah had lived on the coast, if there was only a little rain or waves, the ship would have risen.

Likewise with David, did he have the talent to become a king? No. When his father met with the Prophet Samuel, who was going to choose one of his sons to be king, David was not called because his father himself did not consider him capable enough. However, David was the one chosen by God.

When the Israelites were going to war against the Philistines, and his father told David to visit his brothers there, when he arrived, his brothers scolded him. In fact, at that time David had been anointed as a king. However, the anointing carried out by the Prophet Samuel, which was done in front of his older brothers, was still not believed by them. This was proven when David was still scolded by his older brothers. Was David talented? No. At least in the eyes of his family, David was not talented to be a king, not even a soldier.

Likewise with the Lord Jesus, if He were looking for talented people, would He choose fishermen and tax collectors to be His disciples? At least He would choose the scribes or Pharisees.

Why does God often choose those who are ordinary over those who are talented? First, because if God chooses talented people, have good appearances, have abundant wealth, or

have many other advantages, these people are **easy to become arrogant**. In fact, God hates those who proud,

*¹⁶There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: ¹⁷**haughty eyes**, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, ¹⁹a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community. (Prov. 6:16—19 NIV).*

*¹⁷**A proud look**, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, (KJV).*

Second, because God looks more at the heart than at talent and appearance,

*But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but **the Lord looks at the heart**. (1 Sam. 16:7).*

2. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

One day a servant of God, whom the author has known for quite a long time, came to visit. After chatting for quite a long time, the author finally asked whether when he was taking his Masters in Theology education there was an obligation to read the Bible. He explained that when taking his Bachelor's degree, all students were required to read the Bible. However,

during his Masters, there was no such obligation because the participants were considered to have the awareness to read the Bible. Likewise with Doctoral studies, there was no obligation to read the Bible.

Then, the author continued to ask about what he learned in his Masters. He explained that during his Masters, he studied theological concepts from the church fathers. The author commented, *"So, during your study, you learn many wrong things?"* He looked surprised and asked back, *"What do you mean by learning many wrong things?"*

The author explained that he definitely got lessons related to the rapture, of which there were at least three theories or versions: Pre-tribulation (God's children will be raptured before period of persecution), Mid-tribulation (God' children will be lifted up in times of persecution), and Post-tribulation (God's children will be raptured after the end of the persecution period). *"These three theories or versions can't all be true, right? Only one of them is correct or, in fact, all three may be wrong."*

Let's say his lecturer believes that Pre-tribulation was true, with his reasons. Was what his lecturer said definitely true? Not

really. The author himself believes that the rapture will occur in the Post-tribulation period, after the persecution, but Pre-wrath, before the bowl of God's wrath.

Is the author's opinion definitely true? The author does not dare to say that it is definitely true. However, the author has this opinion by studying directly from the Bible.

The problem for the author is why do we have to study theology from theologians. In fact, at this time we can get the Bible very easily. In fact, in this technological era we have access to get the Bible in various languages and translations easily and cheaply, even for free.

The author does not mean to disrespect the Church Fathers. However, no matter how great they are, they are still human beings who can make mistakes. For example, the book *The Purpose Driven Life*, whose theological concept has been adopted by many churches, has been explained by the author that its theological concept is not biblical.

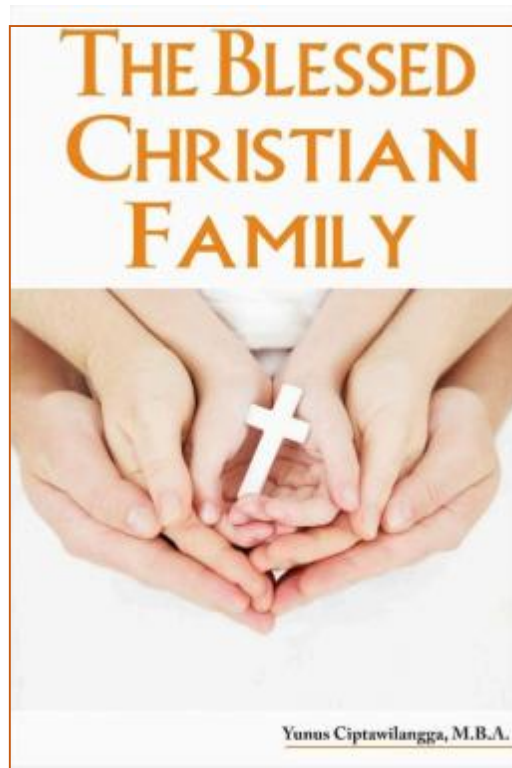
Let's connect that with the previous illustration, which is about a husband who is confused about his wife. The husband feels sure that he knows his wife. In fact, what he did didn't solve the problem. Then, he asked his friend and his advice did not solve the problem. Next, he asks the experts. However, their advice also did not solve the problem because basically

they are only humans who are unable to see what is in his wife's heart.

In that illustration, the main problem is not on the wife's side, but on the husband's side, namely why he does not ask his wife directly. When the husband asks his wife directly, the reason is revealed. It turns out that the wife is upset because she has repeatedly asked her husband not to be busy with his cellphone, but he ignores it.

41 Years of Married Life Experience

When this book was written, the author had been married for 41 years. As far as we can remember, during those 41 years we fought less than 20 times, even in the first 25 years we fought less than 10 times. Why is that, **first because of God's grace**. This can be read in the author's book entitled *The Blessed Christian Family*.



Another thing is that since we got married, it can be said that we always go everywhere together. After getting married, we sold daily necessities at Kosambi Market in Bandung. We managed it together. So, we both knew everything that's going on. In addition, for anything that is big or important, we discuss it first, for example if we plan to borrow money from the bank, buy goods in large quantities to prepare for Eid which usually has increased sales, and other important things.

Usually, the market starts to get quiet after 2 pm, then the author's wife would go home. However, if there was something that needed to be bought, the author would go shopping.

At that time we got our children used to going to bed at 8 pm. As soon as the children went to bed, the author and his wife used to tell stories about things that happened when we were not together. For example, when the author went shopping, the author would tell about what happened, whether the atmosphere of the shop where he was shopping was busy or not, whether there were new items or cheap items on offer, whether there was information about issues of price increases or decreases for certain items, and other things that the author considers important. In addition, the author also would tell if there were special things that were encountered during the trip.

Likewise, the author's wife would tell stories about events she experienced after returning from the market, especially those related to children, so that the author's and his wife's knowledge is relatively the same. If there were issues related to children, we would discuss how to handle them and what our respective roles were.

When the author took his Master's degree in the 90s, the author also often told his wife about special events at college. After completing his education, the author began to enjoy reading books. Every time he finished reading, the author also told the contents of the book to his wife. Likewise, the author's wife who likes to read magazines, she would tell the author if there was something good and interesting that she read.

The author thinks that communication is what caused us to only fight less than ten times during the first 25 years of marriage. After that, there were several quarrels because starting in 2009 the author was more serious about studying the end times so that the time with his wife decreased because the author had to read and write books. Furthermore, in 2014 we sold most of our restaurants leaving six restaurants managed by the author's wife, which caused a wider knowledge gap between us. According to the author, that was one of the causes of several more quarrels so that maybe the total number had exceeded ten, but less than twenty.

Likewise with first love, if we want to have a good relationship with God, we must continue to read the Bible to get to know God better. **If we continue to follow human concepts, the author is worried that our gap with God will widen.**

3. THE DAMAGED BIBLES

A. THE DAMAGE TO THE PHYSICAL BIBLE

The author still remembers several decades ago in one of the churches that provided Bibles for congregants who did not bring Bibles, the condition of the Bibles was very shabby. Most

of the covers had come off. In fact, some of them no longer had their covers.

During the service, the author also often saw Bibles being thrown or moved on the floor. Some even used them as projector supports.

Several years ago, the author asked our former church pastor to re-baptize our children and son-in-law because they had previously been baptized by sprinkling. Because we lived in an apartment in Jakarta, they were re-baptized in the apartment swimming pool.

On our way to take him to Bandung, the author remembered the church security guard and was curious to know if they had become Christians. The Pastor said that they had been evangelized, but could not be convinced. The Pastor then told their response: *“The God that Christians worship is not a living God. Their Bibles are so destroyed. They say that the Bible is the word of God, how can they treat it like that?”* “Wow, I am so embarrassed,” said the Pastor, then continued what the security guard had said: *“In my village there is a religious study group, the children hold the Quran above their heads. Because they believe that the Quran is the Holy Book, they do not dare to put the Quran lower than their heads.”*

Likewise with us, when we spread the Gospel, we spread God’s love and say that the Bible is God’s love letter. We must

not feel that we love and respect God, but treat His love letter badly and inappropriately. This does not mean that we should worship the Bible and make it an idol, but it is only natural that we treat the Bible appropriately.

B. THE DAMAGE TO THE CONTENT OF THE BIBLE

1. THE WORD OF SERPENT

The Bible explains that Satan brought down Adam and Eve not by persecution, insults, seduction, fame, wealth, but by falsifying God's word, and that has proven to be very effective.

In the last days, many falsified words of God have circulated, including those related to the following:

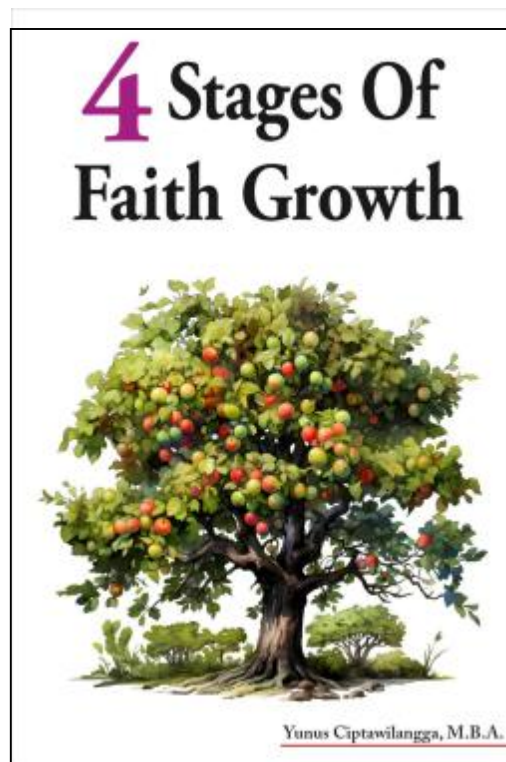
a) Growth in Faith

*²⁴“Therefore everyone **who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.** ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet **it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.** (Matthew 7:24—25).*

These verses explain **the growth of faith**, namely **from a hearer of the Word to a doer of the Word**. Doing the Word is not easy. It requires perseverance, commitment, and sacrifice.

However, at this time there are several churches that teach an easy way to grow in faith, namely by what they call **"speaking in tongues"**. They will teach certain words or sentences that are considered "speaking in tongues". So, when the congregation can say these words, they are considered to have experienced an increase in the growth of faith. Very easy, right? Yes, of course it is very easy if it is compared to those who try to become doers of the Word because it will take years, even a lifetime. As for "speaking in tongues" it is enough to be done in just a few weeks.

To get a broader picture of the growth of faith, please read the author's book entitled ***4 Stages of Faith Growth***.



b) To Be Blessed

By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life. (Prov. 22:4 KJV).

This verse explains that if we want to be blessed, that is, we want to be rich, respected, and live well, we must be humble and fear God. Is it easy to be humble? It is difficult, especially if we are in good condition. However, to be able to be a person who fears God is even more difficult because we must know the Person of God, understand all His laws and commandments, then obey or become doers of the Word. So, in order to be a person who is blessed, we must be people who persevere in reading the Bible, that is, repeatedly reading and meditating on the word of God so that we can know the Person of God and understand the laws and commandments of God, then do them. That is a long process, even throughout our lives.

However, the process is very worthy to do because the reward is extraordinary, namely not only being given wealth, honor, and a good life, but also being given something very valuable in our lives, namely a good family, as recorded in Psalm 128:3-4,

³Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. ⁴Yes, this will be the blessing for the man who fears the Lord.

However, at this time some servants of God and churches teach an easy way to be blessed, namely by **serving and giving offerings**. It is not wrong to serve if God does give this gift because, as explained at the beginning, service is a gift, a favor from God that is given to certain people only.

Likewise with offerings, it is not a kind of bait to catch fish, but a willingness of heart driven by love for God who has first loved us. Therefore, our offerings must be based more on our love for God and others by providing support to the local church and servants of God, to the church and servants of God in the region, and to other Christian organizations.

However, service and offerings cannot replace humility and fear of the LORD because humility is the basis for being willing to be taught and educated so that we can have wisdom.

- ***He guides the humble** in what is right and teaches them his way. (Psalm 25:9).*
- *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but **with humility comes wisdom**. (Prov. 11:2).*

The fear of the Lord also cannot be replaced with service and offerings. As explained in the beginning, leaving one's first love is a tremendous fall because one cannot possibly become someone who fears the Lord without knowing the Lord and His

laws and commandments. In addition, the Lord clearly states that obedience to His word is far more important than offerings.

*But Samuel replied: “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? **To obey is better than sacrifice**, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. (1 Sam. 15:22).*

c) Reading the Bible

*Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and **examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.** (Acts 17:11).*

This verse explains the attitude and habits of the early church who examined the Scriptures daily. This means that they did not just read, but also investigated to find the truth of a teaching or theological principle.

This did not only apply to the church, but was also commanded to the elders.

*Until I come, **devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.** (1 Tim. 4:13).*

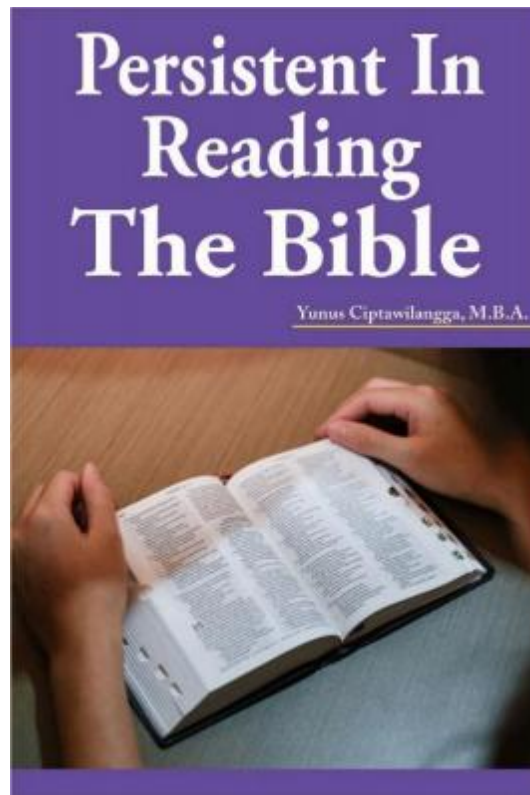
Is it easy to persevere in reading the Scriptures or the Bible? It is difficult and takes a lot of time. However, that is what the early church did and it also applies to us as children of God.

At this time, there are not many children of God who diligently read the Bible. In fact, there are many who have never finished reading the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. That is why they are easily led astray when there are "servants of God" who offer an easier way, namely not having to read the entire Bible, but simply memorizing certain verses, then they follow the advice. It is no wonder that the Lord Jesus said that in the end times there will be many children of God who will apostatize because they do not understand the Word. They are children of God who have no roots, who do not maintain their faith.

- *But since **they have no root**, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, **they quickly fall away**. (Matthew 13:21).*
- *At that time **many will turn away from the faith** and will betray and hate each other, (Matt. 24:10).*

For information, the author has written down the author's experience related to reading the Bible in a book entitled *Persistent in Reading the Bible*. Hopefully the book can

motivate readers to also persevere in reading the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.



d) Speak the Holy Scriptures

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. (Josh. 1:8).

The verse was God's word to Joshua that whatever he said must be based on the Law. For that, God commanded

Joshua to meditate on what was written in the Law so that he could grasp the essence of the verses or commands in the book. In addition, God also reminded Joshua to act carefully so that everything he did was in accordance with the law. Thus, all his plans would succeed and Joshua would be lucky.

Was it easy for Joshua to carry out God's commands as stated in the verse? It was very difficult, because he had to understand correctly the Word contained in the Law so that he could speak and give commands in accordance with the Law. That is why God commanded Joshua to meditate on the Law day and night. In addition, Joshua was also asked to act carefully so that everything he did was in accordance with the Law, which means he had to consider, and even ask for the opinions of experts, before taking action.

However, unfortunately, at this time there are servants of God who only take a few parts of the verse to be like this,

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Then, they taught their congregation to recite (say) certain verses every day or as often as possible so that their plans would be successful. Such a difficult command was made easy by simply reciting certain verses every day or as often as possible. What a deception!

e) Glorifying God

- *Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. (1 Pet. 2:12).*
- *In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:16).*

These two verses explain how we can give glory to God. In essence, these two verses explain that we must have a good way of life and do good deeds either so that it can be seen by the public or the people around us. In this way, our lives become role models for society or the people around us.

Next, the Lord Jesus explained in more detail how we can give glory to God, namely by bearing much fruit,

This is to my Father,s glory, thatyou bear muchfruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (John 15:8).

Being fruitful means that we have the fruit of the Spirit,

²²*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Gal. 5:22—23).*

It is not easy to have the fruit of the Spirit. Therefore, it is not easy to be able to give glory to God.

However, at this time there is an easy way to give glory to God, which is **by simply clapping your hands**. “Give glory to God”, then the congregation applauds and the congregation feels that they have “given glory to God”.

In fact, if we pay attention to the three verses, the "Glorifying God" that is meant is **not the praise that comes out of our mouths, but from the mouths of people who see our fruit of the Spirit!**

f) Pray

*⁶But when you pray, **go into your room, close the door** and pray to your Father, **who is unseen**. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, **will reward you**. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of **their many words**. ⁸Do not be like them, **for your Father knows what you need before you ask him**. (Matt. 6:6–8).*

These verses above explain how to get our prayers answered by God. First, pray in a hidden place so that no one

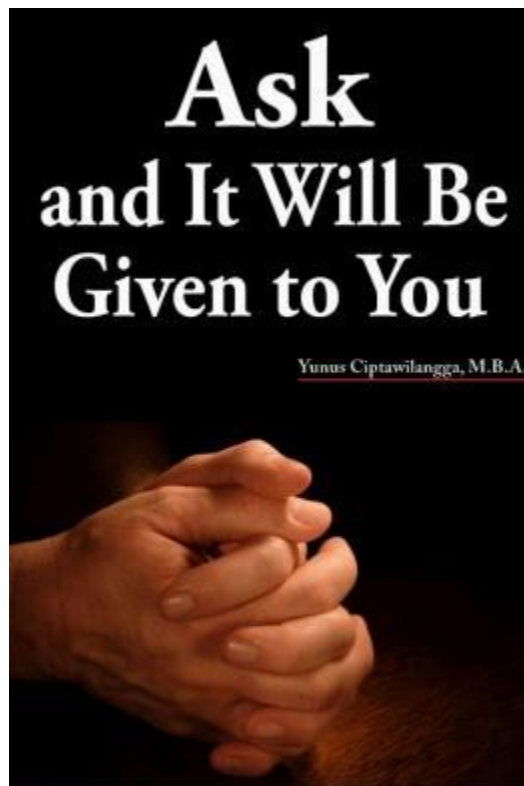
knows that we are praying. Second, pray to God which is invisible. Third, pray to God who is our Heavenly Father. Therefore, speak as we speak to our earthly father because what God wants is **a prayer based on faith**, not **a prayer to the ears of others**.

The form of prayer based on faith is explained, among others, in Mark 11:24,

*Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, **believe that you have received it**, and it will be yours.*

This verse explains that whatever we ask of the Heavenly Father will surely be given according to His word. Therefore, when asking God for something, **we must be sure that we have received it**, that **God has granted our request**, and we just have to **wait for the time**.

To get a more complete explanation, please read the author's book entitled *Ask, and It Will Be Given to You*.



Apart from that, the Bible also shows several examples of how the Lord Jesus practiced prayer in His life, as stated in the following verses,

- *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and **went ofto a solitary place**, where he prayed. (Mark 1:35).*

⁴¹***He withdrew about a stone,s throw beyond them, knelt down andprayed,*** ⁴²*“Father, ifyou are willing, take this cupfrom me; yet not my will, butyours be done.” (Luke 22:41—42).*

However, nowadays some churches add musical accompaniment or sounds like supporting music in films in their prayers with the intention of **touching the hearts of the congregation more**. In fact, even though in **their prayers they ask God**, basically they are praying in **people's ears**, namely **asking their congregation**.

Several years ago the author attended a service for the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit. When the pastor prayed asking the congregation to be filled with the Holy Spirit, he imitated the sound of blowing and strong wind accompanied by supporting music. They wanted to imitate the event of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts 2:2,

Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Previously it has been explained that whether our prayers are answered or not is not based on the number of words we say or the atmosphere when we pray, but rather on our faith.

Therefore, imitating sounds like a strong wind will not make our prayers more noticed by God. On the contrary, do not let this cause God's anger, as happened to Herod.

²¹*On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people.* ²²*They*

shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man.”

²³Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. (Acts 12:21—23).

2) INCORRECT BIBLE VERSES

Currently, there is a phenomenon, stating that certain verses in the LAI (Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia/ Indonesian Bible Society) Bible are wrong. The author does not understand why such a phenomenon appears, whether because the verses in the LAI do not match their thinking or because of something else.

The author once saw a pastor preaching. He read a verse, then explained that the verse in the LAI translation of the Bible was wrong while smiling. The author was shocked, how could the pastor smile?

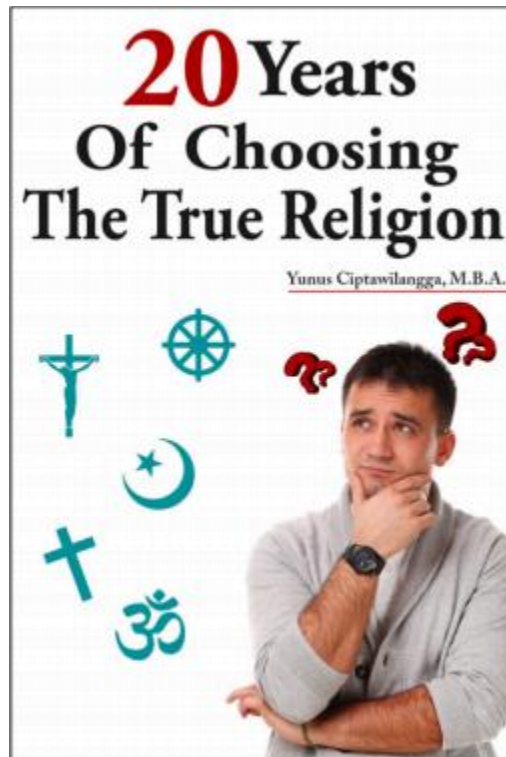
Proud because he could state that there were Bible verses that were wrong? If the Bible verses were really wrong, shouldn't he cry? Because the Bible is one of the foundations of the Christian Faith, if it is wrong, Christianity has a fragile foundation!

The author remembers when he was presenting end-times material at a theological school. During the break, a master's

student said, *"Excuse me, sir, the Bible verses cannot be translated literally like that. The Bible verses must be reviewed from the history and customs of the Israelites **because the Bible has many mistakes.**"* The author was very surprised by his statement, then the author replied, *"If the Bible has many mistakes, why do you want to study it and become a Christian?"* The student looked a little confused by the author's answer. However, the author did not have time to explain it because the break was very short and the author needed to go to the toilet.

On the way to the toilet, the author said to himself, fortunately the student said it at this time, after the author decided to become a Christian and read and learn the Bible. If he had said it when the author was looking for the true religion around 1980-2000, it is very possible that the author would have become an atheist. Why be a follower of God who is unable to maintain the truth of His word? If He is not able to protect the truth of His word, how is He able to protect the author?

The author's experience of 20 years of searching the true religion has been recorded under the title *20 Years of Choosing the True Religion.*



BIBLE VERSES MUST BE SEEN CONTEXTUALLY

Let's look at Joshua 6:3–4,

³March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. ⁴Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams, horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets.

If Joshua had seen God's command from the history and customs of the Israelites, he would not have carried out God's command because it was not the custom of the Israelites to march around a city they were going to conquer. In fact, there was no such event in their history. So why did Joshua do it?

Because he believed that what God commanded would definitely happen.

Therefore, the author is concerned about the teaching that what is written in the Bible must be explained contextually is not based on a desire to explain the Bible more clearly, but rather **is caused by their disbelief in the Bible that the contents of the Bible are true and complete.**

The phenomenon of finding errors in the Bible

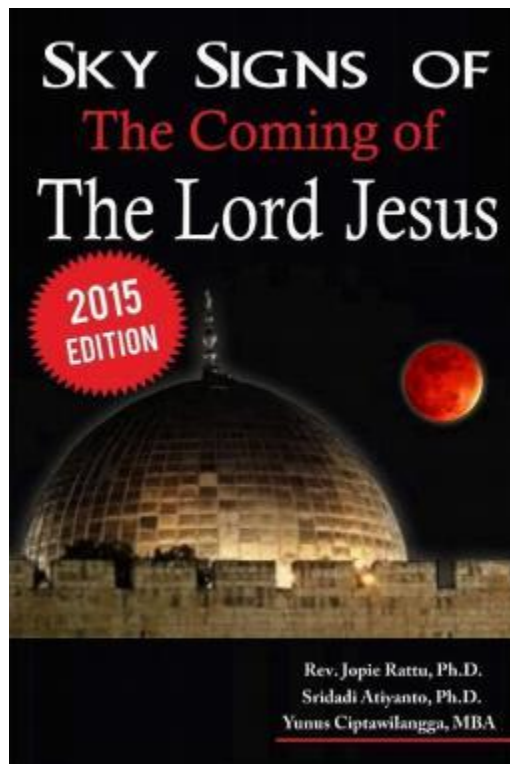
Finally, the author tried to find the source of the phenomenon that stated the Bible's errors came from. When investigating it on the internet, it turned out that the phenomenon of stating the errors of Bible verses was initially found on websites of other religions.

It is natural for adherents of other religions to state that there are Bible verses that are wrong, perhaps because of their lack of understanding or other intentions. What is not normal is the existence of servants of God who state that certain Bible verses are wrong because that means that **they are destroying the basis of their own faith.** This is very different from other religious figures, who will immediately defend when someone states that their Holy Book is wrong.

In late 2006, God gave the author the opportunity to study the end times. When studying it, the author was truly amazed at the Bible because it turned out that the words and terms used by the Bible were very precise, and the numbers in the Bible were very accurate.

In addition, the LAI Bible translation in Daniel 9:27 allowed us to find the beginning of the end times, which then led us to find the sky signs of the coming of the Lord Jesus in the form of 26 eclipses as contained in the table presented earlier.

So, for us, the LAI Bible translation is extraordinary because the verse Daniel 9:27 is translated differently from the English Bible. The explanation of Daniel 9:27 that allows us to find the beginning of the end times and the period of great tribulation can be seen in our end times book entitled Sky Signs of the Coming of the Lord Jesus.



4. MAMMON IN THE CHURCH

The word mammon comes from the transliteration of the Aramaic mamona, which means 'wealth' or 'profit'. In the context of the Bible, "mammon" is often associated with greed for wealth, which is contrary to devotion to God. The spirit of mammon is attached to wealth, and influences people to trust it more than God.

In Mark 10:16–22, it is conveyed that a rich young man felt that he had done all God's commandments, then he asked the

Lord Jesus what he still lacked. However, when the Lord said to sell all his possessions and give them to the poor, the young man left disappointed and reluctant to follow the Lord.

At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. (Mark 10:22).

Many children of God claim to love God and are willing to do many services and other things, except to give their possessions. At this time, love for mammon is not limited to the congregation, but also penetrates the servants of God and the church, which causes them to be like this:

a. Stingy

The author sees several churches being very stingy in helping other organizations' programs, even Christian organizations and organizations in the surrounding. In fact, the author is sure that all churches know that one of the church's tasks is to spread the Gospel according to the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus.

Incidentally, the author supports one of the Christian organizations that provides a little assistance to Christian religious teachers who teach in public schools. Most public schools only have Islamic religious teachers so that Christian

students can only get religious grades if they study Islam or ask for religious grades from their churches.

Therefore, there are some children of God who are moved to become Christian religious teachers voluntarily because there is no honorarium from the school. Some of these teachers are given a little assistance in the form of transportation money, which is basically more as an appreciation for them.

Evangelizing and discipling Christian students is part of the Great Commission that needs to be supported by all parties, especially the church. However, the author sees from the monthly report of the organization that support from the church is very small, even from large and wealthy churches.

The author does not understand why the church only gives minimal support to the organization. In fact, their monthly reports are good, open, and regular. Does the church consider the implementation of the Great Commission to be only what is done by their church and who will become their church congregation?

The author also saw that not many churches support churches from other synods that are having difficulties. They focus more on themselves, whether in the form of building, renovating their churches, or improving their equipment facilities.

b. All Ways to Raise Funds

In fact, to raise funds, there are some churches that use false testimonies. The author once supported a church for a mission to preach the Gospel. However, when the author received its annual report, it turned out that of all the funds collected, only a very small portion was used to help churches in the regions. In fact, in their evangelism activities, they used servants of God from the regions to give testimonies. Most of the funds were actually used to buy land and build their churches.

The author also remembers a pastor who conveyed the need for quite large funds for a church project, then invited her congregation to pray for God's guidance. In the middle of the prayer, she said that anyone who was moved to give to stand up, need not be afraid, because she would not ask those who stood up to come forward or write down the value of their offering. She only wanted to pray for them specifically. Because the author is not a member of the congregation, the author did not stand.

Then, finished praying, she asked the congregation who were standing to remain standing, then said, *"In the Old Testament if a person makes a vow, but does not carry it out, he sinful. Plan to make an offering is a vow and you are a sin if*

you don't do it. " Apparently, she was carrying out psychological pressure.

c. Focus on Collecting Assets

Currently, many churches are more focused on collecting assets than evangelizing or caring for the welfare of God's servants. There are several churches that pay attention to the welfare of their internal God's servants. However, very few pay attention to the welfare of external God's servants and churches in the regions. In other words, many churches only care about themselves or those related to themselves. That is why, we see several churches that have magnificent buildings with pastors who appear charming. On the other hand, there are several churches that are very simple with pastors who, even, are forced to send their children to small Islamic boarding schools.

Until today, the author has only met one pastor who believes that his current church building, which is moderately sized, is sufficient. He is not interested in enlarging his church. The excess blessings received by his church were distributed to hundreds of pastors in the area and to churches in the area, both those under his church synod and those not.

In fact, he had a principle of not leaving any income from one month to the next. The income from one month would be distributed until it was used up in that month because he believed that if what he did was God's will, God would provide the funds so that there was no need to have reserve funds for the following month. Amazingly, the author was amazed and respected him very much.

d. Bad Policy with a Good Name

The author once attended a branch of a church that was being matured. At that time the author was very happy because the central church turned out to give the branch church the opportunity to become mature and independent.

However, the author later heard that the church was being matured not so that they could be independent, but because the central church no longer wanted to support the church which was always in deficit.

A good name or term can actually be a bad policy if it happens solely because of money. In fact, the central church is able to continue to support financially.

e. God's Call and Mammon's Call

The author noticed that quite a lot of church pastors prepare their children to become successors. Actually, it is not

wrong to prepare children to replace their ministry. However, it becomes a problem when it is not based on God's call, but rather because of economic factors.

Becoming a servant of God, let alone a pastor, must be based on God's call or gift, not based on inheritance. That is why the author sees many churches declining, both in terms of teaching and the number of congregations, when the church is continued by their children. One of the reasons is because the children continue their father's position based on the call of mammon, not the call of God.

f. Fighting for Church Positions

Recently, the author had a conversation with a relative who is a pastor with a business background. He explained that he was still an assistant pastor in a church. Many people encouraged him to build a church so that he could become a pastor.

However, he said that he did not want to build a church because in his church synod every church building must be donated to the synod. Actually, he did not mind handing over the church to the synod. But from his experience, when the founder of the church dies or is no longer a pastor, usually the church will be handed over to the son, son-in-law, relative, or

close friend of the synod chairman, not to a capable servant of God.

He continued, that is why church positions are currently being fought over like regional head elections. In the campaign, it was conveyed that they wanted to occupy the position so that they could do things that glorify God. However, for some of them, the goal was actually for financial interests.

g. Selling Church Assets and Buildings

Since he was young, the author has heard that there were church treasurers who embezzled church funds. However, currently the case that is rife on social media is the struggle for church assets. In fact, because mammon entered the church, there were even those who sold church assets and buildings for their personal interests.

There was a church that also had a school that was sold by its pastor. The method was to deliberately abandon the school and church before the buildings were sold. The neglect caused the congregation and students of the school to continue to decrease so that the church and school were finally closed. Not long afterward the church and school buildings were sold and the pastor moved to another country.

The author does not know in whose name the land and buildings are. However, it is very possible that at the beginning of the construction of the church building, the congregation helped. In general, the congregation helps build the church with the belief that the church building is used for the benefit of God and the congregation. In fact, many believe that the church building basically belongs to God even though the certificate and building permits are in the name of the pastor. Therefore, the pastor actually has no right to sell the building.

CLOSING

From church history, we learn that one of the causes of the Reformation was the deviation of church teachings, one of which was caused by the scarcity of the Bible and the limitation of the congregation's right to read the Bible.

That is why John Wycliffe translated the Bible from Latin into English. Meanwhile, the Reformation figure, Martin Luther, translated the Greek New Testament into German. William Tyndale translated the Greek New Testament into English, one of the main goals of which was so that the Bible could be read and understood by many people so that there would be no more heresy.

In fact, at this time the Bible has been translated into regional languages, including into various dialects. However, heresy still occurs, even massively. What is the cause?

The core of the Church Reformation is the statement of the three Solas, namely Sola Fide (by faith alone), Sola Gratia (by grace alone), and Sola Scriptura (by the Bible alone).

However, although Sola Scriptura is one of the cores of the Church Reformation, currently there are quite a lot of God's servants who preach by only taking one verse or one passage as a theme, then explaining the theme based on the opinions of theologians, senior pastors, or writers who are basically just human opinions. In fact, the explanation of the theme is in the Bible.

Unfortunately, many consider explaining the Bible through the Bible itself to be an old-fashioned, non-contextual way. They prefer to explain the Bible with human opinions. In fact, some pastors who have taken higher theological education feel the need and pride if they can explain a Bible theme through the opinions of theologians or books they have read.

Therefore, pastors or churches who proclaim themselves as followers of the Reformation, Lutheran, or Protestant, but do not base their lives and teachings on Sola Scriptura (because they rarely read the Bible), **have lost their "first love"**.

In closing, when was the last time we read the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation? Don't let what we bring in the church pulpit not be a sermon, but only a lecture because the content is human opinion, not the word of God!

³For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. (2Tim 4:3-4).