

Newsletter

from

Trinity Methodist Church

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SINGAPORE-19



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PASTOR'S MESSAGE

JULY 1974

SUPERSTAR, EXORCISM - AND THE CENSOR

It must be said at the outset that what follows is the expression of one person's point of view, and is intended to stimulate, not agreement but responsible decision. There are bigger battles to be fought by Christian men and women than those over what films should be shown to the cinema-public of Singapore. And it would be illogical and invidious to get noisily hot under the collar about a couple of items that seem to touch ourselves a little more closely than most, when we remain blithely silent about all kinds of other rubbish which is the normal diet of the film fans. But since some questions have been publicly raised about the decisions of the Board of Film Censors in relation to "Jesus Christ - Superstar" and "The Exorcist", we ought to be prepared to make up our own minds.

First, we need to remember that both items are available in other forms in the Republic - 'Superstar' on records, 'Exorcist' as a paperback. How much do we want to ban? And who shall decide where the line should be drawn?

Second, it is hard to understand why "Superstar" has been excluded. Some of the music is pretty pedestrian (not least that rather dreadful 'theme' excerpt played by our school brass bands during the recent inter-schools contest organised by the Ministry of Education) but it has its moments - even for an old man like me. Its theology, of course, is totally inadequate; but then it does not claim to be a 'Christian' piece or a proclamation of the gospel. And I wonder whether its theology is much less adequate than that of some of its most vocal critics. A newspaper reporter told me that some of the 'Christian leaders' had complained that the film made our Lord "too human"; and behind that comment I see lurking one of the oldest dangers to Christian thinking.

(see page eight)

TRINITY FAMILY NEWS

NEW ARRIVAL To Vincent & Rosalind Chia, at Kandang Kerbau Hospital on 12 June 1974, God's gift of a daughter; a third grand-daughter for Mrs Patricia Chia

NEW MEMBERS FOR THE CHURCH After completing the preparation class the following new members were welcomed into church membership on Pentecost Sunday, 2nd June on the profession of their faith:-

<u>By Baptism</u>	Miss Florence Seah
	Miss Tock Seow Meng
	Mr Yip Fook Yoon
<u>Confirmation</u>	Mr Marcus Ang, 1 Chepstow Close (19)
	Miss Deborah Chia, 3 Medway Drive (19)
	Mr Viva Doraisingham, 4, John Road (11)
	Mr Lee Cheong Seng, 32-G Yuan Ching Rd. (22)
	Miss Joy Ou Puay Gek 29, Farleigh Avenue (19)
	Miss Lynette Pang 23, Burghley Drive (19)
	Miss Florence Seah 31 Jln Kechubong (28)
	Mr Tracey Tay 57 Brockhampton Dr (19)
	Miss Tock Seow Meng 45 Neram Road (28)
	Mr Yip Fook Yoon 14-F Bkt Merah View Blk 120 Singapore (3)

WE EXPRESS OUR SINCERE SYMPATHY to Mr & Mrs Chan Chong Hiok, on the passing of Chong Hiok's father on 3rd June; and to Miss Mollie Cheang and other members of her family on the death of her father, Mr Cheang Thiam Siew on 17th June. Mollie was in Rome, as a member of the Singapore delegation to a U.N. Seminar, when she received the news of Mr Cheang's sudden death.

AMONG OUR KNOWN SICK We are glad that Mrs Lily Lee is back home after quite a long spell in the Middleton Hospital, though it will be some time before she is fully recovered.

Mr Lim Hock Aun spent several days in the Intensive Care Unit at Outram Road G.H. following another heart attack. We are glad to know that he is now recuperating in Ward 24, though his planned trip to Europe will have to be postponed just now.

MORE FAMILY NEWS

BAPTISMS AT TRINITY on Sunday 30 June included four members of one family. Singapore-born but now an Australian citizen, Miss Ha Teck Yin was returning the following week to her work as a nursing sister in the Austin Hospital, Heidelberg, Victoria. Her brother, Ha Khoi Sian, a businessman from 5, Jalan Berjaya (20), nephew-in-law Leong Yew Ham of 117, Ming Teck Park (10) and his fiveyearold daughter Li Ming were baptised at the same time. We pray that God will bless this family, with Mrs Leong already baptised, in their new commitment.

CALLING ALL YOUNG ADULTS! What is a young adult? I suppose it is anybody who thinks of himself or herself as a young adult! Anyhow, a group of 'young adults' are feeling the need to develop a programme in the church which would be particularly catered for their needs. They invite all who are interested to meet them at the church on Saturday afternoon, 20th July at 3.30 p.m. to plan the way ahead. What do 'young adults' need? Come and tell us! Come and share! Bring your wife or boyfriend - or come alone! This is for you, if you think it's for you!

YOUTH LEADS THE WAY

A group of girls from Methodist Girls' School, Mount Sophia brought their offering of song into our worship on 30th June, and enriched us all with their uplifting music. We were sorry that the tight beginning-of-term schedule and the opening of the Youth Festival made it impossible for them to rehearse the sketch, which they had planned to offer, on our church premises; it was felt best not to dare the tricky acoustics of our noisy church, under these circumstances - so we had to miss this part of their proposed programme. But the singing was a joy!

THE COFFEE HOUSE PROJECT is slowly and patiently being shaped by the enthusiastic and dedicated group who completed the initial preparation course some weeks ago. Meetings are an experience in joint discovery and joint decision. Before the concrete tables-chairs-and-coffee-machine planning can be done, the group is wrestling hard and long to get a clear picture in mind of what is being attempted - and why. They feel that it is important that we set our compass before we embark on our journey into the unknown. It may take longer, but it is surely the right policy. Agree?

 * CHURCH CALENDAR FOR JULY *

- 1 Mon. 6.00 P.M. Y.W.C.A. CENTENARY SERVICE at Outram Road
- 3 Wed. 7.45 P.M. BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP at the Manse
- 4 Thu. 8.00 P.M. COFFEE HOUSE PLANNING Session
- 6 Sat. FLAG DAY FOR SAMARITANS OF SINGAPORE (S.O.S.)
- 7 SUN. Missions Sunday
 8.45 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL
 10.00 A.M. HOLY COMMUNION SERVICE - Mr Andrew Lee
 11.30 A.M. SACRIFICIAL LUNCH in aid of S.I.P.A.C.
 3.30 P.M. M.Y.F. MEETING
 5.30 P.M. HOLY COMMUNION SERVICE - The Pastor
- 10 Wed. 7.45 P.M. BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP at the Manse
- 11 Thu. 8.00 P.M. COFFEE HOUSE GROUP meets
- 13 Sat. 4.30 P.M. MONTHLY PARISH MEETING at 41, Taman Serangoon
 the home of Madam Khor Peck Hoon
- 14 SUN. 8.45 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL
 10.00 A.M. SERVICE OF WORSHIP - The Pastor
 12.00 NOON Holy Communion Service at Woodbridge Hospital
 3.30 P.M. M.Y.F. MEETING
 5.30 P.M. SERVICE OF WORSHIP - The Pastor
- 17 Wed. No Bible Study
- 21 SUN. 8.45 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL
 10.00 A.M. SERVICE OF WORSHIP - Rev. Philip Chan
 11.30 P.M. LOCAL CHURCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE meets
 3.30 P.M. M.Y.F. MEETING
 5.30 P.M. SERVICE OF WORSHIP - Rev. Michael Wong
- 24 Wed. No Bible Study
- 28 SUN. 8.45 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL
 10.00 A.M. SERVICE OF WORSHIP - Dr Gunnar J. Teilmann
 12.00 NOON Worship Service at Woodbridge Hospital
 3.30 P.M. M.Y.F. MEETING
 5.30 P.M. SERVICE OF WORSHIP - Pastor Tan Cheok Kian

 SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE SMITH FAMILY will be away on holiday for a couple of weeks from 15 - 31 July. Urgent pastoral help can be obtained from Rev. Dr George Wan at Paya Lebar Methodist Church (Tel. 887719)

BROADCAST SERVICES The Pastor will preach for the Broadcast Service on Radio Singapore at 6 p.m. on 7th July, and present the Epilogue at 10 p.m. the same evening.

Trinity Methodist Church will also be responsible for the two Sunday broadcasts on 1st September.

SACRIFICIAL LUNCH ON 7 JULY will be a special feature of our Missions Sunday programme. A simple meal will be served, for which tickets are being sold at \$3 (for adults) and \$1.50 (for students and children) and the proceeds will be sent to the Sarawak Iban Provisional Annual Conference (S.I.F.A.C.) for the support of our Iban ministers. This is part of our Missions outreach.

COINS FOR MISSIONS The Outreach Committee has prepared some simple collecting tins for distribution to members and friends who would like to make a personal and regular contribution to Missions funds. These will be available on Missions Sunday, and it is planned to collect them back at the end of the year for emptying and re-issue. Take a can and place it on the family table. A small coin every day and special gifts for special family occasions would make a very valuable source of income for the Board of Missions and for our own Outreach projects such as the Coffee House.

WE WELCOME TO OUR PULPIT during the pastor's annual holiday a number of Methodist friends, old and new.

Rev. Gunnar Teilmann, Director of the Churches' Counselling Centre and of Samaritans of Singapore, needs no introduction. He has been a missionary in our Conference since 1949.

Rev. Philip Chan District Superintendent Selangor/Southern, was at one time Associate Pastor at Wesley Singapore. Recently married to the former Miss Lynell Lee, he is taking a course for Supervisors in Clinical Pastoral Education.

Rev. Michael Wong one of our former pastors at Trinity, has led the developing work in Toa Payoh from its first beginnings.

Pastor Tan Cheok Kian entered Trinity College from Fairfield. He is engaged in the Youth Ministry of our District.

disturbingly, successful film, in which the personification of man's dark side occurs in such vivid and real form that the film becomes a psychological experience rather than an entertainment. Some viewers have been vocally - and sometimes physically - revolted by it.

A small child turns into a vicious monster. A joyous and innocent face transforms into a raging vomit of filth and degradation that bolts out to cover herself and those about her. She develops strength after strength to violate all who come within her reach. Blasphemies and obscenities burst forth in conjunction with unctuous, slimy evil. Modern scientific methods fail to help, and in desperation her mother turns to the Church for an exorcism. In perhaps the only intellectually provocative line in the film, says one reviewer, when the priest to whom she turns responds that he might help the child 'as a psychiatrist', she explodes at him: "She doesn't need a psychiatrist - she needs a priest! Jesus Christ, won't somebody help me?"

The question is well taken! The Church of our time has been tempted often to sell out to humanistic psychology when confronted by the fact of human evil. Psychiatry can help cure many types of mental and emotional sickness; counselling skills are an important part of any Christian ministry; but the mother in the film reminds us that we have more to offer than just this.

The trouble with the film is not that it does not raise a proper question, but that the author has lumped together on to one girl-victim every possible symptom from every case he had ever read about. The result is overwhelming, obviously alarming and, at the last, preposterous. Unfortunately many film-goers are not critical enough of what they are watching to avoid getting hurt.

I share this 'WARNING FOR PARENTS' from a balanced Christian reviewer: "Children whose parents were unwise enough to take them to this film have sometimes reacted with hysteria. I myself was greatly disturbed after viewing it. Frankly this is a rip-your-guts-out-lick-them-off-the-table film. If that sounds repulsive, then you have the idea....Even with a parent this film is too disturbing for the average adolescent who is trying to deal with positive and negative behaviour eruptions, who is trying, often desperately, to gain some control over himself and come to grips with outside forces over which he has no control. This comes too close to the teen-ager's already-existing psychic fears...At least see it yourself before your son or daughter does, if you are still unconvinced."

 WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE

GIFTS RECEIVED during the first four weeks of the month included ordinary Pledges totalling \$1,402 with open offerings from the 10 a.m services of \$482.

THANKSGIVING gifts have been received from Mr & Mrs Wong Yow Chuen, Mr & Mrs D. Henley, Mr & Mrs Wee Eng Hock, Mrs Tan Kim Tee, Dr & Mrs Alan Tay, Mrs Jean Marshall.

TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH EXTENSION FUND Appeal leaflets have been sent out recently to all church members, and to friends of the church, appealing for generous donations, interest-free loans and pledges to enable us to raise some \$250,000 in time to carry out the needed extension building as soon as the plans have been approved by the authority. We shall be happy to acknowledge such gifts etc. month by month in this Newsletter, and to keep you informed about the growth of the Fund to date.

Today we express our gratitude for gifts from the following:

Trinity Methodist Church WSCS	\$1,000
Mrs Tan Khe Tong	
Mr & Mrs Khoo Gim Seng	
Rev & Mrs Chew Hock Hin (Bel Canto)	
Mrs Rosie Leong and Richard	
Mr & Mrs Koh Chin Peng	
Anonymous	\$1,500

We apologise to the Bel Canto Singers for omitting the amount raised by their concert last month in aid of the Church Extension Fund. After all expenses were paid, the nett proceeds amounted to \$3,074 - and again we say a grateful Thank you to all concerned.

 OUR GIFTS FOR OTHERS

At its recent meeting this month, the Local Executive Committee authorised contributions from our Social Service Fund as under:

Churches' Counselling Centre	\$300	Assocn. for the Deaf	\$200
Tampines Home for Retarded Chd.	200	Meth. Children's Home	100
Home for Aged, Aljunied Road	100	Home for Aged Sick	100
Repairs to roof of Sengoi Pastor's House (part)			500

A further \$2,000 has been sent to the Board of Missions for Sengoi work, and the Sacrificial Lunch on July 7 is in aid of Iban pastors.

I do not think we need to be over-defensive. It has always been a fundamental part of orthodox Christian faith to affirm that Jesus was 'truly man', 'perfect man'. This was his mother Mary's first experience of him; this was where the apostles began in their relationship with him; this real humanity is the solid ground from which all our thinking about Jesus must start. "The Word was made flesh"; "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh". But so often in the history of the Church, we have de-humanised him. In our time we know that humanness is inescapably 'sexual' - we are male and female, as the book of Genesis taught us long ago. This is part of what it means to be a person. Whatever we may feel about our Lord's 'masculinity', would it be surprising if the strong character which challenged fishermen to leave their work proved extremely attractive to the women in his company? If this is so, why do we have to get up-tight about Magdalene's love-song, for example?

What transformed the disciples' understanding of Jesus was the experience of meeting him "risen from the dead". Some complain that "Superstar" has no hint of the resurrection; it ends with the crucifixion. Where else can the story end, except for Christian faith? Dead and done for - Judas and the priests triumphed - a good man destroyed by this wicked world; what is there more to say, until the Easter experience (not the Easter theory). Just as we begin discovering the divinity of Jesus by starting with the Man, so we begin discovering the meaning of the resurrection by facing the fact of a dead man on a cross. The Christian message begins with the down-to-earth-ness of "Superstar" - why be afraid of it? - but it does not end there.

We do not need to protect Jesus. He is alive enough to look after himself. As Dorothy Sayers once put it in her play "The Zeal of thy House":

.... God is a man,
And can defend His honour, being full-grown
In wisdom and in stature. We need not
Play nursemaid to the Babe of Bethlehem
To shield Him from the harlot and the thief,
Or keep those tender, innocent hands from harm
That bear the sharp nails' imprint, and uphold
The axis of the spheres.....

The other film, which the Censor allowed, seems potentially much more damaging. By all accounts, "The Exorcist" is a horrifyingly,

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