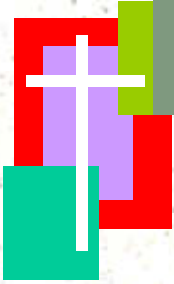


# Christian Message



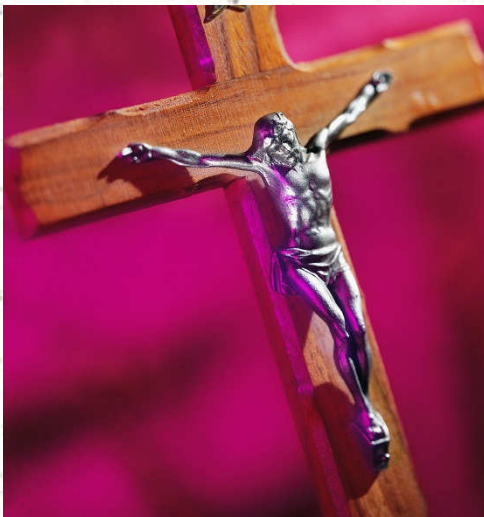
KLANG CHURCH OF CHRIST

Volume No. XXII Issue No.2

January 9, 2011

## Removal of Crucifixes

By Steven Chan



**T**he recent controversy about the purported request by governmental authorities to remove crucifixes in a meeting place so as not to offend a visiting dignitary is food for thought especially as regards the Christian's response to similar situations.

The issue raises a few points that need careful consideration from the biblical perspective so that we can be of one mind in the event that we are asked about this matter.

The issue simply stated is "Is it right or appropriate for the church to remove the crucifixes in order not to offend a dignitary attending a function organised by believers?"

We have the following passage:-

Rom 13:1-8: "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to

### Sermons in January:

- ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW - ONG ENG BOON
- NEW HEART & NEW SPIRIT - KOAY CHUAN LEK
- NEW DOCTRINE? - RICK KIRK
- NEW COVENANT - RICHARD LIM
- NEW EVERY MORNING - LIM CHONG TECK

“ *PREACHING*

*THE WORD WAS*

*NOT SOMETHING*

*THAT WAS*

*OPTIONAL; IT WAS*

*A NECESSITY ”*

## Removal of Crucifixes

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whom honor. Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law."

The afore-stated passage of scriptures teaches that we are to be subject to governing authorities "not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake" and that we are to "give them all that are due to them" ("Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor") including to love them in accordance with the commandment to love our neighbour.

The question is: "Is the above biblical injunction violated by the action purportedly required by the governing authorities, i.e. to remove the crucifixes so as not to offend the governing dignitary?"

It appears that so-called "sacred crucifixes" are nowhere mentioned in the Bible - therefore they are not things that are required of Christians. Clearly there's no biblical requirement for crucifixes to be present in the assemblies of the Christians. Hence, the issue of the removal of so-called "sacred crucifixes" ought not to arise in the first place.

Are crucifixes forbidden by the Scriptures in the churches or in the homes of Christians? There are no expressed or implied statements or examples in the Bible that I am aware of that forbid the presence of the physical symbol of a cross.

The cross is referred quite frequently in the Scriptures, such as:-

1. Matt 16:24: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.
2. I Cor 1:17-18: "lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God
3. Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me
4. Gal 5:11: "And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased."
5. Gal 6:12: "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ."
6. Gal 6:14: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."
7. Eph 2:16: "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross"
8. Phil 3:18: "(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:"

From the above scriptures, it is clear that the cross is central to the Christian faith.

However, is the "physical symbol of the cross" a required matter or a forbidden matter?

The scriptures do not require Christians to carry the physical symbol of the cross everywhere he goes or to place it in the meeting place of the Christians. When Jesus said that one is take up his cross and follow Him, He obviously did not mean that we are to carry "physical crosses" with us everywhere - regardless of whether the crosses are big or small miniatures - there is also no evidence of any of the early Christians in the Bible doing any of that.

There are some who object to the use of the physical symbol of the cross because they contend that it is akin to worshipping idols.

1. Lev 26:1: "Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God."
2. Act 17:29: "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."

The above scriptures teach us that we should not think of God in terms of "gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" (Acts 17:29) for God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Neither should we make "any graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it" (Lev 26:1). So God forbids thinking of God in physical terms or bowing down to any man-made image (i.e. worshipping the image). Notwithstanding the importance of the cross, in the event that people bow down to the image of the cross, then that would contravene the express statements of the Scriptures as such acts are clearly prohibited. Prima facie, it does not matter whether one has a physical cross or a physical symbol of the cross.

Perhaps the closest symbols for the cross or death of Jesus as shown in the Bible are:- (1) the act of baptism [Rom 6:3-6: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin"] and

(2) the partaking of the Lord's Supper [ I Cor 11:23-26: That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

# Removal of Crucifixes

Continued from Page 2

But baptism and the Lord's Supper are not physical symbols akin to crucifixes.

So, does the Bible prohibit the physical symbol of the cross? The facts are as follow:-

The cross is referred often in the Bible;

There is nothing in the Scriptures that prohibit the physical symbol of the cross so long as we do not think of God as being represented by the physical cross nor do we bow down to the physical cross as then that would contravene the express statements of the Scriptures.

Given that the physical symbol of the cross is neither a required matter nor a forbidden matter, it would come under the realm of "permitted" optional subject only to the further test of whether it is inexpedient.

Given the above guidance from the Scriptures as regards the cross (specifically that it comes under permitted optional subject to it being not expedient), is it wrong to remove the crucifixes from the meeting place in order not to offend the dignitaries?

It has been contended that the removal of the crucifixes tantamount to "valuing the presence of dignitaries" more than the "presence of God". But the existence of the crucifixes does not represent of "God's presence" and so, strictly speaking the issue does not arise.

But are there situations where the actions of Christians (although they are not required nor forbidden matters) tantamount to hypocrisy or denial of God?

The incident of Peter as recorded in Gal 2:11-14 may be instructive: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

Peter's act of not wanting to offend certain Jews caused him to act hypocritical-ly which caused Paul to accuse him of not walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel.

In the present instance, does the removal of the crucifixes fall under the same category of "hypocrisy" or not "walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel" insofar as the cross was offensive to those who reject the sacrifice of Christ as "propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:2)? Or, could this accommodation be deemed as being compliant with the principle in 1Cor 10:31-32: "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God"? In the latter passage it should be highlighted that Paul's accommodation is for a specific purpose: "just as I try to please, everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved."(1Cor 10:33) Could the action of removing the crucifixes be viewed as actions which seek to glorify God and that would contribute towards the salvation of others?

Perhaps the appropriate action ought to have been not requiring the presence of these dignitaries as then there would be no perception of not "walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel". It may also be wise not to have these crucifixes in the first place and thereby avoid any controversy relating to them.

On the other hand, if we are required to continue to accede to accommodate any actions which are deemed offensive to those who reject Jesus Christ then where will this end up?

Can Christians stop accommodating unbelievers and insist on their legal rights of citizenship? Acts 28:17-19: ""Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar--though I had no charge to bring against my nation." In the case of



Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

(1 Cor 10:31)

**“ THE  
EXISTENCE OF THE  
CRUCIFIXES  
DOES NOT REPRESENT  
OF "GOD'S  
PRESENCE ”**

## Specially for Ladies

Note: This is the second part of the article which was published in the last next issue.

# Where There Is No Vision, The People Perish (Prov. 29:18)



By Sis. Theresa Ee (wife of Bro Eddy Ee, Minister to Jurong congregation)  
(Editor's note: we are thankful to Sis Theresa Ee for contributing this well-written article)

### Today's Topic ...

The Topic 'Where there is no vision, the people perish as cited in Prov. 29:18'

Meaning of Vision from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary: 'a person who has the ability to think about or plan the future with great imagination and intelligence'

Hebrews 1:1 says God, at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets'. During the Old Testament times, the people of God were led by prophets who received guidance from God in the form of visions. Hence, the statement which recorded in Proverbs 29:18 emphasizing the importance of having divine guidance

**Where there is vision, there is spiritual commitment**

Here Jesus is showing them the importance of being able to visualize the

real needs and opportunities in reaching out to the lost. His duty was to save the lost. Jesus was showing them the spirit of enthusiasm, the know-how communication and evangelism at point of contact (John 4:7-29)

**Where there is vision, there is willingness to work**

Nehemiah's vision was to rebuild the Jerusalem wall. Those people that helped him to build the wall had a mind to work (Nehemiah 4:6). Zealous attitude and prompt action are all needed for the right vision where the wall was completed in 52 days

Where there is vision, there is a great need for God-fearing, capable, spiritually matured and honest people to lead the work. One such example could be found in Exodus 18:20-22 where Moses' father-in-law Jethro advised Moses when he saw his workload

### Vision of God

The purpose of God sending His Son to the world as shown in John 3:16-17 which says 'For God so loved the world ... the world should be saved through Him.' (Spiritual Salvation of Mankind)

### Mission

Before Jesus ascended to heaven He gave the Great Commission to all of us in Matthew 28:19-20 ... 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age'

The Great Commission is our Mission (an important spiritual work which is my duty to do where Christ will be the Judge)

The Great Commission is our Mission. The Lord calls His church and us as

# The People Perish

Continued from Page 4

individuals to make disciples. In summary, what does this involve?

It means ...

GOING, GETTING OUT into the world to LOVE and REACH MEN and WOMEN for Christ

Being involved through prayer ( spending time with the Lord, and in meditation of His Word which is the practice of our Lord as recorded in Mark 1:35) through loving our neighbours (John 13:33-34, Col.3:12-14) through building bridges on common ground and from that sharing the Gospel ( Jesus recognised the importance of being able to visualize the real needs and opportunities which may not readily apparent to those who are not spiritually minded or focused on the doing of God's will. Such an example as shown in the spiritual conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman where she was enlightened that 'the true worshippers worship Him in Spirit and in Truth' in John 4:7-26)

Baptising them in public declaration of their new life in Christ after winning them to the Lord through the Gospel message (Acts 2:37-41)

Building them (positive attitude with enthusiasm) in the Word, teaching them to know, guard and apply the Word to their lives so that they can in turn become disciple makers who are involved in the multiplication process (Acts 2:42,46-47)

This is a call to commitment to fellowship with the Lord, fellowshiping with other saints in studying the Word and prayer, along with a commitment to doing those things that will enable us to reach others for Christ and engage as many as possible in the process of making disciples and helping one another to remain faithful to meet God

## Self-Reflection

Often some have this perceived idea that as long as I come faithfully for Sunday Service, Or perhaps by being a leader in one of the activity, teaching a class, distributing tracts, teaching a visitor would suffice me to go to heaven. Salvation is by grace through faith, and we are required to be faithful unto death and to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Eph 2:8-10; Phil 2:12; Rev 2:10; Luke 12:47).

Let's reflect on the performance of the 7 churches in Rev 2 &3. Who do we resemble most? Where can we be better?

On the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20

Which part of the work processes in Matthew 28:19-20 do I see myself in?

1. Am I satisfied / happy with the work?
2. How do I rate myself?
3. Is God satisfied with my Total Performance?
4. How does He rate me?
5. Instruction from Matthew 28:20 ... teaching them to observe all that I commanded you ...

Examples like ... Sermon on the Mount ... live a life to please God (willing and do our best)

1. Matt 5:13 ... salt of the earth ...
2. Matt 5:16 ... shine before men ... glorify your Father in heaven
3. Gal. 6:10 ... opportunity to do good

In an article written by Bro. Steven Chan, the vision of the Klang Church of Christ in 2006 was ..

To be a growing (grow in number, spiritually matured, knitted socially and grow in knowledge) and glorifying church (people praise God) through every member being enthusiastically involved in leading at least one soul to Christ

With this vision they had re-focused their eyes and their lives in 2006 and they formed 7 teams and mobilized for the work of evangelism. Each team is expected to target at least one conversion per quarter (4 per year from each team).

For mission field they targeted the outreach work at Kota Kemuning. On 6th December 2009, the brethren in Kota Kemuning rented a property and there are about 40 members meeting there now as the Kota Kemuning Church of Christ (with transfer of memberships from Klang, Subang & Melaka). They have baptized 10 believers into Christ for 2010. You can read about the Kota Kemuning church at their website: <http://kota-kemuningchurchofchrist.org/>

To all of us, let's work together enthusiastically and positively for our Lord so that Heaven can be our Home one day. Heaven is a place for prepared people

## Conclusion

Let us remember ...

The way to heaven is not easy Matt 7:14 says 'For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

We cannot out-give, out-do God for we are the 'unworthy slaves as recorded in Luke 17:10 '... We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done'

## Our Visitors and Visiting Brethren



### VISITORS

January 2, 2011

- Serene Ng (Guest of Leow Yew Chong)
- Michael Ng
- Parames (Samson)
- Chan Siew Meng (Richard Lim)

### VISITING BRETHREN

January 2, 2011

- Rajandran & Sharon (KL)
- Sean Lim (Jurong)
- Joshua (Iraq)
- Tan Cheer Cheers (Indonesia)
- Koay Chiang Loong (NZ)
- Koay Chiang Ling



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## Services This Week (January 9, 2011)

### Adult Bible Class

Lesson: Principles of Prayer  
Teacher: Ng Yewo Kong

### Youth Bible Class

Lesson: Sound Speech, That Cannot Be Condemned  
Teacher: Sean Lim

### Worship

Lesson: New Heart & New Spirit  
Preacher: Koay Chuan Lek

### Helpers

Communion: Lucy Lee & Lee Su Yin  
Floral Display: Josephine Mariam

### Statistics for week January 2 - 4, 2011

Friday Bible Class Attendance	-	140
Sunday Bible Class	-	62
Sunday English Worship	-	98
Children in attendance	-	25
Mandarin Worship	-	17
TOTAL SUNDAY ATTENDANCE	-	161

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim 2:15)

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## Services Next Week (January 16, 2011)

### Adult Bible Class

Lesson: Studying The Bible  
Teacher: Richard Lim

### Youth Bible Class

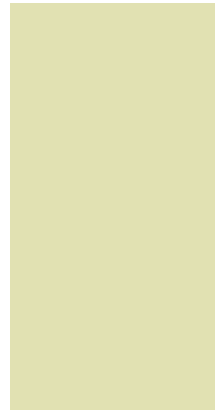
Lesson: Living Soberly, Righteously, and Godly, In This Present World  
Teacher: Jerry Cheah

### Worship

Lesson: New Doctrine?  
Preacher: Rick Kirk

### Helpers

Communion: Lee Su Cheng & Mah Yit Mui



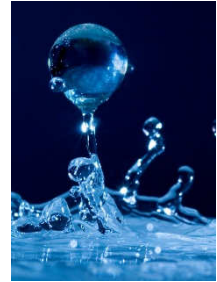
## BAPTISMS

We rejoice with the angels in heaven over the baptisms of four youths on Sunday January 2, 2011. All of them had attended Sunday School regularly.



**Cousins (L-R: Jyven Yu, Joelyn and Jaylyn Chan). Inset: Jiao Faye getting ready to be baptized**

1. **Jyven Yu** (son of Annie Yu)  
Date of Birth: 1 April 1997  
Student, Kwang Hua Independent School, Klang
2. **Joelyn Chan** (daughter of Amelin Chan)  
Date of Birth: 28 June 1996  
Student, Kwang Hua Independent School, Klang
3. **Jaylyn Chan** (Daughter of Amelin Chan)  
Date of Birth: 14 July 1997  
Student, Kwang Hua Independent School, Klang
4. **Heng Jiao Faye** (daughter of Heng Mon Sing & Ai Kee)  
Date of Birth: 27 October 1995  
Student, SMK Kota Kemuning



Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father (**Rom 6:4**)

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## PRAYER REQUESTS

- **Bro Yeow Chin Kiong**, to recover fully from his surgery
- **Bro Charles Bishop**, former missionary to Klang, says: “ My surgery has been postponed. I don’t know if and when it will occur. I thank you for your prayers “
- **Bro Guss Eoff**, for good health



**Speak where the Bible speaks. Be silent where the Bible is silent.**

## KLANG CHURCH OF CHRIST

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### Elders:

- Koay Chuan Lek  
Tel: (603) 3341 9577  
Email: [koaylek@gmail.com](mailto:koaylek@gmail.com)
- Steven Chan  
Tel: (6012) 206 6618  
Email: [steventkchan@gmail.com](mailto:steventkchan@gmail.com)

*The Klang Church of Christ seeks to glorify its Founder and Head, Jesus Christ (Matt 16:18; Col 1:18), by proclaiming salvation on the same terms stated by Jesus in Mark 16:16: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved".*

*Having been born again (John 3:3-5) through baptism in water (Titus 3:5; Eph 5:26; 1 Pet 3:21; Rom 6:3-5), we acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus, that "Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God" (Gal 2:20). Thus, like the apostle Paul we can say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13).*

*We appeal to all believers to be united in love as desired by the Lord (John 17:20-23; 13:34,35) and that all may "speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among us, but that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor 1:10).*

*Denominationalism does not feature in God's plan. We urge all to leave denominationalism and to be united in One Body (Eph 2:15-17) on the basis of what the Bible says (and to leave aside the teachings and traditions that are man-made as these are the cause of division among believers). "The churches of Christ greet you". (Rom 16:16)*

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We're on the web. Visit us at <http://www.klangchurchofchrist.org>

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Visit the Youth Blogsite at  
<http://youths-kcoc.blogspot.com>

Visit the Sunday School Blogsite at  
[www.ahadschool.blogspot.com](http://www.ahadschool.blogspot.com)

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## Removal of Crucifixes

Continued from Page 5

Paul, he was compelled to appeal to Caesar over the allegations, charges and accusations of those who were offended by his actions of preaching the gospel and had wanted him to be subject to the death penalty. There were many other instances where Paul had been unfairly treated but he did not go to the courts or appeal to Caesar all the time (2 Cor 11:23-26). It appears that Paul was compelled to appeal to Caesar only as a last resort as his life was at risk of being taken away. So, whilst Christians may appeal as they are entitled to their legal rights, they are nonetheless required to be in subjection to the governing authorities as far as possible even though some may be unjust:-

1 Pet 2:12-19: "Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. Be subject for

the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly."

We live in challenging times and we need to take heed of the counsel of our Lord as stated in Matt 10:16: "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

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