

# People of God, People in Singapore

(Talk 1)

Mark L. Y. Chan

Director, Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia  
Trinity Theological College

The theme, “People of God, People in Singapore” for this FES National Conference 2015 is certainly appropriate as we celebrate our nation’s jubilee this year. As we look back, God has indeed been gracious to our nation. There is certainly much that we – the people of Singapore in general and the people of God in particular – can be thankful for.

Many had contributed to the success of Singapore. Our founding fathers along with the pioneer generation – drawn from different races, social and cultural backgrounds, and from different religious faiths or no faith at all – joined their hands and sacrificed much to build this nation we now call home.

Christians too had played their part. Coming from a range of backgrounds and occupying different strata of society, they worked alongside adherents of other faiths in nation building. And they went about working for the common good of the nation

not by setting aside their Christian faith and commitment, but by working out their faith within the social and geopolitical realities of life in our nation.

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Every generation of God’s people must consider afresh how they might serve the purposes of God in their generation. Who are we as the people of God? What are we called to do

as God’s people in our society? The two questions are intertwined. Who we are tells us what we are to do in the world; and the nature of what we are to do in society is rooted in who we are. Identity and mission go hand in hand. They feed into each another. Christian witness and engagement in the world is predicated on understanding of who we are.

Or more precisely, whose we are. Knowing that we belong to God – that we’re the people *of* God – gives us our bearing. We start from here: rooting our

identity in God. It is tempting in an age of activism to plunge straight into doing things, formulating strategies and rolling out programmes to impact our society. But doing must be grounded in being. Knowing who we are as the people of God not only gives us our identity, it also provides us a sense of purpose and a context for relationship.

In what follows, we will look at Scripture to understand what it says about *being the people of God*. The key question is: “Who are we as the people of God?”

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For many Christians, the expression, “the people of God” is simply taken as a synonym for the church. To be part of the church is to be part of the people of God. This is both true and yet not true. At the very least it is not quite accurate from a biblical standpoint.

The question turns on when and where we think the people of God came into existence. If one accepts, as some do, that the ‘church’ was birthed on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem as recorded for us in Acts of the Apostles, then by this reckoning the people of God came into being only in the first century.

But then, one asks: what about Israel as the people of God in the Old Testament? Aren’t the Israelites the people of God as well? If so, in what sense then can we speak of Israel as the people of God while acknowledging at the same time that the Church too is the people of God?

It seems to me that we need to bring together into a coherent whole the redemptive purposes of God in both the Old and New Testaments. We need to see the connecting thread that binds Israel the people of God in the Old Testament and the Church as the people of God in the New Testament. In short, we need a biblical theology of the people of God.

The People of God is a central motif in Scripture. From the calling of Abram to the constituting of Israel as a people, through the establishment of the global body of Christ to the pronouncement at the end of the Book of Revelation, “He will dwell with them and they shall be his people” (Rev. 21:3), we’re confronted by two main characters in the Bible, namely God and his people. “I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.” (Ex. 6:7; cf. 19:5; Isa. 43:20b–21; 49:6b). The entire history of the Bible is made up primarily of the accounts of God’s dealings with his people, and what God desires to do with all the peoples of the world through his own chosen people.

Let us look at a couple of key passages to get a sense of the trajectory of biblical teaching on the subject.

# The People of God in Scripture

## 1. Creation, Human Fall and the Aftermath

We begin at the beginning, with creation. It was God's intention at the dawn of creation to have the entire human race as his own people. As the Creator intended it, the earth would be populated by individuals made in his image, living in accordance with his will, and fanning out across the world to spread everywhere the glory of God.

That plan however was disrupted when humankind, represented by Adam and Eve, decided to repudiate God. Sin was introduced into God's good world. The early chapters of Genesis tell the story of the spread of sin and human rebellion. We find there the account of the escalating crescendo of human violence and wickedness.

Such was the rampant wickedness of the human race that the Lord God had to send the Flood in judgement. We know how the story turns out. Only the remnant of Noah and family and the gathered animals in the Ark were spared.

In the aftermath of the flood, God renews his promise to creation, and human beings are once again blessed and commanded to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen. 9:1). But the story takes another turn in the direction of human assertiveness, culminating with the account of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. There we find human self-assertion reaching its epitome.

When God saw the concerted ambition of the builders of Babel, he "confused the language of all the earth" and "dispersed them over the face of all the earth" (Gen. 11:9). It is against the backdrop of the scattering of the peoples after the Babel story that we're introduced to the calling of Abram in Genesis 12.

The Lord God put into motion within history a plan to reverse the effects of sin. And this divine plan entails the calling, first of a man, Abram, and then through him the calling to himself of a nation, Israel. The offspring of Abram will be the people of God. And through this nation will come one who will "crush" the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). The calling of Abram is thus the outworking of a redemptive plan that the Lord God alluded to right after the Fall.

## 2. The Covenantal Promises to Abraham: Genesis 12:1–3

Sandwiched between God speaking to Abram in verse 1 and Abram's leaving in verse 4, we have the Lord's speech, which is given in two parts. Both of these are given in the form of an imperative: "Go ..." and "Be a blessing" (in the ESV, this is rendered as "you will be a blessing"). Without going into the intricacies of the Hebrew here, the thrust of the Lord's word is clear: if Abram were to do as he is told, and if God were to do what he says he will do, the result will be blessing experienced by all the "families" or "peoples" of the earth.

There are allusions to the account of the Tower of Babel in this short passage. In contrast to the desire of the builders of Babel to make a name for themselves (Gen. 11:4), the Lord says to Abram, “I will make your *name* great” (2). Five times in the Babel narrative we find the expression, “the whole earth” (11:1, 4, 8, twice in 9), pointing to the global ambition of the enterprise. That ended in confusion. But to Abram, the Lord promises blessing that will come to all the nations of the earth. Clearly what we have here is the Lord doing a new work to reverse the effects of human sin and self-assertion. If humanity as a whole has failed God and is subject to God’s curse, then humanity as a whole must be reached by God’s blessing.

The Lord’s promises in Genesis 12:1–3 are reiterated in Genesis 15, 17 and 22. The trajectory of God’s covenantal intention runs through these passages. To follow this, I recommend the superb treatment by Christopher Wright in his magisterial book, *The Mission of God*. Suffice to note here is God’s expressed intention to bless the nations through the obedience of Abram. There is a coming together of the *universality* of God’s intention to bless all the peoples of the earth and the *particularity* of his covenantal relationship with Abram. In God’s wisdom, he has ordained it such that it is through Abram and his descendant that his

covenantal promises to bless the nations will be realised. Blessing is not bestowed automatically or mechanistically. Blessing flows only when Israel responds to God’s grace through covenantal obedience.

This language of God’s covenantal promises to Abram hovers in the background of the apostle Paul’s description of his Christ-centred ministry in Romans 1:5, “to bring about the obedience of faith

for the sake of his name among all the nations.” Paul’s goal in mission is rooted in his reading of God’s promises to Abraham. He points to the faith of Abraham in Galatians 3:8 as well, calling it “the gospel in

advance” and makes reference once again to how all nations will be blessed through him. As far as Paul is concerned, to believe in Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and as the Saviour of the world is to enter into the blessing of Abraham. According to Paul, to be in Christ is to be in Abraham (Gal. 3:28–29), and this is something totally independent of our social, ethnic or gender identity.

The upshot of this is to underscore the point that being the people of God means being engaged in the outworking of God’s intention to bless all the peoples of the world. God’s election of Abraham is for the purpose of his universal mission to reach the world. All who believe in Jesus

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Christ are now part of the seed of Abraham and heirs of the promises made to him. Those who have been blessed are now called to be a blessing. Missional concern for the peoples of the world is thus part and parcel of what it means to be the people of God.

In fact, as Chris Wright has shown, the skeletal message of Genesis 12:1–3, “Go ... and be a blessing ... and all nations will be blessed through you” is like the Great Commission of Matthew 28. Wright notes in his book, *The Mission of God’s People*:

When God set about his great project of world redemption in the wake of Genesis 12, he chose to do so not by whisking individuals off up to heaven, but by calling into existence a community of blessing. Starting with one man and his barren wife, then miraculously transforming them into a large family within several generations, then into a nation called Israel, and then, through Christ, into a multinational community of believers from every nation – all through the story God has been moulding a people for himself. *But also a people for others. “Through you ... all nations.”*<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Redemptively God-like

If Abraham and his descendants were to be a blessing to the nations of the earth, how, one might ask, are they supposed to do this?

Genesis 18:19 provides an answer: “For I have chosen him [Abraham], that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.”

The Lord says that Abraham must teach his family the way of the Lord, commanding his children and his household to do righteousness and justice. Abraham has a responsibility to provide ethical education to his family that they might walk in the way of the Lord.

To be a blessing to the nations, we have to be a people who live by the ethical standards of the ways of God. Our ethics and our mission are inseparably bound. Election, ethics and mission come together in Genesis 18:19.

Interestingly, this call to ethical uprightness on the part of God’s people comes in the context of God’s judgment upon Sodom. It was against the backdrop of human depravity epitomised by the city of Sodom that we have the call to righteousness and justice.

When we look into the many stipulations within the Mosaic Law pertaining to how the society of Israel ought to be organised, we find a basic social vision undergirding all the laws and regulations. We see this for instance in the strictures against exploiting workers and the limitations placed on the powerful, the clear guidelines on humane treatment of slaves and strangers, the

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God’s People* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan: 2010), 73.

unequivocal regulations that every person should be given a fair trial, that everyone should receive the fruit of his labours, that women should not be taken advantage of because of their subordinate status in society, etc. These laws reflect God's concern for his people.

One example of this divine concern for human flourishing is the jubilee legislation in Leviticus 25. At the end of a cycle of seven sabbatical years, Leviticus 25:8–10 specifies that in the fiftieth year, there was to be a proclamation of liberty to Israelites enslaved by debts and a restoration of land to families compelled to sell during hard times. This was an economic institution in Israel that expresses concern both for the social life of Israel and the economic management of Israelite society. And it is wrapped up with the Lord's commitment to the well being of the vulnerable in society. The willingness to stop farming in the jubilee year is not unlike the stipulation to desist from working on the Sabbath. In both instances, God's people, by obeying God's clear command, are demonstrating that they are prepared to trust God to look after them, even when they're not working.

From the standpoint of biblical theology, we might say that the Jubilee regulations, along with the many stipulations on the ordering of life in Israel in the Old Testament, are anticipatory of the greater and the final Jubilee that is the promised Messianic restoration at the end of history.

Meanwhile, God's people are called to reflect the priorities and concerns of God by living according to the ethical ways of the Lord. This is all the more needed in an age of economic injustice, where the powerless are treated callously and the powerful unrestrained in the exercise of their powers. The people of God today are to be characterised by a commitment to order their lives after the ethical standards of God. It means doing all that God desires. It means doing for others what God wants done for them.

#### **4. The Story of Israel and the Church**

From the nation of Israel and out of the womb of the Jewish faith came Jesus the Messiah, the incarnate Son of God. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection and the explicit instruction of the risen Christ to "go into all the world and make disciples of all nations", the possibility of reconciliation with God through Christ is now open to all peoples. One does not need to be a member of the people of Israel to be one of God's people.

This globalising of membership in the people of God is not so much a deviation from God's covenantal arrangement with Israel as it is an outworking of his redemptive plan. The early Christians recognised this continuity. When Peter, Paul and the first missionaries went out evangelising and calling pagan Gentiles to believe in Jesus, they did so by rooting their

own activity in the story of God's dealings with Israel. When Paul went, for instance, to the Gentile city of Pisidian Antioch in Acts 13, he went to the Synagogue and pointed the Jews there to their own story, that is, the story of Israel in the Old Testament. Paul said to them: "we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus ..." (Acts 13:32–33).

In anchoring the gospel message of Christ in the Old Testament narrative, the early Christians were only doing what Jesus himself did. Recall how the risen Christ appeared to the disciples on the road to Emmaus and showed them from the Old Testament – "beginning with Moses and all the prophets" (Lk. 24:27) – how the story led up to himself.

Significantly, many of the New Testament descriptions of Christian believers are the same ones used to describe Israel in the Old Testament. One passage where this is clearly seen is 1 Peter 2:9, where we find descriptions of the new covenantal people of God that echo descriptions of the old covenantal people of God.

## **5. On Being God's People: 1 Peter 2:4–12**

The first letter of Peter was written to a people traumatised by historical and social events. These early Jewish and Gentile Christians were emotionally drained. They were still coming to terms with the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, which

stood at the centre of Jewish life. With the temple destroyed, sacrifices were no more. There was no Sanhedrin leadership to speak of. And their land was confiscated.

You can understand why questions about the locus of God's presence became paramount for these early Christians. Without the emblem of identity, they felt alienated by the social and political system of the day. They suffered alienation and incurred the displeasure of people in the larger society. It was to a people experiencing a sense of homelessness and wondering what God was up to that Peter wrote this letter of encouragement in the latter part of the first century.

The readers of this letter were living in the five provinces of Asia Minor (1:1), in what would be modern day Turkey. They are called "elect exiles" (1:1; 2:11) (*parepidemoi*, a term denoting foreigners temporally dislocated from their homeland, e.g., traveling merchants, missionaries, refugees) and "resident aliens" (*paroikoi*), i.e., landless people from abroad who had recently taken up residence.

Two main ideas are expounded in verses 4 to 10. The first concerns two differing responses to Christ, described here as "living stone" and "cornerstone" (4, 6–8), namely those who have "rejected" him and those who trust in him. The second is on the spiritual nature of the Christian community (5, 9–10), which is described in terms that remind us of God's dealings with Israel.

(a) *Christ the rejected Living Stone* – Christians, the apostle Peter says, come to the Lord, “a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious” (4). The irony is unmistakable. Christians go to the one that men have rejected. The reference to the rejection of the “living stone” recalls Jesus’ parable of the vineyard and the tenants (Mt. 21:42; cf. Mk. 12:10–11; Lk. 20:17). This is a recurrent theme in Peter’s preaching in Acts (2:22–36; 3:13–15; 4:10–11; 190:39–42). The very one rejected is in fact God’s precious chosen.

In saying that Christ, the “living stone” was “rejected by men” yet “chosen and precious” in the sight of God, Peter reminds the Christians of Asia Minor that despite their being God’s “elect” (1:1) and God’s “chosen” (2:9), they can expect to be rejected by the world as well. We, who are “living stones,” will likewise be rejected by those in our world who “disobey the word” (8), those who stumbled over Christ and rejected him. The people of Christ will share in the suffering of Christ.

(b) *Living stones built into a spiritual house* – The spiritual house that is the people of Christ is a counter-cultural society, very different from the world around. Verse 9 begins, “But you ...” In contrast to those who out of unbelief have rejected Christ the cornerstone, they’ve embraced the “living stone” and built their lives upon this solid rock. And as Christians enter into relationship with Christ (4), they’re being “built up as a spiritual house” (5).

As we come to the Living Stone, we become “living stones” ourselves. The life of Christ now courses through the soul of all who belong to him. The idea of living stones is intriguing. The two words don’t seem to belong together, do they? What could be more dead than stones? What could be less living than stones? Yet the two are brought together.

What may be incongruous at a physical level is theologically astute and significant. If there is any life in us, it is not because of anything innately alive about us, but because of the infusion of the life of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The description of “a spiritual house” formed by “living stones” is evidently that of a temple or place of worship. The words, “royal priesthood,” “offer spiritual sacrifices,” make this association clear. Peter is perhaps suggesting here that the old temple made of regular stones has now been replaced by a new spiritual temple, which comprises Christians (“living stones”) connected to Christ (“living stone”).

One cannot claim to have a relationship with God and yet not be part of the people of God. To come to Christ is to be inducted into the community of Christ. To be born again, is to be born again into the family of God. The Christian faith is from start to finish irreducibly communal in focus. It’s never meant to be lived alone. It’s always meant

to be lived out in community. God doesn't call and save us as individuals and then leave us to do our own thing. No, he calls us to himself and he calls us to each other. In short, he calls us to be a people.

The nature of this spiritual house is then teased out in a series of descriptive terms to designate God's people. These descriptive expressions in verse 9 are not original with Peter. They were used since the time of the Exodus to designate Israel – “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my *treasured possession*. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a *kingdom of priests* and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:5–6).

(c) *Chosen people* – This expression is drawn from Isaiah 43:21. Peter picks up the words of Isaiah in his description of the new people of God: “... for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.”

What does it mean to be chosen? To begin with, it means that *humility* and *gratitude* should be the distinguishing characteristics of the Christian community. When we recognise that the privilege of being God's own is not because of our moral superiority or exemplary holiness (see Deut. 7:7–8), or because we are smart or powerful,

but because of God's grace and God's grace alone, how can we not be grateful? As one biblical scholar puts it, we are *chosen* people, not *choice* people.

To be a humble and grateful church means that there is no room for any form of entitlement theology that compels God to bless us. This is the attitude of those who, as it were, “throw the book” at God and demand that he keeps his promises by blessing them. It is one thing to stand on

the promises of God, to take his promises seriously, and quite another to treat God as if he owes us a living.

A humble and grateful community is also one where there is an abiding sense of amazement and awe at God, at his world, at his work, at his word. Not a jaded cynicism that says, “Been there, done that,” but showing wonder like a child along the aisles of Toy-R-U's! This translates into an ethos and attitude of expectation. “I wonder what God is up to next in our community?”

(d) *Royal priesthood* – This description goes back to Exodus 19:6 – “and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” All Christians are ministering priests. They are priests in the sense that all who are in Christ now have access to the Father. There is no need for any human intermediary. Thanks to the Reformers who reminded us of “the priesthood of

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all believers,” we now recognise that the privileges of the Christian life are open to all in the Body of Christ. There is no class system among God’s people. God does not play favourites. From the humblest to the most esteemed, from the least attractive to the most appealing, everyone in Christ can enjoy the blessings of salvation.

The idea that the clergy are somehow hierarchically superior to the so-called laity is neither a biblical nor a healthy one. Clergy are often treated as people who seem to have a private line to God, and looked upon as intermediaries without whom ordinary Christians just haven’t a clue as to what to do. Yes, there is certainly a differentiation of function. And there are distinct things that theologically trained ministers are equipped to do in the church. But they do not belong to an elite class separated from ordinary mortals in church.

What is needed instead is for *all* God’s people to discover their calling, their gifting and their vocation, and to find their place of service to God in the world. All Christians are in full-time Christian ministry. Yes, some are in full-time *vocational* Christian ministry – as in pastors, missionaries, theological educators, etc. But all followers of Christ are in full-time Christian ministry in the sense that God has a redemptive part for every one of his redeemed people to play in his world.

In addition, all Christians have a duty to offer spiritual sacrifices to God. The words, “royal priesthood” (9) reiterates verse 5 where we are being built into a spiritual house “to be a holy priesthood” (5). As priests, we are to offer “*spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*” (5). The qualifying phrase, “through Jesus Christ,” makes it clear that the sacrifices we make are possible only because the greater sacrifice for sin has already been made, namely Christ the unblemished Lamb of God slain for the sins of the world! We are not talking here of offering sacrifices that can atone for human sins.

**What sort of sacrifices are we called to make before God?**

What sort of sacrifices are we called to make before God? We *present our bodies* (or ourselves) on the altar as living sacrifices to God (Rom. 12:1). As priests, we are constantly to bring more and more of ourselves to the Lord. And the reason why we need to be constantly doing this, making recommitment and rededicating ourselves to the Lord is that we are constantly changing as people.

We encounter new situations and acquire new experiences that leave their marks on our souls. We meet people and enter into alliances that change the way we think and the way we behave. We’re constantly changing and growing. But not all change is in the direction of being God-pleasing. Sometimes, we find ourselves drifting unwittingly in life. It is therefore

imperative that we engage in soul searching ever so often, and renew our commitment to Christ.

We offer *the sacrifices of praise* and the *sacrifices of good deeds* (Heb. 13:15–16). And we offer the *sacrifices of prayer* for the world and for the Church. We are a “royal” (*basileion*) priesthood in that we have been inducted into the Kingdom (*basileia*) of God. The use of the word “royal” with its relatedness to God’s kingdom agenda gives a world-transforming and world-shaping thrust to the priestly function of the church. We are to fulfil our priestly duty in a Kingdom direction.

Just as the priests of Israel represented the tribes of Israel before Yahweh in the Old Testament temple worship, so priests of the new covenant stand before God as representatives of our hurting and sinful world. They intercede for the peoples of our world, pleading for mercy, praying for peace, imploring God to restrain evildoers and thwart the plans of mischief-makers and strengthen the hands of those who are working for justice, for righteousness, and for the good of the human race.

(e) *Holy nation* – The word “nation” is the word *ethnos*, from which we derive the English word, “ethnic.” It means a multitude, a horde that shares common customs and values and practices. The Jews used this word of Gentiles as a kind of put down, as in, “the godless horde” or the “godless *ethnos*.” But in Christ, a word of denigration has now been redeemed and

given a new lease of life. In Christ, the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles has been removed, so that the one Body of Christ is made up of different races, ethnic groups, ages, sex, educational background, talents, etc. It’s a mixed bag!

Yet this is the intention of God. There is now a unity. But this is not uniformity as it is a unity in diversity. What joins the diverse members together is their common identity as a “nation” or a community or a society under God.

Interestingly, if the word “nation” denotes the coming together of a wide spectrum of people groups, different ethnic groupings and nationalities, then the word, “holy” speaks of commonality that must characterise all these different components that together make up the Body of Christ.

A common characteristic shared by the different peoples who form the one people of God is holiness. This is a point that Peter has already alluded to earlier in the epistle. “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct” (1 Pet. 1:14–15). This is where the people of God ought to focus their attention.

(f) *A people for his own possession* – Or “a people belonging to God” (NIV). The full nuance of this expression in the original doesn’t quite come through in this translation. Its background is in Malachi 3:17 – “They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my

treasured possession”. We’ve been purchased at tremendous cost and are therefore precious as a jewel to God’s heart. We are a special people to God. “Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (10).

(g) *Proclamation and Exemplary witness* – All these descriptions or designations are meant to reflect various facets of the one reality that is the people of God. What are we - as God’s chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, and treasured possession - to do in the world?

As God’s people we are told to do two things: (i) “proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (9). Being the people of God is not simply about enjoying the blessings of being God’s chosen and treasured people; it is about pointing the world to the greatness and excellencies of God, particularly in the way he has transitioned us from darkness into his marvellous light. The focus is not on us but what God has done for us. (ii) We are to “abstain from the passions of the flesh” (11) and to keep our conduct “among the Gentiles honourable” (12) so that when we are accused of being evildoers, there will be no basis whatsoever for their accusations. On the contrary, such is the honourable way in which we conduct ourselves, our accusers will see our good deeds and glorify God.

To summarise, the calling to be a people of God is a redemptive act. Part of the historical outworking of God’s salvation plan entails having a faithful and obedient people. God set in motion his redemptive reversal of the effects of human sin by calling Abram and constituting Israel as a nation. It continued with the birth of Jesus the Messiah from the womb of the Jewish people and faith, and the calling forth of the Church as the global people of God. As the church moves out to disciple the world, the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the nations of the world is realised.

The people of God are historically rooted, placed there to mirror the character of God in the way they live, the way they act and respond in the realm of the social. There is a vision of social shalom that is part and parcel of God’s self-revelation in and through his people. And finally, we are a privileged people: chosen to be the elect, having access to God as his royal priests, made holy, and a people highly treasured by the Lord. And it is out of the abundance of the blessings that we’ve received from the Lord that we go forth to be a blessing to our nation and all the nations of the world.

(The above was the first of two talks presented by Rev. Dr Mark Chan at the FES National Conference on 7 March 2015.)

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