

COBWEBS

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During my recent travel to another Canadian city, I went to a Chinese church for worship on a Sunday morning. It is not a very big church, with a congregation of about 300. The church building is quite new and yet it is fast reaching its seating capacity. It is always heart-warming to be in a growing friendly church.

To prepare myself for Sunday services, it is my habit to meditate on Christ's resurrection. I have been taught to regard every Sunday as a mini-Easter. While I was trying to quiet down my heart, I happened to look up. There was a cross hanging prominently behind the pulpit. It was a wooden cross, painted in a darkish brown color. As I was staring at the cross, I suddenly noticed some cobwebs on its top. Next to the cross, there were two large lanterns. They must have been very attractive when new. With the passing of time, the top part of the lanterns have become dull and dusty. Also, one could easily spot the spider webs hanging loose on top of the lanterns.

The rest of the church was kept quite tidy. The carpet was clean. The things in the foyer were properly organized. Even the nursery was well kept. But there were the cobwebs.....

Maybe the local people have not noticed the spider webs. Maybe it is simply too difficult to reach so high. It would require an extraordinary long ladder to do the job. Maybe it is not worthwhile to spend so much effort just to get rid of the benign cobwebs. I can find many excuses why the church would rather leave the cobwebs alone.

About a month later, I had chance to go to California for a medical conference. A good friend of the family had recently moved to California to work. He invited me to visit his new

home.

It was a very big house up a small hill with a triple garage. The backyard was well landscaped with a swimming pool. He showed me around the house. He introduced me to his children who had grown quite big since I last saw them in Canada. His wife showed me their family album. We had a great time of reunion.

Then someone rang the doorbell. It was the paperboy. We all got up and went to the foyer. On the other side of the living room was a grand piano. I walked towards the piano as the hosts were taking care of the paperboy.

Shining down at the grand piano were two recessed lights. They were skillfully placed in the ceiling so that whoever plays the piano would have enough lighting without being disturbed by the recessed lights. Somehow I thought one light was brighter than the other. I could not understand why. So I went closer and looked directly into the lights. Quickly the reason became obvious. The left one was brighter because there were shiny silky cobwebs around the light bulb! Oh no! I felt being followed by cobwebs.

Cobwebs are hidden places of our lives that are often overlooked or simply neglected. Often it needs someone else to point them out to us. It always requires an extraordinary effort to remove them. They may look benign but they also reveal some hidden secrets of our lives that we may not want to show others.

A modern paraphrase of the psalmist's prayer may go like this: "Search me, O God, and check all the secret corners of my heart. Test me and know all the recessed thoughts inside me. See if there are any cobwebs in my life and help me to remove them with Your strength." 