

Time Belongs to God and Other Poems

Leong Kwok Thye

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Leong Kwok Thye's uplifting poetry collection *Time Belongs to God and Other Poems* uses poetic lines to make biblical passages accessible.

The poems are straightforward about their religious themes. They emphasize God's sovereignty and the relationship between God and people as described in the Bible. "Time Belongs to God" sets the stage for the rest of the collection, establishing God as having control of all things. Other poems reflect on God's omnipresence and love. Poems function as guides to godly living, characterized by faith, virtue, and continuous submission.

Each poem is matched with a related biblical verse; they appear before poems, offering a direct link between the new lines and the biblical passages that inspired them. Poems emphasize the verses' meanings, as in "Peace," which is preceded by verses from John, including "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you."

The work makes use of everyday language that is direct and undemanding. Events are presented as they occur in real-life scenarios in poems like "Does God Care?":

*Hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes,
The earth in fury shakes.
Millions homeless, families in distress,
Dreams shattered, lives in a mess.
Does God care?*

Quatrains are frequent in the work, but some poems deviate from the trend and employ sestet stanzas. The organization of lines in these forms accentuates the musicality of the poems, as do end rhymes, as in the poem "God is Our Refuge":

*The Lord saves the unaware
From the fowler's snare.
His faithfulness is guarantee
Of their absolute security.*

Beyond binding concepts of religion, themes of individual poems vary drastically. The casual "My Super Mobile Phone" describes a conversation with God as an accessible phone conversation, while the heartfelt "Last Days" describes the last dispensation as explained in the Bible. Such contrasts keep the collection engaging.

The collection is brief, and its poems use few words to describe their events; each line only contains enough words to bring out the poem's meaning. This is evident in poems like "Discovering God," composed of four stanzas

characterized by brief lines that ponder on God's dominance.

While it creates visual interest, the photo that serves as the background on every page is repetitive. Even though it depicts the message of the poems with regard to submitting and worshiping God, it does not conform to specific messages in the collection and ultimately adds little.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (August 12, 2019)

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