

*Counselling
Recipes
Through 40 Years Pastoring*

Timothy Tow

Counselling Recipes Through 40 Years Pastoring

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Published by

Far Eastern Bible College Press

9A Gilstead Road, Singapore 309063

Republic of Singapore

Website: <http://www.lifefebc.com>

ISBN: 9971-991-36-5

To,

My elder sister,

Dr Tow Siew Ai

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FOREWORD

Counselling Recipes Through 40 Years Pastoring is a rich course in pastoral theology for anyone in the Lord's work. It is an especially valuable course for those preparing for what we often call "full-time" service. What a tremendous advantage it is for a young minister or missionary beginning his work to have the advice and experience, in writing, of one who in so many areas of service over 44 years has experienced the sovereignty of God and the assurance that God's Word is true.

In the accounts of God's faithfulness, in so many practical ways, Dr Timothy Tow relates them all to Scripture. He points out that the minister who rightly counsels is himself counselled daily in God's Word. He states, "I merely point every client to the Counsellor of counsellors (Isaiah 9:6) even our Saviour Jesus Christ, and to His Holy Spirit..." Again Dr Tow states, "As counsellor our job is simply to bring our patients to Christ the Living Word. It is He who prescribes to us the treatment or recipe."

The continuing emphasis in his book is the absolute necessity that the servant of the Lord be in God's Word daily. He admonishes us to read three chapters a day in order to read the Bible through in one year. He points out that John Sung made a practice of reading 11 chapters per day and 13 chapters on Sunday. Dr Tow states: "No wonder there was such abundant power in his sermons."

The scope of his practical illustrations, in which he consistently applies God's Word, covers about all the problems and opportunities any of us is likely to experience in a lifetime. Dr Tow speaks to so many areas in the ministry, such as money, buildings, ethics, demon activity, healing, baptism and more. He

includes an excellent chapter on Biblical premarital counselling by Elder Khoo Peng Kiat, our dear fellow labourer in Singapore and Australia.

Dr Tow shows that the Scriptures touch every aspect of the Christian's life. The Tuesday evening prayer meetings at Life Church is a testimony of this fact as members give their testimonies of answered prayer and God's guidance.

As Dr Tow presents accounts of God's sovereignty and faithfulness he reveals glimpses into his own personal life. We see this in his tender appreciative remarks concerning his Godly grandfather with whom he lived while attending school in Singapore. He speaks of a decisive crossroads in his life concerning his call to the ministry. He states, "I was in a predicament, when after World War II I was set like a flint on going to London to finish my law studies. I aspired to fame and power. By God's grace the Lord sent two deaths within five weeks of each other, the homegoing of my beloved mother and little seven month old baby daughter. This rudely shook me up. I realized that I had earlier vowed to serve Him full-time on top of my mother's vow."

Dr Tow has a real burden for the young people who are avoiding God's call and are missing the privilege, the blessing and the power of the Holy Spirit in the ministry. He stated, "...few are our young people willing to give up their ambition or career to enter the full-time ministry. No doubt the matter of wealth and an easier life seem to be the power holding them..." I also see this same reluctance in my country. The greatest reluctance here seems to be with the parents. Very few parents are willing to pray that the Lord will call their sons or daughters into the Lord's service.

A reader of this book will not only rejoice in account after account of God's faithfulness to His Word but will himself be challenged to serve the Lord more faithfully. A sense of urgency comes through Dr Tow's words, which reflect his surrender to the Word of God and his sense of the Lord's soon return.

Dr Arthur E Steele

PREFACE

This book, *Counselling Recipes Thru 40 Years Pastoring*, is a follow-up of *40 Years on the Road to Church Growth*. Both are accounts of experiences during over four decades of serving the Lord as pastor of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church and over three decades as principal of Far Eastern Bible College, Singapore.

From these experiences of God's mighty working among our members as well as those from other churches and comparing with results of counselling by humanistic and "integrated" methods, we see more clearly the truth of this saying by Chinese Christians in Peking (according to Wang Ming Tao):

For small sickness see the Taifu (doctor)

For big sickness see the Yesu (Jesus)

Like the Egyptian magicians, we perceive counsellors who follow after men can heal up to a point. Those who solely rely on Jesus the Great Physician of whatever denomination are often amazed by miraculous results.

In 1959, when I was travelling home from USA via the West Coast, I was invited to preach at a Bible Presbyterian Church in Glendale, California. The topic of my message was "Jesus the Water of Life" from John Chapter 4. Jesus only can satisfy our every need, be it physical, mental, spiritual, financial, etc but not other saviours, nor those who seem to work miracles in His Name, but are money making false prophets (Matthew 7:13-23, Romans 16:17,18). After the sermon a young American couple sought counselling from me, the wife in tears. The husband disclosed he was a psychiatrist. He could counsel others, but not his wife nor himself. They were about to be divorced. Praise the Lord for the power of the preaching of His Word. We prayed

together as both husband and wife surrendered themselves to the Lord. They left the Church grounds, rejoicing!

This companion volume on “counselling recipes” is therefore a treatise on how God honours those who honour Him (I Samuel 2:20), inasmuch as “him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

As God Almighty is no respecter of persons nor time periods, Jesus the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:1), He will save us from every trial if we will “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:15). Indeed, “Salvation is of the Lord” (Jonah 2:9).

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:21).

INTRODUCTION

Like Church Growth, Counselling is another hot topic of the day. Degrees are awarded by more and more seminaries on this subject to more and more students of psychology and psychotherapy. For as modern day stress and strain has caused more and more to break down mentally, emotionally, so must be trained a new generation of counsellors by the study of psychology and psychotherapy.

Now, counselling courses were not taught in our time, 30-40 years ago. Does that mean seminary graduates of those days could not “practise” counselling? Because they had not earned a degree in psychology, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, psychotheology, psychopathology, and what not?

But what is psychology? It is the study of the soul (psyche). Webster defines it as “the science of dealing with the mind and mental processes, feelings and desires.” It is the study of the inner man and its behaviour. That being the case what better subject is there for a basic understanding of psychology than the study of theology? Calvin says, “True wisdom principally consists of two parts — the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves. Which of these two branches of knowledge comes first, it is hard to determine. They are intimately bound together. For, our very existence is nothing but a subsistence in God” (Book 1 Chapter 1, *Calvin’s Institutes Abridged* by T. Tow).

But which text book is most reliable for our study of theology (which totally involves the study of man)? Dr William Lyons Phelps, introducing *The Bible for Today* edited by John Stirling, says:

“The Bible is not only a revelation of God. It is a revelation of human nature. With the exception of humour, it contains more

complete pictures of men and women, of good and evil, than any other work. The Mosaic account of the creation of Eve may not be confirmed by scientific research. But the Book of Proverbs is as true today as when it was first written. We do not go either to the Bible or Shakespeare for science. But for knowledge of the human heart, all works of science, biology, psychology, and others, are very inferior to Shakespeare and the Bible. Remembering that Emerson said, 'Do not argue; repeat the assertion', I will repeat what I have often asserted, that a knowledge of the Bible without a college education is better than a college education without the Bible; and that a man or woman can learn more about human nature by reading the Bible than living in New York."

With the study of theology that is key to Bible knowledge, a seminary (Bible college) graduate, if he now makes the Bible his lifelong Book, he should be able to counsel better than those who use humanistic principles or try to "integrate" those principles with the Bible. In order to counsel well he must read his Bible regularly and meditate in His Law day and night (Psalm 1). Let us who are in the counselling ministry read the Bible through at least once every year! (As the Bible has 1189 chapters we must read over three chapters daily to achieve this.) In the words of Melchior Wolmar, teacher of the Greek Testament to Calvin, "In this book is the answer to every problem, the remedy for every abuse, the rest of every laden soul."

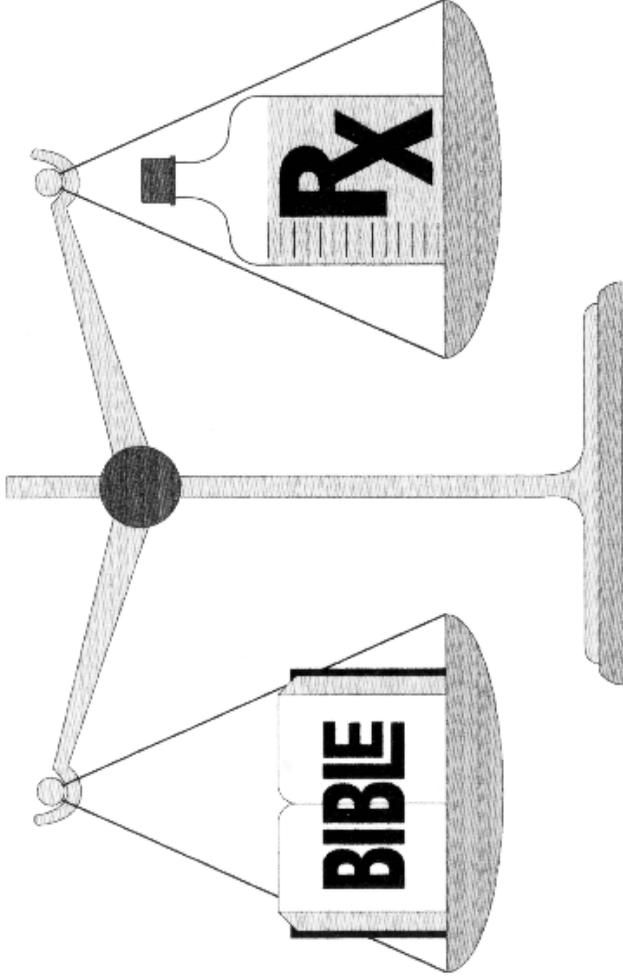
For the last 44 years as pastor of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (membership 1,300) I have to counsel countless cases of men and women, old and young, not only with members of my Church but also to as many as would seek me for deliverance from the Lord. I do not claim to have an answer for every problem nor the power to cure the soul's diseases. I merely point every client to the Counsellor of counsellors (Isaiah 9:6), even our Saviour Jesus Christ and to His Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who is also called Counsellor (John 14:16, NIV) speaking through the Book. The Lord is the doctor as well as the medicine. I am rather like a dispensing pharmacist.

I am one of the elders of the church to whom James the Apostle would bring her troubled members: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:14-16).

I am on call 24 hours of the day and seven days of the week. But there is a weekly prayer meeting where members of the church gather on a Tuesday night. Especially devout and troubled members. Here they come to meet with the Lord and the elders and deacons pray for them together with the pastor. Lay leaders are also called to pray. As Protestants we need not any priest as in the old Romish system, for Christ is our High Priest, our "new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20). Best of all, every member is urged to pray to the Lord by "the new and living way" which is open to one and all. And when the Lord has answered our prayers the persons prayed for would come forward to witness to the same. This is after the good tradition from Dr John Sung during the Great Revival in Singapore, 1935. "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name" (Hebrews 13:15).

This book is a testimony and a treatise on the results of counselling by prayer and supplication and by His Holy Word. Not by our wisdom, but by His grace upon grace. May the report of actual cases, especially, help not only the counselling pastor but every Christian who comes prostrate before Him.

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake...But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased...The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence. But we will bless the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the Lord. (Psalm 115)



**God's Word is the Standard
Recipe for all Counselling**
(Isaiah 8:20)

Chapter I

WHY DO WE GO ONLY BY THE BOOK?

As we have stated, our text book for counselling is nothing else, but the Bible. All who use the Bible in counselling are our friends. All who follow puny man, no matter how great he appears to be (Freud was thoroughly exposed in the Straits Times several years ago as a Fraud), we have no truck with them. Nor with those who try to “integrate”, like mixing oil and water together. The Bible, while being the source book of how man and the world came into being and where he is heading, is primarily the Divine Revelation of his salvation. According to Dr Chia Yu Ming, my teacher in China, the Bible is God’s “All Complete Plan of Salvation” (完全教法).

Having fallen into sin, man is become a totally depraved creature. And having lost his original righteousness (Shorter Catechism Q18), his will is now bent to think evil and do evil. This Revelation leads us to a completely different kind of psychology, from what is generally being taught: “Man still has a divine spark within him, and plenty of self-esteem.” Those who take this latter view castigate “fundamentalists and Calvinistic circles” for “presenting a radical perversion of the doctrine of total depravity, over-accentuates the negative by constantly emphasizing our sinfulness and glossing over our newness in Christ. Thus we find Christians like Jay Adams, a renowned counsellor, highly critical of terms like “self-esteem,” “self-love” and “self-image”... (Siew Yau Man in *Serve the Lord with Gladness*, edited by Howard Peskett and David W F Wong.)

It is not we or Calvin or Jay Adams who “present a radical perversion of the doctrine of total depravity, overestimate the

negative by emphasizing our sinfulness and glossing over our newness in Christ.” It is the Bible, God’s holy, infallible and inerrant Word, that exposes our utter sinfulness that leaves us dumbfounded. Dare any talk of any goodness in man by His indictment, as follows:

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:10-20,23).

Even in our newness in Christ, there still persists the old man with us:

“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin” (Romans 7:15-25).

Who can deliver us from the body of this death? Not by “self-esteem” or “self-encouragement,” for according to St Paul’s

testimony above, self-effort totally fails. Only through Jesus Christ our Lord can he be delivered in his struggle with his sinful nature within. And only by walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus can make us free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1,2). This is the Biblical approach to counselling. Every troubled soul is writhing in the throes of sin, and only the Conqueror of sin, Jesus Christ by His death in our stead and resurrection for our justification, is able to deliver — not by the humanistic counsellor's self-esteeming psychoanalysis, psychopathology, psychotherapy.

When a man gets sick, he is not required to study his own case nor to read books on hygiene and nutrition prescribed by the doctor in order to get well. He simply surrenders himself to the doctor's treatment. As counsellors, our job is simply to bring our patients to Christ the Living Word. It is he who prescribes to us the treatment or recipe given in the Written Word — the Bible. There is no other doctor, there is no other recipe! "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am! Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

An indisputable proof of Christ's power to deliver drug addicts over secular methods through medicine and psychiatry is the liberal assistance our Singapore Government has given to various Christian organisations such as Breakthrough Mission led by Simon Neo, a Chin Lien graduate and Helping Hand under Robert Yeo, graduate of Far Eastern Bible College. Here drug addicts are first saved by a complete surrender to the Saviour whose precious blood is able to cleanse them from their sins, and empower them to live a new life. Following this these converts are nurtured daily by an intensive course of introduction in the Word.

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.” Psalm 119:9-16

But in order to counsel well from a thorough knowledge of the Bible with good understanding from a proper study of theology, let me emphasise again we must read the Holy Scriptures regularly and meditate in His Law day and night! Like a good pharmacist who knows in and out where all the drugs are stored, and what medicines are good for what diseases.

“O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients,

because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." Psalm 119:97-104.

Amen and amen.

Chapter II

COUNSELLING ON THINGS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

The Bible is “a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

Thy Word is a lamp to my feet,
A light to my path always,
To guide and to save me from sin
And show me the heavenly way.

Thy Word have I hid in my heart
That I might not sin against Thee
That I might not sin
That I might not sin
Thy Word have I hid in my heart.

In all our counselling even on mundane things of everyday life where no question of morality is involved, we can find an answer from the Bible.

Not by the practice of Bibliomancy, that is, opening the Bible at random and blindly pointing to a verse with closed eyes. (This is worse than telling your fortune by means of a pair of green parakeets trained to pick fortune cards by an Indian at the former K.K. Market.) The story is told of one who did this to find out God’s will for his life. He hit on the verse that tells of Judas going out to hang himself (Matthew 27:5). The second time he tried his hand he landed on the verse, “That thou doest, do quickly” (John 13:27). No. To be a good counsellor one must read his Bible everyday and meditate therein day and night. Like a pharmacist as I have said before, he must know his stock of medicine well

and be able to find the right medicine at his finger tips. We cannot overemphasize this!

To find an answer even for a simple matter, such as choosing what transport to take to a nearby town, we can have perfect guidance from the Book. When I was a student at Faith Seminary years ago, a classmate by the name of Bob Cator asked me which way of travel from Wilmington, Delaware to Washington DC was the Lord's will — by train or by bus? My answer was, whichever was the most efficient and economical in time and money would be it! God's will is that we must make the best of every situation. "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 4:16).

What are we to eat for lunch? What do you want me to buy from the hawker stall at Newton for you? How am I to determine whether God's will is for me to eat *Char Siu Fan* or *Wan Ton Meen*? Whichever is to your taste, that's it! Read Deuteronomy 14:26 "And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth..."

Dr John Sung told the story of how when he was preaching in North China, he needed a woollen suit to keep him from the cold. He wished he could find one the next day. True enough, someone brought him a suit that fitted him perfectly. "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm 37:4). I have had a similar experience. I wished I could have a chocolate shirt, Hawaiian style, and lo and behold, a few days later a sister from Malaysia brought one for me! I never told her, how did she know the exact thing I wanted? Psalm 37:4!

When I got married to Ivy in July 1966, a non-Christian friend gave us a silver ashtray set. Not being a smoker what was that to me? Smash it up and throw into the dustbin? A verse in Deuteronomy 14:21 helped me dispose of it: "Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God..."

The silver set was sold for fourteen dollars and the proceeds given to the Lord's Treasury.

A Muslim wife of an Indonesian Christian was so grateful to the Lord for answering our prayer for the husband's recovery that she offered a solid gold ring to the Church. Being the gift of an alien, I struck one match and put the ring over its flame to cleanse it. It was given to the Treasurer who converted it into cash — three hundred dollars (when the price of gold was at its highest). Numbers 31:21-23 says, "And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war which went to the battle, this is the ordinance of the law which the Lord commanded Moses; Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead, Every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire..."

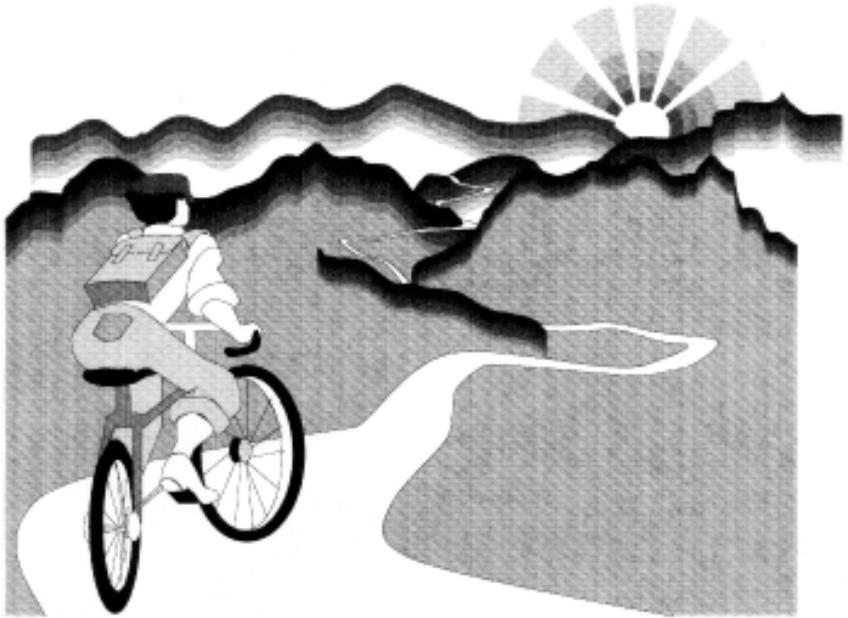
How about picking a good day for travel? This is often a vital decision to make for those outside of Christ. For those living under a blind Fate, who fear meeting misfortune lurking before their path. This fear sends them to the medium and fortune teller. Even men of learning and politicians of renown are apprehensive of ill luck. It is reported that President Franklin Roosevelt would consult Clairvoyant Jean Dixon about the direction of World War II.

Comments Calvin in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I Chapter 5 (abridged by T. Tow):

"Notwithstanding this knowledge of God and His everlasting dominion so abundantly reflected in the mirror of His works of providence, there are so few that see it. How many of us when we lift up our eyes to heaven or upon the various regions of the earth think of the Creator? We see the works but not the Author."

Similarly, in regard to the things that daily happen in the ordinary course of nature, is it not the general opinion that they take place by the workings of a blind fortune? This is the erroneous view not only of the common ignorant people, but of the learned and philosophers too. Plato, the most religious of them all "loses himself in his round globe." These believe that

Q. How about picking a good day for travel?



A. “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Proverbs 4:18)

men are rolled and whirled about by the blind temerity or caprice of fortune.

To the Christian, however, everyday is a day of vibrant life in the Lord.

Everyday with Jesus is sweeter than the day before,
Everyday with Jesus, I love Him more and more.
Jesus saves and keeps me, and He's the One I'm waiting for!
Everyday with Jesus is sweeter than the day before.

Nevertheless, in travelling to a distant foreign country one must judge, sometimes between two or three schedules offered by the travel agent. That which best serves your purpose, I

believe, is the will of the Lord. Let me tell you of the choice we were to make recently flying from Singapore to the United States. Schedule one was: Singapore-Tokyo-Chicago-Philadelphia by United Airlines. The price was S\$2350 with voucher to fly free to any Asian city, which was quite an incentive. But the difficulty about this flight was there was one leg of the journey, Tokyo to Chicago, we were wait-listed, though our agent assured us it could be confirmed in a week or two. This caused uneasiness in our souls.

The second schedule presented by our agent was: Singapore-Frankfurt-New York, price S\$1840, confirmed. When it was realised that we could also visit with our dear friend Rev C. T. Hsu in New York and our son was on hand to ferry us out of New York, we immediately clinched this second deal. Our hearts were now at ease flying Singapore-Frankfurt-New York. One good sign that it is the Lord's will is the peace He gives in your heart. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6,7). Subsequent meeting with Rev C. T. Hsu and our son on time, without a hitch, confirmed our flight via Frankfurt to New York was by the Lord's "cooperative will." "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5). "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and He delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23).

The "cooperative will" of God attending our way though often smooth-sailing, may sometimes be "diverted" because we cannot see as God sees. The Father's Hand must overrule a young child because he might be distracted to the left or to the right as they go along the way. This was St Paul's experience during his Second Missionary Journey. In Acts 16 we read of his desiring to go Southwest through Asia, but the Holy Spirit forbade him. Now when he turned Northeast to go to Bithynia, "the Spirit suffered them not." Thus, he was channelled to Troas. Here in a night vision, he saw a man of Macedonia standing on the other side of

the sea praying him to “come over into Macedonia and help us.” Now, here is Luke’s testimony of God’s cooperative will working in Paul’s behalf, “and after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore, loosing from Troas, we came (“trus,” which is Malay for “straight”) *with a straight course* to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis” (Acts 16:10-12).

In the early part of my journeyings, I went through a similar experience. After the Lord had turned me around from going to study Law in London to China rather to study Theology, I came midway to Shanghai, purporting to go onward to Chungking in West China where I was accepted as a student. From Shanghai to Chungking by river boat would entail another 2,000 miles. With my aunt’s objection and simultaneously coming in contact with Dr Chia Yu-Ming, principal of the Seminary in Nanking, I was re-routed to Nanking, only 150 miles from Shanghai. From Nanking the Lord led me to study in the USA. This He did in the fall of 1947, two years before Mao took over all of China. As I look back on this part of life’s mysterious wanderings, I can assuredly say I was led to higher ground by the “cooperative will” of God. Yea, God had snatched me from the mouth of the Red Chinese Dragon.

This mysterious working of the “cooperative will” of God happened also to Calvin. Calvin was travelling from his hometown Noyon in Northern France to Basel, Switzerland where he would settle down to a life of study and writing. As there was war that blocked his path direct to Basel, he took a detour via Geneva. He would put up there only for a night. How did he know God was leading him to spend his life as a Reformer-pastor in Geneva? God used his old friend William Farel to speak so strongly to him that he felt God’s hand was upon him. This was the greatest turning point of his life.

As I grow older I can see that disruptions in my life, such as the double death of my dear Mother and seven-month-old daughter 1946 and the double death of my wife and another

daughter 1965 were appointed by God's "cooperative will". These are "blessings in disguise." Do you have such setbacks? But did they not turn out for good? Romans 8:28.

As I conclude this chapter on God's "cooperative will" working in our behalf everyday, I must impress on the simple minded the importance of keeping the rules that govern a community, ie. in our interpersonal relationships. It is the rule of courtesy (*li*) or good manners, which is the first of four Confucian cardinal^s in ethics. This rule of courtesy is also required of Christians as taught by the Apostle Peter, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. **Honour** all men. **Love** the brotherhood. **Fear** God. **Honour** the king" (I Peter 2:13-17).

In Peter's teaching, we see how Christians should be loyal subjects and law abiding citizens under God. Christians should be gracious to one another, and be honouring and courteous to the people we meet in the outside world. There is a protocol (original meaning: diplomatic etiquette) to keep in respect of our superiors. For example, an alien intending to work in a foreign country cannot circumvent the Immigration Regulation by entering as a tourist. The procedure is to apply from "outside" before entering the new country. Insofar as our Bible College (FEBC) is concerned, when a married student desires to bring his family with him, he must first apply to the principal. By bringing them in without permission, he breaks a serious protocol. Such discourtesy turns the authorities concerned to immediate disfavour.

To succeed in life (therefore favoured by God) one must not only be courteous but chivalrous! Even in a foreign country where one is exposed to hostile forces. One must always stand

for the right and be ready to help the weak and needy in order to be favoured by His “cooperative will.” We can find one outstanding example in the Old Testament. It is the case of Moses who defended the seven daughters of Reuel (Jethro) against marauding shepherds (Exodus 2:16,17).

Not only be chivalrous, but industrious. I had discovered this truth when a student in the United States. Whenever I was invited to dinner, I would join in the wash up after dinner. I found I was invited again and again. “Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed” (Psalm 37:3).

God’s “cooperative will” is evidently manifested in our everyday life through the blessings He bestows when we perform our duties diligently. Shirking our duties, our moral responsibilities, being contrary to His will, will end in outer darkness. “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18).

Chapter III

FIRST SAVE THE SOUL, THEN SAVE THE BODY

At the Easter Sunrise and Baptismal Service 1993, after I had baptised some forty candidates including infants, I was abruptly distracted by an elder who rushed up a hurried note, "There's a sick man here seeking baptism!" As usual, whenever there is an urgent request, I would respond with, "...him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). Jesus, you will notice in the Gospel accounts, never turned off anyone who sought His help. In the case of the Syrophenician woman, Jesus' reluctance was evidently to test her faith (Read Mark 7:24-30)

I asked the sick man to come forward. Knowing in advance this middle-aged man was suffering from terminal cancer, I admonished him that baptism for salvation of his soul was much more important than saving of his body. I told him that there was no guarantee for his cure from cancer, but if he truly surrendered to Jesus, the Son of God, who died on the cross for his sins, his soul would be saved. He nodded emphatically to what I said, so I baptised him.

Not long after this, it was reported that Bro. Chu Kok Keng had gone to be with the Lord. As his wife was of the old Chinese religion and so were the deceased's parents, it seemed they would go for a Buddhist or Taoist funeral. We prayed to the Lord to soften their hearts, and soon came the answer yielding to a Christian funeral. Had not the deceased man been baptised in his lifetime, there could be no Christian funeral. Now this would be a golden opportunity to preach the Gospel to the whole bereaved family, relatives and friends. The soul of the deceased

was saved so that the unsaved living might now receive the Word of the Gospel. To counter any Roman claims of the priest's power over the soul of the deceased we would declare, "We pray not for the dead but rather for the living!"

First save the soul, then save the body! Our Lord gave us this recipe in the healing of the paralytic brought into the house by lowering him through the opened roof. When he saw the paralysed man lying on his back and the faith of the men who carried him there, He said, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee" (Luke 5:20). The soul must be saved first before the healing of the body.

Often, requests are made to the pastor to pray for the healing of a parent or loved one. My first question to the inquirer is, "Will he (or she) believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? When the answer is yes, to make doubly sure, I'd ask further, "Does he (or she) have an idol or idols in the house?" Being caught unawares, for most of those who come have idols, they become hesitant. My condition: Unless the idols are removed, I will not pray.

Once I was invited to a home where Grandma wanted to receive Christ. This was due to the witness of her Christian granddaughter. But the house had an idol belonging to the daughter-in-law. Here came the chance for a bargain. I persuaded the daughter-in-law (that is, the Christian granddaughter's mother) to believe as well. Whether she really received Christ I could not be sure. For Grandma's sake, however, she surrendered her household god to me. Praise the Lord. The day came when Grandma went home to be with the Lord. A Christian funeral without question (for the idol was no more there to hinder) and what a glorious opportunity to preach the Gospel at the vigil services and at the Christian cemetery. Funeral time is the best time to lead those who are without hope to the living and true God (I Thessalonians 1:9).

The most outstanding case of the Lord's saving both soul and body, almost instantaneously, took place in 1960. I had just come home from an evangelistic campaign in Korea, when the phone rang as I stepped into the house. An Indian man, Chandra by

name, spoke from the Hospital where his son of nine months was lying seriously ill with leukaemia. The doctors gave him one week to live according to Mr Tassicker our elder. He pleaded, "Pastor, please come and baptise my son!" Like answering a call for the ambulance I rushed to the General Hospital.

There I found Chandra carrying a Bible in one hand and gesticulating nervously with the other. Now, his wife was also with him, and she was a Muslim while her husband was a Roman Catholic. Accommodating their request to baptise their child, I laid down my conditions. Both of you, husband a Catholic, wife a Muslim, must renounce your religions and receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour. "Yes!" replied both husband and wife in emphatic unison. I prayed for them first to confirm their vows. Then, borrowing a kidney dish from the nurse on duty (it was about 10.30 pm) I baptised Roslan the baby boy "in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The next morning came the wonderful news that the boy had recovered 50 per cent. In three days he was discharged, praise the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. As for me, like Peter after the big catch of two shiploads of fish, because of my trembling faith, I could only prostrate before His Greatness.

We visited the Chandra family in Jurong. We catechised the whole family, father, mother and six or seven children. At the semi-annual Baptismal Service, the whole family were baptised. But that was not all, Chandra opened his Telecom quarters for us to start a Church (the wife dreamt this) from which has matured an English Church and a Tamil Church. From the Tamil Bethlehem-Jurong BP Church there have sprouted several others, three in Singapore and two in Malaysia. The latest report of progress is that the Tamil churches have banded together to buy a valuable property at the junction of Dunearn and Farrer Roads which they name Rehoboth, meaning *Enlargement for the Tamil ministry*. Roslan the leukaemia baby is today a healthy young man, a Christian, following in the steps of his parents.

Here is another moving story of the saving of the soul over saving of the body. A twelve-year old Sunday School student of

Life Church was dying of a fatal heart disease at the General Hospital. He himself called for the pastor to baptise him (his parents were Buddhists), for he had believed with all his heart. Moreover, he knew his days were numbered on his fingers. I rushed down with an elder to see him. There and then he requested baptism again. When a surgical bowl filled with water was brought in, and as I was about to baptise him now sitting on his bed, the young man pointed to the bowl, "Shall I drink all the water in this bowl too?" There was no doubt about his entering into life. Immediately he was baptised, a glow of joy brightened his pale-yellow face, like the appearance of the rainbow above the clouds.

Suffice it to recount a third instance of God's marvellous working in the saving of the Buddhist wife of a Lifer Yee Keong Hui by name, who later became a Deacon. This young woman was lying in hospital who requested me to pray for her recovery. At that time Rev John Grauley had come from America to assist me at Far Eastern Bible College. I brought him along to help pray for the lady. I also brought along a bottle of olive oil. Before we prayed, anointing her with the oil (James 5:14) I asked if she was willing to renounce her Buddhism. She nodded an emphatic yes. Whereupon I put my hand on her forehead in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Immediately after prayer, a most wonderful thing happened. Her yellow cheeks suddenly glowed a healthy pink. She declared she felt completely healed! She added, "I want to baptise this coming Sunday." I baptised her as requested. She testified before the congregation to the rejoicing of all.

Many are the testimonies of those who first find Christ before the saving of their bodies. Such testimonies are given at the Tuesday night prayer meeting of the Church. Suffice it to add this well-known story from our Indonesian Service. A young Chinese-Indonesian couple came to Singapore for medical treatment at the Tan Tock Seng Hospital. The wife was lying half paralysed in bed. We visited her and spoke to them the Gospel. We told her the stories of Jesus healing the maimed and the paralysed.

Immediately she believed! She believed Jesus could also raise her up. Whereupon she asked to be baptised. “But what about your husband?” I demanded.

When we visited her again she gladly declared her husband was ready to confess Jesus in baptism also. Upon a stated afternoon members of the Indonesian service and the pastor visited the paralysed woman. There stood her husband by her bedside waiting for us. He knelt spontaneously beside her. First I baptised the woman, then the husband. I prayed for the speedy recovery of the half-paralysed wife. We sang praise choruses to the Name of Jesus.

A fortnight later, while the morning service of the English congregation was on, there suddenly arose from the pews that Indonesian lady, walking stick in hand, stepping steadfastly to the Lord’s Table Platform. She climbed the two steps herself, and requested to give her testimony. A hush came upon the whole congregation. Whereas she had to be carried about before, now she could walk by herself with a stick. Glory filled the house as all stood, praising Him! “Blessed be the Name, Blessed be the Name of the Lord.”

The young couple followed up with regular attendance at the Indonesian afternoon service for some weeks before returning to their home in Surabaya, Indonesia. Every year, for a good number of years, she sent us a Christmas card with words praising and thanking the Lord.

This chapter on the importance of saving the soul before saving the body cannot be complete without testifying for a lady of our Chinese Service. Sister Hwa began to suffer from depression when her husband would not come home. This depression so upset her that she developed insomnia. Being spiritually tormented day and night, she consulted both western doctors and oriental mediums, *dukuns*, and bomohs. She spent a fortune visiting both Chinese and Indian temples, going even to Batu Caves in Kuala Lumpur to see the Hindu holy men — all to no avail.

A patient of my brother Dr S H Tow she was recommended to attend Life Church Chinese Service. For many months she came, regularly hearing the sermons preached by Rev Jason Linn of *Pioneering in Dyak Borneo* fame. (Rev Linn was our guest staying on the Church premises.) As she waited patiently on the Lord, with the support of the whole congregation's prayers, she suddenly came to herself one Lord's Day afternoon. Whereupon she sought me quickly and announced, "Praise the Lord, I am well, I am well."

At the Christmas Eve Service, 1975 she requested to give testimony of her healing by hearing the good news of Jesus Christ regularly at the Sunday Chinese Service. "I have put on ten pounds. Whereas all the doctors, bomohs, *dukuns* and mediums could not heal me, JESUS has! He touched me one day and I woke up with a clear mind. I am well, I am well." In thanksgiving she offered \$3000 to construct a Galilee Sea Fountain for the Churchyard, which functions to this day. The Lord saved her soul, then her body also recovered. Madam Hwa has since that date served faithfully in our Chinese Church. She does not miss Church for a Sunday. Hallelujah, praise the Lord!

A corollary from "First save the soul then save the body" is the gentle admonition by our Lord to some of His patients. To the impotent man of thirty eight years lying by the Pool of Bethesda whom he raised up on the Sabbath Day, Jesus cautioned, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14). To the woman taken in adultery whom our Lord saved from stoning at the wicked hands of the scribes and Pharisees, He also said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).

Sin is worse than cancer, than aids, the latest pestilence God has sent to this crooked generation that takes pleasure in unnatural lust. To indulge in it again is double death, after that man is saved from it. For the impotent man of thirty eight years to go back to his former lust, not even Jesus' cure could keep him immune from it. For the woman to go back to adulterous practice, never would our Lord keep her from the judgment. By the law of

Moses she would certainly be stoned. Deuteronomy 22:22 says, "If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel." "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Leviticus 20:10).

Today we have the gravest problem facing society, viz., the curse of drugs, that the Singapore Government is among the first to impose the death penalty on drug pushers of over 15 grammes of heroin. For, once a man or woman comes under its grip, it is hard to escape from its cold, clammy clutch. Of those who are delivered there is only a small percentage who can resist it. Usually they are those saved in "half-way" houses under Christian management. But for those delivered to go back to the old way it is the surest slippery way down into hell.

But there is no chance given to the enlightened, to those active in the Lord's service, when they sin wilfully, knowing what they do is clearly against the commandment of the Lord. We can call to mind numerous cases from both the New and Old Testaments.

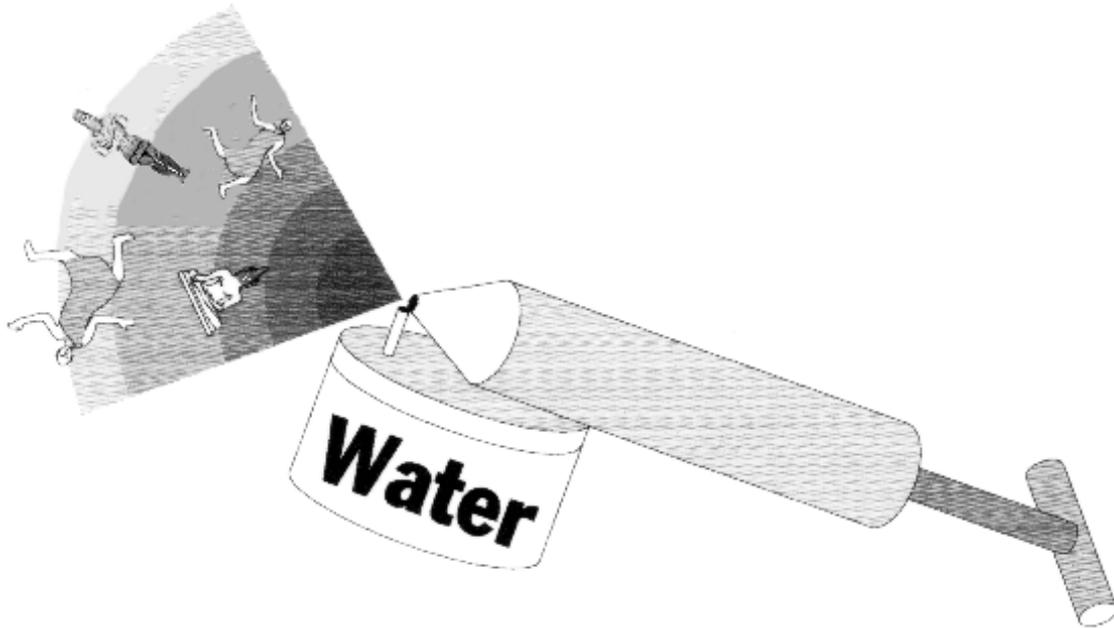
First is the case of Balaam whose notoriety as a prophet of unrighteous gain recorded in Numbers 22-25, 31 is oft-quoted in II Peter 2:15,16, Jude 11 and Rev 2:14. A modern prophet gone astray after Balaam is Billy Graham, who is also called "The Jehoshaphat of this generation." (J.A. Johnson, Berean Publications, Bangalore, India.)

A second case is that of Achan. The Lord had put a curse on any who would take of anything in the capture of Jericho (Joshua 6:17,18). But when Achan of the tribe of Judah retained to himself a Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels (Joshua 7:21) and had them hid in the earth, the whole army of Israel was paralysed until the curse was put away by stoning Achan and his whole family.

Suffice it to mention a third case, the covetous scheming of Gehazi, disciple of Elisha. This is in connection with the cleansing of Naaman by bathing seven times in the Jordan. When Elisha refused the gifts offered by the Gentile general, Gehazi felt a great loss sustained. So he went up to the departing patient now healed to demand a present for himself. He told a lie, "My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from Mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments." Naaman responded with double the money Gehazi asked for with the two changes of clothing. When this came to Elisha's knowledge, the prophet of God said to his covetous servant, "Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow" (II Kings 5).

In the New Testament we have Judas the Treasurer of the Apostolic College who, according to John was a thief. Jesus called him a devil. He it was who betrayed the Lord. His ignominious death by hanging is a grave warning to every disciple of Jesus Christ.

To quote these several examples is enough to teach us the corollary of not sinning after one's cure and forgiveness and the corollary of the severe judgment on wilful sin.



Baptism is Repellent
against mediums and idols
(Mark 16:16)

Chapter IV

REDISCOVERING THE POWER OF BAPTISM

While there are those who take an extreme position on the right in regard to baptism, that without undergoing this sacramental rite one cannot be saved (Roman Catholics and some of the Church of Christ which also stipulates immersion), there are others who take an extreme position on the left (since baptism itself does not save, one need not be baptised).

The central position on baptism is crisply and succinctly stated by our Lord in Mark 16:15,16. “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Notice that our Lord stresses baptism for those that believe, but the unbelievers who are damned are lost per se, so no baptism is mentioned. For since they believe not they have no part with the sacrament of baptism. But they who are believers have the Lord’s blessing confirmed by baptism.

Baptism is commanded not only in Mark but also in Matthew in what is known as the Great Commission: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Apostles, after praying in Jerusalem for the stipulated period after the Ascension stood up with one accord on the day of Pentecost and preached to all who came to Jerusalem to keep

the feast. The power of God descended on both preachers and hearers in a marvellous manifestation of tongues (speaking and hearing in foreign languages).

This is what Luke records of the epochal event:

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”
(Acts 2:37-41)

Every one of the three thousand who surrendered to the Apostles' preaching was baptised! This sets the pattern for all other processes of conversion. When Philip, one of the seven deacons, went down to Samaria and preached Christ to the Samaritans, he baptised all who believed both men and women (Acts 8:12), including Simon the Socerer (Acts 12:13). After this Philip was sent to meet the Eunuch of Ethiopia at the Gaza desert. He preached Christ to him from Isaiah Chapter 53 which the Eunuch was reading. And when he believed, “he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptised him” (Acts 8:38).

As we read further on in the Acts of the Apostles, we come to Saul's conversion on the Damascus road and how Ananias was sent to baptise him. After Saul's conversion and baptism we see Peter prominent in action. Peter was sent by a Vision to Caesarea to preach to the house of Cornelius. When Cornelius and all his household believed and spoke in tongues, Peter said, “Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he

commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord ..." (Acts 10:47,48).

From the several accounts on baptism practised by the Apostles in the early Church, we see how mandatory it is for the church, ancient or modern, to carry out this holy injunction. Without the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, together with the regular preaching of the Word, there is no local church formed. This is Calvin's observation and the teaching of the Reformed Faith. Hence, the Salvation Army, though descended from William Booth the Soulwinner of the Streets, but had dispensed with water baptism and the Lord's Supper, is not a Church but a para-church organisation. Their officers are thus deprived of the keys of baptism and the Lord's Supper. They surely labour at great handicap against ordained ministers of the Gospel.

After I was ordained by the Philadelphia Presbytery of the Bible Presbyterian Church USA in Geneva 1950, I was immediately installed pastor of the English Service of the Say Mia Tng (Teochew Life Church), Prinsep Street. In a month's time I was called upon to administer the Lord's Supper and in six months to baptise the first batch of believers. I officiated in the capacity of the Lord's minister, like one on Government service carrying out the King's orders. (In 1950 Singapore was still a British Crown Colony.) From the beginning I have always felt a surge of power within me when baptising in the Name of the Triune God, and another surge of power administering the Lord's Supper in Jesus' Name. "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

The power through baptism truly confirms the joy of forgiveness of sins in the believing candidate as you can see in the radiance upon his (or her) face. An elder of my Church when asked when he was born again, replied, "On the day I was baptised." The water of baptism indeed is an outward testimony and confirmation of the inward grace of conversion as Paul has declared in Titus 3:5, "Not by works of righteousness which we

have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost” (the water outwardly witnesses to the Spirit’s working inwardly). To cap it all on the saving faith of the baptised candidates, now risen from their knees, it is the custom at every Life Church Baptismal Service to sing “O Happy Day” the hymn from the pen of Philip Dodridge (1702-1751). Stanzas 2 and 3 are particularly significant to the newly baptised as they sing of their entrance into life, sealed and confirmed by the holy ordinance.

O happy bond that seals my vows
To Him who merits all my love!
Let cheerful anthems fill His House,
While to that sacred shrine I move

Chorus:

*Happy day, happy day, When Jesus washed my sins
away!*

He taught me how to watch and pray

And live rejoicing ev’ry day;

Happy day, happy day,

When Jesus washed my sins away!

’Tis done, the great transaction’s done —
I am my Lord’s and He is mine;
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.

As the water of baptism confirms the washing of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the cup that we drink at the Lord’s Table works peace within and confirms the cleansing of the heart by His precious blood. These two sacraments alone are ordained as a “means of grace” to strengthen the faith of the believer (not seven, according to Romanism).

At Life BP Church, we normally take twelve weeks to study through the Shorter Catechism to prepare candidates for baptism. But once in a while we receive special requests for baptism without going through the whole course because the candidate has to leave early to study or work in a foreign country. Now, the essential thing in baptism is the candidate’s salvation. If the same can testify to this, there is no reason to delay. We baptize

at the earliest convenience upon a written testimony being submitted. We never delay such a request. What is the reason for requesting early baptism? That baptism confirms and assures the Lord's keeping and mercies in the soul of the candidate is the obvious reason. The Christian who has the Lord's seal feels a hundred times better than buying insurance before taking leave of his home country.

What I would like to witness to the power of baptism over the heathen Chinese world is particularly enlightening. In the early years of my ministry I was requested to baptise a believing family of six in the village of Tampoi, Johore, Malaysia —father, mother and four children, but not Grandma who lived together with them. Before the baptisms Grandma used to have the youngest boy of seven hold the joss sticks for her when she prayed to *Tien Kong*, the Heavenly Grandfather. She appointed the youngest grandchild to hold the joss sticks because, she said, he being youngest was purest in heart. However, when she discovered that the whole family including the young boy was baptised, she left off enlisting the child. She said, "Now that he is baptised, he becomes Jesus' son. Jesus keeps him from me."

My sister-in-law who was a Deaconess of the Holy Light Church fell seriously ill with cancer. A non-Christian friend who tried to help consulted the medium of a Chinese temple. When he came to know who she was, Deaconess (therefore baptised) of the Christian Church, he said, "I cannot do anything for her. Jesus her God is greater than ours." Praise the Lord, Jesus is greater than all! He is the Son of God!

One early Sunday morning an angry father brought his son to the parsonage to lodge a complaint. He was furious to know that I had baptised his son. He said to me, "I allowed him to come to your church for the sake of improving his English. I forbade him to baptise. Now that he is baptised by you, can you not de-baptise him?" Replied I, "Once baptised, always baptised." Whereupon the infuriated father dragged his son to the open badminton court and made him kneel. Then he kicked him in the buttocks and stormed out of the Church grounds. The poor son,

Barnabas by name, did not move nor yell. In quiet composure he got up and returned to his house.

Being a teenager, he had to obey his father. He did not come to Church for a good long while. Nevertheless he kept his faith. How glad were we to see him smiling again, when he grew taller and more muscular. The father now could not bind him. A faithful Lifer, he led his younger brother Micah to Church where he also got converted. The father gave up not only on the first son but this his younger brother. Baptism keeps them both.

A young girl who joined the Life Bible Class was prohibited from baptism by her irate father. She had to withdraw from Easter Baptism at the last moment. She wept. After two years she could be restrained no longer. This time she told me very boldly, "Pastor, I'm joining the baptism this year. Though I was beaten before because I wanted to baptise, this time I'm not afraid."

Indeed, she knelt with new candidates to confess Jesus Christ without fail. Prepared to be beaten for Christ's sake, she returned home. The father who forbade her before called her to his room. A trembling daughter as she entered to meet his father, she was amazed to see her dad hold out a *hongbao* (red packet containing money) to her. In Chinese lore, the *hongbao* has many uses. This one was to make peace! The power of baptism in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ has "paralysed" his striking hand.

There is a young lady whose mother is a staunch member of our Chinese Service. This girl has often been obsessed with an evil spirit plaguing her. This has got her confined to a mental hospital, on and off.

Upon the occasion of Easter baptisms I approached her to get baptised. To which her reply was, I must get rid of this evil spirit haunting me before I am clean enough to be baptised. "No," I said, "it is the other way round. If you believe Jesus is the Son of God who died for you, you should be baptised now. With baptism the evil spirit troubling you will be driven away." I

baptised her and there was good result from this baptism. She was rid of that evil spirit. In appreciation of her deliverance she gave me a cross-stitch with these words, “He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him” (I John 2:10). The power of baptism!

Many are my baptism stories! Suffice it to tell of a case where baptism had a hold on a whole heathen Chinese family including all the household gods! A young man of New Life BP Church, Woodlands, Singapore was drowned while swimming at Desaru, Johore, Malaysia. This young man had received baptism a month or two before the mishap. When the family members searched his papers locked up in a drawer they were surprised he had been baptised from the photos taken in Church.

When the family realised he was baptised they decided he belonged to Jesus, that only the pastor could conduct the funeral. Being supervisory pastor of New Life BP Church it became my lot to perform the last rites, the pastor on the spot being away.

When we came to the deceased brother’s house, lo and behold, all the household gods, whether sitting in idol shelves in the hall or at the staircase or in the kitchen, all of them were curtained off with red linen. For they had to be protected from the pastor who was Jesus’ officer. Red in Chinese means life, so a life-linen, according to their thinking, can ward off death. They were scared to death! What a new revelation to me of the power of baptism over the Chinese heathens.

There’s a Chinese saying, “There is no end to learning until you die.” That’s why the title of this chapter is not *Discovery*, but *Discovering* the power of baptism. I am still learning about the power of baptism against the forces of darkness. I’m still a novice!

This chapter on the power of Baptism cannot be complete without discussion on the mode of baptism. Is it true that without full immersion, baptism by sprinkling is invalid? That is the position of Baptists, so much so they pride themselves to be

called a **Baptist** Church, while certain Church of Christ theologians hold that without immersion, one cannot be saved.

From my experience I have discovered the absolutist position of immersion baptism shattered by (1) the testimony of an American veteran of WWII; (2) the request by an American Baptist missionary to me a Chinese Presbyterian minister.

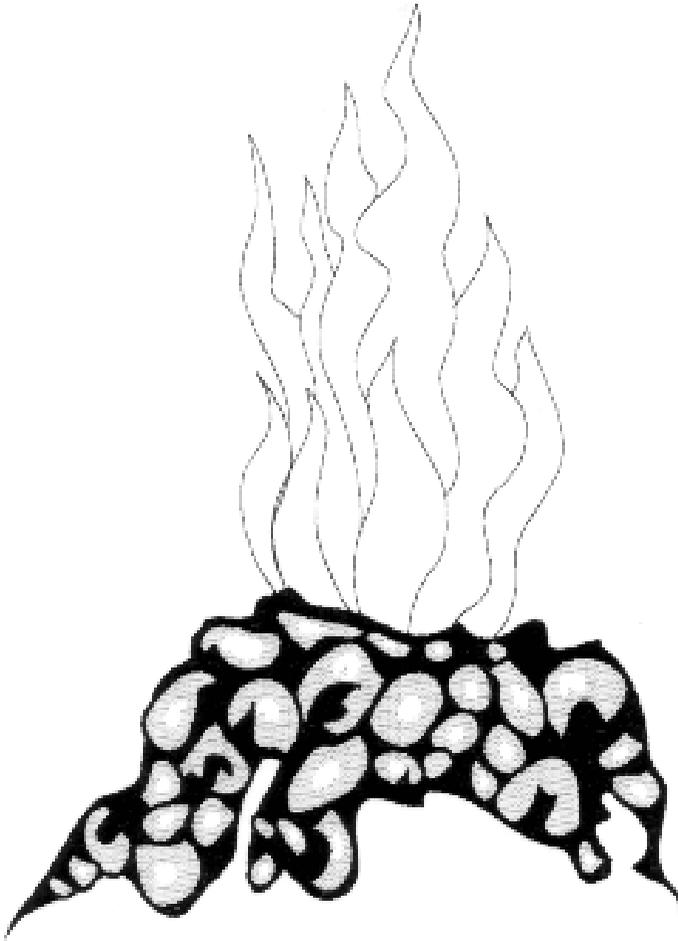
1. This American veteran serviceman told me how before leaving America for the European continent, he got immersed as a means of divine protection from war hazards. But he was not born again. In a foxhole in Italy when the going was roughest, and when he was under a hail of bullets, he cried out to God for salvation. The baptism of fire saved him, not the immersion he went through back home.

2. This Baptist missionary of an interdenominational society and a good friend of mine telephoned me one evening. He said, "Could you do me a favour? I have an old grandmother lying sick at the General Hospital. After my witnessing to her she has believed. Now she requested baptism. To immerse her in the hospital is very cumbersome. Could you take over from me since you can sprinkle her more conveniently?!"

The position this Bible-Presbyterian minister holds is after that of the apostle Paul. The preaching of the Gospel unto the saving of souls is more important than the mode of baptism. Paul says, "For Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel:..." (I Corinthians 1:17). Thus, while we practise baptism by sprinkling in good Presbyterian theology and tradition, we are willing to work with Baptists on the mission field. Not only to cooperate with them, aiding them, but also to give financially to their building funds. In this respect Life Church has helped build three Baptist Churches in Manila.

As to the baptism question, here is Dr John Sung's famous saying, "More faith, less water. Less faith, more water." Dr Sung once baptised by sprinkling 200 at Harbin in his revivalist campaign in Manchuria. When he came to Baptist territory in Hong Kong and was debarred from preaching in Baptist

churches, he got immersed. To paraphrase it according to I Corinthians 9:22,23, he would have said this openly. "To the Baptists became I as Baptist, that I might gain the Baptists. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake..." John Sung can say with Paul also, "For Christ sent me not to baptise but to preach the gospel..." and, not being bound by the power of baptism negatively, the gospel is advanced through Life Church more positively, yea, even making deep inroads into Baptist territory. The greatest inroads were made by both Calvary and Life BP Churches in the building of "Hilltop" in Manila. For in heaven there will be no more controversy on "More faith less water or less faith more water." Both Presbyterians and Baptists will be there.



United Prayer

is like burning charcoal.
More prayer, more power;
less prayer, less power.
(James 5:16)

Chapter V

REDISCOVERING THE POWER OF PRAYER

Through all my life, from childhood to this day, I have been under the power of prayer.

Son of a mother's vow, I was offered up to the Lord through the hands of my pastor Grandfather. At an early age my sister, younger brothers and I came under the tutelage of Grandpa, when we boarded at the Manse to go to school in Singapore. (Our parents lived in Malaysia.) Grandpa was a man of prayer. Whenever he prayed in his room our young hearts were solemnised as if we were brought before the presence of God. We all learned to say the Lord's prayer. From Mother's hand we learned to pray before going to bed and first thing in the morning. And we could say grace at table. Prayer was a good exercise for our souls.

But it was not after we were born again in the great Singapore Revival of 1935 that prayer has become the lively breathing of our souls. Our moment by moment heart-throb was quickened by the spirit of prayer. We loved to worship and fellowship as never before. We found our communion with God heightened when someone more spiritual than we led in prayer. Whenever Elder Sim of Glory Presbyterian Church prayed at the John Sung Evangelistic League Monthly meeting, my soul was always lifted up.

After the Lord called me a second time and I yielded to study theology in China, I came under the prayerful nurture of my teacher Dr Chia Yu Ming....

When I became pastor of Life Church English Service in 1950, we started the Prayer Meeting immediately after the

inaugural worship service. We began to practise corporate prayer.

Now while the attendance at the Lord's Day Service grew steadily, the prayer meeting remained stagnant. As Singapore became more affluent the spirit of prayer was inversely affected. Like the Church of Laodicea, we were neither cold nor hot. Being lukewarm we were to be spued out of the Lord's mouth. We were rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing. But we were spiritually wretched and miserable, and blind and naked.

James's admonition fitted us perfectly, "Yet ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss..." (James 4:2,3).

It is when the Church is come to a crossroads or to the valley of decision, to a critical hour in her life and work that her members are constrained to come together and pray. One greatest crisis confronting Life Church came in October 1989. We had to find \$7.2 million in six and a half months in order to purchase the former Eye Clinic, opposite the Church at 10 Gilstead Road. Apart from the regular Tuesday night prayer meeting, we called an inner circle of members, like Peter, James and John, to pray on a Friday night at the parsonage. We lifted our hearts as never before at every Lord's Day Worship, crying to God to help us cross our financial Jordan. We had no other way out but pray, and as we prayed we also learnt to pay!

There's a saying, "Prayer changes things." When God answered our prayer, mountains were removed. At first Session was prepared to take a \$2 million loan. We persisted not to through prayer. Later it was thought we still needed a million. Again by prayer and supplication, we surmounted the difficulty. When the sum needed for payment on the property across Gilstead Road became due, the Lord delivered us so we had a \$200,000 surplus!

Through the victory to take over what we now call Beulah Land, our Tuesday Night Prayer Meeting was revived!

Today, it is no more held in the main sanctuary, but at the FEBC Hall. Here members are drawn closer together by the limitation of space. Like burning charcoal heaped together the spirit of prayer is become warmer.

The Tuesday Night Prayer Meeting of Life Church is composed of three parts. Part I which is 30 minutes consists of singing of an appropriate hymn or psalm or chorus. This is followed by Bible Study. Part II consists of another 30 minutes, this time of testimonies and praise. This is after the tradition of Dr John Sung in the conducting of his Evangelistic League monthly meetings. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks in his name" (Hebrews 13:5). When prayers are answered, when God has manifested Himself mighty to save, testimonies, thanksgivings and praises are offered. This is the vibrant life of the prayer meeting. Part III, also 30 minutes, consists of reading out the prayer requests that are sent in on blue cards. Items compiled by the pastor are also read out, and elders and deacons, mostly, are requested to pray aloud. The meeting ends sharply at 9.30 pm. After this the over hundred praying members adjourn to a time of fellowship, some over a cup of coffee or tea.

What are some of the testimonies of answer to prayer? Let me recount just a few:

A young mother brought her son of six or seven before the prayer meeting started. He was obsessed with seeing dark figures at night, which caused anxiety to the whole family. I laid my hand on him to pray for deliverance. The same mother brought her son to seek the Lord at the next prayer meeting. After a fortnight or so she returned, smiling. She spontaneously came to the microphone and read out a testimony how God had healed her son. He was now normal as before and attending school.

Here's a written testimony presented at the Tuesday Night Prayer Meeting by Teo Cheng Seng with fervour that warmed up every heart. He says, "I give this testimony with humility for the

glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. God says, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me' (Psalm 50:15)."

"My wife, myself and our six-year-old son thank and praise the Lord Jesus Christ with our whole heart for answering our prayers. We prayed and cried to the Lord as a united Christian family, with our whole heart on bended knees until our legs ached. He heard our prayers by miraculously preserving our baby son's life. He healed him completely and speedily for His own glory and to relieve his sufferings. We would also thank the Lord for hearing the prayers of other Christians on our behalf.

"My wife gave birth prematurely when she was pregnant seven months and one week. The baby weighed 4.1 pounds. The lady paediatrician and neonatologist said our baby son was born with Grade 4 lung problem which claims a high death rate. The chance of survival is very slim. That our baby has lived through the ordeal is declared by our lady doctor to be a miracle. We want to thank the Lord Jesus Christ for hearing our united, earnest prayer on bended knees. To God be the glory. Amen."

A young lady was obsessed with evil spirits. She was gripped often by trembling fear. She heard voices and saw ugly figures. We prayed for her not only at the Church prayer meeting, but also separately on two occasions at the parsonage. We instructed her to read the Psalms and the Gospels where Jesus is seen mighty to save, casting out devils and healing the sick. We read her I John 4:4, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Thus strengthened, she looked steadfastly to the Lord. After a fortnight persevering in prayer and in reading His Word this sister was completely delivered. She brought a cheque for \$500, a small token, she said, of her thankfulness to the Lord for deliverance. Meanwhile she had lost her job, but soon she found another. She is now a faithful member of the Tuesday night Prayer Meeting.

A young man from Indonesia was seriously injured in a motor cycle accident. The rider was killed in a head-on crash and the pillion companion suffered a compound fracture of his leg. Prayers were offered week after week for him. He was saved from death by the good surgery of Singapore doctors. Though prayers are needed, the more practical help rendered were the sympathetic gifts of Church members and Christian friends that paid his heavy hospital bills. The ministry of hospitality of Beulah House, giving him and his parents shelter, heightened their spirits. Today this young man has completely recovered. Through this accident he has also felt God's call to full-time service and is now admitted to Chin Lien Bible Seminary. Besides this, his father who had been an inquirer at a Charismatic Church in Tanjung Pinang now believed with all his heart and was baptised together with his son. There's the ministry of prayer. There's also the ministry of payment and of hospitality. God is mighty to save in every form of good work in his Name.

One more testimony will suffice to witness to the power of not only prayer but every charitable deed. An elderly woman from Indonesia had been suffering from migraine for three years. She came to stay in Beulah House. She was X-rayed, which cost her \$500. But while she stayed in the cool and quiet of Beulah Land, she found she could sleep soundly, a blessing that had escaped her all these years. On the fourth day, however, she announced to one and all that her headache had clean gone from her. She testified to the FEBC family as she ate with us. Her husband who accompanied her was astonished. They returned to Indonesia, praising God for the "automatic" healing.

We are still rediscovering the power of prayer and more so, through the ministry of hospitality.

Teach me to pray, Lord, teach me to pray;
This is my heartcry day unto day;
I long to know Thy will and Thy way;
Teach me to pray, Lord, teach me to pray.

Chorus:

Living in Thee, Lord, and Thou in me;

*Constant abiding, this is my plea;
Grant me Thy power, boundless and free:
Power with men and power with Thee.*

Power in prayer, Lord, power in prayer,
Here 'mid earth's sin and sorrow and care;
Men lost and dying, souls in despair —
O give me power, power in prayer!

My weakened will, Lord, Thou canst renew;
My sinful nature Thou canst subdue;
Fill me just now with power anew,
Power to pray and power to do!

Teach me to pray, Lord, teach me to pray;
Thou art my Pattern day unto day;
Thou art my Surety now and for aye;
Teach me to pray, Lord, teach me to pray.

Prayer and Thanksgiving from Grateful Lifers

This chapter will be incomplete without republishing the grateful notes attached to offerings presented by Lifers in the offering bags at both the 8.00 am and 10.30 am Services - thanksgiving for answer to specific prayers. Not through the priest nor through the pastor, but by the ever open new and living Way, even Jesus who is also the Truth and the Life (Hebrews 10:20, John 14:6). Let us find inspiration from twenty-four, that is, 2 x 12 which in Scripture numerics means "fullness of representation." (This is not to exclude the countless tithes and offerings received week after week, for answered prayers though not annotated.)

1. *This is in grateful thanksgiving to God who answers prayers (despite my sins and lack of faith). Please proportion this little amount to the Siregar brothers and to Bethel BP Church (Melbourne) as you would deem fit (\$1,200).*

2. *How great the Lord is. He answered my prayers and freed me from my impossible situation and gave me the*

peace that only our Lord is capable of giving. I fully trust in Him. Enclosed my gift for the Lord (\$400).

3. Tithes and thanksgiving kindly forward to Life Church Missions \$2,500, RPG Ministry \$1,000, The Eberts \$1,000, Charles and Frieda \$500, FEBC students \$570.

4. I want to tell you that coming to prayer meeting has been such a great blessing ... Enclosed is also \$300. Please use it however you wish.

5. This is according to the Lord's prompting: \$300 for Burma Adjacent Land.

6. This offering is an echo of the much loved hymn THANKS TO GOD... Thanks to God for pain and pleasure; thanks for storms that I have weathered; Thanks for all Thou doth supply - especially for the bonus which I'll get tomorrow - the much awaited 12th of July '93. — A Cheerful giver (\$1,000).

7. Please use the small gift enclosed as you deem fit for whatever the need is. I cannot express my grateful thanks to God and Life Church enough especially for the good results of my daughter's 2nd year exams. (\$500 for Burma Adjacent Land).

8. This gift is only a little of the much blessings, grace, mercy, goodness and love He has richly bestowed upon me. (\$500 through pastor's hand after prayer meeting.)

9. Enclosed please find \$1000 as our Thanksgiving. \$500 is for Mission Fund and \$500 is for buying Chinese/English Bibles.

10. I want to thank the Lord for the many blessings to my family and myself — good health, happiness and also taking good care of my two daughters studying in Melbourne, Australia. Without taking any Medical Leave for a year, I was awarded \$500 through The Health Incentive Scheme formed by the Company. It immediately came to my mind this award should be for the Lord, because He has kept me in good health, and not through myself. The Lord has been so gracious to my family and

myself all these years. Praise the Lord. All glory be to the Lord.

11. *Thank God for His grace and mercy for answering my prayer and helping me to pass my diploma course exam. Enclosed thanksoffering of \$100 for the extension of God's Kingdom.*

12. *My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Jesus Christ. Philippians 4:19 (\$600).*

13. *Truly I want to praise and thank the Lord for His goodness and grace upon me even as He has answered my prayers in my recent examinations.*

The Lord has granted me the strength and wisdom from above to enable me to clear my postgraduate examinations; something which I know I could not accomplish by my own human effort.

I would like to present this cheque which is my take-home pay for the month as a thanksgiving offering. Please channel it to the various areas of need such as the 'Hilltop' and EBF II, etc as you wish.

14. *Enclosed is a gift in thanksgiving to God for restoring my health and blessing me in my work. Please give it to the Hilltop project in the Philippines. (\$1000)*

15. *Touched by the testimony of "a grateful child of God" who offered to the Lord \$150 because his ex-schoolmate succumbed to cancer of the breast and "it dawned upon me that I've always taken my cancer-free body for granted," I'd like to thank the Lord that my hand is not paralysed like the man "whose right hand was withered" in Luke 6:6. I can still freely write and sign cheques. (\$150 for Hilltop)*

16. *My heart is very glad to see young men and women, from far away countries heeding God's call to study in this College and to serve Him. I shall continue to support the College in prayers. Enclosed is a little gift for the College use. May God bless you with good health. (\$300)*

17. *Soon FEBC will celebrate her 30th Anniversary. The good Lord has blessed her and preserved her in difficult*

times. She is my alma mater. I am proud of her. May she continue to produce many godly labourers for the Lord's vineyard. Please accept this gift for the ministry of FEBC (\$1000).

18. This is my gift to God, to thank Him for all that He has done for me, and for even giving me another chance to study/to further my education. I can see how God has gone before me and led me thus far. Truly indeed, my life is in God's hands! Praise the Lord!

19. My love gift to God. Although He has taken my beloved husband Home to be with Him. I trust that Richard is now in the arms of Jesus and enjoying the Glory of eternal life. My heart still pains but who am I to question the will of God? Richard told me many a time that God should be No. 1 in our lives and I believe He has chosen to put God first; hence obeying God's will. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21 (\$1200)

20. I've always admired the FEBC students from other countries giving their all to serve the Lord. Some have families to support. Some have difficulties mastering English. Yet the Lord has helped them overcome their burdens, be they academic or financial.

The Lord has impressed upon me the desire to help some FEBC students by giving my tithe for this month as a bursary. May the Lord bless the recipient of my bursary! (\$600)

Much blessed but not called, yet!

21. I want to thank our Gracious Heavenly Father who took away the dark cloud which hung over me and replaced it with a rainbow of promises and assurance. This small token is for the purchase of Christian literature and Bibles for the people in China who crave for His Word. (\$100)

22. "The Lord is good to all" (Psalm 145:9). Thank you very much for your kind hospitality to us (\$40).

23. For several months a new phenomenon has appeared on "From the Offerings Bags" column. It is the

“sacrifice of praise ... the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name” (Hebrews 13:15). It is the words of overflowing gratitude accompanying every monetary gift.

This week we received such a “sacrifice of praise” with a blank cheque that overwhelmed us. The offerer is a sister whom we know well and love in the Lord.

She writes: “As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting... Psalm 103.

Thank God for preserving me in a road accident that wrecked my car but left me unscathed. The Lord is indeed merciful. Praise the Lord!

Enclosed is my thanksgiving offering. Please enter the amount and use it as the Spirit leads. I cannot thank the Lord enough. He who gave me life everlasting, will He not freely give me all things?” (\$5,000).

24. I would like to make a small donation to express my thanks and gratefulness to FEBC. I have greatly benefited from my visit here and would like to thank everyone for the warm welcome I received. I have developed a thirst for knowledge of God’s Word. Thank you also for all the books you gave me (I am avidly reading them), and for the delicious cooking.

I return to England a stronger Christian, and hope to find a good church to continue growing.

And here’s the Lord’s reciprocal blessing on you, dear Lifers: “For God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (II Corinthians 9:7,8).

Chapter VI

ROYAL BALM FOR THE TROUBLED SOUL — THE PSALMS

At the very outset of my pastoral ministry, within the first two years, I remember, I went to visit a member of the Heng Clan warded at the General Hospital. He was to be operated on for stomach ulcer in two days. “Pastor,” he cried, “I am very scared to go up the operation table!” Immediately I counselled him, “Read the Psalms. Just open to any Psalm and read on to the end. Then start from the beginning and go on for as long as you can.”

When I revisited him the next day, Brother Heng smiled a broad smile, “Pastor, I am no more afraid. The Psalms have strengthened my heart. I’m ready.” He had a successful operation. He became a stronger Christian. He never missed attending Church. After some years he transferred to another B-P Church because he shifted to its locality.

Remembering the good results obtained from this recipe, I have also prescribed the Psalms to any who tells me of his soul’s trouble — whether it be fear, sadness, sorrow, depression and every heartache. Whenever I go hospital visitation, I would invariably read a Psalm to the patient.

Psalm 20 is a most reassuring one:

*The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the
God of Jacob defend thee;*

*Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee
out of Zion:*

*Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice;
Selah.*

*Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy
counsel.*

*We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God
we will set up our banners: the Lord fulfil all thy
petitions.*

*Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed; he will hear
him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his
right hand.*

*Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will
remember the name of the Lord our God.*

*They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and
stand upright.*

Save, Lord: let the king hear us when we call.

Another is Psalm 40. The first three verses read:

*I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me,
and heard my cry.*

*He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry
clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my
goings.*

*And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto
our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in
the Lord.*

In respect of Psalm 40, this was what I opened to read to a lady patient from our Chinese Service, when lo and behold, she smilingly pointed me to the same passage she had just been reading when I called. Two are a confirmation from the Lord (Genesis 41:32). She said to me, "Pastor, I'm not afraid to go up the operation table. These verses have strengthened my heart." She came out of hospital without a hitch though with many a stitch — by the assurance of God's Word. The Psalms are a Royal Balm for every troubled soul.

About eight years ago a member of Sharon B-P Church came to see me with his wife for counselling. This young professional was an engineer of an American firm. He was sent to Indonesia to sell the company's machines as well as to demonstrate and train the customers. Somewhere along the way he developed a fear and nervousness. This brought the sales down and he lost his job.

He consulted Singapore's well-known psychiatrist. He was hospitalised and heavily guarded because he became violent. Though later on discharged, the fear kept on haunting him. He approached a B-P minister who has a busy counselling practice. Since this also did not help, he finally came to me.

"I cannot heal you of myself," was my reply to this young man. "But if you'll read the Psalms, this will help. Turn to any Psalm. Read to the end. Then start from the beginning." I told him of my successful first case with Brother Heng. He left with this recipe and did not come back — for some years.

One night at Life Church Tuesday Night Prayer Meeting there walked up from the end pews a stout fellow with a broad smile. As I asked for testimonies and praise items from the congregation, he was the first one to respond. He identified himself as that member from Sharon B-P Church who saw me with his wife because he had a mental breakdown. He revealed how after being counselled by me he read the Psalms, the whole book, several times. At the end of it, he came to himself. He was now confident to live a Christian life. Being fully healed by reading the Psalms, he also got back his job. The American Company which had employed him sent him this time to China. There he served for three years, his wife by his side (as also counselled by me). Now he had put on twenty pounds. Praise the Lord, he looked so prosperous I could hardly recognize him. Today this young man continues to work with the American Company. When I told this story at a Bible Camp of Sharon B-P Church they rejoiced — it's Bernard Ng!

Yes, the Psalms are a Royal Balm for every troubled soul. Not only for the Christian, but also for the Jew! The story is told in

Time Magazine, Feb 24, 1986 of one Scharansky, most famous Jewish dissident in Russia released to Israel in an exchange of political prisoners between East and West. The report on how the Book of Psalms had sustained him is given as follows:

The Psalmbook kept him company. During the nine years he spent in Soviet prisons and work camps, most of his other possessions were taken from him. But he clung to a miniature copy of the Book of Psalms that his wife Avital had sent from Israel. In fact, he once spent 130 days in solitary confinement because he refused to allow the authorities to confiscate the book.

Early last week the Soviet guards tried again to seize it. In desperate fury, the prisoner defied his captors by throwing himself into the snow. 'I said I would not leave without the psalms that had helped me so much,' he later explained. 'I lay in the snow and said, 'Not another step.' The guards scrutinised the book completely, then handed it back ...

The story of Scharansky and his Psalmbook which he fought for with his whole life is in fact chronicled in the Life B-P Weekly Vol. XXI No 26, 23 Feb 1986. There, the Editorial ended with this remark, "We conclude: Each Psalm is Balm for your sick soul. What Psychiatry cannot do, the Psalms can do." (In the light of the Sharon Church member who was healed reading the Psalms and put on 20 pounds.)

The Psalms, did you notice, is located in the middle of the Bible. The heart of the Bible which the Psalmbook is, is also medicine for our heart. In fact it is the most read book of the 66 books, inasmuch as a Psalm is usually chosen for Responsive Reading in our Lord's Day worship. Why? Because it is a book as my teacher Dr Chia Yu Ming had said, that helps to stir your heart to prayer and to worship.

The Psalms, of all the 66 books, is often appended to Pocket Testaments, sometimes also with Proverbs. The Gideons Pocket New Testament with Psalms and Proverbs are a major part of 200 million Bibles and New Testaments placed in hotels, motels, hospitals, penal institutions, members of the armed forces, school

Rx



Like Chinese Medicine

Drink it all

Sure cure for fear and depression

students and those in the public nursing field. It has a most comprehensive guide to the Reader titled "*WHERE TO FIND HELP, When...*" For the benefit of every soul oppressed, we reproduce this guide hereat, as follows. (It is noted that of all books of the Bible quoted, Psalms stands out as No. 1.)

WHERE TO FIND HELP, When

Afraid	Psa 34:4; Matt 10:28; II Tim 1:7; Heb 13:5,6
Anxious	Psa 46; Matt 6:19-34; Phil 4:6; I Peter 5:6,7
Backsliding	Psa 51; I John 1:4-9
Bereaved	Matt 5:4; II Cor 1:3,4
Bitter or Critical	I Cor 13
Conscious of Sin	Prov 28:13
Defeated	Rom 8:31-39
Depressed	Psa 34
Disaster Threatens	Psa 91; Psa 118:5,6; Luke 8:22-25
Discouraged	Psa 23; Psa 42:6-11; Psa 55:22; Matt 5:11,12; II Cor 4:8-18; Phil 4:4-7
Doubting	Matt 8:26; Heb 11
Facing a Crisis	Psa 121; Matt 6:25-34; Heb 4:16
Faith Fails	Psa 42:5; Heb 11
Friends Fail	Psa 41:9-13; Luke 17:3,4; Rom 12:14,17,19,21; II Tim 4:16-18
Leaving Home	Psa 121; Matt 10:16-20
Lonely	Psa 23; Heb 13:5,6
Needing God's Protection	Psa 27:1-6; Psa 91; Phil 4:19
Needing Guidance	Psa 32:8; Prov 3:5,6
Needing Peace	John 14:1-4; John 16:33; Rom 5:1-5; Phil 4:6,7
Needing Rules for Living	Rom 12
Overcome	Psa 6; Rom 8:31-39; I John 1:4-9
Prayerful	Psa 4, 42; Luke 11:1-13; John 17; I John 5:14,15
Protected	Psa 18:1-3; Psa 34:7
Sick or in Pain	Psa 38; Matt 26:39; Rom 5:3-5; II Cor 12:9,10; I Pet 4:12,13,19
Sorrowful	Psa 51; Matt 5:4; John 14; II Cor 1:3,4; I Thess 4:13-18
Tempted	Psa 1; Psa 139:23,24; Matt 26:41; I Cor 10:12-14; Phil 4:8
Thankful	Psa 100; I Thess 5:18; Heb 13:15
Travelling	Psa 121
Trouble, in	Psa 16; Psa 31; John 14:1-4; Heb 7:25
Weary	Psa 90; Matt 11:28-30; I Cor 15:58; Gal 6:9,10
Worried	Matt 6:19-34; I Pet 5:6,7

Hitherto, we have prescribed the Psalms especially for believers in trouble. But the greatest problem about a man's soul is whether he is saved, whether he has passed out of the darkness of death into the light of His salvation. This brings us in our counselling practice to the prerequisite of finding out whether the counsellee is a child of God. "Are you saved? Are you born again? Are you become a child of God? If not, you are still dead in your trespasses and sin, without help and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:5,12)."

That being the case, the first step in counselling is to bring the lost soul to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Until Christ is become his Saviour, we cannot proceed to pray for his trouble whether they are of the body, soul or spirit. Hence, we would recommend the Gideon's Recipe to bring the soul to Christ, as attached to the inside back cover.

God Loves You

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

— John 3:16

But God proves His own love for us by Christ's dying for us when we were still sinners.

— Romans 5:8

All Are Sinners

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

— Romans 3:23

God's Remedy for Sin

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

— Romans 6:23

But to those who did receive Him He granted authority to become God's children, that is, to those who believe in His name.

— John 1:12

For I transmitted to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that also He was buried, and that He rose on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

— I Corinthians 15:3-4

All May Be Saved Now

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone listens to My voice and opens the door, I shall come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.

— Revelation 3:20

For every one who calls on the Lord's name will be saved.

— Romans 10:13

My Decision to Receive Christ As My Saviour

Confessing to God that I am a sinner, and believing that the Lord Jesus Christ died for my sins on the cross and was raised for my justification, I do now receive and confess Him as my personal Saviour.

NAME

DATE

Thank God for a selected number of Gideon recipes republished above, a most convenient guide to the relevant Scriptures. God bless the mighty soul-saving work of the Gideons! Amen.

And apart from Psalm 20 and Psalm 40 earlier suggested for hospital visitation, we append the following selections for use on other occasions:

Psalm 22, 23, 24 are a trilogy - cross, crook, crown.

Psalm 22 is David's foretelling of the Crucifixion, Psalm 23 is the Shepherd Psalm as symbolised by the Crook and Psalm 24 is the Crown Psalm welcoming the King. Psalm 23 is a Psalm for all occasions, whether in times of sadness or joy, for the deathbed, for funeral and for wedding.

Psalm 1 is on the two ways of life, one that leads to heaven, the other to hell.

- Psalm 8 - The wonders of creation
- Psalm 19 - Natural revelation, Supernatural revelation.
- Psalm 32 - Joy of sin forgiven.
- Psalm 34 - Rescue from the "tiger's mouth".
- Psalm 39 - Sickness reminds of vanity of life.
- Psalm 42 - Psalm for the depressed.
- Psalm 43 - Send out the Light and the Truth
- Psalm 46 - Luther's Fortress Psalm
- Psalm 49 - Psalm for the Rich Fool
- Psalm 50 - Examination of the Church Goer
- Psalm 51 - Penitential Psalm
- Psalm 53 - David vs Atheism
- (Psalm 14)
- Psalm 90 - Moses' Psalm of Life
- Psalm 91 - God is our Shield from Danger
- Psalm 92 - Psalm for the Sabbath Day
- Psalm 100 - Call to Worship
- Psalm 101 - Psalm of the Christian Home
- Psalm 103 - Reminder to Thanksgiving
- Psalm 115 - Psalm against Idols
- Psalm 121 - Travellers' Psalm
- Psalm 122 - Exhortation to go to Church
- Psalm 126 - Encouragement to Beginners
- Psalm 127-28 - Psalm for House Blessing
- Psalm 133 - In Praise of Christian Unity
- Psalm 139 - The Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence and Omniperfection of God

Chapter VII

BIBLICAL PRE-MARITAL COUNSELLING *by Elder Khoo Peng Kiat*

Introduction

Counselling by itself and by its very nature is a Christian concept because our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is Counsellor, and so His Word, the Bible, becomes the source of His counsel. It is imperative that in pre-marital counselling, the human counsellor should look to Him and His Word for instruction.

Why the Need for Pre-marital Counselling

God says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6a). We also have the wise words of Solomon on the importance of counselling, “Without counsel purposes are disappointed (or frustrated): but in the multitude of counsellors they are established” (Proverbs 15:22). And yet too often many couples have entered this sacred institution, marriage, without due consideration of its seriousness. For it is “not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God, duly considering the causes for which matrimony was ordained.” This is what we hear declared by the officiating minister whenever we witness a church wedding.

So, don’t rush headlong into marriage. Consult God and pray earnestly before making that serious commitment. How true the saying, “Marry in haste, repent at leisure.”

J Allan Petersen, in his preface to the book *Before You Marry*, writes:

“No sane person would ever leap blindfolded over an unknown cliff with nothing but a hope that it would prove to be a good decision. No wise person would commit himself to life in a strange land without knowing something about what to expect and the difficulties he would inevitably face. No one foolishly commits himself to play a game without knowledge of the rules that determine its success or failure.

Yet millions of young men and women take these same unbelievable risks when it comes to marriage. They feel their marriage will somehow be happier than most marriages they have observed. But they have no valid reason to expect it...”

“It is no surprise then that the highest incidence of divorce is found in the below-25 age group... Wives under 20 are involved in almost half of all divorces recorded yearly.” In America it has been estimated that more than one million marriages end in divorce every year. What a staggering figure! In our tiny island republic one out of ten ends in the divorce courts. But this is not what God intended and ordained it to be. Marriage is a permanent relationship as attested by the words of our Lord Jesus, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:6b, Mark 10:9). It is also intended to be a harmonious partnership: “And they twain shall be one flesh” (Matthew 19:6a, Mark 10:8a). Furthermore, it is for spiritual companionship: “Can two walk together, except they be agreed” (Amos 3:3).

What is Christian Marriage?

It may be defined as the union of one Christian man to one Christian woman for life. But my favourite definition is this one: Christian marriage is “a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death.” In a Christian marriage, “the dependence is mutual, the obligation reciprocal,

and the dependence on God, absolute.” At the heart of marriage is companionship, communion and consummation. God’s blueprint for marriage involves Leaving, Cleaving and Becoming One Flesh. The husband and wife relationship is the closest, the most intimate of all human relationships for it is likened to the relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:22-33).

The Role of the Husband in Marriage

The husband is the head of the wife and the home. This is the constituted order which God Himself ordained. Here headship is not in the sense of being “the boss of the show,” nor does it mean that his is “the master’s voice” in all matters, but in the sense of being a spiritual leader, directly in responsibility to God who is your Head. The husband is to show deference to his wife as the weaker but not an inferior partner. She is her husband’s equal in the grace or gift of life (I Peter 3:7). The husband’s role is to provide and protect the family: to give strength, support, stability and security. Unhappy is the home where authority and control are assumed by the wife because this is against God’s injunction. Many are the blessings when God’s order is obeyed. Billy Sunday once said, “If you want your wife to be an angel, don’t treat her like the devil.”

The Role of the Wife in Marriage

The wife is the heart of the home. She has a high and holy calling and that is one of loving submission to her husband as the Church submits to Christ. The apostle Paul declares, “Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be unto their own husbands in everything” (Ephesians 5:22-24, Colossians 3:18, I Peter 3:1,2).

“Was there ever a time when the true church felt that it did not want to be subject to Christ? Was there ever a time when Christ, the Head of the church, ruled and governed His flock like a ruthless tyrant? Has there ever been a time when you, as a Christian, have felt that Christ dealt with you in a loveless, unjust manner? Has there ever been a

time when in obeying Christ you were made to feel like a dog obeying his master? Of course, the answer is no. The whole relationship is one of limitless love and not of tyranny and domination.”
O W Toelke

In the words of A McClaren, “No wife ever had a satisfactorily wedded life who did not look up to and reverence her husband.” The Word of God says, “...thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Genesis 3:16b). In other words, she is to be helpful and responsive to every reasonable request of her husband.

Six Vital Secrets for a Happy Marriage

1. **Put God first in everything.** The apostle Paul’s counsel is, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (I Corinthians 10:31). See also Matthew 6:33.

2. **Seek reconciliation at once.** Remember love will not prevent misunderstandings or quarrels. Because we are human, seldom is husband or wife completely right or completely wrong. Any misunderstandings or quarrels should be settled immediately, on the same day they occur before going to bed at night. “...let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Ephesians 4:26). Be humble enough to say, “I was wrong” followed closely by “I am sorry.” James says, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another” (James 5:16). A successful marriage requires two sincere forgivers who can accept and forgive as God accepts and forgives us.

3. **Be steadfast in love.** It is said that a successful marriage requires “falling in love many times BUT ALWAYS WITH THE SAME PERSON.” The husband should love his wife with the same selfless and sacrificial love that Christ has so demonstrated on the Cross for His Church. The wife is to respond in the same manner. It is said that marriage is a two-way street of consideration and cooperation. It is founded upon kindness, selfless devotion and consideration. Great happiness is made up of little kindnesses. Lack of consideration and appreciation is a

great divisive factor in marriage. “Nag people and they sag; believe in people and they bloom.” Another good reminder which I find very appropriate is from a poem from Margaret Sangster which runs like this:

*We have careful thought for the stranger,
But oft for our own,
The bitter tone,
Though we love our own the best.*

4. **Preserve the bond of marriage.** Preserve this unity at all costs. It is the gracious design of the Architect of marriage that the married couple remain faithful to each other and to God whatever the circumstances. “And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mark 10:8,9).

5. **Keep private matters private.** The wedded couple should endeavour to keep certain matters to themselves and within the confines of their newly established home, “a sacred citadel of exclusiveness where no prying eyes or gossiping tongues are permitted.” Even the Lord our God keeps His own secrets, but what He has revealed concerns us and our posterity (Deuteronomy 29:29).

6. **Establish a mutual trust in money matters.** Always keep in mind that whatever you possess comes from the loving hand of God. You are merely stewards entrusted with whatever God is pleased to bestow upon you. “But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth” (Deuteronomy 8:18a). O W Toelke has some pertinent points pertaining to the management of family finances:

Most frequently difficulties arise in the family finances when there is too great a disparity in the financial backgrounds of the marriage partners. Two people, even husband and wife, with different sets of financial values, and different attitudes toward money, can very readily disagree on how money is to be used. What one regards as a luxury, the other may consider a necessity.

In order to avoid difficulties in the administration of the family funds, some very basic concepts should be resolved upon at the very beginning of the marriage.

Whether you are going to pool your resources in a joint bank account or keep a separate account, you know best and you need to come to an agreement from the outset. From my own experience, it is good to have a certain amount that one can use freely as one sees fit.

What is Dating?

The concept of dating varies from culture to culture. Dating may be defined as “a special kind of friendship between two people of the opposite sex that may lead to courtship, love and marriage.”

For young people who are still schooling or under training, they do not generally date acquaintances. How then would young people get to know one another? It is through group dating. Group dating is one in which a small group of those closer to you is chosen from among a large group of common friends. Group dating provides you with opportunities to learn about one another through communication both verbal and non-verbal. It is through group dating that you learn to cultivate manners and learn how to give and take, how to conduct yourself in company and to enjoy the company of the opposite sex without being too involved emotionally with one person. Hence group dating offers you opportunities to grow socially in the right way. Many social activities can be arranged such as picnics, fishing, concert going, eating, attending fellowship meetings, etc.

Many a boy-girl relationship instead of being “just be friends” relationship prematurely becomes a single dating relationship, that is, they become lovers before becoming friends. This is infatuation and not true love.

Difference between Infatuation and True Love

Infatuation is likened to a passing cloud, now here, gone later. Many people can be infatuated with more than one person at the same time: And it is characteristic of teenagers. It is based mainly on physical appearance. It is like the “real thing” to you when you are in it. However, when an infatuated person discovers more of the other party, the feelings often disappear as fast as they appeared. Many are turned off and scared away when the other party responds. It is love of emotion. It is “being carried away by unreasoning passion or attraction” (Webster). Love, on the other hand, is different. When a person is in love, he learns to accept and love the other person more as time goes by. Love lasts and progresses gradually and deeply; and there is understanding and acceptance.

Time brings two people in love closer together, rather than separates them as in the case of infatuation: out of sight, out of mind. A person in love is not bound by chains of anxiety or jealousy. The other party is free to be herself or himself. This does not happen to an infatuated person. True love is giving, not taking. Infatuation is a selfish and possessive emotion. This love of emotion can cause you to be infatuated with someone, for example, a Hollywood film star you don’t even know, and have never met. Genuine love is “a growing experience, based on mutually shared interests, beliefs, attitudes and goals.”

When are you Old Enough to Date and How?

This varies from individual to individual. Some manifest maturity and responsibility earlier than others of the same age. Readiness for dating therefore does not depend solely on chronological age but rather on one’s values, one’s maturity, and one’s understanding of the main purpose of dating which is to develop close friendship. It is not to practise your sex technique and petting skills. Keep yourself pure by taking heed to God’s Word:

1. **Be sure to walk in God's appointed way.** "My son, forget not my law: but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man" (Proverbs 3:1-4).

2. **Trust in the Lord, acknowledge Him in all your ways.** "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil" (Proverbs 3:5-7).

3. **Listen to parental instruction for your own good.** "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother. For they shall be ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck" (Proverbs 1:8-9). Because of their experience, wisdom and knowledge, God can use parents to guide their children in their dating relationships. Parents, it must be realised, do have the benefit of objectivity.

4. **Honour and obey your parents.** "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord" (Colossians 3:20).

5. **Exercise self-control.** There is a time for everything. To be self-controlled is to do everything in its proper time. These are words of wisdom from king Solomon (Ecclesiastes 3:1-4). Self-control is one of the virtues of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Paul's advice to young Timothy was to "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace..." (II Timothy 2:22).

6. **Don't be yoked with an unbeliever.** "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them;

and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (II Corinthians 6:14-16).

How to Stay out of Trouble

Ninety per cent of your temptations on a date will be overcome if you remember and practise two simple guidelines:

GUYS

- a. You will have problems being excited by a **look**, since most of your prime temptation will come visually; so **guard your eyes**. Keep a “Job’s covenant,” and you will keep the doorway to your mind and emotions.
- b. You will give a girl a problem by **touch**, so **keep your hands to yourself!** If you take care of your eyes and hands, you will not be burned on a date.

GIRLS

- a. You are going to give a guy problems by the way you **dress**, so watch it! Don’t dress to stir lust in your boyfriend; dress as if you were going to be ushered into Heaven right on your date, and Jesus will not be ashamed of you. Help keep him from temptation by the right clothes (I Timothy 2:9-10).
- b. Keep a “hands off” attitude with your date. It may be hard to say “No” but you must. No heavy necking or petting can develop this way. If your boyfriend doesn’t understand because he doesn’t want to understand, repeat it a couple of times, then use this “emergency” prayer:

Extend your free hand from your shoulder, pull it back behind you, then offer up a quick petition thusly: “Lord, give me strength for this task!” Then *slap him hard!* If he doesn’t think your action was very scriptural, show him Ecclesiastes 9:10 - “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.”

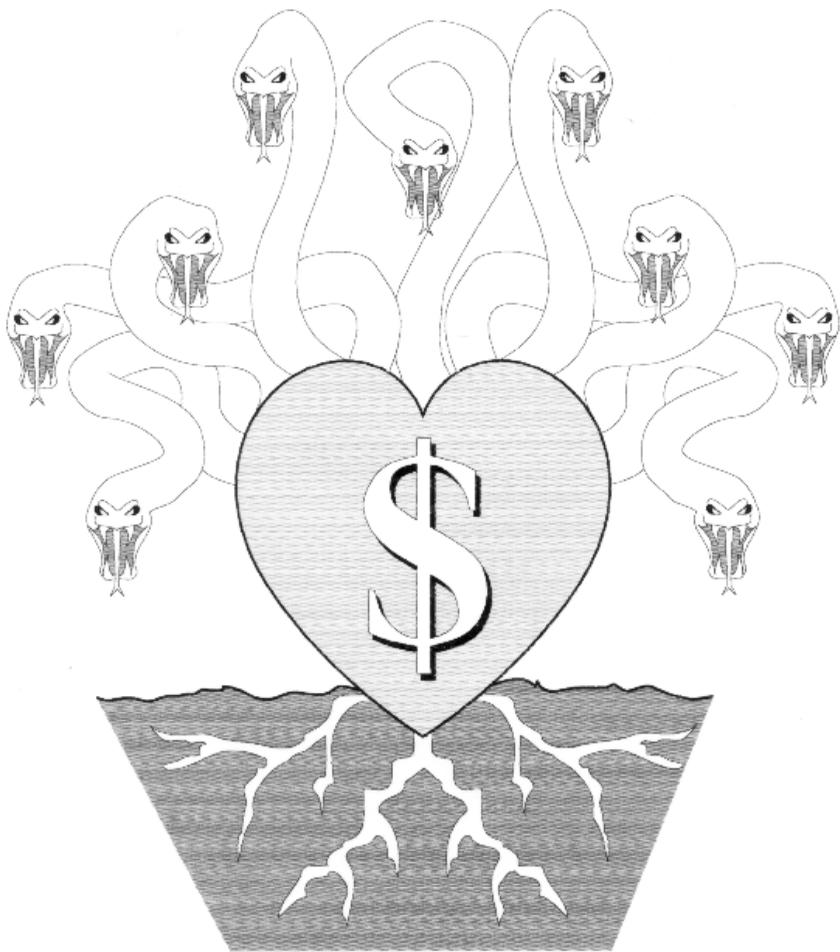
Chapter VIII

THE CHRISTIAN USE OF MONEY

Ofentimes Paul's injunction to Timothy in I Timothy 6:10 is misquoted — "Money is the root of all evil." This misquotation is tainted with the erroneous notion that a Christian should not be involved with money, or that a Christian should not become rich. The reverse is the truth. A Christian who works hard and runs his business efficiently is well compensated. "The labourer is worthy of his reward" (I Timothy 5:18). "For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance..." (Matthew 25:29). This last quotation is the reward our Lord gives to the five and two-talent man, who **traded** wisely the money their Lord had entrusted them.

Thus, upon his faithful servant Abraham God blessed with much wealth. "And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Genesis 13:2). Even Lot the nephew was blessed under his uncle's umbrella. "And Lot also which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds and tents" (Genesis 13:5). What is wrong with money is not money, but the person who **loves** the money, to whom a dollar, as we used to say in colonial days, is "like a bullock cart wheel"!

Not only must a Christian work hard to get wealth, he must realise he needs God's help in the process. "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day" (Deuteronomy 8:18). Never say, like the arrogant and ungrateful man, "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:17). I remember the son of a certain Chinese pastor who joked, "Before



“For the love of money
is the root of all evil...”

(1 Timothy 6:10)

I eat I should rather give thanks to my right hand that earns the money to buy me food.” He did not say this for long when he had to go to hospital for operation on his appendix. Let us, when we become prosperous, walk ever humbly before God. Let us remember to thank Him for helping us to get wealth. For, if He is displeased with us and withdraws His mercies, we may be disabled by contracting a serious sickness or be hurt in an accident. Let us rather say with David, “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits” (Psalm 103:1,2).

What are the benefits for which we are to give thanks? Not only the material but rather for the spiritual. They are: 1. The forgiveness of sins. 2. The healing of all our sicknesses. 3. Deliverance from destruction (accident and death). 4. His lovingkindness and tender mercies. 5. Good appetite and youthful energy. 6. Withholding His anger and not punishing us according to our sins. 7. Fatherly pity and keeping His Covenant with those who fear Him (Psalm 103:3-18).

Let us realise that our life and property are gifts from God. We are not absolute owners of our wealth. We are trustees or stewards. We cannot spend on what we like. Every item of expenditure must be prayerfully considered. We can spend only what pleases Him and never to satisfy our selfish pleasures. When we do this with Him in view, He will entrust us with more wealth as He would reward His faithful servants.

Now, to set a standard of giving to Him who owns us, God instructs Moses to require of Israel, that sacred tenth: “And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s: it is holy unto the Lord” (Leviticus 27:30). When Israel very conveniently skipped paying the tithe in the days of Malachi, the prophet chided them in no uncertain terms:

“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now

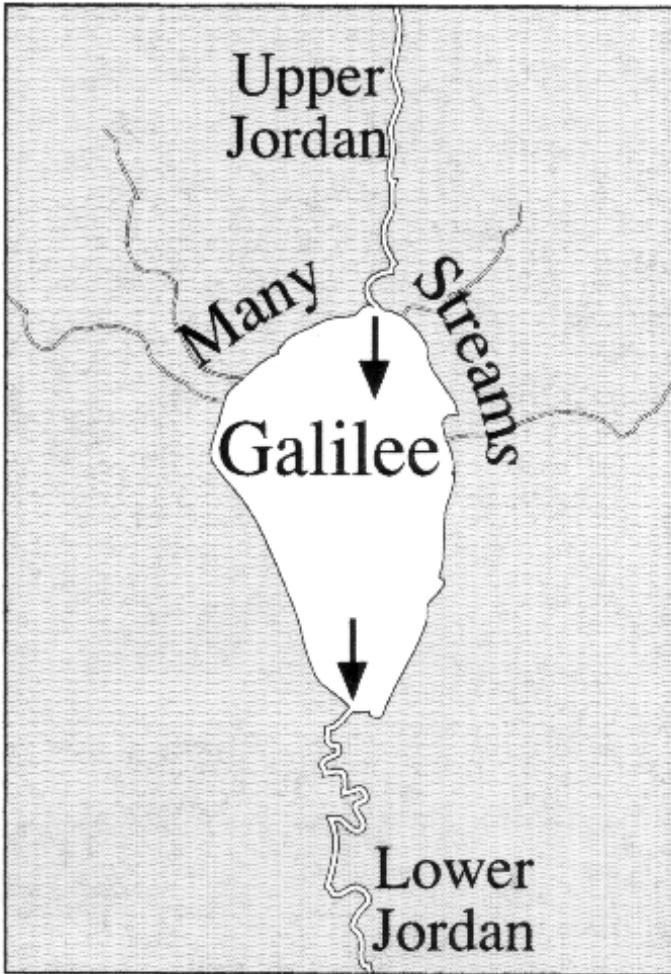
herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Malachi 3:8-12)

This message is addressed both to the individual as well as to church and nation. Individually speaking, we have Abraham who set the Israelites the example. The tithe was given by him spontaneously, from a grateful heart, not because a law had been laid down on him. So did Jacob his grandson. Let us as individual members of the Church render our tithes to God as spontaneously and cheerfully as patriotic citizens willingly pay their income tax. Those who give thus are blessed beyond measure as promised, receiving back from God like pouring rain. Moreover God will keep our produce from being devoured by pests.

Individual worshippers at Life Church are not slow to give their tithes (though there could be many more). A unique phenomenon are the weekly thanksgivings attached to envelopes put into the offering bags. A sampling of these are given in an earlier chapter of this book under *Rediscovering the Power of Prayer*. God receives not only the tithes but also “the sacrifice of praise ... that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks in his name” (Hebrews 13:15). The tithe is not given grudgingly, but hilariously. Why? Every tither can tell you that he becomes richer and not poorer. Every tither is blessed of God (II Corinthians 9:7).

Tithing, according to the Dispensational theologian is a legalistic ordinance done away in the New Testament. Is it so? Let them read Luke 11:42 and Matthew 23:23. Here our Lord chides the scribes and Pharisees for their legal punctiliousness on the tithe, but overlook weightier matters such as judgment, mercy and faith. Nevertheless He upholds the tithe in the sense that the cart should stay in the position of the cart and not before

GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER



“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you;
that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things,
may abound to every good work.”

(2 Corinthians 9:8)

the horse. St Paul never writes against the tithe. Undoubtedly, he supports it, but stresses that any form of giving to God must be rendered with a cheerful heart. And when it is given as in humble worship, God will cause every grace to abound toward us, that we, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work (II Corinthians 9:7-8). Let us see this picture of blessing as mirrored on the Sea of Galilee. This Sea of Bountiful Life and Produce is fed by the snow waters coming down Hermon's heights. Now the water comes not only through the Upper Jordan River which we crossed by a bridge, but also from numerous streams funnelling into Galilee through tunnels and culverts. When we give to God upwards He returns to us from every side like the many streams swarming into the Lake.

Speaking on the Church level, let the pastor-in-charge teach members to give his or her tithe. But let him set the example first, or else he would be a liar! Never use the human wisdom of the Liberals and Modernists, and of the ritualistic Roman and Greek Churches to increase the Church's finance by holding concerts, food and funfairs, garage sales, charity balls, walkathons, and what not. The returns from such efforts are meagre to say the least. Some like to fish with hook and line, but the Lord gave to Peter two shiploads.

Another thing I would like to stress about a Church's finance is that, as my Grandpa had taught us from a young age, "Never borrow, never pay interest." When a Church meets with an overwhelming need, such as buying a property involving millions, the normal path of action is to take a bank loan. To me this is blood sucking when every monthly instalment of repayment is due. And this can go on 15-20 years.

We met with such a situation in the proposed acquisition of the former Eye Clinic (Hospital) at 10 Gilstead Road. To take a bank loan was the bridge across "flooded" Gilstead Road. By God's grace, we rallied to His Cause. We do not have to pay six or seven percent interest on that proposed one million. We did it by hilarious giving and by taking interest free loans from members and friends. This amounted to \$3.1 million, but this colossal sum

is now reduced to a fraction. By saving on the interest payable monthly we are enabled to support missions abroad without difficulty. If the Reader would like to know how Life Church was enabled to gather \$7.2 million in six-and-a-half months you can read the story published in a blue book titled *Chronicles of Conquest*, obtainable from Life Book Centre.

Many churches are not outward looking enough. Like the Chinese who say, "Let not fertile waters flow into other fields," they would like to see their income stored as into the Dead Sea. It flows in but never flows out! While God's money must be spent with meticulous care, to hoard it so that God's work is stifled is not only counter productive but against His will.

I have observed that many small struggling beginnings of Church work would have surged forward if Big Brother Churches would give a helping hand. For this reason we have declared our Easter offerings "accelerated missions giving" and Singapore's National Day our International Missions Day. So, the National Sunday offerings are also channelled to Missions. From time immemorial our Christmas Eve offerings are all given to worthy needy members, missionaries and missions. This has given to those languishing in the shadows a big boost. "For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God" (II Corinthians 9:12).

In Singapore, for many years, the Government has legislated the CPF savings of its citizens. Of late the economists have felt such savings should be released for more profitable investment, such as the buying of reliable shares. To Lifers, I would suggest putting their savings into the Church Treasury in interest free loans. This is sure profit because it is God's business. Especially when the Church is in need of funds. Here's a blessing from King Solomon, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again" (Proverbs 19:17). I remember there was an elder during the campaign to build Life Church and FEBC at Gilstead Road, how he sold his car (he had no other asset) to help the Building Fund. He gave

half of the proceeds, and loaned the other half. Two months after this, he got a double promotion in his Government Service. He was so glad he immediately converted the loan into a gift. Such a testimony is not an isolated case, but one of many. Are B-Ps behind Charismatics in giving, who are known for giving gold and houses? To God's glory we have a sister who has given three houses to the Lord.

Another way of making good profit for the Lord's work is to offer to the building of Churches and Bible Colleges in other countries, such as in the Philippines and Burma, yea, even in Africa. Let me cite two cases.

First, is the five-acre Hilltop at Antipolo, Manila where six "longhouses" double-storeyed, including one three-storeyed, are built. And the price of the land, less than US\$1 per sq. foot! As labour is cheap in the Philippines the cost of building is easily less than one third of what Singapore has to pay.

Second, the land we've bought in Rangoon for the Far Eastern Fundamental School of Theology (Robert Thawm Luai). We paid S\$100,000 for a first piece of land with a bungalow. Soon after this, when an adjacent piece of land was offered for sale, our brother Robert Thawm Luai seized the golden opportunity to acquire it and that for a song. Adjacent land in the realtor's language is "wife" land, has marriage value. The Chinese has a saying, "A thousand gold can hardly buy a neighbour's field." Now this piece of added land makes it possible for our Burmese brethren to erect a four-storey Bible College, the same area as Life Church auditorium minus the six-pillar porch. And the cost? Only S\$330,000. To build that in Singapore would cost \$2 million. See how far your *Sing* dollar goes! Give to missions and make your dollar work six times more for you. This profitable investment for the Lord will surely earn from His lips, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of the Lord" (Matthew 25:21).

What will happen to all your assets, money and property, when you leave this earth? This is addressed to members

financially blessed of the Lord. Many will give them to their children. If they are God-fearing, well and good. If not, why don't they give it to the Church or Bible College that is faithfully proclaiming the Gospel! To you our Lord would say as He does to the "unjust steward": "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." To understand this cryptic saying we must know the background of the unjust steward's dealings. It is this. This steward of a rich towkay was about to be sacked for mismanagement of his master's business. While he was still in office he took the opportunity of making friends with his towkay's debtors by writing off certain percentages of their debts. To one he slashed 50% and to another 20%. So, when he got sacked, these debtors whom he had helped would help him in return. The money a rich man has is called "the mammon of unrighteousness" because in money matters one's palm is liable to be soiled. It is unrighteous because, perhaps, we have withheld giving our tithe, or not helped the needy when it is in the power of our hand to do it (Proverbs 3:27). Now, to return the whole sum to God at the end of one's earthly life is it not a wise move? After all, we are giving up in a happy way what we cannot take out of this world. Christian, remember God in your will!

Mr Rajaratnam our ex-Foreign Minister once lamented in an article in the Straits Times how modern economists today repudiate those of his day. He was taught to save. Today we are taught to spend; to borrow and to owe. As Singaporeans live above their means, they have to forfeit the fruits they would gather in future. As long as one is in debt one is choked as in a quagmire.

Solomon says, "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender" (Proverbs 22:7). The debtor is slave to the creditor.

The way to economic freedom is to heed the old yet ever new injunction by the Lord, "Owe no man anything" (Romans 13:8). This is possible when we hold to the Pauline philosophy of life. We must be content with what God has given us, live within our

means, happy with what is essential — three meals a day, enough of clothing to keep us warm and a roof over our head. But we must be diligent under any circumstances. Paul testifies how by labouring with his two hands he earns extra so as to be able to help the weak. By good hard work and economic arrangement he becomes prosperous so that he can experience what Jesus has said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

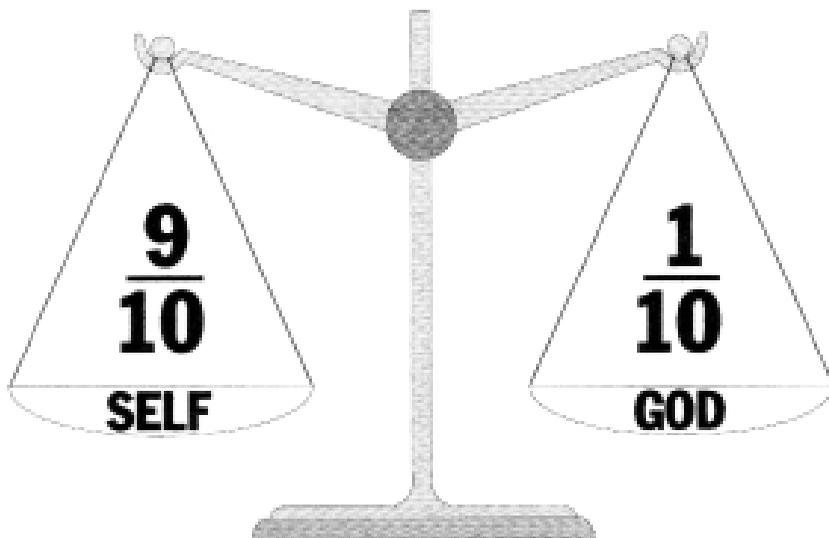
By this principle have arisen the truly rich. The story is told of Colgate how he started out with a few dollars in a small business. When he made a few dollars he was careful to give back one tenth to God. As he honoured God, God honoured him. His income grew steadily so that from tens, he increased to hundreds, from hundreds to thousands. He gave not only one tenth back to God, but two and three. The more he returned to God the more God poured His blessings upon him. Conversely, there are Christian businessmen who follow the world, borrowing and owing at the expense of others, who never honour God with their substance. So they are forever in debt which, if not like sinking in a quagmire, is like one with a millstone hung around his neck.

When we give to God, God will give back to us. We will not only be prospered vertically but also horizontally. Jesus says, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall **men** give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 8:38).

This reciprocity from men is due to our dealing with others generously, not only in money matters but in other areas of human relationship, which our Lord prescribes earlier in His sermon, “Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also... Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil... forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”

The transcending philosophy of the Christian use of money is not only not to owe but to lend without demanding it back, yea, to give and in its final projection, to forgive. This is the way to prosperity with happiness. Amen.

DIVINE MATHEMATICS



$$\text{Minus Becomes Plus} = \frac{11}{10}$$

Chapter IX

DEMONS, OBSESSION, MENTAL DERANGEMENTS AND *KONG TAU* (CHARMS)

1. Introduction

In the story of the powerless disciples failing to cast out a demon that possessed a boy while our Lord, Peter, James and John were up the Mount of Transfiguration, various terms are used by the Evangelists to describe the case. In Matthew the young patient is called a “lunatick,” a “devil” (Matthew 17:15,18). In Mark he is described as having a “dumb spirit,” the “foul spirit,” “dumb and deaf spirit” (Mark 9:17,25). In Luke, the child is said to have had “an unclean spirit” (Luke 9:42).

In these Synoptic accounts, we can see how the poor boy was variously affected — from lunacy, that is, a derangement of the mind, to his spirit or soul being possessed by the devil or demon. This devil or demon is further classified as “foul,” “dumb and deaf.” There is a borderline connection between lunacy or madness and demon possession. But we must distinguish clearly between those who are mentally deranged and those who are possessed. Lunacy is the beginning stage, and demon possession the final.

The reader will have noticed that I mentioned in the title “obsession” and not “possession”. The reason is I have not met with such a violent case as had gripped this boy who hurt himself in fire and water, nor have those who practise exorcism in Singapore today, I believe, dealt with a proven demon-possession case. If they have, they are very few!

When I was in Nanking under Dr Chia Yu Ming, 1946, there was the case of a young girl who was gripped by a brutal spirit. This gave her strength to smash up whatever things stood in her way. Several men barely overpowered her, who locked her up in a storeroom. Dr Chia, my teacher, was called. We students were summoned to pray together for her release. We prayed earnestly and sang Gospel choruses. Her raging inside the storeroom slowly subsided. But what finally became of her, I cannot recollect, for we were busy with our studies.

For those who are interested in studying demonology, there is a reprinted classic of 367 pages, *Demon Possession* by John L. Nevius with Foreword by Merrill F. Unger. Dr Unger says of this book:

In 1945 and 1946 when I was doing special research for *Biblical Demonology* (Scripture Press Foundation, Wheaton, Illinois, 6th edition, 1965), John L. Nevius' classic on *Demon Possession* was of immense help. One cannot peruse Dr. Nevius' account of his experiences with demonism as a Christian missionary in China, without being struck by the fact that it reads like a page from the Gospels where demon possession and expulsion play so large a part in the earthly ministry of our Lord.

Today people in general, even Christians who profess to believe the Bible, dismiss the demonism of the Gospels and of the Scriptures as a whole, as an adaptation to the folklore and superstition of a bygone day, now no longer credible in a scientifically enlightened age.

Dr Nevius' firsthand contact with the rampant evil spiritual forces behind an ancient pagan culture not only proves that the demonism of the Bible is not an adaptation to popular superstitions of the day, but is a spiritual reality of far-reaching import in our modern world.

In an age of spiritual anarchy, shocking immorality, and general world unrest, scientific advance and intellectual sophistication cannot gloss over the evil supernaturalism at work in our society. The deeper explanation of our trouble

lies in the Scriptural revelation of sin and the concomitant truth concerning Satan and demons.

A work like Dr Nevius' *Demon Possession* is ever fresh because it deals with a truth just as valid in our day as it was in the author's day. The publisher is to be congratulated in reprinting this volume. It has a message of vital importance to our distraught times in pointing us to the basic spiritual nature of the conflict pressing in upon us and in guiding us in the way of victory and deliverance from our foes.

2. Dealing with Demons Today

As fundamentalists who believe in the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture, we have no doubt about the reality of demon cases and the casting out of demons by our Lord. We rejoice in the power of the apostles to whom were given authority over the unclean spirits, yea, even to the Seventy (Luke 10:1), "to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

In the light of the Scripture, there are the charismatics who claim to have apostolic power to cast out demons. Hence there has arisen a ministry of exorcism amongst them, and even with a B-P minister (though only for a season). Such an exorcism ministry, like opening a medical clinic by a quack doctor, is bound to fail. The failure of the exorcism ministry is understandable when it is realised that the power to cast out devils is given primarily to the apostles (Acts 5:12) for the confirmation of their preaching ministry (Mark 16:20). Moreover as the early Church grew and became established, there were no more demon cases dealt with by the apostles that were recorded after Acts 19, nor are there any injunctions or prescriptions on demon-possession in all the Epistles.

What shall we do today, if we should meet with demon cases? Of course we can pray for deliverance. Dr John Sung dealt with demon cases, and had cast out some inasmuch as God had given him grace to heal the sick. It was a special

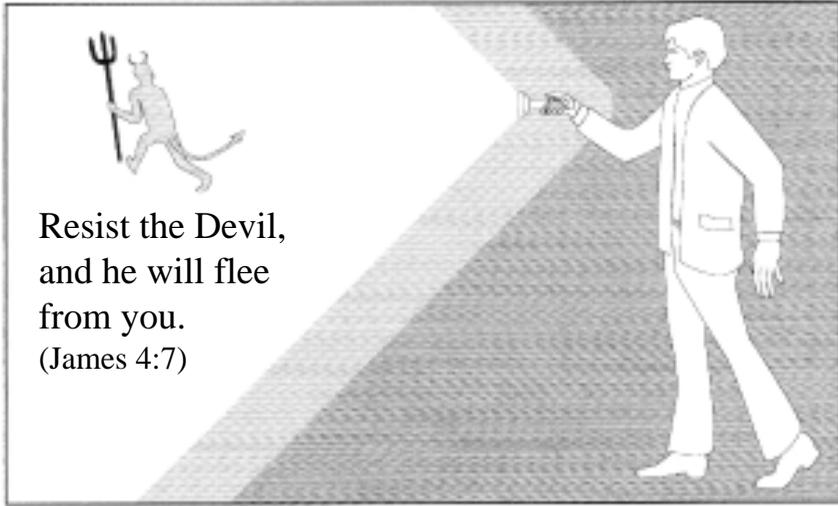
dispensation of mass soul-saving graciously bestowed on China and Southeast Asia in the thirties. (In John Sung's words several hundred thousand souls were saved under his hand. The Protestant population in 1949 when the Communists took over China was only one million: Leslie Lyall).

In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can rebuke the demon to depart, and when he gets out, all glory be to the Son of God. But, if God does not grant deliverance by our prayers, let us submit to His will. Let us acknowledge God has now given, by His common grace, the ministry of improved hospitals and mental institutions. Let the suffering patient be admitted to one of these institutions until such time as the doctor can let him out. Let us recognize also that modern medicine and surgery are a gift from God. It is vain for someone suffering from a tumour to persist in prayer against the plain open way of good treatment from the surgeon's scalpel. For, after the John Sung Revival in Singapore, there were those who would refuse taking two tablets of Panadol when afflicted with a headache. To take any drug, according to their thinking, would be a lack of faith tantamount to sin! I'd rather take the medicine with a prayer for recovery and thanksgiving to God and the doctor in advance.

3. Resist the Devil and he will flee from You

Talking about demon-possession, or rather obsession, insofar as the patient is concerned, he must be encouraged to put up a fight against the evil power. The Apostle Peter gives us this recipe, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (I Peter 5:8,9). This is more succinctly put by the Apostle James, "**Resist** the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

A believer, a born-again Christian, who has the Holy Spirit indwelling him, cannot be possessed! John says in his First Epistle, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them (the false spirits): because greater is he that is in you, than he



Resist the Devil,
and he will flee
from you.
(James 4:7)

that is in the world” (I John 4:1-4). Nevertheless, every Christian is not free from temptation by the Evil One. Even our Lord had to undergo temptation by the Devil after He had fasted forty days and forty nights in the Judean desert (Matthew 4:1-11).

What shall we do then? As we have just stated, the recipe is given most succinctly to us by James, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). This must be acted upon with full confidence! Jesus sets us the example by repulsing Satan with three sword thrusts. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy thrice, inasmuch as the Word of God is called the “sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17). The more Bible we know, the more dexterous we are in crossing swords with the Devil. Let us encourage one another constantly to read the Bible, and memorize it too. Dr John Sung testified often in his preaching how he kept up a schedule of reading eleven chapters of the Bible everyday and thirteen on the Lord’s Day. No wonder there was such abundant power in his sermons.

What about beginning believers who are emerging from a background of superstition and idol worship? These need the counsel of the Lord to come out from among them and be

separate (II Cor 6:14-18). They need encouragement, help that older Christians can give.

4. The Example of Gideon

There's a good example we can take from the story of Gideon. After Gideon had received God's call in a time of darkest apostasy to save Israel from the hand of Midian, he was further instructed to throw down the altar of Baal and build an altar to Jehovah.

Now read the Bible record:

Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night. And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar. (Judges 6:27-32).

Was there any who stood up to challenge Gideon the Iconoclast? None. The fact that Baal, the god of the Canaanite tribes, who became a god of Israel had no power to speak for himself, shows how we must continue steadfast to resist Satan, for he is a defeated foe. Be not afraid of him! And we must eradicate all forms of idolatry, like Gideon smashing down the

image of Baal and chopping the grove beside it, inasmuch as all idolatry is worship of the devil (I Corinthians 10:20).

5. Example from Nevius' Book

In John L Nevius' book, *Demon Possession*, he tells the story of a young man by the name of Kwo "who was suffering all sorts of afflictions from an evil spirit." When Nevius' Chinese assistant preached Christ the only Saviour and Great Physician to Kwo, telling him of the *wonderful* miracles He did in casting out demons and healing the sick, Kwo readily believed. Whereupon he was exhorted to tear down a shrine he had erected in his house for the demon he had worshipped. Nevius' Chinese assistant prayed for Kwo that he might be protected from the Evil one. He was further instructed in the faith and given a few Christian books to read. He soon joined a Church.

After Kwo had torn down the shrine he had erected for the demon he worshipped, this is what happened according to his statement, "The death of our child occurred a few days after we had torn down the spirit's shrine. My wife was much distressed, believing it was in consequence of my having offended the demon. She urged me to restore the shrine and resume the worship. I told her that whatever might happen I would not break my vow to worship and trust in Jesus. A few days after that the demon returned and, speaking through me, of course, a conversation ensued between it and my wife, which was as follows: 'We understood that you were not to return. How is it that you have come back again?' The demon replied: 'I have returned but for one visit. If your husband is determined to be a Christian this is no place for me. But I wish to tell you I had nothing to do with the death of your child.' 'What do you know of Jesus Christ?' they asked. The answer was: 'Jesus Christ is the great Lord over all; and now I am going away and you will not see me again.' This, said Mr Kwo, was actually the last visit; and we have not been troubled since."

The description above of Kwo's tenacity in holding firmly to Jesus and resisting the Devil to the end is truly in line with Peter's

injunction, given in more detail than James, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

6. Testimony from Two Pastors

Now, here is a modern parallel. We, that is Rev Djunaidi of West Kalimantan, my fellow-helper in the Gospel for the last two decades and I were involved with the conversion of a Lifer’s wife, a staunch devotee of Kuan Yin the Chinese Goddess of Mercy imported from India. We preached to the wife on several occasions the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ, but she countered with Kuan Yin having sacrificed herself by cutting off her arm and gouging out her eyes to be made into medicine for the healing of others.

With the concurrence of her husband, we had her goddess, i.e. Kuan Yin removed and had the idol and all its paraphernalia totally burned in their garden. There were protests naturally, but this drastic action on the pastors’ part severed her completely with her superstitious past. Now, she was obliged to call on the name of the Lord Jesus. While she did not know that Kuan Yin was a fictitious goddess, she at least acknowledged, as all Chinese mediums do, that Jesus is the Supreme God of gods. “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Today this lady comes to Church regularly with her husband to call on the name of the Lord. Sometimes she comes with her husband to prayer meeting. The best assurance I have of her salvation is her coming to me after Church service one day, “Please pray to the Lord Jesus to protect my daughter, as she is going to London to take higher studies in medicine.” “Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (I Corinthians 12:3).

Looking back on the abovementioned case, we thank the Lord that both Rev Djunaidi and I had the courage to burn the

lady's Kuan Yin idol. By thus resisting the Devil behind the Kuan Yin worship, he has fled from us, not the least from the said Lifer's family. Hallelujah, Amen!

7. Victory over the Devil by destroying His Stooges

Throughout these 44 years, one particular ministry of my pastoral charge is to remove and destroy idols. Sometimes it may be a solitary one but in many cases housefuls of them. In several cases we had to use the Church van to carry them away, the pastor's car being too small. Removing idols occurs at a frequency of three to four times a year. Over one hundred therefore have been consigned to the incinerator during these years.

Let me conclude this section on resisting the devil by burning his stooges, idols of all kinds, with this astounding account of how a towkay (a proprietor of some standing) is delivered from the medium of a Chinese temple in Pasir Panjang. This account is published in the Life Church Weekly Volume XXVII dated 3 November 1991 under the caption, "Delivered out of the Mouth of the Chinese Dragon".

It was a Sat. morning, a week ago; there came a phone call from Conrad See, an FEBC student: "Pastor, can you help my father? He has an urgent request. Shall we come and see you Sunday afternoon?"

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"My father is greatly worried. The temple medium with whom he is involved pronounces he would die by a certain day!"

"Then bring him here at once!"

At 3.45 pm, after I had spoken at the Inauguration of the Chinese YF, I found both father and son sitting in the Palm garden waiting. I brought them upstairs to my flat.

Mr See Pee Guan, 57, sat a frightened, perspiring man. A Baba in upbringing he is more conversant in Malay and

English than in Chinese. He spoke a mixture of English and Hokkien. "For the last four years I have been involved with a Chinese temple. As a devotee I have to attend temple ceremonies every Mon., Wed. and Fri. night. Lately I was promoted to do higher service, burning joss sticks and joss papers, and going through complicated motions. As I have made mistakes I was chided on occasions. Last night, I was punished to kneel two hours on conch shells. The young medium pressed me down several times to increase the pain to my bruised knees. My friends chided me, a well-to-do towkay, for being bullied by good-for-nothing upstarts. My wife, who has lately believed in Jesus nursed me, but I bluffed her I had fallen down.

"To add insult to injury the young medium said to me, 'You are 57. But you will die before you're 59.' (I've been relieved of \$100,000 during the years.)"

At that, I turned to Eccles 8:8, "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death..." Verse 7 says, "for he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?" (NIV says: "Since no man knows the future, who can tell him what is to come?") Incidentally these verses were quoted by an old FEBC student who was also pronounced by a medium to die before a certain date. This fear drove him to Christ. He had a shrine-room filled with idols costing \$10,000 but he had them all smashed and burnt up.

I told this story to Mr See. In Jesus' Name I guaranteed him safe from the medium's curse. In Jesus' name I exhorted him to give up his idol worship. Then I offered to visit his office to survey the situation, to which Mr See consented. Together with Conrad his son we drove off in his brand new Mitsubishi sedan.

We climbed up three storeys to a stuffy office room dominated by a wall to wall idol shrine almost ceiling high. The icon of Kuan Yin goddess of mercy presides over 8 Chinese gods and a sea goddess, Mah Cho (Great Grandmother). The other gods, such as god of war Kuan Kong, the monkey god, the god of heaven, etc, red-faced, black-faced, brown-faced, sat on two tiers covered with

crimson velvet in order of rank. Incense was burning simultaneously from 6 or 7 positions. Bananas, oranges, apples and Chinese shortbread were placed before these idols. Then there was a brown Buddha with bulging belly, 2 1/2 ft tall standing guard by the door. There were numerous smaller gods occupying two lower shrines, cartons of joss papers, etc, etc. Half of the office was taken up with all these evil objects. It took us three men 1 1/2 hours to dismantle and pack them into 16 sacks. The last deed we performed was to hang a JESUS SAVES clock on the wall.

This infernal cargo was packed into the sedan car, and consigned to the rubbish trolley in our Church compound. But that was not all. Mr See would have to hire a lorry to transport that rosewood shrine with the huge Kuan Yin icon. All these must be brought to Church to be chopped up for the rubbish heap.

On the way back to Church, Mr See asked to be baptised. Early Sunday afternoon before 4 pm, he and his wife, with two sons, were all seated in the Indonesian Service waiting for me. We arrived on the scene 5 mins. before time. I preached from Luke 15:8-10 on the lost coin and the joy in heaven over one sinner that repented. Mr See gave a short testimony in Malay, whereupon he knelt down before the Lord - to be baptised. Hallelujah!

Never had the struggling Indonesian Service an attendance of 32 as on this Lord's Day. The worship service ended with a high note of praise, and with a get together. As we sat over the refreshments a smiling Mrs See chuckled, "Now my husband, who has not eaten beef the last thirty years as a devotee, can eat *satay lembu!* (barbecued beef)..."

Ed. note: Beef is tabooed. The medium cannot work if you eat beef!

Both Peter and James exhort us to resist the devil and he will flee from us. As in the cutting down of Baal by Gideon and there was no one to take up Baal's cause, so there was no one from the Chinese Temple where Mr See had served as a devotee to



Spitting on the ghosts

challenge him. The humorous sequel to this episode was that the medium said “Sorry” sheepishly to Mr See when they met each other on the street. “Resist the devil and he will flee from you!”

A Chinese Ghost Story (from Straits Times)

Friendly and jovial Mr Chen Zaiheng was a fellow clansman who was over sixty years old.

One night, while walking along a road in the wilderness, he saw two people carrying a lantern walking in front of him. He walked up to them, hoping to light his pipe, but no matter how hard he tried, the pipe could not be lit.

One of them asked him: “Have you passed the first ‘seven days’?”

Mr Chen felt the question very strange and casually replied: “No.”

That person exclaimed: "That's right! Your life spirit has not completely vanished and hence cannot light this ghost fire."

Only then did Mr Chen realise the pair were ghosts and deliberately asked: "Everyone on earth said people are afraid of ghosts, is this true?"

One of the ghosts replied: "It is not true. Ghosts are afraid of people."

Mr Chen then asked: "What's there to be afraid of?"

"That they will spit on us," came the reply.

Mr Chen took a deep breath and spat at the ghosts, who retreated three steps, opened wide their eyes and said angrily: "Aren't you a ghost too?"

Mr Chen laughed and said: "In fact, I'm a human being who is quite near to becoming a ghost!"

He spat at the ghosts again, and the ghosts' bodies were reduced by half. When he spat the third time, they vanished.

The Bible says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). And have you observed all the darkness in a room flees at one flash from your torchlight?

8. Be Faithful Unto Death under the Devil's Persecution

Now, while it is true that the devil will flee from us when we stand firm against him, it is also true, he may inflict injury on us by the permissive will of God. The well-known case of Job illustrates this point. And we should be prepared for this.

By the will of God, the Church in Smyrna, of the seven churches in Asia, is the one to undergo terrible persecution. Smyrna represents the Church under Roman persecution the first three hundred years of Church history, and indeed all other churches under persecution, even the Chinese Church under Mao Zedong. Thus in peaceful Singapore also, for who knows

what will come to pass as the world becomes more and more hostile to the true Church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, let us hear the Word of the Saviour addressed to Smyrna, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

"Faithful unto death" is the watchword of every Church under persecution. This in fact is required of us from the very beginning. Did not Jesus demand of His disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up the cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matthew 16:24,25). In the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord said the same as He said to Smyrna, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

The apostles, the specially chosen twelve (not Judas Iscariot but Paul his substitute) all died a martyr's death according to tradition. In the New Testament account we are sure of the deaths for Jesus' sake of James, Paul and Peter.

The Son of God goes forth to war
A kingly crown to gain
His blood-red banner streams afar
Who follows in His train?
Who best can drink his cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain
Who patient bears his cross below
He follows in His train.

The martyr first whose eagle eye
Could pierce beyond the grave
Who saw his Master in the sky
And called on Him to save
Like Him, with pardon on his tongue
In midst of mortal pain

He prayed for them that did the wrong
Who follows in His train.

First in sub-apostolic church history to answer the Lord's call to faithfulness unto death was Polycarp, disciple of the Apostle John. He was the chief presbyter of the Church at Smyrna. A plain stone monument still marks his grave. He died a martyr in AD 155 at the age of 86 years. When asked to recant from his steadfast faith by denouncing Christ, he replied that he had served his Saviour for 86 years and he had experienced nothing but love and mercy at the hand of His Master, so why should he recant?

As Singapore Christians with our roots in China let us take courage from the noble examples set by 185 China missionaries who were beheaded by the Manchus for their faith in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. An eminent Chinese pastor and evangelist was Ting Li Mei who received 200 strokes from the Manchu Governor of Shantung. God having spared his life, he became a flaming torch to light up the first Revival in China in the second decade of this century. The latest is Wang Ming Tao, sentenced for life by the Mao regime, though he left prison after 23 years for his faith. He has been called "China's Living Martyr."

9. Key to Victory over the Devil's Persecution

As our Lord conquered Satan and the power of death by dying on the cross for our sins, so we will win if we lay down our lives for the brethren (I John 3:16). Shakespeare says, he who is afraid to die has died a hundred times. But Jesus says he who will die for my sake will live forever (Matthew 16:25). Jesus says again, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve him, him will my Father honour" (John 12:24-26).

Resist Satan to the death and he is a fleeting defeated foe.

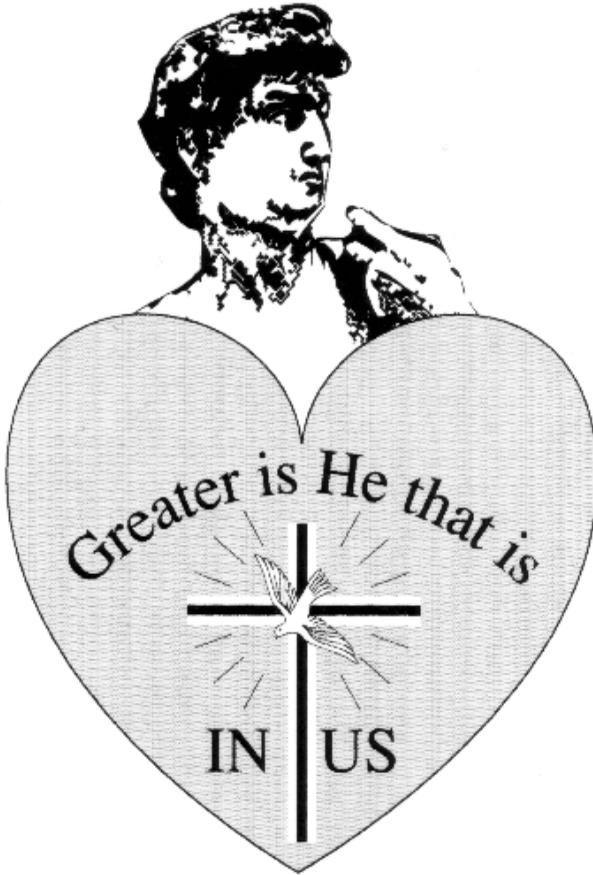
10. Demon Possession

Though I have never dealt with a demon possession case, I beg to disagree with a certain minister who used to tackle “demons” to his own loss. It is reported that he would cast out demons, but never could he cast out all. Whether he had cast out two, three, four or five demons (ie. from the same person), there would always be one left! Is this the Biblical pattern? the man who cut himself in the tomb of Gadara (Mark 5:1-9) had a legion (3,000 to 6,000 according to Roman military order) inside him, but Jesus cast them all out. These hordes of demons cut out possessed 2,000 pigs, driving them headlong into the sea. Mary Magdalene had seven of them, but they were all consigned to darkness at a Word from the Master.

Those who practise exorcism or try to are deceived by Satan through and through. The power to exorcise was given by our Lord to the Apostles in the days of His earthly ministry and in Acts (Acts 5:12) in order to confirm the Word (Mark 16:20). In all the Acts record there are only two cases of Paul casting out demons.

The first case is that of “a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination...which brought her masters much profit of soothsaying” (Acts 16:16)... “But Paul, being grieved, turned and said unto the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour (Acts 16:18).

The second and last case is recorded after the citing of evil spirits being exorcised by applying handkerchiefs and aprons used by the Apostle. This is a unique case of a demon overpowering quack exorcists who used the name of Jesus and Paul. These were the seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest. The demon cynically retorted, “Jesus I know and Paul I know; but who are ye?” (Acts 19:15). In other words, this demon would surrender to our Lord and Paul his servant. Others who tried to play the fool with him would be knocked out at one blow. “And



than he that is
in the world



(1 John 4:4)

the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded” (Acts 19:16).

There is no more mention of Paul casting out demons from Acts 19 all through the end. Neither is there one word in all of Paul’s Epistles nor in the other Epistles teaching us how to exorcise demons. This is not an argument from silence. If indeed, there is a ministry of exorcism for the Church, ancient or modern, Paul would have written some paragraphs about it. But there is none, not one word! To indulge in exorcism is to attempt something totally unwarranted by Scripture for our day.

Though I have not been involved in a demon possession case, I have dealt with those who are obsessed. “To obsess,” according to Chambers, “is to fill the mind completely.” “Obsession” is “persistent attack, especially of an evil spirit.”

Those who are obsessed are gripped by fear. They see apparitions of evil ones, they hear voices that tell them to commit suicide, they feel the demon or demons entering their bodies, drilling through the top of the head and clutching at their heart. How dreadful!

To counter these threats, real or imagined, I turn the patient to I John 4:4, “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” I ask the patient, “Have you received Jesus as your Saviour? Are you born again?” If he gives a clear answer that he is, then I would assure him with victory over the evil one by Him who indwells him, even the Holy Spirit. For “greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.”

A person under stress and strain, when his mind is weakened by insomnia for many hours, even days, can physically crack up. Rest and care can help to restore such a soul, with prayer by the pastor and elders, with the laying of hands. If the patient lives in the parents’ home where idolatry is practised, he should be removed to stay in a Christian environment. In this connection,

FEBC (Far Eastern Bible College) has frequently been used to good effect to “quarantine” the spiritually sick.

Next is the reading of the Bible, particularly the Psalms and the Gospel accounts of the mighty acts of Jesus — healing the sick and casting out devils. Oftentimes a person is obsessed through neglect in church attendance and the partaking of the Lord’s supper. These are means of grace dispensed to every Christian for our spiritual nourishment. We neglect these spiritual exercises at our own peril. Spurgeon tells the story of a spider and an insect engaged in a fight. Whenever the insect is wounded by the spider he would retreat and suck the juice of a medicinal plant. A naughty boy plucked the plant away, so the insect had no more of that life-giving juice to resuscitate him. He died in the fight. So is every Christian a total loss when he is cut off from his Saviour. I have prayed and the Church has prayed for cases of obsession and the Lord has heard our prayers. The soul restored now comes to prayer meeting and church service regularly. They become stronger Christians after going through such ordeals.

11. Mental Derangement

The derangement of the mind may not be as serious as demon obsession. These can be helped by modern medicine using tranquilisers. But we must not rely on human cure alone. The same spiritual therapy we apply to obsession cases is applied to the mentally weak. Mental cases are definitely curable. Martin Luther has used sacred music effectively as an antidote not only against the Devil but also the mentally affected. Singing of Psalms and hymns and gospel choruses can chase away the blues. When Saul was disturbed by an evil spirit David would play on his harp, he would become himself again (1 Samuel 16:14-16).

12. Kong Tau

Kong Tau is the Chinese name for Charms or Spells. Those who live in heathen darkness without God and without hope in the

world (Ephesians 2:12) live in constant fear. There's a Chinese saying, "The more you fear it the more you'll get it." So they are taken captives by the black magic of witch doctors, *dukuns* and *bomohs* (those feared by Indonesians and Malays respectively). Chinese mediums can cast evil spells when working at the behest of demons. Yet, they can be saved from Satan's clutch. There are Chinese mediums who are delivered by the power of God through Jesus' Name. Their testimonies are recorded on tapes. These should be played to bring souls frightened by Satan to salvation and release.

Not a few cases of deliverance are reported. But I have a "brother" tell me how, although he "has become a Christian" and is "baptised" is still in the grip of the *kong tau* or "charm." From a thorough study of this case I have come to the conclusion that this person is only a Christian in name. I doubt he is ever born again. He has gone through some form of reformation, but is empty inside of any power to resist the counter attacks of Satan. The Evil Spirit keeps bringing back the fears and chills that descended on him upon his having been charmed. Why? Because he, though baptised, stop attending church, nor partake of the Lord's Supper. His heart is not occupied by the Spirit of the Lord.

Jesus says, both in Matthew and Luke, "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked then himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be unto this wicked generation.

Jesus' application of his account of demon action to the wicked generation of his day, viz., the Jewish Church under the dry-as-dust instruction of the Pharisees and Judaisers is pertinent to my observation of what was called the "Oxford Group."

This so-called “Oxford Group” was started by an American Luther pastor named Frank Buchman which took root in England in the early twenties. It was the gathering in “house parties” to share religious experiences with one another. In the course of sharing there was the confession of sins. This brought an unburdening of the troubled souls. This process was called the changing of lives. Now, while the mutual confession of sins brought relief, without the cleansing power of the precious blood of Christ, it turned for the worse. As Jesus has said above that the evil spirit, seeing the house he stayed before now swept and garnished, “he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”

Today, the Oxford Group movement, with which I was intimately connected, after the Singapore Pentecost brought by John Sung, which I saw through to be a cult, has degenerated to what is now called the Moral Rearmament Movement. The degenerated form of Buchmanism, another name for the Oxford Group movement, takes in members of all faiths, or you may call it Ecumenical Reformation Movement.

Christ who was there in the beginning because the movement was started by a Lutheran pastor but devoid of His Blood is now completely dethroned. Buddha and Mohammad are placed on the same pedestal. It is a movement where Satan as an angel of light reigns supreme.

With this observation on the worthlessness of a Christless reformation, I end this chapter on *Demons, Obsession, Mental Derangements and Kong Tau (Charms)* with this assurance that Jesus who is the same, yesterday and tomorrow is willing to help if we will come to him with all our heart, willing to do His bidding, come what may. Amen.

Chapter X

THE CALL AND PRECEPT OF DISCIPLESHIP (From Reservist to Regular in the Lord's Army)

(Message to the Life B-P Church Combined Fellowships Conference, August 14, 1993)

Text: Luke 9:23-26

Introduction

At first glance of the title, "The Call and Precept of Discipleship," we are apt to think solely of the calling of the Twelve Apostles and the commandments they received from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Upon closer examination we begin to realise that this statement applies to every believer, to every Christian of every age. Chambers defines a disciple to be "one who professes to receive instruction from another, one who follows or believes in the doctrine of another; a follower, especially one of the twelve disciples of Christ." From the dictionary definition, discipleship, therefore, extends beyond the Twelve.

I

Indeed, every Christian is a disciple, for Luke tells us, "And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26). No one can be a Christian until he has heard the call of the Master, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your

souls” (Matt 11:28,29). Have you and I come to the Saviour with our heavy load of sin? Have we believed in Him?

The Shorter Catechism puts it this way, “How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?” Ans: The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling. (Q&A30). “What is effectual calling?” Ans: Effectual calling is the work of God’s Spirit whereby convincing us of our sin and misery enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel. (Q&A31).

Thus, it is, that for one to be a disciple of Christ one must follow or believe in the doctrine of Christ. This constitutes one’s call, or effectual calling, according to the Shorter Catechism. What is the doctrine of Christ that we must believe unto “effectual calling”? Or as St Paul puts it, “The Gospel which I preached unto you...by which ye are saved..For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures: And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (I Cor 15:1-4).

As to the precept of discipleship, it is given in each of the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 16:13-16; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-26). Let us read Luke’s account where it is stated that the precept is given to **all**. “And he said **to them all**, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels.”

Now, it is to be noted that following Christ is a free choice of the individual. “If any man will come after me.” Christ does not

compel us as in some religion with a sword. He attracts us with His Cross! But once we say yes to Him, to His call, we must follow Him to the bitter end. Salvation is free, but there is a price to pay for discipleship — all disciples, every disciple, old or young, male or female, for Jesus gave His precept to them **all** (v.23). The price is even to death for Jesus says, “Let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” The old rugged cross and not the modern smooth cross, shaped sometimes like an airplane! **“Daily”**, in Luke, makes the cross-bearing, the preparedness to die for His sake, a never relaxing process. For, we can never tell when persecution will come, especially in the days of the early church. And when it came this was what happened: “And at that time, there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles...Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:1,4).

We see here that the enemy of the Gospel does not differentiate between the apostles and the lay people. All come under his attack, but the apostles stay put, being leaders. During the Boxer Rebellion in China 1900, there were 185 foreign missionaries who were beheaded by the Manchus at the command of the Empress Dowager. But we must not forget the 50,000 Chinese Christians who also suffered death or injury by the sword of the persecutors. When the Boxers came to my Grandpa’s Church in Swatow (Santou), my Grandpa was given courage and wisdom to stand firm. He prepared tea and peanut caramel that the Teochews like to chew. God used the sweetmeats to cool down their frenzy. They left him untouched but took the German wall clock! “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Isaiah 26:3).

The message of our Lord to the Church in Smyrna that she remain faithful unto death under the persecution to come is addressed to every member, for it concludes, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Rev 2:11). So

the call and precept of discipleship applies to everyone of us at this conference and also to everyone who sits in these pews every Lord's Day.

Not to embrace the cross which is our lot will bring shame to the cause of Christ (v.26). This happens to us when we love the world more than Christ. But what a great miscalculation! "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself and be cast away?" The story is told of Wang Ming Tao how under extreme pressure from the Chinese Communists he denied his Lord. So, he was let go. But when he came to himself, he wept bitterly like Peter. He went back to the Communist authorities to retract his statement. Since he stood up now for Christ, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. In the end, they let him off after 23 years of hard labour. He redeemed himself. For his persevering witness to the Lord Jesus Christ, he is called "China's Living Martyr."

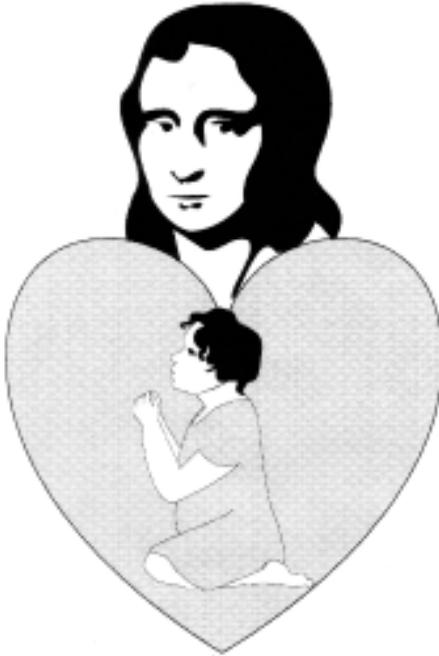
How important it is for us, leader or lay person, to stand up for Christ. We cannot do it in our own strength, like Peter, but we can with His help. The guilt of denying Him is a gnawing conscience that makes it more miserable than going to jail. That is the testimony of another modern day saint, Pastor Richard Wurmbbrand, a Romanian Jew turned Christian. He was imprisoned 14 years for his faith. (Read *Tortured for Christ*.)

II

Now, if the call and precept of discipleship is so strong, yea, stronger than death on every Christian, how much more will it be upon everyone called to full-time service! Those in full-time service today are represented in the Twelve Apostles, in the Seventy sent out two and two, by the bishops and presbyters in Church history. Like regulars in the Army they are the first to bear the brunt of battle. The lay people, believers sitting in the pews, are like reservists. We who are leaders in the Church, specially trained pastors and evangelists, and those elected to office, elders and deacons, are like the regulars. We have, logically, a much higher responsibility to the Lord. We are those like the

Twelve who are required to forsake houses, brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, yea, even wife, children and lands for His sake (Matt 19:29). For this reason there are so few who will join Far Eastern Bible College to study for a lifelong Christian ministry. And in our fellowships of whatever name, there is no lack of sound leadership, but few are our young people willing to give up their ambition or career to enter the full-time ministry. No doubt the matter of wealth and an easier life seems to be the power holding them, though the call of Christ has come to them every now and then — from the pulpit, from Bible conferences like this, from reading books of great men in Church history. How worth its while will this special meeting be if only one or two will respond to the Master's call to full-time service today!

I can perceive the reason for a young person not joining the Lord's Army not so much in fear of persecution since we live in a peaceful Singapore, as in the consideration of a richer materialistic living. The rich young ruler, reported in all the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 19; Mark 10 and Luke 18), is he not a mirror reflection of many a promising young and ambitious candidate today? While he desired the best of both worlds, everlasting life in heaven as well as ever-easy life on earth, when challenged by Christ to give away his worldly possessions, he turned sadly away. In the end he lost both. I was in this predicament, when after WWII I was set like a flint on going to London to finish my law studies. I aspired to fame and power. By God's grace the Lord sent two deaths within five weeks of each other, the homegoing of my beloved Mother and little seven-month old baby daughter. This rudely shook me up. I realised I had earlier vowed to serve Him full-time on top of my mother's vow. And I remembered Eccles. 5:4,5: "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." Thank God, I turned back to my Master and Saviour. That was 1946. To this day, I've never; for once, "having put my hand on the plough," looked back (Luke 9:62).



Every Samuel is
conceived in a
Devout mother's heart
(Proverbs 31:2)

The call to full-time service, I believe, is the most important item on the agenda of this conference. Jesus in His day repeatedly challenged the young people He met. He called them by the seaside — fishermen of ruddy character. He called one who was a government servant. He called simple, humble souls from the country that He could mould into heroes of faith. The only one from Judea where the capital city was was Judas Iscariot. If few from the wise, the mighty and noble are responding to the Lord's call, He can choose "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which

are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (I Cor 1:27-30).

Hence, at FEBC, we give every one called of God a chance to train for the ministry. A good percentage have tertiary education behind them, but there are those who may not have had such advanced training. Like the tortoise and the hare in the race, it is not won by the swift nor the battle by the strong (Eccls 9:11). But if God has called you, He will persevere in you to the end. And there is always a job in the Lord's vineyard for the stronghearted, but we must not be choosers or we will be losers.

Does serving the Lord make us paupers? If we are willing to become poor for His sake and will go to the hardest of places at His bidding, He will reward us, as He assured Peter and the rest of the Disciples, “And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Matt 19:29).

When I started out as pastor of Life Church English Service at Prinsep Street in 1950, we were a little gathering with no guarantee of support for the pastor and his family. But I was happy to experiment the new life of a disciple carrying the cross in my newly ordained pastorate. The freewill offerings for the first month that totalled \$110 was my salary. With my wife’s salary of \$160 as a midwife, we tightened our belts together. We could live frugally, happily. As I liked cycling a sister bought me a BSA racer costing \$165 and that gave me speedy transport to visit members which also served as my jogging on wheels! We had no adequate housing. But God is the best paymaster. In no time, He gave us a three-room SIT (HDB) flat in Tiong Bahru. From there we advanced step by step by the Way of the Cross. Who could have imagined that we would own two acres of near-Orchard Road prime land with the latest addition of Beulah House? Have we not received a hundred fold in houses and lands and in brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers in Christ? But the Way of the Cross is the only Way to Glory. Moreover, the Lord has enabled our Church to help weaker Churches, and God has prospered every cheerful giver (II Cor 9:7,8).

III

Finally, let me challenge one and all to our responsibility in carrying out the Great Commission. The business of the Church is to go out into all the world and be a witness to every nation, particularly when His coming is so near. (“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” Matthew 24:14). Not to harp upon His Second Coming is to snore away like the Five

Foolish Virgins. And since His Coming is ever at the door, are we not to hasten unto the coming of the Day of God? (II Pet 3;12). In the light of these Scriptural warnings, how can we say it is too soon to talk of building a four-storey Bible College complex for Burma? Will Jesus approve of such a selfish sentiment? “Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matt 16:23). (If each member will give his tithe we can build three Bible Colleges!) The fact is, if we delay, we will have to pay very dearly as prices go up in a land now opening to the outside world. That four-storey Bible College complex, to build it now, costs only S\$320,000 — the price of an HDB flat! (To build that in Singapore would cost easily \$2 million.) Can’t a big church of 1,300 members like ours give one flat to Jesus Christ? And think of the good our support of the Burma Mission will bring in the opening of a Gospel door no man can shut!

Now learn a lesson from the escalating property market in Singapore! You know how sore some people are who have “missed the train.” Do we thank God that Beulah House is benefiting so many with no burden on any? We are always ready to return your loan in a jiffy! Yes, the call and precept of discipleship in projection leads to worldwide missions. What have you contributed to the Cause of Christ? Rather than talk, let us walk, rather than criticise let us evangelise, rather than gripe, let us give!

Let us review our “call and precept of discipleship” from Jesus’ mandate according to Mark, “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”