

# ASIAN BEACON

1985

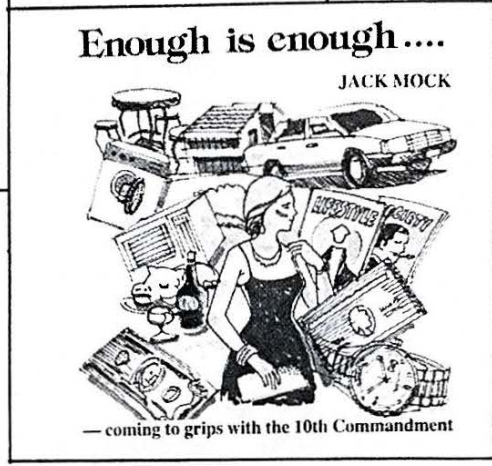
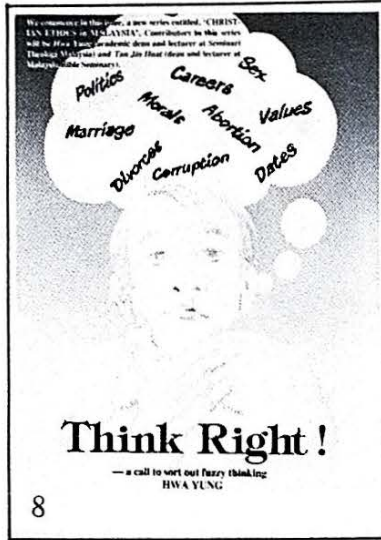
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## GIGI VILLA: Seeking His Kingdom

Enough is Enough  
Think Right!

*1985 Writing Contest*



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**beacon**

1. a lighthouse, signalling buoy, etc. used to warn or guide ships in dangerous waters.
2. a person or thing that serves as a guide, inspiration or warning.

# Interview with Gigi Villa, international recording artiste



## Seeking His Kingdom

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

I am the fifth of six children and I started singing at the age of eight years. I entered show business when I was 10, after I had won a singing contest. In 1981 I started travelling to parts of Asia and the United States. All this while I was involved in movies as well as television programmes.

How does your family feel about your career?

I come from a musical family and like most Filipinos, we play all kinds of musical instruments and sing together. My mother is my manageress and is with me wherever I go. We ring home regularly to keep in touch with the family.

What, would you say, is the guiding principle of your life?

Matthew 6 : 33 – 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you.' This has affected the kind of movies I act in, eg I refuse to be involved in sexy roles. I want to maintain the image of the 'girl next door'. That is why I would rather stick to singing.

KOH SOO CHOON

### **How did you come to know the Lord Jesus Christ?**

I come from a traditionally religious family. My normal procedure before going for any performance is to find a church and pray, ie to commit the whole thing before the Lord. One night in Manila, my mum and I couldn't find any church as they were all closed. But we saw one that was open and found the people inside raising their hands and praising the Lord. It was such a joyous occasion, so different from the usual solemn kind of worship. At the end of the meeting, both my mum and I went forward to commit ourselves to the Lord.

### **Do you find it difficult to maintain your Christian convictions in show business?**

Everyone who works with me knows my stand and I will take time off for church, however hectic the schedule is and the others have to wait for me. We have had unpleasant scenes, especially in the States, but we pray all the time and the Lord has seen us through. As each performance is dedicated to the Lord in detail, He has been faithful. Besides, I am careful in my choice of the type of places I perform in and I make sure to have my Bible with me all the time.

### **Have you come across other Christians in your course of work?**

There are some born again Christians in the music world. I have had contact with singers like Freddie Aguila who sang that popular "Anak" (Child). Freddie Aguila accepted the Lord two months ago. *(I saw him perform at the 1st Metro Manila Festival of Gospel Songs in September 1984 – Interviewer's comment).*

### **How do you view your achievements thus far?**

I believe the Lord has given me this talent and I try to do whatever I can to help the unfortunate. Usually some of the proceeds from my performances will go to charity. I have produced two albums so far, one in Malay and the other in Tagalog under the CBS label. My first English album will be released next month. My dream is to produce an album of Gospel songs which I will do so after my contract with CBS is over.

### **What are your future plans?**

I am still young (just turned 21) and committed to my Lord and career. Everything depends on Him so I'll continue singing till He says 'Stop'. I want to be an instrument of the Lord to spread peace and love.

### **Will you be coming back to Malaysia?**

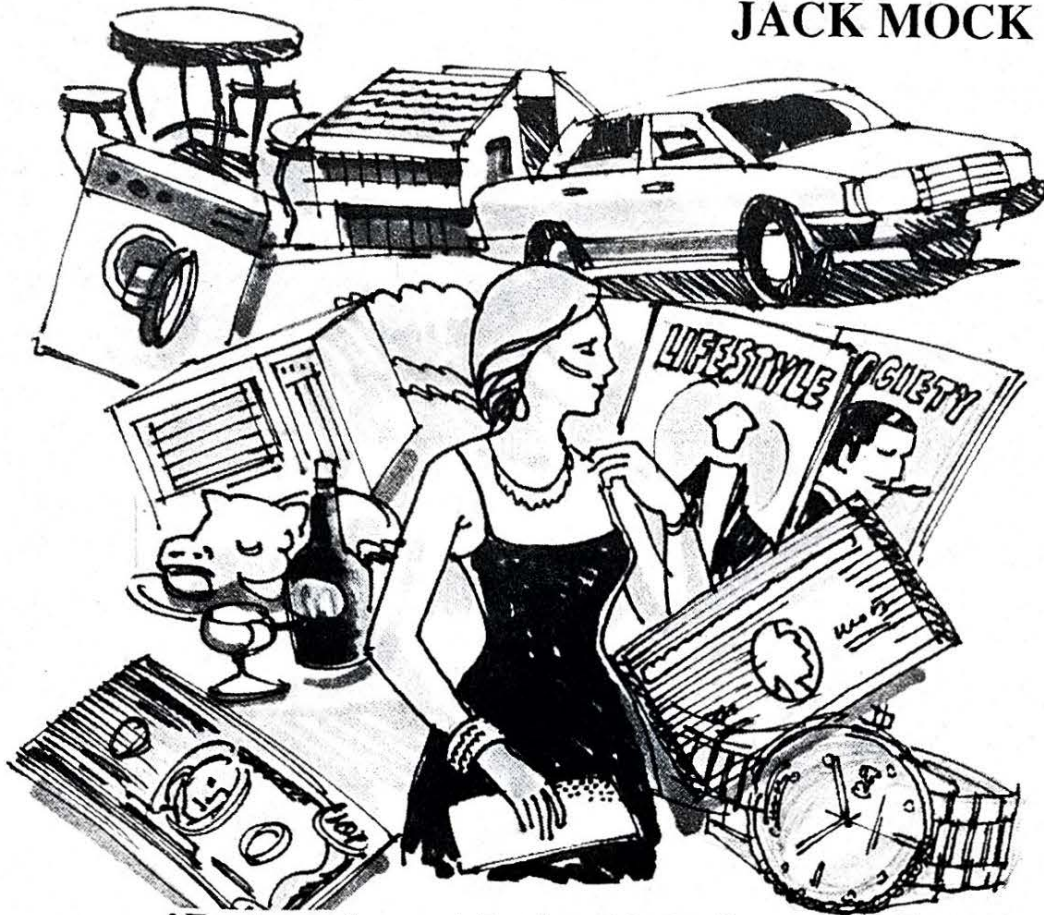
I will definitely be back. I love Malaysia : it is like my second home.

*Miss Koh Soo Choon, staffworker of Malaysian CARE, met Gigi Villa and spoke to her in Kuala Trengganu, Sept. 1984.*

Concluding our series on *The 10 Commandments*

# Enough is Enough ....

JACK MOCK



— coming to grips with the 10th Commandment

**W**e come now to the last Commandment in our brief study of the Decalogue. I hope that we have all realised the importance of the law of God for our lives. The 10 Commandments spell out in detail what it means to love God (the first four Commandments) and what it means to love our neighbour (the last six Commandments). The Commandments teach us that love is positive and active. Love recognises the other person's rights: eg the right to private property (*you shall not steal*); the right to life (*you shall not kill*); the right to covenantal

faithfulness (*you shall not commit adultery*) and the right to truthfulness and honesty (*you shall not bear false witness*). The opposite of love is hatred, stealing, killing, committing adultery, being a false witness and telling lies and so on. Christians have been saved by grace alone through faith and repentance in Jesus Christ. When we repent we are called to love and serve our neighbour. The Christian life is not merely believing in Christ and piety; it also involves life and discipleship. Of the 10 Commandments, the last commandment is often neglected and sometimes even

ignored by many Christians. Most of us do not steal or kill, we do not commit adultery or bear false witness but what about coveting? To covet is to want more and more; it is to be greedy. Are you and I guilty of breaking the 10th commandment?

### Affluent Consumer Societies

Ronald Sider's book *"Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger"* reminds us that we have so much. Who are the needy neighbours whom God is calling us to love and serve in today's global village? Certainly they are people of all races, classes,

continents, of both sexes and different ages. But none of our neighbours face more desperate need than those who are so poor that malnutrition and even death constantly haunt them. Sider in his book states that in 1977, the National Academy of Sciences published a study which showed that 750 million people in the poorest nations live in extreme poverty with annual incomes of less than US\$75. Hundreds of millions more in developing countries also subsist at poverty level incomes. In the September 12, 1977 issue of Newsweek magazine, there was a major story on "The Middle Class Poor". Millions of North Americans actually believe that they can barely survive on US\$15,000, \$18,000 or even \$25,000 per annum. "We're not poor enough to go on welfare but not rich enough to write a cheque to a plumber," says a Chicago secretary, who works to supplement her husband's \$23,000 salary as an accountant. If the 750 million persons with less than \$75 per year were to read this story (they will not of course, because they are illiterate, and the magazine would cost them almost a week's supply of food) they would be astonished! If Sider's 1977 figures were updated, the figures would be even more astonishing!

The Christians in the West live in affluent consumer societies. Even in many developing countries like Malaysia, the majority of Christians seems to come from the middle and upper middle classes. This is rather self-evident, looking at a few economic statistics. Since the industrial revolution and the rise of the technological society, consumer goods have been

marketed to meet our wants and needs. Advertisements abound. Fashion and cosmetic industries, among many others, tend to create our wants and needs. We live in a consumer society. We also live in an inbuilt opulent society. We buy more and more and consume more and more. We live in a different world to that of Jesus and the apostles. What is the Christian to do in a developing or affluent country? What if we are the affluent *minority* in an Asian country? What is the Christian's attitude to wealth and possessions?

## Enough is enough....

JACK MOCK



— coming to grips with the 10th Commandment

When we meet someone for the first time, the first question we ask him is what his name is. The next question is usually about his occupation, sociologists say. Our vocation or work often determines our socio-economic status. Wealth gives us *status*, ie a position of power in the community. It has a *power-base* which we often take for granted. It is noteworthy that the Bible does not condemn wealth in itself. It is not money per se, but the love of money which is the root of all evil. God has given us good gifts, including the resources of earth for us to use wisely. It may be that God uses poverty to bring

men to an awareness of spiritual realities and an awareness of bankruptcy before Him, and it may be that some men like the apostles, are called to a life of poverty, but poverty brings sufferings and great distress and this cannot be an end in itself.

### Let us be Content

The teaching of the Bible would appear to be not the *amount* of a man's wealth that matters; what matters is how he *acquired* it, how he uses it and what his attitude is in disposing and re-investing it. Paul tells young Timothy "as for the rich in this world, charge them not to be haughty, not to set their hopes on uncertain riches but on God who richly blesses us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous (1 Tim 6:17-18). Uncle Scrooge would be a good counter example. Paul's attitude is positive. We are to be good stewards, honest and hard workers. Notice that the trust is exclusively in God Who gives and Who can also take away. The stress is on sharing, doing good deeds, and being generous and charitable. Earlier on in 1 Tim 6:6-10, Paul reminds us that "there is great gain in godliness with *contentment*, for we brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world; but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content . . . for the love of money is the root of all evils."

Now this temptation to be rich and to have more is common to both rich and poor. But Scriptures teaches us to be content. If we are poor — the have-nots — we must not become

obsessed with the desire to become rich. "Thou shall not covet" applies to the poor as well! Interestingly enough, when we consume more and more . . . We will *ultimately* be consumed by that which we so greatly wish to consume. Notice what the Commandment says: "You shall not covet your neighbour's house

" It is the keeping up with the Joneses' mentality, the keeping up with the Wongs and the Annadurais. Is it significant that in most western cities like Sydney, Christians tend to live in the green bible belt garden suburbs. . . what about Christians living in the older inner-city areas? Are you and I coveting our neighbour's new house, say in Damansara Heights? What priorities must we sort out when deciding to buy a new house? The cost? Situation? The right housing estate? For most of us buying a unit/apartment/house will be the most expensive purchase in our lives. We need to think over it and pray it through.

The text goes on to say, "You shall not covet your neighbour's wife". We all want our wives/husbands to be like other wives/husbands. Look at the clothes, cosmetics, jewellery, etc, of the neighbour's wife! I must give my wife the same . . . or should I? Of course, we are to be proud of our spouses but should we always compare them with others? We all need to work out an *appropriate* (for some of us, it would mean a more simple) life-style. It seems some of us may be too material-centred; too object-centred and not person-centred enough. We spend all our lives buying things. We need to remember that the giver is more important than the gift! The

gift is merely a token of our love . . . we shouldn't say, "but he gave her such and such for her birthday/wedding anniversary!" Lady readers can find the appropriate parallel things for men and rephrase the text to read: "You shall not covet your neighbour's husbands".

### Are You Sure You Need It?

We are further not to 'covet our neighbour's manservant or maidservant". Our modern household servants (other than our house-helps!) are the fridge, oven (micro wave), dryer, washing machine and so on. It

### Enough is enough....

JACK MOCK



— coming to grips with the 10th Commandment

is tempting to raise the matter of ethics in advertising and marketing at this point. Obviously we need quality for our money . . . the question to ask is: Do we really need this machine? If yes, then how much can we afford? We are baffled by the many brands and variations of any single product in the market. Again we are called to be wise stewards of our money. The neighbour's modern kitchen or family room should not determine what ought to be in *your* kitchen and family room. We are all enticed by our dream-homes conveyed to us by the magazines and selling techniques

of estate agents, yet we must not allow these to grow covetousness in us.

The Commandment goes on to say, "You shall not covet your neighbour's ox or his ass". The ox worked on the farm in ancient times. The modern equivalent would be household tools and equipment, like the lawnmower, power tools, electronic gadgets and so on. The ass was the means of transport in ancient times. The modern equivalent is the automobile, the family car. In most urban areas, most of us need transport, and the car is often the handiest and most convenient. Again we need to ask: What car should we buy? Which motorcycle? For whom? We need to examine our motives, our needs and our ability to pay. We must resist the temptation to compare and to covet our neighbour's car! The glossy car magazines are very attractive and they appeal easily to our greed and covetousness. Again we need to be wise stewards. We need to think and discuss and pray over the matter before the purchase. Often, for most of us, the car would be the second major item of purchase in our lives.

### Enough is Enough

Coveting could also include other things beside housing and transport, so the 10th Commandment concludes with the phrase "you shall not covet anything that is your neighbour's". God may have richly blessed your neighbour with various material blessings. Why God chooses to bless some more than others in His prerogative. Our business is to get on with our Christian living and not to grumble, moan,

or to covet – but to obtain only those things which are necessary for us. Luxury items (which are taxed more than other goods may or may not come our way. To spend all our life getting and getting is not the way for Christians to live. If we are wealthy, we must rest lightly on our riches, knowing where our *true* treasure is. We must beware of arrogance, of not sharing with those in need. This is the challenge of the Commandment not to covet. How do you and I determine our priorities in saving and spending? Where to live? What car to purchase? What clothes we wear? These questions

are as important for ‘poor’ students as they are for ‘wealthy’ graduates. The Christian ought to be different in his value system and the way he spends his money.

Can a case be made for Christian expenditure on extravagances? The essence of this type of expenditure seems to be that its price exceeds its intrinsic worth. It confers prestige on its owner. The Christian need not live amongst factories if he can afford to live somewhere else but should he spend three times or five times as much on a house, just to live in a fashionable

area? It is not necessary for Christian women to dress dowdily but expensive and extravagant clothes and cosmetics may not be necessary. “Enough is enough”. Sufficiency is the rule. It is interesting to note the context of the list of vices in which the apostle Paul places covetousness in Colossians 3:5. He says, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you; fornication, impurity, passion, evil and *covetousness* which is idolatry According to Paul, covetousness soon leads to idolatry, the worship of material things. Is covetousness a sin which we rarely confess? □

# GIVE *all* YOU CAN

## The Witness of the Wesleys

**I**n one of his classic sermons on money (dated two years before his death), Wesley thunders with the urgency of a John the Baptist or one of the Old Testament prophets. His strongest application concerning “The Causes of the Inefficiency of Christianity” was put to his own beloved people called Methodists. In pressing the

issue, he questioned whether one in a hundred in their own societies dared to “give all he can.”

His famous sermon on giving had three points: (1) *Make all you can*; (2) *Save all you can*; (3) *Give all you can*. He points out that “all who observe the two first rules without the third, will be twofold more the children of hell than ever before.” He

continues, “It would be easy to show, in how many respects the Methodist, in general, are deplorably wanting in the practice of Christian self denial; from which, indeed, they have been continually frightened by the silly outcries of Antinomians (those who denied the significance or need of law under grace).” Wesley owns up that his

own people "grow more and more self-indulgent, because they grow rich." He acknowledges that there were still many people in their ranks who were "deplorably" poor, but he estimates that, among those who had decreased in grace, "nine in ten" had decreased in the same proportion as they had increased in wealth.

### Generous Giving

In his analysis of the total picture and in the history of Christianity, Wesley confesses that to some extent Christianity contained the elements of self-destruction. Here is the cycle he describes: "For wherever true Christianity spreads, it must cause diligence and frugality, which, in the natural course of things, must beget riches! And riches naturally beget pride, love of the world, and every temper that is destructive of Christianity." Wesley probes how to stop this suicidal chain of events — this vicious circle. The answer is generous (utmost) giving. Hear him plead: "Then if you have any desire to escape the damnation of hell, give all you can; otherwise I can have no more hope of your salvation, than of that of Judas Iscariot." He testifies at the close:

*I call God to record upon my soul, that I advise no more than I practice. I do, blessed be God, gain, save, and give all I can. And so, I trust in God, I shall do, while the breath of God is in my nostrils. But what then? I count all things but loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Jesus my Lord. Still,*

*I give up every plea besides—  
Lord, I am damn'd! but Thou hast died!*

Some are inclined to think that John Wesley was too much of an ascetic and therefore not to be followed in money matters. It is true that he confessed after

## GIVE *all* YOU CAN

### The Witness of the Wesleys

his Aldersgate Street experience that formerly in his university days he lived as a monk. But a careful analysis of his view of spending on himself reveals that this grew out of a strong desire to render a good account of his stewardship to God. He exhorts in his sermon on Luke 6:9 the following: "Render unto God not a tenth, not a third, not half, but all that is God's (be it more or less) by employing all on yourself, your household, the household of faith and all mankind, in such a manner that you may give a good account of your stewardship."

Wesley himself was constantly under fire and one of the complaints made about his revival work was that he did it for money. This stung Wesley and he answered his critics in some detail. Then he challenged them to check up on his own totals at the end of his journey. He writes in his sermon, "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion":

*Food and raiment I have; such food as I choose to eat, and such raiment as I choose to put on. I have a place to lay my head. I have what is needful for life and godliness...for as to gold and silver, I count it dung and dross; I trample it under my feet... I only fear lest any of it should cleave to me, and I should*

*not be able to shake it off before my spirit returns to God... None of the accursed thing shall be found in my tent when the Lord calleth me hence. And hear ye this, all you who have discovered the treasures which I am to leave behind me: If I leave behind me ten pounds (above my debts, and my books, or what may happen to be due on account of them) you and all mankind bear witness against me, that I lived and died a thief and a robber.*

Careful historians have estimated that John and Charles Wesley probably gave between 90 and 95 percent of all they made in their lifetime. Certainly they could have been comfortable country gentlemen if they had simply paid a tithe and kept the rest from their publishing business (books and music). But they "plowed it back" into the building of chapels and the like. Surely their reserves in the bank without moth or rust or thieves has piled up, even as Jesus promised. □

Taken from *Giving and Living*, Samuel Young



### ADD VARIETY

#### TO YOUR PRAYING

1. Try singing a song, hymn or Psalm. Listen to one on a record or tape. Then pray, making its thoughts your own.
2. Choose three items of world or local news from the daily paper and pray about them.
3. Try praying for friends, relatives or Christian workers while working at a recent photo of them. Make a small prayer album.
4. Be truly creative. Draw a picture or write a poem or a letter telling God how you feel. Express your daily reading this way.

We commence in this issue, a new series entitled, 'CHRISTIAN ETHICS in MALAYSIA'. Contributors to this series will be *Hwa Yung* (academic dean and lecturer at Seminari Theologi Malaysia) and *Tan Jin Huat* (dean and lecturer at Malaysia Bible Seminary).

Politics  
Careers  
Sex  
Marriage  
Morals  
Abortion  
Values  
Divorces  
Corruption  
Dates



# Think Right!

— a call to sort out fuzzy thinking

HWA YUNG

**S**ome time ago, I was asked to speak to a group of Christians on William Wilberforce, the British Member of Parliament, who led the battle for the abolition of slavery during the last century. We wanted to ask what we could learn from him in terms of Christian political involvement in our nation. We noted that Wilberforce, as a Christian, saw that morality was at the heart of politics. He realised there could be no lasting political changes without corresponding changes in the morals of the nation and her peoples.

At the end of the talk a Christian graduate came up to me and said, "Don't you think you are making a mistake in so strongly emphasising the moral issue in the context of Malaysian politics? After all, the fundamental problem here is not moral but racial!" Mercifully, before I could answer him, someone else interrupted our conversation. But I left the meeting with a sense of despair. It reminded me that, whilst many Christians would not fail to recognise that racial problems were ultimately moral at heart, there is nevertheless a general lack of clear Christian thinking in the Malaysian Church today.

### Money and Status

Further evidences in support of the above conclusion are not difficult to find. Take the simple example of how often Chinese and Indian Christians choose 'auspicious dates' for weddings according to traditional customs. The argument is that after all Christians need not deny these aspects of our cultures. But is the issue that simple? The idea of 'auspicious dates' is based on Chinese and Indian astrology in which it is believed amongst other superstitions, that

the movements of the sun, moon and stars control human destinies. To believe in these is in fact to deny that God is the sovereign ruler of the universe and that Christ is Lord. Another example of the lack of clear thinking amongst Christians is the way we choose our careers. Usually if a person does well in his examinations, he goes for the highly lucrative professions like medicine and dentistry, law, engineering, business and accountancy. If he or she cannot make the above he will then consider the somewhat less lucrative fields like teaching, sales, the technical fields, nursing, etc. And if he cannot get into any of the above he will finally think of blue-collar and clerical work and perhaps the 'full-time' ministry in Church. What is wrong with this is that it is an unchristian view of careers or, to use a more Christian term, 'vocation' (meaning 'calling'). It assumes that we can do anything we like with our lives and the unspoken assumption is that we go for the career that offers most money and the highest social standing. But how often do we stop to ask, (and teach our young people and children to do the same) the question, "Is this the best way that I can serve Christ, His Church and a suffering world? How do I as a child of the Kingdom of God choose a vocation in which I can spend the most productive years of my life in the most fruitful way? How can I embark on a career with Christian impact in a non-Christian world?" This leads to a third example. Browsing through a book store recently, I came across a book written by a well-known Asian pastor. The blurb on the back cover read something like this: "Do you want to draw near to God? Do you want to grow as a Christian? . . . Do you want

to be prosperous?" This is of course a perfect illustration of the 'Gospel of prosperity' preached by so many in our churches today. This teaching assumes that if we faithfully attend church worship and prayer meeting, do our bit in church, and drop a regular offering into the bag, God will bless us with happiness and success and prosperity. But is this what Christianity really is? Many will say 'Yes' and quote passages like Proverbs 3:9-10 as proof. But have not some other aspects of the teaching of the Bible been neglected? What does, for example, Jesus mean when he said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). What did he mean when he told a man who wanted to be his disciple, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head" (Luke 9:58)? The 'Gospel of prosperity' has little or no place in Jesus' call to self-denial and sacrificial living, and it is in truth a pagan version of Christianity. But sadly, few recognise it to be so!

Other examples are plentiful. Think of the racial pride and prejudices of many Chinese and Indian Christians, or careless attitudes to divorce and remarriage, our condoning and even practising of social evils like abortion and corruption, our failures to apply God's principles to our family life and homes, the lack of social and political concern and involvement by Christians at large, etc. All these bring us back to the first point: The Church is sadly in need of some clear thinking today. The problem is of course not one faced by the Church in Malaysia alone. On my desk as I write are four books written for different audiences at different times in different parts of the world dealing with

the same problem from different angles. (2) This only increases the urgency of the problem and the quest for a solution. Where do we begin?

### Renewed Minds

#### Spiritual Worship

Paul writing to the church in Rome spent four chapters (Rom 12:15) dealing with the problem of Christians living in a non-Christian society. He began by reminding them that it was right for them "to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — which is your spiritual worship" (Rom 12:1). But how do we do that in practice? Paul's answer was to have 'right thinking' or the 'renewed mind'. He reminded them that it was so easy to get their thinking wrong because of possible contamination by non-Christian values around them. "Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world" (Rom 12:2) or as J B Philips' classic paraphrase says, "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould." Instead, "be transformed by the renewing of your mind." In other words, if we are to live our lives "as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God" we must allow Christ to renew our minds, to get our thinking sorted out and made right! And when this happens, then a 'transformation' would take place. The Greek word for 'transform' is instructive. It is *metamorphoo*, the same word from which the word *metamorphosis* is derived. In other words, when the Christian's mind is renewed, then, like the process of metamorphosis in which an ugly pupa changes into a beautiful butterfly, the Christian's life and character will similarly be transformed.

Rom 12:1 sums up clearly the New Testament call to right

thinking which can only come from the renewed mind. Now if this is the New Testament emphasis, why is it there is so little of it in the Church today? Three reasons may be suggested. The first relates to what we have already referred to in the preceding paragraph — Christians have not heeded Paul's warning about the danger of worldliness, ie. of conforming to the values of the world. It is not so much that we deliberately choose the values and standards of the world all the time, although that does happen too. But more often than not, we have not made a real effort to break away from the non-Christian values that were a part of the pagan backgrounds we came from. The Church in the New Testament times faced the same problem. The apostles overcame it successfully by giving constant attention to Christian ethical teaching as in the Epistles of Peter, John and Paul. We on our part have neglected this and consequently we are not only "in the world" but also very much "of the world".

#### Return to the Bible

There is also a second reason for the lack of right thinking in the Church today: It is the loss of confidence in anything as the source of God-given truth. H Blamires in his book *The Christian Mind* writes: 'One of the crucial tasks in reconstituting the Christian mind will be to re-establish the status of objective truth as distinct from personal opinions.' (p. 40) Whilst this problem is particularly acute in the Church in the West today, it is nevertheless also very real for many in the Malaysian Church also. It seems that the only way out is a return to the Bible as our ultimate source of authority and truth. However,

further discussion on this must belong to a later article in the series.

But there is a last reason which we must examine. Much of our muddled thinking is simply a result of our being too lazy or unwilling or fearful to think. Clear thinking requires effort and for some of us it is too much of a bother. Again, right thinking must eventually lead to right effort. But that can place too much a moral demand on us who are living in a hostile world (cf. John 15:20; 16:33a; 2 Tim 2:3) because it would mean going against the tide and making ourselves unpopular with our non-Christian families, neighbours, colleagues, etc. And so sadly, for these and other reasons the Church who has been called to be the "light of the world" (Mat 5:14) stumbles on in spiritual semi-darkness herself.

Today in the Malaysian Church there is a lot of talk about renewal in the Spirit. This stress on renewal has indeed brought much good. However we need to be reminded that according to New Testament teaching, there can be no true and lasting renewal without the renewal of Christian minds. The Church like Israel, has been called to be "holy because I (God) am holy" (Lev 11:44; cf. 1 Pet 1:16; 1 Thes 4:7; etc) to live transformed lives based on renewed minds (Rom 12:2) and to live in such a manner that the world around "may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Mat 5:16). We have found ample evidence to know that we have often failed to live up to our calling. The purpose of this first article in the series has been to draw attention to these matters and if it has appeared rather negative and critical, it has been so in the hope that something positive will come out of this.

Indeed, the aim of this proposed series is to stimulate and encourage Christians to engage in serious ethical thinking and to live holy lives before God, our Creator and Redeemer. The first few articles after this will examine some basic questions in moral philosophy like situation ethics, conscience and the ultimate source of authority in ethics. The next few will cover basic issues in biblical ethics and how we are to use the Bible in ethics. These eight or nine articles will be foundational. Having covered these we will then go on to deal with ethical problems like abortion, divorce and remarriage. Christian home patterns, politics, corruption, poverty. We claim no infallibility. We welcome criticisms and questions. Our prayer is that at the end of all these, the Church in Malaysia will become more and more that bride of Christ who is "radiant... without stain or wrinkle or any other blemishes, but holy and blameless" (Eph 5:27). □

**Footnotes:**

1. cf. eg Paul's rejection of similar beliefs in Col 2:8; R Martin, *Colossians and Philemon*, Marshall, Morgan Scott, 1974, pp. 10-14, 79.
2. M.C. Griffiths, *Consistent Christianity*, IVP, 1960, written by a Baptist for University and college students; H. Blamires, *The Christian Mind*, SPCK, 1963, written by a 'High' Anglican for the British and American public; Lucy Tan, *The Limping Church*, 1982, written in the Malaysian context dealing specifically with the problem of syncretism; and J. White, *Flirting with the World*, Hodder and STL, 1983, written in the North American context in particular.

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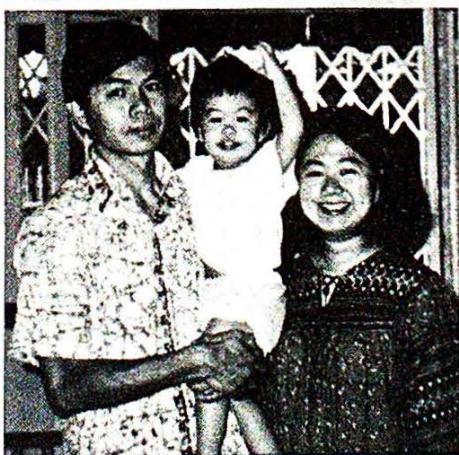
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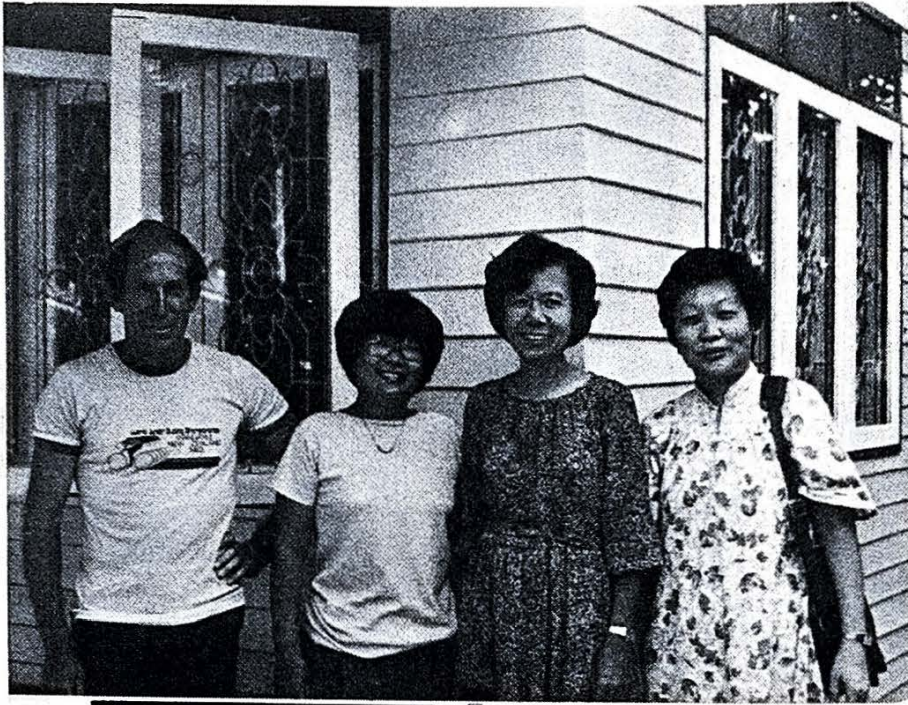


Hwa Yung studied Chemistry and Education at the University of Tasmania. He then taught about five years at Sultan Abdul Hamid College, Alor Setar before going for theological studies at Trinity College, Bristol and the University of London. He worked as a Methodist pastor before taking on his present post as lecturer and academic dean at Seminari Theoloji Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur. Hwa Yung is married to Bee Teik, a medical doctor, and they have one son, Yang Jerng.

## New Hope Refuge and Care Centre, Bangkok ~

# *A Ministry of Love & Reconciliation*

L to R: Roger Dahlberg, Jintana (a missionary), Stella Hooi, Yeoh Lay Bee.



YEOH LAY BEE

**BANGKOK.** A city of five million people, with its notorious traffic jams, endless noise, well known canals — it was not a place I would have chosen to be in, but God in His wonderful plan has sent me here to serve Him in the New Hope Refuge and Care Centre. Amongst other aims and objectives, we at the Centre seek to provide relief to the rejected, neglected and exploited children and to retrain them into having useful skills, through individual sponsorship or other means so that they will be able to find honest and rewarding employment. At all

times we will seek to point them to the Saviour because He alone can give them wholeness and bring healing to their young but much scarred and traumatised lives.

The Centre is the result of the concern for the neglected children first felt acutely by Roger Dahlberg of New Zealand. Roger Dahlberg, (formerly a Brethren missionary in Malaysia) now a missionary from New Zealand, on a brief visit to Bangkok in August 1983 was very much challenged by the plight of these children. While

I was on furlough in Penang, Stella Hooi, an OMF missionary in Thailand, shared Roger's vision of a Home for these children with me. As I prayed, my mind went back to 1978, when at the 1st "Return to Malaysia" conference held in Oxford, England, the Lord had challenged me to return to Malaysia and to consider missionary service. I vividly remembered my prayer then, "Lord, IF You want me to be a missionary, You'll have to prepare me to be one." I believe He answered that sincere although reluctant response from my heart.

### Legitimate Rights

Over the years the Lord has been patiently and gently teaching me the freedom in relinquishment of legitimate rights. How dearly we hold on to our jobs, status, families and material comforts and put them above what God intends for us, and He desires nothing but the best for us. He alone knows what is best for us because after all, He is our Maker.

When I told my parents my decision to work in the Centre in Bangkok, they initially objected. They were hurt and hostile to the idea. They found it difficult to understand (and I cannot blame them) why I should take this course of action and 'leave' them in their old age. I had just been home for over a year, having spent almost all the years of my nurse's training and working years abroad. Jesus' words: "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he

cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14 : 26) became an applicable challenge to discipleship. I praise God that He changes hearts and attitudes and today my parents have accepted my decision.

The Lord in wonderful ways then confirmed His leading to me. I came to Thailand on September 1984, as an overseas worker, seconded by Malaysian CARE. I appreciate the love, prayers and support of the Christians in the Christian Fellowship Centre in Brunei, the New Zealand partners and the members of the Island Glades Gospel Centre, my home church in Penang. The Lord has encouraged me through many individuals and groups of Christians who have prayed and/or promise to pray.

### Loops, Curves and Squiggles

We have rented a hostel with 22 double-bedded rooms and 5 staff rooms. At the moment there are 23 boarders, comprising students and young working adults. Many of them came for the Christmas evangelistic outreach in the hostel and there was certainly a hunger in some of their hearts. The girls will stay until the centre is registered with the Thai government and the work becomes operational. Meanwhile I am doing language study and I hope to do at least six months of basic Thai. The language has five tones and the script consists of circles, loops, curves and squiggles! I have my own peculiar areas of difficulty with them. There are times when I feel I have achieved something and other times when I feel frustrated with the lack of progress, but praise God, He is my Helper.

As I envisage the work ahead, I look not at myself as I will see all the inadequacies and lack of experience. Instead I will look to the Lord Who will equip me and give grace, wisdom and strength for the task which He has called me to.

There are four other potential workers who are waiting on the Lord regarding this project. Amongst them is a Thai national. Please pray for them.

Pray with us that we may bring Jesus Christ's ministry of love and reconciliation in all its beauty and power to the broken lives of these children. □

Miss Yeoh Lay Bee is Malaysian CARE's first seconded overseas worker. Readers wishing to contribute to Miss Yeoh's support may send gifts to Malaysian CARE, 599, Jalan 17/18A, Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Readers wishing to send gifts for the work at New Hope Refuge and Care Centre, Bangkok may send their gifts to: The Treasurer, Burmah Road Gospel Hall, 164A Burmah Road, Penang, West Malaysia. Please state clearly that the gift is for Miss Yeoh Lay Bee/the Bangkok work.

### Bold Prayers

There is nothing God can't do unless, of course, it is something contradictory to His nature as revealed in Scripture. He is in control of nature and the lives of men and women. The knowledge that nothing is impossible to God should make our prayers bold, expectant and joyful.

# Home Grown Patch



## Yesterday, today, tomorrow — forever the same

Thou wilt never change  
From generation to generation the same:  
Thy faithfulness always great  
Thy grace and mercy the same.  
So I will call on Thy name.  
JEHOVAH, JEHOVAH GOD Is Thy Name.

Times will change  
Things do not remain the same.  
I will change,  
Friends will change  
— never the same.  
But Thou, Lord  
Thou art always the same  
Yesterday, today, tomorrow  
Forever the same  
Thou wilt never change  
Glory, glory to Thy great name.

P. G. G.

## In search of the perfect Church

When I found my church wanting,  
I thought 'twas time to go a – searching  
For that perfect church so true,  
Where strong and fruitful I would grow.

So I left my church for another  
To be greeted, “Welcome, sister!  
We are the perfect church!” they cried.  
But I saw hearts so full of pride.

My next church was fun,  
Singing and clapping, everyone.  
With ne'er a care for the wretched and the poor,  
Just praise the Lord and be of good cheer!

Soon I was on the move again,  
To seek a church where God must reign.  
Instead I found one with money and power,  
Where meetings and projects their emptiness cover.

Here and there, I desperately went.  
Alas, at last I sadly knew:  
There is no perfect church, you see!  
I returned to mine – a repentant me.

I read Christ's letters to the seven churches  
Warning them of sin and the devil's clutches.  
But never did He ever say  
“Leave your church and run away!”

Do your best with what is there.  
Use your talents if you care  
Worshipping and tithing, caring and praying  
Your church will grow with God's blessing.

*S. C. is a teacher in Seremban*

S. C.



**EVERYONE  
CAN LEARN  
to PRAY  
ALLOUD**

Most of us remember the days when as young Christians, we found it difficult to pray aloud in front of others. Sometimes we felt intimidated by the fluency and eloquence of the older ones or we were just too plain shy to pray audibly. As others encouraged and loved us, we slowly learnt.

New Christians still join our prayer groups in our churches today. How shall we encourage them to pray aloud? We are reprinting below Evelyn Christenson's Six S's Method from her book *What Happens When Women Pray?* as we believe it will be helpful to both those among us who are learning to pray and those of us who are encouraging young Christians to participate in prayer groups.

*"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him."*  
Matthew 6:7-8.

## Scared to Pray Aloud

"Well, I suppose you all know how to pray. I won't fit into this group." With that remark, Betty, my neighbour, joined the three of us meeting in a home on our block to pray for the coming Billy Graham Crusade. There she was, apparently wanting to take part, but scared to death to pray aloud, even with only three other women present.

There are thousands of people just like Betty. They are all over the country – in neighbourhood prayer groups, in midweek services, and in special prayer sessions – and they are not praying audibly for only one reason: they don't know how.

We have found in our prayer seminars that about 50% of those participating have never prayed aloud before. They come from a great variety of churches, Protestant and Catholic, but talking with God in the presence of others is a very real problem to them.

My response to my neighbour, Betty, was, "Oh, yes, you certainly will fit into this group. It's really not difficult. After we hear the prayer requests, we all are going to pray just one simple sentence on each one." And we did. The three of us, who had prayed for years, prayed one simple sentence following the request, and so did Betty! In fact, as we concluded that session, she had prayed four times, audibly. What happens when we put ourselves on the level of the most inexperienced pray-ers? Many of them hear their own

voices in prayer for the first time.

The rules we applied that morning were the ones our women devised in 1968 to implement our method of praying in one accord – praying about only one subject at a time, with one person praying aloud while the others in the group are praying silently on the same subject. There are six S's, six simple rules to follow, whether one is a participant or a prayer group leader, a seasoned pray-er or a shy and untrained one. These six rules serve as effective tools to help a prayer group get started, to encourage newcomers, and to motivate timid people to pray aloud. But a prayer group doesn't have to stay with these elementary rules. It's exciting to know that the participants can go on and graduate into effective, fervent, spontaneous praying.

Suppose your present prayer group is not going very well with no one wanting to join or perhaps not coming back after trying it once. Or, suppose you would like to start a prayer group in your church or in your neighbourhood. You may find that these six S's are just what you need to encourage 100% participation.

## 1. Subject by Subject

The first 'S' is *Subject by Subject* – praying in one accord about only one subject at a time. As one person prays out loud, the rest pray silently on the same subject, not planning their own prayers in advance. This assures complete concentration and fervent prayer on one request at a time. Also, in this way no one is deprived of the privilege of praying for the request before going on to another.

You may be accustomed to praying around the world, mentioning every person you know, every missionary in many different countries. And you may be tempted to pray this way as a

prayer group leader. But your part is only to announce one subject for prayer at a time, and then to pray a short sentence prayer yourself. Sometimes it's a good idea to have a list ready and to say, "Right, now we are going to pray one simple sentence about so and so." Then, as the leader, pray one simple sentence and wait for others to pray audibly on the same subject before going to the next request. Because the participants will have to "shift mental gears" before going on to another subject, it's a good idea to pause between subjects. Then the group will be prepared to pray again.

As the participants learn to pray in one accord, subject by subject, prayer gains momentum and becomes more spontaneous. When this happens, the leader may simply lead out in prayer on a subject rather than announcing it. When those in our groups become proficient in this method, their spiritual pulses will be throbbing together in such a way that each one will begin to sense the direction of the Holy Spirit when it is time to start a new subject. Everyone in the group will then have the freedom to initiate a new topic for prayer. It may take a while, but this is our goal. They won't have to have a leader anymore!

I remember the first time I tried this with my group in 1968. I had always come to the prayer meeting with a written list of requests at which I would peek with one eye. That day I told God I was going to hide the list and trust Him completely to bring to the minds of the pray-ers those things He wanted us to remember in prayer. Checking the list after we finished praying, I was delighted and amazed to find that He had reminded someone to pray about every single request I had written down!

When praying subject by subject, everyone is free to pray audibly in turn. But whether praying audibly or silently, all are praying in one accord on the same subject, not planning their own prayers in advance, and multiplying the power of all the prayers that are ascending simultaneously to God's throne.

## 2. Short Prayers

*Short Prayers*, the second handle, are the secret of the success of small group prayer. Just one, or only a few sentences from each person on each subject allows time for all to pray if they wish. No one should be forced to pray aloud, but let prayer be something spontaneous, something a person wants to do, even if it's only to hear her own voice in prayer.

As leaders we are responsible to see that the

prayers are short. How are we going to do this? Superimpose our wills on our groups and say, "Look everybody, pray short prayers"? No, but at first we will have to back way up and start praying just one simple sentence ourselves in order to get the shy, untrained ones to pray. We make the rest of the group more comfortable by the kind of praying we do. Might it be that God is much more interested in the short statement of a new pray-er who have never prayed audibly before than He is in an elaborate prayer uttered by one who has had years of practice? It may be that we, veteran pray-ers, mature pray-ers, are inhibiting the shy ones. Some of us may even have an idea that God hears us for our "much praying".

Christ had something to say about this when He was teaching His disciples to pray. He said, "But when ye pray, use not vain repetition, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him" (Mt 6:7-8).

Do we think we're going to be heard because we give an introduction, three points, and a conclusion to everything we pray about? God knows all we need, and all we have to do is to lay our requests before Him. Just think of all the requests that go unremembered when someone dominates the group with lengthy prayers on one, two, or even three subjects!

Now, there are times when long, involved prayers are very much in order. If you are asked to lead in prayer at a meeting and respond by praying one simple sentence, you will probably jar the whole group! Long prayers are appropriate at the right time and in the right place, but that time is not when the shy and untrained are learning to pray.

## 3. Simple Prayers

The third "S" is *Simple Prayers*. Those who have never prayed before will find it possible to utter one simple sentence from the heart when the leaders and other participants avoid using complicated phrases and a special prayer vocabulary. When we leave our high-sounding theological expressions at home in our prayer closets and make our short prayers simple ones, then the new pray-ers will feel comfortable about praying one simple, uncomplicated prayer themselves, and will be more apt to return the following week.

Though he didn't know it at the time, I learned a valuable lesson from one of our church

leaders during our Prayer Week in 1970. He was an Irishman with a beautiful accent and a rich vocabulary. Whenever he prayed aloud our hearts soared heavenward. But we had a problem. When he finished praying nobody else dared to follow him! Why, I wouldn't be caught dead praying after he had just uttered his long, beautiful prayer, couched in lofty theological phrases. I can remember even my husband hesitating a bit to close in prayer after this man had prayed so eloquently.

As we approached that 1970 Prayer Week, I wondered what was going to happen in a group he would be leading. I soon found out, for one night he and I were leading our respective groups in areas separated only by a plastic curtain. As I presented the prayer requests to my group, I found it difficult to concentrate because I was so curious to learn what was happening on the other side of the curtain. Have you ever had your ear attuned in one direction while your voice was aimed in another?

I heard him open his prayer group with just one simple sentence. Astounded, I listened. But he didn't say another word. Soon, one by one, all the people in his group prayed their own simple sentences. Then he prayed another sentence on the next subject and stopped. Once again each one prayed. I was acquainted with everyone in his group, and I knew that many of them had never prayed aloud before; but that night every single person in his circle prayed aloud. What happens when we are willing to put ourselves temporarily on the level of those who don't know how to pray? We encourage them to pray with us.

Back in 1968 when we were practising and experimenting with all these methods, eventually a whole room in our church was filled with women praying; but Eva, a woman who lived next door, declared that she would not join the others in prayer. She said she had never prayed out loud in a group and she never would.

I knew that Eva's family had a very fine devotional life. She was a great Christian. This wasn't her problem, but praying aloud with others was. She would shake her finger at me in other meetings and say, "Don't you ever call on me to pray; don't you ever call on me."

I assured her that we never call on anybody to pray, but still she didn't come to our prayer meetings. As we drove up to the church, we would see the curtains part as she peeked out the window, but that's as close as Eva got. Then one day, without explanation, she joined us. She came every week after that, but never prayed out loud.

As the summer rolled around, we moved our meetings to one of the parks in town. It was at one of those park sessions that I had a distinct impression from God that Eva was going to pray that day. But as I led the group in prayer, mentioning one request after another, she didn't utter a word. Though it was past time for us to start home, I kept adding requests and waiting for her. Suddenly, Eva began to pray. She forgot all the rules she ever learned. It was like Niagara Falls breaking loose! That day Eva prayed around the world.

When we had Prayer Week in January 1970, one of the groups praying was made up of all men, including the pastor and the chairman of the church board, except Eva. Again my ear was attuned in another direction. Guess who prayed first in that group? Eva! She has said to me since, "Ev, if I can do it, anybody can."



#### 4. Specific Prayer Requests

Handle number four is *Specific Prayer Requests*. Specific requests listed and specific answers noted are a great encouragement to continuing and expanded prayer. Use a notebook or file folder for this.

If our groups start falling apart, and they may, or if people suddenly aren't interested, the best way to get things going again is to encourage them by showing specific answers to their specific requests. When there's a lag, whip out that little book in which requests and answers are recorded and point out how God has used the prayer group to change circumstances and individuals. Spend time in prayer praising God for His specific answers. Then watch as new life floods your prayer group!

As the specific answers to their prayers pile up, you will begin to see the pray-ers change as well. By keeping records, the individuals who are praying start to see the worth of themselves in prayer, and this is important.

Date your specific requests and date the an-

swers. God is not controlled by time as we human beings are. He is only aware of time. He places His answers down on Planet Earth when He knows best. Therefore, if we keep track of time — how long God takes to answer our prayers — we're going to learn some tremendous spiritual lessons about how God operates. As weeks and months and years come and go, we will see that His timing is always perfect.

We will also learn some whys when we keep track of how He answers. It may be that we are not ready for some answers. My two prayer partners and I prayed every week for two solid years before I had my first neighbourhood Bible study. I wasn't ready and God knew I wasn't. If we keep a record of the specific timing of our requests and God's answers, then we can look back and see many of the reasons for His delays and His withholdings.

God may answer our prayers not only at a time when we least expect, but He may answer in a way we don't expect. We will be astounded at how God answers prayer. He may answer in a way that is completely opposite to the way we think He should. He knows what is best for us, and He never makes a mistake.

Our women experienced this great joy in praying specifically in May 1968, when we were preparing for a mother-daughter banquet. Ruth Johnson of "Back to the Bible Broadcast", a "daughter" of our church, was to be the speaker. We set up a prayer room and asked the women who came to the church to work (cook, set tables, or decorate) to spend more time, equal time if they could, in the prayer room, praying specifically for Ruth Johnson. What a great moving of God there was at the banquet that night!

On the following Sunday, with my little notebook in hand (I always recorded the results of our prayer experimentation), I said to Ruth, "Please be very careful how you answer me because we zeroed in on you in prayer, and I want a very honest answer. This will be reported to our national conference in June. Will you tell me what happened, if anything did happen, on Friday night when you spoke at our banquet."

Ruth drew a deep breath and tears came to her eyes. "Ev," she said, "the last time I was in this church it was to bury my mother. It all came back to me last Friday as I was on my way here. After I got to the church, I couldn't even bring myself to open the door. I kept thinking of my mother, and then I thought of my former Sunday School teachers who are going to be at the banquet. You know, I used to be 'naughty little Ruthie' to those teachers, and I had a feeling that they were all going to be looking at me and think-

ing, There's that "naughty little Ruthie" again. Evelyn, I could not walk through that door. But suddenly, I felt a great sense of strength and freedom. I can't explain it, but there was complete release and I walked in. It was just fantastic. My voice has gone around the world via radio for 30 years, but never in all those years have I felt such freedom and such power as I experienced when I sang and spoke last Friday night."

Not long afterward Ruth's missionary brother came home from India. He came to me and said, "Evie, what did you do to my sister?"

I replied, "We didn't do anything to your sister."

He said, "Oh, yes you did. Since the women prayed, my sister has been a completely different woman"

Now I thought Ruth was a fantastic Christian before that time, but I learned something. It was that we don't limit our praying to the down-and-outer, or to someone we think is dying or experiencing great tragedy. We also need to pray for those who are ministering, who don't appear to have any needs. What did we do? We only prayed — specifically. And God worked.

## 5. Silent Periods

The next "S" is *Silent Periods*. Silent periods between prayers are a privilege and a blessing. Don't panic when there's a lull — just listen! Prayer is a two-way conversation with God.

Today silence is almost a lost art. After a few seconds pass without audible prayer, someone usually feels compelled to clear his throat, shuffle his feet, or nervously finger a song book. Somehow we think we have to talk at God all of the time, but there are marvellous things that God wants to say to us. He has answers to our questions, secrets He wants to share, yet we bombard Him with our "much praying". We forget that God is on His throne in heaven just waiting to say something great to us, if we would only give Him a chance. How frustrated He must be (if God can become frustrated) when He has something so wonderful to tell you and me, and we aren't quiet long enough to listen to what He has to say.

One day I asked my son about a girl who lives near us, and he said, "Oh, I guess she's fine, Mom, if she'd ever keep still so we could find out."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well on the school bus that girl talks every single minute. She might be a real great girl, but she doesn't shut up long enough for us to find out."

Has God ever said that about me? Has He ever said it about you? Have we learned to keep still long enough for God to say something to

us? It is in the silence that our communication becomes two-way.

The first time I practised the six "S" method at a retreat was 1969. It was evening, and as the women finished praying in their small groups of four, I dismissed them to go out to a point near the water. "Just one rule," I said, "please don't talk while you are walking out to the point." There had been fervent prayer in their groups, and I wanted them to keep their hearts open to God's voice.

We had planned that the KTIS radio trip would come to the point by boat and, at a given signal, sing to the women on shore. But the signal somehow failed, and they waited and waited, not knowing when to start their song. The leader of the testimony meeting kept putting more wood on the fire and thinking, "I have to say something" But each time she thought it, God said, "Keep still, Mary." In fact, Mary told me later, "You know very well, Evelyn, that God said, 'Mary, shut up!'"

Twenty minutes went by with about 500 women sitting in absolute silence at the water's edge. Now and then we could hear soft crying. Then from the boat totally obscured by the darkness, came the beautiful strains of "Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to Thee." The common theme that ran through the testimonies that night was: "God spoke to me not so much in the songs or in the message, but in the silence."

## 6. Small Groups

*Small Groups*, the sixth "S", are usually best for newcomers, as well as for the shy or untrained. For some, it would take great courage to stand before a group of 100 people, or even 25 people, and raise their voices in prayer for the first time. But in smaller groups they can gain confidence in praying audibly.

In our seminary when there are several hundred participants in one room, we divide into small groups of four or five. This is quickly accomplished by standing and having every other row turn back, each two rows of people facing each other. We then just draw apart in groups of four, two from each row. How my heart thrilled at one of our prayer seminars in a large church recently when almost 200 small groups of people in the same room lifted their voices earnestly to God.

Yesterday, when one of my original prayer partners called me long distance, we chatted about the joy and the privilege of being two or three in a little group. "Ev," she recalled, "when we started praying, just the three of us, that was

the turning point in my spiritual life."

Whatever we do, we must never underestimate the value of a small group praying, for Christ promised that where two or three of His followers gather together in His name, He will be in their midst (see Mt 18:20). What an opportunity it provides to practise the presence of Christ in our midst!

Do you remember in the account of the stoning of Stephen that he lifted up his eyes and "saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God"? (Acts 7:55) The right hand of God is the place of authority and honour. Christ is still at the right hand of God today, interceding for us, but we also have His promise that He will be with us — where even two or three are gathered together. Now, we want to be very careful that we do not take Christ off His throne, that we do not play games with Him in prayer. He is in heaven, but His presence is in the midst of those who gather together in His name.



Christ helped the disciples and those who knew Him very intimately here on earth to understand this. G. Campbell Morgan, in his message "Re-kindled Fire," emphasises the importance of our Lord's vanishing and appearing after His resurrection. He explains that the disciples and His friends were learning the lesson that Christ was with them, even when they did not see Him with their physical eyes. These followers of Jesus were practising His presence even though they could not see Him. After He had vanished from their sight for the last time at His ascension, He was in their midst in the upper room, and they knew it.

**For you to pray:**

*"Dear Father: Please give me the privilege of being aware of the presence of Jesus, my Saviour, in a prayer group. Teach me to help others to pray. Teach me to listen to You speaking to me in the silent periods." □*

# MEREKA YANG MENARUH KASIHAN

“Berbahagialah mereka yang menaruh kasihan terhadap orang lain, Tuhan juga akan mengasihani mereka.”

Mt. 5 : 7

## MRS. LYDIA LOH

‘Menaruh kasihan’ berbeza dengan ‘rahmat’. Menaruh kasihan adalah perbuatan kasih kepada orang-orang yang memerlukan pertolongan. Biasanya mereka orang yang menderita sakit, kesusahan dan kesengsaraan. Kesemuanya itu akibat dosa. Rahmat berhubungan dengan dosa dan rasa bersalah. Menaruh kasihan bererti menghulurkan pertolongan serta meringankan beban, sedangkan rahmat menghapuskan kesalahan serta mengembalikan kedudukan yang semula.

Yesus tidak menunjukkan kepada para pengikutnya golongan manusia yang khas kepada siapa mereka harus menaruh kasihan. Kisah perkhidmatan Yesus memberi gambaran bermacam orang yang menerima kasihannya. Seorang Samaria menaruh kasihan kepada seorang mangsa perompak di tengah perjalanan ke bandar Yeriko. Yesus menaruh kasihan kepada mereka yang lapar, sakit dan yang dianggap sebagai sampah masyarakat. Dia membela orang yang seharusnya dihukum, tetapi oleh sebab kasihannya mereka diampunkan. Tuhan kita itu Tuhan yang berkasihan serta sentiasa menunjukkan kasihanNya. Sebagai warga kerajaan Tuhan, kita pun patut menaruh kasihan.

Memang sebenarnya dunia ini tidak mengenal kasihan. Ianya lebih senang melindungi diri-

nya dari kesakitan mahupun bencana yang menimpa umat manusia. Dunia ini lebih senang mencari pembalasan daripada mengampunkan. Tetapi barang siapa yang menaruh kasihan akan menerima kasihan juga. “Berbahagialah mereka yang menaruh kasihan terhadap orang lain, Tuhan juga akan mengasihani mereka.”

Hakikat itupun dibincangkan di bab yang selanjutnya. Yesus berkata, “Jika kamu mengampuni orang-orang yang bersalah kepadamu, maka Bapamu yang di syurga akan mengampuni kamu juga.” Ini tidak bererti kita hanya menerima keampunan jika kita mahu mengampuni. Kita menerima kasihan Tuhan serta pengampunannya bila kita berpaling dari dosa-dosa kita. Oleh sebab kita sudah diampuni, maka patutlah kita menaruh kasihan kepada orang lain dan mengampuninya. Bukti yang paling baik guna mengetahui kita sudah diampuni Tuhan adalah kesediaan kita mengampuni kesalahan orang. Kesediaan mengampunkan dan menerima pengampunan, serta menaruh kasihan dan menerima kasihan, merupakan suatu kenyataan yang tidak boleh dipisahkan.

Yesus menyelaskan hal itu dalam cerita Hamba Yang Tidak Tahu Mengampuni Orang. Hamba itu menerima pengampunan dari tuannya, tetapi dia enggan mengampunkan rakan-nya. Bila tuannya mendapat tahu hal itu, hamba itu menerima hukuman yang berat. Dapat disimpulkan bahawa “mereka yang merendahkan diri” itu sama dengan “mereka yang menaruh kasihan”. Orang yang merendahkan diri itu mengaku kepada orang lain bahawa dia seorang berdosa. Orang yang menaruh kasihan kepada orang lain, menyedari bahawa dia juga seorang berdosa. □

## INSAN. . . .

Insan. . . .  
lahirnya riwayatmu  
bukan secara kebetulan  
saintifik ataupun evolusi  
tapi  
bermulanya denyutan nadi  
terletak padaNya yang Esa

Insan. . . .  
Sedihnya hatiku tidak berkata  
melihat kau terumbang-ambing  
bersama pendirianmu  
yang menuju ke arah buntu  
selalu  
dalam kegelapan kau meraba-raba

Insan. . . .  
Sesungguhnya kau tercapai  
mendaki gunung kian mencabar  
mengharungi lautan yang bergelora  
namun  
apakah erti kejayaan  
neraka. . . . destinasiimu buat  
selama-lamanya

Insan. . . .  
Insaflah  
Kau bagaikan orang pelarian  
yang dahagakan ketenteraman  
selagi  
kau enggan sujud kepadaNya  
ketenteraman tidak akan datang. . . .

*Chew Lam Choon  
Penang*

# How to Help a Physically Handicapped Person

VIMALA DEVI



For the past twenty years, I have lived a physically handicapped life. I cannot do many things other normal people do without a second thought. I cannot even shift or turn myself to another position without someone else helping me. I need someone to take things for me, to carry me to bed, to put me on the chair and also to turn me to another position.

Friends and family are therefore very important to me; in fact friends and family are very important to all of us. In this article I want to share some areas in which friends can help the physically handicapped person.

## Transport

First of all, friends must realise that although the handicapped person is unable to move around freely on her own, this does not mean that she is to be excluded from outings, picnics, parties, concerts, film shows, meetings in church and even regular hospital check-ups. It is possible for the handicapped person to go on an outing

provided there are friends who are willing to help her. Friends should feel free to come forward and ask the handicapped person if he/she is willing to be taken out. Then they can learn the ways to help the handicapped person, like how to handle the wheelchair. Once you give it a try, you will find it's not so difficult after all.

Some handicapped persons may feel shy for one reason or another, to be handled by a friend who may be of the opposite sex, but personally when necessary, I would appreciate this offer of help. Here is one example: Going to my church, which is now situated in town is a problem for me. Furthermore, the church meets on the third floor and this means I will certainly need someone strong to carry me up the flights of stairs. When the Pastor's wife asked me if I would agree to have the Pastor and some of the brothers carry me up for the meetings, I replied, "Certainly, I would appreciate it."

Can you imagine what would

happen if these Christian friends hadn't volunteered to carry me? I would have felt left out and I would not be able to participate in any of the church activities. As a result, I would get discouraged spiritually and I would soon be bored and lonely staying at home all the time. It is a pity that in many cases the handicapped person is left on his/her own and he/she has no other choice but to live a miserable and lonely life.

## Friendship

All of us need friends. Without friends, we are lonely. Friends can really do wonders in the life of a handicapped person. Here are a few suggestions how friends can bring cheer to the handicapped person who is confined to a room or wheelchair most of the time.

Firstly, friends can visit the handicapped person either in groups and personally I would suggest small groups up to five persons, or they can visit the person individually. One thing which friends can do to cheer the handicapped person during their

visits is to bring a guitar along and to have a singing session in the room. Chit-chatting, sharing jokes and playing indoor games with the handicapped person are also ways to help enliven the day for us. Of course, friends should not over stay or the handicapped person will be tired out. There are times when I have felt that friends are like angels sent by God to cheer me up, especially when I am sick or downhearted. Friends are truly wonderful blessings.

Secondly, close friends can help the person to develop new abilities and to pick up new skills. This depends very much on the limitations of the handicapped person. Handicapped persons tend to be negative and to feel inferior, so the encouragement of friends is valuable. This will also involve regular visits and sacrifice of time on the part of friends. To encourage us, friends can share about the achievements of other handicapped persons. This really helps us to do better and to achieve something useful for ourselves. For example, a handicapped person whose hands can be used could learn to sew, weave, paint or write. For those who cannot use their hands, they have the potential to become artists through the Mouth and Foot Painting Artists association. The blind usually weave baskets; and some have even succeeded in becoming lawyers and musicians.

Thirdly, trustworthy friends can help the handicapped person in his/her personal matters such as keeping secrets and personal problems shared to them by the handicapped person. As in any friendship, when friends share

things in common, they will be able to encourage one another. My cousin in England, who is taking a course in journalism has been a tremendous encouragement and a blessing to me. We correspond and we share our thoughts. We also encourage each other in our interest in writing. She even bought me a book on writing which I found very helpful. I certainly appreciate her friendship.

### Prayer

Church friends and other Christian friends can pray for the handicapped person. This means praying specifically for real needs. This can be done during visits and especially when the person is sick in bed. Reading the Bible to the person when he/she is lying sick in bed will strengthen and uplift the person spiritually. We handicapped persons will surely appreciate the prayer support of our brothers and sisters.

As I conclude, I want to share some reasons why friends are sometimes reluctant to help a handicapped person.

Sometimes friends are scared to come forward to help the person because they think it might be troublesome. As stated earlier, it's not really that difficult once you learn how to 'handle' us.

Secondly, some friends are afraid they may interfere with the parents' decisions for the handicapped child. It is true that some parents and families of the handicapped person are too protective. The parents may want to take care of their handicapped child's problems themselves, as they think they are the

only ones who know the best for their child and so suggestions by friends are resented by parents. This causes concerned friends to stop giving suggestions and parents sometimes become a stumbling block when friends want to help the handicapped child.

Thirdly, there are also instances where the handicapped person's attitude is wrong and when he/she is not willing to be helped. This may be due to shyness, feelings of inferiority or even stubbornness. The latter is more commonly seen in aged people.

We who are physically handicapped persons need the support of friends and family so that we need not live lonely, frustrated lives. Please remember that we are people like you, with feelings, needs and desires like any able-bodied person. And we need you to befriend us. □

*Viimala Devi lives in Kajang with her parents. She is enrolled on the Christian Writers' Course and this article was written as an assignment.*



# who is my neighbour

## *Just an Ordinary Housewife*

We hadn't met for six years. How good it was to see her again, this friend I had known since she was a young girl. Now, in her mid-forties, she had come to Kuala Lumpur to see a Specialist.

We spent the first hour catching up on news about our families. There was so much to tell each other about our children! And then we gradually drifted on to other things. She leads a very busy life and is a working mother. Besides her three children, she had taken in a niece at the age of six to help a poorer relative, and seen her through school to young womanhood. As soon as that one was off her hands, a friend from another town had suddenly arrived with her 17-year daughter. "Please help me" pleaded the distraught mother. "She's in danger in my own house." My friend with the big heart had been touched. "Of course she can stay with us," she had responded to the troubled woman. She went on to tell of this one and that one whom she had been able to take to hospital, ferrying them back and forth in her car because they had no transport. And then her eyes lit up as she told of her birthday, and how she and her

## BETTY YOUNG

family had gone to a Government Home for the Handicapped to distribute fruit and sweets, cutting the fruit and staying to watch the children enjoy it.

In no sense was my friend bragging about her good deeds. She obviously had no idea that she was making any impression on me. It was the story of her life, bubbling along like a joyous brook, brimming over with kindness and help to people.

"And then I fell sick just before Christmas," she said. "I had to lie still." And what about the Christmas cooking? How would all the visitors be fed? The family set to work and three chickens were prepared. But the baking? The cakes? No one had time to do that. And then the visitors began pouring in and each one brought a cake. And tin upon tin of biscuits! As wave after wave of food poured in, the visitors were fed and so was her family.

Her eyes danced with merriment. "So I didn't do anything for Christmas this year," she finished, "but we all had plenty to eat!"

When she had left, I reflected on all she had told me. There were many more stories — all about people and how she'd been involved with them. I never

told her what a wonderful person she was. She wouldn't want to hear that anyway. But I quietly thanked God for this caring housewife, so oblivious of how the love of Jesus shines through her. Her deeds will never appear in the New Straits Times. Nevertheless countless people have turned to her for help, and never in vain.

I smiled to myself as I remembered her Christmas. How surprised she had been when all the cakes and biscuits had turned up! Did I say I smiled to myself? That isn't quite true. I exchanged a smile with my Heavenly Father. I saw so plainly His love and care for her and her family — in return for all the help and caring she had given others. For we can never outdo *His* kindness and caring. He sees all the little caring acts we do, and sometimes soon, and sometimes long after we've forgotten all about them, He suddenly surprises us with lavish expressions of His bounty — His way of saying "Thank you for caring."

*"Blessed is he who has regard for the weak;  
the Lord delivers him in times of trouble.  
The Lord will protect him and preserve his life;  
he will bless him in the land  
and not surrender him to the desire of his  
foes.  
The Lord will sustain him on his sick-bed  
and restore him from his bed of illness."  
Psalm 41:1-3*



Dear Goldie

Greetings in Jesus' wonderful name. I have some personal questions and I'd like you to help me.

1. Should we give our tithe wholly to our church or can we divide the 10% of our salary for various Christian organisations?
2. Is it a sin to look and read pornography books?
3. Is it a sin not to pray?
4. Is petting sin? Some of my friends told me petting is sin while others say that it's good as long as I can control myself.

Please help me.

Peter

Dear Peter

Here are my brief answers to your four questions. If you need more detailed answers, write in again to us.

#### *On Tithes*

Some churches encourage their members to give all their tithes to the church and the church will then apportion amounts to different Christian organisations.

Several Christians however, choose to apportion a certain amount of their tithes to their church and give away the remainder to groups/Christian workers of their choice. I personally feel that either way is acceptable. The important thing is to

- i. give generously (2 Cor 9:6)

- ii. give willingly and cheerfully (2 Cor 9:7)
- iii. give purposefully (2 Cor 9:7)
- iv. give regularly (2 Cor 16:2)

Remember that the tithe is the smallest suggested amount. Certainly, Christians are to be encouraged to give more than that.

#### *On Pornography*

Read Ephesians 4:22-23 and Eph 5:3-5 and you will already have the answer to your question. Pornography panders to the lustful appetites of fallen men. The born-again Christian is now a new person (1 Cor 5:17) with new interests and a new spiritual appetite and these things will no longer have a hold over him.

#### *On Prayer*

Scriptures exhort us to pray. Check out 1 Thes 5:17; Col 4:2, Phil 4:6. When we do not pray, we are not only disobeying the Lord, we are also missing out on the blessings and the joy that the Lord wants to give us when we fellowship with Him in prayer. Prayer is not only confession of sins and bringing our petitions before Him. Prayer also includes praise, worship, thanksgiving and intercession ie praying for the needs of other.

#### *On Petting*

Petting is to caress or touch another person with intent to arouse. It is meant to be a beautiful thing in marriage, a natural expression leading to sex. The problem about petting is that it's meant to move on to something more. Two persons won't be satisfied to just pet - they will want to move on. And many young people find themselves so aroused they just let their desires push them on.

As a Christian, your desire should be to keep your body for the woman you will someday marry. Experimenting and playing around are out for the Christian. God's word to you is 1 Tim 6:11-16. Determine that you will follow only God's commands and He will honour and bless you for your obedience.

Goldie

#### *Dear Goldie*

I am a Christian young man and my girlfriend is also a Christian. She is 19 years old. We like being together alone. Of late we've begun petting. Most times we don't feel there's anything wrong (we love each other very much) but sometimes I feel a little guilty.

Please tell us whether it's OK to pet. Please remember we really love each and we've talked of marriage.

Please Help

Dear Please Help

Petting is meant to be a beautiful thing in marriage, a natural expression leading up to sex. Petting has the intent to arouse and it is meant to move on to something else. By itself it doesn't satisfy. That's why, and you may have already discovered it yourself) you may begin with holding hands, but soon that doesn't seem enough. You move on to kissing and soon you will want to hug. Soon even that will not be enough and you move on to touching and petting. And it goes on. That's why petting has for many people, been the bridge to intercourse. It is sexually exciting and it arouses powerful emotions. Many couples have found they reached a point where they couldn't stop; they simply had to go on.

You do not say how old you are, but at 19, your girlfriend is still very young. I would advise you to develop your friendship properly at this stage. Talk and get to know each other, pray together, praise the Lord together, visit church members, read Christian books together, go in groups on outings, etc. Build your friendship up and do not let it degenerate into mere physical explorations.

When two people exclude themselves from others and just concentrate on themselves, it is easy to soon move on to touching and exploring each other's bodies. Once you've started on it, it's going to be difficult to stop. Chances are you'll want to pet once you are together again and you want to be together again so you can pet.

God's people must draw up guidelines for themselves based on the clear principles God has stated in His Word. Check out these verses:

Eph 5:8-14      1 Cor 6:18-20

Phil 4:8          Col 3:5-6

2 Tim 3:1-5      1 Thes 4:3-8

Ask yourselves some questions: Are you glorifying the Lord as you pet each other to arousal? Can you bring this area under the Lord's scrutiny? What is the Lord saying to you?

The Lord God has designed certain things exclusively for marriage. Those who break His rules may defend

themselves and say: "We felt good doing it" but the scars will be there and the years will bring the consequences.

You will do wisely to guard your body jealously now and keep it for the woman you will someday marry. Your girlfriend should do the same. She should guard her body jealously and keep it for the man she will someday marry. As a Christian man, you should treat your girlfriend's body with respect. Only your wife's body will belong to you and yours to her (1 Cor 7:3-4).

Until then, young man, the rule for you is 'Hands Off'!

Goldie

Dear Goldie

**I have a terrible secret and I want to tell you. Nobody knows about it except God. I am an addict; not a drug addict but a masturbation addict.**

**It's a terrible experience and habit. I pray so hard to stop it but in vain. Usually I fall when I am all alone by myself.**

**God seems so far away from me and would not listen when I call to Him when in temptation. I felt that I'd better die than to remain alive with all my guiltiness.**

**Can you please tell me that God will still come to my aid? How can I stop this terrible habit? (Will He forgive me - this is what I want to know most).**

Desperate Girl

Dear Desperate Girl

Yes, God will come to your aid and God will forgive you. If you are reading this reply now, I want you to say this aloud, "If I confess my sin (all sin, any sin) to God, God will forgive me because Jesus has paid for all my sins on the cross. Thank You, God. Thank You, Lord Jesus. I receive your forgiveness, Lord. Hallelujah." Then turn to 1 John 1:9 and Psalm 103:7 and memorise these verses. Cling on to these words, and do not allow the devil to whisper further guilt into your mind.

Last year, in our *Asian Beacon* Vol 16 No 1 we carried an article on Masturbation. If you would like to receive a copy, write us with your address. Let me quote for you Dr. John White's advice to those who are frustrated about masturbation.

1. God is well able to deliver you. If He isn't doing so at the moment, He may, incredible though it may seem to you, have a prior concern with something else in your life.

2. Your view of the seriousness of your problem is exaggerated. If you search the Scriptures, you will find a lot about virtues God commends to you and sins he warns you about. How do you measure up to them? How about forgetting your problem and taking the commands of Scripture seriously? You hurt no one but yourself by masturbating, but whom have you hurt this week by your sarcasm, your coldness, your forgetfulness, your laziness, your lack of tact and courtesy? How many minutes have you praised God in the last twenty-four hours?

3. Thank God for all your sexual feelings. Don't hate them. They may be difficult to manage as an unbroken horse, but they represent one of God's richest gifts to you. He made you to feel sexual desire. Be glad and rejoice in it. Thank Him, too, for the day when you will be master of your sexual drives. Though it tarry, it will come, if you let God be master in other areas in your life.

4. Quit hating yourself. Refuse to listen to the endlessly torturous accusations of the accuser of the brethren, who accuses you day and night (Rev 12:10). If you are cast down, God waits for you with wide-open arms. By all means groan, but take your shame to the throne of grace where blood will wash it away. Your will is being freed and will be freed from the grip of masturbation, too, one day. So learn to laugh at your chains, in faith.

If you would like to meet us, or need us to help you further, please write again.

Goldie

## the editor's note

# A Psalm for the New Year

**P**salm 112 is very much a New Year Psalm. It contains all that we could want to wish our family and friends (and ourselves) at the start of the new year. Consider the following:

*v. 2 'His descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed'*

The promise here is for blessings upon the children. In typical Chinese interpretation it would mean they will grow up well, excel in scholastic endeavours and prosper in their careers/business.

*v. 3 'Wealth and riches are in his house'*

This is a promise for the breadwinner himself. His own business prospers, he does exceedingly well. There will be plenty of food in the larder and on the table all year round.

However, the blessed (happy) man to whom these promises are made is the man *who fears the Lord and who greatly delights in His commandments* (v. 1). When a man's spiritual life is in order, God promises to take care of his family and home (v. 2) and his work (v. 3).

Notice the other characteristics of this blessed man. He:

(i) *is generous (v. 5)*

(ii) *conducts his affairs with justice (v. 5)*  
*(no bribes, undercounter deals, etc)*

(iii) *shares his goods with the poor (v. 9)*

The Psalm does not say that life will be plain sailing for this righteous man who fears the Lord. There will be some difficult days but *he is not afraid of evil tidings, because his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.* (v. 7). Events may happen that will threaten to shake him and his house, *but his heart is steady, he will not be afraid* (v. 8).

The Lord will be gracious, merciful and righteous to him at all times (v. 4). And when the year comes to an end, he will have only one testimony, *"It has been well with me (v. 5). Praise the Lord."*

Make this your new year Psalm for 1985. And if you are bringing New Year Wishes to family and friends, desire for them the promises in Psalm 112. Begin by praying for them to first become men and women who will fear the Lord and greatly delight in His commandments. (GPG).

## Psalm 112

Praise the LORD.

Blessed is the man who fears the LORD,  
who greatly delights in his commandments!

His descendants will be mighty in the land;  
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

Wealth and riches are in his house;  
and his righteousness endures for ever.

Light rises in the darkness for the upright;  
the LORD is gracious, merciful, and righteous.

It is well with the man who deals generously and lends,  
who conducts his affairs with justice.

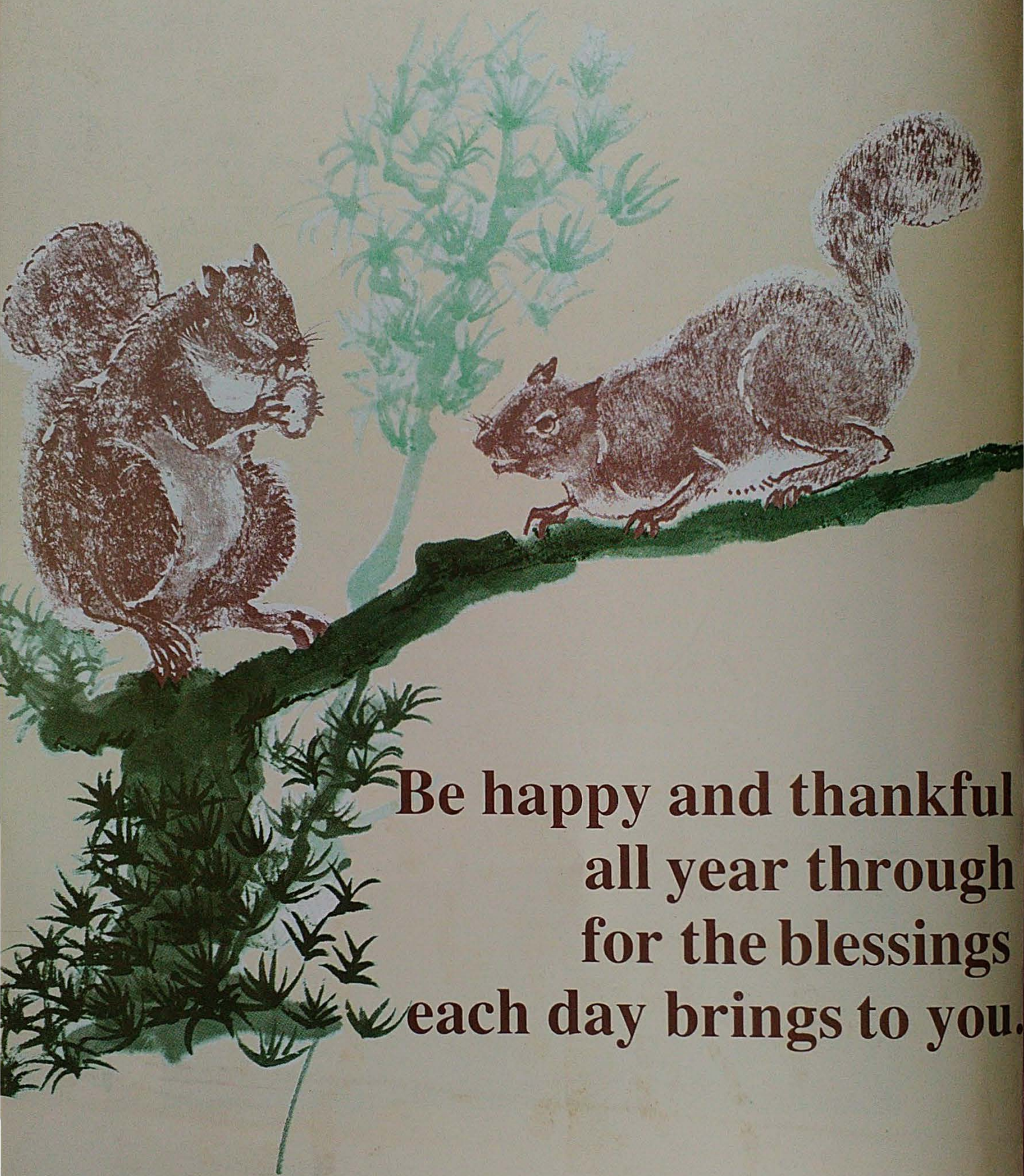
For the righteous will never be moved;  
he will be remembered for ever.

He is not afraid of evil tidings;  
his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD.

His heart is steady, he will not be afraid,  
until he sees his desire on his adversaries.

He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;  
his righteousness endures for ever;  
his horn is exalted in honour.

The wicked man sees it and is angry;  
he gnashes his teeth and melts away;  
the desire of the wicked man comes to naught.



**Be happy and thankful  
all year through  
for the blessings  
each day brings to you.**