

THE VINE

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Pastor's WORD

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

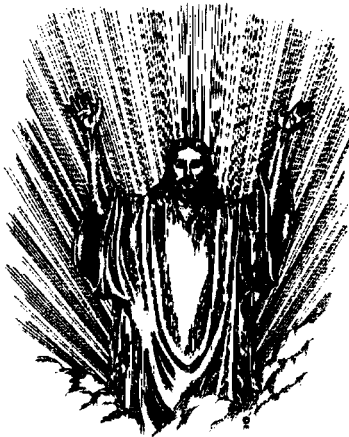
Joyous Easter greetings!

We can rejoice every day because we live in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since He has won the victory over sin, death & Satan we too can triumph through these in our lives daily as we abide in Christ. Are you experiencing your victory as Christians?

How many of us constantly fight temptations and war against our carnal nature! The great apostle Paul himself was not exempt from this spiritual versus carnal nature problem as a devout Jew.¹ Indeed, the Spirit of life can set you free from the law of sin and death. Being born again as a child of God - a Christian - takes a moment of faith for each one of us,

¹ Rom 7:21-25

becoming like Christ takes a lifetime. That is the process of sanctification. How can we be more and more holy? The Holy Spirit, the Counselor, is with you always to help you live every moment, empowering you to be a living witness of the transformation within you *for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*²



Nevertheless, *my dear friends, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*³

The end of our salvation is our spiritual maturity reflecting the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁴ In fact, it is a natural process for all living things to grow.

Do you expect your children to grow up? What farmer would put in energy and resources

on plants that would not bear fruit? What about you? A farmer cannot expect to harvest unless he works hard tilling, watering, pruning and caring. Do you expect your children to grow healthy without caring for their diet, education, need for love and spiritual nurture?

² Phi 2:13

³ Phi 2:12

⁴ Eph 4:13; Col. 1:28; 2 Cor 3:18

Jesus says that His Father *cuts off every branch that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.*⁵

How do we grow spiritually? There are several essential spiritual habits or disciplines for everyone who desires to grow. The following four areas correspond to our Church's vision statement - to be a community growing in Worship, the Word, Fellowship and Witnessing.

- Our private devotions or "quiet time". It is time of worship, prayer & communion with God using the Bible & other spiritual disciplines. It is developing an intimate relationship with Jesus. This is basic to our spiritual health. It helps if you get a good study Bible such as the "Life Application Bible".
- The study of the Bible. In addition to regular devotional reading, we need to undertake solid Bible study. It is also very helpful to read good Christian books which is another way of studying certain topics or subjects. These are important ways of feeding on solid spiritual food & growing in strength for service. There are many opportunities in care groups, DTP, Adult Bible Class, the Bethel Series, Church Retreat, seminars. It is good if you have goals like reading a book every 1-2 months,



attend a Bible study every 3-4 months.

- Fellowship - small group or one-to-one relationships - is vital for your spiritual growth too. Fellowship is a means in which we experience care from each other and receive the ministry of God. Fellowship also includes the larger corporate worship-celebration on Sundays.
- Exercising our spiritual gifts in serving and witnessing to others in the Church, in our homes and in our work places is also necessary for spiritual growth. Just as we exercise our mind and body in our work and family life, we need to exercise our spiritual life by using our spiritual gifts. In fulfilling our call to servanthood we find joy in the body of Christ and enable the ministry of the Church to be effective. Just as a body cannot be fully efficient if one organ is not functioning, the Church too will suffer if you do not function according to your gifting. Everyone has a role in this Church. What is yours? If you want Jurong Christian Church to be strong & caring, you need to play your part. Then the Church can become a dynamic witness through the powerful working of the Spirit in mature Christians.

In the light of this, we need to choose mature leaders at the coming AGM to be on our Council. We need leaders who are willing to lead by example and who have the humility to serve others. I believe we have brothers and sisters who have the spiritual gift of leadership. We need leaders who will come forward to fulfill their role so that the Church can

LETTER FROM NORTHERN THAILAND

edited

continue to move forward. I would like to mention that those who have finished their term have been faithful and exemplary in discharging their duty. We ought to thank them for their service.

On Easter, we rejoice together with our new brothers and sisters who will be baptized for the new life they will receive through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*⁶ Let us pray for each one's spiritual growth and help them achieve spiritual maturity by your example & exhortation. They are Willie, Florence & children, Tan Hock Leong, Soon Kok, Susan & Rachel Toh, Sze Wen, Marcus, Mervyn, Rachel Lee, Wei Yang, Jonathan Goh & Hartley Muze. Those joining us by transfer of membership are: Young Kwang, Iris & children, Richard & Margaret Lee.

Hallelujah!

Pastor Fredric Lee



Dear Sponsor,

Time truly flew. In the twinkling of an eye, the old year has gone.

I experienced His mighty power. A member was sick and asked for prayers. I asked him, "Do you believe God will heal your illness?" He said, "I believe God is a mighty doctor. He is able to heal me." After many prayers, he is well. His testimony has touched many.

In Manguo village there is no water. God has truly heard our prayers. He gave us water. Thank you sponsors. We do not have anything to repay you. We can only ask God to bless you.

Last year fire burned my house. Sometimes I get discouraged. Why does a servant of God meet so many dangers. However, I continued to pray. Now, I stay in a place better than the old one.

Please continue to pray for us as we serve. May God

bless you and be present with you.

Thank you.

In Christ,

Li Jian Ping

⁶⁶ Rom 6:4

FROM BANGKOK TO SINGAPORE

5TH UPDATE ON THE KEES

Wishing all of you a blessed new year! May your lives be filled with God's love and peace as you serve Him. We are reminded to give of our best to the Master, to give what He has given us back to Him as a love gift. When we hoard a thing for ourselves, it will turn into spiritual dry rot as the manna did when it was hoarded. But when it is given back to Him, He make it a blessing to others.

December 1996 was a memorable month for both of us in Thailand. It was our first Christmas in Thailand and it was certainly different. Unlike in Singapore, Christmas is not a public holiday in Thailand. Nevertheless, the Christians used this season to remember the love and grace of our Lord as well as to proclaim Christmas Gospel to others.



Sally and I thank God for the opportunity to travel with the evangelistic team to Sisaket, Buriram and Udon Thani as part of their team. We travelled, ate, prayed, done visitations and served together for 10 days. It is also a joy to see the extension of the ministry of the Thai Good News Centre (Singapore) here in these places.

Sisaket: This is the hometown of Mr Tavorn (the man featured in the video "Finding Christ in the Foreign land"). He received Christ in Singapore and after the completion of his training at L.I.T.E.. *in 1995, Tavorn returned to the house he had built with the desire to use it for the glory of the Lord. He

served with the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a part-time evangelist. What a joy it was to see more than 30 people worshipping together on Sunday and to see the great number of people helping out in the preparation for the Christmas celebration which was attended by almost 200 people. The Lutheran Church is planning to purchase land in this province for the building of a church in the near future.

Buriram: The people in this province speak mostly Cambodian and has the reputation of having the most superstitious beliefs in Thailand. When Mr Sutin (a former drug addict) returned to this place from Singapore, he was severely persecuted for his unwillingness to pay homage to the household spirits. His sister and niece was oppressed by the spirits and the family was told by the "spirit-doctor" that their torment will cease only if Sutin pay homage and apologise to the spirits. He stood firm and offered to pray for the sister and the niece instead. Thanks be to God, they were freed from their torment resulting in his niece receiving the Lord and was baptised last year. After he completed his training at L.I.T.E.*, he returned to his hometown. He evangelised amidst much opposition. Thanks be to God who brought to past several breakthroughs in the past year. He was allowed use of a house as resident as well as preaching station by a non-Christian friend for two years. He was able to purchase a piece of land at a very , very special price of 20,000 Bahts (about S\$1,200) which he plans to build his house cum preaching station. He is now trusting God for 90,000 Bahts (about S\$5,000) for that

purpose. He hope to have it built before he need to return the house he is now using to his friend. It was a joy to visit with him and to meet several families whose hearts as now very open to the Gospel.

Udon Thanki: After returning from Singapore, Mr Boonma studied in L.I.T.E.* for a year. He graduated in June 1996 and since then had been serving in his home-town as part-time evangelist with the Lutheran Church. He had the joy of seeing his family changed from persecutors of Christians into faithful followers of the Lord and supporters of his ministry. His eldest son is praying about studying in L.I.T.E. and there are now about 20 worshippers meeting at his hour each week as a result of his faithfully ministry.



MORE NEWS UPDATE FROM THE KEES

As mentioned in our last letter, we will be helping the Church in Ladprao this year while continuing with our language studies. We are thankful that God has made it possible for us to purchase a good second-hand vehicle. The journey to Ladprao Church is 15 minutes by the expressway instead of the normal 2 hours. Terry will spend part of his module break in February (15th-22nd) in Singapore, and also plans to attend the wedding of Pastor Jimmy Khoo at Yishun Christian Church. We hoped, if God willing, Terry will be able to make

and fellowship with some of you during his leave in Singapore.

POINTERS FOR PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS

Thanksgivings:

1. For the pastoral visit by the Rev Peter Chong from 25-28 December 1996.
2. For the encouragement of many who wrote, called or visited us in December and January.
3. For the many learning experience He had given us.
4. For the good second-hand vehicle we were able to purchase.
5. For the opportunity to return to Singapore for a short visit in February.

Prayers:

1. That God will grant us favour in His sight as well as in the sight of members of Lapprao Lutheran Church as we commence our ministry there in March.
2. Both of us will be studying the Bible Module in March. Please pray that we will learn well this important module.
3. We are approaching the hot season in Bangkok. Please pray for our health as well as our adjustment to the heat in Bangkok.

Now may our God who is everywhere present, alike to them that are afar and to them that are near, assist you in every good work and keep both of us and you alive in the hope of a joyful reunion.

Yours in Christ's love

Rev Terry and Sally Kee

*L.I.T.E. = Lutheran Institute Of Theological Education

DEMONS, YES; TERRITORIAL SPIRITS, NO

Dr Chuck Lowe

Over the last decade, the concept of territorial spirits has caught on. According to this teaching, demons are arranged in hierarchies, each assigned to a specific geographical region or ethnic group. Their task is to keep those dwelling within their domain ignorant of the gospel. This explains, we are told, why some countries are resolutely resistant to Christianity. Identifying the personal names or functional descriptions of the demons assigned to a particular area enables us to bind the spirit(s) through aggressive warfare prayer. Evangelism, it is claimed, can then proceed with greater effectiveness.



While this teaching makes some appeal to Scripture, one of the leading proponents admits that the view lacks explicit biblical proof. A brief glance at the most commonly cited texts confirms this evaluation.

Evidence of Territorial Spirits

Daniel 10:13,20 is the most commonly cited text from OT. Here we find a ruler (prince) of Persia and a ruler of Greece battling against the guardian angels which protect Israel. Is this proof that demons are assigned to specific territories?

Persia and Greece were successive and rival empires in OT times. Persia ruled most of the ancient Near East, including Palestine. Then the Greek empire rose, defeating Persia and taking over its territory (Dan 10:20; 11:1-4). Thus, if the rulers of Persia and Greece are demonic powers, then when nations went to war, the ruling demons fought each other. But, as Jesus insists, the kingdom of darkness does not

engage in civil war (Mt 12:24-26; Mk 3:22-26; Lk 11:15-18).

The rest of the biblical evidence further complicates the picture. Revelation 2-3 describes Satan at work in several regions simultaneously. The cities of Smyrna and Philadelphia each contain a synagogue of Satan (Rev 2:9; 3:9). Yet Satan lives in, and rules from Pergamum (Rev 2:13). And his deep teachings are promoted by a prophetess in the church in Thyatira (Rev 2:24).

How do we make sense of all this? Quite simply, behind any human opposition to the people of God lurks Satan.

In OT times, when the nation Israel was known as the people of God, Satan worked through the surrounding pagan nations (Dan 10:13,20).

In NT times, Satan works by opposing the Church. This entails religious persecution (such as the Jewish synagogues in Smyrna and Philadelphia; Rev 2:9; 3:9), political oppression as in ancient Pergamum (Rev 2:13), and false teaching which corrupts the church, as in Thyatira (Rev 2:24).

Wherever the church faces adversity, Satan is at work behind the scenes. Whatever form the harassment takes, the ultimate opponent is demonic, not human. To be more specific is to exceed the evidence.

Warfare Prayer

The case for warfare prayer is even weaker. The leading exponent of this practice admits that Daniel never even knew what was happening in the heavens while he prayed on earth. Daniel never confronted the demons; he merely prayed to God (Dan 10:12).

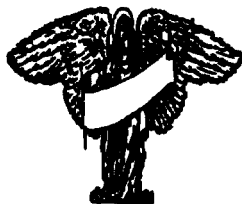
The gospels and Acts contain many accounts of exorcism, and the epistles issue many warnings about Satan. But not once do we find Jesus or the apostles using the names of demons to gain control over them. Moreover, the NT warns against aggressively confronting ruling demons.

In the ancient Jewish community of Qumran, worship included not only praising God, but cursing Satan and his demons. The New Testament does not teach that.

Both Jude and Peter rebuke such belligerence.

Not even Michael, the archangel dared rebuke Satan (Jude 9). Nor do angels attack demons, not even in the presence of God (2 Pet 2:11).

Their modesty shows that we have neither the power nor authority to challenge ruling demons. Instead, we are to appeal to God to deal with them.



Biblical Response

The Bible models four responses.

1. Jesus and the disciples exorcised demons from individuals, as the need arose. There is no evidence to support outlandish claims that up to half of all Christians are demonised, or that Christians need to have demons cast out of them at every worship service. On the other hand, there is no evidence to support the contention that exorcism is no longer necessary. A judicious use of exorcism is clearly mandated in Scriptures.

2. Our chief line of defence against Satanic attack comes in the practice of normal Christian disciplines: Bible reading, prayer, reliance on the righteousness of Christ, holy living, faith and salvation (Eph 6:10-18).

Like soldiers, we must train everyday to be fit for battle.

3. In times of persecution, we conquer Satan the same way Jesus did: by remaining steadfast in the face of opposition, even to the point of death (Rev 3:21; 5:5-6; 12:11; 15:2; 21:7).



4. We pray for courage and perseverance to spread the gospel in the face of opposition (Acts 4:25-31) and for Christ to send His Spirit to cure the blindness which prevents people from perceiving the truth of the gospel or the glory of Christ (2 Cor 3:16 - 4:4). But in prayer we do not threaten Satan; instead, we plead with God.

Spiritual warfare is crucial to the survival of the church and the spread of the gospel. But this does not entail naming demons over particular geographical regions, or assuming the authority to bind them. Instead, now as always in the history of the church, it involves the judicious use of exorcism, regular maintenance of spiritual vigour, perseverance through times of persecution, and intercession for the conversion of the nations.

This article, title above as suggested by Dr Chuck Lowe, was published in Impact Dec/Jan 97 Vol. 20 No. 6 under the title "DO DEMONS RULE?". Reprinted with permission from Impact. Dr Chuck Lowe is a lecturer in SBC and a researcher with OMF. He has done theological research in the area of demons and territorial spirits.

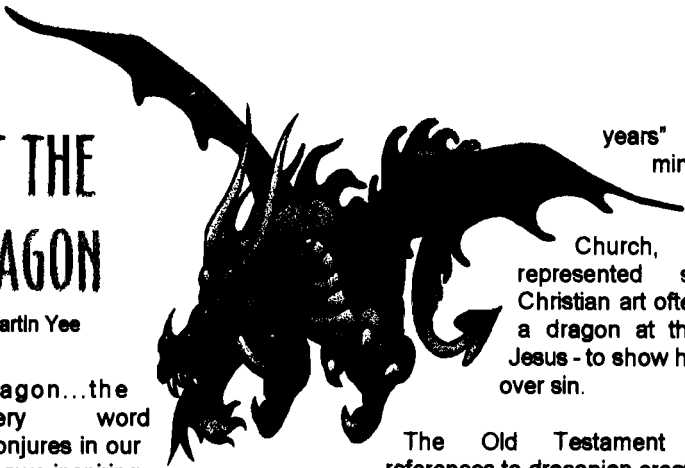
EXIT THE DRAGON

by Martin Yee

Dragon...the very word conjures in our mind an awe-inspiring beast breathing out fire, symbolising strength and prowess. Dragons are imaginary beasts with a long history in the folklore and legends of many cultures. Bruce Lee's movie "Enter the Dragon" was a local hit in the bygone days when I was a schoolboy. Our English word "dragon" is derived from the Greek word "drakon"; Latin "draco". These words refer to real and mythological snakes or serpent-like figures which may be land, aquatic or aerial beings. The mythological beings are normally shaped like serpents. In addition to serpent-like features they also have features or parts of various other animals.

The Biblical imagery of dragons - NT "drakon" and OT "tannin"

In the Christian tradition, dragons are evil. In the New Testament imagery the link between the dragon and the devil is obvious. In Revelations 20:1-2, John wrote "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. He seized the **dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan**, and bound him for a thousand



years" (Italics mine). In the Early Christian Church, dragons represented sin and Christian art often depicts a dragon at the feet of Jesus - to show his triumph over sin.

The Old Testament contains references to draconian creatures, and sea monsters such as:

1. *Leviathan* (Psalms 74:14; Isa 27:1),
2. *rahab* (Isa 51:9) - the Hebrew vowels in this word "*rahab*" is different from that of the lady's name "*Rahab*" who helped Joshua to escape (Jos 2:1-7), alto' in English they look alike,
3. *Tannin* (Job 7:12; Eze 29:3)
4. *Behemoth* (Job 40:15).

In the creation context they probably may represent chaos monsters. A number of poetic passages describe a conflict at the beginning of the world which pit Yahweh (Jehovah) against the dragon and the sea (e.g. Psa 65:6-7)

The dragon imagery in the Old Testament is also used metaphorically to represent earthly powers hostile to Yahweh. It is applied to Egypt (Isa 30:7, 51:9 cf v10; Psa 87:4) or Pharaoh (Eze 29:3-5; 32:2-8). The imagery of chaos waters is applied to the Assyrians (Isa 17:12-14 cf. 8:5-8); and the waters and the dragons are both used to denote the oppressive Babylonians

(Hab 3; Jer 51:34,44).

Babylonian mythology

The kingship of the Babylonian god Marduk was associated with his defeat of Tiamat the sea monster in the Babylonian Enuma Elish creation epic.

Canaanite mythology

The Ugaritic text has a detailed account of Baal's defeat of the sea god Yam, also allusions to another conflict between Baal or Anat and the sea monster Leviathan (the twisting, crooked serpent, and the dragon, in addition to other monsters).

Egyptian and other Near Eastern mythology

The Egyptian god Seth defeated the serpent-dragon Apep or Apopis. The Sumerian god Enlil defeated a monstrous being called Labbu in the Sumerian Text. In the Hittite story of Bogazkoy, the serpent Illuyanka was killed by the storm god.

Western mythology

St. George, is perhaps the best-known dragon-slayer in Western folk lore. Dragons are perceived as hideous, ugly, evil, causing chaos and thus to be conquered.

In Nodic myth, Sigurd (Siegfried) is the famous dragon-slayer of Fafner the dragon.

In classical Greek mythology the heroic dragon-slayers are Zeus and his sons Apollo and Hercules who slew monsters such as Typhon, Python and the Hydra. There are exceptions, however. For example, in England, the dragon was used as battle

standards of kings. Some of their coat-of-arms contain the dragon motif. The dragon was a positive symbol in the realm of heraldry.

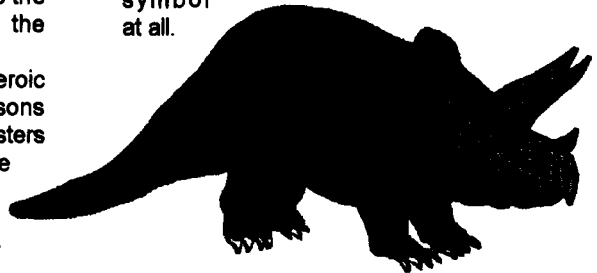
Hindu and Buddhist mythology

In the Hindu writing the *Rigveda*, Vitra the serpent like demonic dragon was slain by the god Indra. The dragon *Naga* is viewed as a benevolent semi-divine being, which in spring time climbs into the heavens and in winter lives deep in the earth.

The term *Mahanaga* or "the great dragon" is often used as a synonym for Buddha or sages who have passed beyond rebirth. The *Nagaraja* or "dragon king or queen" are water deities controlling springs, rivers, lakes and the seas. In Buddhist tradition the *nagas* are the water deities who in their sea palace guard Buddhist scriptures that have been placed under their charge because humanity is not ready to receive them.

Chinese beliefs and mythology

In contrast to the Christians, in the Chinese tradition, the dragon (known as "loong") is considered wise, benevolent and auspicious. The Chinese do not perceive evil or chaos in the dragon symbol at all.



The dragon is described as follows in a Chinese Classic by Wang Fu as "...his horns resemble those of a stag, his eyes those of a demon, his neck those of a snake, his belly that of a clam (shen), his scales those of a carp, his claws those of an eagle, his soles those of a tiger, his ears those of a cow. Upon his head, he has a thing like a broad eminence called *chi mu*. If a dragon has no *chi mu*, he cannot ascend to the sky." (Quoted in William de Visser. The Dragon in China and Japan. Wiebaden: M. Sandiq, 1969)

The dragon symbol has pervaded all segments of the Chinese culture - worshipped as god in festivals, featured in folklore, operas, songs, movies and novels;

the Chinese emperors have chosen the dragon as the royal insignia since the Han dynasty. Considered majestic and powerful; Chinese calligraphers, artists and sculptors frequently featured the dragon in their paintings, calligraphy, porcelain and bronze sculptures etc.

Dragon worship by the Taoist/Chinese

The sculpture of an imaginary beast called *ao yu* with a dragon head and a fish tail is often placed on roofs of Chinese temples. The ancient Chinese believe that the dragon was the deity in charge of rain. It inhabits a crystal palace at the sea bed and could summon the rain and wind across the sky at his bidding.

Some believe that there are four types

of dragons -

1. Tien loong (heavenly dragon) — with replenishing power,
2. Shen loong (divine dragon) - ability to start a rain
3. Dee loong (earth dragon) - care of water sources
4. Hu Zang loong - guardian of treasures

The Dragon-kings or loong-wang are mythological beings who in the Taoist view are ruled by the Celestial Venerable of the Primordial Beginning (Yuan-shih-tien-tsun) to whom they go up to once a year in order to give their report. In addition there are four other sea dragons who rule the four oceans of the earth.

Chinese villagers and fisherman pray to the dragon king for favourable weather. About the 30th day of the twelfth Chinese lunar month, many Chinese go to the seaside or the mountains to worship the dragon king offering incense and sacrifices.

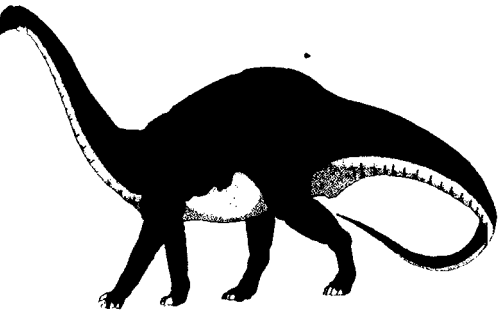
Conclusion

As Christian we need discernment so as not to get tangled in idolatry, worshipping false gods and indulging in superstitions. We only worship one True God, who created us all. On the other hand I believe that we should not go to extremes like some who advocate removing or destroying everything in the house that has the dragon symbol... including Singapore dollar notes - it is a crime to do so!



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THE 16 HIDDEN BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Here is the solution to the Bible Brain Teaser (or Eye Twister) which was published in the February issue of the Vine. The names of 16 books of the Bible mentioned in the paragraph below are highlighted.

I once made a reMark about the hidden books of the Bible. It was a luLu: kept people looKing so hard for fActs ... and for others it was a Revelation. Some were in a Jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalized. But the tRuth finally struck home to Numbers of our readers. To others it was a real Job. We want it to be A most fascinating few moments for you. YEs, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require Judges to help them. I will quickly admiT it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud Lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you can comPete. relax now, for there really are sixteen names of books of the Bible in this paragraph.

Follow Me!

What heroes are calling your child?

Your child naturally looks for people he can identify with and imitate. You can help answer the question, "Who will he follow?"

The sixth-grade class sat in stunned silence.

Their teacher had just assigned a new essay topic to them and they didn't have any idea what to write. The topic? "My Hero." "Finally, the teacher attempted to draw out ideas from the children. She asked them what person they looked up to - who did they respect? At last one boy laughingly suggested, "Luke Skywalker from the Star Wars films."

"Now," said the teacher,

"you're getting the idea!" With that, she let the class write their own thoughts.

YOUR CHILD AND HEROES

Before we look at the results of the class's assignment, think about your own child. Does he have a hero? According to Webster, a hero is "A central personage taking an admirable part in any remarkable action or event; hence, a person regarded as a model." Who is a role model for your child?

Years ago, astronaut John Glenn was a role model to many in the United States. Before that, such radio characters as "Captain Midnight" and the "Green Hornet" captured children's imaginations. Today, film stars such as Luke Skywalker dominate the attention of boys and girls.

Should you encourage your child to have heroes? You will not need to encourage him - he will! The most vital thing is to guide him in choosing the right heroes. Some television series in which the "good guys" clobber the bad have continuously high ratings. Strength in the face of great odds is always admired but whether or not these characters are acceptable models is questionable.

Don't fail to teach the value of quiet strength that comes from faith in God. Take every opportunity to point out Christlike characteristics in people so your child can learn to recognize true heroes.

GOD'S HEROES

The Bible makes no mention of the word "hero." Yet in God's Word we can find authentic heroes for study and



imitation.

Fantasy heroes in films, books and drama are not always real people. They are often superhuman people who have no relationship to our lives. The ultimate hero is Jesus Christ. He showed emotion, was not accepted by everyone who knew Him and continued to do His Father's will in spite of impending death. He was tempted just as we are and can sympathize with our weaknesses (see Hebrews 4:15).

Why not spend some time as a family each week reading brief sections of the Gospel of John. Decide what good qualities are shown in Christ each time. Relate those traits to someone the family knows or has read about - a person through whom Christ is seen.

People in the Bible who followed God can also be role models. Many of these men and women would not have viewed themselves as heroes. Some even argued against being used by God. Moses was one such leader who protested that he could not help his people escape from Egypt because he could not speak well (see Exodus 4:10). Since he finally allowed God to use him in a mighty way, his name is known around the world today.

Are you concerned about your child's self esteem? Teach him about some of the great biblical heroes such as Abraham, Gideon and Esther, who were not always courageous but who trusted God and obeyed Him.

Now back to the sixth grade class who wrote on the theme, "My Hero." Although some of them chose fantasy

characters, most of them wrote about their own parents. What a great testimony! Two children wrote about the same man. He was the custodian of their former elementary school - a man named Mel, who has the love of Christ shining through him.

Parent, be careful of the people you applaud in your home. Be careful not to make wealth or prestige the most desired qualities. Help your child choose one of God's heroes.

A VERSE TO THINK UPON

**CHOOSE FOR YOURSELF
THIS DAY WHOM YOU
WILL SERVE ... BUT AS
FOR ME AND MY
HOUSEHOLD, WE WILL
SERVE THE LORD.**

Joshua 24:15(NIV)



Written by Nancy Thomason.
EVANGELIZING TODAY'S CHILD,
November/December 1983

CARE GROUPS

Khoo Teng Choon



Care-Group

A small group in the church. How would you define small group in the context of the local church? It is important to define it because it identifies the characteristics of the activity.

Definition

"A small group within the church is a voluntary, intentional gathering of 3 to 12 people regularly meeting together with the shared goal of mutual Christian edification and fellowship."

Within the Church

Groups within the church have a spiritual dimension and purpose to their existence. As such, they exist and operate under the direction of the Holy Spirit, utilizing biblical values and standards.

Three to twelve people

Group size is very important. When group membership expands beyond 12 people, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain effective interpersonal relationships and accomplish the group's goal. This doesn't mean groups larger than 12 people won't work, but the likelihood of their success is reduced in proportion to their increased size.

Voluntary

People are not forced to join as it does not produce long term participation. Those of you who know, understand, see and experience the value of being in a group must encourage those who do not.

Intentional gatherings

As gatherings are intentional they are planned with a clear purpose and design and systematically bring people together for deliberate reasons.

With the shared goal

Members participating understand, accept and actively promote common goals. The general purpose for the existence of the group is acknowledged and approved by all participants.

Mutual

Every member of the group, not only the leaders, must actively accept the responsibility for the group's success. Members must view their involvement as a blend of both giving to and receiving from the group. All are accountable for group relationships, processes, tasks and goals.

Christian Edification

The group focuses on strengthening or reinforcing the spiritual lives of believers. Regardless of the group's specific purpose or activities - evangelism, Bible study, praying, sharing, worship - everything should be aimed at building up people to know, love and serve Christ more and more.

Fellowship

Biblical fellowship carries the idea of communion with one another as an expression of our relationship with Jesus Christ. It builds and holds the group together.

The dynamics of the group

Groups are not just a certain number of individuals together. In every group, whenever people come together, unique emotional pressures are at work. These pressures arise from the different relationships within the group, the group's relation to the outside world and the different needs individuals bring to the group. The feeling of "team spirit" is released when a group is committed to a particular good and to some extent to each other. These forces are not only constructive. People will often change their behaviour or do things that they would not do as individuals when in a group. These forces are known as "group dynamics".

In the next issue - "Small Group Dynamics Grid". Definition from "How to Head Small Groups" by Neal F McBride)

TODAY'S MISSIONARIES

Paul and Barnabas had it easy. They said goodbye to the church at Antioch, walked to the docks at Seleucia, and next day were on the way to Joppa.

It is not so easy today. Today's missionaries cannot simply pack their suitcases and head for Joppa, equipped with faith, good health, and courage. They must also produce inoculation scars on both arms, customs papers in triplicate, birth certificate in duplicate, passport, visas, registrations, clearances, evidences of financial independence, and declarations without number or the authorities won't let him on the plane.

In the book of ACTS, the role of the local church was to appoint its own missionaries, sent them out and supported them as needed. Today, the world is so complex that it is rare for any local church to effectively follow.

Hence the rise of the mission board, to do for the local church what it cannot do for itself. Ideally, the mission board should be an extension of the local church. Unfortunately, the mission board takes complete control of the missionaries' needs and supervision that the local church seem left out.

The scriptural role of the local church as the sending authority and financial base for world evangelism needs to be brought back into clearer focus. Whatever else the mission boards may do, they do not raise their own missionaries. They are the fruit of the local church. It is the local church's responsibility to raise missionaries.

extracted from a missions article by S.I.M.

GOD RESTORED THEIR JOY



Theresa Kapler is a spiritual warrior. Her five-year-old daughter, Joy, suffered traumatic brain injury after being thrown from a horse. Doctors diagnosed the child as totally disabled, functionally illiterate, unable to ever again concentrate, focus or learn. For five years, Joy suffered from much pain throughout her whole body, migraines, eye spasms and seizures, which destroyed her brain cells like "a match to plastic".

Over this trying five year period, Theresa saw the gradual demise of her home. Her husband fell into deep depression and filed for divorce. The family bordered on bankruptcy from overwhelming medical bills and their other daughter, Kelsey, developed asthma. She was placed on a breathing machine.

Theresa's frustration was so massive she was ready to surrender to suicide.

During early 1991, Theresa attended a conference in Minneapolis at Brother Cerullo was a guest speaker. His teaching was on inner healing.

At wit's end, she felt alone, run down, at the end of her rope. Brother Cerullo made an altar call saying, "There are seventeen people in this room who are ready to commit suicide. Come forward to this platform."

The Spirit of the Lord was unleashed upon Theresa. She reluctantly went forth and received the anointing. A peace came upon her. She knew in her heart that all would be fine with her daughter, Joy, and her household.

As a result of that experience, she received healing and deliverance from suicide. Her marriage was restored. Kelsey came off the breathing machine. The divorce process halted and reversed into unification. Little by little, Joy began to recover from the darkness.

The Kapler family has a lot to be thankful for. Their rewards are great because they stayed obedient to God, stepped out in faith, kept in constant prayer, fasted, and interceded. Today, Joy enjoys a normal, healthy teenage life in Christ, completely healed!

The above article was submitted by our foreign correspondent, Meel Leng, who now resides in Batu Pahat. In her note to Pastor, she mentioned that she has adjusted to her new environment.

She enclosed the above article which she would like to share with everyone at JCC.