

# the VINE

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# P A S T O R S A W O R D S

Greetings to you and peace from God the Father!. "The LORD is my light and my salvation- whom shall I fear?" Psalm 27:1. Wow! What a great promise! Yes, if the Lord Jesus is indeed the only true God we worship in our life, we need not fear even though the newspapers abound with tragic and sad news nowadays. A. W. Tozer writes "To know that love is of God and to enter into the secret place leaning upon the arm of the Beloved - this and only this can cast out fear. Let a man become convinced that nothing can harm him, and instantly all fears goes out of the universe". Indeed Jesus Christ our Lord assures us "I give them eternal life , and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand." John 10:28. Martin Luther asserts

"The body they may kill;  
God's truth abideth still  
His kingdom is for ever"

The year 1998 brings with it many opportunities and challenges as our church moves ahead. Seeking to forge a stronger and

more dynamic community is by no means an easy task with many factors playing a part. But with a little extra effort, in love and forgiveness by everyone I think we can succeed by the grace of God. Jesus made an interesting observation about us in the Gospel of Luke chapter 16 verse 8, that "For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light". Think about that, huh! What does Jesus mean?

Human relationships are complex no doubt. But thanks be to God we have His Word to instruct us. So at least we have a common datum of reference. His written Word should therefore be central to our life as a community. Let us get the fundamentals right. We need firstly to have the daily spiritual disciplines of worship, prayer, study of the Word and fellowship in place. Are we lacking in any of this area? Let's be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and

take action on it - NOW! "And may God be our helper."

The Lord has been good. Recently, I wished to have a guitar to play for prayer meetings and classes in church. And God provided one graciously - I found one guitar in good condition, discarded as rubbish, at the void area of my block.

Next month in March we have the privilege of having Dr Bloomquist to guide the church council members, worship leaders and musicians in Lutheran worship service - its flow, structure and meaning. Dr Bloomquist is a gifted Bible teacher and has a rich background in Lutheran church worship. He will be conducting sessions every Sunday mornings from 8.45 am onwards. Prayerfully, we can be enriched in our worship as a community and have a common direction and focus. Glory to God on high. Amen.

*Pastor Martin Yee*

# Biblical Advice

when our children do not love & follow GOD

**A**s our children grow up, they want to become more independent and begin to make decisions of their own. The world and their friends also exert a great deal of pressure on them and their values. Some of the decisions they make may not be pleasing to us and to God. Children of Christian parents may also stray away from God.

How can we as Christian parents handle situations where our children stray away from God? The Bible offers timely and sound advice.

\* Be encouraged. God cares for us. We are not alone. God is with us.

## **Isa 40:10,13**

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, 'Do not fear; I will help you.'"

\* Don't pretend everything is OK. Find a few trusted friends and concerned Christians. Share your concerns and hurt.

## **Prov 17:17**

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

\* In such a situation, there would be people who are just curious and want to find out for information. Encourage them to pray. You do not need to disclose all the information and details to them if you are not comfortable.

## **Prov 10:19**

"When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise."

\* If you have wronged your child, confess to them and to God and ask for their forgiveness. Many parents find it hard to do this. The Bible encourages us to do it.

## **Prov 28:13**

"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."

\* Teach your children and remind them of their accountability to God for their actions. Prov 20:11, Gal 6:7.

## **Prov 20:11**

"Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right."

## **Gal 6:7**

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."

\* Pray, and wait upon God. God is a God of patience. He cares. Wait in faith for him to respond.

**Rom 5:3-5, 12:12**

“Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

\* Continue to minister to your children. We are called and entrusted b God to minister and train our children.

who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”

\* Love your children but don't be over eager to rescue and get them out of problems they brought upon themselves.

Most parents feel guilty and that they are to blame for their children's failings. Remember God's children have also rebelled. Isa 1:2 records “Hear O Heavens! Listen O Earth! For the Lord has spoken:

# HE WHOM WE TRUST IS FAITHFUL AND HE WILL DO IT.

**Prov 24:10**

“If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength”

**Rom 11:29**

“for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.”

\* Submit yourself and your children to the sovereignty of God. He is in control.

**Rom 8:28-29**

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him,

‘I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. He cried for them to repent and return. Finally, He sent his only son to die for their sins and rebellion.’ “

Thank God we do not have to do the same. We humans have the responsibility to direct our children from their waywardness in accordance to God's word. As we seek God and Christian counsel on these matters, He whom we trust is faithful and He will do it.

By Tan Swee Leong

THE



# DEADLY SINS

by Rev Dr Kang Ho Soon & Leslie Quahe

In my starched uniform, I was ignorant of few spiritual things. There in the convent school I attended, I was enraptured with the lives of the saints and their heroics; confident of the things that comprise venial and carnal sins: and awed by a list called the seven deadly sins. When I grew up and started to read the Bible for myself, I was surprised that no such list existed. Except perhaps in Proverbs 6, where seven things abominable to God were mentioned.

But what exactly are these terrible sins? I knew that pride would make the list (after all, was it not the sin of Lucifer?) And lust would be the other (for what could be worse than immorality?). But I was surprised to see that slothfulness or laziness share the dishonour! And gluttony and anger and envy and avarice or greed.

Every conceivable sin is believed to be the result of one or a combination of these seven. It is perhaps for this reason that one church has completed a sermon series on the subject. Its senior pastor, Rev Dr Kang Ho Soon, introduced the series with these words: "You will not know what is good news if you do not know what is bad news. If you do not know what is deadly then you cannot go for that which gives you life."

## **PRIDE** (Lk 15: 11 - 20)

### *Definition:*

Pride says "Give me what is mine..." It is the cry of self-sufficiency. It is the demand for the right to run life as I see fit.

It is a failure to recognise that all that I have is a gift from God (a sound mind and a sound body, talents and wealth); that the gift is handed to me by my forebears, my parents (through the genes and through nurture); that it is developed with the help of others (my friends and teachers).

Pride is the prodigal son coming to the father, "Give me what is mine..." Like the father in the story, God will let us have our way if we insist and like the prodigal son we will get ourselves into deep trouble.

### *Symptom*

Pride is the deadliest of deadly sins because it blinds us in at least 3 areas:

\* Pride blinds us to ourselves. Carried away with ourselves, we can no longer admit ignorance or error. We must have all the answers. To believe that is to stop growing.

\* Pride blinds us to others. Filled with pride, we'll no longer be able to see the goodness in others, or be able to hear what they have to say to us.

\* This blindness besets not only individuals but nations as well. When leaders think they have all the answers, when they refuse to listen to the ground, it is the beginning of the downfall of these leaders.

\* But the worst pride is the spiritual pride. When some Christians think they're the guardians of truth, that all other Christians are wrong and they right, then the church will fall.

\* Pride blinds us to God. It is impossible to experience the love, compassion and grace of God when we are filled with pride. Deceiving ourselves as to our true worth, blind to the goodness of others, we finally cut ourselves off from God, the very source of our lives.

### *The result of pride*

Pride divides. Sometimes the movement is physical, like the prodigal son who travelled to a far country. But more importantly it breaks up relationships. When pride entered the heart of the prodigal son, the father had to let him go.

### *Answer to pride*

a) Honesty. We must take an honest look at ourselves. Like the prodigal so we must realise that we are living among pigs.

b) Remembrance. We must again look at "the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died." As we behold the grace of God we will be like the son who said, "Not worthy. Make me one of your servants." As we come to God in humility we would be surprised with His reception, the warm welcome, the celebrations, the restoration to sonship.

## **SLOTHFULNESS (Lk 19: 12- 26)**

Slothfulness is the most subtle of sins because its cause is not external. It is an excuse for not doing anything. Often not seen as sin because of two misconceptions.

1. This is my life. I can do with it as I please.

Answer: Our lives are no longer our own. Jesus gave His life for us so that we should no longer live for ourselves.

2. Slothfulness does not hurt me or anyone else.

Answer: It hurts others by depriving them of the good we could have done. It hurts us finally because God calls us to give an account of our lives.

### *God's gifts*

Each of us may be gifted differently but there are at least two things that God has bestowed equally on every one.

1. Time. Each year we have 525,600 minutes. We can use the time given or waste it. But at the end of the year the slate will be wiped clean and we will have to start again.

"Yesterday was a cancelled cheque. Tomorrow is a promissory note. Today is the cash-in-hand."

2 Opportunity. Our lives is an opportunity to do something worthwhile. Opportunities come to those who seize them but seem to avoid those who let them slip by.

Opportunity is sometimes a matter of perception. Two shoe salesmen were sent to a new land to survey the possibilities of new investments. One cabled back, "People here don't wear shoes, no opportunities for sales." Another cabled: "People here don't wear shoes. Great potential for sales."

### *Reason for slothfulness*

Fear of failure. We prefer not to try than to fail. But the story of Jesus in Luke showed that God was angry with the servant who did nothing with his talent. It was not failure but laziness that God condemned.

### *Why is slothfulness a sin?*

Because God has given us a life and we have done nothing with the life that He had given us.

THE



DEADLY SINS

The sad epitaph of a lazy man:

"He slept beneath the moon  
He basked beneath the sun  
He lived a life of going to do  
He died with nothing done."

Some wise thoughts

\* Take time to work. It is the price of success.

\* Take time to play. It is the secret of youth.

\* Take time to be friendly. It is the road to happiness.

\* Take time to look around. It is too short a day to be selfish.

\* Take time to love and be loved. It is the privilege of the redeemed.

\* Take time to laugh. It is the music of the soul.

\* Take time for God. It is life's only lasting investment.

(To be continued...)

Condensed from IMPACT/ Aug-Sep 86

(Original Title: *The Seven Seditious Sisters*)



## FROM BANGKOK TO SINGAPORE

(Condensed for publication)

01/98-10

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### LANGUAGE STUDIES

At last, we had our language examinations on December 6th. The last 2-3 months of extra drilling by the school left us exhausted. The examinations are over but we realised it is the beginning of real learning.

Looking back ... We came not knowing any Thai, but the school managed to prepare us enough to at least get by in our daily life within the 1<sup>st</sup> two months of our studies. We are thankful. During the initial stage, we felt the 5 tones of the language rather confusing. The written stage proved to be even more difficult. When we were on the 6th month of our studies, the Bishop approached us to assist in some of the ministries because there was a great lack of ordained pastor. We tried to find a balance between study and ministry. In the end, it seems that our involvement has helped our spoken Thai to improve at greater speed, especially Terry's. Knowing that we are still in the midst of our studies, members are more gracious when we make mistakes with our Thais. So it seems everything worked for the best for us.

Though the period of language learning had been tough, we had enjoyed our time at the school - learning, applying, meeting new friends from all over the world, praying with some of our Christians missionary schoolmates, etc. There were also opportunities to share the gospel with some of the teachers as well as students. We are glad we managed to establish some very good and strong friendship during this period.

### WORK ASSIGNMENT

The Council has finally decided to attach us to Grace Church in Bangkok, at least for our first term of service. We start officially in January 1998. Our co-worker is a gifted Thai lady who has graduated from LIITE (Lutheran Institute Of Theology Education) only about a year ago. We are looking forward to serve. Please pray for us in every aspect.

### THAILAND TODAY

The Thai economy is in very bad shape. It was predicted that in 1998, the jobless rate will reach as high as 2 million. Crime and suicide rates have been on the increase. As all human efforts seem to have failed in reviving the economy, many have turned to spiritual means. Pray that the Christian church in Thailand will seize the opportunity to reach the people with the everlasting hope of Christ.

We are well and Thailand has become home to us. We have been here for only 1½ years but we already feel this strong attachment to Thailand and its people. Of course, there have been moments of frustrations, but we no longer felt that we are "aliens" in a foreign land. Thank you for all your prayers. It definitely makes a difference.

#### Prayer Requests:

- Working relationship with co-workers and members.
  - Wisdom and understanding as we serve in the Thai church and community.
  - Meaningful involvement by Sally.
  - Continual language learning (once a week home tuition).
  - Health and strength as we serve in Bangkok as well as for our parents back home.
- May the Lord be with all of you back home.

Yours-in-Christ

Rev Terry Kee & Sally



# my faith???

One of the hardest things to do as Christians  
is to share our faith.

We're often reluctant to share our faith for fear of having a person reject us and our message; yet God has given us clear marching orders to go out into the world and preach the gospel "making disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19-20)

God has given us some sound principles that will enable us to effectively lead others to Christ. God will never ask us to do anything He will not give us the power to do. The calling of God is the enabling of God (see 2 Cor. 3:4-6).

1. Effective sharing must be led by God's spirit. Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." (John 6:65) Conversion must be the work of the Holy Spirit, and it must be in God's timing. That's why the Scripture tells us to be prepared to share the

gospel message "in season and out of season." (2 Tim 4:2)

2. Effective sharing is grounded in the knowledge of God's word. Although our message may begin with a personal testimony or illustration, the thrust of it must be the Word of God! We must not neglect this powerful witnessing tool, for God promises, "My Word...shall not return to Me void, but shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11)

3. Effective sharing takes time. Some of the most profound things Jesus ever said were found in His one-on-one conversations. He took time with these individuals (see John 3 & 4). We must remember that we are not called to make converts, but disciples.

4. Effective sharing is sincere. For evangelism to be effective, it

must begin with a genuine concern for the lost.

5. Effective sharing is flexible. In 1 Corinthians, Paul encourages us to tailor our approach, though not our message, to those we are trying to reach for Christ. Evangelism is meeting someone at his or her level in order to bring that individual to Christ's level without compromising the truth of the gospel.

6. Effective sharing is discerning. We need to be discerning so that we will not "cast our pearls before swine," offering the truths of God to someone who is not genuinely interested. Rather than anger someone who's uninterested, it is best to simply present the truth and move on.

7. Effective sharing is tactful. A good example of tact is found in the story of Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8). As Philip heard the Ethiopian reading from Isaiah, he simply said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" A number of more judgmental Christians might have shouted, "Did you know you're going to burn in hell unless you repent?" A fruitful witness is a tactful witness.

8. Effective sharing is backed by love. This final principle is the most important one we need to employ. Whenever Jesus came into contact with people, He genuinely loved them. Such love and concern will speak volumes before we even utter a word. The world today is flooded with religious cults, which are Satan's way of flooding the market with imitations. Those imitations ought to motivate us to make the truth known. Our edge over these spiritual counterfeits is the love in our hearts that Jesus had when He walked this earth, combined with the Word of God, which shall not return void.

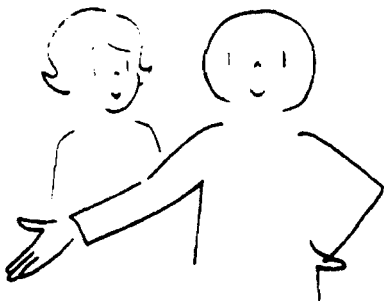
Why not ask God for His holy boldness right now? Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to someone who needs Christ. Love him with the love of God, and then share the truth of the gospel. Then you'll see how "the goodness of God leads you to repentance" (Rom 2:4)

**faith?**

But the best way  
to witness is

**BY EXAMPLE**

--living a life of LOVE  
and SERVICE to others...



Give time to  
the church



Teach a  
Bible class



Visit the aged  
and the sick



Introduce people  
to the church



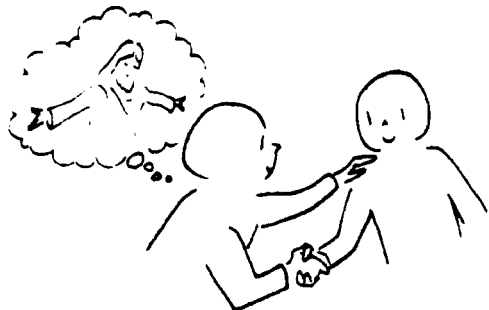
Work as a  
church officer



Work with  
charity groups



...by behaving **SELFLESSLY**, as a follower of Christ.



**SHARE**  
your faith--  
for the  
salvation of  
**ALL** men.

A Christian's  
**DEEPEST NEED**  
is to be part of a **TRULY**  
**MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY--**

**THE CHURCH IS THAT**  
**COMMUNITY**

**YOU NEED  
THE CHURCH**

--it offers  
new life  
in Christ  
through the  
preached  
word, the  
sacraments,  
service to  
people.



...and  
**THE CHURCH  
NEEDS YOU**

- your talents, time,  
love of man
- every member  
is important
- every member  
has something  
vital to  
contribute



"**LORD, WHAT  
WOULD YOU HAVE  
ME DO?"**

The "CHURCH"  
is REALLY  
PEOPLE

... called to faith  
in Jesus Christ  
and sent on a  
mission to  
the world.



"YE SHALL BE  
WITNESSES UNTO ME"

ACTS 1:8

IT'S A LIVING  
FELLOWSHIP--

our DAILY  
partnership with God  
and men;  
loyalty to Christ  
"matures"  
within the church  
and  
cannot endure  
outside it.

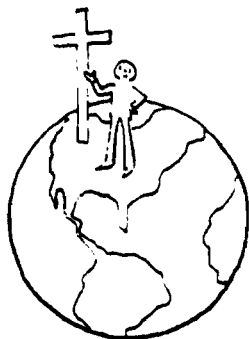


JESUS ASKS  
that men care  
for one another,  
worship together,  
raise children  
in faith.

It's also every  
Christian's  
responsibility to...

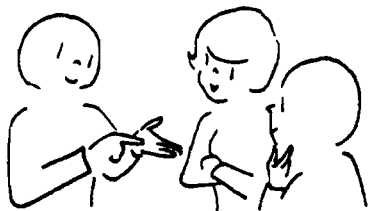


... "win" others from the world  
**TO WITNESS  
TO THE TRUTH**



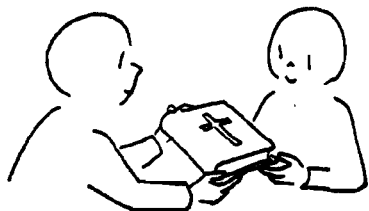
**BY SPOKEN WORD**

-- tell the story of Christ, what Christ means to you, to a friend or neighbor; tell him about the church, services, Bible classes.



**BY WRITTEN WORD**

-- pass on to other people the Bible and other materials that tell the story of God; and explain the real meaning of the church.



When in doubt about how to proceed,  
**PRAY--** the answer will come to you.

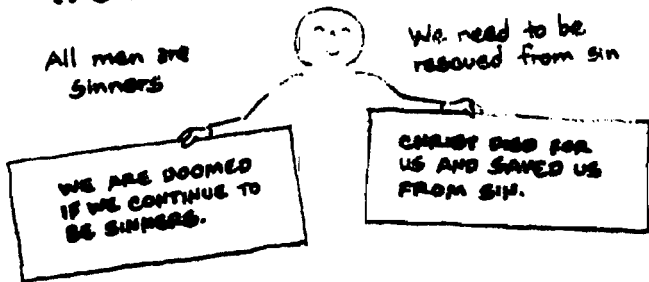
**THE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY**

All men are  
sinners

We need to be  
rescued from sin

**WE ARE DOOMED  
IF WE CONTINUE TO  
BE SINNERS.**

**CHRIST DIED FOR  
US AND SAVED US  
FROM SIN.**



## FAREWELL, DOROTHY LEE



**NEW YEAR'S DAY 1998.** The choir gave a farewell to Dorothy Lee. It was at Christopher's house and all brought their special dishes. It was a potluck party.



After the food and karaoke session, the choir found an appropriate time to express their gratitude to Dorothy in a specially written song, sung to the tune of "Seasons In The Sun". This immediately brought tears to Dorothy's eyes.



The gathering lasted until evening and soon it was time to leave for the final time. A tinge of sadness to start off the new year.

**May the Lord watch over us all, as we go our separate ways.**



# NEW DAWN TEAM

It was a Saturday evening and a few of us were in church already, talking and waiting for the time to begin the sharing by the New Dawn Team.

As the clock approached 8.00pm, the sanctuary was still very empty. I wondered how that would have affected the morale of the New Dawn Team.

Personally, I would be very demoralized to see such a small



audience, if I had flown all the way from the USA to perform in Singapore. However, as the clock struck 8.00pm, there was a sudden increase of people coming into the sanctuary. And by the time the New Dawn Team began their performance, the hall was almost full. I was rather pleasantly surprised by the turnout.

The New Dawn team did some songs, sketches and puppet show, which were



very entertaining even though the message was very subtle.

I am sure many fully enjoyed the evening and had a fine time fellowshiping with the New Dawn Team.

