



Words from Lee

The biggest event for us this past year was our 50th wedding anniversary celebration. As I may have mentioned before, Miltinnie and I wanted something different from throwing a fun dinner party with games and a slide show. Instead of having something in Niseko, Japan, at the kind invitation of our friends, Joe and Carol Lu, we had the whole family come over (with spouses and kids) for a **week-long time of reflection and gratitude to God for saving and building our marriage.** It turned out to be something we never imagined or would have planned; God be praised!

We held five sessions where I was able to "hold court" on whatever topic I thought would be important for the family. Each session lasted two to three hours and was full of sharing, reflection and back-and-forth Q&A. **We had five topics: 1) How to have a marriage that can last 50 years; 2) How to raise children that will own the Christian faith; 3) A review of our life-altering events; 4) Insights on the sanctification process from Romans Chapters 6-8; and 5) End of life matters.** During the marriage portion, we shared more details of our gruesome near-divorce while newly married in Germany, which caused us to abandon our lives to Jesus Christ. One of the keys to us subsequently growing together has been our common purpose of doing the ministry. Doing E-Squared (Evangelism and Discipleship) together serves to diminish our temporal squabbles and even our problems in light of eternity. **Finally, I talked humbly about taking seriously the last four verses of Ephesians 4 and what difference those simple verses make in a marriage.** I urge you to read these verses for yourself and let the Spirit soften your heart toward your spouse. **The secret of longevity in marriage** is not something complex as much as it is about putting your spouse first.

I took it as a great compliment when my son, Mike, told me he could tell the faith was real while growing up, by the way we lived our lives. Kids are always watching and Christianity must be caught as well as taught. Although we stressed how much we marvel at God's grace in their lives to bring them to faith, we had a chance to go over "the good and the bad" as we reminisced over our times as family. This was

also a valuable time for their spouses as they reflected on parenting and discipleship of their own kids. **What became very clear was the importance of making and protecting the times of family communications, whether it was over evening dinners, long road trips, vacation times, or times when discipline had to be administered.** Our kids felt "safe" during these family times to discuss how best to apply the tenets of the faith. Christie remarked how grateful she is to have a close-knit family that can talk about anything.

I used **Rom 6-8** to share about the importance of sanctification, or Christian growth. I shared my regret that I never took maturing in the faith seriously apart from learning the doctrine and being able to articulate the tenets. Since salvation was 100% from God and nothing from me, I thought sanctification was the same. Instead, I showed how the Romans passage indicates what my role in sanctification should be. The "Wretched Man" passage at the end of Rom 7, and the crucial role of the Holy Spirit in the beginning of Chapter 8 were the main things we talked about. **What a precious time that was to open the Scriptures with my adult kids and their spouses!**

Christie reports that my life-altering stories really stuck out to her and I should consider writing them up in a personal memoir. When her husband Albert chimed in strongly, I took notice because rarely does he urge me to do such things. I ask you all for prayer for this project (gulp!).

Some Misc. notes:

Bible studies on Zoom can often be like marital sex in that at first you don't think you are in the mood for it and may not have much heart for it, but afterwards, you realize it was such a wonderful time. Such has been many of my Zoom studies of late (I have about 8 studies,) and I usually end up exhilarated and full of gratitude that I still have guys who actually want to study the Bible with me, and once I get started, it is such a satisfying and rewarding exercise. The Covid 19 shut-in has strengthened our family of three. David no longer goes to school every day but has become our "side-kick" being more integrated into everything we do.

Like the Peter Sellers character of Inspector Clouseau in the Pink Panther movies, I always keep David on his toes by suddenly throwing something at him to catch with no warning. At nearly 45 years old, (Dec 7th), David is one of the most alert autistics with great hands to catch almost anything. He is also so helpful in a variety of projects such as helping in the kitchen chopping vegetables, taking out the garbage, carrying things into the house after grocery shopping and most importantly, lifting heavy boxes to top shelf storage. **I am so thankful for having David in our lives as we get on in age. Instead of being a burden, he has become God's great blessing.**

Like others, I have come to believe we are nearing, if not already in, the "End Times" and the rule of AntiChrist may be within even my lifetime. **Dr. Bangert has taught that the Laodicean Church in Revelation 3 is an approximation of the "lukewarm" Christianity in America today, and it is time for us to become either hot or cold.** The prayer in Daniel chapter 9 is instructive and an example of the kind of prayer I need to make for our country. After 70 years in captivity, it seemed that Israel had not learned the lessons they should have and **I fear that fate** for our country as well.

We are healthy and still putting on weight, even while we work. I've been joining Miltinnie on her weekly Zoom workouts. Our financial support has been hanging in there and for that we are very grateful. If you don't have a "Smile" charity set up on Amazon yet, please consider registering "Layman's Foundation, Inc." as your Smile charity of choice, before you buy your next boat on Amazon. The half of one percent that Amazon drops into our bucket every month is beginning to add up.



Words from Miltinnie

In nine months Covid has birthed a whole new way of life for us. While God has closed many doors, He also has opened many wonderful windows for us. Not only did our home Bible studies become zoom studies, but we also added new zoom Bible studies reconnecting to old and new friends, both believers and seekers

(with at least one finding faith), reaching all across the US, HK, and China.

In a zoom study with ladies from China who immigrated and are now living with their families in Silicon Valley, we discussed, **"Be hospitable to one another without complaint" (1Pt4:9).** Hospitality differs from entertaining in that hospitality focuses on making the guest feel welcome and comfortable while entertaining focuses on the hostess, what and how she serves and presents herself and her home. Coincidentally a member of the study once visited our home in Cambridge years ago for a Bible study and lunch. She didn't remember what I taught, but never forgot what I said when she brought what she feared was an insufficient amount of dessert: "It's fine, because we will just share whatever we have."

In fact, we are to be hospitable with everything we have, not just our home or our dinner table, but our lives: skills, effort, thoughts, and knowledge in order to share our relationship with Christ. Practicing such hospitality enlarged my heart. "I shall run the way of Your commandments, For You will enlarge my heart" Ps 119:32. We taught them to steward the temporal (everything that will not last), but invest in the eternal (people and the Word). **We shared our very best when we introduced them to the Lord Jesus Christ.** Recently our hearts swelled as we zoomed with many of these dear old friends again and saw how they had grown in their faith. 1Th 2:8 says, "Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us."

In a zoom study with many of our 3Mers scattered around the US, **we had especially rousing discussions about moving our marriages from being transactional to intimate.** We also discussed how **submission is God's way for us to develop "a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God."** (1 Pt 3:1-4) We naturally are repelled by the thought of submission because it has the smell of death all over it. **A woman can only submit to her husband if she believes that God is greater than any mistake her husband can make.**

The other day I spoke on zoom to a group of parents of older special needs children in Kuala Lumpur who were worried about what would happen when they would predecease them. Though we just met online,

we shared and cried, and at the end, one man said, "I can see why your husband fell in love with you, in fact, I have as well."

Lee and I also zoomed with a group of young marrieds in Houston to share on what I call the **Bedroom Ministry**. 1Cor. 7:5 says, "Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." **Satan relishes that everyone wants to have sex, just not in marriage. But God invented sex for marriage. When you tend to this marital relationship, you are doing Spiritual Warfare! Your passion in bed is an extension of your passion for life, so don't deprive one another.**

In addition to our zoom Bible studies, I also began writing again because Moody Press solicited a manuscript from me for "Eternal Legacy: Giving Your Children an Eternal Inheritance." I just got a rejection from them and I'm going to retire that book for now.

I rewrote a children's gospel adventure story, "Greener Pastures," which my Beijing publisher (ZDL) is interested in publishing, saying, it will "let Chinese Children know and rely on Jesus through an adventure story." I am trying to make it into a trilogy and presently have the first book out to US and China tweens to read for feedback and suggestions. I covet your prayers for this project.

For the second year in a row, ZDL selected my memoir,

"A Pearl Necklace," to distribute 26,000 copies in their Christmas Box to 2nd and 3rd tier cities in China through churches, both underground, and government (where there are many unsaved), schools, factories, and hospitals. What an incredible opportunity for evangelism! The funds were raised for this project through 29 friends within one month. Our friends from China and HK made up 58% of the donors who raised 76 $\frac{1}{4}$ % of the amount. We are so grateful to God for all of you who made this possible!

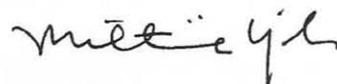
We are enjoying each other and the simple pleasures of home life and treasure the occasional times with the family. David actually is faring well and has become more independent and engaging. Being home

with us shields him from normal irritants (like babies crying), and he is freer and more playful. Lee is unseasonably sweet during this pandemic. A spaghetti dinner calls for all hands on-deck: Lee at the stove cooking the meat and sauce, me gathering and washing all the ingredients and pots and pans, while David is gleefully chopping everything up into tiny pieces, all while Creedence Clearwater is blasting in the background. It's a party! We share, reminisce, and try to outdo one another in serving one another. Grace smooths out the wrinkles caused by our humbling yet inevitable lapses in memory, hearing, and clumsiness. What a cherished time this is! God has reversed the curse of our early godless marriage that drove us to Him.

For me, this is a special season of gratitude.

Sometimes I awake in the night and walk through the house thanking the Lord for each room, each piece of furniture reminds me of different times and places of our lives, most of it is scratched, chipped, reupholstered, reglued, or repositioned, but is definitely well-used after 21 moves, a mishmash collection that somehow works together beautifully. My life did not turn out as planned, but is more than I could ever have dreamt of because of Him.

This pandemic brought down some of our most cherished idols. Who could have imagined empty stadiums, theaters, Disneyland, restaurants, planes, churches, schools? Instead we had to tend to our children, spouse, cooking, and isolation. Perhaps it was an enforced Sabbath "rest" - though it may not have been restful, it was a rest from these idols, a rest from our restlessness in order to realign our values and allegiances. May this Christmas be one where we find our true rest in Jesus who said, **"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matt 11:29)** When two are yoked, the bigger one carries the greater burden..



Miltinnie's Brother

Words from Jansen

Moving out to Walnut Creek, CA brought on a strangely quiet atmosphere in contrast to the pre-quarantine Vih household. I find I don't have the

same energy as I once had in getting my new place in order. Things just seem more challenging now. Though I am across the bay from the Yihs, it feels distant in the context of the quarantine.

Only a few China scholars were lucky enough to return in January before all the travel restrictions. After February, the scholars found it much more difficult if not impossible to return. To secure their trip home, most of them had to book several backup flights costing them up to \$10,000. They also had to take an average of four or five Covid-19 tests before being allowed on a plane home followed by a 2-week quarantine.

At that point I knew the effect quarantine would have on the scholar ministry. Then I recalled a quote, "never let a crisis go to waste," and used this crisis to reach the scholars that were stuck in the U.S. with not much else to do. I focused with my co-workers to reach more scholars through Zoom meetings. **What was a four-times a week ministry with then quickly turned into a eight times a week Zoom ministry.** Of course, remote ministries can never replace personal ministries; quantity is never better than quality. But Zoom meetings do take less travel time, save on food expenses, consume less personal energy and give more opportunities to meet them.

The current scholar Zoom meetings are English Corners (EC) which are English conversational classes. Because of China's travel restrictions, many EC ministries in China have ended. Many scholars in China are looking for something to replace their China EC classes as they naturally begin to lose their English proficiency after returning to China.

For my ECs. I get to choose the topics and articles which led to many discussions about confronting Jesus. One article used was about the American Dream, which naturally led to what their goals in life are. **One scholar, a PhD sociologist, accepted Jesus on Zoom after returning to China this summer.** She still attends several Zoom ECs and now wants to recruit scholars from her university to our Zoom EC meetings. Another, a PhD economist also wanted to help with her university.

Once the U.S. suspended the scholar visas (J-1), it was a matter of time before there were no more

scholars to minister to. While reading the biography of Bonhoeffer by Metaxas, I was touched by how

Bonhoeffer was profoundly affected by a movie (All Quiet on the Western Front, 1930). This gave me the idea to start a zoom movie ministry for the scholars hoping somehow movies might affect them. This new ministry has already reconnected with several scholars who were in China.

One of our Stanford scholars, a neurologist, doing medical research with Myasthenia gravis, was one of 4 scholars arrested and charged this summer by the FBI for false statements in their visa application. It was quite a shock, but I learned that it was not uncommon for scholars to 'fudge' their visas to get a once in a lifetime chance to study in the U.S. She has since been released on her own recognizance and Joe (an EC coworker) and I still meet with her weekly. Here supervisor at Stanford, Joe and I believe she was not here to spy. If she was, the FBI would have charged her by now and wouldn't have released her. Entering jail, she asked for but was refused a pencil for journaling. They then offered her several books to read. She chose a Bible. Later, alone, she discovered a small pencil inside the Bible! She said it was a miracle. One day she told Joe and I that she was more fortunate that the other 3 scholars that were arrested and said that there must be a reason why she is still in the U.S. I answered that maybe so she can know God. We continue to meet with her.

Pray for this ministry since there are less scholars in the U.S. the ministry is uncertain. Pray that we can **grow the EC Zoom ministries** to the universities in China. Perhaps God allowed a new administration to restore the China scholar ministry.



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