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Editorial



Rev. Vijayesh Lal

The Evangelical Fellowship of India greets the nation and the readers of Aim at home and abroad on India's 75th Independence Day.

To paraphrase the historic words of India's first prime minister, the legendary Jawaharlal Nehru, we as people and nation, have achieved much in our tryst with destiny in the post-colonial world. But not in full measure. Events have dogged our footsteps, so that for every decade of progress, there has been a dark interlude of war, drought, flood, and pestilence. But thanks to the remarkable secular ethos of the Freedom Struggle under Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and others, we have overcome.

As we celebrate the 75 years of independence on August 15, 2022, we should be proud of being the world's largest democracy. We are a nation of 1.3 billion people, a young and aspirational nation with

great potential, and obstacles as great to overcome.

India has changed in these seven and a half decades. A remarkable programme named after Mahatma Gandhi has lifted tens of millions of rural small peasantry and landless labour out of utter poverty and threatened starvation. A programme that makes school attractive to the children of the rural and urban poor by giving them a wholesome meal has had phenomenal impact, as much in juvenile nutrition as education of the girl child. Christian organisations have played a wonderful role in taking quality education to the poor, a project that in fact began well before independence.

We can also be proud of our various achievements in the realm of science and technology where our prowess in the fields of health,

space and even nuclear capability has been appreciated worldwide. India's voice is an important one in the globalized order.

Some would think of these itself as miracles, realising impossible dreams. Countries in various continents that were enthused by India's freedom to seek their own from the same and other colonial masters, frittered away that guiding spirit. Many have been convulsed with military coups, despot dictatorships, religious fundamentalism, and at the base of it all, reeking poverty.

Many remain poor in India too, but their comparative numbers are swiftly dwindling. The perennial shadow of famine and starvation deaths is now distant.

But it is in the more subtle and intangible area of national ethos and democracy that India has been an object lesson not just in the third world, but to many advanced countries beset now with problems.

Electoral democracy is now a way of life, including a healthy and on-going debate on should the country revert to a paper ballot or continue with the Electronic Voting Machine that makes for easy polling and rapid counting of votes. It is a strong rebuttal to politicians in the United Kingdom and

elsewhere who doubted if a country as large and diverse as India could sustain a democratic way of life. Neighbours near and distant stumbled, but the democratic tradition remained strong in this vast nation.

The one gnawing issue that soils the otherwise brilliant record of 75 years has been the recurring political use of religion. This has been the main cause of pain and suffering in many parts of the country over the last several decades. The birth of India and Pakistan was accompanied by the biggest carnage the subcontinent has seen in its history. Its memories, and its shadows, have sometimes been used to foment hate, demonise communities and target individuals.

These divert energies of peoples and governments. Even though economically we are predicted to be the fifth largest economy in the world, our rank in the Human Development Index is abysmal. We stand at rank 131 out of 189 countries. According to the Sustainable Development Goals report of 2022, India has slipped spots from last year's 117 to rank 121 on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted as a part of the 2030 agenda by 192 United Nations member states.

Millenniums of the hold of caste

and patriarchy on the land impacts women the most. Gender Inequality needs to be addressed on a priority by government and people's groups. Various government measures, including reservations in the local self-government systems at the level of the village, and districts, have seen a rise in women voters, and women political activists. The dropout rate of girls in schools remains above the line of concern in rural areas, but progress is steady, if not always rapid.

In India even though there has been some progress on some fronts like female literacy which has grown, women participation in electoral process has seen an increase and women representation in local governance has increased greatly. Instances of female infanticide have decreased but there is a long way to go. In the Global Gender Gap Index for 2022, released by the World Economic Forum (WEF), India's rank is 135 out of 146 countries.

Red Flags must be raised his Independence Day on the basic glue that holds the nation together – of religious co-existence, mutual respect, and equality before the law. Religious polarization and the growth of high-pitched religious nationalism and majoritarianism, fuelled by an equally toxic social media and television media, is a

major challenge before the nation.

The world has known India as the largest liberal democracy with constitutional values of secularism, liberty, plurality, fraternity, and tolerance. Today, that image is under stress and the result could be the weakening of the soft power of India. This should worry all citizens of the country.

These could be challenged in debates in parliament and state legislatures, and in courts, but constitutional institutions and safeguards have been severely mauled in recent times. Civil society, and several senior jurists have cautioned that they see a steady dismantling of the legislature, judiciary, executive, and the media.

In August 2020, a vision document prepared by the NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Rural Development, was presented before the nation with a target of making India poverty-free and corruption-free by 2022, the 75th anniversary of India's independence. The document stated that India has succeeded in finding a solution to the problem of poverty and that everyone will have a home by 2022. One must only look around to know that the vision has not become a reality.

What is important for the nation is

to set the basics right including goals that are achievable, planned and executed well, so that they do not end up sounding like hollow political rhetoric rather than concrete goals that can take the nation forward. One must dream realistically.

The Christian community, even though a tiny minority, has contributed to the building of our nation in an unmatched manner. It has set benchmarks in education, public health, and social work. The community remains committed to the idea of development for all and especially constitutional values.

We know God loves the nation of India and is at work in it. The Church has been called to pray and work for the peace, prosperity, and stability of the nation. The state of our nation and the challenges it faces, stirs us to look to the face of the Almighty God and to pray for God's unceasing blessings on India.

Which is why the National Council of Churches in India and Evangelical Fellowship of India have been jointly facilitating the observance of the National Day of Prayer on 14th August 2022 across India to earnestly intercede for our country, our leaders, and our fellow citizens.

An appeal is being made to all

Churches, Prayer Movements, Christian organizations, and individual Christians across denominations, to observe 14th August 2022, which is a Sunday, as a day dedicated to prayer for the well-being, peace, and prosperity, of our country.

The National Day of Prayer campaign started in 2017 with the Evangelical Fellowship of India humbly initiating it. EFI Member Churches and Bodies resolved to observe the National Day of Prayer annually on the Sunday closest to Independence Day of India. Since 2019, the National Council of Churches in India has also endorsed the same and now the NCCI and EFI jointly facilitate the National Day of Prayer. Resources for the National Day of Prayer can be downloaded from the website: www.nationaldayofprayer.in

As we celebrate this jubilee of the 75 years of freedom, let us pray that God will keep His hand of favour on our nation and that He will bless us. And let us resolve to work for an India which is inclusive, fraternal, and peaceful; where justice flows freely as a river and where there is equal opportunity for everyone to flourish and contribute to the nation's greatness.

Happy 75th Independence Day!

Rev. Vijayesh Lal



The Humanitarian Worker

Dr. Shantanu Dutta

I opened the newspaper this morning to read about the killing of Two Border Security Force personnel, who were part of the UN peacekeeping mission in Congo after they got caught in the skirmishes between warring factions in the civil war-torn country. These weren't the first to be called in the court of humanitarian service and they won't definitely be the last. That shifted my writing compass to think of the many humanitarian workers who die unseen and unsung every year, perhaps every month including a few Christian workers I or my family have personally known.

Every day, humanitarian aid

workers help millions of people around the world, regardless of who they are and where they are. World Humanitarian Day pays tribute to the men and women who risk their lives in service to others and raises awareness and support for those affected by crises around the world. Scripture tells us that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for a friend (John 15:13). Rejecting the myth of our disconnectedness, they offer their lives in service not for their friends but for strangers. Humanitarians make real God's love for the world. Humanitarian aid workers literally run into harm's way for others. To remember them and all that they

do, World Humanitarian Day is observed on 19th August every year.

The UN is the formal agency charged by the governments of the world to render humanitarian aid and peace keeping is a part of that. More than 200,000 Indians have served in 49 of the 71 UN peacekeeping missions established around the world since 1948. India has a long tradition of sending women on UN peacekeeping missions too. In 2007, India became the first country to deploy an all-women contingent to a UN peacekeeping mission. The Formed Police Unit in Liberia provided 24-hour guard duty and conducted night patrols in the capital Monrovia and helped to build the capacity of the Liberian police.

In 2022, 274 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection according to the Global Humanitarian Overview of the United Nations.

This number is a significant increase from 235 million people a year ago, which was already the highest figure in decades. The

United Nations and partner organisations aim to assist 183 million people most in need across 63 countries, which will require \$41 billion. The gap will be met by humanitarian agencies, quite a few of which are christian or have christian roots like the Red Cross.

Would humanitarian aid flourish without religion? There are entirely secular organisations, like Médecins sans Frontières, or Oxfam, which function without any religious allegiance at all. Most credible humanitarian agencies, whether they are religious or not, must stress that they are not biased in their giving if they hope to raise funds. Yet, it is also true that religious networks are essential to the delivery of aid and education: the Catholic church runs a third of all the schools in Africa.

Christian NGOs will play an important role as social service providers, and through their faith-based approach, they have the ability to develop deeper relationships with communities in developing countries. Wendy

Tyndale, in her 2003 analysis of a World Bank survey that collected voices from around the world, found that "no other organisations are more firmly rooted or have better networks in poor communities than the religious ones". Churches are able to connect congregations in the developed world with their counterparts in the developing world and make both feel that they are part of the same great enterprise.

The Biblical principle for humanitarian assistance is based on the Second Greatest Commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves. The neighbour is one who we know and would include persons one does not know. Throughout Scripture, God had individuals and communities that he compelled towards living out this principle, even before Jesus formally gave this commandment. The intent was that they would be living examples of his goodness and that they would extend it into the world where brokenness existed. In the New Testament, that

community is the Church. We are tasked to embody Shalom and to extend it, connecting with what God is already doing to restore creation to himself.

Although there is a lot of focus and visibility on natural humanitarian crisis, increasing numbers of responses are being required in situations where the conflicts are man-made and chronic. Congo came into the news today because of the tragedy of the peacekeepers killed but conflict and tragedy - and all manmade are everywhere. Afghanistan, Ukraine, Syria, Palestine. And of course, Sri Lanka, where the disaster is more economic than civil war. Unlike natural disasters which can often be sorted by providing a carefully calibrated relief response and there is no clear moral dilemma, in man-made conflicts there is and taking sides is difficult and coloured by politics and even our understanding of the Bible and its application may be coloured by our politics. A good example is the war between Ukraine and Russia, where the dominant

church in both countries (The Orthodox Church) has got divided along political lines with their respective Patriarchs taking nationalistic positions. Or the Palestine - Israel issues where again Christians are divided depending on how they read and understand the Bible.

Unfortunately, the humanitarian worker, whether christian or secular like the UN peace keeping forces are not equipped to deal with the moral brokenness and societal sin that is so in your face and repentance is needed more clearly than ever, and without which conflicts cannot be resolved. The Church has the responsibility but sadly not the

influence or the authority or even perhaps the impartiality to dissect these well and attempt at a resolution. Meanwhile, workers at the margins continue to die and die unsung by all but their families.



Dr. Shantanu Dutta

is a part of Interserve (India) and the Theological Research and Communications Institute and can be contacted at shantanud@gmail.com

**Carry each other's burdens,
and in this way you will fulfill
the law of Christ.**

Galatians 6:2



The Sanctifying Spirit

Rev. Dr. David Mende

Every year, the world observes August 12th as 'International Youth Day.' Even as we celebrate this special day, I pray that the Lord will speak to the young readers of AIM through this article. Some of us think that we are doing good in our spiritual lives. Some Christians are even over-confident about their spiritual lives. They see only part of their sins, but they are not aware of their blind spots. They are not aware that they need to change in several areas.

Bill Bright, in his book, *Discover the Book God Wrote* says, "The process of sanctification can be compared to an iceberg, which is almost 90% under water. As the

sun shines on the iceberg, the exposed part melts, moving the lower part upward. In the same way, we are usually aware of only a small part of our sinfulness and need, which is all we can deal with at any one time. However, as the light of God's work in our lives changes us in the areas we know about, we become aware of new areas needing the work of God."

My prayer is that each one of us will surrender ourselves to the Spirit and ask him to sanctify us in such areas. Second Thessalonians 2:13 says that the Spirit sanctifies us. So, how can the Holy Spirit help us live sanctified lives? Before we answer that question, let's briefly

talk about the challenges which hinder us from living sanctified lives.

1. We Face Many Temptations in This World.

It is no secret that all of us face several temptations in this world. James 1:13 makes it very clear that God never tempts us. Then what are the sources of temptation?

a. We are tempted by our sinful nature.

The first source of temptation is our sinful nature. Though we are saved, we have sinful nature within us (1 Jn 1:8). In James 1:14-15, apostle James writes, "But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death." Temptation in itself is not sin, but it can give birth to sin.

In Psalm 51:5, David writes, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." David admits that he had a sinful nature from the

time of his conception. In Galatians 5:17, apostle Paul writes, "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do." In this verse, 'flesh' means our sinful nature. So, you are your worst enemy. We don't even need the devil's help to tempt us. All of us are prone to sin.

b. The corrupt world tempts us.

In 1 John 2:16, apostle John writes, "For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world." The world and its desires are other sources of temptations. That's why Apostle Peter exhorts his readers to flee from "the corruption that is in the world" (2 Pet. 1:4). The sinful world keeps tempting us.

c. Satan and demons entice us.

Whether we like it or not, we are in a spiritual warfare. We have to constantly battle the devil and his

demons. In 1 Peter 5:8, we are warned: "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." In the passage which most of us may be familiar with, the apostle Paul writes, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:10-12). Satan is referred to as the "tempter" in the New Testament (Mt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5). He often tempts God's people and entices them to sin.

So, we face several temptations in this world.

2. The Lord Commands Us to Live a Holy Life.

Repeatedly, God commands his people to live a holy life. In Leviticus 11:44, Yahweh commands his people, "For I am

the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy." In the New Testament, apostle Peter echoes these words as he exhorts his readers to live sanctified lives: "but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Pet. 1:15-16).

Further, in 2 Corinthians 6:17, apostle Paul alludes to Isaiah 52:11 and writes to the Corinthians, "Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you." In order to be with God, we must separate ourselves from the world. Holiness is not just about rejecting the world. Rather, it's about being consecrated to God. Separation from the world is not the source of holiness, but it is the result of holiness. We enjoy the Lord's presence so much that we don't care about the sinful pleasures of this world.

The Bible says that God "saved us and called us to a holy calling"

(2 Tim. 1:9). Again, in 1 Thessalonians 4:3, apostle Paul writes, "For this is the will of God." What is God's will? He goes on to write, "your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality." Further, in Ephesians 1:4, Paul writes that God "chose us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him."

Also, the writer to the Hebrews exhorts his readers: "Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). Writing to the Ephesians from prison, Paul says, "But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints" (Eph. 5:3). As we can see in all these scriptures, the Lord demands holiness from his people. To live a holy life is a command, not an option. God has given us this command for our good and our joy.

3. The Spirit Enables Us to Live a Holy Life.

Sanctification is the work of the

Spirit. In 1 Peter 1:2, apostle Peter writes, "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood." Even apostle Paul reiterates that the Holy Spirit sanctifies his people. He writes, "But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13).

While sanctification is not possible without the Spirit's work, it is not automatic. We must yield ourselves to the Spirit and make efforts (cf. 2 Pet. 1:5) in order to live a holy life. In 2 Corinthians 7:1, Paul emphasizes our role in our sanctification. He writes, "Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God." Further, the writer to the Hebrews says that we must strive for holiness. He writes, "Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will

see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

Now spiritual disciplines are important to grow in holiness. But they will not make us holy automatically. Rather, as we follow the spiritual disciplines and as we surrender ourselves to the work of the Spirit, we progressively become sanctified. The Spirit uses God's word to sanctify us (Jn 17:17). Also, the Spirit uses leaders and fellow Christians to encourage and motivate us to live holy lives (Heb.10:25). That's why we must be accountable to one another.

In 2 Corinthians 3:18, we see that sanctification is not an event, it's a process. There, apostle Paul writes, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." Yes, we will not become completely perfect in this world. However, there must be clear progress in our sanctification.

John Newton, who is the author of the famous hymn 'Amazing

Grace,' said to his friend, "I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I want to be. I am not what I will be. But thank God I am not what I used to be." Like Newton, there must be progression in our sanctification too.

Sometimes, we resist the Spirit (Acts 7:51), quench him (1 Thessalonians 5:19), or grieve him (Ephesians 4:30). If we reject the Spirit's work, we will be disciplined severely and we can never be happy if we grieve him. That's why we must wage a war against sin with the help of the Spirit. We must not compromise with sin at any cost.

Christian character is the fruit of the Spirit. Apostle Paul contrasts the fruit of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. He writes, "Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (Gal. 5:19-23). We need to stop living according to the desires of the flesh and yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit. In Galatians 5:16, apostle Paul exhorts, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." We cannot live a holy life in our own strength. We need the Spirit's help to live lives that will bring glory to God.

Conclusion

So, what is the main takeaway for the youth (and for all the age groups) from this article: **Let's submit to the Spirit as he sanctifies us.**

A day is coming when we will be totally sanctified. In 1 John 3:2, apostle John writes, "but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." When Christ returns to establish his kingdom on a renewed earth, we don't have to battle sin anymore. We will completely overcome sin.

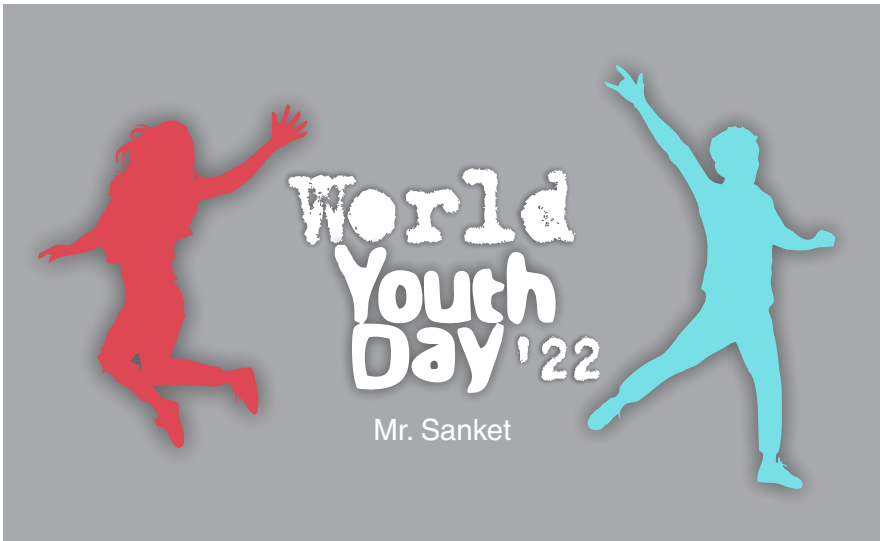
But until then, we must submit ourselves to the Spirit so that he can transform us into the image and likeness of Christ. Let's submit to the Spirit!



Rev. Dr. David Mende

serves as the Lead Pastor at El-Shaddai Assembly of God Church, Hyderabad (elshaddaiag.in). He also serves as an adjunct faculty member at Southern Asia Bible College (SABC) in Bangalore, Hyderabad Institute of Theology and Apologetics (HITHA) in Hyderabad, and SUM Bible College & Theological Seminary in California, USA.

He is married to Sis. Susan Mende, who is also actively serving the Lord. They are blessed with a daughter, Karis Ruth. Dr. Mende can be reached at +91 9848004094 and davemende@gmail.com.



Greetings To You in The Name of Jesus Christ,

It gives me immense joy to share my thoughts on this International Youth Day 2022.

Let's see the dictionary definitions of youth-

Cambridge (noun)- the period of your life when you are young or the state of being young Oxford (noun)- the time of life when a person is young, especially the time before a child becomes an adult.

The message I'm going to share

is to the young hot blood up to the senior citizens who are young at heart. So, please meditate on the below scripture portion for a minute and then continue reading the message.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. -John 15:13

We read these words of Jesus as we all know he was crucified on the cross for our sins. But how truly can these words apply to our monotonous lives. We live in a world where AI has developed so fast that we do not consider having a friend. We don't take the

risk of getting to know others more because we feel that we might be exploited or heart-broken by all the effort we have put into our friend/s. Now the question we ask ourselves is, is it worth laying down your own life for your friend? To answer this, we need to understand, how does God become our friend, Jesus says- you are my friend if you do what I command. So, God keeps his promise in giving life each new day and His blood that was shed on the cross washes our sins daily. Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice of being our dear friend. So now, when we come across strangers who then in turn become our friends, shouldn't we follow Jesus in the same way? We must strive hard to ensure that our mind and spirit are aligned with God's word. God will fill us with his love so that forgiveness will not become a difficult task. And we will be a role model to the ones who watch our lives closely.

So, my advice to all of you is to take out the time to reach a lost friend whom you haven't spoken to for a long time, envisioning the

way a shepherd rescues a lost sheep. Strengthen your bond with your friends irrespective of what religion they belong to. There is an observation that many of the mental health issues creep out from the mindset of a person thinking or being obsessed about himself/herself all the time. It's a healthy break for your mind when you show genuine interest for your friend's career/lifestyle/accomplishments, etc.

If you will be regularly attending church, you will be exposed to so many conflicts that you will keep a safe distance from making new friends. The true examples we can follow are seen in the lives of David & Jonathan. Even though Jonathan could have forcefully taken the Throne as an inheritance, he chose to respect and love his friend David. At times, you will face challenges where your parent/s have ill feelings towards another parent/s or child; you will then have 2 choices- (i) have the same ill feelings and snub that person (ii) forgive a fault and do what's best in the sight of God. The second

option is the command for us as followers of Jesus Christ, and when we follow it, there will be manifold blessings over your life.

Now, there is very thin line between folly and bravery. It's easily misunderstood if you are very young and are always there to give your life for your friend. So be careful! What kind of friends are you hanging out with, are their ways hurting your Biblical Principles or drifting you away from God or do they have the patience to listen to God's Word through you. So, keep praying regularly and as you know prayer is communication with God. You can speak to God in your mind while travelling, eg- which route should I take, while reading, eg- what book should I read, etc. When you will create a pattern of communicating with God constantly, the Holy Spirit will take control of your life. And when the time is right, God's power will be revealed through you in matters you never imagined and thought you could never pull this off on your own. The Holy Spirit will give you the guts and calm mind to pull off any extreme

situation. As Christians all around the world, mostly, we are local minority and a global majority. We are called to make a difference in the lives of many as we are called to be the salt of the world; and at times, it becomes very challenging when the world (dark forces) is against us. God's saving right hand and angels are ever there to give us protection. And thus, we should thank God daily for the love and protection which we at many times take for granted.

Looking at the current scenarios of India and many countries, we see a lot of hostility towards Christianity. Our character must display the love of Christ towards the conflicts that arise. And at the same time, we must be ever prayerful to ask God to strengthen us to defend our brother/sister in Christ. Being youngsters with fresh mind and vigour we must wilfully surrender our energy for God's will. So, prayer is very much essential in these testing times.

We as youngsters have to not depart from God's Word. And

while learning God's Word, we should weigh our motives. When our motives are pure and selfless, God will create opportunities for us to grow and be a living example. And thus, the ones who don't know about Jesus Christ or the Holy Bible will know the source of our strength and love when we acknowledge God.

I hope this message will ignite a never-ending flame in our hearts that's small yet significant. Amen

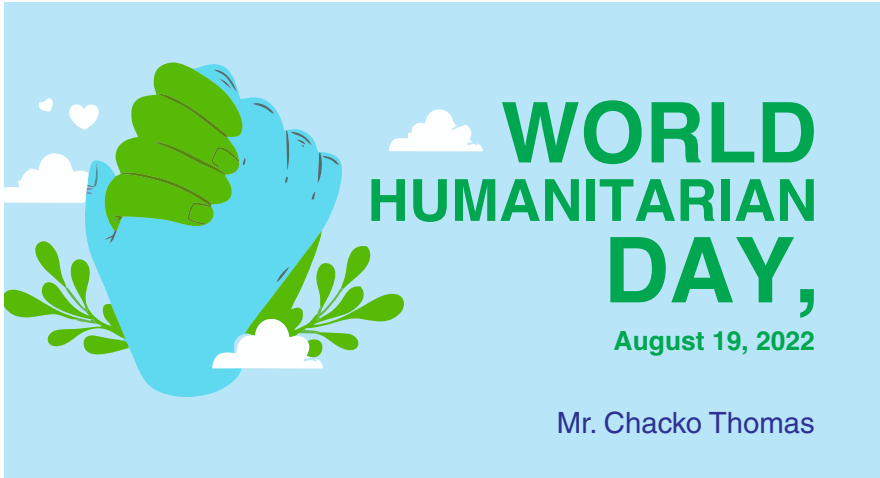


Mr. Sanket

is a member of Vernon Memorial Methodist English Church. He resides in Kalyan and works as a Digital Marketer in Mumbai. His Passions include Singing Praise & Worship songs, Songwriting and Playing Sports

**Don't let anyone look down
on you because you are
young, but set an example
for the believers in
speech, in conduct,
in love, in faith and in purity.**

1 Timothy 4:12



We live in a fallen world, but:
Our God has not given up on our world!

He is a Redeemer God. The Creation has a Saviour.

His saving grace is at work. A blessed future that "no eyes have seen, nor ear has heard, and no mind has imagined" is awaiting us.

But the reality today is that there is untold suffering, toils, oppressions, and calamities all around us. There are natural calamities like floods, droughts, and earthquakes. Then, there are those man-inflicted disasters like wars, poverty, oppressions, human trafficking, slavery, you name it.

Humanitarian assistance.

Christians have been on the forefront of providing humanitarian assistance throughout our existence. It is a natural outcome of the Christian belief system. Human dilemmas seen in the light of the Christian faith calls on us to act in compassion as Good Samaritans. The question is not "who sinned, he or his parents?" but how to rescue those victims and provide relief and remedy. We are our brothers' keepers.

World Humanitarian Day

"honours humanitarian aid workers all over the world. Established by the UN in 2009, this day commemorates the anniversary of the bombing of the United Nations Headquarters in

Iraq. 22 people lost their lives, including the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights”

(<https://nationaltoday.com/world-humanitarian-day/>)

The article continues "Humanitarian aid workers provide life-saving assistance to suffering people all over the world. Those workers who live in conflict zones or in areas devastated by natural disasters are especially vulnerable.

"The day pays tribute to the thousands of humanitarian workers who gave their lives and suffered injuries in the course of their work. Did you know that at one point in 2021, 235 million people in 26 countries required humanitarian assistance? This is the day to honour all those workers who continue their service to provide support and protection to people in need."

Sadly, I can't help but recall a time when Humanitarian groups, providing food and education to needy unfortunate children in India were thrown out of the country and their foreign funds were stopped. Those who have been touched by the compassion

of Jesus will find it hard to appreciate such moves. It is a sad day when governments and religions become callous and inhumane.

True religion is very humane. As James, our Lord's brother wrote, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." James 1:27.

Terms like "Humanitarian" and "Humanity" have special meaning to me. I have had the privilege of visiting 107 countries in six continents and living and working with up to 50 nationalities at a time for 15 years with the OM Ships. It changed my outlook from a nationalist to a world citizen. (By the way, one of the books that I am reading now is by a man who had travelled to every country in the world, that is 217 countries. His book is entitled "His Last Command – My First Desire" by Ray Lentzsch.)

In this article, I would like to broaden the UN term "Humanitarian" to include others in the "trade" other than Aid Workers. There are Humanitarian

workers serving people everywhere; in governments, in the Media, in Charity groups, serving through our schools, hospitals, Judicial systems, law and order and those "Good Samaritans" who serve their "neighbours". The list is long. They are God's servants, as I understand my Bible.

Media Personnel. Recently, I watched the US "White House Correspondents' Dinner", an annual event to celebrate freedom of the Press. It is gathering of hundreds of Media Persons in the USA. There was a slide presentation of nine media personnel who were killed in the last two months for reporting on the war in the Ukraine. Another slot was given to honour those reporting on the January 6th attack on Democracy and the US Capital. Those reporters in prison in places like Syria, Iran and Russia were remembered, one of them in prison for more than a decade. The programme is available on YouTube. Truth telling Media is a Humanitarian Aid.

Humanitarian Leaders. Who can deny the fact that what Dr Martin Luther King (USA) did was not a Humanitarian work in lifting

a whole section of its population from inequality to equal citizenship in the country? By the way, he was a Baptist Pastor. (I think India would be blessed if Christian leaders gave thought to humanitarian needs of the country. The prophets were social reformers, be it Isaiah, Micah or Amos.)

I read something encouraging about the New President of India on the BBC News site: "After she quit her job in Bhubaneswar and returned to Rairangpur to take care of her family, at the insistence of her mother-in-law, she took up a job as a teacher at the Sri Aurobindo Integral School. "But she refused to accept a salary. The school only paid her rickshaw fare. She said this was not a job, but public service. She said the salary of her husband, a bank officer, was enough to take care of their family needs," what a beautiful example. (I wish she took the salary and gave it away to the poorest of the poor in her area, but it is not up to me, is it?) Heaven will reward her for her public service.

What is Humanity all about?

One of the reasons for the

mistreatment of humanity is the wrong way people perceive Humanity. What do Authorities, religious leaders, religions, or common man think of Humanity, especially of a different race or caste? Most are operating with a false Worldview.

Sadly, the age-old mistaken views on Humanity are creating hell on earth. It is inflicting horrible pain on large pockets of humanity all over the world. Abuse of Human Rights is a real thing, and millions perish under its curse.

The Bible has a very high view of Humanity. We need our Creator to tell us what the humanity is all about, who we are, how we are to treat each other, and the consequences to the abusers of humanity. And God has spoken in His Word. In it, we have God's Revelation about Humanity. One phrase in the Bible summarises what humanity is all about, it is that humanity is "created in the image of God", and "made in the likeness of God". We read these phrases in the very first page of the Bible. Genesis 1:26-27.

The creation of human beings

crowns the seven days of creation. It is one of the two peaks in the creation account. The other peak being the Sabbath, it's the supreme goal. (See Genesis 1 and 2). The existence of the Sabbath (Rest) keeps human beings from total absorption in the task of "subduing the earth". The Commandment to keep the Sabbath is the longest of the Ten Commandments. This Commandment is correctly called the first ever Labour Law, where God regulated the employer employee contract. (Exodus 20:8-11)

What are the implications of being made in the image of God? Implications of being made in the likeness of God is huge. Dr John Wyatt, Professor of Ethics and Perinatology at the University College London and a specialist in the medical care of newborn babies, has expounded on it on his book "Matters of Life and Death". I shall just point out his main points here:

God's image in us implies dependence on Him.
God's image in us implies communion with Him.
God's image in us implies that we are His children.

God's image in us implies the dignity of each human life.

God's image in us implies the equality of human beings.

How do we respond to God's image in others?

Dr. Wyatt expounds on it under four significant words in his book. We respond with 1) Wonder, 2) Respect, 3) Empathy and 4) Protection. The God of the Bible gives us no other options.

A person's worth in the Bible

is not based on his or her work or accomplishment. It is derived from the fact that we are created by the Living and Loving God in His image. Be it a beggar, a foetus in the womb, a child, or old, disabled or dying, all are worth more than the whole world. God loves us and cares for us all. He makes his sun to shine on us all, he sends rain for us all. Our life came from him. We are a part of Him. We are not to discriminate male or female, black or white, "high" caste or "low" caste, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, Hindu or Muslim, you name it. We accept them all as precious to God.

We still are in God's image.

The Bible tells us that the image

of God in us had been marred, by what we call, The Fall (Genesis 3). But we have not lost the image of God. God is at work in us through the Lord Jesus Christ to restore that image and one day, we shall be fully restored.

God has no favourites.

A human's worth comes from the fact that he or she is made in God's own image, in His own likeness. So, Humanity is to be loved and cared for. Six of the Ten Commandments are all about loving our neighbour as ourselves. It tells us how to love others with the kind of love God has for them. And the other four Commandments are about how to Love God. This comes first and foremost. Then, we would know how adequately to love others with an unselfish love.

God's Business Card:

I heard a Bible teacher say that if God carried a Business Card, it would quote Isaiah 25:4. "For You have been a defence for the helpless, a defence for the needy in distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat;" He is a God of the vulnerable. After preaching a lot about the Good Samaritan, George Verwer, the founder of OM, printed on the back of his

business card "Seven People lying at the side of the Road". They are Children at Risk, Abused women, Extreme poor, The HIV/AIDS patient, People with impure water, The unborn and the Environment. And he asks, "Will you be a Good Samaritan?".

Please allow me to introduce you to Dr. K. Rajendran, who went to be with the Lord earlier this year at the age of 70. He served India for 25 years with OM India and OM Ships; 12 years as the General Secretary of IMA (India Missions Association), at a period of remarkable growth and development of both movements. He networked with hundreds of top Christian leaders across India and beyond. Dr. Rajendran spent most of his time teaching and mentoring younger leaders who now are spread all across India as OM India and IMA and other graduates. He multiplied himself in hundreds of lives.

His wife Pramila, a brilliant lady from U.P, ably served alongside Rajendran. Thanking God for this couple and their daughter, Preeti and son, Pradeep. I am re-reading his book, "Which Way Forward Indian Missions?". It is a huge Humanitarian contribution

to India. He was especially concerned for first generation followers of our Lord who joined Indian Missions by the hundreds. He worked to remove stumbling blocks that prevented majority India population from following the Lord Jesus. He sought to build bridges between the lost and found. May God bless India with such humble and able Servant Leaders.

We are blessed to bless.



Mr. Chacko Thomas

is presently a Minister-at-large with Operation Mobilisation. He served for 15 years on the OM Ships Logos, Doulos, and Logos II. His ministry has taken him to 107 countries in six continents. One of his few passions is to see the earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord and His values blessing the nations. He can be contacted on chacko.thomas@om.org



The year before she finished her master's in science, there was a marriage proposal for Rebecca from an air force guy. Eligible wouldn't you say? Good salary, lots of perks, glamorous job of ruling the skies, and in the end, there would be secure retirement benefits that could pass on to the surviving spouse. But, she turned him down because when asked about church attendance, he gleefully told her that he was based in Ambala and the church there had got bombed. Rebecca didn't like the idea of being married to someone who found joy in the fact that a church had been ruined.

A few months later, an aunt told Rebecca that there was a

proposal from a widow for her son, who was preparing to be a preacher – a man with no great prospects. Still, Rebecca considered the proposal, and in the end, decided that she would marry him.

Within a few months of having finished her master's degree, their marriage took place in November. Ten days later the bride and groom were on their way to Lucknow, where the preacher had been appointed pastor of a church.

In January, Rebecca decided that she would try to get a job as she had a master's degree. There was a church-run women's college and so, she went there.

She met the principal, who brushed her off saying that though she wanted to help "our pastor's wife", there were no vacancies. However, when she looked through Rebecca's file and spotted her master's degree in Home Science with Textiles as her specialisation, the principal quickly backtracked and said that it so happens that a vacancy would be coming up where she would fit.

The college was founded by missionaries. The then principal was a product of the missionary era and was intent on running it the old way – as a women's college with faculty resident on the campus. This meant that all the teachers had to be single women. Any married ones were employed on an ad hoc basis – from one year to another. They were never confirmed in the job. At the end of the academic year, their services were terminated, and they were reemployed only if no single women turned up to fill any of the positions the married women had held.

The principal had been readying one particular teacher to become

the next principal. She was highly suitable, simply because she was a single person and a loyalist. However, on a trip to the US, this single teacher met an American man who romanced her and swayed her from her plan to remain single. When she got back from her journey, she broke the news to the principal that she would be getting married and moving to America.

This protégé of the principal was the head of the college's department of Euthenics – a science that deals with development of human well-being by improvement of living conditions. In India, the subjects covered under euthenics are taught in Home Science departments – ridiculed by most ignoramuses as the department teaching cooking and stitching. The principal didn't want people to belittle girls and decided to use this American term instead. And that was right, because Home Science is more than just the arts of cooking and stitching. It covers Food and Nutrition, Child Psychology and Human Development, Textiles and Apparel, Resource Management

and Communication and Extension.

Thus, it was that Rebecca got her appointment because someone who was a "confirmed spinster" decided that she did want to get married and made way for her.

Just before summer vacation, Rebecca asked the principal if she could order books for the department that would fit in with the Home Science curriculum followed by colleges all over India. That was when she learnt that her services would be terminated and there was a possibility that she would not be reemployed if a single woman applied for the job. A rude shock, indeed!

Rebecca didn't lose heart. She applied for the job after the summer hols. Among the applicants, there was another woman with a Home Science degree, and she was single. It certainly looked like Rebecca would not be getting the job, after all.

A few days before the interview for the job, the principal had a fall

and broke her leg and so couldn't attend the interviews. And so it happened that the others on the selection committee favoured Rebecca as the one who had been teaching in the college already.

The bursar of the college was the principal's right hand person and confidante. He had a file in which the principal had circled the name of the single woman indicating her choice for the position. So, he went to her after the selection committee meeting and told her that instead of the one she wanted, the young married woman Rebecca had been selected. The principal was gracious enough to recognise that her proposal had been overruled and nothing could be done about it.

When Rebecca and her husband learnt that the principal's plan had been to select the single person instead of Rebecca, they concluded that God had broken the principal's leg to prevent her from carrying out her plan.

The young couple had planned to have their first baby after a whole

year of just being together in keeping with the biblical rule that a newly married couple was not to have any obligations or social responsibilities in the first year of marriage (Deut. 24:5). And since Rebecca was not entitled to maternity leave, because married women were not confirmed in their jobs, they planned to have the baby during the summer vacation period.

After Rebecca had joined, the college came under the University Grants Commission's (UGC) rules, and salaries were upgraded immensely. The inevitable happened. A few of the single young women who had already been confirmed in their jobs, were considering marriage. When the principal learnt of the impending "disaster" of single confirmed teachers getting married, she realised that she would not be able to terminate the services of any of the single women who had already been confirmed. The college's board was convened, and a new rule passed that allowed the confirmation of married women, and so, Rebecca was confirmed and that summer when her son

was born, her husband joked that their son was the first legitimate child of the college.

Rebecca found out that former students who had done Euthenics were not able to pursue post graduate studies elsewhere as no other universities had heard of euthenics. It wasn't a recognised subject. The college she was teaching in was the only institution offering the subject. Neither the Lucknow University nor any other colleges affiliated to the university had euthenics. In effect, the study of euthenics was serving as a finishing school for girls ready to be married – the very purpose it was supposed to defeat.

Since she was now a confirmed teacher, Rebecca worked on getting the Euthenics Department converted into a Home Science Department so that her students could benefit by joining other institutions to pursue post graduate studies. She got the syllabi from other universities offering Home Science degrees and upgraded the syllabus to fit the

requirements of Home Science departments around the country. Then, she steered the syllabus through the academic council of the university and got it approved. As a result of her efforts in getting Home Science on the list of the university's approved departments, other women's colleges were also able to open home science departments. What Rebecca did, opened doors for girls all over the city.

Around this time, the first proposer of marriage – the Air Force chap – died, and her husband teased Rebecca that she had lost the chance to be a "merry widow" on the fat pension and perks available to widows of armed services' personnel.

Though she was confirmed, Rebecca never opted for pension as her retirement benefit. The reason for that was that the denomination that her husband worked for had the rule that a pastor was appointed annually. Thus, at the end of a year, he could be transferred to another city, and she would have to move with him. So, she opted for provident fund – something she could take with her whenever she

had to move because her husband got transferred.

Sixteen years after joining the college, Rebecca needed surgery. Since the surgery was taking place during the summer vacation, she would get some rest right after the surgery. But the surgeon had said that she had to be careful for at least four to six months.

In those days, Lucknow had only cycle rickshaws and "tempos" (three-wheeler vehicles used for transporting small goods that were converted to convey passengers). Both were rattletraps – not good for someone trying to recover from surgery.

Rebecca's husband had only a scooter from the church, and riding pillion over pot-holed roads wasn't all right for someone recovering from surgery. Small time pastor though he was, her husband began to pray the impossible prayer that somehow the Lord would provide a car and driver to take Rebecca to college and bring her back. Just before Rebecca had to rejoin duty, the

then bishop assigned her husband to temporarily take additional charge as the president of the college where Rebecca was teaching. The job came with a car and driver. Not the answer he was hoping for, because the guy didn't like administrative positions. He told the bishop that from day one he would be looking for a woman to replace him as the president. In the meantime, for about six months both of them rode to college and back by car.

As he was filling an English-language pulpit, Rebecca's husband was not transferred year after year for 23 years. After the bishop who appointed him moved on to another conference area, three bishops who followed that bishop did want to move him for their personal reasons. He agreed to move, but each time the bishops were frustrated because the man in the only other English-language church in the conference didn't want to move. However, the last bishop Rebecca's husband worked under, had his own agenda, and insisted on moving him when a new person was coming in after

training in a seminary abroad. The bishop offered Rebecca's husband a promotion – the district superintendency. Without a pulpit, the job was mainly looking after court cases in the district. Our man tendered his resignation. They left the church and vacated the parsonage in less than a month, even though the family had lived in it for 23 years, and some people told them that they should just hang in there and refuse to vacate because no court would get them out and wait it out until the bishop moves to another conference. Having built a reputation for integrity, that was not an option.

Together with people who were not members of the denomination but attending that church because our man was the preacher, they formed an independent, non-denominational church.

At last, with no fear of transfers hanging over their heads, Rebecca was free to choose pension as the retirement benefit, she wanted. However, by this time, the pension option was no longer open. The government

had thrown it open again and again, a number of times earlier. But finally, the government had closed off the option. She was left with no hope of getting a pension.

Then, some college and university teachers in the same situation got together and took the matter to court and the High Court ordered that the pension option be made available to the teachers who were left out. Without being a litigant herself, the pension option was thrown open to Rebecca and that too at a time when the new president of the college was against her for having been one of those who opposed the plan to have the college designated a deemed university.

As a senior teacher, Rebecca was one of those who could and did influence other teachers and they jointly opposed the move because the staff would have been at the mercy of the head. Though touted as the way to ensure a smoother administration for a college, the staff were fearful of being fired at

will for the broad and vague charge of insubordination, whereas as part of the Lucknow University, the management of the college had to follow government rules before anyone could be sacked. For her role in making sure that the president's dream was shattered, she was in the bad books of the head. But without any effort whatsoever because others had gone to court in the matter, she got her pension approved.

This is a true story. Wasn't Rebecca's an appointment under God? It's not only preachers who are called of God. A teacher, a farmer, a doctor, an administrator – all are called.



Rev. Kuruvilla Chandy

is a freelance preacher and writer. He can be reached at: reverendkuru@aol.com



The Return of the Prodigal: Insights for Christian Youths

Rev. Dr. Samuel Richmond

In simple understanding, there are three stages in human life: childhood, adulthood and old age. Throughout this period, we humans learn, grow and develop. If we look at life from these three different stages, it appears to be quite interesting. Children want to enjoy every bit of their lives. They are curious to know more things as they grow. They are carefree, full of enthusiasm, and highly dependent on their parents. As they grow, they become adults. They enter into two different phases of life within adulthood: youths and mature adults. Youths usually try to view life as an opportunity to accomplish something in a short period. If they fail to accomplish (generally it happens), they go through

depression, isolation, stress, anxiety, shame and sometimes, even end their lives. Youths generally go through identity crises, personality clashes etc. Most of them think they can do anything without the help of their family members and God. For some of them, parents are the worst enemies. They take life for granted and meaningless. Without knowing the consequences, they quickly jump into controversies, violence, agitation, addiction etc. Sadly, today's youths are becoming puppets in the hands of technology in this digital world. The church has a role to play in the lives of young men and women. We as a community of believers cannot neglect their

physical needs, but at the same time, we need to address their spiritual needs too. In God's Word, God has a special place for young people. Most of the prominent biblical characters were young, from which we may draw some spiritual lessons.

Wayward Young Man

Luke 15: 11-24 is commonly known as 'the parable of the prodigal son.' In this parable, Jesus describes a wealthy father who had two sons. The younger son demanded a share of his father's wealth to spend it according to his will. There may be a possibility that the father must have counselled him as per Jewish custom, but he never cared. The younger son had all right to ask for his share legally and even to sell it, but it was not considered the right act as the father was still living. After squandering all his wealth on wild living, there was a big famine in the land, and he had nothing to eat.

At last, he had to work for a foreigner, feeding pigs -- something detestable to a Jew. But, for the prodigal son, the

famine was a blessing in disguise. It made him think that his father's hired servants lived far more comfortably than him. He determined to go to his father in repentance, acknowledging his sin against God and his Father and seeking pardon. He realized he was no longer worthy of being called his son, but he knew his father's heart. Although he has no right to the property, he is still confident that he will get a little space for himself in his father's house as a slave. With the repented heart, he reached the father, but the picture was entirely different than he expected. The father, on seeing him at a distance, ran toward him. With compassion, he opened his arms, hugged and kissed him, even before hearing the son's prepared speech. The father did not demonstrate love in response to his son's confession. Instead, out of his mercy, he ran to be reconciled with his estranged son. Now, he was no longer a prodigal to him (vs. 32), because true repentance brought reconciliation between the two.

The Sting of Sin

According to 1 John 2:16, there

are three avenues through which people sin: (a) the lust of the flesh, (b) the lust of the eyes, and (c) the pride of life. Through these windows, young people often forget the meaning and purpose of life and drift away from God's life. Sin not only corrupts humans but also paralyzes them spiritually. Minds get darkened, ignorance dominates, and the heart becomes hardened. In such circumstances, satan robs our relationship with God, as well as with our family members. He creates a circumstance that takes young people to the point of isolation where they become depressed, suppressed, and oppressed, eventually forcing them to commit suicide. Jesus said in John 10:10, 'the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy....' The characteristics of satan are also the same. Satan knows that when human gets disconnected from God, they die. In today's generation, many young people are getting trapped by the desires of the world. The power of sin is dreadful but is not everlasting.

Key of Forgiveness

A person who sins needs outside

help. The antidote for sin and death is God's gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. It only happens when the person admits the fault. By admitting the mistakes before God and humans, the gates of heaven get open wide, and God's grace flows gently in the repented heart. Repentance is turning from sin and evil desire and taking the road of obedience and holiness. This type of repentance leads to a fundamental change in a person's relationship with God and helps overcome sin's power in Christ. The prayer of King David (Ps. 51) on repentance gives a chance to a sinner to come to the Lord who has the power to (a) create a clean heart in us; (b) allow us to be in His holy presence, and (c) restore in us the joy of salvation. Despite losing everything, the prodigal son had something in his hand, i.e. he still had his father. With that hope, he went to see his father. We have a heavenly Father who is the Father of all, ready to forgive all our iniquities.

Bosom of Joy

Henri Nouwen, a well-known twentieth-century writer,

commented on Rembrandt's painting in *The Return of the Prodigal Son* in 1994: "The hands of the father are quite different. The father's left hand touching the son's shoulder is strong, rough and muscular. There is pressure, especially in the thumb. The hand seems not only to touch but with its strength, also to hold. The right hand of the father does not hold or grasp. It is refined, soft and very tender. It lies gently upon the son's shoulder which offers consolation and comfort. It is a mother's hand..." In the Bible, God is presented as a father, who also acts with the tender compassion of a mother (Deut. 32:18; Ps. 131; Is. 42:14; 66:33)."

In Colossians 1:21-22, Paul writes, "...you who were once so far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions, now he [through the sacrifice of His Son] has brought you back as his friends". God "has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 5:18). It is true once we were alienated from the presence of God, we were dead, but now we are a New Creation, restored and renewed. There is a

joy and abundance of life in God's presence. Once, we were fatherless, but now, we have a love of our heavenly Father, and in Jesus, we have received this inheritance.

Renewed Relationship

Reconciliation leads to restoration, which is the heart of the Christian gospel. In restoration, the relationship is renewed with God. The treatment that the young man receives from the father is fantastic. The father embraces him, covers him with the best garment, gets a ring for his finger, sandals for his feet and celebrates his homecoming. Similarly, when a sinner repents, God covers that person with the garment of salvation and righteousness (Is. 61:10); provides a ring which is the sign of authority (Gen. 41:42) and seal (Esth. 8:8) or covenant; sandal for our feet is the peace that we receive from God's Word, and it ends with a grand celebration in heaven by the angels (Luke 15:10). All that we lost in the Garden of Eden due to the sin of disobedience is now regained in and through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. At the beginning of

the parable, the son is lost, but toward the end, "...he is found!" In earthly father, we find physical security, but in Spiritual Father, we find eternal security. Jesus said, in John 14:1 'there are many mansions in my Father's house.' Sometimes, our earthly father may not be able to provide for our physical or spiritual needs, but there is a Father who provides all our needs. To be part of the holy family of God, cleansing is required. Father ran to welcome his son, depicts God's love for the world: God loved the world that he gave His Son and Son had compassion over us and he died for our sins.

Ultimate Decision

The parable of the prodigal son is an eyeopener for young people. It's a universal story that represents every member of the human race. It reveals the wayward lives of young people and gives them hope that even when we make mistakes, we have a God who loves us and is ready to forgive us. Lust for money, cravings for alcohol, drugs, pornography, stealing, and sex will never satisfy our young people. Such an act

corrupts bodies and destroys our souls. We should not forget that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. John J. Jones felt God calling him into the ministry, but he resisted, choosing the law profession instead. His son followed in his footsteps. Young Sam Jones proved a brilliant attorney at first. But alcoholism quickly ruined his life and reduced him to shovelling coal. He was on a drinking binge when he heard of his father's illness. He rushed home, and the old lawyer became a preacher, at last, saying, "My poor, wicked, wayward, reckless boy. You have brought me down in sorrow to my grave. Promise me, my boy, to meet me in heaven." Sam fell to his knees and promised, then he flew to a bar and begged for a glass of liquor. But as he started to drink it, he saw himself in the mirror—hair matted—filth and vomit on his clothes. Lips swollen. He smashed the glass on the floor and gave his life to Jesus Christ. A week later, he preached his first sermon. Jones became the most famous evangelist of the nineteenth century. He held crusades in major cities throughout America, winning an

estimated 500,000 people to Christ.

Connection with God

Ecclesiastes 12:1 writes, 'Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come...' King Solomon encourages young people always to remember and think about God. Youth should know that they are not in this world by chance but are God's creation and answerable to Him. It becomes so easy to neglect and forget God when we are caught up in the enjoyments and opportunities of youth. Theories like Evolution and Big Bang may influence our younger generation to think that life has no purpose, but the ultimate truth is no one can survive without God. As a Creator, His authority exists over the entire universe, especially on humans, as we are created in His image and likeness. Hence, youths must be connected to God if they want to excel in their lives. Warren Wiersbe gave a fundamental principle to young

people based on the book of Ecclesiastes, "I will be satisfied to the extent that I see everything I have as a gift from God." True satisfaction can only be found in a relationship with our Creator. Young people should remember and acknowledge that—money, talent, friendships, marriage, children, material possessions, health, home, bike, car, etc.—are gifts from God that He has chosen out of His generous nature to give them. Ken Baugh encourages young people to 'drink deeply, my friend, of the truths of God's Word, for in them you will find Jesus Christ, and there is freedom, peace, assurance, and joy.'



Rev. Dr. Samuel Richmond
*Academic Dean, Caleb Institute,
Gurugram*

For by grace you have been saved through faith
Ephesians 2:8-10

The wonder lane of miracles



This is an interview with Dr. Saira Paulose, Executive Director of EHA (Emmanuel Hospital Association). EHA specializes in providing health care in underdeveloped and remotest parts of Northern and North Eastern India through 19 hospitals and 42 projects. Dr. Saira and her husband Dr. Santhosh Mathew were young doctors pursuing their MD in CMC (Christian Medical College) in Ludhiana when they got to know about EHA, and it has since been a beautiful journey of serving the marginalized in some of the most challenging hospitals of EHA in northern India. In this

interview, Dr. Saira reminisces some memories and the faithful hand of God along the way.

- **What was your vision when you started your medical studies?**

I always wanted to be a good doctor from the beginning, to serve the poor.

My father was a doctor in the government service; and would also do private medical practice at home, many poor people would come and pay their consultation charges in coins, I remember vividly as a child, that

my father would give back the fees and treat the poor people for free. So, these memories stewarded me while growing up.

- **Journeying through cross-cultural change, how did you prepare for mission as a doctor?**

I come from a very conservative family in Kerala, and I didn't have any exposure to missions in Northern part of India or any cross-cultural missions. There was a Bible study in Trivandrum Medical College which I used to attend regularly, from there I heard about mission hospitals in North India for the first time, beyond that I had no idea to what it entails. When I moved to Christian Medical College in Ludhiana for Masters, I didn't know much, but I was ready to face the challenge. I went with an open mind and God amazingly provided us with good friends, who supported us through the journey. I had gotten married by then, and we, in the process, grew spiritually and learnt to accommodate well. I didn't know much about mission in Northern India, but what helped me was

that we were taught to accommodate and adjust while growing up, so I was willing to adjust wherever I was put.

- **In 1992, you had first joined EHA Hospital Unit in Lakhnadon Christian Hospital and moved to other hospital Units in the later years; what challenges were you welcomed with in regards to lack of health-care facilities and shortage of equipment in rural India?**

Back then when I had joined Lakhnadon, the hospital was almost shut down and in a dilapidated condition. There was only Dr. Uttam, my husband and I, with old basic equipment and instruments, a rudimentary lab, and old ether machines for anaesthesia. Due to lack of money, we weren't able to upgrade the hospital to match the need or pay any salary. It was surely a rough hill, but with no good hospitals in neighbouring places, people would resort to Lakhnadon Christian hospital with hope.

Duncan Hospital in Raxual held better memories but Kachhwa Hospital was again in the same

run-down situation. We were met with innumerable constraints wherever we worked in those early days, be it human resources or not having enough equipment to take care of basic needs to provide good quality care, but we worked with what we had without complaint. We did desire upgrades and good instruments for proper care, but prayerfully, we managed with what we had and in this, we saw numerous miracles unfold and patients getting healed.

I have memories of parents rushing in with their children who were gasping for air; complicated delivery cases with no hope, cases of the ruptured uterus, and many more. In these situations, I have seen such children going back home alive and active, mothers going back after delivering healthy babies through normal delivery, ruptured uteruses getting healed and what not. Operating on patients with very low haemoglobin was always a task to manage, as we had to manage without blood, no relatives would agree to donate blood. But God would miraculously heal; His immense

love was visible in these interventions.

Language was also a challenge in some communities, but trusting God and persevering along the way, we were able to learn and communicate.

- **You have worked tenaciously as a lady doctor (OB-GYN) across EHA Hospital Units; what practice or superstition amongst women in local communities challenged you, especially while working in Duncan Hospital which is based on the India-Nepal border.**

The belief system and hygienic practices wouldn't go well with the ailing patients; many of them would visit the local doctors or recourse to temples and would only come to hospitals when the situation was grave and totally out of control. For OB-GYN, they would want a female doctor and would prefer a male doctor for other illnesses, they could think of a surgeon as a male doctor only. Changing or reasoning with their belief system of occult practices was impossible as they were steeped in it.

We as doctors, touch and check anterior fontanelle- the forehead of children for signs of dehydration, but parents in rural areas cover or seal the forehead of their children with mud or cowdung, believing that this would prevent water from entering their children's brain, it was a practice never changed (I don't know about now).

Communities didn't value sick women or girl child, even in critical conditions; they'd refrain from spending money on them by admitting them to the hospital. If blood was needed for a woman in case of anaemia, they'd refuse to give and instead say, "let them die, we'll marry another one." But for a man or a boy child, they'd go to any extent to get the patient treated. I remember treating pregnant girls brought in, impregnated by their own uncles or brothers, I've also treated loads of abortion cases gone messy and fatal.

In Duncan Hospital, I remember ladies brought in with severe burnt cases, clouded with simple excuses of cylinder burst or hot water fell or a kitchen accident

when everyone knew someone lit the fire. I remember a lady from a well off Marwadi family living in Nepal, brought in with 85% burns; she looked more like a charcoal strewn on bed than a human being. We had to refer her to another hospital and she later passed away.

- **Serving as a doctor in hospital units in the Northern part of India for the last 30 years, what place do you love the most and what did it teach you?**

I'd say that our experiences in each hospital were good, some were too challenging but each taught and honed us a lot. Duncan Hospital serves many good memories both professional and spiritual, regardless of numerous struggles.

Shalom Centre in Delhi for patients with life-limiting diseases, helped me to grow spiritually and enabled me to see the practice of medicine from a different perspective. That's where I understood what holistic care means.

- **How did work amongst marginalized people change your perspective about the world?**

My perspective had to change as I had to see each of them made in the image of Christ and God's love had to flow in them through me. Also, to go beyond my medical practice, in the sense to provide holistic care, I could deeply comprehend how a person as a whole is important in all aspects.

I knew that I won't fit on the other side of the world, in other hospitals; I never had an inkling of a flashy medical career. I strongly knew that I was needed here amongst the marginalized and this is what God wanted from me, He's always had a purpose for me wherever I went and that's what kept me straight. I have MD in Anaesthesia, but I hardly practiced it as the need for a lady doctor (OB-GYN) emerged more and God used me for so many lives.

- **Throughout your journey as a missionary doctor, what did God teach you about Himself?**

What's strongly instilled is that He is Faithful. He knows what is best for me and my family and He'll undertake it, I just need to depend upon Him continually. And all along, in these 30 years through different hospital units and multiple challenges, He's proved it every single time.

We need to be faithful in what we're doing, and God is the one who transforms situations and enables us to walk through them.

- **A Bible verse/ story/chapter that has been your pillar throughout your journey.**

Proverbs 3:5 has strengthened me throughout the journey till now, there're things we cannot conceive or solve, situations that will baffle us and catch us off guard. But, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding'.

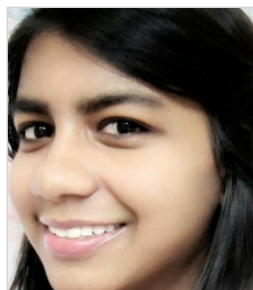
- **A message to the upcoming generation of young missionary doctors.**

Be faithful in obeying the Master who's called you to His mission, take a step forward and He'll sustain you. You're safe in His

hands, you and your family, it's worth taking the risk, and He'll unfold all plans along the way.

Our family and children's education were all taken care of when we obeyed God, instead of worrying and grumbling about what we didn't have, we enjoyed whatever we had, they were all blessings. It's always best to be where God wants us to be, that's where the blessings flow and miracles unfurl. I bless you all!

Interviewed by Ms. Jessica Joel.



Ms. Jessica Joel

is a student of Arts and a freelance writer. She lives in Agra and loves to write.



REQUIRED FOR THE SERVICE OF THE LORD AT MISSIONARY UPHOLDERS TRUST (MUT)

Missionary Upholders Trust is a Christian organization committed to meet some of the common unmet needs of Christian workers. More details can be viewed in our website www.mutindia.org

MUT, requires **born again Christians** who are really committed to serve missionaries and pastors in any of the locations viz. Vellore / Chennai / Oddanchatram / Lamtaput in India. Interested candidates may send their particulars/ bio-data to <mut.vellore@gmail.com>, and a **small paragraph on why you are interested to serve in MUT.**

Interested person must be at least a graduate in any stream with proficiency in word, excel and PowerPoint. Communication in English and arithmetical skills would be expected. If from commerce stream it will be an added attribute. Knowledge of any other language especially Hindi would be good. Exposure in medical environment will be an advantage.



THE LAST, MOST EMPHASIZED, TRUTH FOR YOUTH IN THE HOLY BIBLE

Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj

What is the last most emphasized truth for youth in the Holy Bible? When I first discovered this, as I prepared to preach God's Word to a youth group based out of Qatar and United Kingdom over Zoom, I was surprised. This is what I discovered: The Bible repeatedly calls young people for sexual purity just before signing off. The Scriptures, time and again, challenge the Google Generation for sexual holiness as the Bible canon comes to an end. We must first turn to Revelation chapter 18 to grasp this. This chapter records God's judgment upon Babylon. And the oft-repeated sin of Babylon is sexual sin. By clearly recording the judgment that was to come upon sexually immoral Babylon, God

was saying this to modern readers of the book of Revelation: be holy when it comes sexual purity, lest you too face the same fate of Babylon!

- **The References to the sexual immorality of Babylon:**

Time and again, we read references to the sexual immorality of Babylon in the book of Revelation. They begin much earlier than Revelation 18. They begin in Revelation 14. There we read this: "A second angel followed and said, 'Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great,' which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries!" (Rev. 14:8, NIV). A look at the above passage reveals that the gospel was being

proclaimed to all nations, tribes, languages, and peoples through an angel (Rev. 14:6). What was the content of the angel's gospel message? "Fear God and give him glory because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water" (Rev. 14:7). The angel's announcement tells me a few things about evangelism.

First, about the AUDIENCE for the Gospel. It is clearly a message for all people (Rev. 14:6).

Second, about the ANNOUNCEMENT part of the Gospel. The Gospel is not just an announcement of the Goodnews that Jesus loves you and died for your sins as a substitute. It is also the announcement of the bad news that the day of judgment is coming and those who stubbornly reject Jesus will have to face hell punishment. In this case, the hour of judgment (Rev. 14:7) is spoken of pointing to the truth of 'any time judgment' (judgment comes anytime for those in the New Testament last days because of the possibility of any-time death and any-time

Second Coming of Jesus).

The third thing about evangelism I understand from this passage concerns the AIM of evangelism. The aim of evangelism is to establish worshipping communities – the starting of local churches (Rev. 14:7 last part).

- **The Rock bottom that Babylon hits because she chose sexual sin:**

After these truths were recorded, John the author of Revelation, sitting in the island of Patmos, talks about Babylon for the first time in Revelation 14:8. And what he wrote concerning Babylon makes this obvious: Babylon has rejected the Goodnews of Jesus and chosen a life of sexual immorality instead. She chose the maddening wine of her adulteries! The consequence for this stiff-necked choice is obvious: God planned her fall as she chose to fall for sexual temptation! As we come to Revelation chapter 18, we see many more condemnations for the sexual immorality of Babylon. The Heavenly Messenger says this: "Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the great city! It has become a habitat

for demons, A haunt for every kind of foul spirit, a prison for every sort of unclean and hateful bird. For all the nations have drunk deeply from the wine of the wrath of her immorality, And the kings of the earth have disgraced themselves by engaging in gross sexual acts with her and the merchants of the earth have grown fat and rich, profiting off the power purchased with luxury" (Rev. 18:1b-3, The Voice).

The above passage is a clear announcement of God's judgment upon sexually immoral Babylon. This passage also compares sexual immorality to a kind of intoxication (Rev. 18:3, 'the wine of the wrath of her immorality'). Just as alcohol makes our senses dull, regular indulgences into sexual sins like pornography weakens our spiritual senses and consequently, wreak havoc on our conscience. Afterwards, it is a downward spiral all the way to eternal hell! Revelation 18 again talks about the judgment of God coming upon sexual sin yet again. Let's look at Revelation 18:9-10 which reads this way: When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her

luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: 'Woe! Woe to you, great city, you mighty city of Babylon! In one hour, your doom has come! (NIV). The kings of the earth who committed adultery with Babylon did not expect judgment to come upon Babylon the way many who keep committing adultery of various kinds – digital, mental, actual – do not believe that judgment will ever come to them. Yes, judgment for stubborn sexual sin will come – either on this side of eternity or the other side of eternity. That is the oft-repeated truth from Revelation 18. That is also the truth from Hebrews 13 where we read this: 'Hold marriage in high esteem, all of you, and keep the marriage bed pure because God will judge those who commit sexual sins' (Heb. 13:4, The Voice). There will be no escape from the punishment which comes for stubborn sexual sin. The only escape possible is when we truly turn from sin and kiss the feet of the Son (Psa. 2:12), who loves us and gave his body as a sacrifice for our sins on the Cross (Gal. 2:20).

- **The Release from the bondage of sexual sin learnt from the Babylon story:**

Yet another truth which we can again place under the last most emphasized truths for youth in the Bible is this: all sin robs you of joy, especially sexual sin. We find this truth repeatedly rehammered in Revelation chapter 18. Check out verse 23: 'And never again will the light of a lamp bring warm light to your houses. And never again will the voices of the bridegroom and bride bring joy to your festivities' (Voice). This truth – 'you will never find in sin what you entered sin to find' – is mentioned in-effect in Verse 7, Verse 11. Verse 15, and Verses 18-19. 'Torment', 'sorrow' (verse 7), 'weep', 'mourn' (verse 11 and 15), 'reduced to tears', 'wept bitterly' (verses 18-19) – these are phrases used about the experience of sexual-sin-choosing whore Babylon and the people who committed sins with her. From this observation, jumps out a way to beat sexual temptation. A realization that sexual sins offer only fleeting pleasures, at best, will puncture the enthusiasm of those tempted by it and go after them.

There are other motivations for

holy sexual living one can derive from a concentrated meditation of Revelation 18. The phrase 'the hour of His judgment' is repeatedly used in connection with sexually rebellious Babylon (Rev. 14:7; 18:10; 18:17; 18:19). Let me elaborate these phrases: "In a single hour, your day of judgment has come" (Rev. 18:10; Rev. 14:7 is similar); "In a single hour, all this wealth is gone!" (Rev. 18:17); "In a single hour, you have been utterly ruined!" (Rev. 18:19). The possibility of the suddenness of God's judgment is never the first motivation for us to stay holy. Our love-driven passion to fulfil the will of God upon our lives for holy living from eternity past remains our first motivation to be holy (I Thess. 4:3; Eph. 1:4). However, we will be ignoring the obvious if we failed to see that sudden judgment possibility can also motivate us for holy living as per the Word of God. Hyper-grace pastors would not want us to see this. But it is in the Word of God. Apostle Paul used judgment imagery to motivate the church he led for holy living. Sample this: "We must be careful not to engage in sexual sins as some of them did. In one day, 23,000 died because of sin" (I Cor. 10:8,

Voice). Apostle Peter pointed to the suddenness of the Lord's return as the judge. This was to be a motivation for the people he led to embrace a holy life. I am sure you have read these, his writings: The day of the Lord will come unexpectedly like a thief in the night: and on that day, the sky will vanish with a roar, the elements will melt with intense heat, and the earth and all the works done on it will be seen as they truly are. Knowing that one day all this will come to pass, think what sort of people you ought to be – how you should be living faithful and godly lives, waiting hopefully for and hastening the coming of God's Day when the heavens will vanish in flames and the elements melt away with intense heat (2 Peter 3:10-12). Apostle John by pointing out that sexually-deviant Babylon's end would come in one hour – suddenly in other words – was also motivating the first readers of his book for daily holy living! We can see it that way!

Let us come to the second motivation to live holy from Revelation 18. Yes, Revelation 18 also points out another reason why we must flee sexual sin as

we flee a rattle snake: it makes us progressively ineffective in everything we do eventually. The consequence spelt-out in Revelation 18:11 - '... no one is buying their goods any longer' – came about because of Babylon's incredibly foolish choice of committing 'lewd, sexual acts' with 'the Kings of the earth' (Rev. 18:9, recorded just two verses above). So, even if the 'king' is calling you for adultery – read, even if the boss responsible for your promotion is calling you for adultery – do not be coerced. It will be not worth it. People commit sexual sin hoping to win some intimate friends. An ignored-by-husband woman may indulge in sexual sin hoping to fill the gap left by her irresponsible, unloving husband. But the fact of the matter is this: sexual sin can never be the cure for loneliness. The sad truth is this: sexual sin will make you lonely even more! Revelation 18 observes how the copulating partners of Babylon chose to 'stand at a distance' (see verse 10 and 15) when Babylon experienced the punishment for sexual sin indulgence.

My meditation of the last verse of Revelation 18, gave me a clue

about the most effective way to deal with sexual temptation. It reads this way: "And in her streets the blood of the prophets, saints, and all who have been slaughtered upon the earth, ran freely" (verse 24). Verse 20 of the same chapter also indicates that Babylon rejected the voice and words of the apostles, saints, and prophets. Why did Babylon fall into sexual sin? It rejected the Word of God which was found in the mouth of the true prophets of God. The corollary is true as well: if we store the Word of God in our hearts, then the seduction of sexual sin – or any other pet sin – can be overcome. That is what the Psalmist also said. He wrote, "Deep within I have hidden Your word so that I will never sin against You" (Psa. 119:11, The Voice). Romans 12:21 is the Bible verse I am most recently using to overcome the Porn temptation. It reads this way: 'Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good' (ESV). I quote this verse to myself often. There are so-called benefits of porn watching which the secular media often talks foolishly about: you learn sex technique which could better your marriage joys. Certain movie directors show

nudity to realistically capture the horrendous evil around us which calls for an immediate response. But the truth of Romans 12:21 is this: the ends – be it something good such as learning sex technique that would be only used inside marriage or be it a realistic portrayal of sexual crimes on video – do not justify the means, soft porn production and consumption. When we read the 10 Commandments in the Bible, you do not read a clause that goes this way: Coveting your neighbour's wife is okay except in the scenario... The Bible instead of teaching situational ethics calls us for Jesus' ethics calling us to walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6).

- **The Relevance of sexually immoral Babylon for the modern NT believer:**

As I finish this essay, I can almost hear some of you say, "I agree that God called Babylon for sexual purity and warned that nation for the lack of it. But why does that have to apply to me – a believer in today's church?" In the New Testament, Babylon is a code word for the sinful world trying to seduce the folks in the local church. How do I come to that conclusion? I do so from the

writings of Peter in I Peter 5:13. There he refers to 'she who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark' (NASB). The Bible Knowledge Commentary for Epistles and Prophecy notes this: "Since Peter was writing to churches and said she is chosen together with you, probably 'she' refers to the church (which is a feminine noun *ekklesia*). If so, Peter was sending greetings from the church in 'Babylon' to the churches in Asia Minor. According to historical evidence, Peter was in Rome during the final years of his life. "Babylon" here might be a disguised reference to Rome, used in order to protect both the Roman Church and Peter from Neronian persecution." So, let us – New Testament believers - flush out the Babylon that is trying to bamboozle us with the battery of sexual seduction! This is the last most emphasized truth in the New Testament!

(The author of this article is the founder of Grabbing the Google Generation from Gehenna Mission, the G4 Mission. Straight Talk, the author's book on what the Bible teaches on sex, love, marriage, porn, phone addiction,

etc. has blessed thousands of readers. His monthly Kahoot Bible quiz over Zoom attracts players from India over and beyond. WhatsApp him at 91-8886040605 to play this open-for-all online quiz).



Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj

is the founder of Grabbing the Google Generation from Gehenna Mission, the G4 Mission. He is the author of the book that brings Bible Teaching on Sex, Love, Marriage, Porn, Phone-addiction, etc. called Straight Talk. Reach him via 918886040605 to order this book that has blessed many. Duke has ministered by invitation in over 20 Indian states and in 5 nations. He presently lives in Chennai with his wife, Evangelin. His son Dale is a student of St. Stephen's College while his daughter is in Class Nine



EXAMINE YOURSELVES!

Emeritus Prof. Henry Shepherd

A Neglected Commandment

On doctor's advice, people sincerely go for tests and body check-ups, but some divine edicts given by Lord Jesus, are by and large either ignored or neglected; For example –

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash

one another's feet " (Jn 13:14-15); and

"You hypocrites, first take out the plank of your own eye, and then you will see

clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Mt 7:5).

The second dictate has been reworded by Paul as an

exhortation "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ is in you – unless of course, you fail the test?" (2Cor 13:5). This is generic human tendency that faith recedes in bad company, and also due to non-availability of Christian fellowship. In order to hide their guilt, they often follow the worldly tactic: 'Offence is the best defense'; and blame others to prove themselves righteous. The trend set by Adam and Eve is still continuing with sinful human nature. Therefore, Paul advises fellow believers- "Consider others better than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3); which is possible when one starts to appreciate the brighter side of others and learns

from godly people. In spite of Jesus' strong woe statements, egoist pharisees and their associates did not care to examine themselves. Instead, self-righteous Pharisees, witnessing the divine works and powerful teaching of the Lord, continually felt offended, and big crowds following Jesus made them feel small. So, they accused him of blasphemy and connived to eliminate him, and for this reason, they framed more concocted charges against the Lord. Though in court, the judge repeatedly gave his unbiased edict, "I find no basis for a charge against him". Yet, until the crowd led by Pharisees, priests, scribes, and teachers of the law succeeded in their plan, they kept on shouting "Crucify! Crucify him". Thus, tyranny prevailed over justice, and Jesus was crucified.

Suggestive Signals

Our fidelity must be genuine and acceptable to the Lord. Therefore, self-righteous, those enjoying and hypocrites, in particular, need to self-examine, regularly. Unlike routine assessment in Industrial, I.T.,

Education and Healthcare sectors, fidelity test through self-examination has been suggested to Christians; It is like an on-line exam, but examiner and examinee is the same person. Also, in self-analysis, examinee tests his/her conduct, faith, integrity and state of mind with respect to that of the Lord, whom we should imitate (1Jn 2:6, 1Pet 2:21, Phil 2:5). To self-examine, the questionnaire may have just one or multiple questions, depending upon the need felt by examinees. The only requirement is truthfulness of the examinee. The examination must be fixed at the earliest, after getting suggestive signals. As such, the following conditions give the signal – 'It is time to self-examine':

- Everybody must self-examine before taking part in the Holy Communion. Unworthy person taking part in eating and drinking invites judgement, sickness, or death. But the one who self-examines does not come under judgement (1Cor 11:28-31),

- In case if one is doubtful about having eternal life, it is a signal (1Jn 5:13, Jn 17:2-3),
- If one lacks confidence going in presence of God with petition, it is signal (1Jn 3:20-21, Heb 4:16)
- Brothers who are fond of self-exultation, and applauses or consider themselves righteous but unable to control their tongue or desires of flesh, lust of eyes and pride of life (Jam 1:26); for them self-examination is the solution.
- Person not knowing the generic will and specific will of God and living a life based on his/her own likes and dislikes (Rev 2:26-27, 1Th 4:3-5, Eph 5:13, Mk 3:35 and Rom 12:2-8); need to self-examine.
- If the word of God does not talk to you, and you find nothing for yourself in sermons (2Tim 4:3, Heb 4:12, Ps 119:130); you need sanctification and gift of the Holy Spirit
- Those losing spiritual fervour, lacking interest in attending fellowship, praise and worship services and feeling uncomfortable due to return of the old nature, it is signal (Rom 12:14-21),
- If one is not confident of Christ living in him/her and not sure that he/she is in Christ Jesus (1Jn 4:15, Rom 8:9-11); go for self-examination.
- If there is no aversion towards bad habits, evil desires, pride, lies and wickedness, it is signal; immediate self-examination will do wonders
- When due to internet addiction and cheap entertainment, one is losing interest in Bible studies, prayer time, church activities, and get adducing signs like uncontrolled anger, favouritism, unwillingness to forgive, enjoying loose talk, being judgmental, critic of God's servants and having ever increasing love for money (1Th 5:17, 1Tim 6:10); He/she must take self-examination.
- When mind and intellect is suggesting no need for self-

examination, but the Spirit is prompting to go for it. These signals are sure signs of backsliding.

- If one does not find any sin in him/herself after getting a signal for self-examination, according to the word of God, he/she is under self-deception (1Jn 1:8); Repeating the process prayerfully after a short break is helpful,
- Even when someone is feeling that 'All is well,' there is no harm in going for self-examination. If really all is found satisfactory then too self-examination will be just icing on the cake; and
- If there is no aversion towards bad habits, crude jokes, gossiping, injustice evil desires, pride, lies and wickedness; it is signal.

Commendable Models

There are at least five types of testing situations: First: Satan tempts and tests humans (Rev 2:10). God allowed the devil to test Job (2:6). Second: Humans

testing God, for which Israel was forbidden by Moses - "Do not test the Lord your God as you did in Massah" (Deut 6:16, Mt 4:7, 1Cor 10:9). However, everyone should taste and see the Lord is good (Ps 34:8) and test the spirits to see whether they are from God (1Jn 4:1). Third: The Spirit of God tests person's hearts before entrusting with the gospel (1Th 2:4, 1Tm 3:10, Rev 2:23 and 3:10); He tested his friend Abraham (Gen 22:1, Jer 17:9-10), but on the other hand David and Job both urged God voluntarily to test them (Ps 139:23, 26:2, Job 13:23). Fourth: Humans test each other, then accuse others for self-satisfaction, whereas the Scripture commands not to judge others. Fifth: Paul repeatedly admonished brothers to examine their own deeds (Col 6:4-5). Prophet Jeremiah also advised, "Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord" (Lam 3:40). Jesus taught us to self-analyse using the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:17-24). He self-examined and returned. The Lord used to test his disciples to know their faith level from their responses (Jn 6:16). Some wonderful benefits

of self-examination are confession of sins, repentance, assessment of faith level, seeking forgiveness, restoration, maturity, learning perseverance and practicing humility (Jas 1:3, Ps 119:59, Ez 18:27-29) etc. No harm is caused by this exercise, but a regular self-examination gives unimaginable benefits.

Faith is a dynamic entity; therefore, static faith starts diminishing and with time agape love becomes cold; this state is called 'Back sliding' (Rev 2:4, 3:15-16). The self-examination is essential for edification of faith. Poor quality of emotional faith reflects in new believer's attitude and works. Jesus said, "By their fruit you can recognise them...." (Mt 7:16-20, Jn 15:5-6). The devil appreciates them who do not care to examine themselves. He further convinces them that 'All is well', though it is not. Jesus forewarns the self-righteous who would get the worst shock of their lives when the Lord will finally rebuke them saying, "I do not know you". It is vain calling him Lord, Lord without obedience and love which gets revealed in self-assessment. After denial, Peter

self-examined repented and was restored. But Judas chose self-condemnation. Always remember that cost of discipline is less than the price of regret.

People usually, claim that they are better than 'such and such' and at times they may be true. But our yardstick is not fellowmen, we are to imitate Christ Jesus, not any set of people or a denomination of our choice. Therefore, examine, "Am I anywhere near Jesus, and if so then upto what level?" (Ez 47:1-6). The life of Jesus is the standardized yardstick to be used while we are examining ourselves. Eventually, if there is anything good in us, it is because of the Lord who has given it as a gift by his grace to glorify him, not to boast about it as our own achievement. Self-praise is result of pride, over-confidence, and self-righteousness. Let us never examine the way a Pharisee examined himself in the temple by comparing himself with the tax collector (Lk 18:11-12). Humility is sign of the person following Jesus truthfully (Mt 11:29); implicit as well as explicit. Jesus answered his erring disciples as

to who is greatest among them in the kingdom of heaven and said, "Whoever humbles himself like a child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Lk 8:3-4). Humility is the only virtue for which Jesus told his disciples to learn from him.

Typical Questionnaires

The self-examination is justified because a spiritual man makes judgement about all things but he himself is not subject to any man's judgement (1Cor 2:15). Besides, other than integrity and good intention there are no set norms for this exercise, because every individual is unique having own strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats. Nevertheless, for new believers some Bible based guidance may be used to know how to prepare a questionnaire. For example, if a brother is not feeling blessed, as a new creation in Christ, the questionnaire may be prepared with respect to 'Sermon on the Mount'. The spiritual blessings are indicative of reconciliation with the Father, as a result of confession, repentance and on accepting Jesus as Lord and

Saviour. Such believers walk in light on the narrow path (1Th 5:12-22). The sermon deals with Christian conduct, and everyone needs to improve his/her status. Another believer feeling absence of spiritual fruit may be helped with respect to Gal 5:22-23. But the basic question of a good questionnaire is – Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? (Act 19:2). The Spirit is the primary requirement to live a spiritually healthy life. If the lust of body still appears, the self-analysis may be based on (Gal 5:19-21, 2Tim 3:1-6, Mt 15:7-9, 17-20). Paul's list of 25 do's and don'ts is a good help in preparing a questionnaire (Eph 4:22-32, 5:1-2). The book of 1John, Chapters one to five, have been used here to propose a typical questionnaire, to be answered by examinee prayerfully and truthfully, as under:

- Am I born again?
- What is my testimony?
- Have I received eternal life?
- Do I know the Lord personally?
- What for has God chosen me?
- Do I receive the answers of my prayers?

- What is my status regarding loving others?
- Who do I love the most: God, world, or both?
- Am I still controlled by the desires of flesh or by the Spirit abiding in me?
- Which temptation is still beyond my resisting power?
- Am I walking in light or in darkness?
- Who is sitting on the throne of my heart?
- Do I really believe that Lord Jesus is Son of God?
- Do I practice the word I have heard, read, and memorised?

The parable of Sower can be used to examine the type of soil you have. The results of self-examination must be submitted with the Lord in prayer with necessary petitions. Failures should not discourage but make examinee more determined to obey and follow Him. Failure is not uncommon or an end; initially even Paul felt troubled by his failure (Rom 7:14-25); Seek forgiveness and be restored. One should not boast his strengths or give-up to persisting weaknesses and threats. Regular self-assessments will show wonderful

effects on your mind and soul. But those who are self-delusional, self-righteous and self-centered, they compare themselves with others; Jesus has given a strong warning to pseudo-Christians. (Mt 7:21-27); He said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and performed many miracles'. Then I will tell them plainly; I never knew you. Away from me you evildoers!" (Mt 7:21-23). It is not the one who commends himself is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends is under grace and blessed.

It will be relevant to conclude with a standard questionnaire, recommended for Christians to examine themselves, and test their status of faith, by the Synod of the Church in Uganda, is given below:

- Do you know salvation through the cross of Christ? (Gospel and Faith)

- Are you growing in power of the Holy Spirit in prayer, meditation and knowledge of God? (Edification and Sanctification)
- Is there a great desire in you to spread the Kingdom of God? (Love and Serve)
- Are you bringing others in Christ by visiting, and by public witness? (Witness and Dutifulness)

It is obvious that tests are specifically designed to examine the deficiency of faith in the examinee and his biblical understanding; It also examines the growth in his living faith; The test examines the level of love and integrity towards the Kingdom of God; and believer's sense of duty towards people. It helps a lot to them who are still in

the cesspool of sin. When we share our own testimonies as to what all God has done, it edifies us. Always remember self-examination is not for self-accreditation but to assess the weakness, hindering edification and transformation. May the Holy Spirit guide us in choosing the most appropriate way of self-examine to show the way, the Truth and the Life. Amen



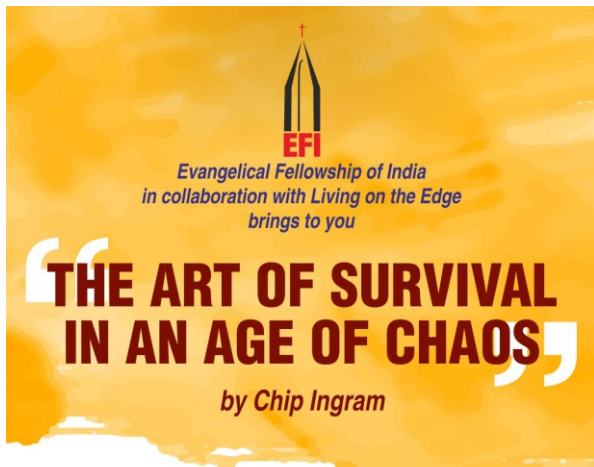
Emeritus Prof. Henry Shepherd

Former Chaplain and Pro-Vice Chancellor Sam Higginbottom University of Agri.Tech. & Sciences, Prayagraj

**God is not unjust; he will not forget
your work and the love you have shown him
as you have helped his people and
continue to help them.**

Hebrews 6:10

THE ART OF SURVIVAL IN THE AGE OF CHAOS



Surviving in this age of chaos is an A.R.T. that you can learn! You can overcome hard times with the Bible's clear teachings. Learn God's established blueprint for thriving... even in the midst of chaos.

Resource materials shall be provided.

Join us to know more.

Evangelical Fellowship of India in collaboration with Living on the Edge successfully organized the trainings on "The Art of Survival in the Age of Chaos" for the pastors and leaders in the five states of India.

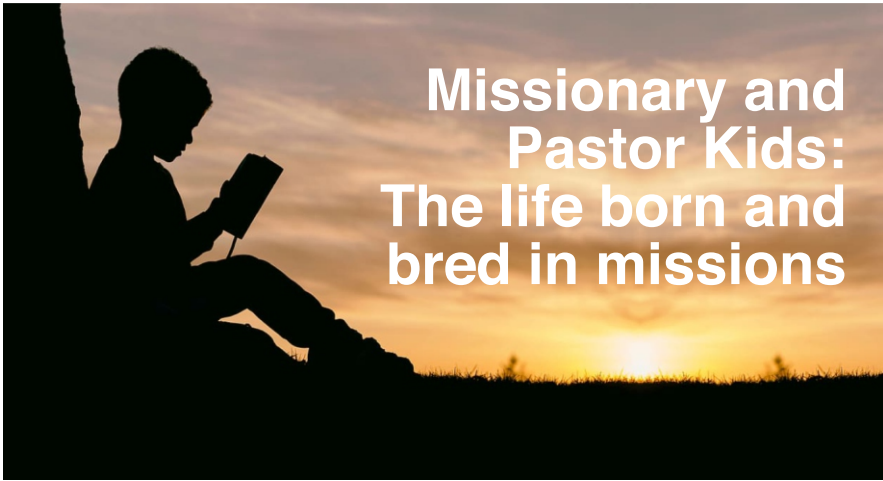
The trainings were flagged off from Delhi on the 18th of July, followed by Ahmedabad on 19th July, Patna on 20th July, Ludhiana on 21st July, and ended with the last training at Varanasi on 22nd July. There was an

overwhelming response from the pastors and leaders to attend such an apt training especially in the current scenario and it was very humbling to witness around 1200-1300 pastors and leaders attend these trainings.

The resource persons included Rev. Dave Holden, Rev. Vijayesh Lal, and Rev. Ramesh Landge. It was a blessing to have Rev. Dave

Holden as a main speaker, who imparted excellent teaching, encouragement and motivated the pastors to face and survive the chaotic situations using the training. The pastors were encouraged to take this training forward and share the learnings with their congregation. All the participants were very encouraged and motivated by the training.





Missionary and Pastor Kids: The life born and bred in missions

This essay is a compilation of thoughts, conversations, ideas, and writings by the members of The Discussion Group, a forum of Missionary Kids and Pastors Kids (MKs/PKs) meeting twice every month virtually to talk about issues in our society and how we need to think differently about the future of Christian Missions.

This International Youth Day, August 12, 2022, we are thinking about some of the issues faced by MKs & PKs. We often get to hear stories about missionaries and their adventurous journeys. The stories are filled with a passion for people and a selfless commitment to missions. However, little is spoken about the families, especially the kids of these missionaries.

Mks & PKs are an overlooked group. They are either spoken about as a part of the great calling, or spoken to/praised, but are rarely able or given the opportunity to speak themselves of the challenges they face. The fact remains that they have experienced significant hardships and challenges that are different from others.

When we raised this topic in one of our discussions, we had a member talk about growing up as a PK and how her faith was strengthened by seeing the struggle that her parents faced in missions; how every prayer, every need that they had as a family was answered, and somehow, they had everything they needed; many of us can

relate to that. However, another member countered this to practical reasoning and the Christian romanticization of suffering. Going forward, when we think about the challenges of missions, it becomes important to prayerfully strike a balance between the practical and the spiritual.

The identity struggle

When asked, "Where are you from?", most people immediately identify with a place/ community/ culture from which comes a sense of rootedness. However, in the case of most MKs/PKs, they have made multiple location moves with their families in a short span of time, leaving them confused on questions of belonging and identity.

The positive of this cannot be denied: MKs/ PKs can be extremely adaptable, learning early on to adjust to new schools and different neighborhoods with diverse cultures and faiths. The cross-cultural exposure and unique experiences are a blessing.

However, the constant transition also means that building lasting relationships in

schools/neighborhoods/churches is a rarity. This can leave them with a deep sense of rootlessness that manifests as an identity crisis. It isn't uncommon for adult MKs/PKs to find themselves directionless and without deep relationships.

The vulnerability

The missionary life of a couple with children often is a two-person job from the get-go. The wife is not just expected to serve her missionary husband, but also asked to fulfill different roles in the church and in the missional context. With both parents fully occupied, the children are at times left out. They find themselves in the care of neighbors, friends, and Christian boarding schools, leading them to grow and develop differently.

Again, the positive of this is that they quickly develop a sense of independence and self-resilience. However, this can also lead to them never allowing anyone into their close circle or mental space - a classic coping mechanism used to shield themselves from the pain of separation, displacement, and uprootedness which inevitably comes with another move.

Again, in our The Discussion Group, this topic brought up boarding school experiences. A few of those who went to boarding school found the experience irreplaceable for what it taught them and how it prepared them for the world. However, there were other members who spoke candidly about the adverse impact of boarding school on their already strained relationship with their missionary parents; still others spoke of sexual abuse. In fact, the issue of sexual abuse among MKs/PKs is sadly not limited to boarding school experiences.

The pressures

A strong bias prevalent against MKs/PKs is that they are expected to be role models. Their lifestyle and attitudes are required to be, at all times, 'godly', perfect. This gets challenging with time as expectations increase as they grow. Often, it is assumed they will join the missions like their parents. Even the slightest deviation opens up the possibility of public ridicule and stigma. Imagine, being a Pastor's kid and not saying "Praise The Lord" as you greet an elder, or not praying at a prayer

meeting. Everything - from their questions and criticisms of the church and missions, to their personal lifestyle choices is under constant review.

The response

MKs/PKs typically respond to these life experiences and pressures in one of the following three ways :

- They develop a parallel life - a whole group of relationships or lifestyle that is kept under wraps from those who know their identity in the church or mission field. Extreme precaution is taken to ensure that these two worlds do not collide in any way; but this leads to the deep loss of authenticity.
- They resort to outright rebellion. This often begins during the teenage years with language or lifestyle choices such as clothes, hair trends, body piercings/tattoos that are in direct contrast to what is seen as 'acceptable' in the local church/mission circle.
- They become extreme introverts living in perpetual anxiety of straddling the 'holy' Christian life and 'worldly' public spaces.

The pain

We all carry scars - that's the inevitable part of life. However, MKs/PKs are often left without the scope of support for the unique struggles and issues they experience. The common resolution still prevalent is to quote bible verses or give calls for prayer, often spiritualizing the issue rather than addressing and enabling healing.

Mental health needs are complex. We in the Christian community need more grace to understand, let alone deal with mental health issues. It's time mental health issues are addressed with the same concern and seriousness as physical ailments.

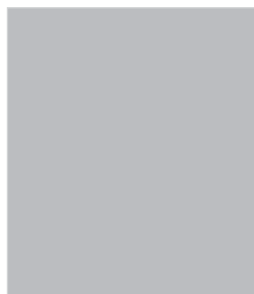
The great potential

Let's not forget that MKs/PKs with their ability to adapt easily, their cross-cultural exposure, and the deep Bible-based learning they have received since childhood, makes them a people of great potential for the future of international missions. How we are going to address the missional challenges before us - the issues young people face, the rapidly changing world, the relevance of Jesus in these times - are yet to be seen and thought

through with prayer, deep devotion, and innovative thinking.

The beginning of many new conversations

This essay to us is an expression of dialogue. We at The Discussion Group have the opportunity to talk about many different missional issues that need answers that are Bible-based yet relevant for our times. One of the topics we hope will be addressed is member care for mission leaders and especially for their children so that they can continue to communicate Christ's values in ways that the world needs to hear them now and in the future.



Written by Daniel Sukumar, Eunice Penuka and Pradeep Rajendran from The Discussion Group, a Think Tank and Network of MKs\PKs that meet twice a month to talk about Issues in our societies, and broader implications for Indian and Global Missional challenges.



Celebration Christian Contributing Towards Nation-Building Communique

Christian leaders invited by the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) and Global Institute of Leadership Development (GILD) met together in a consultation in Chennai from 29 June to 2 July, 2022, deliberating on the theme, 'Celebrating Christian Contribution Towards Nation Building'. The purpose of this gathering was to mark the 75th anniversary of India's independence. Further, the consultation sought to identify key areas in which Christians are being the light and salt of our nation as we navigate into the future.

We rejoice to be Indian Christians and we affirm the historic presence of Christianity in India for almost two millennia. We are thankful to God for this and for enabling us to assist the communities of India through our hospitals, educational institutions and other infrastructure. As we celebrate 75 years of Indian independence, we are thankful to living in a secular democracy which allows people of all faiths and none, all ideologies and cultures to exist side by side in a rich diversity.

We affirm that the Christianity that emerged in India has its roots in an Indian ethos yet it raised challenges to many of the Indian customs and practices that negated the possibility of acquiring life in its fullness. We also observed that Indian Christianity has been shaping/evolving itself by engaging with many different cultural streams.

We thank God for the blessing of our country with diverse cultures, languages, races, and religious traditions. Rooted in our Christian faith, we strive towards love, peace, justice and reconciliation for all people in the country. We pray for courage to face the contemporary challenges, and wisdom to contribute to building our nation so that all sections of society may enjoy the fruits of development. We commit ourselves to re-imagine our Christ-like participation in the public life of India by working for social harmony, ecological sustainability and prosperity for all.

Our way forward:

1. We as Christians representing different denominational churches in India encourage our members to affirm their constitutional rights while working with all faith and ideologies and make every effort to come out of the shell of minority consciousness and be participants in the whole socio-political process of nation-making. We affirm that it is our responsibility to enhance LIFE-flourishing cultural and social values through which we can engage with the LIFE-negating forces as part of our witness in this country.
2. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we have a commitment to establish peace with justice/just-peace. Despite being a community going through suffering and marginalisation, we affirm our commitment to continue to accompany all people in their distress and in the care of creation.
3. We encourage mutual enrichment between Christian communities and affirm through this our collective commitment to make use of our resources for the benefit of the least among us and for all.
4. We would undertake the documentation and dissemination of Christian engagements in the social, cultural and political spheres of India.
5. We would develop appropriate and relevant resources based on sound contextual, biblical and theological foundations for continued Christian participation and presence in nation building.
6. We will communicate all the commitments made at this consultation at various levels to church and lay leaders, academics, non-government organisation workers and to the emerging young Christians to take it forward.
7. We would encourage and endeavour to have an accountable, sustainable and self-reliant church in India.

Our prayer of Commitment

All powerful and loving Triune God, we praise and thank you for the gift of our faith in Jesus Christ, Our Lord. We thank you for blessing our country with diverse cultures, languages, races, and religious traditions. Help us to be rooted in our faith and be witnesses of your Reign of love, peace, justice and reconciliation to all people in our country. Empower us with your Holy Spirit and give us courage to face contemporary challenges; the wisdom to contribute to building our nation, so that all sections of society may enjoy the fruits of holistic development. Help us to re-imagine our Christian engagements in India by working for social harmony, ecological sustainability and prosperity for all so that we become a leaven in the dough, the salt of the earth and the light of the nation. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Intercessory Prayer Points



August 2022

1 MONDAY Thank God for this new month. Pray that God would enable you to use it meaningfully for His glory. Ask God for the boldness and courage to share the Gospel with your friends as you celebrate Friendship Day today. Pray for your friends so that they may have eternal life in Christ Jesus.

2 TUESDAY Pray for the political leaders of our country. Pray that they may be able to pursue and accomplish goals that would bring growth to the country and peace with neighbouring countries.

3 WEDNESDAY Pray for our neighbouring country Sri Lanka. Pray that God would restore the nation in all aspects. Pray that God would strengthen the Church and use it as His agent in this time of crisis.

4 THURSDAY Pray for the ministry of CASA-India at New Delhi. Church's Auxiliary for Social Action is a national development and humanitarian organization set up in 1947. Pray for Spirit-led decisions and actions to be made for the benefit of many people.

5 FRIDAY Continue to pray for the EFI Punjab Mobile Bible Trainings scheduled for this month. Pray for the Holy Spirit empowerment and guidance for the teachers and those who are learning.

6 SATURDAY Amidst our struggles and problems, let us pray for His peace to prevail in our lives. Pray that God will give us a persevering heart and strength as we face our problems.

7 SUNDAY Pray that the Churches would worship today with gratitude for the freedom of religion that we enjoy in our country.

8 MONDAY Pray for a team of Bible Teachers who are working to develop and design fresh materials for Christian Education of the Evangelical Fellowship of India (CEEFI). Pray that God would enable and help them and use the works of their hands to make Christian education meaningful yet more interesting than before.

9 TUESDAY Continue to pray for the finances of EFI. Pray that the Lord would bless and continue to use it as

His instrument for change and growth for the Church in India.

10 WEDNESDAY Pray for Dooars Evangelical Bethel Church Fellowship, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. Pray for effective witnessing to reach the unreached people and planting house churches in the interior parts of the Himalayan region including Madesh and Tarai belt.

11 THURSDAY Thank God for the AIM magazine writers who are investing their time and energy every month. Pray for them that their services to the Lord would bring change and growth in the body of Christ. Pray for some who are struggling with health issues that God would bring healing and restoration.

12 FRIDAY International Youth Day. Pray for the youth that they would stay on the path of purity by living according to God's Word. (Psalm 119:9) Pray that they would be disciplined, trained, and empowered to live out their lives for God's glory.

13 SATURDAY Pray for inner strength for the women of India. Pray that they would know their rights and worth in Christ. Pray for equality in every field.

14 SUNDAY Pray for the Churches that God would enable them to overcome any challenge and bear bountiful fruits. Pray for God's help as leaders strategically carry out their plans to extend God's kingdom.

15 MONDAY Indian Independence Day. Thank God for the freedom that we enjoy in our country. Pray for freedom for every citizen in every aspect of their lives. Pray for the people to experience true freedom that God offers through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

16 TUESDAY Continue to pray for our nation persistently. Pray that all in leadership position would be a faithful and caring guardian of the constitution as well the people.

17 WEDNESDAY Pray for Jesus Calls ministry in Chennai. Jesus Calls is a ministry dedicated to prayer for the broken-hearted people irrespective of caste, creed, and religion. Pray that God would raise many prayer warriors who would intercede for the needs of the people.

18 THURSDAY Pray for the staff of EFI in different parts of India. Pray for God's anointing upon them so that they may effectively serve Him. Pray for the ministry of EFI and the financial needs so that the God would accomplish His plans and purposes through EFI.

19 FRIDAY World Humanitarian Day. Praise God for the compassion and bravery of humanitarian workers in India and around the world. Let us also pray for international cooperation to meet the needs of humanitarian work around the world.

20 SATURDAY Pray that God's will to be done in your church, family,

friend circle, community and in every part of our country. Pray for those who are spreading the message of love and peace that is in Christ Jesus.

21 SUNDAY Pray for the Holy Spirit's protection, comfort, and empowerment for those persecuted because of their faith in Christ. Pray that they may come out victorious and gain strength from God as they walk their faith journey.

22 MONDAY Pray for Missionary Upholders Trust at Tamil Nadu. MUT was established to gain deeper understanding of the difficulties faced by the missionaries mentally, emotionally, and physically. Pray that they would lighten the burden of missionaries as they walk alongside them.

23 TUESDAY Let us pray for the Senior Citizens in our country. Pray for accessible and affordable medical facilities. Pray for safety, protection and lots of love and healthy environment for them. Pray also for those who care for them.

24 WEDNESDAY Pray for Union Biblical Seminary that the Lord would continue to use it to train and equip many young leaders for the extension of His kingdom. Pray also for the AGM scheduled for tomorrow that God would lead and help them make right decisions.

25 THURSDAY Pray for His continued provision and protection.

Pray also that you will be dependent on God and not be self-sufficient.

26 FRIDAY Continue to pray for children who are vulnerable especially to human trafficking. Pray that God would build a hedge around them and supernaturally protect them.

27 SATURDAY Pray for children from broken homes that they would find security in Christ. Pray that Jesus would meet their emotional and physical needs, heal them, and bring them to complete restoration.

28 SUNDAY Pray for the teaching and learning of God's Word in your church. Pray that the Holy Spirit may teach the audience and many lives may be impacted. Pray that God may remove Biblical illiteracy.

29 MONDAY Pray for all the Life members and individual members of EFI. Thank God for their support in the ministry of EFI. Pray that they may be blessed by God in all the things that they do.

30 TUESDAY Continue to pray for the ministry of North-sEast Centre for Training and Research (NECTAR), Shillong, Meghalaya. Pray that they would train many leaders who would bring change into people's lives.

31 WEDNESDAY Thank God for his faithfulness throughout the month. Pray that the new month would bring more opportunity to bring Christ glory.

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EVANGELICAL
FELLOWSHIP
OF INDIA



HAPPY
INDEPENDENCE
DAY

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