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A Journey of Faith

*Carry each other's burdens,
and in this way you will fulfill
the law of Christ.
Galatians 6:2*



EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF INDIA (EFI)

Invites

Applications for the post of Accountant

Location - New Delhi



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Previous work experience, ideally with a Christian NGO/ NPO.

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A Journey of Faith

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Editorial



Rev. Vijayesh Lal

For the LORD is a God of justice.
Blessed are all who wait for him! -
Isaiah 30:18

"For I, the LORD, love justice;" –
Isaiah 61:8

God is just. He always does what is right and good. His justice is the basis of all that He does in governing the universe. The Bible says, that righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne (Psalm 89:14).

Justice is internal to God as one of His attributes. It is who He is. Tozer says, "Justice is not something God has. Justice is something that God is." In doing justice, God does not follow an external standard or law. It all

comes from within Himself. His perfect law comes from His own nature.

Therefore, everything in the universe derives its definition of justice from God, its Creator, for He is the only and true reference point. Everything is just only to the measure in which it conforms to His righteous nature. When it fails to meet God's standard, it is evil.

C S Lewis in his book, Mere Christianity, reflects this thought and says, "My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea

of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?”

The question before us is: if God is Just (and He is), then what are the implications of this truth on us, His people?

After all we as Human beings do not essentially concern ourselves with justice. We are inclined to it, when it is convenient for us or when the victims of injustice are engaging or affable. The God who we worship however is not like us. He is consistent and always cares for justice.

Gary Haugen, in his book, *Good News about Injustice*, writes about four truths about God's character:

- God loves justice and, conversely, hates injustice.
- God has compassion for those who suffer injustice – everywhere around the world, without distinction or favor.
- God judges and condemns those who perpetrate injustice.
- God seeks active rescue for the victims of injustice.

As His children, we must reflect the character of our father and so the Church must stand for justice, no matter what the cost. The history of the Church is full of God's people who have struggled for justice, who have lived by God's standards and eventually changed the face of the society of their times. Unfortunately, Church history also has people who surrendered in the face of opposition because it was far more convenient to save their own skins rather than take a stand for justice.

God has placed us in a unique time in history and we are responsible as to how we respond. The Word of God is abundantly clear on where God's priorities lie and where our own priorities should be.

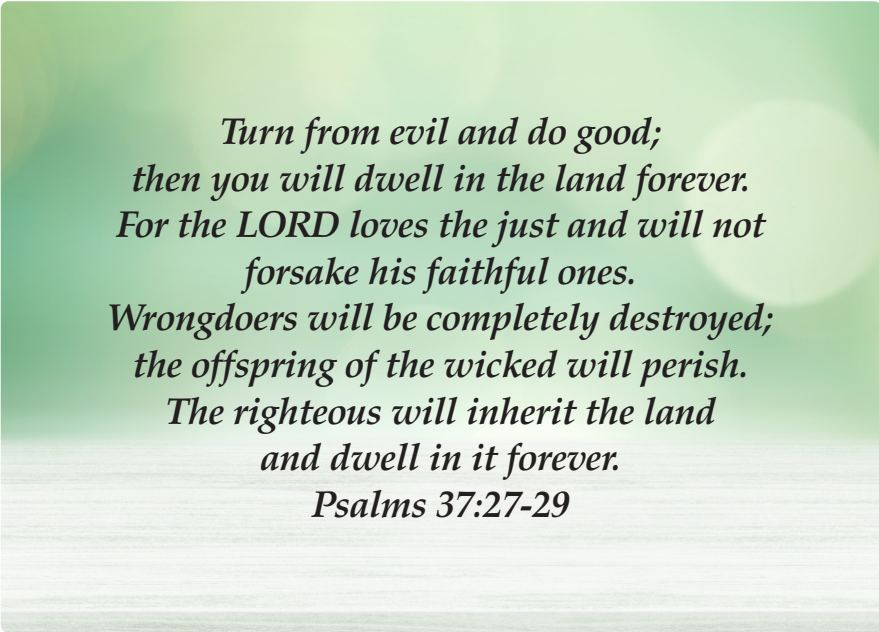
The pursuance of justice may require us to struggle against the powers that be. Justice may mean being lonely or being patient for a very long time, persevering without seeing much result. It can also mean conquering our own fears that stand in the way of the path of justice. We can weather all of this

because God is not only a God of justice but also hope.

God's justice gives us hope. His story of justice begins in a garden where every created being and thing, was related rightly with each other and to God, before sin marred it. We see God's commitment in restoring relationships and indeed everything to the beautiful state in which He had created it. This is why indeed Jesus, our Lord, came, to make all things right. He

led justice to victory, demonstrating the fullness of God's justice and mercy on the cross and commissioned us to go into a broken and unjust world with a message of hope. In the book of Revelation, we see how the story ends, we see how God's justice prevails and everything is finally the way God intended it to be. This gives us hope and the courage to challenge injustice during our times, as we live in the already and not yet.

Rev. Vijayesh Lal



*Turn from evil and do good;
then you will dwell in the land forever.
For the LORD loves the just and will not
forsake his faithful ones.
Wrongdoers will be completely destroyed;
the offspring of the wicked will perish.
The righteous will inherit the land
and dwell in it forever.
Psalms 37:27-29*



Blessings of a God-Fearing Family

Rev. Dr. David Mende

Introduction

Families are important to God. We see that in both the Old and the New Testaments. As the world celebrates the "International Day of Families" on May 15th, let's see how a family can be blessed by the Lord. Psalm 128 continues the theme of God's blessing mentioned in Psalm 127. In Psalm 128, we see that those who fear the Lord will be blessed in every way.

Psalms 120-134 have a common title, "A Song of Ascents." Some scholars say that the Hebrew word translated as "ascents" (which means "steps") is related to the verb, "to go up." They say that the Jewish pilgrims sang these songs as they went up to

the Temple during the three annual agricultural festivals. For instance, some say that Psalm 128:2 probably alludes to an agricultural harvest. The main idea I want to focus on in this article is: **Fearing the Lord brings blessings!**

1. Those Who Fear the Lord Will Be Blessed (Ps. 128:1, 4).

In verses 1 and 2, the word "blessed" means "happy." In verse 4, the psalmist says, "Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord." Other psalms also highlight the theme of God blessing those who fear him. For instance, Psalm 112:1 says, "Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments!" Also, in Psalm

119:1, the psalmist writes, "Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord!"

We must align our lives according to God's word. This blessing is for "everyone" who fears the Lord! Now we must not think that material blessings are automatically promised for all those who fear the Lord. This psalm gives a general description of the blessed life in ancient Israel. This psalm is not a universal promise to God's people. In the New Testament, the emphasis is on spiritual blessings more than material blessings. Material blessings are a mere shadow of eternal blessings.

After making a general statement that those who fear the Lord will be blessed (v. 1), in verses 2-3, the psalmist specifies how God blesses a person who fears him.

2. God's Blessings on Those Who Fear Him (Ps. 128:2-3).

Let's see how God blesses those who fear him.

a. The blessing on the table (v. 2).

This is a reversal of the curse that

came as a result of what Adam and Eve ate (Gen. 3:16-17). Eating "the fruit of the labor of your hands" is a covenant blessing (Deut. 28:1-6). The opposite happens when we are disobedient (Deut. 28:33). In those days, people didn't always enjoy the fruit of their labor. People faced war, drought, disease, or plagues regularly. So, enjoying the fruit of their labor was considered a great blessing.

In today's context, the Lord blesses the labor of our hands in our jobs and businesses. The Bible teaches a strong work ethic. We must not be lazy but work hard. The Lord gives us satisfaction as we pursue our vocation.

b. The blessing within the house (v. 3a).

The psalmist writes that "Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house," (v. 3a) instead of being a faithless wife whose "feet do not stay at home" (Prov. 7:11). Here, the psalmist uses the metaphor of a vine for a wife. This metaphor suggests delectability (Song 7:8) and childbearing (Gen. 49:22; Isa 5:1). I believe that even if the wife cannot bear children, the family is still fruitful if

she labors for her home and God's kingdom.

c. The blessing around the table (v. 3b).

In Psalm 127:4-5a, the psalmist says that children are like arrows in the hands of the warrior. Here, the psalmist says that children are like olive shoots around the table. An olive tree had several uses. It was useful for its wood, leaves, and oil. An olive tree symbolized well-being (Gen. 8:11) and splendor (Hos. 14:6). Even after being cut down, an olive tree produces new shoots. The Israelites valued children because it was part of the covenant blessings.

There is a sense of community and happiness as the children gather around the table. Children are a great blessing! Vines and olive plants symbolize rich blessings, unlike staple food like wheat. Grapes from the vine and oil from the olive plants were not essential for survival, but they greatly enriched life.

In the same way, a wife and children are not essential for a man's survival, but they greatly enrich his life. The Israelites undertook pilgrim journeys as a

family. Thus, it makes sense that family is given attention in the Songs of Ascents. So, the Lord blesses those who fear him.

3. The Benediction on Those Who Fear the Lord (Ps. 128:5-6).

Zion is the capital of Israel and the temple was situated there. So, to go on a pilgrimage to Zion (v. 5) was to seek God. There were several diasporic Jews who lived outside of Israel. The psalmist pronounces the blessing (barak: blessed of the Lord) that even those who are not in Jerusalem (Zion) would experience God's blessings. Under the New Covenant, since we are made the temple of the Spirit through Christ's sacrifice, all of us can experience God's blessings as the Spirit of God dwells within us.

The godly people in the Old Testament were concerned about "the prosperity of Jerusalem" because it meant the well-being of the Davidic kings and the prosperity of individual families as well. This psalm doesn't advocate individualistic and self-centered families. Our desire must be to see all of God's people blessed. We must care for

our community. But families, as well as nations, can succeed only with God's blessings.

Seeing "your children's children" (v. 6) is equivalent to "all the days of your life" (v. 5). And "peace be upon Israel" is equivalent to the prayer that those who fear the Lord may see "the prosperity of Jerusalem" (v. 5). Seeing one's "children's children" was considered a blessing (Gen. 48:11). Seeing great-grandchildren was rare (Job 42:16). These days even seeing grandchildren has become rare because many people are settling abroad. Even in such cases, we must maintain sufficient contact with our extended families. The psalmist prays that peace (shalom: completeness, soundness) would be upon Israel! So, we must pray that the Lord will bless our nation and our rulers.

Conclusion

We've seen that: Fearing the Lord brings blessings!

As families, our focus must be on godly living, not on earthly blessings. When families seek first the King, his kingdom, and his righteousness, the Lord will

bless them in every way! And when we complete our earthly journey faithfully, we will receive eternal blessings!



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 has authored eight books, including The Dangers of the Health and Wealth Gospel.

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.



Of Godly Mothers

Rev. Kuruvilla Chandy

My Mother would have been 99 years old if she was alive today. One of my earliest memories was of Mother and I playing "catch me". I must have been about three, because it happened before I started going to school. She was running slowly (at child speed) while I ran furiously round and round the table. I would look back to see if she was near enough to catch me. Suddenly, I banged into a chair and cut my lip. I started to cry. Mother gathered me in her arms to comfort me, but I wouldn't stop crying. Then she took some sugar and put it in the cut. The blood and sugar tasted great. I stopped crying. All who know me well, know that I have a sweet tooth.

Ponder

The Bible says that Mary the mother of Jesus, "pondered" things in her heart (Lk.2:19 KJV; cf. v. 51) I suppose all mothers treasure things in their hearts. My mother did. Mothers don't merely cook meals, wash clothes and clean house. They do think about the clutter in their lives. They discover meaning for their families in the midst of life.

The Bible shows some glimpses of how Mary mothered our Lord. During His babyhood is when Mary is described as having treasured things in her heart and reflected on them. That is when mothers and children are closest. The baby is totally dependent.

There is nothing a baby can do for itself. Survival depends on the mother feeding and caring for the baby.

When we grow up, mothers tell us what we were like when we were babies. They share their memories of our first experience of pain and laughter. They tell us about what we liked to do when we were babies and of the times when something special or frightening happened. Mary must have done that with Jesus, telling Him of the way the angels sang, the visits of the shepherds and the wise men, and of the frightful journey to Egypt.

As a boy, Jesus was once lost. At least, He got separated from Mary and Joseph. When He was scolded by His mother, Jesus said that He had been in God's home all the time and that they should have known that. This extraordinary answer Mary kept in her heart (Lk. 2:41-51). But for all that, Mary and Joseph didn't forget to bring up Jesus in the discipline of a Jewish home (v.52). At the end of that period of upbringing, Jesus was well

known as the son of Mary and Joseph, and He had acquired hands-on-training in His adoptive father's carpentry shop. He was so skilled that He took over when Joseph died and became known as the Carpenter.

Mary remembered all those things. So, when wine ran out at a wedding reception, Mary turned as usual to her eldest Son, who always took care of things after Joseph's death. Mary very simply said, "Son, they don't have any wine" (Jn.2:1-11) At the time, she didn't know that He had any miraculous powers. Still, she expected Him to do something that would help the situation. Mary acted on her faith in her Son, who had taken charge when she became a widow. She knew Him to be a caring person. She had seen Him come up with practical solutions to all her problems.

When my mother was dying, she told me to take care of my younger sister and brother. She believed that I wouldn't cheat them of their shares because she had inculcated family values that

didn't put wealth and possessions before commitment to God and relationships with people.

Though Jesus said that His time had not yet come, He went ahead and performed His first miracle. Was Mary instrumental in nudging Him to begin to exercise God's power? Mother birds nudge fledglings to try their wings, though they twitter their protests about not being ready.

The wedding at Cana may have been the last time Jesus had gone along with His mother to a social event. He left home to become a wandering preacher. Mary had to let go of her eldest Son on whom she had grown dependent for support and help. But when she heard that Jesus was so busy that He wasn't getting enough rest from His labours, she went to Him. She painfully heard Jesus say that anyone who did God's will was just like His mother and siblings (Matt. 12: 46-50). She had to accept that while she was His mother and would always care about His welfare, she had to give

Him the space He needed to be Himself and do all that He was sent to do.

Mother was hurt when I decided to go North. She thought I was distancing myself from her. She visited us a few times in Lucknow and got involved with the work Roshini and I were doing. She would periodically send gifts to support the work. She accepted that God had called me to work there, though she did feel that there would be more people to hear me preach if I moved South, where there were so many more Christians. She also recognised that some of the older women and men in the church were parenting me in her place.

In the end, Mary didn't give up on her Son. The angel had promised that her Child would be the Son of the Most High (Lk.1:31-32). For thirty years, He had lived in total obscurity. Then, He became an itinerant preacher without any symbols of authority in society. All the power He manifested was spiritual and it did not get Him any privileges—not even a foxhole or a place He could call home

(9:58). For one brief moment, He had a crowd claiming Him to be King (19:38), but within days, He was impaled on a cross with the mocking signboard "King of the Jews" hanging over His head (23:38). Yet, she stood there—the grieving mother (Jn.19:25).

There were times Mother had to stand by and watch me get hurt in ministry. There was one member who was abusive and treated me like dirt. As I preached one Sunday, my voice broke. It happened when Mother was there, and she felt for me.

Practical

Another mother I can think of is Jochebed, the mother of Moses, who faced her problems with a practical attitude. Pharaoh had given the order that all baby boys were to be killed (Ex.1:16-17). Jochebed hid Moses at home for as long as she could (2:2). When he was too big and could bawl louder than a baby, she hid him in a basket among the reeds in the river. But even a baby boy can't care for himself. So Jochebed made the baby's sister Miriam stand guard and attend to the

baby's needs whenever Moses cried (vv.3-4).

The most practical thing that Jochebed did was to give up her son for adoption by Egypt's princess (v.10). "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast?" (Isa. 49:15). Yet, to save her son, Jochebed gave up her rights as a mother. She trusted God enough to be practical.

Mother was a practical woman alright. When I was about four or five, my parents got a cow for milk and extra money. They got a man to come and clean the place, feed the cow, and milk it. One day it started to rain, and the cow was getting wet. Mother asked Father to take the cow into the shed before it got sick. But Father was afraid to go near the cow. So was Mother, but she felt that she had to do something. She went out, untied the cow and took it into the shed. Father was impressed.

All through her life, Mother showed that practicality. When people were hurting or discouraged, she would make them a bottle of jam or relish, or

give them a batch of what were, in my opinion, the world's best laddoos. She would visit them and pray for them.

Though my sister and I had left home and started our own families, Mother continued to be supportive and helped our families whenever we needed it. She took care of my sister when she was giving birth to her daughter. Equally, she was there to take care of motherless Roshini when she gave birth to our son Ishaq. Two years later, when our daughter Elishba came into our lives, Mother delighted in having a second granddaughter and then my sister had her second, a son. Mother lavished her love on all her grandchildren equally.

Praying

Mothers pray for their children more than the children pray for themselves. Hannah was a praying mother before she became a mother. When she was taunted for being childless, she turned to God. Her husband could not give her the son she wanted. Through prayer, she

went beyond her husband to get a son (1 Sam.1:1-15). She made a promise to God. People who make promises claim the future and shape it when they keep their promises. Hannah kept her promise to God and gave her son to God. Hannah's song (2:1-10) was a precursor to Mary's song (Lk.1:46-55). She showed the same trust in God and His power to uplift those in trouble.

Mother prayed for us. All of us knew that whatever happened we could count on Mother praying for us—for our home and work, for our children—for their growth and happiness.

When my mother was dying, the last thing she did was to pray for my sister, her family, my brother, and for me and my family. Afterwards, she slipped into unconsciousness for days and then went to her Lord. We miss her prayers for us.

Passing It On

Though the Bible addresses fathers about rearing children in the knowledge of God, it is a historical fact that more mothers

have influenced their children than fathers. They spend more time with them and nurture them not only with food, but also inspire and motivate them. They teach good behaviour and impart values.

Timothy got his spiritual direction from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (2 Tim.1:5). It is not essential that wealth and possessions are passed on. They are only of temporary worth. It is more important that children receive a heritage of ideals and values—because those are principles to live by. They guide us through life. They steady us when we falter and stumble, when we struggle and fail.

My father died when I was 17. Mother told us of her life with Father. She told us stories of their struggles and hopes. She passed on their values to us. She set an example in devotional life and taught us about commitment to the church of God. Though a widow of limited means, she practised tithing – even going beyond the tithe. My siblings and I

learnt to tithe because we were taught by example.

After Father's death, she could have easily made us forget that we were part of Father's family. Like Ruth (1:16-17), she made it a point to affirm that her dead husband's family was her family and her children's. Not that she neglected her own parents and siblings. Working at relationships and being generous toward those less fortunate were things we learnt from her.

Proverbs says of the ideal woman that her children will praise her. Her children are her praise (31:10-31).



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

Easter Discount – Christ for sale

Dr. Babu John Vettamala



During a late Friday night – the Friday before which our Blessed Lord was crucified, a little consortium of Jewish leaders was holding a clandestine conference in the closed room of their private office in the temple of Jerusalem. Their hushed deliberation was interrupted by an unexpected knock on the door. The team in dismay opened the door, and to their shock they saw Judas Iscariot, a disciple of Jesus standing before them with a massive offer.

This offer was precisely the unexpected answer of their brain storming – how and where to find Jesus Christ of Nazareth and undo Him in secret once for all. Then came the answer like a bolt

from the blue, "I will show Him to you, what shall you give me"? – Judas, the archvillain of all times, was ready for a bargain.

The unscrupulous bishops caught him in the snare – thirty shekels. That is the price they tagged on Jesus. The deal was fixed, and the blood money exchanged.

Thirty shekels was the price of the least valuable slave in those days; and that is all the worth that Judas could see in Jesus, the precious pearl of heaven.

Two thousand years have elapsed since this nefarious deal was executed, but the unfortunate fact is the annals of

Christianity are still marked by the repetition of such deals.

Much to the chagrin of everyone concerned, Easter 2023 has witnessed a notorious deal of this sort, and the farce was staged nowhere else, other than in Kerala, the avowed heart land of Christianity in India.

With the dusk of the colonial rule in India, there dawned an era of Christian persecution in the land which has never been on ebb ever since. However, the spiral of persecution soars unchecked since the year 2014.

The philanthropic Christian institutions in the North India, the ascetic priests who offers themselves as a sacrifice on the altars of missionary work among the under privileged rustics in the country, the unassuming nuns who carry the beacon of Christian peace to the peaceless communities in the remote villages and the Dalits and tribals who find a spiritual refuge under the shadow of Christian churches have all got to articulate a story of untold violence that they are exposed to by the hands of unscrupulous religious fanatics. They are hundreds, not for any

crime they committed but for the endeavour that they have undertaken to carry Christian peace to the unprivileged, and for embracing Christianity as the last resort for the salvation of their souls.

Persecution on Christianity is the hall mark of today's India except in Kerala and Tamil N du. There is a sheer difference between Kerala Christians and their counter parts elsewhere. The ones in Kerala are primarily of the high caste, educated, wealthy. Privileged and closer to the ruling classes. What matters them more is the maintaining of their wealth, social status and chances for exploitation than the hard and painful annals of the poor converts in other parts of India and the Christian missionaries who work among them. Wealth speaks to power and power speaks back to wealth – that is the new maxim of the current Kerala Christian leaders. They cannot compromise with anything that hampers the steady growth of their wealth.

One of the great threats to the very existence of Christianity that the Kerala Christian bishops have discovered is the heavy

price fall of natural rubber, a product that sustains the money greed of their sheep. If the rubber farmers of Kerala do not get a high price for their produce, Christianity they fear might collapse. So, the Cardinals and Archbishops held many hushed talks behind closed cloisters, and they had their eureka! Put Jesus on sale. But then the price- be it three hundred rupees for a kilo of rubber sheet. Let any ludicrous politician who catch this bait be our ruler for world without end.

For the morsel of rupees three hundred, they would catapult anybody to the throne of India. Suppose that ruler is the incarnation of Hitler to wipe out Christian organisations, missionaries, and the lower caste Christian converts? Who cares – we get three hundred rupees for a kilo of rubber sheets.

If posterity rewrites the story of this despicable deal of Pamplani's and Aalanchery's and

their unethical menience with killers of Christianity today, it will read, "evil has nowhere else been manifested with so much ferocity as in the villainy of Kerala Christian leaders during Easter 2023".



Dr. Babu John Vettamala, *specialised in Biblical Psychology, Management, Law, English literature, Western history and philosophy is presently teaching the Bible and ancient Hebrew. He did M.A, Ph.d, English language and literature. He retired from prolonged professional life- Pastor, Teacher, Speaker, Columnist, and author. He Lives in the U.K with family for the last 25 years.*

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
Romans 10:17



No Artificial Immortality

Rev. Kuruville Chandy

Hear ye! Hear ye! If you live to see 2030, potentially you would not die and could go on living forever.

One expects that sort of nonsense from religious cranks and charlatans. But that announcement came from a computer scientist and former Google engineer. So, people are going to believe the man, because a scientist can't be wrong can s/he?

Ray Kurzweil, a computer scientist who was awarded the U.S. National Medal of Technology in 2000, made the shocking prediction that humans will become immortals in another seven years. He says that nanotechnology and robotics will give birth to age-reversing

'nanobots'. These tiny robots will constantly keep fixing damaged cells and tissues that deteriorate with age. They will make us immune to lethal diseases.

Kurzweil's book *The Age of Intelligent Machines* (1990), anticipated the explosion in popularity of the Internet. In *The Age of Spiritual Machines: When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence* (1999) Kurzweil presented a vision of a time when computer technology would have advanced far enough to allow machines to operate on a level equivalent to that of the human brain – make complex decisions, appreciate beauty, and even experience emotions. He believes that as humans transfer the information in their brains to

computers, man and machine would become indistinct. He predicted the convergence of human life with technology in *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (2005). He set 2045 as the date for 'Singularity' which is "when we will multiply our effective intelligence a billion-fold by merging with the intelligence we have created". Kurzweil is plainly an evangelist for the notion that technology will help humans rise above biological limitations to become superhuman or, in other words, more like God.

Can we beat death and live on and on? According to Kurzweil and other futurists like him, yes, we can attain immortality, and we're almost there.

Mere Hubris

Futurists manifest hubris – extreme and unreasonable feeling of pride and confidence in oneself. Pride keeps on cropping up in the story of humanity.

In Eden our first parents chose to disobey God and seized the forbidden fruit so that they could become like God. They could have chosen the fruit of the tree of

life but chose what was forbidden. Some centuries later humans decided to build a tower that would help them reach heaven itself. God put a stop to their attempt.

Our Lord told a story about one man's hubris. He was a farmer who was doing so very well that his barns were insufficient for what he was harvesting. So, he decided to build bigger barns and when he had stored away all that he had harvested, with extreme self-satisfaction he said to himself, "Soul, you have lots and lots stored for many, many years: be completely at ease, eat, drink, be merry". But then God said, "You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?" (Lk. 12:16-20).

Just when futurists are gung-ho about attaining immortality by means of artificial intelligence (AI), some voices have been raised to rein in the mad rush to handing over life as we know it to AI. More than a thousand of technology's top talent — including Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak and Twitter CEO Elon Musk — have signed an open letter urging AI pioneers to put the

brakes on AI development, because it poses "profound risks to society and humanity. Advanced AI could represent a profound change in the history of life on Earth and should be planned for and managed with commensurate care and resources. Unfortunately, this level of planning and management is not happening, even though recent months have seen AI labs locked in an out-of-control race to develop and deploy ever more powerful digital minds that no one – not even their creators – can understand, predict, or reliably control."

It's Lunacy!

This call to halt the lunacy of pursuing AI without considerations is reminiscent of atomic scientists who developed nuclear weapons starting the cautionary Doomsday Clock. When it was started in 1947, they set the time at 7 minutes to midnight – the time when humans will self-destruct because of their pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. The clock was reset to 17 minutes to midnight in 1991 at the end of the cold war between the US and the USSR. That was the furthest time from

doomsday. But this year, with the Russian aggression against Ukraine going on, the clock is set at 90 seconds to midnight.

This is what happens when humans are managing things on their own without reference to God. When asked whether he believed in the existence of the soul, Kurzweil declared himself an agnostic – one who doesn't know. However, as to the possibility of divine intelligence, Kurzweil said, "Does God exist? I would say, 'Not yet'."

"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Ps. 14:1; 53:1). But Kurzweil is no fool. He is very knowledgeable and intelligent. He is brilliant. When we hark back to the original Hebrew word nabal that has been translated "fool" we discover that the psalmist's assertion is that it is impiety that makes one deny the existence and relevance of God. He links denial of God to perversity. Thus, according to the psalmist, it is the desire to live life without God's moral restraints that makes people deny God (Ps. 14:1-3; 53:1-3). Isn't it foolish to deny God only for the sake of wilfulness in life?

Aldous Huxley, the writer and philosopher (famous for his book *Brave New World*), admitted the truth that denying God has to do with being ungodly: "I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; and consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics. He is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do. For myself, as no doubt for most of my friends, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom. The supporters of this system claimed that it embodied the meaning - the Christian meaning, they insisted - of the world. There was one admirably simple method of confuting these people and justifying ourselves in our erotic revolt: we would deny that the world had any meaning whatever" (*Ends and Means*, pp. 270 ff).

Quest for Immortality

Without believing in God who is Spirit, Kurzweil (and others) seek immortality through AI, which can exist only on man-made platforms. AI cannot exist in thin air. It needs gadgets and networks. But everything manufactured is temporal and lacking in immortality or permanence. The dots won't connect between things temporal and the state of immortality. To ignore the disconnect is nothing less than foolishness. The psalmist is right. It is only a fool who denies God while seeking blessing.

From time immemorial, around the world, humans have been seeking the elixir of eternal life. Wandering outside Eden, humankind has been pursuing immortality by all sorts of means. Today the ancient mumbo-jumbo of magicians and witch doctors has been replaced by scientism. The sacred cow of science is the new magic. However, when you take a closer look at what is offered, you realise that AI offers only artificial immortality – if, even that, becomes reality.

Based on the human ability to

programme computers some early software developers theorised that the formula for immortality was coding personality into electronic circuits and later reanimating what was coded to recover the mortal who had passed on. Today Futurists say that mind-uploading, (digitizing the content of human minds and plugging them into computerized hard drives), would permit to and fro transitioning between material entities and data. Moreover, Human Body 2.0 will be all artificial parts. Our eyes will have monitors that connect our retinas and mind directly to the Internet. Implanted chips and processors will link our brains to Google. Our immortality will lie in our being information files or computer data. Kurzweil has even suggested that we will be equipped with pleasure devices that will let us have sex with touchable imitations of celebrities we fantasize about. If our bodies somehow get broken or killed, all we'll have to do is download ourselves into brand new clones of ourselves. We will become non-biological. Forsaking our humanity, we will become cyborgs that are immortal. Kurzweil clarifies, "What we are doing is transcending biology."

Is this the immortality that humans want? Do they wish to no longer be human, but just super-machines?

From Perishable to Imperishable

Let's face it: only God is immortal and only He can offer immortality.

How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!

People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

They feast in the abundance of your house;

you give them drink from your river of delights.

For with you is the fountain of life;

in your light we see light (Ps. 36:7-9).

We need to echo the psalmist David in thanking the Lord for life and the hope of life beyond the grave:

Praise the Lord, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits

—

who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit

and crowns you with love and
compassion,
who satisfies your desires with
good things
so that your youth is renewed
like the eagle's (Ps.103:1-5).

David prayed that God would show him what his life's end would be (Ps. 39:4-6), but he immediately launched into asking for salvation from sins (vv.7-8).

Our Lord said that He gives His people a spring of living water that would keep on refreshing them (Jn. 4:14). He refreshes people with His Holy Spirit (7:37-39). If we do not want to perish, if we seek immortality, we must believe in Jesus because "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (3:16-17).

Yes, we can be really immortal – not artificially. It will not be through AI that we attain real immortality. Human immortality is tied to the return of the Immortal Lord:

"the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time – God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might for ever. Amen" (1 Tim.6:14-16).

Whether we die before His coming or are alive at the time of His coming, we will gain immortality:

"We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory'... But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:51-57).

AI is a perishable commodity. It is manufactured by perishable beings and needs platforms that have no permanent existence. On the other hand, though we are perishable right now, we will be rid of our perishability, because the Immortal Lord our God will take it from us and make us imperishable. We will be made immortal – not artificially, but really immortal.



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



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Have you ever felt like you're going in circles and not making any progress? At least not the kind of progress you are expecting.

The constant appeals of the world is pulling you in a million different directions, causing you to question if you're headed in the right one? You have plans and dreams that you want to fulfill, but life is confusing at times. And there are days it seems like you're just surviving instead of living out those dreams or accomplishing your goals.

Numerous distractions. Too many choices. Endless interruptions!!

There have been days I've felt like

one foot on the ground, while my other foot scurried in every direction. Spending a lot of energy and mental fatigue, but going nowhere. Can you relate?

Wouldn't it be awesome to wake up every morning and be assured you're on the right path? To know with certainty that you're headed in the right direction? To feel confident with each step without constantly questioning yourself?

Too many times, I've second-guessed a decision I was confident about. I want so desperately to follow God's will, but then feel uncertain, not wanting to make a wrong move. I wonder: Maybe this isn't what I'm supposed to be doing. Maybe this

isn't part of God's plan for my life.

As I wrestled with indecision and insecurity, I've sought God's Word for help. A few months ago, I found a priceless nugget of truth in the Bible. It addresses our desire for guidance and shows us what to do when we need a clear-cut direction.

King David composed these words in a beautiful psalm, tucked within the pages of the Old Testament:

"Show me the right path, O LORD; point out the road for me to follow. Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you" (Psalm 25:4-5).

These verses reveal David's humble and learning heart. He wanted to be guided by God and led by His truth. David knew God was his Savior and placed all his hope in the One who created the right path for him.

We find the answers to David's request for guidance only a few short passages away. Promises we can claim for our own lives:

"The LORD is good and does what is right; he shows the proper path to those who go astray. He leads the humble in doing right, teaching them his way. The LORD leads with unfailing love and faithfulness all who keep his covenant and obey his demands" (Psalm 25:8-10, NLT).

When our hearts are humble and truly seeking God's will, we can be confident of this:

- 1. God will always show us what is right for us.*
- 2. When we get sidetracked, God will direct us back to the right path.*
- 3. We are not alone. God leads and teaches us along the way.*
- 4. God leads those who obey Him with unfailing love and faithfulness.*

If you're unsure about some things in your life, don't wait another day to figure it out on your own. Ensure your heart is in the right place of humility, and then ask God to help you. Once

you've asked, simply trust that God is directing you!

If you know you've gotten on the wrong path, seek God for direction instead of looking to the world for answers. As you take steps to follow and obey God's voice, He will lovingly show you the way.

Months ago, I asked the Lord to etch these verses on my heart and mind so I'd always have them with me — especially the days when I feel like I'm going in circles and lacking direction.

Today, if you're there and you can relate this to your life, I bring this to you. God will surely direct your paths and lead you into the peaceful green pastures. So, get going! He is our good shepherd



Brother Joseph Suhas B

is Jesus' lover. Enabled with gifting, he is a writer, worshipper, preacher and stands as a symbol of encouragement. A Mechanical Engineer by profession, he also carries the gospel across IT hub. He shares his heart and passion through his life for the Lord. His dynamic zeal to seek God's heart has set him apart to lead many from around the IT hub to the Lord. He is the Co-founder of the 'Voice of Restoration Ministry', and moves echoing the bridal call for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Blog:

*<https://josephsuhas.home.blog/>**

*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for
and assurance about what we do not see.
Hebrews 11:1*



Celebrate work and the worker

Mr. Chacko Thomas

"Do everything without grumbling or arguing,.." A good Motto for living. (Philippians 2:14)

"The best security a parent can give his children is an insatiable thirst for hard work". O. A. Battista. Quoted in Quote Unquote.

"Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks." Phillips Brooks, in Quote Unquote.

The annual International Workers' Day or Labour Day is once again upon us. Thank God that the 20th Century saw it fit to honour the labourers.

I was surprised that Labour Day was not one of those good things spear-headed by Christians. I had got accustomed to attributing everything good to Christianity. Apparently, the Labour Day points back to Russia, to Communism. But of course, Christian world embraced it. All good gifts come to us from God above, even if comes via Moscow, Beijing, or New Delhi.

The Most Hardworking man I have ever seen: George Verwer

As I sit down to write this article, Brother George Verwer (1938 - 2023) had been promoted to Glory, on Friday the 14th of April, 2023. By the time you see this article, some ex-OMers (OM Forward) in India would have

celebrated his life. A large-scale celebration is being planned for him here in the UK. The event would be live streamed for anyone who wants to tune in.

We have lost a great Champion, a Mission Statesman. But thank God for his enormous contribution to Christian Mission worldwide. Instead of copying others, he decided to pioneer in Christian mission. He had a highly enterprising approach to world mission. His life has impacted, individuals, groups, denominations, and nations. He was a great Christian and a great missionary. Thanks be to God.

I mention Brother George in this article on "Work and Workers" because he is one of the most hardworking human being I have ever come across. Many people have remarked that he is a "workaholic". But he would never accept it. He told me once that "People think I am a workaholic, I am not, I just have a passion for what I am doing." I believe him, it has been a privilege to watch him work over 55 years.

We in India are blessed by his passionate commitment to the mobilisation of the church and evangelisation of India. One of

the things on his mind on his deathbed was whether or not all the money needed for the remaining 20,000 of the 100,000 Bibles for India had come in. He had been giving them away for Christian workers across India in the Indian languages. He also had a push for Bibles for Africa. A friend of mine in Mexico told me that he has received Spanish Bibles for Mexico. What a way to end one's journey on the planet.

On an average, Brother George worked for sixteen hours a day. He believed that he had to work harder than his [financial] supporters, many of whom did an eight hour a day job to support their family and on top of it, to support the work of OM or other missions. George did pass on his work attitude to OM workers alright; even to otherwise lazy Indian OMers, who greatly benefited from the OM's Intensive Training Programme. I am one among them.

George is famous for often saying, "Redeem the time" (Eph.5:16, Col. 4:5). He practiced it consistently over the six decades of his leadership. One senior Pastor in the UK who knew him well remarked, "Even though he is quite witty from the pulpit, it

is all business when you talk to him one on one."

"Mobilise or you will fossilise." was another one of his oft repeated sayings in the early days of OM. After all, he started a movement called "Operation Mobilisation" (OM). OM today serves in well over 100 countries and with people from more than 100 countries serving with OM. This is a mission revolution, in more ways than one.

Work is an important part of human life:

An average person spends a third of his day at work, the rest of it in leisure and sleep. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Bible has a lot to say about work, most probably more about work than about worship or preaching. Christianity not for the sluggard. The saying "if you don't work, don't eat" is found in the Bible. 2 Thessalonians 3:10.

Although, to my dismay, in a world where there is a lot of abuse of servants, labourers, and employees the wise book, the Bible, is **not** taken up with lashing out at masters or employers. At least, it does not appear so for a casual reading of the Bible. Astonishing though is the space

given to work and workers right through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, perhaps a complete treatment on the subject anywhere in print. The book of Proverbs leads the way, although a strong foundation is laid for it in the earlier books of the Bible.

It is not that the Bible leaves the employer off the hook as to what the Lord expects from him; the employer, the master, the parent, the Government or any in authority, religious or secular. Addressing the employer, the Lord says, "Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven." (Colossians 4:1.) Again, the Bible says in the book of Ephesians, "... And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that He Who is their Master and yours is in heaven, there is no favouritism with Him (6:9). Wow, that should make any employer to sit up and make amends to his ways with the employees. It is a needed revolution in India, Asia, and in many parts of the world.

Undoubtedly, the fourth Commandment, the world's oldest "labour-law", is addressed to those in authority. "Six days you shall labor and do all your

work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." (Exodus 20: 9-11, NIV.)

"Labourer is worthy of his labour." Here is something all who employ others need to honour. Paying a worker is not a favour you do. We need to get away from the mentality that Abraham Lincoln eloquently expressed, "You work, I eat". May the Lord grant it.

Thinking Christianly about work:

Rev. John Stott in his landmark work on "New Issues Facing Christians Today" (478 pages) has a chapter of "Work And Unemployment" (25 pages). He introduces the chapter with these words, "Work occupies such a significant place in most people's lives that, if we are Christians, we must know how to think Christianly about it and about the

trauma of unemployment. ... We need a philosophy of work which will determine our attitude to it."

In spite of the industrial developments, modern education, and international travels, we in India, are still stuck with an archaic, caste based work attitude, especially when it comes to blue collar jobs. The Bible can help us here. May I encourage all to read through the Bible with theme of work on your mind. The well known "Protestant work ethics" (industry, honesty, resourcefulness, thrift etc) goes back to the Bible, and to the Lord Jesus and His Apostles. Christianity is not a lazy man's religion.

Much of the Bible exhortation is directed to the workers:

There is much against laziness, idleness, slackness, "eye service" (KJV), and man pleasing in the Bible. The Apostle Paul exhorted the Colossian Christians saying, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God;" (Colossians 3:22 NIV). The New Living Translation has it more vividly, "Slaves, obey your

earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord." This kind of worker is not a loser, the Lord will honour him. I have seen some examples of it.

What an example the Lord Jesus is to the worker!

He chose to be born into a working-class family. He worked with His hands as a well reputed carpenter till the age of 30 to provide for his mother and siblings, and beyond. In Matthew (Matt 11:28-30) we have a reference to a yoke, "my yoke is easy". He must have made many yokes and earned a reputation for the yokes He made). His yoke in the spiritual sense too is the easiest of yokes going in the world today. (Of course, true to our nature, the Christian world has not left the yoke alone, but added to it or subtracted making it unbearable for its bearers, like the Pharisees of old.)

When the Lord launched His "ministry", it was an intensive and all-consuming three and half years. There is no hint of Jesus

being lazy as a carpenter or as a minister. It is incredible how much work, travel and hardships, He and His disciples packed into those three and a half years of ministry. There seems to have a sense of urgency in His ministry. His food was "to do the will of the Father" (John 4:32, 34). He was aware that His time is short. He made the best use of every opportunity that presented itself to Him. He refused to be distracted. Thus, He could close His short life with a final account of His life which He gave to the Father, "I brought glory to you here on earth by completing **the work you gave me to do.**" (John 17:4 NLT. Please also see verses 6 and 8, "the men you gave me" and the "words you gave me").

Our God is a working God. We meet him in the first page of the Bible as Creator, creating the universe. He hasn't left the creation to itself and gone on holidays. He is a Redeeming God, a sustaining God, a guiding God, and he is with its creation every day and all the ways. A day of judgement is also being prepared as well a day of full restoration. I look forward to it. There are more than 100 references in the Old Testament

to the work of the Holy Spirit in our world. Please see Psalms 104 and 145 for examples, or the book of Job.

Rev. Peter Lewis writes "In the created world the Holy Spirit is "the divine executive" of all the works of God. He brings to pass daily and at ground level, as it were, all that is decreed and directed "from above". He is God next to us. ... His work in the world at large ranges from bestowing mental and moral abilities and artistic and technical skills upon man in general, to the unique and saving work of softening the heart, sanctifying the penitent and comforting the people of God." Quoted from the "The Glory of Christ" by Peter Lewis, from its chapter "Jesus and the Holy Spirit".

Right through the Old Testament we see God working with Zeal to bring about His plans and purposes (Isaiah 9:7, 37:32, 59:17), in this case to bring about the King and the Kingdom of God. He is watching out to fulfil His word. What an amazing work of God the Bible is. How He worked through Moses in Egypt, in the wilderness, and through Joshua and Samuel and David in the

Promised Land. Now in our time, the Church is upheld by him.

The Apostles call us to work with zeal. Romans 12:11-13 reads "not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality." (NASB).

For the "over worked and underpaid": Rev. Stott, rightly called it the "trauma of unemployment". He called on all people to work, unpaid or retired.

Thank God that the Lord promises his reward. "Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ. But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites." (Colossians 3:23-25).

A Christian primarily works for the Lord. We do it for the glory of the Lord (1 Co. 10:31-33. We look to the Lord for "our daily bread"

even when we have good savings, good jobs, or caring government over us.

I am aware of the predicament of hundreds of millions, like in the parable of Jesus, standing around to be employed. I have no easy answer, I am afraid, for this huge problem of India. Cursing the past is no solution. But I do have two suggestions. Ask God of the Bible for work; for the food for your family and for giving to others. The next is in the words of the Bible, "whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10a). Here, we are back to work.

I recently quoted the above verse, Ecclesiastes 9:10a, to someone who had read my book, that hard work has been my secret. She said "NO". After all your book is entitled "Beyond the Natural". Well, yes, I have seen many supernatural interventions from the Lord over these 50 years. But hard work has also been a secret. You can be sure that OM would not have carried a "lazy bone" around the Globe for all these years.

I must draw this article to a close. I have sought to show how the Bible views work and workers.

We have seen the example of George Verwer, the exhortations from Word of God, and the examples of God himself. I pray that it will make a difference to you and to all who are touched by your life.

I close with a Scripture portion from Colossians 3:23-24, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. (NASB).



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 Freedom to Speak and Write

Dr. Shantanu Dutta

It is widely recognised today that the mainstream media in India has become a mouthpiece of the powerful - whether it is the government or corporates.

Godi Media is a slang term coined and practiced by NDTV journalist, Ravish Kumar for this kind of compromised media. The Godi media refers to the section of the media that is broadcasting the news in favour of the government of the day without any pretence of being independent or non-partisan. There has been a lot of discussion on this phenomenon for the last few years, ever since 2014, although its origins can be traced to the emergency era of 1975. You were asked only to bend," L.K.Advani once India's

deputy prime minister told journalists (after the Emergency was lifted), "yet you crawled. Today, far from crawling, India's press and television channels are jumping up and down and cheering. Talking heads vie to outdo one another in celebration. Rights groups and activists have raised concerns over dwindling press freedom and rising intimidation of journalists by the government.

Conglomerates' takeovers of media outlets are not unique to India. But New Delhi-based historian Mukul Kesavan, who is also an independent journalist, says Indian media takeovers by government allies are "symptomatic of a larger malaise" posing threats to rights. "it's part

of a much larger battering down on basic, fundamental, democratic rights — the right to organize, the right to protest, the right to march, the right to speak and the right to publish," says Kesavan.

Kesavan says that most Indian media houses have become defenders of the government, selling the majoritarian populist agenda.

A few major [digital] outlets are independent but for how long remains to be seen. Newspapers of all hues have always depended on advertisements to stay afloat and the cost that subscribers pay to buy a copy is a minuscule amount. India's digital footprint when it comes to media is not large enough to adopt this model and while advertising is scanty, consumers are reluctant to pay for news on the internet. This forces the digital media to look for funding from elsewhere and eventually, these donors will have an agenda which they may want to push.

If this trend continues, the future is grim for Indian democracy.

In January, the government proposed new rules for digital

media, which would ban content the government judges to be fake or false.

Pro-government media outlets recently cast doubt on the BBC's credibility. A spokesperson for the ruling party called the BBC "the most corrupt organization which has little regard for India's constitution while it works from here, while other officials called a recently produced BBC documentary hostile propaganda and anti-India garbage with a "colonial mindset.

Unfortunately, trust between the media and its consumers has deteriorated in recent years. A variety of factors led to this moment. The fragmented media environment allows us to choose our information based on our personal biases and shut out the news that cuts against our tribal instincts. Our public officials have condemned reporting that makes them look bad, catechizing their most fervent supporters to only believe the good news about them.

And many in the media have contributed to the lack of faith in the institutions they represent, seemingly cheerleading for

certain outcomes or underreporting stories that may contradict a personal worldview.

I've always had a deep appreciation for the work of media institutions and those hard-working journalists who deliver the news to ordinary people around the world. But my appreciation for the media doesn't just stem from being a news nerd, but from something deeper. As a Christian, I believe in the pursuit of truth (Philippians 4:8). The telling of stories didn't start when the first ink-stained pages rolled off of a printing press, but when God himself inspired 40 different authors to tell his story. The Bible tells the beautiful narrative of humanity's creation, fall and God's glorious redemption in Christ. Faithful Christians will never give today's headlines the same weight we do our Bibles, but we should appreciate the way a free press contributes to a healthy civil society.

The OT prophets are sometimes called the "conscience of Israel" and "guardians of the covenant." The prophets believed and passed the message that all leaders practising prejudice and

mistreatment against humankind, especially practising injustice to the powerless and poor people will receive punishment from God, following the breaching of the Mosaic covenant. God would send harsh punishment including cursing those who mistreat others.

Both in the Old and the New Testament—speaking truth to power is no laughing matter. On the contrary, it is deadly serious, and it can be downright dangerous. The wise woman of Tekoa spoke truth to power when she stood before King David insisting that he forgive his son and not banish him. The wise woman of Abel-Bethmaach spoke truth to power before Joab, the captain of King David's army, and convinced him not to wipe out an entire city. David, himself, spoke truth to power when he entered a battlefield to confront the Philistine giant Goliath. Moses spoke truth to power when he stood in the court of Pharaoh of Egypt demanding that Pharaoh let God's people go. In the New Testament, John had spoken the truth to power and paid for it with his life. The Bible is full of men and women who spoke truth to power.

When a prophet speaks truth to power, power often strikes back. The prophet can expect persecution. It was that way with the prophets of old. Think of the prophet Samuel, confronting King Saul. Think of Nathan, confronting King David—although in that rare instance, the king in power listened to the prophet and did repent. But generally, it is dangerous for a prophet to call out a king. The prophet Elijah rebuked King Ahab and his queen, Jezebel. Jezebel tried to hunt Elijah down, much like Herodias went after John. The prophet Amos—Amos spoke out against King Jeroboam, and it did not make him a very popular person. Speaking truth to power is not easy, nor is it safe.

In the 20th Century, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, spoke truth to power during World War II. What distinguished this religious scholar and preacher from the rest of his contemporary intellectuals was his staunch, unremitting vocal resistance against Adolph Hitler, the Nazis, and their murderous doctrine. Bonhoeffer's philosophy of the responsibility of the church [to stand up against injustice] gained a small and dedicated following in

his native land—even as most of the] German clergy kowtowed to Hitler."

God's people have every right and every responsibility to protest lawfully when the freedom of speech appears to be shrinking, both for common people as well as the media. This might mean speaking out against a secular government. This might mean speaking against arrogant religious leaders. This might mean rebuking political rulers pushing legislation through brute majority without consideration and debate. It is part of what it is to be a follower of Christ and it is part of what it means to be salt and light.



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

A Close Look At The Hebrew Mid-Wives Will Impact Your Professional Choices!

Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj



The Biblical record of the Hebrew Midwives is not a familiar passage and so, is reproduced in full, before a crucial life lesson for working professionals is drawn from it:

Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, "When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live." But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. So, the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and let the male children live?" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the

Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." So, God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families (Exod. 1:15-20).

The Hebrew midwives were asked by the king of Egypt to kill all the Hebrew male babies born at that time. The Jewish Study Bible explains why the king gave this order: "Killing the males and leaving only females would eliminate potential Israelite military power." The Hebrew midwives disobeyed the command from their "boss" here for it required them to sin by murdering innocent male babies, which is against God, the

Ultimate Boss!

This account suggests that these midwives possibly lied when questioned by their "boss" for their disobedience. Not only that—this Exodus account suggests that God blessed them, notwithstanding the fact they were untrue! Some commentators suggest that the midwives may be actually telling the truth. Douglas Stuart, a Bible Scholar explains how in the paragraph reproduced below:

The first part of their answer, "Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women," could be true in several ways that are not necessarily specified.... It is possible that at the time of the Exodus, Egyptian women—at least of the classes that Pharaoh would be familiar with, and the mid-wives were referring to in 1:19—took a minimum role in delivering their children. They may have mainly lain back with their eyes closed during and perhaps immediately after the children and let the midwives do all the rest.... By contrast, it may well have been the practice in Israel for women to play an active role in the delivery of their own children. The role assigned to the midwives may have been

minimal at any event. The final part of the verse, "they give birth before the midwives arrive" could thus be perfectly true, perhaps in part because of a purposely slow arrival of the midwives as part of a quiet, widespread plot among Israelites to fool the Egyptians. Indeed, one can imagine the midwives, as part of this strategy, regularly informing Israelite women to do "everything possible to give birth before we are summoned to your home. We will take it from there. But whatever you do, don't call for us before the baby actually comes (The New American Commentary).

Therefore, it could be said the midwives were indeed not lying and God was justified in blessing them for telling the truth with tact. Working Professionals also need to be truthful at all times for God's hand of blessing to be continually upon them!

These midwives inspire working professionals of today to bravely choose to obey the Lord when they receive possible orders that are unethical and counter-biblical from their company boss. If your job involves things that will not please God such as porn promotion and alcohol promotion

or the like, be bold and quit! The hand of God upon the Hebrew Midwives of old will be with you as you imitate them, to bless you!

Mordecai was perhaps inspired by these Hebrew midwives. He refused to bow before Haman. Haman, some Bible Scholars say, wore a chain with an idol's image dangling down his chest. That's why Mordecai, a follower of the living God, refused to bow before him! Though his life had several twists and turns, God exalted Mordecai in the foreign land he worked in (read Esther 10).

God will exalt you when you refuse to compromise in the place of your work! Surely this will happen on the other side of eternity, if it does not happen on this side of eternity! I stand testimony to this, along with the Hebrew Mid-wives and Mordecai!

When I had to compromise to hold onto my job in a Christian Organisation, I refused (with my dear wife encouraging me). I met the concerned leader in private and confronted him.

Sure enough, I had to resign from that organisation, down the line!

Now, years later, I can say that God has blessed me beyond words and has graciously placed me in a position of great influence for the Kingdom of God! This could not have happened if I had stayed put and shut my mouth!

What will you now choose to do in the place of work when called to compromise?



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

Seeking a Lead Pastor for Dakshinpuri Church of Delhi Bible Fellowship (DBF), New Delhi

Delhi Bible Fellowship (DBF) is a non-denominational, evangelical church, started in 1968, currently having 34 weekly services across the Delhi-NCR (National Capital Region).

DBF is looking to appoint a Lead Pastor, whom God has called, to serve the Dakshinpuri Hindi church in South Delhi. The Dakshinpuri DBF Church is a unique, vibrant and growing church that focuses on youth and families drawing people from all walks of life. There are three worship services every Sunday and several ministries serving about 600 people. The church is led by 16 Elders and Deacons who volunteer their time and resources to build the community.

The applicant should be committed to and gifted in the teaching and preaching of God's Word. They should have a good reputation in line with the qualifications of church leaders in 1 Timothy 3:2-4 and Titus 1:6-9. They should have strong skills in leadership, discipleship, evangelism, and teaching, be a team player, be able to work with the other pastors and staff of the organization, with a vision to lead the church into the future. They should be fluent in Hindi (written and spoken) and should have a heart for ministry among those who live in urban slums.

The applicant must be an Indian citizen, with an MDiv or BD and have at least 8 years of relevant pastoral experience.

Interested and suitable candidates are requested to send their detailed resume by 30th June 2023 to the email ID or postal address given below.

Email ID for correspondence: searchcommittee.dbf@gmail.com

Postal Address:
Chairman
Search Committee
Delhi Bible Fellowship 22, Bhai Veer Singh Marg
New Delhi – 110 001
Phone: 011-23360944

दिल्ली बाइबल फैलोशिप (डी. बी. एफ.), नई दिल्ली के दक्षिणपुरी चर्च के लिए एक लीड पास्टर के पद के लिए आवेदन आमंत्रित कर रहा है।

दिल्ली बाइबिल फैलोशिप (डीबीएफ) एक गैर-डिनोमिनेशन वाली इंजीलवादी चर्च है, जिसकी स्थापना 1968 में हुई थी। वर्तमान में दिल्ली-एन.सी.आर. (राष्ट्रीय राजधानी क्षेत्र) में इसके द्वारा 34 आराधना समूहों में साप्ताहिक सेवाएं चलायी जाती हैं।

डी.बी.एफ.दक्षिण दिल्ली में दक्षिणपुरी हिंदी चर्च की सेवा करने के लिए एक लीड पास्टर नियुक्त करना चाहता है, जिसे परमेश्वर की बुलाहट प्राप्त है। दक्षिणपुरी डी.बी.एफ.चर्च एक अनूठा, जीवंत और बढ़ता हुआ चर्च है, जो युवाओं और परिवारों पर ध्यान केंद्रित करता है जो जीवन के सभी क्षेत्रों से आते हैं। हर रविवार को तीन आराधना की सेवाएं होती हैं और कई सेवकाईयों के द्वारा लगभग 600 लोग इनकी सेवाओं कालाभ उठाते हैं। चर्च का नेतृत्व 16 एल्डर्स और डीकन करते हैं जो समुदाय के निर्माण के लिए स्वेच्छा से अपना समय और संसाधन का योगदान करते हैं।

आवेदक को परमेश्वर के वचन के शिक्षण और उपदेश के लिए प्रतिबद्ध और वरदान प्राप्त होना चाहिए। 1 तीमुथियुस 3:2-4 और तीतुस 1:6-9 में कलीसिया के अगुवों की योग्यता के अनुरूप उनकी अच्छी प्रतिष्ठा होनी चाहिए। उनके पास नेतृत्व, शिष्यता, सुसमाचार प्रचार और शिक्षण में मजबूत कौशल होना चाहिए, एक टीम के रूप में काम करने वाला होना चाहिए, तथा चर्च को भविष्य में ले जाने के लिए दर्शन के साथ संगठन के अन्य पास्टर्स और कर्मचारियों के साथ काम करने में सक्षम होना चाहिए। उन्हें हिंदी (लिखित और मौखिक) दोनों में धाराप्रवाह होना चाहिए और शहरी झुग्गी-बस्ती में रहने वाले लोगों के बीच सेवकाई के लिए दिल में बोझ होना चाहिए।

आवेदक को M.Div. या B.D. की डिग्री के साथ एक भारतीय नागरिक होना चाहिए और कम से कम 8 साल का पास्टरीय सेवकाई का प्रासंगिक अनुभव होना चाहिए।

इच्छुक और उपयुक्त उम्मीदवारों से अनुरोध है कि वे अपना विस्तृत बायो-डाटा 30 जून 2023 तक नीचे दिए गए ई-मेल आईडी या डाक पते पर भेजें।

पत्राचार के लिए ईमेल आईडी: searchcommittee.dbf@gmail.com

डाक का पता:

अध्यक्ष

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Intercessory
Prayer
Points



May 2023

1 MONDAY Thank God for the new month with new opportunities to serve Him. Pray that you will faithfully and wholeheartedly serve Him.

2 TUESDAY Pray for Soul Winners Prayer Fellowship, New Delhi. Pray that the ministry would influence the youth group in a big way. Pray for God's empowerment and supply as they organized prayer ministries in and around New Delhi.

3 WEDNESDAY Pray for Presbyterian Church in India (Reformed), Manipur. Pray for strength, sustenance, and stability as they serve God's church.

4 THURSDAY Pray for the needs of Evangelical Fellowship of India. Pray that God would continually provide and use this ministry for His glory.

5 FRIDAY Pray for D6 Asia Evangelical Alliance Family

Conference to be held on May 19-20, 2023. Pray that many will sign up and participate.

6 SATURDAY Pray for those who are persecuted for their faith. Continue to pray that every individual would fearlessly practice their faith.

7 SUNDAY Pray for personal and corporate revival for all the members of your church. Pray that love for God's Word would increase greatly.

8 MONDAY Pray for World Impact Light the Nations Trust, Punjab. Pray for Holy Spirit's guidance and instruction on them so that they would become an agent of change in the world.

9 TUESDAY Pray for Beersheba Church of God Society in Punjab. Pray that the church would feed the needy both physically and spiritually with deep concern and care. May God provide all their needs as they serve His purpose.

10 WEDNESDAY Pray for Seva Bharat, Telangana. Pray that the Lord would bless and multiply this ministry to the extension of His kingdom on earth.

11 THURSDAY Pray for Revival Literature Fellowship at Karnataka. Pray that the ministry would focus to encourage people to receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Pray for strength and commitment for those involved in this ministry.

12 FRIDAY Pray for Covenant Blessings Church in Maharashtra. Pray for many transformed lives in this Church as the word of God is taught, learned, and applied by individuals. Pray for the church's revival and growth.

13 SATURDAY Pray for joy, peace, and unity in your church. Pray that every church member would love and serve others with humility.

14 SUNDAY Mother's Day. Thank God for all the godly mothers. Pray that their influence would grow and spread in her family and outside. Pray that you may be a good and God-fearing mother.

15 MONDAY International Day of Families. Pray that God who had established the constitution of family, would nurture and

strengthen every family. Pray that Christ would be the head of every family and He may be glorified.

16 TUESDAY Pray for Presbyterian Free Church in Madhya Pradesh. Pray that God would use this church as a channel of blessing both spiritual and physical and touch many lives.

17 WEDNESDAY Pray for Pongring Hope Foundation Centre, Manipur. Pray that the aim and objectives of this ministry would be fulfilled. Pray for God's enablement and empowerment.

18 THURSDAY Continue to pray for D6 Asia Evangelical Alliance Family Conference starting tomorrow. Pray for all the speakers that their time with the participants will be meaningful. Pray also for all the logistics that everything will go well smoothly.

19 FRIDAY Pray for Sharing Love Mission at Tamil Nadu. Pray as they share the Gospel to the Bhil Tribes in Gujarat and that God may use them as an instrument to reach out to many unreached people.

20 SATURDAY Pray for all the staff of EFI. Pray for empowerment, guidance, and strength as they carry out their responsibilities.

21 SUNDAY Pray for Safe India, Tamil Nadu. Pray that the Lord would bless their initiatives and bring glory to Himself and goodness for the people involved in this ministry.

22 MONDAY Pray for JNP Bethany Mission Welfare Society in Andhra Pradesh. Pray that the Lord would lead, guide, equip and use this ministry for His glory.

23 TUESDAY Pray for Scripture Union India, Tamil Nadu. Pray for all the people involved in this ministry as they help others to mature in Christ through the spreading of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

24 WEDNESDAY Pray for Community of Nations in Uttarkhand. Pray that the Lord's blessings would be upon them so that they succeed in everything they do.

25 THURSDAY Pray for Soul Winning Mission, Manipur. Pray that many wandering souls would find peace and satisfaction as they hear the Gospel from this ministry.

26 FRIDAY Pray for North Bank Baptist Christian Association, Assam. Pray for new insights and zeal for this ministry. Pray for all

their constituencies to actively shoulder and implement the mission vision. Pray for God's abundant blessings upon them.

27 SATURDAY Pray for New Life Foundation, New Delhi. Pray that God would use them mightily to reach the unreached and bring healing to His people through them.

28 SUNDAY Pray for your church that you will be a blessing to many wandering souls. Pray that the Lord will bless your worship service and that each one will be spiritually fed.

29 MONDAY Pray for Sparsh Sewa Samiti, Uttar Pradesh. Pray for wisdom, encouragement, discernment to decide and the ability to do what needs to be done. May God bless the ministry.

30 TUESDAY Pray for Suman Bihar at Nawada, Bihar. Pray that the Lord would show His favour on this ministry and the people involved in it. Pray that many people would benefit from this ministry.

31 WEDNESDAY Thank God for a fruitful month. Pray that God would use you mightily in the coming months too.



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50, Amrita Shergill Marg, New Delhi - 110003
Mobile: +91 9999625833; 011-24611311; 24643587 Extn.: 208
E-mail: dbi13.bb@gmail.com

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*As a mother
comforts her child,
so will I comfort you.
Isaiah 66:13*

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