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A Journey of Faith

*He heals the brokenhearted
And binds up their wounds.
Psalm 147:3*





*“Lord, be gracious to us;
we long for you. Be our
strength every morning,
our salvation in time of
distress.”*

- Isaiah 33:2

A Journey of Faith

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Editorial



Rev. Vijayesh Lal

Counting the Cost:

Assessing the Tragic Consequences of Manipur's Ethnic Violence

The toll of ethnic and religious violence in Manipur, which erupted a month ago, has been devastating. According to a recent government statement issued on June 2, the casualty count stands at a heart-wrenching 98 lives lost, with an additional 310 individuals injured. Unofficial numbers suggest an even higher toll, with estimates from local leaders indicating over 160 deaths, more than 200 churches destroyed, hundreds of villages razed to the ground, and over 65,000 people displaced both internally and externally. These figures paint a grim picture of the immense human suffering

endured during this tragic episode.

Further analysis of the situation, based on government information, reveals that over 37,450 people are currently seeking refuge in 272 relief camps, away from their homes and communities. These camps have become temporary sanctuaries, providing respite for those affected by the violence that has ravaged their lives. The magnitude of displacement speaks volumes about the profound disruption and upheaval experienced by the people of Manipur.

The figures released by the Chief Minister's Office also shed light on the extent of destruction witnessed in the region. A total of 4,014 cases of arson have been reported since the outbreak of violence, leaving scars on the landscape and perpetuating a climate of fear and uncertainty. The state police have registered a significant number of cases, amounting to 3,734, and have made 65 arrests connected to the violence.

The academic future and careers of thousands of students both in schools and colleges is at stake. Most will miss a year of studies. Some have missed their final exams. I remember meeting a final year engineering student who had to flee even when his exams were going on. Their misery must be addressed.

While there are glimmers of hope amidst the chaos, with sporadic incidents of violence decreasing in frequency, the journey towards healing and reconciliation remains arduous. The coordinated efforts of various

security agencies, including the Army, Assam Rifles, CAPFs, and local police, have been helpful in curbing outbreaks of unrest. However, reports of fresh violence from certain sectors continue to pour in.

One of the defining characteristic of the violence in Manipur has been that its victimhood is largely Christian while the clashes were ethnic. There has been an attempt to characterize this as a purely ethnic strife, but that still does not explain the burning of Meitei Churches and the pressure on Meitei Christians to do a 'ghar-wapsi'. The Meitei Christians are the ones that are doubly marginalized and have to be taken care of.

Political parties and commentators have raised questions about the role of Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun. It is alleged that they have been formed "on lines of on lines of RSS, Bajrang Dal,". Articles by Scroll and other publications have also elucidated how these organizations are

connected politically with the ruling BJP and how both organizations have “insecurity” about Christianity.

Yet, as we reflect on the current state of affairs in Manipur, it is imperative to recognize the profound human cost incurred by this wave of ethnic violence. Each life lost is a tragedy that reverberates throughout families and communities, leaving scars that may never fully heal. The harrowing experiences endured by those affected must serve as a solemn reminder of the urgent need for peace, understanding, and meaningful dialogue.

Moving forward, it is essential for the authorities to direct their efforts towards restoring normalcy and creating an environment conducive to reconciliation. Support systems must be strengthened to aid those who have been displaced and traumatized by the violence, helping them rebuild their lives and fostering a sense of hope for the future.

The role of the Church in the

peace and reconciliation process in Manipur is of utmost importance. As a moral compass for society at large, the Church can offer guidance and promote understanding between the warring factions. By fostering interfaith dialogue, advocating forgiveness and reconciliation, extending humanitarian assistance, creating safe spaces for dialogue and healing, and supporting grassroots initiatives, the Church can contribute significantly to restoring harmony and rebuilding trust in the shattered communities. The time is now for the Church to step forward and embrace its role as a catalyst for peace in Manipur.

Since the scars of Manipur's ethnic divide run deep, the importance of addressing the root causes that have fueled this unrest cannot be overstated. It is time for collective reflection on the underlying tensions and grievances between communities. Only through sincere dialogue, empathy, and a commitment to fostering harmonious coexistence can Manipur overcome the shadows

cast by this tragic chapter and emerge stronger, united in its diversity and shared humanity.

Mourning the Tragic Train Collision in Balasore, Odisha

The recent train collision in Odisha's Balasore district, resulting in the loss of over 280 lives and leaving more than 1,100 injured, has left the nation deeply saddened. EFI extends its heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones affected by this devastating tragedy. This incident serves as a solemn reminder of the urgent need to enhance safety measures on India's railway network.

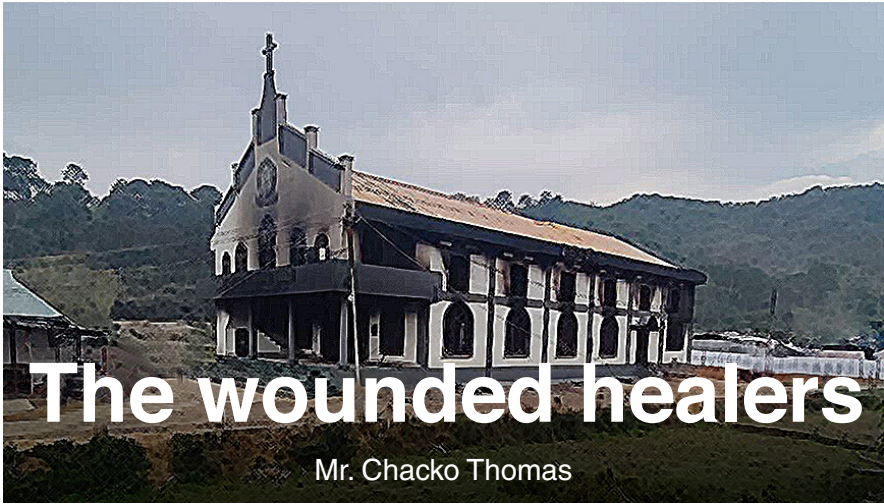
A thorough investigation is essential to uncover the causes of this tragedy and prevent similar incidents in the future. The government must prioritize the modernization of infrastructure, enforce strict safety regulations, and provide comprehensive training for railway staff. Addressing overcrowding on trains is also crucial to ensure passenger safety. There is a need to create a safer railway system

that prioritizes the well-being and security of its passengers. May we never witness such heart-wrenching tragedies again.

We stand in solidarity with the affected families, offering our support and prayers during this difficult time. The Scriptures remind us that God is near to the broken-hearted and offers strength to those who are weary. For the victims of this tragic accident and their families, we pray that they find solace and comfort in God, who is described in the scriptures as our refuge and strength, a present help in times of trouble.

As we mourn the lives lost both in Odisha and Manipur and empathize with the victims of ethnic violence in Manipur, let us unite in prayer and action. May we seek ways to improve safety, promote harmony, and extend the love and compassion that the Word of God teaches us. Together, we must work towards a future where tragedies like these are minimized, and peace and justice prevail.

Rev. Vijayesh Lal



"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5 KJV.)

"Make a friend of yesterday, today and tomorrow. For yesterday the key word is forgiveness. For today the key word is opportunity. And for tomorrow the key word is vision." Late Charles Crabtree, Past Director of US Decade of Harvest.

A Grenade Attack

It was in August the 10th of 1991. I was preaching on Isaiah 53:5 (quoted above) to a crowd of about 1000 people in Zamboanga, The Philippines. I had finished the message and was halfway through giving an

invitation for those who wanted to accept Christ as their Saviour.

A few angry Muslim fanatics launched two hand grenades at us, the Doulos Crew and Staff seated on the backstage. Although one did not explode, the other did. It resulted in two of our young people being killed and 38 injured.

The wounded were treated in the ship's hospital and the hospitals ashore. Thankfully no one else died including a couple of seriously wounded. God kept the infections down, eventually all recovered. The physically wounded recovered faster than the emotionally wounded.

George Verwer swung into action.

He got his Associate International Director, Peter Maiden to fly out to Zamboanga. Peter Maiden, I remember, confessed that he had never experienced any serious persecution, but gave us a study of Persecution in the book of Acts.

Also on the plane was Dr Marjorie Foyle, a retired Missionary Psychiatrist from London, who had served Nur Manzil Hospital in Lucknow, India (started by the great Missionary E. Stanley Jones). She interviewed all the people on the ship who were injured and all those affected in one way or other and recommended that the ship move to a safer and familiar part of the world for few months of ministry, which we did by serving in Western Australia.

George also "recruited" Dr Hudson Taylor III, then Director of OMF based in Singapore, to pay visit to the ship. (As the name suggest, he was the grandson of the famous Hudson Taylor, the founder of China Inland Mission, now OMF.). He had experienced similar tragedies as a Missionary Kid and later as a Missionary in China.

God meant it for Good.

Dr Taylor's visit was very

memorable to me. I expected to hear him say, how sorry he was for us. Rather, he went on chronicling the traumas he experienced in China when the Japanese invaded China. He was taken a prisoner of war together with a school full of children and teachers, including the famous missionary Eric Liddle (the subject of the film "Chariots of Fire").

He shared his experiences from China. We felt a sense of fellowship with those who had suffered for the sake of the Gospel (Phil. 1:29). His Bible teaching was on the life of Joseph (Genesis 37-50) entitled "You meant it for evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Gen 50:20). He showed "how God used great evils against Joseph to save many lives," not the least the Israelites through whom we have the Bible and the Saviour of the World. Notice that Joseph did not blame his brothers or Potiphar's wife when he asked the cup-bearer to report his innocence to Pharaoh (Genesis 40:15).

The Indian Church has been Wounded:

The stories that we hear from Manipur, Chhattisgarh, UP, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand,

Karnataka etc. are heart breaking. I can only hope that these Christians are receiving the kind of support we received during our tragedy, including emotional support and trauma counselling. May God have mercy, especially on those first-generation followers of the Lord from poor backgrounds. May God Himself exalt these people. But we are not victims, any more than Jesus is who suffered so much injustice and so many atrocities by the hands of evil men. After Good Friday came the Easter Sunday and Jesus is Lord of all. India comes under his jurisdiction. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:36, 10:36b; Eph. 1:20-22. I believe these verses and seen their message at work).

I like what I see happening among God's people in India:

Among the positive outcomes, I see a new boldness, mutual support, greater unity, women speaking out, Christian lawyers stepping up to help the hundreds of cases of falsely accused Christians, the devil being proven a liar again and again, prayer gatherings, generous giving, overcoming fear, deeper commitments to the cause of Christ. Christianity has come out of the closet. These hidden Christians are now in public view,

at least in prayer of many. But our hope is in the Risen Lord.

The Key word for Yesterday is Forgiveness:

Forgiveness is the best response, a winning response we can give to ourselves and to our "enemies". It was beautifully expressed by Gladys Staines after the burning alive of her husband and their two sons. The word "forgive" comes twice in the Lord's prayer which we repeat so often.

Forgiveness is a major topic in the Bible, than it appears. "The man after God's own heart", David, was a forgiving man. A long list of people he forgave is included in first and second Samuel. (I have been taking a weekly class on first and second Samuel for more than a year).

A seven-fold revenge as Lamech demanded is human, it belongs to fallen humanness (Genesis 4:23-24.) Seven-times-seventy-fold forgiveness is Divine, as the Lord commanded the Apostle Peter. (Matt. 18:21-22).

I am thankful that the Nehru Government remained cordial with the British after Independence, rather than being unforgiving, bitter and angry. It is

a good lesson for us all. There is no hope for the world apart from forgiveness, be it politically, socially, or spiritually. It's so much better for us leave the past and "vengeance to God" and get on with building our future.

Blaming the offender for past adversaries or misfortunes will not redeem the present or help the future. For a good part of life, I have heard and even joined the chorus against the British Colonial Rule in India. But have we gained any good from that attitude? It only makes us bitter and resentful. That failed approach is adopted by many countries in the world. The Palestinians seem to fit the bill, blaming Israel for everything. Meanwhile Israel, is getting on with life and has made huge strides in only 75 years of its existence; it is now one of the top nations of the world. Puts India and Pakistan to shame.

Why can't all the nations learn from these good examples and move forward. How much of our national spending is for the past? How about other nations? Or how about us personally? How about our churches, are we any better than the rest of India?

"Forgive your way to better

Health, greater Productivity and world Peace" is the title of a book written by Ron Brackin (USA), an investigative journalist who has travelled extensively in the Middle East. Brackin writes, "Forgiveness is a solitary decision, a one-sided transaction, a reckoning. The offender need not be alive. It is often confused with reconciliation which is a corporate process in which the offender must willingly participate. Forgiveness does not require that we forget the offense. Only God forgets. (Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:12).

"Forgiveness is unconditional whereas reconciliation is always conditional. Reconciliation offers no guarantee of success, while forgiveness has no risk of failure. Forgiveness is the act of releasing the offense; reconciliation is the process of restoring fellowship and trust between the victim and offender."

"The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world" wrote Marianne Williamson, in a blurb recommending Brackin's book.

"WARNING: Unforgiveness can cause serious side effects including depression, increased

anxiety, paranoia, psychosomatic complications, heart disease, reduced productivity, divorce, war, and crimes against humanity. Do not drive, operate heavy machinery, or do other dangerous activities while refusing to forgive" writes Brackin. How seriously we need to take the Biblical exhortations and examples to forgive.

Our example is a "Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world" even before we sinned.

One of the first things our Lord said from the Cross was, "Father forgive them ... ". He was a free man after that. There is a huge forgiveness deficit among us in India. Such a mindset among us Christians will do no good to the cause of Christ. If we would want to be healed, if we want to be Christ like, then we must forgive. Let us forgive the British, forgive the Prime Minister, forgive our parents, children, neighbours, employers, employees, even pastors. And we would truly be free indeed, no longer chained to the ones we refuse to forgive. Let us embrace one another as God has embraced us (Luke 15:20). God's plan is to make us one in Christ. There is no two ways about it (Eph.2:14-15).

Embrace, Ethnic cleansing is a lie, we are killing our own brothers and sisters.

"DNA Blood Tests Show We Are All Related" writes Dr Christy Wilson, a former Missionary to Afghanistan, an American who was raised in Iran by his missionary parents. In his book "More to be Desired than Gold", he writes "In the summer of 1995, TIME magazine reported that studies in DNA blood samples now prove that people of all races and tribes in the world are descendants of *one father and mother!*"

"The Scriptures say, "From one man [or blood], God has made every nation." (Acts 17:26). TIME reaffirmed what the Bible already tells us, that we are descended from our first parents, Adam and Eve.

Thus, "ethnic cleansing" is a lie. We are really killing our own brothers and sisters – whether it is Jew in Germany, Muslims in Bosnia, or the Hutu and Tutsi Tribes in Rwanda and Burundi. With the collapse of Communism, ethnic conflict has replaced the cold war as the world's Number One political problem.

"When a young lawyer, an

Israelite, asked Jesus Christ to define who his "neighbour" was, Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, from another ethnic group, who helped the man left to die by the side of the road. Christ also spoke to the women at the well, a Samaritan, and she came to believe in Him as her Saviour.

Like Jesus, we need to love others, whatever their ethnic background."

As Christians, this is a good time to play down our differences and display our commonness. As for doctrines, stick to those doctrines that we all have in common. I know that denominational unity is not possible, God may not even require it of us. but spiritual unity is already there, it is a reality. Can we not appreciate it publicly? This has been my practice for over 50 years, thanks to George Verwer. I thank God for it, because He made it possible through the death of the Lord Jesus on the Cross.

I must bring these thoughts to a close. By God's grace, we can stand with Him and support His worldwide programme. We can stand with each other for the

cause of Christ. At the end of the day, we know Jesus will win, not the devil; truth will win, not lie or hypocrisy; good will win, not evil. The Church will win, not the world. Now is our opportunity to get out of your comfort Zone and join hands with God.

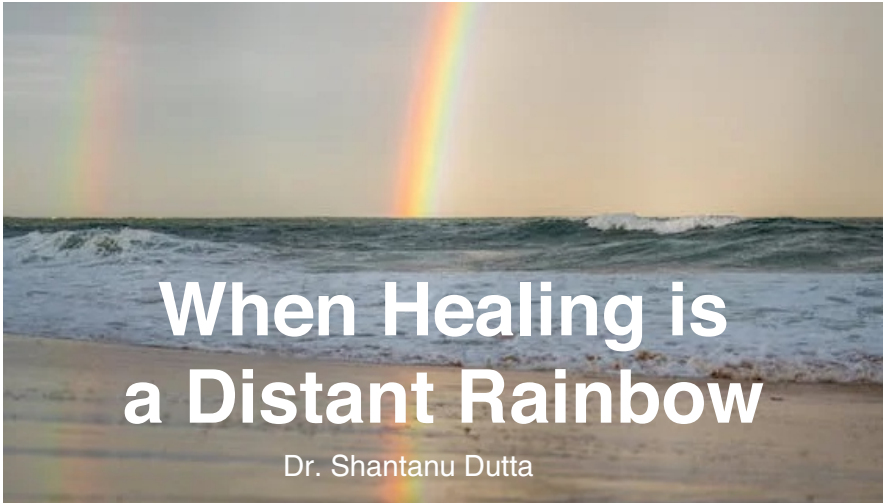
We Christians are the light of the world, salt of the earth that God has ordained. He will stand with us.



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

*Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.
Nehemiah 8:10*



When Healing is a Distant Rainbow

Dr. Shantanu Dutta

When we think of the word "Healing", the thought that first comes to most people's minds is a medical condition that needs treatment. A lot of the Biblical stories about healing are about healing from sicknesses. Jesus and the apostles performed a lot of these. In church and personal prayers, they feature a lot too. A lot of our intercession is about physical or mental healing. Of course in the New Testament, the gospels include stories of Jesus and the disciples healing broken bodies, as well as wounded spirits, and restoring people to their communities. Throughout the biblical narrative, we have clear examples of how healing is not only physical but also spiritual, emotional, and social.

To this, we might add intellectual, financial, and vocational.

The Bible therefore, talks about other aspects of healing and perhaps more explicitly so in the Old Testament. However, Paul did say, "All creation groans" in Romans 8:22. We may suffer now through our journey here on earth, but Paul reminds us that this world is not our home (1 Peter 2:11; Hebrews 11:13). Awaiting us is a glorious future kingdom where death is defeated, and tears of sorrow, pain, and grief will all be wiped away (Revelation 21:4).

In Romans 8:19, Paul says that all creation is eagerly awaiting that future glorious day when

God's children become who they were always meant to be. J. B. Phillips' New Testament in Modern English renders verse 19 like this: "The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own." That is full and complete healing. Healing occurs through the integrating forces that restore, transform, sustain, and nurture the whole person (body, mind, spirit) at each phase and in every dimension of life, and within relationships of the person to the creation, to other people, and to God. Christian healing is a lifelong process which occurs by the sovereign grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. This understanding of healing enables us to pray from a deeper and more restorative angle.

For the last month or so, we have been remembering and praying for the people of Manipur, particularly our brothers and Christians in Christ. Violence in Manipur has left thousands displaced, and news of damaged and ransacked churches is pouring in every day. Tensions had been rising for months in

Manipur — when thousands of people gathered on May 3 for a rally in the state's Churachandpur district.

They were protesting against moves to include the local Meitei community under India's Scheduled Tribes category. They argued that the step would give the Meitei people — who account for more than half of the state's population — greater access to land, jobs, and other resources at the expense of other ethnic groups. The Meitei, who are predominantly Hindu, live in the state's more developed central Imphal Valley but are not permitted to settle in the surrounding hilly regions, which constitute 90% of the state. The hill regions are reserved for the local tribal population, who are also allowed to live in the valley.

While the clashes pitted a largely Hindu ethnic group against a chiefly Christian one, the dispute does not appear to be driven principally by religious differences. Commentators stress other factors such as the state's changing demographics, and a battle over equitable access to land, healthcare,

education, and jobs in a remote region with scarce resources.

What seems to have begun as an inter-ethnic clash hastily developed an inter-religious dimension" due to the polarized atmosphere created by what he called "the majoritarian Hindutva regime at the national level." Most tribal people in Manipur are Christians. A sense of fear united the entire Christian community belonging to various tribes into a single body," All this is true. Suffering and persecution is the predominant narrative of today. And so, it must be real because we are humans. But in the midst of chaos, we still must look and pray for healing and restoration among those who have been so badly traumatized, but also among the various ethnicities who inhabit this space.

There are precedents. Decades ago, when I was younger, in a time span of one hundred days, between April and July 1994, Rwanda's political arena imploded. The country collapsed into chaos, and violence escalated into the genocide of one million people among members of the Tutsi ethnic

group and moderate components of the Hutu ethnic majority in the country. The genocide occurred in one of Africa's most Christian regions, with ninety per cent of the population identifying itself as part of a Catholic, Protestant, or Seventh-day Adventist Church as of 1991.

After the genocide in 1994, Rwandan society lay in ruins, its condition due in no small part to the various actions and inactions of the organized Christian Church in the country. In an effort to reconcile itself and the message to believers it had betrayed, the Church leapt at the opportunity to influence the way forgiveness and reconciliation were achieved. Rwanda's religious reconciliation efforts are no exception to the cycle of division and unity to which faith groups have been party over the centuries. The Catholic Church in particular has played an influential role in the events that led to the conflict, and that church itself as well as other denominations have tried to pick up the pieces of the society they have helped destroy.

Reconciliation is an event which

indicates the changed relationship for the better between persons or communities or groups, who formerly were at enmity with each other. Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments, gives us sufficient insight into the vital need and nature of reconciliation, either between God and humankind or between the humans themselves. Hence, here there is no question of the superior and the inferior, the powerful and the powerless, the mighty and the lowly. The basic issue is who understands the tragedy of conflict and also, the beauty of personal relationships as the basis and guarantee of peace and harmony in the community and in society. Every individual encounters the temptation to hate at some time or another. We may be a person who has experienced or witnessed the torture of you or your dear ones at the hands of an abusive wicked individual. We may have lost everything through betrayal in a business transaction or been fired unjustly. We may be a member of a people group who has experienced rejection, exploitation, discrimination, and injustice for generations. It is

impossible to have lived without being hurt by something.

The road to reconciliation and healing is not an easy one. It involves listening, truth-telling, repentance, forgiveness and a sincere commitment to Christ and his justice. Of course, efforts at reconciliation do not cancel an event or its impact on us completely as if nothing had happened. Love removes the thorn of offence which generates vengeance and retaliation. Even after reconciliation, one may have trouble trusting the other again. There is the possibility of the other hurting me again, and me hurting the other too as we move ahead. However, forgiveness leads us to live our deepest identity as the children of God. We grow closer to the mind of Christ who dared to love to the very end taking the risk of being betrayed by a trusted disciple, abandoned by his friends, mocked by those whom he served, and crucified with two known criminals. From the depth of his suffering, he prayed what he taught, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing".

When we've sinned against by others, the natural tendency is to move away from everyone else. When we sin and are shamed by others, it's similarly natural to withdraw into ourselves. But while this withdrawal may be a natural survival instinct, it won't lead to complete healing. At some point, we must move toward others to find comfort and healing. While this withdrawal may be a natural survival instinct, it won't lead to complete healing.

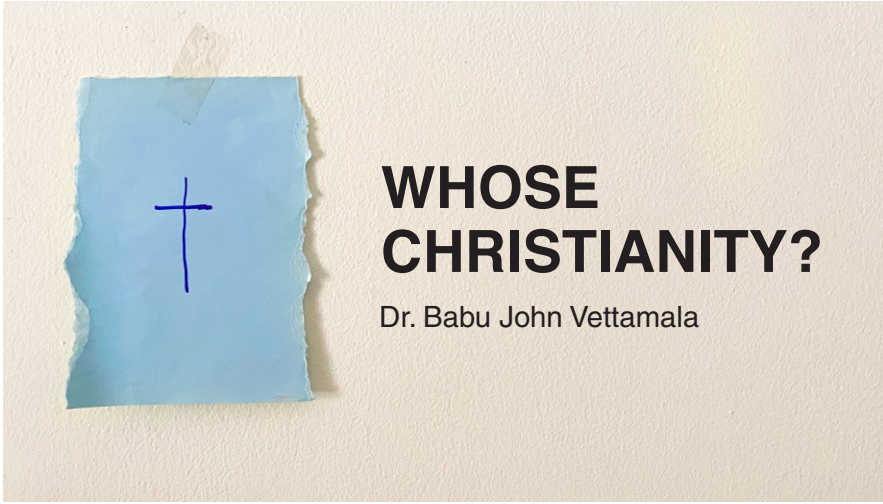
The joy of living in a community and engaging in its mission is often eroded by hurt feelings, offensive conversations, tale-bearing, and withdrawal. Hurt persons tend to hurt others. Personal differences can gradually develop into a "cold war" or open conflict unless the wounds are treated with the balm of forgiveness and healed with the practice of reconciliation. We find and live by the hope that there is always a possibility of healing in life. We're hurt in relationships, and we find healing in relationships and a mature and peaceful community is one which grows in the capacity to confront lovingly, and in the process, creates room for reconciliation. In

fact, a reconciled community is a typical kingdom of God on earth. Brothers who can forgive each other manifest the basic nature of God as one who is "Merciful and Gracious, slow in anger" especially as seen in many Psalms (for example Ps. 100:5; 106:1; 117:2 among others). "It is in forgiveness that Israel recognizes 'divine' activity par excellence and the ideal human activity in society and history.' At the time of writing, healing and writing about it seems like a distant thunder but however bleak the circumstances, at the end, reconciled communities living in harmony is what is the heartbeat of God and is elaborated so beautifully in Revelation.



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Christianity has become a topic of hot talk in India today. When we see the vibrance with which it is being discussed in the media and elsewhere, it is likely to air the doubt that it is something very new in the Indian sociocultural, political, and religious scenarios. No, it is not at all.

Then why all these tall talks now. The answer is very simple. Though the history of the Indian subcontinent for the last two thousand years has been touched by the presence of Christianity, the faith has deviated to different phases and appearances in the recent Indian social life.

Christianity as it is devised by Jesus Christ and His apostles two thousand years ago is one thing, but that which is practised under the veneer of Christianity in the current India is something else. The depreciation that any entity can undergo in its existence over such a long period of time is evident in Indian Christianity.

Unity was a hallmark of Christianity when it began. This was unity between Christian believers as well as their unity with God through Jesus Christ their Lord and Saviour.

In a scientific outlook, unity

means two types – a frozen unity and a molten unity.

Well, we know what a frozen unity is. It exists only in a minus temperature. Once it is exposed to the heat and moist outside, that is it. It cannot survive any such situations.

Well, that is not molten unity. In a highest possible temperature, created in an artificial oven much below the surface level of the earth, metals are cast into and molten together until they melt together into an inextricable entity. And once brought out of that high heat nothing can separate one part from the other. And we cannot even distinguish what is what and which is which. This is Christian unity. That was what Christianity was like in its origin.

Varieties and diversities are the hallmark of natural world, though they are created by one God. The beauty of variety is that various parts of a body can work together as a single body. Here the work of God is very relevant. Why does God work in diversities that He Himself has created.

God expects to bring in unity in the midst of diversities. However, the tendency to establish diversity causing unity impossible has been a tendency in the world since the very dawn of creation. That is why God introduces Himself as "e-chad" (Genesis 1:5), which in its Hebrew original means a great unifier.

Fulfilling this great plan of God, i.e. unifying diverse elements as one unity in Christ, is the great mission that Jesus came to start in the world; and that is the Church of God, otherwise called Christianity.

However, cultural differences, geographical distances, ethnic variations, financial motives, political upper hands etc. have divided Christianity as a house irreparably divided itself in the Indian scenario. The untold atrocities that the under privileged Christians face in the North-East and other parts of India, the unbridled pleasures, and socio-political privileges the rich Christian leaders in places like Kerala, the lifestyle of laxative that the so-called upper caste

Christians all over India enjoy, all pause a question: whose Christianity is the real one? As long as the Christian community in India fails to answer this question, Christianity remains a silhouette. To understand the reality of Christianity we must go back to the very person Jesus Christ the founder of this faith and ask: "Who does Christ like"?

Well, our multicoloured portrait of Jesus looking like a bearded Grecian woman sitting in absolute placidity, caressing the little lambs on His laps is an outcome from the matrix of imagination fostered by Italian painters who lived one thousand four hundred years after Jesus. Unfortunately, this is the portrait we have on our church windows and living rooms which give the world at large a totally wrong picture and misleading ideas about the person Jesus Christ.

Six thousand years before the birth of Jesus, Isaiah the Jewish prophet gave a picturesque description about the look and appearance of Jesus: He was like a tender plant; root out of dry ground; He has no form or

comeliness; there is no beauty in Him that we would desire Him; He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows; and acquainted with grief.

He came to the world not for the saints or the well privileged, but for the lost, last, and least.

What is the one name that could be ascribed to Him in Indian scenario? – "EVERY INCH A DALIT". The word Dalit is of Hebrew origin, which means broken. And that is what is epitomised in His thirty-three and a half years life – a saga of suffering – from the manger of Bethlehem, to the cross on Calvary.

Throughout His life on earth, Christ abstained Himself from the privileged classes of people and was abhorred in Nazareth, which means despicable, and lived in Galilee which was notorious as the land of the gentiles.

This Christ has been hijacked by the upper classes and the privileged. They make every attempt to alienate the under privileged from coming to Him.

These under privileged in Indian scenario, hallmarked as fishermen, Dalits, tribals, and aboriginals, are the people for whom Christ came. He is their right, their privilege, their God, and their Saviour. However, political powers and the privileged Christians ride rough shod on the rights of the poor people to become Christians and that is the story of present-day persecutions on Christianity in the North-East.

To the lascivious church leadership in the South, Christianity faces no threats in today's India. And here emerges the question – "whose Christianity?"



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“ The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation. ”

Exodus 15:2



HOME

By Eloise Fields (11 Year old)

Home is a place of love and care,
Home is a place where things can be shared.
Home is a place where things come from the heart,
Home is a place where family never parts!

When home is a place of love and care,
It's like taking a breath of fresh air.
When home is a place where things can be shared,
The things you give will always be spared!!

When home is a place where things come from the heart,
It is something where friendship can start.
When home is a place where family never parts,
It is a story being told by a piece of art!!!

Every home is not the same,
But do not be ashamed.
Every home has a special part,
It could be later or now, but there will be a new start!!!!

I AM BLESSED

March 1, 2023 Buford, GA

**I am blessed,
Though I may be stressed,
I work hard
It takes me far.**

**I am blessed,
Because I am loved,
I am blessed
Because the moon shines above.**

**I am blessed for all these things,
Though my life may be hard
I am blessed because the of the sky and sun,
And don't forget the stars.**

**I am blessed for family and friends,
For they are close
I know I will know and love them to the end.**





AS WHITE AS SNOW

Brother Joseph Suhas B

With the dusk fast approaching, the evening curtains pitched in and the temperature knocked below zero. As the cold winds gently swirled over me, I started feeling the chills of the cold breeze. I looked above towards the sky and saw a fine drizzling array of snow crystals falling from the sky. It was my first experience of this beautiful snowfall and the sight elated me. The night passed away and the dawn light up the sky, our tent was covered with enormous snow of about 3 to 4 inch thick.

I crawled out of the tent to witness the view and there it was, one of

the most spectacular picturesque view, my eyes ever beheld! The mountains, valleys and everything therein adorned with beautiful white gown like the heaven's bride. With the sun coming up, it turned even more beautiful as the light shone scattered over the white-washed hills and valleys, and it glittered more like the tiny diamonds. The dazzling beauty enthralled us all into a realm of heavenly feel.

The Bible says in Isaiah 1:18, ***"...though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow"***.

I always wondered about this statement. It didn't dig into me as much as it did on that day – when the revelation unveiled! There is nothing of the mountains that brought this glittering beauty, it is bestowed only from above. Just the day before, the land was dry and pale. But after that golden night, everything changed! 2000 years ago, something like this happened!

JESUS CHRIST washed all our sins with HIS precious blood and made us brand new. There was nothing in us that we could do to shine, we were all helpless and sinful. Sin turned us pale and dry; our beauty faded. But then, it was the blood of Jesus that washed us **as white as snow**.

Our transgressions pardoned and our past life hidden beneath the new layer of Forgiveness & Love. It's only God who can wash our sins and make us shine like the light in the world.

No color in all of its surrounding is as beautiful, glittering, bright and shining as the snow dressed mountains. The snow is so light, soft and white that it reflects

every light falling on it and thereby so bright that we can't see the glaring light reflecting from it (that's why people wear goggles to avoid the glare). You can see the snow covered mountains even from miles because of this bright reflection. It is this glory that captures a million eyes!

When our lives are pure and holy as God commands, and our thoughts, intentions, mind and heart kept pure, we become radiant and bright reflecting God's glory when His light shines on us. People around us will catch this brightness even from miles and among multitudes around.

The fresh dew of the season had people flooding to witness this beauty. The very sight brought delight and refreshment to the viewers. Our lives too, will shine like this when we are washed by the blood of Jesus and we become new. The lost and the hopeless will come running to witness the light and will find life coming from it. They will find their healing in it, the joy and abundance overflowing. Wearing the royal robe of heaven's glory,

we shine and glitter with the light of God in us.

As much as white, soft and light the snow is, the tougher it gets to walk or drive on it. Vehicles have a great challenge of grip on the snowy roads. Holiness is that one thing the devil is afraid of, for he cannot stand it. He can't have his grip on us when we are holy and pure. We become tough and unsusceptible to his schemes.

Travelling back, I asked GOD to search my heart and make me one like the beautiful mountains; appealing and delightful to my saviour and to the world around. ***I whispered – Oh yes Lord, purge me, cleanse me & make me as white as snow!!***



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!

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***Cast all your anxiety on
him because he cares for you.***

1 Peter 5:7



Don't Let Satan Outsmart You

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices-2Cor 2:11

Emeritus Prof. Henry Shepherd

Is Satan real and mighty?

Satan is not an imaginary character but real and powerful as per Scriptures. He is there from the first book of the Bible to the last one. Also, every believer, in particular, continually experiences his disturbing presence in Christian walk of life up to the last breath, and some even beyond (Jude 9). His maligned works start against children of God, the day they repent and are adopted as sons and daughters of Almighty. The reason of devil's success is his consistent effort and no discouragement after failure. Satan is the greatest adversary of both God and mankind. He was an angel of God called Lucifer, who rebelled against God of

universe in heaven with 1/3 of angels on his side, so he along with these angels were hurled down to the earth (Rev12:7-9). Now, the whole world is under the control of the evil one (1Jn 5:19). Jesus said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Lk 10:18). Until bound in chain, thrown and locked in the bottomless pit (abyss) for thousand years, he will continue tormenting the righteous (Rev 20:1-3). In order to check his success rate, which is very high, we must know him and all his cunning devices well, and remain always alert, lest anyone may be trapped because of mere ignorance or over confidence.

However, no one who is born of

God will continue to sin because of God's seed in him (1Jn 3:9-10). Jesus has assured that believers cannot be snatched from his Father's hand (Jn10:28-30). Satan wants to be worshipped, so he is worshipped all over the world by his followers and captives. He has long experience of tempting people and has become global expert in assessing and exploiting the weakness of individuals as well as groups, and then use every opportunity effectively in his favour. It becomes easier for him when the prey is a pseudo-believer, covetous, new convert, deprived of fellowship, careless, overpowered by wrath, lonely and or an idler. Satan exploits humans by making them choose the privilege of freedom of free will. To know God is our mission, but it will be fruitful only when we also know deceptive devices of Satan well and never underestimate him. God wants us to know the truth for it sets us free. God gives us a Helper to teach how to lead a Christian life and come out victorious during temptation. The example of Joseph shows how the fear of God gives courage to say 'no' to

sin, and wisdom not to fall in satanic traps (Gen 39:7-12). On the other hand, judicious use of tongue is necessary to disuse boasting abusive language argument and course jokes. James suggests to persevere, speak less, listen more, and never let evil thought persist (Jas 1:14,26).

In the contemporary age, Satan is now using modern and more effective new methods which are not found in the Bible, yet there is enough in the Scriptures to clear our doubts about Satan. The devil in electronic age has become more effective and detrimental. Satan, though an unseen enemy, he may appear in different forms, even as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14). He is known by several names such as: the god of age (2 Cor 4:4); the ruler of the kingdom of air (Eph 2:2); roaring lion (1Pet 5:8); power of the dark world (Eph 6:12); Serpent (Gen 3:4); the great red dragon - the devil (Rev12:9); thief (Jn10:8); prince of the world (Jn 12:31 14:30, 16:11); father of lies (Jn 8:44), murderer. (Jn 8:44) Abaddon, Antichrist, Beast, Fallen star etc. Evil spirits, employed by the devil,

harden heart and make it repulsive for the light of God.

The devil can make its victim insane, body sick or crippled, heart insensitive toward God, deaf and dumb with the help of evil spirits. Thus, he is not only crafty but also having powerful evil forces on his side. In California, the first church of Satan has come into existence in 1966, and now such churches are being established, in other countries and big cities. According to one study, a few states of India are presently under devil's drastic attack such as Kerala, Nagaland and some Northeast states. Some of the evil practices related to satanic culture are: same sex marriages, drinking blood, particular hair cut (Lev 19:27), offensive car stickers, T-Shirts with messages to glorify devil, live-in-relationship, satanic salute, pornographic movies and literature, satanic worship books and songs and satanic bible etc. Though expensive, these books on satanic culture, worship and rituals are usually best sellers and are in great demand. Famous American model Rihanna has

declared that she belongs to Satan, similarly Lady Gaga has publically declared that she has sold her spirit to Satan. All this boldness in favour of the devil, shows the beginning of the end time.

Beware of Satanic deceptive devices, and strategies

The mention of Satan in the key verse (2 Cor 2:11) was w.r.t. forgiveness. If we do not forgive, the bitterness in our heart makes it susceptible for the devil to apply his device. Also, persisting anger makes humans vulnerable to indulge in violence, hatred, and murder. Jesus has emphatically warned not to carry on with anger after sunset, and only when we forgive others without reservation (Mt 18:21), we receive forgiveness from God (Mt 6:14-15). Remember! If not forgiven by God then it means second death. The evil traits cause division and are responsible for the loss of peace of mind and destruction (Gal5:13). As long as a believer is in Christ and Christ is in believer, Satan can do no harm, for we belong to the winning side (Rom8:31). The enemy easily succeeds in the life of people who

are double minded (1Cor 10:21) or still living with the old nature. Every device he works on aims at breaking relationship or making it cold between God and men and among believers in Church. And then, he succeeds in diverting men from walking on the narrow path as suggested by Jesus. Satan is a cunning stratagem and never misses a favourable opportunity (2Sam 11:2-20) Many of his devices are now known to them who read Bible carefully, remember and ponder upon the word of God sincerely (Ps 119:11,17,57 and 101). Once he succeeds in winning just one weak member (Judas), he uses him to harm the leadership and the Church (1Cor1:10-11). 'Precaution is better than cure'; for a serious warning says –"It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of word of God and power of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance" (Heb 6:4). Satan has been planting false prophets, apostles, teachers and miracle workers and he has enhanced

their strength with time (Mt 24:4). Satan's choices are those who are in authority, popular and influential leaders (1Tim 4:1-4). Both over or under confidence of believer, goes in favour of the devil's strategy (1Cor10:12). Therefore, Paul suggests the Church that penitent sinners should be immediately restored in fellowship and given special attention as to babies in Christ, so that they are not easily tricked again. Following are some works of Satan: laziness for prayer and worship, he destroys or distorts the preached word of God, he harasses God's servants, he enters into humans and becomes incarnate in them and then uses them as his tool, he is responsible for producing lust, hatred, jealousy, anger, and pride in human nature. The devil works against the Holy Spirit to control human mind.

An apparent favour from the devil can never be in favour of God's people; though favour may initially appear harmless, yet eventually it will cause suffering. His first victim Eve was tempted to disobey God and believe in lies. He tried the same well tested

device i.e., temptation on Jesus but it failed. Every righteous is tempted to sin and they who fall get separated from God (Rom 3:10). The devil effectively convinces his victims to sin by whispering, "No one will come to know", "now do it"; quickly;" "Come on everyone does it"; "It is not sin"; "It is a need of your body and a natural act" or "Hurry up or you miss the chance" or "Try it once and if you dislike you are always free not to repeat" etc. He also edits or misinterprets the relevant Scripture to convince his double minded prey to sin. First, the devil connives to do wrong but after preys commit forbidden act, he makes them feel guilty of a grave sin. In case of Job, though he was tested under severe condition, he stood firm inspite of condemnation from friends and wife. The devil could not outsmart Job because his faith, righteousness and hope were genuine. The devil is least bothered about them who are already slaves of sin, until they show positive signs of repentance, and desire to turn toward light (2Cor4:4). He accuses saints day and night before God (Zec 3:1, Rev12:10)

and rulers (Jn 13:2) as a last chance.

The devil steals the good seed sown by God's servants and or creates adverse condition to stop it from producing fruits (Mt 13:19). Satan robs peace and joy then replaces them with worries and anxieties. One of his device is to disgrace a righteous person in the eyes of society to the extent that only his old time friends will welcome him for company (1 Tim 3:7). The devil can perform false miracles to attract prey who are usually pseudo-Christians (2Th 2:9). To promote disbelief in the redemptive works of Christ the enemy serves lies, malicious doctrine and deceit in attractive packagings (2Th 2:10). Violence and bloodshed are satanic acts which always ends in mass destruction (Rev 20:8-10). When our acts of sinful nature are onerous, then appropriate reaction from human side must be: immediate confession and true repentance as remedial measures. Three, rather four old-tested devices of the enemy are well known as 4Ws. They are: wine, women, wealth, and Wi-Fi; anyone of them often proves

effective, in most of the cases, if not nipped in the bud. The word of God warns against every satanic device saying, "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy which depends on human traditions and basic principles of this world rather than on Christ" (Col 2:8).

Scriptural teachings lay strong foundation of Christian faith, therefore extra biblical teachings from other sources are detrimental and condemnable (Mt7: 26-27). There is only one God, one Son, one Spirit, one Church, and one faith. Several denominations often cause confusion in the mind of new believers, as they emphasize upon one aspect of faith over others. Some of them have been declared cults, so in case of confusion, pray and let the Spirit of God guide you. Joining a spirit filled assembly is the first right step to avoid deception of following the wrong path. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life". Paul used to keep a close watch over the growth and developments in assemblies, and took every possible means to

caution Churches. He used to educate, admonish, scold, urge through epistles and frequently visited the Churches he planted and nurtured (Gal 4:19, Th3:1-5, 1 Cor 4:16-20, 1Th3 :2-5). We must live to please God and walk in his light; the devil succeeds when one pleases self or others, in giving them miseries and anxiety. Love of money is the root cause of all evil so don't fall in love with money, rather make it your servant. Those who slog to become rich by hook or by crook, unknowingly fall in Satan's trap. God is our shelter, in trouble take refuge in him, "Surely He will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence....." (Ps91: 1-4).

How to defuse Satanic devices?

Naturally, we who want to know how to outwit satanic devices are advised not to love the world (1Jn 2:15-17). The primary step is to learn not to live with worries and anxieties. The Scripture teaches the children of God, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your

anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Pet 5:7). Based on his own experience David has said - "Cast your care on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall" (Ps 55:22). One of the way out is fasting, prayer and sharing problems with God's people with a request to pray for you, for selfless prayers are heard. Jesus used to pray and chalk out plan for the day early morning for the ministry. A believer should not befriend false preachers, prophets and teacher, as they are detrimental for faith (1 Tim 1:6-7). When we ponder upon the word of God the Holy Spirit guides to the passages related to our spiritual need. One should be clear about triune God, second coming, judgement, and life after death. Regular growth of faith is essential, for when growth stops fall begins. It is essential not to remain ignorant about God's will. The Truth sets free from sinful nature and lustful desires of the flesh. Still there is hope for sinners (1Jn 1:9), provided the sinner repents and get restored at the earliest, Also, "Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous just as

He is righteous. No one who is born of God will continue to sin because God's seed remains in him....." (1Jn 3:7,9). Believers should give first place to God, love and obey him from heart, Lord Jesus has given authority to his followers to overcome the enemy. So, it is for us to believe and exercise the power against evil forces in the name of Jesus (Lk 10:18). Then, the God of peace will soon crush Satan, under your feet (Rom 16:20).

Since it is dangerous to live according to desires of flesh, so know and pursue the will of God (Jn 6: 38-40). Take guidance from God's word (Ps 119:105, Rom 8:14 and 12:2, 1Th 4:3-5 and 5:16-18, Heb 13:20-21), and when feeling rudderless go to God in prayer. Human devices work for flesh and blood, but they do not work in spiritual matters. Jesus expressed his will before God the Father in Gethsemane, even his reluctance to drink from the cup but finally he said, "Yet not as I will but as you will" (Mt 26:39), both unintended and intended sins are committed when we do our own will and act independent of God's will. Satan

cannot force you to do his will until you yield to desires of the flesh and thus volunteer to commit sin. Undesirable thoughts would come to mind, but it is for us to conceive or not to conceive them (Jas 1:14-15, Pr 24:8). Our success, in remaining insulated from sinful desires depends upon God's presence in us (1Jn 4:4). Man can resist the devil only after submitting to God (Jas 4:7, 10). In order to protect our mind and heart and other vital areas, the word of God commands to put on all the armours of God, Satan's burning darts are ineffective against spiritual armours. One of the weapons is not only defensive but also offensive, that is double edged sword (Eph 6:10-13). One can learn how to use the sword from Jesus (Mt 4:4; 7,10). Also, the Word (1 Pet 5:6, 8-10) admonishes, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.... Be self-controlled and alert, your enemy, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him by standing firm in the faith because you know that your brothers throughout the world are

undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while will himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast. A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again; but wicked shall fall into mischief (Pr 24:16).

Jesus has lovingly warned, – "Remain attached to me like the branch that remains attached brings much fruit, but apart from me you can do nothing". When Peter was under Satan's attack Lord Jesus saved him. (LK 22:31-32). Apostle Peter was warned against boasting and over-confidence, yet he denied the Lord thrice the same day. Another strategy suggested in 2Tim 2:22 says to flee from the presence of temptation, alike Joseph. Do not boast about former success or any such things out of conceit or fun (1Cor 6:18, 10:14, 1 Tim 6:11). We should learn lesson from our past experience, neither get disheartened in case of failure, nor allow defeat to make you indecisive. Remember all God's children are on winning side with the Lord, who has given

disciples all authorities as he come out victorious on the cross.

The present time situation is more favourable for the devil for he is using innovative devices such as: 24x7 mobile addiction, virtual acts through electronic devices, sex dolls/toys, notorious adult clubs and flood of provocative x-rated videos any day any time, etc, though these evil designs might not be mentioned in the Bible, they are well known to modern children and adults for notoriety. The most effective way suggested to outwit Satan's deadly devices is – "Walk by Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Gal 5:16). Also, trust Jesus because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those

who are being tempted (Heb 2:18). The Psalmist shares his strategy: "I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you". Lastly, 'Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority (Mt 7:13-14) it is time to reform or pause and reflect' (Mark Twain).



Emeritus Prof. Henry Shepherd

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

*I can do all this
through him who gives
me strength.*

Philippians 4:13



THE MANIPURI CHRISTIANS AND US!

Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj

The news about the brutal persecution of Christians in Manipur brings to the fore the repeated calls in the Bible to be ready for persecution.

At the outset, let me say that we do not go looking for persecution! Apostle Paul told King Agrippa: "Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains" (Acts 26:29). Apostle Paul wishes that he and other Christians would not have to suffer "chains" (persecution) – we can figure that out from his reply to King Agrippa!

The Old Testament people of God were persecuted for their faith! Jesus talked about them. He said, 'from the murder of Abel to the murder of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary' (Luke 11:51). The writer to the Hebrews talked about the painful death of Prophet Isaiah (as extra-biblical history confirms): sawn into two (Heb. 11:37).

Jesus asked us to be persecution-ready. He said, "You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Matt. 10:22). Again he

said, "Then they will deliver you over to be persecuted and killed, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name" (Matt. 24:9). Jesus calls us to be "one grain of wheat" in the one life we have (John 12:24) – we ought to be martyrdom-ready.

Paul was persecution-ready. He told a bunch that was super-worried that he would be persecuted in the next city he went to, this: "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13).

Peter's words married "persecution" and "Christian" when he wrote, "However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name" (1 Pet. 4:16).

John narrated the story of a man who was persecuted for being a witness for Jesus in his final letter – the Book of Revelation. He wrote, 'Antipas, my faithful

witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives' (Rev. 2:13). Even as we read the book of Revelation, in our craze for Antichrist, we miss out what Jesus said about this 'anti' – Antipas!

Church History is littered with real stories of Christian martyrs: Jim Elliot to John Allen Chau! They are dead, yet they speak. They inspire us to take persecution in stride!

The writer to Hebrews records a complaint made by the author to the church congregation he addressed via this letter. His complaint was recorded in Hebrews 12:4 – 'In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.' The "sin" he was referring to here was the sin of the Jewish believers of this congregation. They wanted to return to their Jewish faith as the local Roman Government recognized the Jewish faith. However, they did not recognise the Christian faith. So, being a

Christian invited trouble, for these believers. But the writer to the Hebrews called Christians to stay as Christians instead of returning to their safer, no-persecution-attracting Jewish religion! But if they stayed as Christians, they would be persecuted, even thrashed till they lost blood from their body! But many believers turned a deaf ear to this Spirit-given command and returned to the Jewish religion to escape persecution! Hence, we have the agonizing Hebrews 12:4 complaint!

Let not the Hebrews 12:4 complaint be made against us! Let us be persecution-ready Christians!



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

*I am he who
will sustain you.*

Isaiah 46:4



NO LAUGHING MATTER

Mrs. Vinita Shaw

Mental illness is no laughing matter, especially in the aftermath of the COVID 19 pandemic. Fear has gripped the human mind in such a manner that we are fast turning into a laughingstock.

It is not uncommon to see people on the road who have lost their minds. People talking to themselves, abusing, violent, silent, depressed, and suicidal. Millions have lost their lives and those left behind are combating mental illness, usually on their own.

Many are abusing alcohol and drugs to drown their loss, while families breakdown and crime

increased within the home and outside the home.

News updates and social addictions further add to the mental illnesses as the after-effects of total lockdown have begun to manifest themselves on the psyche of people, many of whom want to avoid any kind of social interaction.

Runaway inflation, migrations, crashing economies, joblessness, and isolation has compounded the fear of the future.

Many strategies and advice are proposed to combat this situation.

From school children to youth to the elders, people are on medication, usually sedation and anti-depressants. Many are undergoing therapy and counselling.

Increasingly people are shying away from any kind of social contact, Isolation has so become a norm. Moreso, as even working people are still working from home and prefer to do so for various reasons. Social interaction is kept at bare minimum.

So much so that families barely speak to one another, and parents are not even aware that their children are on anti-depressants, having consulted psychiatrists online or are under going therapy.

Times of India has recently reported that their help line calls are all time high.

In order to combat this context, all kind of exercises, medication, therapies, watching comedy, and counselling are recommended.

More and more young people are turning their stressful situations into stand-up comedies which,

mingled with expletives, does give temporary respite to many.

As Pastors, Christian leaders and Counsellors, we find ourselves inundated with the need we see before us; added to our woes is the persecution faced by the Body of Christ from outside and worst is when it is from within.

As human beings, as we attempt to become superhumans, we quite forget that in the process of it all, we ourselves get burnt out, physically sick, mentally imbalanced, emotionally broken with our families that bear the brunt of it all. It is not uncommon to see many of those in leadership going through divorces and engaging in extra marital relationships.

How do we cope?

With my limited theological knowledge and experience, I dare to give some unsolicited advice, which has worked for me. From burnout to wallowing in self-pity and depression, I have seen it all.

Being a great fan of the woman of Proverbs 31, I am still trying to

wrap my mind around how she can laugh and manage her household and universe while her husband sits with the elders at the gate and praises her.

Proverbs 31:25 says, "She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come."

Laughter is known to be an effective antidote to pain, stress, and conflict. Nothing can work faster to restore someone's mental and physical health than a good laugh. It also helps us stay focused by lightening our burdens and connecting us to others. Laughter has the power to heal the mind and body of a person.

Laughter increases the amount of oxygen in your blood, improves blood circulation in the body, and increases the resistance of the body to fight against diseases.

I believe she can laugh because she has experienced on a deeply personal level the power of Almighty God. She has a relationship with Him. He is the source of her joy. He does miracles before her eyes, and

she receives the credit.

Psalm 30:11 says, "You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing." It is the Lord who is the source of our joy.

This woman chooses to rejoice. She intentionally makes a daily choice to not mope around, pop pills or nag her husband and children to death, but she chooses to be happy. Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say rejoice, says St Paul in Philippians 4: 4. Her joy is contagious. The joy of the Lord is her strength.

We all like to be around happy people. We avoid toxic folks who pull us down. They spread negativity, gossip, backbite because they are themselves unhappy, they spread unhappiness till people avoid them like the plague.

This woman of Proverbs 31 trusts in the Lord for she believes that He has the power to overturn any situation and once again restore what has been lost.

Job 8:21, "He will once again fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy.

Finally, she believes in a God who created laughter who Himself laughs at nations and people who make schemes.

Psalm 2:4, "But the One who rules heaven laughs."

If we trust in God, we have no need to be anxious or fearful. We can laugh and spread laughter which is contagious and does wonder for the human soul and body.

It's important for us to have a thick skin towards people and a tender heart towards the Lord. I find people's criticism of me hugely hilarious and therefore, I never take it to heart. I am called of God for His service is what I

remember and am accountable to Him; nothing else matters.

For the world, laughter may be a far cry, but for us Christians, THE JOY OF THE LORD IS OUR STRENGTH



Mrs. Vinita Shaw

with this painting in a Church in Seoul, which was made by a handicapped man, using his mouth to hold the brush. Wife of Rev. Timothy Shaw, Vinita is an author and broadcaster.

*And I was with you in
weakness and in fear and
much trembling.*

1 Corinthians 2:3



FATHER'S LESSONS

Rev. Kuruvilla Chandy

Around the world, many countries will observe Sunday, the eighteenth, as Father's Day. My thoughts turn to my father, and I would like to share with you what I learnt from my father.

Father died when I was seventeen plus. The teenage period is not when people are very reflective. During that time there is more of a tendency to just live for the moment and enjoy it. Not until a trial or sorrow touches one's life, does a person begin to ask the "Why?" questions.

When Father died, I didn't question why. The overriding feeling was of apprehension about the future. It was only in

later years, listening to Mother's stories about her life with Father and drawing on my own memories of him, that I learnt from my father's example.

Giving Up

Father was a sportsman in his student days. He was a champion high jumper at Wilson College, Bombay. Some years before his death, he brought back a cupboard full of trophies that had been kept with his older siblings. There was also a picture published in some newspaper.

Father failed his college exams after his father died of meningitis, and shortly afterwards, within weeks, his mother died too. His

uncle, his father's older brother, then advised him to pick up a job and support himself.

There was family property that Father would have preferred was sold all at once and the proceeds shared. Instead, it was sold whenever there was a need. His share from periodic sales was never large enough for a bachelor to feel motivated to hold on to. Mother told us that Father even gave up one share for the sake of his brothers who were already married and had more pressing needs than him at the time.

Father married late. He was the last to marry in his family of five siblings. There was a nine-year gap between Father and Mother.

After leaving college, his interest in sports had made him turn to billiards. When Wilson Jones made it big, I remember him saying that he had played with him while in Bangalore. Right after marrying Mother and bringing her home, on Sunday evening, he went off to the billiards parlour. It happened again the next week. Mother protested about being left alone all evening. Father gave up

playing billiards regularly or frequently. He did play from time to time while we were still in Bangalore.

Mother told us that story proudly. It made an impression on me. Marriage means giving up loved activities for the greater love. That's what the Bible tells husbands. They are commanded to be like Christ, who served His Bride, the Church, and died for her. Nothing there about asserting headship or treating family members as personal property or possessions that exist to please the man and to serve his needs and purposes (Eph.5:25-33). It's only in the instructions to wives that there is talk of submission to the headship of husbands (vv.23-24). That wives are asked to submit implies that submission is a voluntary attitude/act on the part of the wife, and not something that a husband can demand.

Piety In Life

My parents were regular in attending church. Pastors were frequent visitors in our home. These men in flowing robes got a lot of importance. I decided then that I was going to become a

pastor when I grew up. I never wanted to become a train engine driver or airplane pilot. I was four then. (Later on, after my conversion, my reason for wanting to become a pastor changed to wanting to serve Christ).

Father went to Hyderabad for better pay. He worked in a factory as a section head. He was not paid what he had been promised. He could have made money dishonestly on purchases and sales. He didn't. Such scrupulous honesty, even when he was cheated by his employers, was a valuable lesson he taught us children by example.

Though poorly paid, Father diligently tithed his salary. As a teenager, I learnt then that obedience to God in this matter does not depend on how well off one is. Rich or poor can tithe—the only way to give proportionately and equally. After his death, Mother continued the practice of tithing very carefully. She didn't plead that she was a widow with three children to educate.

Father read a lot. He passed on that love to Mother and to us

children. For birthdays, Christmas, and Easter, we never got new clothes or toys. All we were given (or wanted, for that matter) were books.

The factory where my father worked was miles away from home. He had to catch two buses to get there. To do that, he had to leave home very early. So, every morning, he got up earlier, to read his Bible and other devotional books. When he returned home from work, he spent his time reading novels.

Forgiving Father

After my sister, brother and I got involved in Youth For Christ, Father used to escort us to the monthly YFC rallies which were after sundown. It was customary at these rallies to give an altar call. This practice upset him. He said that it seemed to suggest that anyone who didn't go forward was rejecting Jesus Christ, and that's not what he felt. My father very definitely believed that Jesus was the only Saviour and following His teachings was very important to Father.

But I thought that anyone who didn't share my vocabulary of

claiming to be born again or having accepted Jesus was not a believer. This spiritual arrogance led to my fall. In the end, I tried to run away from home. I went to the home of friends imagining that their parents were better than my own and would take me in and then I would be able to be a better Christian. I was missing from home for several hours. The other family brought me back home late at night after they had persuaded me to return. Father never scolded me. He just took me in. Years later, my sister told me that he had been like the father in the story of the prodigal son. He kept standing at the gate of the house keeping a lookout, waiting for my return.

Caring

For many years, my maternal grandparents made their home with our family. Mother had three brothers, but while my father was alive, Mother's parents lived with us for many years. I didn't know then that was significant until I learned about cultural practices.

Here in India, it is not customary for the wife's parents to live with a family. The thinking is that when a woman is married off, her parents

can no longer have any claims on her or expectations of her.

My mother didn't have a job outside the home or earn any money. She was a housewife all the time Father was alive. He was the only earner, and he didn't earn much. Still, Father made my maternal grandparents welcome and helped my mother look after them well and that too in style.

The Bible says that a Christian ought to look after needy relatives who need love and care (1 Tim.5:8). Most Indians will accept the idea that this ought to be done for the husband's old parents, his widowed sisters, his needy brothers, his uncles, his aunts, and his cousins. Given our cultural notions, Indian Christian husbands for the most part do not think that it is equally their duty to take care of the needy relatives of their wives. My father broke that norm and showed me the better way of the Bible. There is a passage in the Bible that talks of Jesus going to Peter's home and finding his mother-in-law there (Matt.8:14).

My friend Pastor Pappy Matthai of the Assemblies of God Church

in Lucknow introduced me to describing an in-law as a relative-in-love. That's a whole new way of seeing relationships.

Going Home

In the last year of his life, Father's health deteriorated quite rapidly. He was diagnosed with polycystic kidneys. He had to have surgery. His older brother was the Director of Health Services in Kerala and so he asked him to come down for the operation to be done under his supervision and care.

Before he went in for surgery, my father called me to the bedroom where he was put up, and he told me that if he died, I was to give up college and take up a job to support Mother and my younger sister and brother. I wasn't thinking of college, but I was terrified by the idea of finding a job and working to support the family. (Thankfully, I didn't have to give up college education after all, because my father's brothers and one of my mother's brothers contributed toward the support of the family).

Father survived the operation for about a fortnight. While in recovery at the hospital, a couple of days before his death, Mother heard Father whisper in his sleep: "Thousands upon thousands! Thousands upon thousands! How wonderful!" When he woke up, Mother asked him what he had dreamt. Father said that he had seen thousands of angels coming.

Father was not afraid of death or to talk about it. But that was because he had lived honestly and believed that the afterlife with God was more important than anything this life could offer.



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*We love because he first loved us.
1 John 4:19*



Blessed Are the Peacemakers

Rev. Dr. David Mende

Introduction

Human history has seen several men and women who dedicated their lives to fighting against violence, oppression, and dictatorship. They risk their very lives to promote peace. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation was one such person who played a vital role in gaining our independence through non-violence. Along with other scriptures, Gandhi studied the Bible and was attracted to the teachings of our Lord. He was particularly impressed by the teachings of Christ on humility and forgiveness. After living in South Africa for 21 years, Gandhi returned to India. He began a series of non-violent protests, called satyagraha.

Under his leadership, India gained independence on August

15, 1947. As Indians, we are grateful to God for Mahatma Gandhi's sacrifice for our nation's independence. He achieved our independence by being a peacemaker. That's why he is honored with the title, "Father of the Nation." In the seventh beatitude, Jesus says that the peacemakers are blessed and they will be called by a greater title—"sons of God."

In Matthew 5:9, Jesus teaches that the peacemakers are blessed and promises that they will be called sons of God. This beatitude is part of the Sermon on the Mount. This is often called the "Constitution of the Kingdom." In Matthew 5-7, Jesus teaches how a citizen of his kingdom should be.

Even as Manipur and several

other parts of India are in turmoil, let's see what we can learn from this beatitude.

1. God favors the peacemakers.

In Matthew 5:9, Jesus says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." After speaking about the pure in heart, our Lord speaks of the peacemakers. Since peacemakers are pure in heart, they don't make peace with sin. It's not guileful, but those who are pure and sincere that are peacemakers. Those who battle sin in their lives and conquer it can help those who have conflicts with others. Some Jews looked forward to the time when God would help them to defeat the Romans and establish his kingdom. However, surprisingly, Jesus teaches his disciples to be meek (v. 5), merciful (v. 7), peacemakers (v. 9), and endure persecution (v. 10). Note that Jesus doesn't say that *peace-lovers* are blessed. It's not enough to love peace. It takes effort to make peace.

Some just enjoy watching two people or groups fighting with each other. Others ignore the serious issues and sweep them under the carpet. But these issues can become more serious later. Peacemakers wisely deal with situations that can bring

divisiveness. Jesus says that the peacemakers are blessed. God favors them. Peacemakers are not passive. They actively work towards bringing peace. Here, the Greek word for "peace" is *eirene*, which is an equivalent of the Hebrew word, shalom. It doesn't merely mean an absence of trouble. It means enjoyment of everything good. This beatitude recognizes that in this world, there are conflicts, wars, and injustice. As God's people, we must make this world a better place to live for everyone.

God is a peacemaker. He is the author of peace. Isaiah 27:5 speaks of the theme of making peace with God. We are reconciled to God and one another through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. In Colossians 1:20, apostle Paul says that God reconciled all things through Christ by "making peace by the blood of his cross." In Ephesians 2:15-16, apostle Paul says that Jesus made peace between Jews and Gentiles and reconciled them to God through the cross. Jesus is the Prince of peace (Isa. 9:6-7). He speaks peace to the nations (Zech. 9:9-10). He reconciles humans to God and one another. We must be passionate to see people reconciled to God and one another.

Peace doesn't come easily. God made peace with us by paying the ultimate price. He gave his only Son so that we can have peace with God and with one another. John Stott says that even we have to make peace through pain. He writes that when a conflict arises because of our mistake, we have to make peace by experiencing the pain of apologizing. When we try reconciling two parties, we have to experience the pain of listening to them, freeing ourselves from prejudice, listening to the viewpoints of both people or groups, and taking a chance of being misunderstood.

Jesus doesn't limit peacekeeping to only one kind. We can be peacekeepers in at least two ways:

a. We must reconcile people to God by sharing the gospel.

Since God is holy and righteous, sinners cannot have a relationship with him. They are enemies of God. As we share the gospel, we are being peacemakers. We seek to reconcile sinners with God. God has given us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-21). But as we share the gospel, we run the risk of being misunderstood and persecuted (vv. 10-12). When we share the gospel, some people may be

offended and persecute us (Mt. 10:34). Still, we must seek peace with all people (Mt. 10:13).

b. We must reconcile people with one another.

The word "peacemakers" may be a reference to bringing peace during wars or a conflict between two people or groups. It is said that in the last 3,400 years, humans have been at peace for only 268 years. In just the twentieth century, 108 million (10 crores 80 lakhs) people were killed in wars. In the 1990s, more than 2 million (20 lakh) children were killed due to wars. During a war, civilians are bombed, raped, starved, and forced to flee their homes. Our world desperately needs peacemakers!

Keeping the peace is difficult. It's even more difficult to bring peace where there is no peace. Only those who have peace with God (Rom. 5:1) can be true peacemakers. We must be peacemakers in our homes, church, and community. We must not have a divisive spirit. We imitate the devil when we divide people. It's sad to see many churches divided over petty issues. God is not pleased with those who divide his church. We must never cause any conflicts between people. In Romans 12:18, the apostle Paul says, "If possible, so far as it depends on

you, live peaceably with all." In Hebrews 12:14, the author says that we must "Strive for peace with everyone." In James 3:17-18, apostle James writes, "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." Righteousness cannot grow in disunity. Here, James says that those who make peace sow a harvest of righteousness.

Peacemaking is not just about solving problems, but it's about reconciling people to God and one another. We can be peacemakers by initiating reconciliation when others offend us. We can be peacemakers by asking for forgiveness when we offend others. Our efforts to make peace can often lead to persecution and trouble (v. 10). Still, we are called to be peacemakers. Sometimes, there will be conflicts in a church. In Philippians 4:2-3, apostle Paul writes, "I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are

in the book of life." Here, apostle Paul pleads with two women in the Philippian church, Euodia and Syntyche, to agree in the Lord.

We must actively seek to bring peace in the church. Divisions open the door to the devil (Eph. 4:26-27). We lose out on the blessings of the community (Ps. 133) when there is no peace. In 1 Corinthians 6:1-11, we see that the believers in the Corinthian church were putting lawsuits against one another. Paul exhorts them to appoint wise people among themselves to settle their disputes (1 Cor. 6:5). Reconciliation is God's work. Bringing division is the devil's work. We must not do Satan's work.

Some are trouble-makers by nature. Be careful about whom you go to when there's a conflict. Instead of bringing peace, some people add more fire to the conflict. But God grants grace to some people to bring peace between two people or two groups. They build bridges. God's favor is on those who bring peace, not those who bring divisions. Sometimes, reconciliation includes confronting people's sins. The Lord explains this whole process in Matthew 18:15-17.

Unfortunately, many people short-circuit this process by gossiping about the person's sin. Psalm 34:14 says that we must "seek peace and pursue it." Some people don't confront sin as they don't want to take the trouble of dealing with sin. But if you keep quiet about someone's sin, that person may sin against others too. As the apostle Paul says, "a little leaven leavens the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). So, how can we become better peacemakers?

Peacemakers must be patient. It takes time to resolve conflicts. In Galatians 6:9, Paul writes, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." Peacemakers must be good listeners (Jas 1:19). They should not jump to conclusions. They should take time to hear both sides of the story and then use discernment.

Communication is not just about words. It includes body language and tone too. Peacemakers must choose their communication (verbal and nonverbal) carefully. The book of Proverbs offers us good counsel to be peacemakers. For instance, Proverbs 15:1 says that "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Also,

in Proverbs 29:20, the author writes, "Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him." Some people say something in haste and think about what they said later. Peacemakers must control their anger. Proverbs 15:18 says, "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention." Further, Proverbs 29:22 says, "A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression." So, God favors the peacemakers.

2. The peacemakers will be called sons of God.

In the Old Testament, Israel is referred to as "sons" (Deut. 14:1; Hos. 1:10). Also, in Hosea 1:10, the righteous would be called "Children of the living God" on the day of judgment before the nations. But here, those who make peace are called sons of God. When we make peace and reconciliation, we imitate God, and thus we will be called sons of God. God's children act like him. In Hebrew thought, the word "sons" refers to those who strongly reflect the character of another. For example, in the early church, a man by the name of Joseph was given the name, Barnabas, which means "son of encouragement" (Acts 4:36). Joseph was such an encouraging person that he was called a "son

of encouragement." So, when we make peace, we demonstrate God's nature. We are doing God's work.

In Greek, the word "they" is emphatic. It can be literally translated as "they alone." The phrase "shall be called" is a continuous future passive. We will be called "sons of God" for all eternity! The word "called" is passive, which suggests that God himself will call the peacemakers "sons of God." If you are not a peacemaker, you are probably not a true believer or you are being a disobedient believer. Those who are truly born again will be peacemakers.

Conclusion

What's the main message of the seventh beatitude and this article? **Imitate God by being a peacemaker.**

My prayer is that each one of us will be a peacemaker. When that happens, our nation and world will be a better place to live in. Jesus gave his very life so that we can be reconciled to God and one another. Let's imitate God by being peacemakers.

P.S. This article is adapted from Dr. David Mende's recent book, *Be Different: Reflections on the*

Beatitudes. You may contact him for copies of this book.



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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.

EFICAR Report



EFICAR successfully organized seminars on the pressing issue of Human Trafficking in Bihar, (in West Champaran (Bettiah) on May 30th, 2023 and Jamui on May 31st, 2023). The seminars witnessed an impressive participation of approximately 140 individuals. The resource persons for these seminars were Ms. Nirmala B. Walter and Adv. Amit Manwatkar.

The seminars aimed to create awareness about human trafficking, enlightening attendees on the modus operandi and providing valuable insights on preventive measures. The session emphasized the importance of collective efforts in curbing this heinous crime, along with the availability of legal assistance for victims and concerned parties.

During the session, key topics such as the definition of human trafficking, effective prevention strategies, the underlying causes of its prevalence, and the various types of human trafficking were discussed. Additionally, the participants were introduced to the Anti Human Trafficking Unit, a specialised department within the police force dedicated to combating human trafficking and safeguarding its victims. The attendees actively participated in the session and demonstrated great enthusiasm.

Overall, the seminars proved to be an instrumental platform for disseminating knowledge, fostering awareness, and empowering individuals to play an active role in combating human trafficking. EFICAR remains committed to continuing such initiatives in the future to promote a safer and more vigilant society.

It was observed that most of the participants are unaware of the nature and implications of human trafficking. There is a lack of knowledge among individuals

regarding the designated child helpline number. A prevailing lack of awareness exists among individuals concerning the existence and purpose of the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit. There is a notable lack of awareness among individuals regarding the distinction between appropriate touch (good touch) and inappropriate touch (bad touch) under the child protection policy. There is a need for the provision of reading materials and comprehensive training programs.

Feedback from participants:

The participants were grateful for these seminars and shared that this was the first time that they were attending such training, and the sessions were exceptionally informative and thorough.

*"We have also learned from the perspective of the Bible that human trafficking is an evil spread in society, which we all have to end together. – **Bishop Dr. Gabriel**"*

"In our village, there were also several cases of child labor and

child marriage that came to light, but we never took it seriously. However, through this seminar, we gained detailed information about human trafficking and also learned ways to prevent it. - Santosh"

"We had heard about human trafficking before, but we never truly understood its seriousness. Today, when I attended this seminar, I realized how devastating it is. I urge everyone to join this mission and raise their voice against human trafficking. - Manjeet"

"We learned about human

trafficking for the first time and learned how we can save those trapped in human trafficking. - Rekha"

"I live in the border area of Nepal, and child trafficking occurs on the border of Nepal. We had heard that human trafficking exists, but we did not take it seriously. When we participated in this seminar, we learned the definition of human trafficking and became aware of its prevention and legal aspects. Coming here, we have become vigilant about human trafficking and want to raise awareness among others as well.

- Kumar"

*I will instruct you teach you in
the way you should go; I will
counsel you with my eye upon you.*

Psalms 32:8



Rekindling Hope:

A call for compassion and restoration for Manipur

Background

The violent ethnic religious clashes that erupted in Manipur, India have inflicted a profound toll on the lives of its people. With over 98 lives lost and 310 individuals injured, the devastating impact is evident. Unofficial estimates indicate even higher casualties, along with the destruction of over 200 churches, hundreds of villages, and displacement of over 65,000 people. These distressing figures reflect the immense human suffering endured during this tragic episode, leaving behind shattered lives and uncertain futures.

Amidst sporadic incidents of violence still being reported, the

journey towards healing and reconciliation remains an arduous one. The affected peoples, forced to flee with little more than the clothes on their backs, now face the daunting task of rebuilding their lives from scratch. Basic necessities such as food, clothing, and medicine remain scarce for many, and daily wage earners have been left unemployed due to the prevailing curfew and restricted movement.

What has been done so far?

Looking at the dismal situation, the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) immediately reached out to its network in Manipur including member Churches of EFI and started the process of relief planning and distributing.

Food and Medicines distribution



As of June first week, EFI has been able to help an estimated **1500 families** with **food items and medicines** in the Kangpokpi and Churachandpur districts. We are working with partners and EFI members on documenting the havoc caused so that relief can be planned and executed more strategically.

Relief Centers in Delhi and Guwahati



Looking at the needs of people who have been able to leave Manipur and arrived in Guwahati and New Delhi, EFI opened two centers on an urgent basis around the 9th of May 2023, that are providing shelter and food to the victims of the violence. These centers are in Guwahati, the capital of Assam and the central place for all northeast India and in New Delhi.





As of now EFI has been able to help more than 160 survivors and more and coming in every day, while some have moved away as they were able to take care of themselves after the period at the relief center. We have taken care to give the best facilities possible to the survivors and it is expected that people would be in these two facilities at least till the end of July 2023.

As people have increased, some minor upgrading of infrastructure at both Delhi and Guwahati has been required as well as making immediate arrangements for the extremely hot summer weather.



Regular **medical camps and checkups** are organized at both places with the help of partners and the local Churches in Delhi and Guwahati as well as other organizations have also been visiting the survivors to encourage them.

Other initiatives

EFI along with other partners has also helped organize **Trauma Counselling** training for leaders who will counsel people who have escaped Manipur and are in different places.



We have also helped young survivors to get **sponsored for professional courses in tourism and hospitality** that will lead to guaranteed job placements so that they can stand on their feet and so support their families.

EFI has also helped the education of children by facilitating their admissions in various schools in different cities.

Priority for the next three months

With our network and member Churches, EFI will conduct a systematic relief operation in at least two phases to cater to 10,000 families.

While EFI is not primarily a relief

agency, and our relief arms – EFICOR and NEICORD are also helping provide the much-needed relief, the need is immense and necessitates involvement. We must stand with the victims of violence in Manipur, to support them with provisions that will help the community bounce back physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

The approximate **budget** for the **food and non-food relief to 10,000 families** is estimated to be over 3 Crores Indian Rupees. Please pray for provision of the same.

The approximate **budget** for a **relief center** is around **120000 Indian Rupees** per month. We have two relief centers in Delhi and Guwahati respectively, with Delhi being the larger center. Please pray for the provision of the same.

There is a need to **upgrade** and create **new infrastructure** to take care of survivors in the relief centers specially to tackle the summer heat. We need **sponsorships** for bunk beds, air conditioners, clothes, and food provisions etc. for these two centers. Please also pray for the provision of the same.

We urgently appeal that all people of goodwill especially from the Church in India and beyond come forward to support the victims of violence and the people who have lost everything. The provisions of food, clothing, shelter, and medicine is specifically needed on an urgent basis.

Long Term Plan

It is also very important to help facilitate the process of reconciliation, trauma counselling and forgiveness so that Christians would be able to demonstrate love and forgiveness even after what they have been through. Also important is to facilitate the process of justice so that perpetrators and instigators may be held accountable and just compensation is given to those who have lost everything.

In fulfilling the above EFI will work with its constituent members and partners on the following:

- Conducting Trauma Counselling and training people as counselors who can go in the interior areas and be

of help.

- Documenting and gathering data and making it available to all so that long term relief and rehabilitation efforts are strengthened.
- Helping students with their education so that gaps are minimized.
- Working with all stakeholders to establish a peace and reconciliation commission and process so that a lasting solution is reached.
- Working with experts and organizations to ensure just compensation and justice for the victims of the violence.
- Working with Churches and Church associations to rebuild the destroyed Churches. This will also involve petitioning the government and if necessary, the courts.

Please do continue to pray for the many Churches, organizations, and individuals, many of them members of EFI, as we work towards the restoration of peace and the peoples of Manipur.

Account details

Contributions from WITHIN INDIA ONLY

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Account Number: **6080012565**

Bank: **Indian Bank.**

Branch: Guwahati, Lakhtokia (S S ROAD LAKHTOKIA FANCY BAZAR GUWAHATI 781001)

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*He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings
you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your
shield and rampart.*

Psalm 91:4

YOU FEEL CALLED TO GO to unreached places, people groups in India and Muslim nations?

Jesus said, The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few (Luke 10:2)
Be His witnesses in all the world and to the uttermost parts of the world (Acts 1:8)

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Reach the unreached in India, other unreached nations, Muslim nations and finally Israel

TOPICS - Apostolic teaching (mission & doctrine) focussed on reaching the unreached
Make disciples and multiply, Methods of Evangelism, Outreach, Church Planting with Practical exposure, How to reach the Muslims, What is in the Quran/What the Muslims believe, How to reach the whole world by the power and leading of the Spirit, Prayer in His presence, Preaching the Gospel, How to manifest the Gifts and Fruit of the Spirit, The Book of Romans, Gospel of God's grace, Love fulfils the Law, Knowing God as our Father, Growing up from children to sons, Lessons from the life and ministry of Jesus and Paul as models, Trusting God but needing one another, Finances in ministry, Raising Funds & Partners for your ministry, Fulfil God's purpose and call, Seeking His Kingdom and righteousness, Rewards and Crowns, Rule and Reign with Christ

Training will be in ENGLISH, taught by well experienced International and Indian servants of God with rich practical experience in ministry and missions with whom you can connect

DAILY Prayer and meditation, Teaching and training, Outreach and evangelism
TRAINING IS FREE with Food and accommodation provided

WHO CAN APPLY?

- BORN AGAIN young men between 20-40 years interested in ministry and missions
- MUST have basic knowledge of the Bible and be able to communicate in English
- MUST believe in the basic doctrine of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
- ALSO those who are already in ministry or completed Bible College can apply

Students can apply directly OR Pastors and Leaders can refer mission minded young men from their churches, organisations and Bible Colleges

We select 12 students from applications all over India **APPLY SOON!**
Training starts from Sept 04-Oct 14, 2023 in New Delhi
Contact us for the Application Forms

Email: ksd4nations@gmail.com

Dr John Thomas **9654987351**
880352454

Rev Kishun L Singh **9910433313**,

**Open for Admissions
for 2023 entry**

**MA
IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES
(WITH A FOCUS ON ISLAM)**

**MA
IN CHRISTIAN STUDIES**

Oxford Centre for Religion and Public Life (OCRPL), UK, in partnership with the Centre for Advanced Religious Studies (CARS) at the North East Christian University (NECU), Nagaland, India



Key features:

- A degree validated by an internationally recognised university
- Flexible online format
- A team of international experts
- 2 years of study (4 semesters): July 2023 - May 2025
- Affordable education: about INR 20,000 / USD 250 per semester
- Scholarships available for eligible students

Requirements:

- A BA in theology or any other discipline (minimum second class)
- BTh graduates from ATA, Serampore and other recognised institutions will be required to do additional credits

**Application deadline:
30th June 2023**

**PLEASE SEE OCRPL WEBSITE FOR MORE
INFORMATION AND AN ONLINE APPLICATION FORM**

04/2023

ocrpl.org/study/ma-religious-studies
ocrpl.org/study/ma-christian-studies



दिल्ली बाइबल इन्स्टीट्यूट
DELHI BIBLE INSTITUTE
Till North India hears the Gospel

COURSE IN EXPOSITORY PREACHING AND PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Invest a year in learning for a life time of service



About the course

The aim of the course is to equip men and women for expository Bible ministry in the local church so that they can preach and teach God's word faithfully, clearly and effectively.

Who the course is for?

We serve men and women from different cultures, ethnic groups, ages and academic backgrounds. You need to have a firm commitment to the trustworthiness and sufficiency of Scripture for ministry in the local church. The 'heartbeat' of the course is the teaching of a wide range of books of Scripture, coming to grips with them in order to be able to preach and teach them.

Who can apply for the course?

- ❖ Men or women who are committed to the ministry of teaching and preaching the Bible.
- ❖ Written recommendation by the pastor or organisation leader of the candidate.
- ❖ Candidates who have appeared or passed class XII with ability to communicate in English.
- ❖ Prospective students will have a personal interview with a member of admission committee.
- ❖ Candidates from economically underprivileged background can apply for work scholarship.
- ❖ Candidates living in Delhi and NCR can apply as day scholars.
- ❖ Once a student is granted admission he or she will not be given leave to go home except for emergencies.
- ❖ The church programmes and events are designed to be practicals for the students. Sermon notes, prayer meetings, care group meetings, outreach and mission trips are compulsory. Those who are willing to commit for the descriptions above may apply.

Internship

Internship can be applied for and deserving candidates will be accepted.

Schedule:- (July 2023 - April 2024)

English as Second Language (ESL) One month

Basic Course on Expository Preaching Three months

Advanced Course on Expository Preaching Six months

*Health Check-up:
Ensure you are
healthy and prepared for a three to
nine months of studying uninterrupted
by health issues. Fitness certificate
must be sent along with the
application form.*

We adhere to COVID PROTOCOLS

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DELHI BIBLE INSTITUTE
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Contact us: BIBLE BHAVAN
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Mobile: +91 9999625833; 011-24611311; 24643587 Extn.: 208
E-mail: dbi13.bb@gmail.com

Intercessory
Prayer
Points



June 2023

1 THURSDAY Thank God for His mercy that is new every morning. Pray that the Lord would use you greatly for the extension of His kingdom.

2 FRIDAY Pray for UDHAR Multipurpose Society, Maharashtra. Pray that they would faithfully and diligently work so that they would be able to reach their goals.

3 SATURDAY Let us pray for ourselves that our lives may be transparent and highly commendable as Christ's return is near.

4 SUNDAY Pray for your neighbors today. Pray that their fear would turn them to our loving heavenly Father. Pray that you would become an agent of peace to them.

5 MONDAY Pray for the Union Church Coonoor, Tamil Nadu. Pray that every person whom the Lord brought to this church may feel welcomed and comfortable. Pray for the sweet fellowship of the members of this church that many

new people would be drawn to them and to God.

6 TUESDAY Pray for Zeliangrong Baptist Church, Manipur. Pray that the Lord would speak to them personally through His Words and that they would be faithful followers and witnesses of Christ in their culture.

7 WEDNESDAY Pray for Southern Asia Bible College, Karnataka. Pray for God's leading and empowerment for all the staff and faculty. Pray that students would be shaped and equipped to serve in God's kingdom.

8 THURSDAY Pray for Manipur that peace may be restored soon, and the people would respect and care for one another. Pray that believers would rebuild their lives based on God's promises and that God's justice be seen in and through their lives.

9 FRIDAY Pray for the Wesleyan Church, Gujarat. Pray that God may enable and equip them to share God's extravagant love with

people. Pray that people who come in contact with them would experience life in Jesus Christ with them and join their celebration.

10 SATURDAY Pray for those who are in authority to make decisions out of love. Pray that God may give them wisdom and compassion as they handle various things. Do continue to pray for Manipur.

11 SUNDAY Pray that God may draw many people to His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ and receive salvation.

12 MONDAY Pray for the Disciples of Christ Church, Chhattisgarh. Pray for love, mercy, and goodness to overflow the members of this church. Pray that in everything, their conduct may be praiseworthy.

13 TUESDAY Pray for the Bible Society of India, Karnataka. Pray that love for God's word and a desire to obey it would increasingly grow in our hearts and minds. Pray that BSI would continue to serve and be an instrument in spreading the Gospel.

14 WEDNESDAY Pray for EFI-National Centre for Urban Transformation (NCUT). Pray that God's word would effectively spread and transform lives in cities and towns despite busy lifestyles. Pray for those who are involved in urban missions.

15 THURSDAY Pray for Vatsalya Ministry, Training & Development Centre for Mentally Challenged at Gujarat. Pray for the staff in this ministry to prayerfully train others who would reach out the mentally challenged people with love, concern, and care.

16 FRIDAY Pray for Vongzawl Presbytery (PCI) in Assam. Pray that God would enable them to reach out to the most needy ones and be a blessing to them.

17 SATURDAY Let's pray for ourselves that we may fully give ourselves in the service of King Jesus and influence many lives with His beauty.

18 SUNDAY Fathers' Day. Pray for all the fathers in your church to carry out their priestly role in the family faithfully and diligently. Pray that they would lead their family with good examples.

19 MONDAY Pray for the Voice of Christians Evangelical Church, Punjab. Pray that as they witness Christ in marketplaces and teach, preach God's Word and serve the people with healing ministry that God would get all the glory and everything that they do would bring good to the people.

20 TUESDAY Pray for the Church of the Four Square, Karnataka. Pray for their ministry that involves church planting, short term

training, women, youth, and children ministries. Pray that the Lord will multiply their work.

21 WEDNESDAY Pray for Manipur that God's people would get healing and restoration. Pray also that the people of Manipur would turn to Christ for salvation.

22 THURSDAY Pray for Tribals Transformation India, Karnataka. TTI is committed to share the Good News and to bring wholeness to the community. Pray that the ministry would effectively evangelize, plant churches, train leaders and work for community development.

23 FRIDAY Pray for Peace Trust, Tamil Nadu. Pray that God would use them as His instrument as they work towards protection of environment, eradication of child labour, women empowerment etc.

24 SATURDAY Pray for yourself that you would have teachable hearts to learn and follow Christ's footsteps.

25 SUNDAY Pray for all the pastors who are teaching and preaching the Word of God today. Pray for Holy Spirit equipping so that they would effectively serve the church.

26 MONDAY Pray for the Pocket

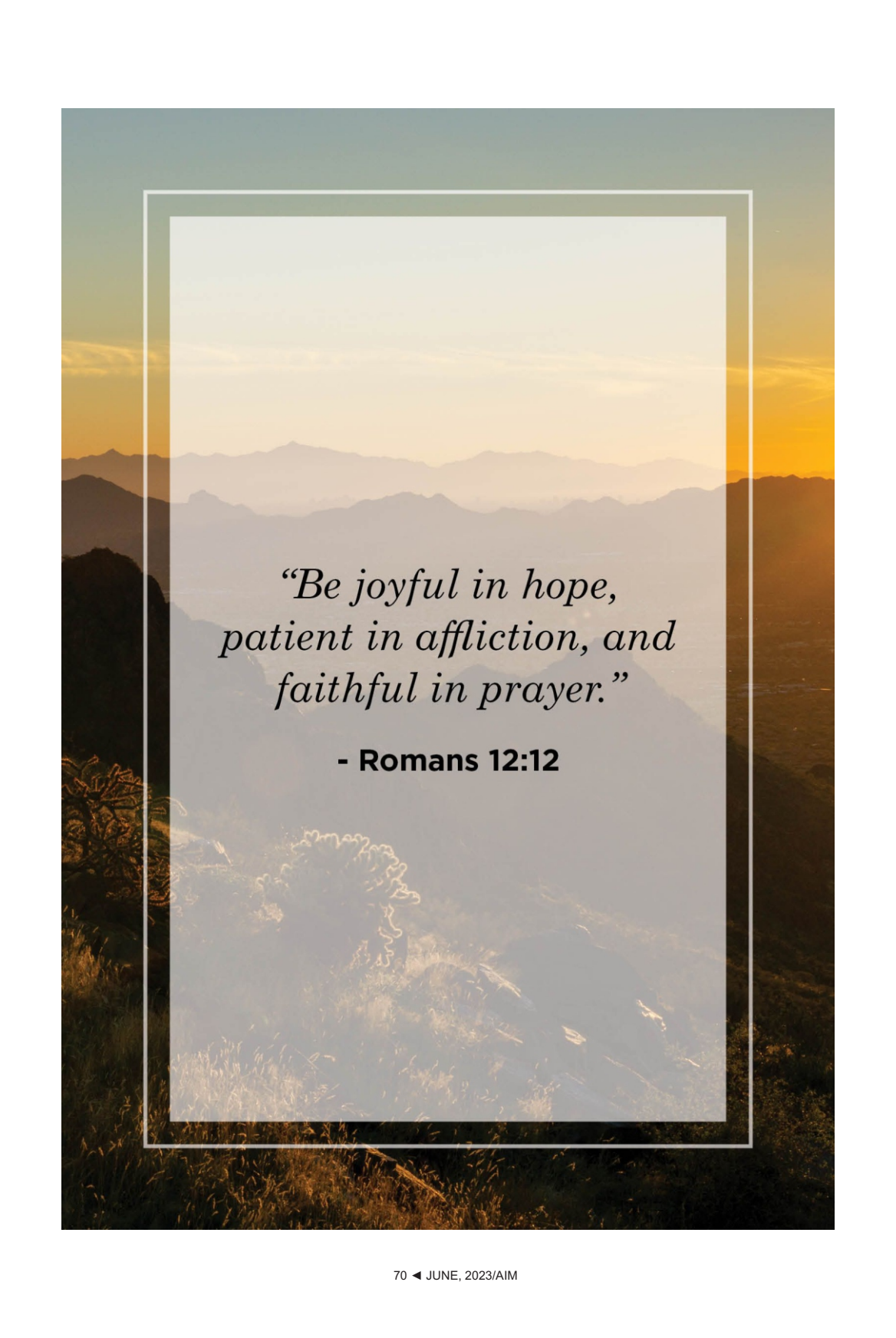
Testament League, Uttar Pradesh. Pray that through them, God would reach out to many unreached people in North India and Nepal. Pray for their new believers' discipleship training to be simple, meaningful, and effective. Pray for strength and renewed commitment to serve God.

27 TUESDAY Pray for Utilize People's Potential Action for Humanities and Research (UPPAHAR) in Andhra Pradesh. Pray that God would use this ministry as his instrument to touch many lives.

28 WEDNESDAY Pray for the Board of Christian Community Church, Chhattisgarh. Pray that they may stand strong amidst trials and hardships and be a strong model to the believers in the state.

29 THURSDAY Continue to pray for the persecuted Christians all over the country. Pray that their love for God would even grow stronger and as a result they may continually serve Him with gratitude and sacrificially.

30 FRIDAY Pray for the world that God's kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven. Pray for God's servants to tirelessly labour in His vineyard knowing that their hard labour will not be in vain.



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

- Romans 12:12

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The righteous man
walks in his integrity;
His children are
blessed after him.

Proverbs 20:7

HAPPY
Father's
Day



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