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A Journey of Faith

# Be kind

World Kindness Day

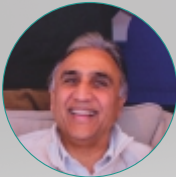


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Editorial



Rev. Vijayesh Lal



## Rising Above the Meanness

In the cacophony of our modern world, where the harshness of meanness often drowns out the softer notes of kindness, there is an urgent and collective need for a transformative shift. The pervasive negativity, especially evident on social media platforms

like Twitter, highlights the challenge of keeping kindness at the forefront of our minds. In a space where reactions garner more attention than reflections, the true currency of compassion—kindness—is often undervalued.

Social media, while providing a platform for marginalized voices, has unfortunately become a treacherous terrain where toxicity thrives. The very technology designed to connect us has morphed into a powerful weapon for spreading outrage and animosity, further dividing communities. It's disheartening to witness this meanness infiltrate even the ranks of those who profess to follow the teachings of Christ.

In the backdrop of ongoing conflicts, such as the heart-breaking violence in Jerusalem, the continuing Russia-Ukraine War, and the tragic violence in Manipur, there's a pressing need to reassess our approach to peace. The stark reality is that terrorism and war only lead to the death and suffering of countless innocent lives. How then can we foster a deeper understanding of this truth and, more importantly, contribute to a meaningful change?

The answer lies in embracing our Christian calling to pray boldly and audaciously. Beyond praying

for the victims, we are summoned to pray for those responsible for the devastation, extending our prayers even to our perceived enemies. This echoes the profound words of Jesus in Matthew 5:43-48, challenging us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. To elevate our prayers for peace, we must embody the teachings of Christ, even when it feels challenging or counterintuitive.

Kindness is a positive response to conflicts. It's a universal solution that can help us counteract hostility and promote understanding. In a world where conflicts often lead to division, kindness encourages us to rise above our instincts and respond with compassion.

When we make kindness a guiding principle, we contribute to creating a more compassionate and just society, even in the face of significant challenges like the conflicts in Israel, Ukraine, or Manipur. Breaking the cycle of violence requires prayerful reflection and actively showing kindness, fostering a mindset of

understanding and cooperation instead of continuing animosity.

In a world where kindness seems to be in short supply, it remains a powerful and workable solution. Kindness, unlike malice, is a universal currency that transcends cultural, religious, and political boundaries. While responding in kind may be a human instinct, the example and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ beckon us to rise above and respond with kindness.

This call to kindness extends beyond individual acts; it urges us to make kindness a guiding principle in our lives. In the face of global challenges where hostility has often overshadowed compassion, the need for kindness is more evident than ever. Leaders, too, must recognize the pivotal role of kindness in shaping a compassionate and just society.

The Christian perspective emphasizes kindness as a response to mistreatment and hurt, a deliberate choice to counter outrage with

compassion. It is a transformative force that extends beyond personal interactions to contribute to global peace. As recipients of God's kindness, we are called to be compassionate, forgiving, and agents of positive change.

In the face of these challenges, can we declare a manifesto for a kinder world? A world where the echoes of meanness are drowned out by the resounding chorus of kindness.

Firstly, let kindness be the compass that guides our interactions. In a world that often prioritizes individual gain over collective well-being, let us choose the path of kindness in our day-to-day encounters. Whether face-to-face or behind the screens of our devices, let kindness be the language we speak—a language that transcends differences and builds bridges of understanding.

Secondly, let us redefine leadership with kindness at its core. Leaders, be they in political offices, boardrooms, or

community organizations, must recognize the transformative power of kindness. It does not necessitate a compromise of convictions but demands a more forgiving, forbearing, and understanding approach. Leaders, by embodying kindness, can set a precedent for a society that values compassion over contention.

Thirdly, let kindness be the driving force behind our conversations. In a world where disagreements often escalate into heated debates, let us be kind enough to consider not only the civil but the dictionary sense of consideration. Let us consider the souls and psyches of those we engage with, striving to understand divergent views by examining the facts or fictions that form them. Let our conversations be infused with

kindness, opening not only our hearts but our minds.

As we navigate the complexities of our world, let us be acutely aware that kindness is not merely a pleasant surprise but a deliberate and profound response to meanness. It is not random or free but a costly, counterintuitive choice to counter hurt with healing. The challenges we face require a collective commitment to kindness—a commitment that goes beyond rhetoric and permeates the fabric of our daily lives. Through audacious prayers, intentional acts of kindness, and a redefinition of leadership, we can contribute to the creation of a world where kindness triumphs over meanness, and compassion becomes the cornerstone of our shared humanity.

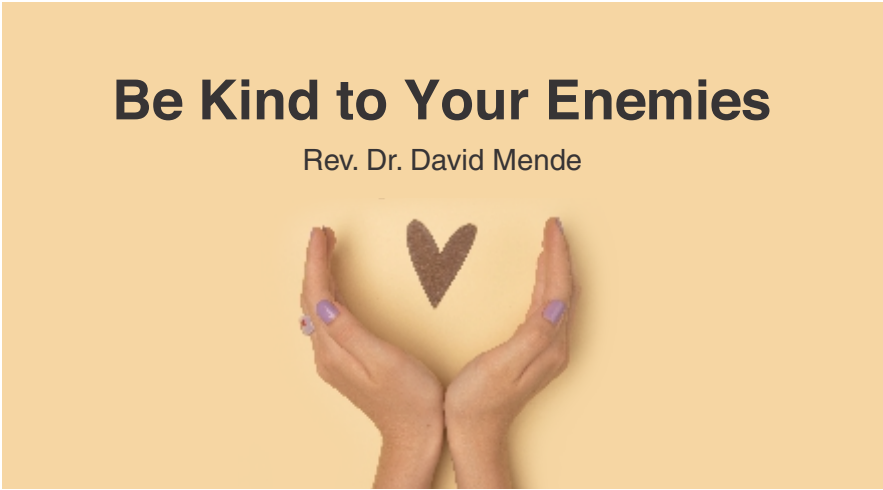
**Rev. Vijayesh Lal**

The LORD is my strength and my defence;  
he has become my salvation.  
Psalm 118:14



# Be Kind to Your Enemies

Rev. Dr. David Mende



The war between Russia and Ukraine refuses to die down. The conflict between Israel and Palestine is heartbreaking. Tragically, according to the UN, this war is turning out to be a graveyard for children. Let us keep praying that the perpetual tension between these groups will be resolved soon. Showing kindness to an enemy is not easy. Generally, people tend to return evil for evil. But our Lord gives us a radical command in Matthew 5:43-48, which cannot be obeyed in our human strength.

Some scholars consider Matthew 5:43-48 as the most prominent section of the Sermon on the Mount. This passage reveals the high standards of Christian

ethics. Here, Jesus teaches that we must love our enemies and pray for them because God shows his grace to the just and the unjust and God expects that our love must supersede that of the unbelievers. I understand that sometimes war is a necessary evil to defend your people. But this world would be a much better place if we learn to be kind towards our enemies and love them. Let us learn a few lessons on being kind and loving towards our enemies.

## **1. Jesus commands us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Mt. 5:43-45a).**

The command to love one's neighbor is mentioned in



Leviticus 19:18. But to include the phrase "hate your enemy" is surprising because the Old Testament never says that one should hate his or her enemy. So, scholars understand that the phrase "You have heard" (vv. 21, 27, 33, 38, 43) speaks of misinterpretation of the Old Testament teaching. Some people, especially a Jewish group called Essenes, generalized that one must hate their enemies by citing examples from a few Psalms like Psalms 31:6; 119:113; and 139:21.

The Old Testament does reveal that God hates evil (Ps. 5:4-5). It even teaches that God and even his people hate the wicked (Ps. 26:4-5; 139:21-22). However, the Old Testament never commands us to hate the wicked as such. Also, note that some Jewish teachers have omitted "as yourself" from the command in Leviticus 19:18. Moreover, they excluded enemies from the category of neighbors. They were supposed to love their neighbor, even if he was their enemy. Many Jews considered their neighbors as fellow Jews. They understood that they were commanded to

love their neighbors. If they are supposed to love only their Jewish neighbors, they reasoned that they may hate their enemies. But they ignored other commands in the Law. For example, Leviticus 19:34 says, "You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

Some Jews ignored a few commands which governed the way they dealt with their enemies. The Old Testament Law even commands Israelites to care for their enemy's animals (Exod. 23:4-5). Similar instructions were given concerning one's brother's ox or donkey (cf. Deut. 22:1-4). So, the Law taught God's people to show kindness to their enemies and even to the animals of their enemies.

The Jewish teachers must have been familiar with the famous proverb that said, "If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink," (Prov. 25:21). So, although the Old Testament does

not explicitly command God's people to love their enemies, it does give implicit instructions to demonstrate their love towards their enemies.

Then, how did some Jews think they could hate their enemies? Many godly people in the Old Testament appealed to God to take vengeance on their enemies (cf. 2 Chron. 24:22; Jer. 11:20; 15:15; 17:18; 18:23; 20:12; Ps. 137:7-9). Also, it's possible that some teachers of the Law understood that they could hate their enemies because of the command that God gave them to wage wars against the Canaanites or even because of the imprecatory Psalms. Note that these imprecatory psalms suggest that we must have a hatred for God's enemies, not our own enemies. These psalms leave vengeance to God.

We must not hate others over trivial matters. God is not our servant to wipe out enemies just because we hate them. Our hatred for God's enemies must be motivated by God's honor. Even the New Testament teaches that we must not take revenge on

our enemies. Romans 12:19 says, "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'"

The word "but" in Matthew 5:44 presents a contrast. Jesus says, "Love your enemies." Christ's teaching is counter-cultural. This teaching is revolutionary. These words must have shocked his hearers as much as they shock us today. Mahatma Gandhi used these verses to develop the concept of ahimsa (non-violence), which eventually led to the independence of our nation. This, in turn, inspired American civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr. and the South African leader, Nelson Mandela to embrace the idea of non-violence. In the context of this verse, enemies are those who persecute us. It's not enough to control ourselves from retaliating against our enemies. We are commanded to love them.

The verb "love" is in the present imperative which suggests that we are commanded to continually love our enemies.

Jesus commands us to even pray for those who persecute us. Prayer is one of the practical ways to love our enemies. When your enemies hurt you, don't get even. Get on your knees. The word "pray" is in the present imperative, which means that we are commanded to pray for our enemies continually. We must make it our lifestyle to pray for our enemies. The Lord teaches what he was going to practice later on the cross. As our Lord was crucified, he kept praying (imperfect tense in Greek), "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34). Stephen imitated the Lord by praying for those who were stoning him to death (Acts 7:60). When we pray for our enemies, instead of hating them, we will be often moved to compassion. As we pray for our enemies, our hearts will be softened and the Lord will transform our hearts which are bent on taking revenge. No person can keep hating his enemy in God's presence.

Although our Lord faced insults and torture, he prayed for his enemies. What is stopping you from praying for your enemies?

The word "persecute" is in the present tense in Greek, which suggests that our enemies keep persecuting us. The wicked may be persecuting us, but they too can repent of their sins like Paul. God is patient with the wicked. We too must be patient. In the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk. 10:29-37), Jesus teaches that one's neighbor is not just a fellow Jew, but any human being who comes our way. Once we are aware of their condition, we need to do something to help them. Even when our enemies seek to harm us, we must seek to do good to them. That's exactly what the Lord has done for us (Rom. 5:8).

In Matthew 5:45a, Jesus says, "so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." When we compare this verse to other verses in the Bible, we can infer that Jesus does not mean that loving enemies make us sons of God. Rather, our love for enemies demonstrates that we are sons of our heavenly Father. The heavenly Father's sons resemble him in their character. We must love our enemies through our actions (cf. Lk. 6:32-33) and by

praying for them. This kind of love is supernatural. If the whole world lives according to the principles taught in the Sermon on the Mount, our world will be full of peace. There will be peace even in the Middle East! But people cannot live according to this sermon in their own strength. They need to be born again to live like this. We cannot produce such love. We need to ask the Lord to fill our hearts with his love so that we can love our enemies just as he loves them. So, Jesus commands us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us

## **2. Jesus gives a few reasons to love our enemies (Mt. 5:45b-47).**

Why must we love our enemies? Let's see what Jesus says.

### **a. God shows his grace to the just and the unjust (v. 45).**

God hates evil and evildoers (Ps. 5:5; 11:5; Eph. 2:3), but he still grants his "common grace" (a phrase that is used by some theologians) to all people. God makes his sun rise on the evil as well as the good. He sends rain on the just and the unjust. The Lord grants these blessings to

unbelievers so that they can come to repentance (Acts 14:17; Rom. 2:4). Since God shows grace to all people, we must reflect him and love both our friends and enemies.

### **b. God expects our love to supersede that of the unbelievers (vv. 46-47).**

Jesus asks "if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?" This suggests that there is a reward for those who love their enemies. In Jesus' day, the Jewish tax collectors were hated by their fellow Jews as they worked for the Roman authorities and extorted extra taxes from them. They were considered as traitors by Jews. If we love only those who love us, we are no better than the corrupt criminals.

In those days, those who were socially inferior were required to greet superiors. If we greet only our brothers and sisters, we are not doing much. If we pray with only those who are close to us, we are still equal to pagans. Jesus asks a pointed question, "What more are you doing than others?" Jesus teaches that our righteousness must surpass that

of the Pharisees and scribes (5:20). The Jews looked down on the Gentiles as dogs. But if we greet only our brothers, we are no better than Gentiles. Loving only your friends makes you only as good as a pagan. But we struggle to love even our family, friends, and fellow Christians!

Christians must be different from the rest of the world. If our standards are the same as the world, then what's the point of getting saved? How can we ever make a positive impact on this world? If we claim to be transformed by the Lord, we must demonstrate that through our love for others, including our enemies. If we have truly repented of our sins, saved, sanctified, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, more is expected of us than unbelievers. All our love is tainted by sin. But there is no self-interest in loving our enemies. We must refuse to take revenge and overcome evil with good. We must love our enemies because God shows his grace to the just and the unjust and he expects our love to supersede that of the unbelievers.

### **3. Jesus commands us to be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect (Mt. 5:48).**

In verse 48, the Greek word for "you" is emphatic. This command is given especially to Christ's disciples. The Greek word translated as "perfect" can also be translated as "complete" or "mature." This verse echoes Leviticus 19:2 which says that we must be holy as God is holy. Even Luke 6:36 is a synecdoche (part for the whole) of Matthew 5:48. Luke 6:36 says that we must be merciful as the Father is merciful. We will not attain complete perfection on this side of eternity.

In the same sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches that we must continually hunger and thirst for righteousness (5:6). This indicates that we will not be perfect on this earth. But as Christ's disciples, we are called to pursue this perfection. The Lord has set high standards for us. As we constantly grow in Christlikeness, one day, we will be perfect even as the Father and Son are perfect (1 Jn 3:2-3). We need to aim for perfection in the sense that we must reflect God's

image within us in an increasing measure (cf. Gen. 1:26). Jesus commands us to be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect.

### **Conclusion**

If I have to encapsulate the main idea of this entire article, it would be this: **Imitate God in his kindness by loving your enemies.**

Jesus is our ultimate role model for loving our enemies. He forgave his enemies and prayed for them even as they hurled insults at him and crucified him. Loving our enemies is a supernatural work of the Spirit. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us to love our enemies and pray for them.

Jesus is coming back soon. When he returns, there will be perfect peace on earth. His reign will bring perfect peace (Isa. 11:6-9). There will be no more Russia-Ukraine or Israel-Palestine conflicts in his coming kingdom. But as we await his coming, we need to deal with our vengeful attitude towards our enemies.

Let's imitate God in his kindness by loving our enemies!



### **Rev. Dr. David Mende**

*serves as the Lead Pastor at El-Shaddai Assembly of God Church, Hyderabad (elshaddaiag.in). He also serves as an adjunct faculty member at Southern Asia Bible College (SABC) in Bangalore, Hyderabad Institute of Theology and Apologetics (HITHA) in Hyderabad, and SUM Bible College & Theological Seminary in California, USA. He has authored eight books, including The Dangers of the Health and Wealth Gospel.*

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



# Christians and our Environment

Mr. Chacko Thomas

"When you lay siege to a city for a long time, fighting against it to capture it, do not destroy its trees by putting an axe to them, because you can eat their fruit. Do not cut them down. Are the trees people, that you should besiege them? However, you may cut down trees that you know are not fruit trees and use them to build siege works until the city at war with you falls." Deuteronomy 20:19-20 NIV.

"We give You thanks, Lord God, the Almighty, the One who is and who was, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and

those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth." Revelation 11:17-18 NASB.

## **International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict**

I welcome the UN's annual call, setting aside November 6th as a day to call on Governments for "Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed conflict."

In my own lifetime, we have seen some of the worst exploitations of the environment in human history. I am thinking of, among other things, the so called Vietnam war, decades of wars in Afghanistan, and closer to home,

"the leak of poisonous gases from a chemical plant in Bhopal (1984), which killed more than 2000 Indians and blinded or injured over 200,000," ("Our Human Environment" by John Stott in "Issues Facing Christians Today").

### **UN Secretary-General's Message- 2021**

" ... On the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict, we recognize the environment as yet another victim of war. Crops are torched, water wells polluted, and soils poisoned to gain short-term military advantages, with devastating consequences that can last decades.

Protecting the environment is integral to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustainable development, because there can be no durable peace if the natural resources that sustain livelihoods and ecosystems are destroyed. ..."

### **Moses and St John**

Commending the words of Moses, quoted above from Deuteronomy 20:19-20, writes John MacArthur: "When besieging a city, armies of the ancient world would cut down the

trees to build ramps and weapons, as well as facilities for the long siege. However, Israel was not to use the fruit trees in the siege of a city so they could enjoy the fruit of the land God had given them."

The ESV Study Bible comments on the same verses: "The law of protection of fruit trees acknowledges that Israel is to inherit the trees that it did not plant (see 6:11). This law also puts a break on human short-sightedness; the ultimate end of the land is to be a fruitful garden for God's people to enjoy."

Perhaps, we can understand the significance of these words of Scripture, better than the ancients did, as we look today at a bleak future for the planet. The future is casting its shadow over the present already. Judgement is coming, on "those who destroy the earth" Revelation 11:17-18. This is not just a threat, let us be clear. Ask Adam, Noah, Lot, Moses, or the Israelites. The Bible is the best history book available out there. It is there so that we can amend our ways.

"Wars and armed conflict", although a major destroyer of the earth, are not alone. Religions



are not innocent. So, also are people greedy to become rich at any cost. Human sins are very costly, especially our sins against our neighbour: lying, stealing, murder, adultery, covetousness, and oppression. God is watching, and keeping a record as the last book of the Bible exhorts us. We are accountable, our actions matter.

The Bible makes it very clear that "the earth is the Lord's" Psalm 24:1. Genesis 1-2. Human beings are just caretakers, stewards of God's good earth.

### **Three Affirmations from Genesis 1 on our responsibility for the Earth.**

In a long article (20 pages) on "Our Human Environment", Rev. John Stott takes us into Genesis 1 and points out three points God has made about our responsibility.

- God has given us dominion over the earth. Genesis 1:26-28
- Our dominion is a cooperative dominion. We are not creating the process of nature but cooperating with them.
- Our dominion is a delegated, and therefore, a responsible, dominion. Earth does not belong to us by right, but only

by favour. The earth 'belongs' to us, not because we made it or own it, but because its Maker has entrusted its care to us.

It is obvious to me that Christians are the people best equipped to carry out the care of creation. In his book, "Saving Planet Earth, A Christian Response", Colin A. Russell includes an Appendix which gives the main points [only], of "The Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation". It is quoted here below. (The Full statement is in R. J. Berry's book "The Care of Creation, Intervarsity Press, 2000)

### **The Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation**

- As followers of Jesus Christ, committed to the full authority of the Scripture, and aware of the ways we have degraded creation, we believe that Biblical faith is essential to the solution of our ecological problems.
- We and our children face a growing crisis in the health of the creation in which we are embedded, and through which, by God's grace, we are sustained. Yet we continue to degrade that creation.
- Many concerned people,

convinced that environmental problems are more spiritual than technological, are exploring the world's ideologies and religions in search of non-Christian spiritual resources for healing the of the earth. As followers of Jesus Christ, we believe that he Bible calls us to respond in four ways [which are then enumerated]

- Thus we call on all those who are committed to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ to affirm the following principles of Biblical faith and to seek ways of living out these principles in our personal lives, our churches, and society [ten principles are then listed]
- We believe that in Christ there is hope, not only for men, women and children, but also for the rest of creation which is suffering from the consequences of human sin.

### **Visiting Siliguri, North Bengal**

In conclusion, let me share a story from my visit and ministry with Pastor Samuel Chacko in Siliguri, a few years ago. A German Missionary lady visited him one day. After she left, Pastor Samuel told me about her servant.

Among her duties were the care for the Missionary's garden. This lady put into practice what she learned from the German, back in her humble dwelling and the little space around it. Her house and surrounding looked cleaner and more beautiful. The neighbours began to copy her and the whole village improved.

I believe that we Christians can make some difference to the planet, even at this late stage. As Mahatma Gandhi would say: "Be the change we want". I saw Brother George Verwer live it out and impact many. May the Lord help us to save India!



### **Mr. Chacko Thomas**

is Author of "Beyond the Natural". (OM 1966-2022: served mostly in OM India, on three OM Ships and OM International and OM Special Projects. Privileged to serve the Lord Jesus in 107 countries.) He can be contacted on [chackothomas50@gmail.com](mailto:chackothomas50@gmail.com)



# KINDNESS AND US

Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj

13th November is World Kindness Day. It is a good time to summarize what the Bible teaches on Kindness.

## **KINDNESS AND THE UNBELIEVER**

The Lord Jesus is extremely kind to every one of us. That is why instead of straight-away frying us in hell, he came flying to save us from going to a living hell and a literal hell (Titus 3:4-5). But in response, have you spoken unkind words about your Creator? Have you been rude when you have said anything about the Savior? The Bible says, Jesus is coming again and he will call into account everyone who has spoken unkindly about him! Read it for yourself:

"Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy one to execute judgment on all and to

convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14-15). In response to Jesus' very kind, "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden" call, do you answer like those in Jeremiah's time did, rudely? They said that we will not walk in the ancient paths (Jer. 6:16) and do you say you will not walk in the narrow road of life Jesus? The consequences can be very costly! The kindness of God is showered upon us, so that we can repent (Rom. 2:4). God wants our repentance - not riddance!

## **KINDNESS AND THE BELIEVER**

Kindness! Our answers as

believers to people who question us must be characterized by it!

How do we answer people, even those who may be critical of us? Shimei cursed King David. He called him "worthless". He called David, "a man of bloodshed". In response, Abishai (David's man) was even more unkind to the already unkind Shimei. Abishai called him "a dead dog". But King David's response to Shimei was very kind. He said, "If he curses me because the LORD told him, 'Curse David,' who can ask, 'Why did you do this?' " (2 Sam. 16:10). No wonder, David would be later called a man after God's own heart! After all, God's son, Jesus was kind and loving even to those who mocked him enroute to the Cross!

## **KINDNESS AND THE LEADER**

The Proverbs Penman makes this observation: "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Prov. 15:1). This observation gives a lesson for leaders who have to lead members of their team who are constantly speaking rudely to each other and warring! When leaders respond with Spirit-led soft words to angry words spoken, the tension in the team diffuses! When insults are

matched with greater insults, scoffs are matched with greater scoffs, the shalom (peace) of the team, you lead goes for a Rohit Sharma six! King Solomon's Son, King Rehoboam answered Jeroboam without an iota of kindness. It is recorded so in I Kings:

"And the king(Rehoboam) answered the people harshly, and forsaking the counsel that the old men had given him" (I Kings 12:13). The result: the Northern tribes of Israel split with their southern brothers!

## **KINDNESS IN THE FAMILY**

Kindness! That must be part of the character of husbands!

Apostle Paul writes, "Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them" (Col. 3:19). Husbands must be kind to their wives! It is easy to be kind when our life partner is also being kind to us! But the Christian spouse takes it as a challenge to be kind even when unkind things are being said in the heat of the moment! It is this kind of Christ-like kind response that diffuses tensions at home! Did we not promise when we made our wedding vow that we would love and cherish our spouses even

during their "worse" times? When they are unkind, they are perhaps in their worse behavior, and we ought to still love and cherish them!

## **KINDNESS IN THE MINISTRY**

The Shepherds of Israel were accused of being harsh and unkind by God in the writings of Prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. 34:4). In the New Testament, we read of Shepherds who only feed themselves (Jude 12). Are you in the Christian ministry? Do you selfishly expect kind words to be spoken to you always but choose to respond rudely when the people you are called to minister to, make heavy demands of you? You may be tired. Your energy levels may be down, because of non-stop ministry. You may be under severe pressure. But that is no excuse for those of us in ministry to be rude to anyone. Let us be kind and serve the Lord! One practical way we can be kind to those whom we minister to is by remembering their names and calling them lovingly by the same! Having a notebook which will help us do that is commendable! Paul named at least 60 different people who were with him as he ministered!

## **THE POWER TO BE KIND**

We know that among the fruit of the Spirit - there is also the indispensable ingredient of kindness (Gal. 5:22-23). That means we cannot be kind, the way God wants us to be kind, with our own strength. However, with the enablement the Holy Spirit gives, we can be kind even to those who are extremely unkind to us!

Let us be kind! Let us be ruthless in flushing out rude behavior in the Kingdom of God!



### **Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj**

*is the founder of Grabbing the Google Generation from Gehenna Mission. As an itinerant preacher, he has ministered in 20 Indian States and in Seven Nations. As a Kahoot Quiz Master, he pioneered teaching a fresh Bible Teaching method which gets the Google Generation hooked to the Word of God - a method you can understand by searching Youtube for "Duke Jeyaraj Kahoot"*



## Statement- Holy Land and the Middle East

We, the Evangelical Alliances undersigned, in prayer for and deep meditation on the current conflict and crisis in the Holy Land resolve as follows.

We believe in a God of love and mercy as revealed throughout scripture and His son Jesus Christ.

We affirm our commitment to the dignity of every human being and our commitment to international humanitarian law as an affirmation of the Imago Dei in every human being.

We, as the Body of Christ, are called to make peace. And we remember that Jesus' call to make peace came at a time of conflict, violence and deep division in the Holy Land

We recognize that our knowledge and understanding of the Holy Land and the Middle East is incomplete. We acknowledge the complexity of the geopolitical situation, historical grievances, and multiple perspectives of the people groups. We acknowledge that we do not know God's full plan for Israel and Palestine. We commit to listening and learning from the churches and people of the region.

We humbly seek God's guidance as we pray for the Middle East so that we do not become desensitized like Jonah and disconnected from God's plans to reconcile all people to Himself.

Our faith and the decades of conflict in the Holy Land inform us that without ensuring justice, equality and flourishing to all in the Holy Land, no people group will achieve security in the Holy Land.

We do not see the current resurgence of violence as isolated from the decades-long conflict and war between the two peoples, namely Israelis and Palestinians. This conflict has denied many their human dignity. We lament this situation.

We know that this situation in the holy land has resulted in cycles of violence, and that peace can only be achieved when the cycles of violence are broken and when perpetrators and victims are set free from their sinful desire for vengeance.

We believe that the Church to which we belong bears a responsibility to help break these cycles of violence by helping people be set free from their desire for vengeance, and to work towards the flourishing of all people in the Holy Land and in the Middle East.

Therefore,

We mourn and lament the continued tragic loss of life in the Holy Land.

We repent of our own failure to support just peacemaking in the Holy Land.

We mourn the decades-long absence of peacemaking efforts amidst decades of continuous conflicts that have rendered the two-State solution impossible and extinguished the glimmer of hope of the Oslo Accords.

Therefore,

We call for de-escalation and the cessation of hostilities between Israel and different Palestinian formations and supporters, including Hamas.

We condemn the attacks on civilians by Hamas. Hamas' acts of aggression and the largest killing of Jewish civilians on a single day since the Holocaust are deplorable and despicable.

We note that Israel in pursuit of Hamas has caused more civilian deaths in Palestine. We condemn these further deaths of Palestinian civilians.

We lament the indignity of displaced populations.

We denounce the international community's failure to uphold its obligation to protect civilians and to ensure respect of international humanitarian law, which follows the neglect of its duty for pursuing a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

We call on Hamas to immediately release all hostages.

We condemn every narrative that dehumanizes ethnic or religious groups, and we condemn all forms of racism and antisemitism.

Furthermore,

We urge all Christians and people of faith to pray for an immediate end of the war.

We urge all Christians and people of faith to pray for the safety and release of all hostages.

We call on the Church and people of faith to increase and intensify just peacemaking in the region which promotes restorative justice in the region, and to do so while demonstrating empathy and humility.

Finally,

There are many crises and conflicts in the world including in Sudan, Azerbaijan-Armenia, Yemen, Ukraine-Russia, and Myanmar. We call the Church to pray for an end to war, for peace, justice, healing, and reconciliation in all these conflicts.

Amen.

### **Supporting alliances and Organizations:**

- Middle East and North Africa Evangelical Alliance
- Asia Evangelical Alliance



- Alianza Evangelica Latina
- Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia
- Jordan Evangelical Council
- Evangelical Fellowship of India
- Association of the Iraqi National Evangelical Churches
- Evangelical Alliance of Kenya
- Evangelical Churches Alliance Qatar
- Evangelical Alliance of South Africa
- National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka
- National Churches Fellowship of Nepal
- Protestant Church of Algeria
- Council of the Evangelical Churches in Iraqi Kurdistan Region
- Evangelical Fellowship of Egypt
- Evangelical Alliance of Arabic speakers in Europe
- Caleb Institute, India

If you wish to sign this statement, please send an email to [mabulail@mena-ea.org](mailto:mabulail@mena-ea.org)



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At athletic events, there is nothing as exciting as a relay race. No individual honours are won. The prize is shared. The team effort is considered to be more representative of the school, company, or country than the efforts of any one individual.

The longest-running relay race has been going on from the time our Lord walked this earth.

The first race started with Adam passing on his beliefs and values to his godly son Seth. As the baton of faith was passed from generation to generation, there were times when there was fumbling resulting in the baton being dropped.

When the baton is dropped in a relay race, the team loses time, but it can stay in the race. A team is disqualified only if runners try to compete without picking up the dropped baton or if one runner were to try to do it all.

From Adam to Noah, the runners did poorly for the most part, except for Enoch (Gen. 5:24) and Noah who "walked with God" (6:10). Enoch was transported into God's presence without experiencing death, while Noah was saved from perishing in the Flood. The Bible frequently shows that the consequences and results of godly activity can differ because the Spirit-wind blows wherever it chooses (Jn.3:8).

## **Generation to Generation**

The race picked up when Abraham was chosen as the father of the faithful (Rom. 4: 11) and followed by Isaac and Jacob. God became identified as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex. 3:6; Acts 3:13).

Faith was passed from generation to generation. God instituted a ritual to pass on sacred knowledge from one generation to another. The youngest of a family would ask for the meaning of traditions, and the father would give the same answer year after year (Ex 13: 14; Deut.6:20).

For long periods of apostasy, the runners floundered and dropped the baton a number of times, but there was always a "remnant" that kept the race going (Gen. 43:7; 2 Ki.19:4; Ezra 9:8, 13-15).

Then the forerunner arrived to turn people back to God (Matt. 3:1-3). Finally, Jesus Himself came to carry on the relay race. He ended up starting a new race altogether because the first race was so badly compromised (1 Cor. 15: 45-49). The new relay

race was a continuation of the old one as if the races were in a relay.

But did Jesus Himself receive the baton of faith from previous runners?

For the most part Christians attribute all of Jesus' scriptural knowledge to the fact that He was divine. But the Incarnation must mean that Jesus didn't have special powers. He had to "learn obedience" (Heb.5:8). He grew up subjecting Himself to the discipline of His human parents (Lk.2:51).

As a devout Jew, Joseph would no doubt have followed the ritual of educating his children in the traditions of the faith. Mary's song magnifying the Lord was replete with Old Testament idioms (Lk. 1:47-55). Obviously, she knew the Scriptures. It would not be wrong therefore to infer that, in part, Mary and Joseph were the sources for Jesus' knowledge of the Scriptures.

Since the Scriptures were not in handy-size printed Bibles, nor cheap to own individually, the chief method of learning the

Scriptures was memorising passages. However, it is clear that Jesus went beyond memorisation because, from a very young age, He reflected on them, drew His own conclusions and applied them to life situations (2:46-47).

### **Primary Responsibility**

Before Sunday Schools came into existence, churches imparted Christian education through catechisms (elementary manuals for instruction in the principles of the Christian religion, in question-and-answer form). The Didaché (known as "the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," or simply "The Teaching"), written between the years 65 and 80, is the oldest Christian catechism.

The modern Sunday school began with Robert Raikes (1736–1811), a newspaper publisher in Gloucester, England. Whenever he had time off, he visited prisoners. Most of them were sick or even dying from overwork. They lived in crowded, filthy spaces with almost no food. Even children were sometimes imprisoned along with the worst

criminals. One day when he was going to his gardener, he came across squabbling children. He broke up their fight and learnt from his gardener's wife that they were called the white slaves of England – working 12 hours a day or longer in the mills and sweatshops because their parents were in prison or dead. When he asked when they went to school, she said, "They don't go to school. They have to work to live. And Sundays are the worst. It's their only day off and they run around like wild animals!" He shuddered at the thought that if his father had died while he was little, he too would have ended up like them. That's when the idea of starting a Sunday School came to him. They could be averted from a life of crime if they were given basic and religious education on Sundays – on their day off. He told the minister, Reverend Thomas Stock, "We'll teach them to read and write part of the day and teach them the Bible for the rest of the day." Some church officials opposed the schools because they thought that teaching interfered with the proper observance of Sunday, and others did not

believe in educating the poor because it might lead to revolution. It didn't take long until Robert Raikes and Reverend Thomas Stock had 100 children ages 6 to 14 attending their Sunday schools. Even though the children were taught only one day a week, their behaviour began to improve because they had something to look forward to, after working so hard every day. The policemen of the city told Raikes that the children weren't stealing and fighting like before. After three years, Raikes wrote about the Sunday schools in Gloucester. Then, the system was copied throughout England. Raikes even used his printing press to publish reading books, spelling books, Bible study books, and copies of the Scriptures for the Sunday schools.

Today, the success of Protestant churches is measured by their extra programmes – primarily Sunday school. It would be unthinkable for a church to not have a Sunday School. But the existence of Sunday Schools has meant that Christian homes are no longer sanctuaries for children

to learn about the faith from their parents.

We may think that catechisms were taught only by church officials in the setting of the church, and so Sunday Schools are just in line with ancient practice. 1 Corinthians 14:34 indicates that women (and children) asked questions while church was in session, and Paul said that instead of disrupting the flow of the worship, they should keep their questions for home. That was where explanations and clarifications were given. That was where the details were taught.

Children need affirmation of their faith at home. Often parents excuse themselves by saying that they don't want to force religion on children. They will leave it to them to decide when they are older. Remarkably, they don't have the same unconcerned and laid-back attitude about everything else in the upbringing of their kids. If a child says that he (or she) is not in the mood to brush his teeth before going to bed, parents will "enforce" their will – no doubt,

with explanations. The same when it comes to a child not wanting to go to school: parents have their way.

### **Habit Formation as Education**

My siblings and I did attend church and Sunday School. But my parents guided us at home into reading the Bible and praying as part of our daily personal devotions. We also had family prayers and we couldn't avoid them pleading sleepiness.

Today, I can't remember the sermons I heard at church, or the lessons taught in Sunday School. What I do remember is my own reading of the Bible, day after day. Even when I was in seminary, it was my knowledge of the Bible that helped me. When we studied the Gospel according to Mark in Greek, we had to translate the Greek text into English. I've never been good with languages. I would recognise a few Greek words in the text and "pretend" to translate the passage by guessing the other words relying on my memory of the English text of the Bible passage that I had read so many times. I would say that I passed Greek, thanks to my

parents educating me in spirituality through habit formation. I followed in their steps. I saw them practise what they insisted that we children should do.

All teachers should have the moral authority to be able to say to students, "Follow me." If a person taking on the task of teaching is unable to command a following, she or he is no teacher. Jesus counselled people that while some teachers were good to listen to, they should not be followed (Matt. 23:3).

The Apostle Paul could boldly say, "Follow me, as I follow Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). Setting an example is the primary method of all education, particularly when it is Christian.

### **By Authority**

If we expect our children to follow us, we should be able to command respect. When Jesus taught, He did so with authority. That was because what He had to say wasn't what others were saying. His teaching had the authority of God's Word in all its original sense. He dared to

counter current opinion again and again: "You have heard it said...but I say to you..." (Matt. 5:21-22). He wasn't contradicting God's Word but stood against prevailing false interpretations. He asserted that He hadn't come to break the Law, but to fulfil it (vv.17-18). He challenged people to go beyond the Pharisees' observance of the Law, discerning the spirit of the Law (v.20).

Standing in line with Jesus, the Christian educator's authority must come from God's Word. She or he cannot be one who is tossed about by the winds of opinion if we serve as those the Lord has gifted to the church in our homes.

### **Telling Stories**

No account of Christian education would be complete without noting that Jesus told stories to teach people about the Kingdom of God. Jesus told memorable stories. They were earthy—touching on life, as people knew it. Not all His stories had sacred content. Jesus told stories about ordinary activities (like sowing seed, cleaning

house, and caring for sheep...) and drew spiritual lessons from them. As those who follow the Master Storyteller, we need to develop the art and skill of storytelling so that what we teach makes sense.

The Bible is full of stories that must be retold and explained. The stories are there to serve God's purpose.

Apart from biblical stories, we need to tell the stories of our own experiences. Peter taught about reaching out to Gentiles, by telling of his own experience (Acts 15: 7-11). The Book of Acts records two occasions when Paul recounted the story of his conversion (22:6-21; 26:4-23).

### **Creating Memories**

As noted earlier, in biblical times, memorisation was the chief method of learning, because they didn't have the luxury of owning private copies of the Scriptures. That Jesus used this method of teaching as an itinerant teacher is apparent from the way the wording is preserved in parallel passages in the Synoptic Gospels (e.g. Matt. 5: 13 with Lk.

14:34-35; Matt. 5: 15 with Mk. 4:21 and Lk. 8: 16; Matt. 6:9-13 with Lk. 11:2-4).

Today Christian homes, churches, and Sunday Schools do not insist on Scripture memorisation. Only the Word that is hidden in the heart can stop people from pursuing wantonness (Ps. 119: 9, 11). The Spirit transforms people, when they allow the light of God's Word to fall on them (2 Cor.3:18).

The creation of memories is integral to the task of Christian education. What they store in their hearts is what will guard people facing temptations and troubles.

When the Early Church was formed, new believers devoted themselves to "apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42). Clearly, a body of teaching grew that was identified as apostolic. (Refer to my earlier reference to the Didache). Nothing was in writing then, but there was an "oral tradition" that was handed down by the apostles and passed on from believer to believer, and congregation to congregation.

Paul wrote, "For I passed on to you as of first importance what I also received..." (1 Cor. 15:3-4). What Paul was saying was that the baton he had received was what he passed on in all his preaching and teaching.

Paul charged the church at Thessalonica, "Therefore, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold on to the traditions that we taught you...keep away from any brother who lives an undisciplined life and not according to the tradition they received from us" (2 Th. 2:15; 3:6).

Evangelicals have a sort of gut reaction against tradition, thinking it constitutes dead beliefs and unbiblical practices. However, the word "tradition" simply means "delivering" or "handing over." Passing on what we believe to be true is what tradition is all about, and passing the spiritual baton on is what Christian education is all about.

### **Christian Year**

Allow me to add a word for Christian education in the context of a church's ministry. One



tradition Evangelical educators would do well to restore is the observance of the Christian Calendar.

After coming to the Lord I became involved with Youth For Christ clubs. I developed a taste for a diet of "salvation messages" (urging unbelievers to commit their lives to Christ). I also began to think that preaching for salvation (i.e. getting people to make a decision to receive Jesus as Saviour) was the only kind of preaching that was any good.

When I was appointed pastor at the Lalbagh Methodist Church, while I preached special sermons for Christmas and Holy Week, I never paid attention to other significant days. I got into trouble with some of the older members because I failed to change the backdrop curtains according to the colours of the seasons of the Christian Year. With great reluctance and annoyance, I began to pay attention to the calendar. Slowly, I started to preach on the other special days in the year: Pentecost Sunday, Trinity Sunday, etc. Of course, I didn't observe "saints' days" as in

the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican churches.

I came to think of the Christian calendar as a teaching tool. There are six basic movements of divine revelation that the calendar takes the church through:

- Christmas - Jesus is born
- Epiphany - Jesus is revealed
- Lent/Good Friday - Jesus suffers/dies for all
- Easter - Jesus lives
- Pentecost - Jesus sends the Holy Spirit
- Advent - Jesus is coming

Preaching according to the Christian Calendar would prevent preachers from riding hobbyhorses. Preachers have a tendency to stick to their favourite topics, stunting the growth of people they preach to.

### **Whole Counsel of God**

The Christian Calendar covers the total range of Christian doctrines. Preachers who follow the schedule would present the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). People should hear everything that God wants them

to know. Our Lord proclaimed the "Kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Paul did too (28:31). There was completeness to what was preached. The unpleasant and hard bits were not left out. Everything was proclaimed and explained.

John Wesley wrote, "I find more profit in sermons on either good tempers, or good works, than in what are vulgarly called gospel sermons.... Let but a pert, self-sufficient animal, that has neither sense or grace, bawl out something about Christ, or his blood, or justification by faith, and his hearers cry out, 'What a fine gospel sermon!' Surely, the Methodists have not so learned Christ. We know no gospel without salvation from sin" ("Letter to Miss Bishop" –Oct. 18,

1778). In a letter to his brother Charles, he said that this kind of preaching "naturally tends to drive holiness out of the world" ("Letter to Charles Wesley" – Nov. 4, 1772).

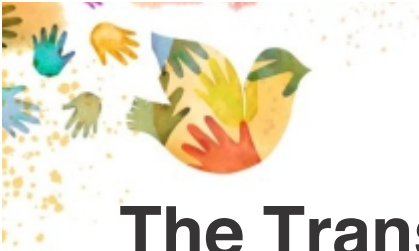
Whether preaching or teaching, we must get the whole counsel of God the children God has blessed us with. Let the baton be passed on faithfully.



**Rev. Kuruvilla Chandy**  
*is a freelance preacher and writer. He can be reached at: [reverendkuru@aol.com](mailto:reverendkuru@aol.com)*

What a person desires is unfailling love ;  
better to be poor than a liar.  
Proverbs 19:22





# The Transformative Power of Kindness

Dr. Shantanu Dutta



Kindness, a universal language, transcends cultural boundaries, age, and gender. This simple yet profound quality has the potential to change lives, uplift communities, and foster a more harmonious world. Amidst a world often marked by division and strife, kindness serves as a beacon of hope, reminding us of our shared humanity and the potential for positive change.

Kindness is a multifaceted virtue encompassing a broad spectrum of actions and attitudes. It involves demonstrating compassion, empathy, and consideration for others. Kind individuals are not only gentle and caring in their interactions but also proactive in helping,

supporting, and uplifting those in need. Whether it's a small act like holding the door for someone or a grand gesture of selfless giving, kindness is a force that unites us as human beings.

A remarkable aspect of kindness is its ripple effect. An act of kindness often inspires others to do the same, creating a chain reaction of benevolence that fosters a more compassionate and connected community. A simple smile or a helping hand can brighten someone's day and encourage them to spread positivity to others, creating a wave of kindness extending far beyond its initial source.

Kindness profoundly impacts

both the giver and the recipient. Research indicates that acts of kindness can trigger the release of neurotransmitters such as oxytocin and serotonin, promoting feelings of happiness and well-being. Regular practitioners of kindness report lower stress levels, greater life satisfaction, and improved mental health.

Acts of kindness range from small everyday gestures to larger intentional deeds. These include helping a neighbour with groceries, donating to a charitable cause, volunteering at a local organization, or simply listening attentively to a friend in need. Acts of kindness don't have to be extravagant to be impactful; it's the intention and sincerity behind the action that matters most.

Empathy - the ability to understand and share another person's feelings - is closely linked to kindness. By stepping into another's shoes, individuals can better comprehend their struggles and emotions, making them more likely to extend a helping hand. Cultivating

empathy is crucial in fostering a kinder society as it enables us to relate to and support each other on a deeper level.

Kindness isn't limited to times of comfort and ease; it often shines brightest in adversity. Acts of kindness during challenging times provide hope and solace to those in distress. Communities uniting to support one another during natural disasters, global crises, or personal hardships exemplify the resilience and beauty of human kindness.

The fast-paced nature of modern life contributes to the diminishing space for kindness. Busy schedules, constant connectivity, and information overload often leave little time for meaningful human connections. Acts of kindness requiring time, attention, and emotional involvement can be sacrificed in the name of efficiency and productivity. Moreover, news media often inundate us with stories of conflict, violence, and tragedy, overshadowing stories of kindness and compassion. This overexposure to negativity can lead to desensitization and

feelings of powerlessness, making it easy to overlook the significance of small acts of kindness in our daily lives.

The diminishing space for kindness in today's world is concerning but not irreversible. We can counteract this trend by prioritizing kindness in our lives. Small acts of kindness like holding the door for someone, offering a sincere compliment, or actively listening to a friend in need can have a significant impact. Moreover, nurturing kindness within communities and organizations can contribute to reversing negative trends. By encouraging empathy, cooperation, and mutual support in schools, workplaces, and local communities, we can foster a more compassionate and inclusive environment.

In the Christian context, kindness transcends mere politeness or cordiality. It represents love, compassion, and goodwill towards others, manifested both in thought and action. Essentially, kindness is an expression of the love that Christians are called to demonstrate to their neighbours.

Ephesians 4:32 (NIV) encapsulates this concept beautifully: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." This verse underscores that the bedrock of kindness is God's forgiveness and love. As Christians, we are urged to emulate His example by showing kindness and compassion to others, despite their imperfections and shortcomings.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan, found in Luke 10:25-37, is a compelling narrative that vividly depicts the Christian virtue of kindness. In this parable, Jesus narrates the story of a man who is attacked by robbers and left half-dead during his journey from Jerusalem to Jericho. Two religious figures—a priest and a Levite—pass by the wounded man without offering assistance. However, it is a Samaritan, considered a foreigner and social outcast, who displays kindness by caring for the injured traveller. This parable imparts that kindness is not confined by boundaries or prejudices. It calls for extending compassion to

anyone in need, irrespective of their background, social status, or ethnicity. It underscores the significance of selflessness and caring for the marginalized as crucial aspects of practicing the Christian faith.

In Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV), Apostle Paul delineates the fruit of the Spirit, one element of which is kindness: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Herein, kindness is depicted as a natural outcome of the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence in believers' lives. It bears witness to God's transformative work within Christians' hearts. As a fruit of the Spirit, kindness should permeate all aspects of a Christian's life—it should be evident in their interactions with family members, friends, strangers, and even adversaries. By allowing the Spirit to nurture kindness within their hearts, Christians are better equipped to mirror Christ's love and grace.

The Golden Rule articulated by Jesus in Matthew 7:12 (NIV)

encapsulates the essence of kindness: "So in everything do to others what you would have them do to you; for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." This fundamental teaching emphasizes reciprocity and empathy. It exhorts Christians to treat others with the same kindness and fairness they would wish for themselves. The Golden Rule serves as a guiding principle that extends kindness universally — promoting harmonious relationships and justice. It highlights that kindness is not an optional virtue but an integral aspect of living in alignment with God's will.

In Christianity, kindness transcends being merely a moral obligation—it is also an act of worship. Romans 12:1 (NIV) encourages believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices—holy and pleasing to God—which includes performing acts of kindness and service to others as a form of worship. Apostle Paul reinforces this notion in Colossians 3:12 (NIV): "Therefore as God's chosen people holy and dearly beloved clothe yourselves with

compassion kindness humility gentleness and patience." Herein kindness is portrayed as a spiritual garment that Christians should don as a testament to their relationship with God.

In today's world, kindness is more necessary than ever. It promotes empathy, understanding, and respect among individuals, fostering a sense of community and mutual support kindness encourages us to treat others as we would like to be treated, promoting fairness and equality. It teaches us to be patient, forgiving, and compassionate, qualities that are essential in navigating the complexities of modern life. In a world often marked by division and conflict, a

biblical understanding of kindness serves as a beacon of hope, reminding us of our shared humanity and the power of love and compassion. It is a timeless virtue that remains relevant and needed in our contemporary society.



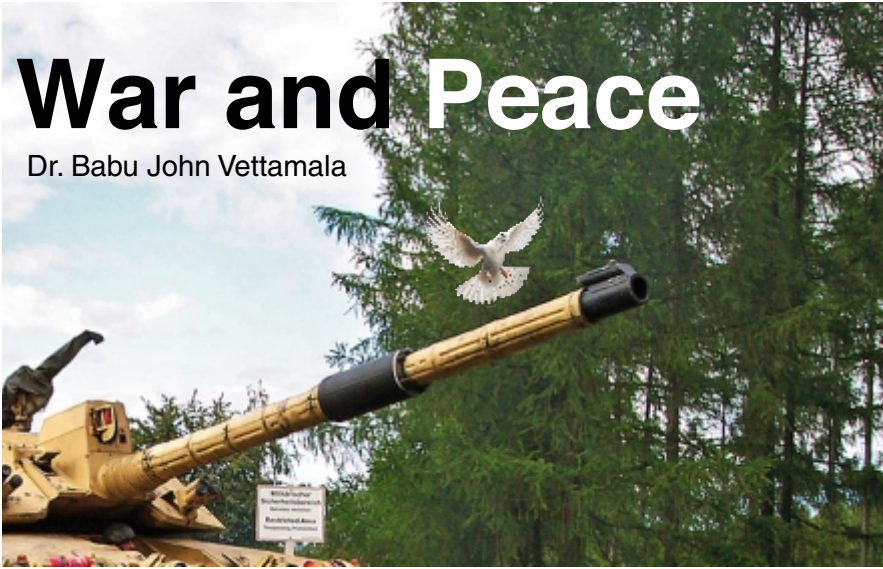
**Dr Shantanu Dutta**  
*is a part of Interserve (India) and the Theological Research and Communications Institute and can be contacted at [shantanud@gmail.com](mailto:shantanud@gmail.com)*

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.  
Colossians 3:12



# War and Peace

Dr. Babu John Vettamala



The conundrum of yet another war has unhinged world peace again. The larva of hatred dormant but very seething in clandestine has now been resurfaced with missiles, rockets, and myriads of other warheads ravaging over the land of Israel in the morning hours of October 7, 2023. The unstoppable array of attacks and counter attacks have been on spiral ever since.

What do situations like these teach us, or what lessons or precautions can ordinary people pick up from these macabre situations?

Well, what is on stake now is

human lives and the peace it distills.

Egg-heads and think tanks on all sides are brain-storming with lengthy deliberations on the facts and factors that led parties concerned into this calamity. It is good that humanists and humanitarians are awake at least when untold crises toll the knell of innocent people.

Before going to the despicable follies that paved paths for this unscrupulous fight, let us look on the solution side.

"Except the Lord build the house", says the Bible, "the



labours work but in vain; except the Lord watches the city, the watchmen wake up but in vain".

The inadequacy of the most invincible iron dome in protecting Israel from an unexpected attack, and the flabbergast of Mossad, the world's most brilliant intelligent agency, coupled with many other failures endorse what the Bible says.

So, the onus is on us, the children of God to bring God into the situation so that He might help us sort out things. But then, God tells us that we are the watchmen of the world. That means the godless world is insensible and insensitive of potential dangers lie hidden by its paths. One might wonder what they are.

Well, religious fanaticism leading to terrorism is the most subtle threat to all existence in the world today. Dime a dozen are national and international agencies that stand for world peace these days. The UN, the most ineffective of all its sort, is the custodians of international peace.

With its accredited agencies like

UN Security Council that ensures no security to anybody and its Peace Keeping Force that remains far from keeping anybody's peace and UNESCO that has no idea of what is worth teaching, the world has no dearth of peace makers.

But peace is becoming a mirage. Here, we must try to understand the reason why the attempts to peace are on permanent failure. To get the right answer let us ask, whose responsibility is that peace is established on earth. Obviously, that of Christians. Because Christians are the people with whom God has entrusted the responsibility of peace.

"My peace I give unto you", said the Lord Jesus to His disciples. The very Gospel that Jesus passed on to us is the gospel of peace. Having been justified with faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ, our Lord", says Romans 5.1.

This is the starting point of peace process. Without getting peace established with God our creator, we cannot imagine bringing peace anywhere. Our peace

attempt will be just like that of a bald-headed salesman trying to sell combs.

And then, go on to establish peace in ourselves. That's where an effective peace maker is emerged. It is this peace that works in our own life that we carry over to the world. Others can see it in us.

Those who cannot scale up to this spiritual high ground of knowing peace are like a well-trained salesman trying to sell colour tv to the blind man.

Peace is not something that has mushroom growth. It is the end-product of a series of serious attempts endeavoured by peaceful persons.

Here, Christians must be sensitive about fringe elements that emerge anywhere with ideas and ideologies that are detrimental to peace. But such forces always operate under the guise of resistance movements who spear-head the cause of some ethnic or religious communities, which they claim as marginalised minorities.

These are the hatcheries from where pernicious terror organisations are hatched out. Unfortunately, Christians everywhere keep their eyes closed to such realities.

This is not right. God wants us to be watchmen of the world. Wherever we see fissiparous tendencies develop, let us alert the world and stand for world peace.



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

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- Entrance Exam will be on **30<sup>th</sup> January & Interview on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2023**



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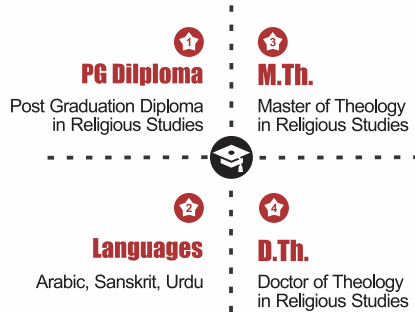


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Intercessory  
*Prayer*  
Points



November 2023

**1 WEDNESDAY** Thank God for the new month. Pray for effective ministry to spread the love of God during this difficult time. Pray also that people would have fresh awareness of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ and live for Him.

**2 THURSDAY** Pray for Full Gospel Pentecostal Church, Tamil Nadu. FGPC is involved in Church planting, missionary family welfare and providing shelter, rehabilitation, and orphanages to needy people. Pray that God would bless the ministry abundantly to display his unconditional love to mankind.

**3 FRIDAY** Pray for EFI member Indian National Evangelical Church in Tamil Nadu. Pray that the church may grow in number and in quality for God's glory. Pray for God's guidance and abundant blessings upon this church.

**4 SATURDAY** Pray for the ministry of Evangelical Fellowship of India. Pray that EFI would continually be instrumental to reach the grassroot gospel workers as well as the urban workers and be their voice to the world.

**5 SUNDAY** International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP). Pray for the persecuted Churches all over the world today to stand strong in the Lord. Pray for those who are persecuted and imprisoned because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray that God would comfort them and hear their cry and answer their prayers.

**6 MONDAY** Pray for your city today. Pray that God would heal the sick and comfort the bereaved. Pray also that you would be a blessing to many people in your city.

**7 TUESDAY** Pray for National Mission Consultation (NMC 2023) scheduled at Hyderabad from 8-10 November 2023. Pray that God would give clear direction and vision to leaders at this consultation.

**8 WEDNESDAY** Pray for Kashmir Evangelical Fellowship, Jammu & Kashmir. Pray that this organization would be the backbone of churches in J&K. Pray that God would give clear vision and insights to the leaders to lead believers according to His will.

**9 THURSDAY** Pray for Shammah Ministries international, Telangana. Shammah Ministries International is involved in church planting, women & children ministries and also for the poor & underprivileged. Pray that God would provide all the means to reach out to these groups so that Christ's love would be embedded in those to whom they minister.

**10 FRIDAY** Pray for the Mennonite Church in India, Chhattisgarh. Pray that the church would be vibrant and over-flowing with spiritual blessings. Pray that the church members would grow in Christ-like character as they live out their faith.

**11 SATURDAY** Pray for the victims of physical abuses. Pray for justice. Pray for healing both emotionally and physically. Pray that the Lord would give them the strength to forgive and move forward.

**12 SUNDAY** International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP). Continue to pray for those who are persecuted because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray that they would stand strong in their faith and be a blessing to others around them.

**13 MONDAY** Pray for The Transformational Movement, Gujarat. Pray that this organization would be an effective transformational agent that brings change in the state of Gujarat.

**14 TUESDAY** Today is National Children's Day. Pray that the Lord

would bless the children of our country abundantly and prepare them to be responsible leaders in the years to come. Pray that every child would hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and build their lives based on His teaching of unity, love, peace, obedience, and humble services.

**15 WEDNESDAY** Pray for Covenant Life, New Delhi. Pray for this new church to be blessed and be used by God to reach many unreached people in the city of Delhi NCR and beyond.

**16 THURSDAY** Pray for Doon Bible College, Uttarakhand. Pray that this college would continually groom, equip, and empower men and women of God to witness Christ in the world.

**17 FRIDAY** Pray for Capital Pastors Fellowship, Chhattisgarh. Pray that the Holy Spirit would anoint, comfort, and strengthen all the members of this fellowship. May God mightily use them for the extension of his kingdom.

**18 SATURDAY** Continue to pray for our nation that Christ's light may shine brightly and that more and more people may see the love of God and develop a greater desire to know Him.

**19 SUNDAY** Pray for the suffering servants of God to be encouraged, emboldened, and courageous. Pray that nothing would dampen their spirit to serve their Almighty God with undivided heart.

**20 MONDAY** Pray for the ministries that are reaching out to the next generation today. Pray that the Lord would give them appropriate tools for every challenge that young people would love God despite worldly trends and influences.

**21 TUESDAY** Pray for Full Gospel Farm Ministries, Maharashtra. Pray that this mission agency would be instrumental in bringing change in people's lives. Pray that God would abundantly bless their ministry.

**22 WEDNESDAY** Continue to pray for AIM magazine. Pray for all the writers to have new insights and appropriate words to express their thoughts as they write. Pray for their homes and relationships to be protected and blessed by the Lord.

**23 THURSDAY** Pray for Kentwood Community Church, Maharashtra. Pray that the Lord would use this community church to shelter and feed many hungry and thirsty souls with His Word.

**24 FRIDAY** Pray for the persecuted churches in your state. Pray that they would draw strength from God and carry on the good works that they do. May God enable them to be bold and courageous as they share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Pray for growth of faith as they go through persecution.

**25 SATURDAY** Pray for the evangelists and missionaries that

the Gospel would reach the remotest corner of every state in India. Pray for God's light to shine and dispel darkness.

**26 SUNDAY** Pray for the Junior Church or the Junior Sunday School program in your church. Pray for the teachers to be well-trained and spirit anointed. Pray for the children to diligently learn all the basic teachings of the Bible so that they may build their life upon it.

**27 MONDAY** Pray for religious liberty in our country. Pray that every individual would worship and share the gospel without fear. Pray for the safety and protection of your church today.

**28 TUESDAY** Thank God for his watchful eyes on His children despite our weaknesses and short comings. Pray that the Lord would bless you and make you a fountain of blessing to others.

**29 WEDNESDAY** Pray that every child in this country would get affordable yet good education. Pray for your child(ren) that they would love to gain knowledge and live their life with great potential, effectively for the Lord.

**30 THURSDAY** Thank God for helping you to get through the month triumphantly. Pray that the new month would bring more opportunities to serve Jesus.



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