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A Journey of Faith



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A Journey of Faith

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Editorial



Rev. Vijayesh Lal

5th September is celebrated in India as Teachers Day in memory of Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan on his birthday. Dr. Radhakrishnan served as the first Vice President of India from 1952 to 1962 and then as the second President of India from 1962–1967. It is a special day when we publicly appreciate our teachers and honour them through various celebratory programs and make them feel special for investing their lives in this noble profession. Indeed, we can never repay the debt of our teachers. We can only respond with gratitude and love.

This year, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian government finally released the National Education Policy. This new National Education Policy (NEP 2020) is the third revamp of our education system so far, the earlier ones being

in 1968 and 1986 (also modified in 1992). The National Education Policy is prepared by the Government of India to promote education amongst the people of India and covers elementary education and higher education throughout the domain of the nation.

The NEP 2020, which aims to transform India's education system by 2040, has been received with much appreciation and criticism at the same time. Interestingly the teachers have had a mixed response to it as well. While some like Prof. Najma Akhtar, the Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia have termed it “groundbreaking”; others like the Academics for Action and Development (AAD), has called it a policy that has "tall ends with little means". The AAD is a body made up of teachers in Delhi University.

The AAD points out that India has presently 18 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) but the NEP 2020 sets the goal of 50 per cent GER by 2035. "How can this be achieved -- more than double of GER in next 15 years?", they say. They also allege that the NEP 2020 speaks of internationalisation which may only facilitate the entry of the foreign universities to tap the Indian educational market for their own benefits. "This is a "return of Macaulay" -- building an education system in the interest of foreigners and wealthy ones," they alleged.

The NEP is also silent on the issue that concerns the teachers a lot i.e. the system of contract teachers. While the NEP says that "the teacher must be at the centre of the fundamental reforms in the education system," and recognizes the need for "recruitment, continuous professional development, positive working environment and service conditions", it does not explain words like recruitment, service conditions etc. which are then open to multiple interpretations. Contractual teachers normally work in smaller schools and do not enjoy the same service conditions as regular teachers. They also are hired while having just basic qualifications but almost never get

any chance of in-service training opportunities. This weakens the system and defeats the morale of the teachers whom we celebrate on 5th September every year.

But there are other related issues too that the NEP does not address. Privatization of education, particularly elementary education is encouraged under the new policy. This will no doubt make way for the regularization of schools that although charge lower fees, particularly in the rural and semi-urban areas but also have poor infrastructure and untrained teachers. It will also legitimise and mainstream "one teacher" schools like the Ekal Vidyalayas that currently spread across the country and number more than a lakh. Ekal Vidyalayas are run by the Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation (EVF), which is "associated with the Hindu nationalist organisations Vishva Hindu Parishad, which is in turn a member of the Sangh Parivar, the family of organisations run by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)."

Minority educational institutions, particularly Christian educational institutions have contributed a lot to nation building. The Church's contribution to education of the nation has been disproportionately

large. The earlier policies like the National Education Policy of 1986 had unambiguously recognized minority rights and the importance of education of minorities and the need for protecting the constitutional guarantees given to minorities to establish and administer their own educational institutions. However, the NEP 2020 is silent on this.

Issues like these have prompted critics like Nandita Narain, associate professor at St Stephen's College to term the NEP 2020 as the "National Exclusion Policy" rather than an education policy. "The NEP 2020 is a blueprint for privatisation of education and ideological takeover by the right wing. Education will be used to disempower people further," she told the National Herald.

The gravest charge against the National Education Policy, whose rules are yet to be framed and noted, is that it encroaches precariously on the rights of states as Education is on the concurrent list in the Constitution, and it makes one man, the Prime Minister, the sole arbiter of all things. Already facing charges of conceding much to sectarian groups, the NEP must shed elements that assault federalism.

While there is a lot of potential for good in the NEP 2020, there are also

a lot of areas of concern that need to be addressed. Space constrains us here but a good resource for the readers would be the August issue of the magazine Indian Currents. You can access the magazine from their website : <https://www.indiancurrents.org/>

EFI's centre for Public Affairs, Public Policy, and Research had held a consultation on the NEP in 2019 and later had collaborated with other bodies and had submitted a document to Mr. Ramesh Pokhriyal, the current Minister of Education highlighting the concerns of the community.

The NEP is a policy and not a law, but no doubt will become the basis of laws and standards that will eventually shape and impact education of Indians and their worldview. The Christian community in India is committed to nation building through our contribution to all sectors including education and will welcome any policy which is beneficial to the nation in building up of values, both moral and constitutional, so that we as a nation may progress and have a sense of common citizenship and culture so that national integration is strengthened.

Rev. Vijayesh Lal

WHAT ARE CHRISTIAN TEACHERS TO DO TODAY?

Rev. Kuruvilla Chandy



Schools are closed. Classrooms are empty. Teachers are now required to do on-line teaching. That is the new mode of doing the teacher's job.

One problem is that teaching was never meant to be just a job. It was/is a vocation/a calling. Old English novels in a village setting show the parson, the teacher, and the doctor as the three people of noble callings in a village.

God, Who Teaches

The first time the Bible used the word “teach” was in connection with God telling Moses that He would teach Moses and Aaron how to speak on behalf of God (Ex. 4:12, 15). So, God is the very first teacher, and in that much every teacher stands in line with God. India does have a tradition of treating the guru as a

god. That is not the same as standing in line with God. It is idolatry to let anyone or anything take the place of God. Idolatry always displaces God.

Moses was reminded that God was the Maker and so, He would take care of the impediments that Moses said he had that would prevent him from doing what God wanted. When we buy any machines or gadgets, we get an instruction manual from the manufacturer. Significantly, the next time the Bible talks of teaching is when God told Moses that he was to teach people from the divine instruction manual that God was giving him so that they would know how to live (24:12).

The aim of all teaching should be to show pupils how to live. The question to consider is whether instructors teach subject matter or

whether they are engaged in teaching girls and boys, youth and adults. Teaching subject matter is only a case of filling a gap in knowledge, and filling such gaps can be done by the individuals on their own by reading up on the subject or searching the internet. Teaching a person, on the other hand, is a matter of having a relationship, that of guru-shishya.

Representative of Christ

Our Lord was a teacher. People called him rabbi or teacher. Here's what Jesus did. He called people to follow Him. That is the role of a teacher: to get the student to follow her/him, to do as she/he does. Jesus deplored the fact that while the teachers of His day were teaching all the right things, they didn't do right. Learning from them was not liberating, but people were burdened. Those rabbis and Pharisees were just people who liked to be idolised as teachers so that they could reap all sorts of advantages and privileges (Matt. 23: 1-7).

Our Lord said to His students/disciples, "Follow me." Every teacher should be able to say that to students: "Follow me. Follow in my steps. If you follow me, you will not go wrong. Your life will be blessed. You will grow as a person." The

Apostle Paul was careful to maintain his integrity as a teacher and was therefore able to say, "Follow me, as I follow Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

Even today, Christian schools are the first choice of many parents in urban India for their children's education. However, many Christian institutions are merely resting on the laurels earned in earlier times. There have been compromises, and there is rampant corruption in so many mission institutions.

It is the staff of schools, colleges, and hospitals that must uphold the mission of their institutions. What is the mission of a Christian school or college or hospital?

First, they are to be representative of Christ Jesus. Being representative of someone is to take his or her place. Any Christian who is a teacher therefore takes the place of Christ, the Teacher, and should manifest the character of Christ Jesus. The Christian teacher must be like Christ.

Righteous Like Christ

Jesus described His disciples as the "salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13). Salt preserves food and flavours it. Arresting decay and making food palatable are what we use salt for. These are not either/or functions of

salt. They go together. If food is to be palatable, it must not be rotten.

People expect mission institutions and their staff to have a higher standard of conduct. They do not expect to encounter corruption in a mission institution. They are shocked and disgusted when they do. A Christian teacher must face the question of whether she or he is functioning as salt in society. Are we arresting the decay, the downward spiral of society? Are we adding a Christian flavour to life and living and thereby inviting people to get a taste for what is Christlike?

Jesus also said that His followers are the “light of the world” (vv. 14-16). He went on to say that “a city built on a hill cannot be hidden”. Christian churches and institutions are built on the hill of Calvary. It is not a very tall hill, but in terms of historical significance there is no higher mountain than Calvary. Any person or institution standing on that hill comes under scrutiny. Others expect to see the purity and sacrificial conduct of Christ when they look at whoever and whatever is founded on the teachings of Christ Jesus.

Significantly, the title “light of the world” was Christ's own title (Jn. 8:12; 9:5). He said that He Himself was the Light of the world while He

was in the world. He passed on the baton to His followers in the relay race of life, or, shall we say, He passed on the torch for us to carry it forward and light up our world?

Representing Jesus as a teacher therefore means that one has to be righteous like Jesus. According to the Bible, righteousness is conformity to the standard given by God. Jesus fulfilled God's Law and He is our standard for conduct in all walks of life. We need to be people of integrity. The Oxford English Dictionary defines “integrity” primarily as “the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles”. A second meaning is that it is “the state of being whole and undivided...condition of being unified or sound in construction...[having] internal consistency or lack of corruption”.

Do fellow-workers and students get justice in the Christian institutions where we serve? Often, instead of being righteous like Christ, we fit into the system and blame the system. We manifest an inability to buck the system because we just want to safeguard our own interests.

A system is a power structure, and as Lord Acton famously said, “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Managements

and executive heads have only the concerns of the management on their hearts and minds. Their concern is to safeguard their own power. They are guided by the profit-motive because they themselves will reap the benefit of profit-sharing. When the management of a Christian institution and its executive head function in this way, they are certainly not representing Christ because they are not righteous like Christ. Such situations call for some to take a stand in the name of our Lord – to do what Christ would do, to be like Jesus in cleansing the temple of God.

Redemptive Like Christ

Jesus was righteous, but not self-righteous. Righteousness for Him meant being redemptive toward those who needed to be rescued. He said that He had come not for those who prided in their spiritual health, but for those who deemed themselves to be in need of healing (Lk. 5:31-32).

This aspect of being like Jesus is particularly significant at this time when schools are not open to children who need teaching. On-line classes just don't do it for those who are poor and underprivileged. Computers, tablets and smartphones are just not there for children in

economically deprived families. While, government and school authorities have been congratulating themselves on providing on-line classes, poor kids have felt marginalised and left out. Schools in Kerala started online classes in June. In Kerala's Malappuram district, a young girl who was a good student, despaired because she had neither a TV nor a smartphone. She was in Class 10. She went missing from her home in the afternoon. A few hours later, her charred body was discovered at a deserted place near her home. The girl's father is a Scheduled Caste daily wage labourer and has not been able to make ends meet during the ongoing coronavirus lock-down. He said that the television at home was not working. The girl told her father that it needed to be repaired but he couldn't get it done. He couldn't afford a smartphone either. Obviously, the girl was worried she would not be able to study further, or that her studies would be affected because of the financial situation of her family.

What can a teacher do in the present circumstances to ensure that poor kids are not left out? Teachers need to do something because when the disciples tried to distance children from the Master, Jesus got indignant and said, “Let the children come to

me” (Mk. 10:13-14). He said that the Kingdom of God belongs to children. How it must make Him sad and angry that poor children have been dispossessed in the kingdoms run by adults doing programmes that meet requirements!

There are no institutional solutions for the problems of those who are marginalised and deprived. But there can be a solution that individual teachers can offer. There are poor children in every neighbourhood. Open your home to teach them in small groups. Or, go to places where they live in a cluster and tutor them in small groups. The health departments of state governments will not allow gathering a full class of 30/40/50 children, but the rules permit 10 persons to gather.

Or, how about offering to tutor the children of the domestic workers who come to your home to help you with housework?

The Second Mile

The Christian response to plagues in earlier times gives us a cue about how we are to respond to the present crisis. Christians of old were clearly motivated by the Word of Christ about visiting the sick and dying as though they were visiting Christ (Matt. 25:35-36). During the Plague

of Cyprian (249–262 AD), the Christian response won admiration and converts. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, reported: “Most of our brother Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains. Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead.”

Similarly when the Black Death (ravaging Europe from the 14th Century onward) struck Wittenberg in 1527, Martin Luther and his pregnant wife, Katharina, remained to care for the sick. Luther said, “We must respect the word of Christ, ‘I was sick, and you did not visit me.’ According to this passage, we are bound to each other in such a way that no one may forsake the other in his distress but is obliged to assist and help him as he himself would like to be helped.” However, Luther did speak of there being circumstances where fleeing was allowed and warned Christians not

to judge one another for different decisions.

Sadly, the image of all the noble callings has taken a severe beating because most of those who do the work of being a pastor (of souls), a teacher (of minds) and a doctor (of bodies) take their professions as just the means of their livelihood. With that attitude, making money has become the ultimate goal.

Teachers have a wonderful opportunity to restore the nobility of their profession, but they have to go the second mile (Matt. 5:41), and there is no payment for going the second mile.

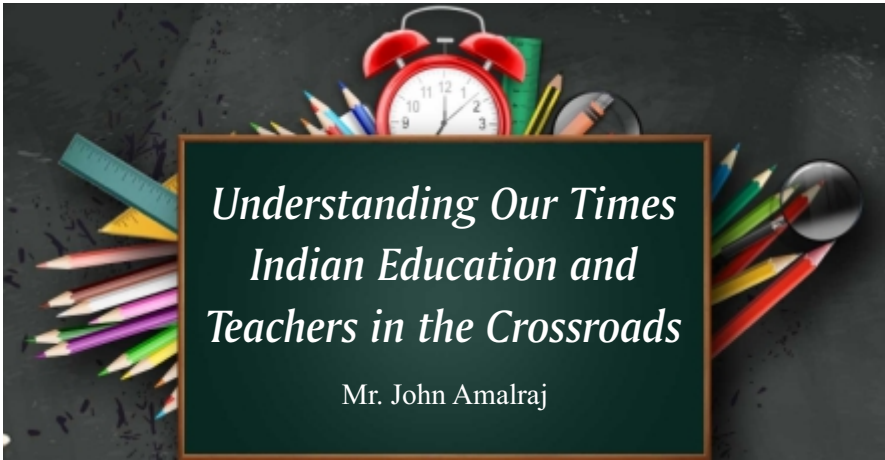
I was in school when Teachers' Day was first celebrated on September 5, 1962. We were told that our Vice President used to be a teacher and therefore, his birthday was going to be observed as Teachers' Day from

that year on. Think of it: a teacher had to become the vice president of the country before the nation, thought of honouring teachers with a day. That's sad. And, the fact is that apart from observing the day commemoratively, for the most part teachers are still not honoured. But it's OK. They have been called to follow the Master Teacher and He has asked them to go the second mile.



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

IF YOU NEED WISDOM,
ASK OUR GENEROUS GOD,
*and he will give
it to you.*



Abstract: *This article is an attempt to analyze the crisis of the educational system in India and how the churches can respond positively in a post-COVID 19 context. It gives a clarion call for educators to re-imagine the role of teachers as mentors.*

The desire to possess the latest branded smart phone is a symbol of the influence of technological revolution impacting communication in today's world. The mode of communication has changed from a post card to social media video chat that has caught the imagination of the world. Even during the extended lockdown, people are learning to socially survive as their mobile phones are still connecting them across cities,

villages and around the globe with friends and families. This technological revolution unfortunately has not impacted the field of education as much as it was expected. Until recently, some higher educational institutions banned the use of mobile phones on their campus or in classrooms. No one imagined that the temporary closure of educational institutions in the context of the pandemic, would extend for months affecting the future of the students. Most private schools, colleges and universities using the strength of the infrastructure have made a transition to remote learning using multiple digital platforms. However, the reality is that almost all government run or aided schools catering to the low-income population are

struggling to catch up with technology and are being left behind. Recently, I was talking to a friend who is a teacher in a government aided school in a small rural town. He was content that the government is paying his monthly salary but was frustrated that he is not able to connect with his students. The government had distributed textbooks to the students and asked them to do 'independent study' at home which is complemented by centralized teaching sessions via television telecast. My friend was wondering when the schools will re-open and if it does not, what will be his role as a teacher. Private schools catering to the middle-class population can use internet and smart phone but for a poor student in rural India who has little or no access to the latest technology the dreams of education is shattered.

Let us go back to understand the background of the present educational system in India, before looking at how we can respond to the present crisis.

Origin of Present Educational System

The first Scottish missionary Alexander Duff initiated the educational reform in India in the

year 1830 by opening the 'normal' school in Calcutta which catered to Indian children across caste and religious barriers to have educational opportunities in English. However, these schools were only for boys.

During this period, some British women observed that girls including young widows and orphans were confined to Zanas (the women's quarters for high caste women living in North India which restricted the entry of men who were not related) and did not have opportunities for education or health care. They initiated discussions in London and started a mission movement to send women teachers into the Zanas, and later in 1852, the "Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society" was opened in Calcutta to train Indian women as mobile village teachers. (The early origin of Interserve's ministry).

Social reformers Savitribai Phule and Jyotirao Phule opened the first school for girls in Pune in 1848. (Roshni, "Savitribai") Later, Pandita Ramabai gave a testimony before the Hunter Commission on Education in 1882 passionately advocating for female education as her duty to her late father who had broken

traditional barriers to teach Sanskrit to his daughters, believing that this was a cause to which she would be devoted until the end of her life. (Frykenberg, “Biographical”) Pandita Ramabai then founded Mukti Mission to educate orphan girls. Since then, men and women have had access to educational opportunities across India although challenges of equitable access for those in the lower caste system and lower economic strata remains.

The present Indian education system is the legacy of the British empire and the Western missionary movement. It is an established fact that whenever national leaders refer to the Indian Christian community, they commend our role in education and health care. It is the Christian educational institutions that built the foundation for the emergence of freedom fighters and many influential political leaders and bureaucrats. Today, government intervention and individual entrepreneurial efforts have multiplied the educational institutions. The private institutions often follow the example of the 'good old mission school'. Today, the church and mission run educational institutions seems to have lost their founding vision as they have been

overwhelmed by their need to administer heritage institutions and provide employment opportunities for their community.

Educational Reforms

We are now in the crossroads of a new era. Globalization, technological advancement, and the pandemic call us to rethink the educational system. In the past seventy years of an independent nation hood, several attempts have been made to reform the educational system by building new model schools and universities like the Indian Institute of Technology, Indian Institute of Management, Jawaharlal Nehru University, All India Institute of Medical Science and the Kendra Vidyalaya schools.

The most recent reform was the enactment of “The Right to Education Act 2009” that made education free and compulsory for all children between the age of six to fourteen years and giving every child in India the right to education. Meeta Sengupta, an educational policy observer wrote an article calling for a complete overhaul of the Indian educational system and suggested a shift in the mindset to build a good learning system. (Sengupta, “Educational”) There are

three major gaps in the educational system in India that needs urgent reform.

The Gap in Life Skills

Higher education has a very high value in India, but it is limited to the craze of just getting a degree, diploma, or certificate. The need for bridging the gap between the job market requirement and the skill level of available workforce is very acute. Work opportunities abound everywhere, but the current workforce fails to meet most requirements. Employers require people with inter-personal relationship skills, communication skills, critical thinking skills and moral character. The educational system fails to provide basic life skills to make a living.

The Gap in Infrastructure

It is pathetic to even talk about the government run schools and colleges across most parts of our country. It is the elite among the population who have access to private management run institutions who have large infrastructures. The primary and secondary schools in rural India have no infrastructure which contributes to the migration of students to semi-urban and urban areas for better facilities. If there is a

lack of basic infrastructure of buildings, furniture, and playgrounds the education system collapses.

The Gap in Teachers

There is an acute shortage of trained teachers in both governments run schools and private management schools. (Education Desk, Shortage, 2018) 12 lakh teachers are the short fall in government schools. The report indicated that we need 20 lakh trained teachers by the end of 2018 for government schools alone. At the higher education level, the need for faculty in existing universities is a challenge of capacity and quality. India needs 1.16 million teachers for all the universities in the country and by the year 2020 the shortage will rise to 1.38 million. The scarcity of qualified teachers results in under-qualified and contractual teachers in government schools, private management schools and mission schools. Teachers are the cornerstone in building the educational system and the lack of trained teachers is troubling.

National Education Policy

On the heels of several demands “The National Education Policy 2020” was released by the Government of India on July 31,

2020 promising to reform the educational sector by shifting the focus from rote learning to critical thinking, skill training and research mindset. This policy also integrates arts, science, technology, and humanities to provide holistic curriculum. Priorities on foundational literacy and numeracy, adult education, continuing education, three language formula, standardization of sign language, provisions for disabilities, internships, teacher training and universalization of early childhood care and education etc., are some of the highlights. However, a closer examination of the policy, the political agenda of the ruling party is evident. Even though the budget allocation has been increased from the present 1.7% of the GDP to 6%, the scope for further privatization and commercialization of the education sector is ripe and not a good sign for the larger population. We need to wait and see how the policy is implemented on the ground and whether the hope of making 'India a global knowledge superpower' will be realized.

Re-imagining the Role of Teachers

In the context of educational buildings and campuses being shut and many of them making a

transition to digital platforms and online delivery the million-dollar question is whether a paradigm shift is needed in our educational system. How can we provide digital access to every child irrespective of economic backgrounds? Can existing church buildings be converted to classrooms and computer labs for the neighbourhood? Can our congregation members volunteer as tuition teachers in the evenings in the neighbourhood? The Government of Delhi in the last few years have proved that with the right intention and use of resources the quality of education can be transformed. The key was re-training teachers to change their mindset and adopt a new teaching style. Teachers became life mentors to students. Whether it is a brick and mortar classroom or a digital platform a teacher as a mentor can make a difference. Teachers need on-going professional training along with being envisioned with the 'higher calling'.

The role Christian teachers can play in moulding the mind of children and youth with the values of Jesus Christ has been underestimated. The testimony of thousands of Indian leaders about the exemplary life and passion of a Christian teacher is told to the next generation. The role of a

Christian teacher is not just a secure employment opportunity. It is a call to mission whether they serve in a Christian institution or in other government or management run institutions. Young Christians must be encouraged to take on the once 'noble' profession of teaching and serve the nation not just in Christian institutions but in government and other private institutions rather than just opting for 'careers' that assure money. Indian education is at the crossroads and it is teachers who can become the cornerstone of the new educational system.



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served with Indian mission organizations in leadership roles. Presently he is pursuing doctoral research on leadership development.

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Happy Social Justice Day

Mr. Chacko Thomas



Introduction

It is very commendable that we have a day called “Social Justice Day.” The need for social justice is almost as old as our planet itself.

In this article, we want to look at some people who have made and are making a difference for the billions who have been “thrown under the bus”, into a “bottomless pit” called injustice.

God's Word is not silent on the subject although our pulpits are. I would be introducing a Justice Study Bible (NIV) called “GOD'S JUSTICE. The Flourishing of Creation and the Destruction of Evil”.

“It is not enough to sit back and say 'the world is bad, God is good, finally it will turn out alright’” said Gary

Haugen, President, International Justice Mission. (Dr Haugen formerly worked with the US dept of Justice and UN genocide investigation in Rwanda). He is also the author of the book, “Good News about Injustice”.

The Baptist Minister and Human Rights activist, Martin Luther King is the one who said that “the moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” He lived and died to make America, a more perfect Union.

The Bible Says,

“Let Justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream.” Amos 5:24

“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to

love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

“Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.” Isaiah 1:17

Social Justice: More than 200 verses in our Bibles uses the word “Justice” in one form or another. Have you noticed that one of the reasons why God chose Abraham is that, “he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, ...” Genesis 18: 19.

The choice of Abraham comes in just a few chapters after the Lord had destroyed the world in the flood, for being 'wicked', 'evil', and 'corrupt', that is Social Injustice. It leaves us in no doubt on where God stands on the matter of Social Justice.

All the writing prophets from Isaiah to Malachi, were preachers of Social Justice and righteousness than preachers predicting the future. In the eighth Century BC, Amos the Prophet cried out these words, “Let Justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream.”

Amos was “speaking to a religious nation, Israel that lived in peace,

prosperity and luxury. But alongside these externals, the nation suffered a profound social and moral decay. In every sphere of society Amos saw evils that needed to be exposed,” writes Rev. John Stott.

And he continues,

“In the law courts magistrates trampled on the face of the poor, for justice had to be bought with bribes” (Amos 5:12).

“In the marketplace, merchants were guilty of “skimping the measure” and “boosting the price” (8:5).

“In upper-class mansions, the wealthy were indulging in luxurious living, eating, and drinking, while ignoring the plight of the poor (4:1, 6:4-6).

“And in the sanctuaries, worshippers were longing for the festivals to be over so that they could get back to their buying and selling (8:5).

“... Amos insisted that privilege brings responsibility, not immunity to the judgement of God.” [quoted from “Through the Bible Through the Year.”]

Although far from perfect, Christianity has championed the cause of justice more than any religious or non-religious groups in

our world. Social progress is more visible in the parts of the world that are based on Biblical values. However, we Christians are far more familiar with Compassion than with Social Justice. We have delegated Justice to the governments of our respective nations. The rest is history.

A Ruler After God's own Heart: The Man hand-picked by God to lead the nation of Israel, “a man after God's own heart” is King David. God's last word on his leadership is that “David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people.” 2 Samuel 8:15, NASB. The NIV renders it “doing what is just and right for all his people.” That is right, “for all his people” not just for his family or his tribe. David's life is worth studying, to find out how he did it.

There is a general feeling among Christians that politics is dirty, therefore do not get involved. Many even preach against Christians going into politics. We may know Christians in India who tried and found it impossible to progress playing by the Bible Values. But you may never find a Bible verse to tell you that a Christians should not enter politics. I agree that it is not for everyone.

You may have read on the BBC website about a leading AoG Pastor in Malawi, Africa being elected for President of Malawi. He said that God told him to stand in election for President of his country. He did so and won the Presidency. It remains to be seen, how well he would do. I pray that He would do well.

Recently, our world watched the funeral of the American Congressman, John Lewis. What blessed me was to learn that he was a Bible Seminary student, preparing to preach and pastor a church when he heard the Baptist Minister, Dr Martin Luther King Jr. preach. Young Lewis joined Dr King to fight for justice for the African Americans and other minority groups in the USA. He gave close to 60 years of his life for it. One of the accomplishments of Honourable Congressman Lewis is a Museum of African American History, now standing in the US Capital. His last political act was to come out of a sick, rather death bed and stand on the “Black Lives Matter” Plaza and support the protesters who were there to protest Police brutality. Days later, he passed-away. He was 80 years old. Without him, Martin Luther King Jr. and others like them, there could not have been an African American President in the USA.

Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God. Timothy Keller, the American author of the book “Generous Justice”, subtitled “How God's Grace Makes us Just” comments on this verse found in Micah 6:8. The verse “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God”, he says, “is a summary of how God wants us to live”.

He adds, 'do justly and to love mercy' are not two separate things, but they go together. The one ('do justly'), emphasises action we are to take and other ('love mercy'), emphasises the attitude or motive, with which we act. He summarises the study like this, “To walk with God, then, we must do justice, out of merciful love.”

Another verse Dr Keller expounds is, Leviticus 24:22. Have the same 'rule of law' for the foreigner as the native. It means, says Keller, “acquitting or punishing every person on the merits of the case, regardless of race or social status. But justice means more than just the punishment of wrongdoing. It also means to give people their rights”, again regardless of their racial [caste in India] or social status.

Socially relevant people. It is heartening to see some people who could live a very comfortable life, almost untouched by Social injustice, would take the risks of confronting injustice that has penetrated every part of the society, including religions. They are champions for Justice. If Christians, they are “socially relevant Christians.”

Their hearts ache for the child labourers, child slaves, sex trafficking, political prisoners, people labouring on one meal a day, overcrowded clinics filled with sickness and death, people who takes bribes, courtrooms where the poor are mocked, governments that ratify the oppression of the weak by the strong, and the list goes on. How about religious atrocities, cloaked in religious mantle? These things are called out all through the Bible.

Look for example in Job 24:2-4, 9-10. “some remove the landmarks, ... they drive away the donkeys of the orphans, they take the widow's ox for a pledge. They push the needy aside from the road; the poor of the land are made to hide themselves altogether.... Others snatch the orphan from the breast. And against the poor, they take a pledge. They cause the poor to go about naked without clothing, and they take away

the sheaves from the hungry. [NASB]. I feel that God has tears in his eyes as he got these words written down for us in His Word, even as Jesus, “the Man of Sorrows” wept at sad occasions in the Bible. In part, it is because He knows the judgement that is coming on the unjust.

The Bible is not ignorant of these evils. God has given us in writing, a long list of evils is going on all over the world, the who and how and why. Please read through your Bible once with Social Justice in mind. We could be overwhelmed, seeing Injustice being so formidable. Sin is more profound than we had imagined. The devil is still the god of this world. He is the enemy of all good (Acts 13:10.) We would have no chance against these wicked and corrupt forces except for the fact that God is against these evils as well.

What can one person do? We feel helpless against these relentless, stormy blasts. Many freeze seeing the vastness of the ills and do nothing, saying what they do will not even make a dent on this massive evil avalanche. But thank God for those who do what they can, because the difference it makes for the ones and twos, that they can help. I have a friend, he and his wife started an organisation called “Set my People Free”, fighting for the freedom to

worship the Lord for those Believers from Muslim background in Muslim Countries, where believers from Muslim background are killed for trusting the Lord.

Another friend started an organisation called Starfish Asia, helping poorest of the poor in Pakistan to get an education, to get a good job in their country. Here is why he and his wife called their efforts, Starfish.

“I was walking on the beach one morning and I saw a young man picking up starfish from the sand and flinging them back into the sea.

I asked why he did it.

“If I don't, they will die in the midday sun , ” he said .
“But there are thousands of starfish,” I replied.

“What difference does it make to save a few?”

He looked down at the starfish in his hand and flung it to safety in the waves.

“It makes a big difference to this one!” he said.”

Thank God for such a mindset.

A Study Bible on Justice.

Let me on closing introduce you, to a

study Bible, now available, that focuses on Social Justice. This will make up for all the sermons you should have heard on Social Justice, but you never did.

“God's Justice: The Flourishing of Creation and the Destruction of Evil.” This is one of the newest additions to the series of Study Bibles available today. It is ably edited by Tim Stafford of the famous magazine, Christianity Today. Contributors to this Study Bible consists of “56 writers who have produced God's Justice” among them some Indian writers we are proud of, like Dr Raju Abraham of Emanuel Hospital Association. They come from various Charities and Organisation like International Justice Mission, World Vision, Compassion and many more.

God has far more to say about Justice and Righteousness than about many of our pet doctrines over which we fight and divide as Christians. We need to set our priorities right. The devil is a “distractor-in-Chief.” Let

us ask ourselves the question, “what am I doing with my life that is more important than “doing justly and loving mercy and humbly walking with God?”

May God guide us to serve His purposes in our generation.

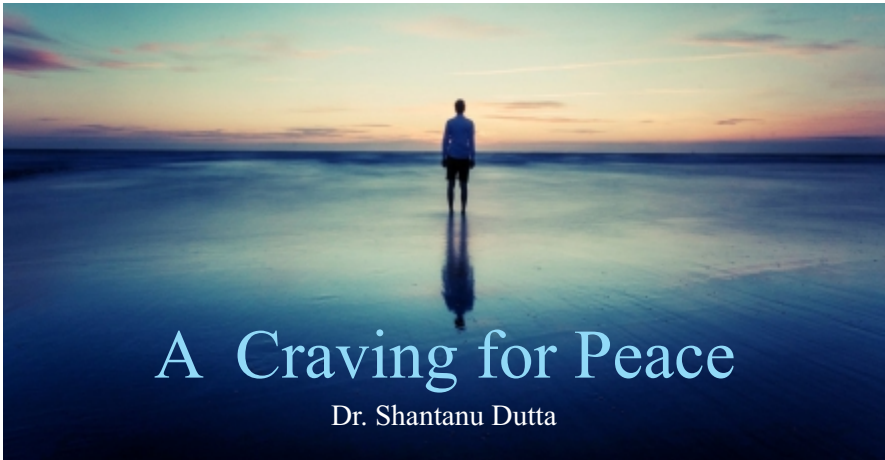


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“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.”

Luke 6:40



Although 21st September is observed as the World Day of Peace, as long as these days are on the calendar, they serve as a grim reminder that we have set up these markers in pursuit of goals that have thus far proved elusive. Not only are the decades old conflicts still around but new ones continue to emerge all the time. Although the day marked by the UN System primarily talks of world peace, the long duration lock downs have ensured that peace is often an elusive commodity even inside the four walls of a home. Prolonged confinement of people in cramped homes, long duration work from home requirements with no adequate infrastructure and lack of adequate preparation have led to situations where even petty disagreement can flare up into peace disruptors and more. On the other extreme, we read about how the

numbers of domestic violence are constantly rising.. often because husbands and partners are now at home all the time – either because they can't go to work or having lost their jobs, they have no work to go to. Observing a day of peace is relatively compared to sustaining peace on a day to day level whether at home or in the world.

The International Day of Peace, or, World Peace Day was first established by the United Nations in 1981. The UN declared that “Peace Day could be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations. At the same time, the International Day of Peace is also a Day of Cease fire– a day for making peace in both personal relationships, and the larger conflicts of our time. On Cease fire Day, the

world calls for and prays for, the guns to fall. Silent everywhere at least for one day.

Sadly, in our society, the true horrors of war and its inherently craven nature, are too often obscured. In our movies and television shows, our news and our memorials, we often prefer to hide the lawful reality of the human suffering and death that results from war. Instead, we focus on its heroism and nobility, sacrifice and national affirming character.

But what does the Bible say? Let's see if God's word can give us answers concerning world peace.

Matthew 24 is filled with Jesus' predictions about the future. Let me set the scene for you. The disciples had been admiring Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. Indeed, the Temple was one of the most beautiful buildings in the ancient world. At that time, it was already 1000 years old. It was built of white marble and plated with gold. Some of the temple's supporting stones were 40 feet in length and weighed 100 tons. The cutting and moving of those massive stones remains a mystery of ancient engineering. The disciples, some of whom were Galilean fishermen, were awe-struck by these huge and beautiful buildings.

Jesus' response must have shocked them. He said, "That temple will be utterly destroyed. Not one stone will be left upon another." Forty years later, in the year 70 A.D., Jesus' prediction came true. The Romans utterly destroyed Jerusalem. A portion of Matthew's 24th chapter, Matthew 24:2 and Matthew 24:15-22, relates to those awful events of 70 A.D. But most of that chapter deals with the end of the age, the end of history.

The Bible seems clear on a few things. It predicts that things will get worse instead of better.

Though our technology is growing by leaps and bounds, though the level of literacy is increasing worldwide, those trends do not create world peace. Why not? Because the basic problem is evil in human hearts. Just think about it. The only world peace we have known has been the brief periods between wars when nations paused to reload. Jesus would have agreed with this statement by Plato: "Only dead men have seen an end to war." In Matthew 24, Jesus gave us a preview of what the world will look like just before the end of time. He predicted that certain trends would be apparent as the end time draws near. He called these trends "birth pangs," sort of like the contractions a woman feels before childbirth. As

we consider these signs of the end-time, you may agree with me that all of these signs are ominously present right now. In Matthew 23:5-11, Jesus tells us that many false messiahs and false prophets will appear to deceive many people.

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tells us that many false messiahs and false prophets will appear to deceive many people.

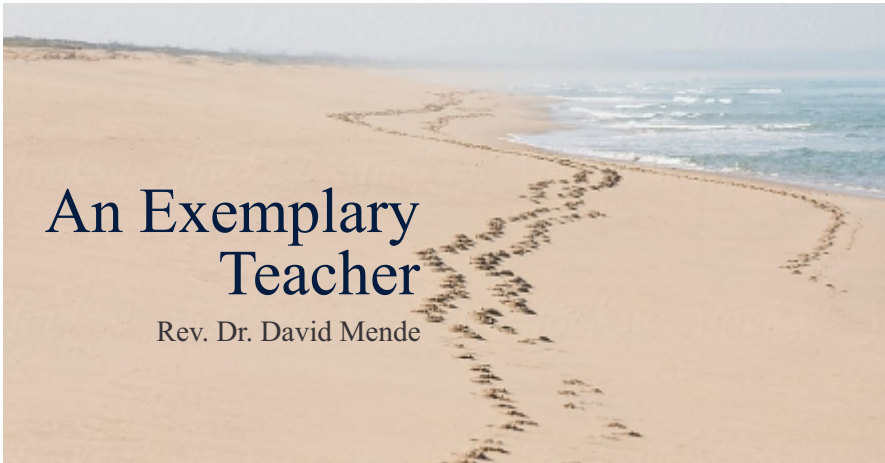
The second biblical truth about world peace sounds almost contrary to the first. While the trends of our world do not point toward world peace, nevertheless, God's People Must Pray and Work for His Kingdom to Come on Earth. Even though the trends will be against us, we must work for peace. Our task is to establish beachheads or outposts where Kingdom values prevail. We must build models of the Kingdom for a sceptical world to see.

The Bible's final word on world peace is this: World Peace Will Finally Come Through God's Massive Intervention. God will write the final chapter of world history.



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An Exemplary Teacher

Rev. Dr. David Mende

“Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher,” says a Japanese proverb. How true! Teachers lay a vital foundation for children. Teachers have an important role in nation-building as they mold young people into responsible citizens. Teachers are a great blessing to every society.

In our country, Teachers' Day is observed on September 5th every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who was a former President of India. He was also a teacher, educator, and scholar. On Teachers' Day, students make cards for their teachers and even give gifts to them. Even as we celebrate Teachers' Day, I would like to present seven qualities (using seven adjectives) of an exemplary teacher by using the acronym T-E-A-C-H-E-

R. Though I'm a theological educator and a pastor-teacher, the qualities that I mention here are applicable to all teachers.

1. Tenacious

While some students grasp concepts quickly, others take time to understand what is being taught. That's why teachers must be tenacious until their students grasp the content. Jesus himself was persistent in repeating the same teachings until their disciples grasped it (e.g., Mt. 15:16; Mk 8:21; 9:32). An exemplary teacher is tenacious as she teaches.

2. Encouraging

Anatole France, a French poet once said, “Nine-tenths of education is encouragement.” Many students need more than a lecture session.

Especially those who struggle in their academics need encouragement from their teachers. A teacher can make a huge difference in a student's life by being a constant source of encouragement.

3. Adaptive

Each student is different and thus teachers must be adaptive. The current coronavirus crisis has forced many teachers to be adaptive to the changing circumstances and needs of education. Even as the new education policy is being introduced by our government, teachers are challenged to be adaptive. As times are changing, good teachers learn to quickly adapt in order to continue serving and equipping the students.

4. Caring

Some students may be having health challenges and/or academic challenges and some even come from dysfunctional homes. This is where a caring teacher can make all the difference. Teachers must get to know their students. When students know that a teacher genuinely cares about their studies and future, they tend to pay more attention to what is being taught. The students even gain confidence as they study. A caring teacher can literally transform the lives of his students.

5. Hardworking

While some people hardly work, others work hard. Teaching is hard work. Preparing the lessons, teaching for several hours, grading the papers, and doing several other tasks pertaining to teaching is a lot of hard work. Most of the teachers get low pay and work long hours. Still, exemplary teachers work hard and give their best to their students as they see it as a ministry to the Lord and to their students.

6. Enthusiastic

When a teacher is demotivated in a class, we can be sure that even students will be demotivated. Students don't like to listen to a boring teacher. However, energetic and passionate teachers motivate students to learn and engage in the class. Our enthusiasm is communicated through our voice, body language, eye contact, etc. What's more, a teacher's enthusiasm can be contagious and encourage students to be enthusiastic about their studies.

7. Reproving

There will be times when teachers have to reprove their students. An exemplary teacher doesn't overlook indiscipline among the students. Even our Lord often reproved his

disciples. Sometimes, a playful student who disrupts the class has to be reprimanded. Needless to say, teachers must reprimand the students in love with the goal to see them become better students.

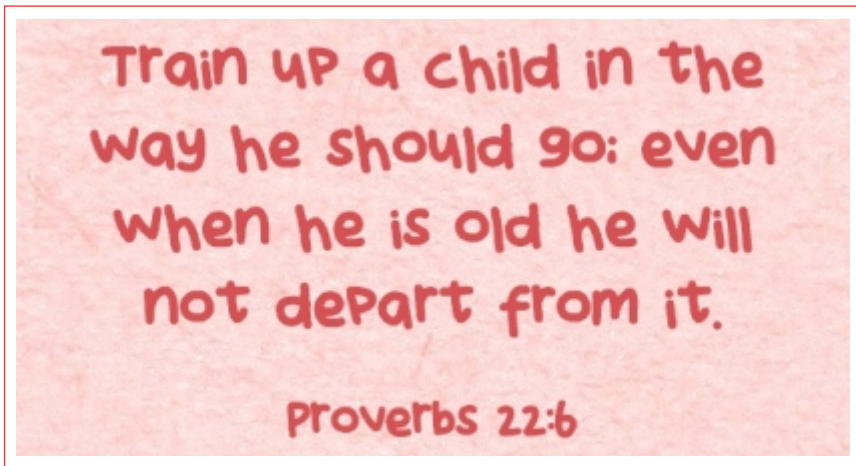
Conclusion

Lord Jesus is the greatest Teacher! Scottish theologian, James Stuart, who lived and ministered during the 19th century once said, “The teaching of Jesus has had a power and an effect with which the influence of no other teacher can even for a moment be compared.” Amen! Christ is the role model for all teachers. He taught through words and deeds. Teachers, we are given a great privilege as well as a huge responsibility by the Lord. Let's strive to imitate Christ and thus glorify God and be a blessing to people!



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READY TO SHUN AND SHAKE OFF BIBLICAL ILLITERACY?

Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj



September 8 is World Literacy Day. How many of us appreciate the fact that the Bible Translation works have indeed accelerated the literacy levels in many a place?

The translation of Bible into English by the likes of John Wycliffe (1328-1384) and William Tyndale (1494-1536) in the 14th century and 15th century paved way for even shopkeepers in England to become 95% literate. Bob Creson writes, “Literacy in England is directly attributable to the Bible” (The Washington Post, December 11, 2014). This phenomenon was repeated in India. Here is a report: 'Teaching people to read was one of the responsibilities the evangelists undertook so that by the time they left a village there were Christians who could read. Conversion and literacy were adopted together. Among the Khasis in Northeast

India, missionaries taught that, “You cannot be a Christian without reading the Bible!” p So, people were taught to read in Schools.' (Darrell L. Whiteman's essay in the Philip C. Stine-edited book, 'Bible Translation and the Spread of the Church: The Last 200 Years,' page 138).

Unfortunately, Christians who brought in literacy initiatives so that people could read the Bible, are fast becoming Bible illiterates. 'Sodom and Gomorrah? Are they sisters?' – this Biblically illiterate generation asks!

Let me use the word 'THEOLOGY', as an outline to underline the need for Biblical Literacy among God's people.

T- Titus Being Called To Pick Bible-Strong Elders!

Paul fondly called Titus his 'son' (Titus 1:4). He told Titus about what kind of elders he had to appoint for providing Christian Leadership in every town: “He must hold firm to the trustworthy Word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9, ESV).

H-Head-nodders, the Bereans Weren't!

The people of Berea were not head-nodders. They were more noble than those in Thessalonica because they, not only “received the Word with all eagerness”, but also “examining the Scriptures daily to see” if the things Paul and Silas taught were in line with Scriptures.

E-Ephesian Elders Called To Commit Themselves To The Word of Grace!

Paul never stayed continuously in one place to minister as much as he did, in Ephesus. And when he wanted to move, he made a gripping farewell speech to this church's elders. What did he say? He said after he left, 'fierce wolves will come in not sparing the flock' (Acts 20:29). What was the antidote for this wolf-attack? A commitment to the 'Word of His Grace!' (Acts 20:32).

O-One Hundred Twenty Thousand People, That God Talked About!

God's last question to Jonah still

rings in my ears: “Then shouldn't I show concern for the great city of Nineveh, which has more than one hundred twenty thousand people who do not know right from wrong, and many animals too?” (Jonah 4:11, NCV). The big number of people in Nineveh who were morally confused as they had no knowledge of Yahweh's life-giving laws which in-turn left none in any doubt about right and wrong – from that big number comes a missionary call to teach the Bible to those who know nothing about it! India's population is approximately 10,000 times more than Nineveh and that means we have a bigger motivation to reach the Word of God to the ignorant millions and teach it to them!

L-Lack of Knowledge Which Hosea Writes About!

One of the most painful cries from God in the whole Bible is recorded in the book of Hosea. God says, “My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. 'Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children!’” (Hosea 4:6 NIV).

O-Online Millions and the Opportunity For Evangelism They Present!

Sandhya Keelery wrote on July 7, 2020, that there are 550 million internet users in India (Statista.com).

This huge number beckons Bible Teachers to dedicate their lives to teach people by modern media, such as Zoom. And there are fully online Bible Training programs by reputed Bible Colleges like South Asian Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS), Southern Asia Bible College (SABC), etc., which trains those who feel called to be Word preachers.

G-Going On Circle!

Apostle Paul talked about an ever-increasing circle of Bible Teachers, when he wrote to Timothy: “And the things that you have heard me say among many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be qualified to teach others as well...” (2 Tim. 2:2).

Y-Yahweh's Prediction!

Yahweh's prediction about a famine of hearing God's Word is mentioned in the book of Amos (8:12). So, in the short time available now, let us become Bible Literates! Let us learn to handle the Word of Truth and teach it to our generation!

You may be a lay-person. But you can equip yourself by a self-study of the Word of God. Pick up a good Systematic Theology book. Wayne Grudem, Millard J. Erickson and others have written excellent systematic theology textbooks. I

picked up my first theology book, not after I landed in Bible College, but long before that. As a student of Technology (B. Tech) in Allahabad, I was studying volume 1 of Renewal Theology by Rodman Williams! And I led Bible Studies on the Doctrine of God, for a small group in the men's hostel! That was the training ground for a nation-wide Bible Teaching ministry for me! God has grand and glorious plans for you! And as you shun and shake-off biblical illiteracy and take time to study His Word systematically, you will become a blessing!



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The Holy Spirit: Sent from heaven
1Peter 1:12

E. BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Rev. Richard Masih



What is Baptism with the Holy Spirit? Is speaking in tongues the evidence of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit? When does it take place? Is it simultaneous with or subsequent to the new birth? Is it what is called the 'second blessing' (Cf. 2Corinthians 1:15). This phrase is translated variously in different translations. Such as, 'benefit twice' (NIV), 'a double blessing' (NLT), 'a second experience of grace' (ESV), 'twice receive a blessing' (NASB), 'a double favor' (NRSV), 'a second benefit' (CSB, KJV). Probably, ESV, CSB and KJV come nearer to the phrase 'second blessing' because they all use the word 'second.' Someone asked a servant of God whether he had received the second blessing? He replied, "Yes, second, and the third, and many more."

However, what is the Baptism with the Holy Spirit? This part of the present study on the Baptism with

the Holy Spirit is based on the book 'By the Power of the Holy Spirit' by David M. Howard. The book is published by the Inter-Varsity Press. I am grateful to God for this book. It removed all confusion from my mind as to the meaning of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. It gave me a straight forward clarity on the matter on which there are lots of confusion and division in the churches. Generally, we go by the testimony of God's people of their experiences when they received the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. Some have described it as electricity going from the top of their head to the bottom of their sole. Others have experienced, what is known as, vomiting in the Spirit.

One man went around and around in the meeting hall, driving an imaginary motorcycle for two hours. He was releasing the pent up emotions within him. Still, others

have spoken in tongues or were coaxed into speaking out whatever was coming in their minds without pausing to think the meaning of the gibberish they were speaking. I believe there are genuine tongues as well as fake ones. We will see more of it later. I was taught by one gentleman to sing 'Sa, Re, Ga, Ma' to learn to speak in tongues. I was told that the Holy Spirit will be pleased to see that his child is learning the Holy Spirit's language. Others were taught to act as if they were drinking from a cup. They were told that in that way they were drinking in the Holy Spirit (Cf. '...we were all given one Spirit to drink' (1Corinthians 12:13). One gentleman was trying me to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. I asked him which comes first- Baptism with the Holy Spirit or speaking in tongues? He had no answer. If Baptism comes first, then let's focus on Baptism, tongues will follow. But to focus on tongues is to put cart before the horse.

Have you heard the phrase 'Slain in the Spirit?' In a public meeting, the preacher calls a person or several persons to himself. Then he puts forward his hands towards them, and they all fall flat on the floor. The preacher makes them rise again on their feet with the help of his helpers, only to make them fall flat again. I have never understood the purpose of this exercise. Someone commented wryly, "When the preacher puts forward his hands,

everyone falls flat, except the photo/videographer." Another puzzling thing for me is this. In John 18:6, those who had gone to arrest Jesus, fell backward. In being slain in the Spirit, the people fall backward. In the Bible, the true worshippers have always fallen forward.

We will not learn the correct meaning of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit if we go by people's testimonies and experiences. The testimonies and experiences, however genuine, should be interpreted in the light of God's word, not God's word in the light of people's testimonies and experiences. There are seven occurrences of the phrase 'Baptism with the Holy Spirit' in the New Testament. They help us to understand the true meaning of the phrase 'Baptism with the Holy Spirit. Five of them are prophetic. They look to the future. One of them is historical. It looks backward to the past. One is theological. It gives us the true meaning of the phrase Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

1. Prophetic (5).

These all look to the future. They are found in all the four Gospels as well as in the book of Acts. In the Gospels, it's John who is prophesying them. In Acts, it's our Lord.

a. "I baptize you with water for

repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matthew 3:11 ESV).

b. “I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:8 ESV).

c. John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Luke 3:16 ESV).

d. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit' (John 1:33 ESV).

e. “...for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5 ESV).

2. Historical (1).

The historical occurrence is only once, found in the Book of Acts. Here, Peter is looking back and recalling what had happened in the house of Cornelius.

a. “And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 11:16).

3. Theological (1).

The theological occurrence is also only once. It gives meaning to the phrase 'The Baptism with the Holy Spirit.'

“For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit” (1Corinthians 12:13 ESV).

The word 'baptize' means to dip, to immerse. Notice the word 'all' repeated twice in this verse. 'All' were baptized- not some, not many but all. The Holy Spirit takes a person and baptizes him into the body of Christ. He becomes a part of the body of Christ, with Lord Jesus Christ as head of the body. This is the meaning of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. It is not subsequent to but simultaneous with our new birth. All the born again believers are baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ.

F. RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

Some believe in tarrying for receiving the Holy Spirit. They say, “You have received Lord Jesus Christ. Now you need to receive the Holy Spirit.” For this tarrying meetings are organized where the believers are encouraged to pray, plead and agonize before the Lord to receive the Holy Spirit. The word tarrying occurs in Luke 24:49, “And

behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay (tarry-KJV) in the city until you are clothed with power from on high (ESV).”

But should the believers tarry before the Lord to receive the Holy Spirit? What does the Scripture say?

1. Those who don't have the Holy Spirit in them don't belong to the Lord. “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him” (Romans 8:9 ESV). So if we do not have the Holy Spirit, we are not even born again. But if we are born again, we do have the Holy Spirit.

2. The Holy Spirit indwells every child of God. “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you... If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. (Romans 8:9-11). Notice, how in Vs.9-11 the word dwells is repeated four times, emphasizing the indwelling of the Holy Spirit every true child of God.

3. We are to guard the good deposit entrusted to us by the indwelling Holy Spirit. “By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you” (2Timothy 1:14).

4. How does our Lord come in us at our conversion except by his Holy Spirit? “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). Though the verse does not mention the Holy Spirit, it is but understood that he can come in only by his Spirit.

So, to say that we need to receive the Holy Spirit subsequent to receiving Christ in our lives does not seem to be right to me.



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CATCH THE KAIROS.

Dr. Sanjay Avinash Mall

There are two words of immense importance in the Bible. They are as follows:

1. Kairos
2. Chronos

The meaning of the word Kairos as per the Oxford dictionary is a propitious moment for decision or action.

The word Kairos is used 86 times in the New Testament. It refers to an opportune time, a moment or a season such as the harvest time. On the other hand, the word Chronos which is used 54 times refers to a specific amount of time such as a day or an hour. Chronos refers to minutes and seconds. It refers to time as a measurable resource. God putting up with the Israelites for forty years in the wilderness is an example of time that God spent with them.¹

In our lives in this world as we pass through the regular Chronos time, there are certain Kairos moments which God allows in our lives. Kairos moments may not come to us in the comfort of our day to day lives. They come to us when we may be passing through very critical moments. It is at such times that we feel the presence of God very closely in our lives. It could be at the time of a death of an extremely loved one, times of unemployment or any other very trying times that we may be going through. Kairos moments may not be very easy moments but they could leave an indelible impression in our lives for all time to come. A good example of a Kairos view is the time we have to shepherd our children. When a friend is experiencing pain, we have a brief window of time in which to reach out to them.² It is in these moments when

God is trying to reach out to us and draw our attention to him that we should recognize and respond to Him. Kairos moments may come to us in the stillness of the night or when we are least prepared for them. How spiritually prepared are we to catch such moments depends upon our relationship with God. A Kairos moment could be our closest encounter with God on this side of eternity. The Bible in the Epistle to the Ephesian church warns us to make the best use of our time as the days are evil.³

Let us look at some of the people from the Bible who had their Kairos moments:

1. Abraham: Abraham obeyed the call of God and left his father's home and followed God.⁴ God told Abraham, Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. In the following verses, God promises Abraham that he will make him a great nation. Abraham did not question God but left obediently as the Lord told him. This act of obedience was just the beginning of a very close relationship which Abraham enjoyed with God. During this time, while he experienced the silence of God, he and Sarah were also blessed with Isaac. Abraham was obedient to God to the point of sacrificing Isaac who was the son of promise. This was the toughest test

that Abraham faced in his life. While on the way to the mountains in the region of Moriah, we do not know the thoughts that were going through the mind of Abraham. However, when Isaac asked him about the lamb for the burnt offering, he answered, "God himself would provide." God honoured the faith of Abraham and in His time provided the lamb for the sacrifice.⁵ This was definitely a lie changing experience in the life of Abraham, having received his son back from God who he almost killed at the command of God. It was definitely a Kairos moment for Abraham. It was because Abraham was obedient that God promised him that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the sea shore.⁶

2. Moses: Moses had his Kairos moment in the wilderness of the desert.⁷ He saw the burning bush and was drawn towards it. When God spoke to him from the bush, his life was changed forever. He led the greatest exodus in human history and was the living witness of the parting of the Red Sea.

3. Ruth: Ruth was a Moabite woman and the daughter in law of Naomi. Naomi had given both Orpah and Naomi, the option of returning to their father's house after they had become widows. While Orpah chose to go back to her people, Ruth, as the word says, clung to Naomi. Your

people will be my people and your God shall be my God.⁸ Life is all about choices and she knew that she had made the right choice in going to Bethlehem with Naomi in spite of her mother in law urging her to return back to her fathers' household. When we read the Book of Ruth, we find how God led her step by step. On reaching Bethlehem, he led her to Boaz who not only married her but who being her kinsman redeemer, helped her to redeem the property of her dead husband. This was a life changing experience in the life of Ruth, something she could not have imagined when she was in her home country. Later on, she also became the mother of Obed. It is no surprise that her name and that of Boaz appears in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

4. The Shepherds in the Fields:

Shepherds in the days of Jesus were one of the most marginalized communities in the world. They were not counted worthy enough to be witnesses of anything in a court of law. It was to such marginalized people that God in His wisdom chose to be witnesses of the birth of His only begotten son.⁹ They went and saw the Christ child and even spread the news in the surrounding areas.

5. The Samaritan Woman: A lot has been preached and written about the Samaritan Woman and her close encounter with Jesus at the well.¹⁰

Life had not been kind to this woman. She had had a string of failed marriages. Ultimately, she came to the point where she lost faith in the God ordained institution of marriage and tried out a live in relationship. It is possible that because of her life style that she had been ostracized by the people in the midst of whom she lived. She experienced social distancing in the absence of a pandemic. It is at this point of her spiritual need that Jesus confronts her and the rest is known to all of us. She made the most of the Kairos time given to her by God and became the first missionary in the community.

6. The Thief on the Cross: The Bible tells us that two thieves were crucified along with Jesus. Both of them knew that Jesus was innocent and were very close to the Saviour of the world. However, it was only one of them who received salvation on the cross. He recognized that this was his Kairos moment and he did not let it go by. While they hurled insults at Jesus, one thief saw the Majesty of Jesus in the tragedy that He was undergoing and so, his language changed. He who comes to me I will not cast out.¹¹ True to His words, Jesus promised the thief that today thou shalt be with me in paradise.¹²

7. Saul: We do not need to dwell on this very long. Saul had his life

changing experience on the road to Damascus. When confronted by Jesus, he asked, “Who are you Lord and the response was that it is Jesus who you are persecuting”.¹³ We know the rest of the story, how Saul and later Paul became the greatest church planter in the history of the world.

8. The Jailor: We read that the jailor who had Paul and Silas flogged and imprisoned had his very close encounter with God when the place was shaken by an earth quake. His question to Paul was “Sirs, what must I do to be saved”.¹⁴ It is very much possible that the praise and worship of Paul and Silas had made a very deep impact in the life of the jailor. The change in his language as he now spoke to Paul and Silas is very much evident. From a derogatory language, it changed to a very respectable one. We further read that he and his family members were baptized the same night and that he offered food to Paul and Silas, the very men whom he had subjected to very brutal physical punishment.

Thus, we see in the lives of these people, each of whom came from a very different walk of life, how they encountered God and their lives were changed forever.

God gives us many chances to come close to Him, to have our close encounters with Him, to have our own Kairos experiences. Will we be sensitive enough to recognize those moments and come close to Him? It is my prayer that we will.



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1. Acts 13:18.
 2. A Biblical View of Time: Shifting from Chronos to Kairos, Loren Pinilis, June 8, 2011.
 3. Ephesians 5:15-16.
 4. Genesis 12: 1 – 9.
 5. Genesis 22: 13- 15.
 6. Genesis 22: 15 – 17.
 7. Exodus 3: 1- 6.

8. Ruth 1:14 – 16.
 9. Luke 2: 8 -18.
 10. John 4: 7 – 30.
 11. John 6:37.
 12. Luke 23: 42-43.
 13. Acts 9:3-6.
 14. Acts 16:30



Great Teachers are found at Home!

Mr. Hansraj Jain

Using ancient remains and currently in use Gothic structures, for PowerPoint, made my grandson inquisitive. He, as usual, asked of the relevance of using such archaic photos for power-point presentation. I was preparing a series of Bible Studies on "Building".

"Well", I said, "remembering our past (history) for what they represent and teach, are essential foundation and core of all our present activities. It is on these that we have built and continue to construct our lives. To forget our history is to condemn ourselves to the curse of repeating the mistakes of the past".

As soon as the words escaped my lips, the expression on the face of my 9-year-old boy immediately spoke up. It felt as if he said, "Dadaji, you have hit a sixer. I do not understand what you just said. (By the way, my grandsons play cricket!)."

Deuteronomy 4: 9 and 10, effectively, say the same thing, in a very tangible and decipherable language. The passage reads in *'The Message'* as follows: ***"Just make sure you stay alert. Keep close watch over yourselves. Don't forget anything of what you've seen. Don't let your heart wander off. Stay vigilant as long as you live. Teach what you've seen and heard to your children and grandchildren... God said to me, "Assemble the people in my presence to listen to my words so that they will learn to fear me in holy fear for as they live on the land, and then they will teach these same words to their children."***

Experientially derived lessons taught are far more effective than theory-driven and hypothesised teaching. They are mere conceptual by nature and content. Such notionally derived concepts leave open windows to conjuncture,

investigation (to prove its reliability). Doubt questions its workability and authenticity.

On the contrary, life experiences are both factual and tangible by character, reliable and authentic that can be tested and proven. These enable it to remain above ambiguity, mistrust and conjuncture. Creation of such an environment is a command and an imperative duty of every parent.

"That's great!", you say. How does one, in reality, achieve this?

Do we laugh away or get annoyed when our little one wears our shoes or the high heels and walk about the house? Is there a silent message in it - a sort of non-verbal communication?

Deuteronomy 6 verses six onwards provide with clues on how every parent can achieve the above. Of course, no two homes or, for that matter, parents, are the same. Their emphasis, creativity, and values would differ; As would be the history of their upbringings. But the core purpose and priority remain the same: to teach deep-seated life-impacting truths and values that are Biblical in character and content. Among these lessons is the knowledge and memory that our God is holy and that we are to be a holy people of His. (vs.1,2; 4 to 6).

God considered teaching this so important that His people are

commanded to 'write' them on their hearts. In other words, memory verses are a great tool. Use it well.

The other is: "Keep the daily tools of communication as tools. Unfortunately, neon sign that most homes have hung all around the house (even the washroom is not spared here!), is: ***Remember 'Communication devices' reign supreme in this family!***

Tools meant to be an asset to better living and connecting together. Instead, they have become direct invaders of family bonding time. These have successfully robbed us. We have no time to sit together, to go for walks together, day of outing as a family, and then come evening when we could have time for dinner together, and finally bring the day to a close with our family prayer time.

With the dishes cleared, kids tucked in bed; it was time for mom and dad to catch up on the day's events with a warm glass of milk, tea or coffee.

As for the bed-time story: It always offered a fantastic opportunity to narrate those Bible stories that were "His-story". Remember, these are events that focus on acts of God. So, it's alright if we spice them up by modulating your voice and by narrator's right to add a little imagination.

Then there are the festive times; Bible-study times when friends

come over and share a meal. These are extraordinary times for other like-minded and gifted in storytelling adults to take on the kids. Be aware that All kids ask questions. Please don't get annoyed with them. Instead, be happy to answer the query and tell the kids your reason for such a get-together and why you all think these are vital times for everyone. Do it around the campfire!

As for Sunday School, they are just an add on - affirming our faith in the lives of our little ones. Let's not forget that we are all attempting to grow children a messed up world!

By the way, all of the above is to be done by Dads. Moms have their role and place in the lives of the kids. None-the-less, blessed is the home where both the parents live, share, TEACH and disciple their children whom God has granted them stewardship for, together.

While Deuteronomy invites and encourages menfolk with the responsibility to teach, train and mentor our broods, James cautions us, saying, "Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers...

Why?

...Because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly."(3:3).

Failing our children is not the fault of the children; it is most often, rooted in parental failure, over expectations, and short-sight perspective. Failure (a bit of a strong word, perhaps?) essentially means that the man (of the house) or the mother, have never spent time planning or preparing how they might, together, fulfil their responsibilities and expectations from their kids. Failure to plan is to plan to fail, is the adage to remember. Yes, even when called to Teach, nurture and mentor kids into responsible adulthood.

Of course, there is always that hidden element of "Pride" - a huge challenge for every parent worth their salt; to have garner courage and humility to examine self and were found wanting, to change. ***Pride always demands a heavy price; it goes before fall.***

Choices do matter!!



Mr. Hansraj Jain
Managing Director, Family, Marriage & Human Relationships, INHERITORS.



Silent no more

Ms. Stuti Farmer

God has created us to be fully sexual and fully human from the moment we were conceived. Sexuality isn't a taboo topic for God, but one that He cares deeply about. He wants us to embrace sexuality but only according to His design. Sexual intercourse is one of the most closest and intimate act between two people which is designed by God for the beautiful purpose of expressing love and reproducing young ones but, which is acceptable only in the terms of marriage.

Outside marriage, such lustful, violent passions end up sometimes into rapes which can destroy the victim's life and is shameful for the criminal in society. Many people are aware of such happenings, but they are still silent. Why? Instead of

taking efforts to teach women dress provocatively, to carry a pepper spray or to take self-defense classes ; teach men that how wrong, filthy and disgusting the act of rape is.

1 Thessalonians 4: 3-5 tells us that God wants us to avoid sexual immorality, to control our body in a holy and honourable way, not in passionate lust like that of the pagans who do not know God, and in that matter no one should take advantage of a brother or sister. A woman has the right to wear whatever she feels right, to walk whichever street she wants, to be dominant, to take up her space. But nobody has the right to rape her. The rape cases which are reported in media and newspapers are only the ones which have come into light. There are many such heart

aching, disgusting and unbelievable assaults happening deep inside many villages which are hidden from the world.

If on a lonely dark night, a man sees a girl who is alone and vulnerable, 75% of the boys in his place will treat her as their responsibility, the rest shameless 25% may tend to treat her as an opportunity. Do not be like the rest of them. Do not let people be like the rest of these. Evil has darkened their hearts and minds which makes them behave worse than animals. God has created each woman fearfully and wonderfully, each of them is beautiful, each of them deserves care and respect, not just your wife or mother but every girl should be honored. God has given them beauty, poise, elegance, affection, strength, the ability of producing babies by bearing that excruciating pain of childbirth, He has given them strength to bleed every month during their menstrual phase and still light up the world around with a smile on their face.

Me too movement was started in October 2017 against Sexual crimes and harassment. There are young girls out there who are victims of this, some are not even 3 years old who face such problems. Yes, it is

shocking and astonishing but it is the truth. The older ones are either killed or made silent, the younger ones are thrown away to be eaten by dogs with their eyes gorged out so their faces aren't recognized. This harsh reality makes many shiver. Do not be silent, do not give up and never stop fighting for what is right. Our Lord is sovereign, it is His will to decide whether the criminal will be put to jail or exiled from the society or what, but it is our duty to raise our voices and take action to support our fellow citizens. Do not stay silent, do not be ashamed, you are not alone, you are a survivor, you are a victor. Let us ask the Lord for Grace, not to hesitate when the spirit calls us, to take a step forward.



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Intercessory
Prayer
Points



September 2020

1 TUESDAY Thank God for His marvelous grace and patience towards us. Thank Him for His protection and provision during the month of August 2020. Pray for effective ministry to spread the love of God during this difficult time.

2 WEDNESDAY Continue to pray for Covid-19 disease to stop spreading further. Pray for God's intervention and healing.

3 THURSDAY Pray for Andhra Pradesh today. Pray for peace and prosperity for this state. Pray also that the people of AP would desire to know and seek the truth.

4 FRIDAY Pray for Arunachal Pradesh. Pray for the churches to boldly share their faith in Christ. Pray that the power of the Gospel would change people's mindset and, also pray for revival for the churches.

5 SATURDAY Today is Teachers' Day. Thank God for your teachers and mentors who have impacted your life. Thank God for those who have committed their lives for the teaching

of God's Word. Pray for effective teaching and transformed lives as a result of their commitment.

6 SUNDAY Pray for Uttar Pradesh. Pray for the persecuted churches in this state. Pray for God's Holy Spirit to move hearts and minds of the people to encounter Christ and know him in His fullness. Thank God for many people who have accepted Christ as their Saviour despite fear and danger.

7 MONDAY Pray for Assam. Assam was deeply affected by flood this monsoon losing many lives and properties. Pray for restoration, comfort and God's abundant blessing upon this land. Pray that the people would look to God for help. And may God hear their cries and prayers.

8 TUESDAY World Literacy Day. Pray for eradication of Biblical illiteracy amongst the believers. Pray for hunger and thirst for God's Word to increase. Pray that people of this land would know the importance of learning. Pray that each child would get the opportunity to learn and gain knowledge.

9 WEDNESDAY Pray for Bihar. Pray for all Christian NGOs working in Bihar to be God-honoring and committed. Pray that the believers in this state would love God's Words and meditate on it day and night and be a light to the other people around them.

10 THURSDAY Pray for Sikkim. Pray for Church leaders to pray and plant churches strategically. Pray that the good news of Christ would reach everyone.

11 FRIDAY Pray for Chattisgarh today. Pray for safety and protection of the followers of Christ. Pray for courage and hope for Christian workers in this state. Pray for religious liberty in the state.

12 SATURDAY Pray for West Bengal. Pray for transformation and growth for the state. Pray for God's kingdom to be extended in West Bengal.

13 SUNDAY Pray for Uttarakhand. Pray for God's Spirit to work mightily in this state. Pray that God in his mercy would meet people who have gone to different places in this state seeking for peace and joy. May God meet them in their need and help them return satisfied and comforted.

14 MONDAY Pray for Tripura. Pray that the Gospel would reach the remotest corner of the state. Pray for God's light to shine and darkness to dispel. Pray for the gospel to be effectively preached and lived out by believers in this state.

15 TUESDAY Continue to pray that people who have lost their loved ones would be comforted. Pray for many people who are affected indirectly such as job loss, strained relationships etc. May God heal us and restore us completely

16 WEDNESDAY Pray for Telangana. Pray that God may use this land for the advancement of his kingdom. Pray for the willingness of the people to be used by God to touch lives.

17 THURSDAY Pray for Gujarat. Pray that the land would flourish both physically and spiritually. Pray for those who are spreading the Word of God to be encouraged and strengthened. May His Church grow and the people flourish.

18 FRIDAY Pray for Goa. Pray for spiritual revival in Goa. Pray that the Word of God may be preached and obeyed. Pray also for people would have fresh awareness of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ and live for Him.

19 SATURDAY Pray for Haryana. Pray for gender equality. Pray that every girl child would be protected and loved. Pray also that the Lord would bless this state and make it prosper.

20 SUNDAY Pray for Himachal Pradesh. Pray that God would raise many Christian workers to reach all the remote places in this state. Pray that people's hunger and thirst for God will be fulfilled.

21 MONDAY International day of peace. 2020 Peace Day Theme is Shaping Peace Together. As we celebrate the IDP pray that we may spread compassion, kindness and hope in the face of COVID19 pandemic. Stand together with the UN against attempts to use the virus to promote discrimination or hatred. Pray that we may all come together to shape peace together.

Pray also for Mizoram. Pray for the people of Mizoram to be the salt and light of this country. May their faith shine brightly and influence people around them.

22 TUESDAY Pray for Jammu and Kashmir. Pray that God would meet the peoples' need and comfort them at this difficult time. Pray also for the people's safety. May God reveal His unconditional love over and over to them.

23 WEDNESDAY Pray for Karnataka. Pray that the believers will have a vibrant personal relationship with the Lord. Pray that the Holy Spirit would inspire believers to live actively for Him.

24 THURSDAY Pray for Kerala. Pray for spiritual alertness for Christian leaders. Pray that they would tirelessly continue to plant the seed of the gospel.

25 FRIDAY Pray also for Meghalaya.

Pray that the churches in the state would focus more on witnessing. Pray the many youngsters from different parts of the NE would meet God personally during their stay in this state.

26 SATURDAY Pray for Tamil Nadu. Pray for spiritual renewal for believers in the state.

27 SUNDAY Pray for Madhya Pradesh. Pray for the churches in MP that they would shine brightly despite the many challenges they face. Pray that they would bear many spiritual fruits.

28 MONDAY Pray for Maharashtra. Pray for the unreached millions in this state. Pray for more gospel workers to reach them. May the Holy Spirit would actively work among them. Continue to pray for the flood victims to have their needs provided and be comforted in times of trouble. Pray for full restoration for the state.

29 TUESDAY Pray for Manipur. Pray for security and peace for the people of Manipur. Pray that believers would live out their faith and display God's glory. Pray for revival and growth for the churches.

30 WEDNESDAY Thank God for the fruitful month in His vineyard. Thank Him for His faithfulness to all generations.

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Evangelical
Fellowship of
India



One in God; Together for Good.

Introduction

Evangelical Fellowship of India, founded in 1951, is the national alliance of Evangelicals in India. As a central network of evangelicals and a service organization, it is the custodian of Evangelical faith, movement and values in India, representing the Evangelical voice, building capacity and promoting participation in nation building.

EFI is a charter member of the World Evangelical Alliance. Its membership includes over 65,000 Churches, over 150 Church related mission agencies and organisations and thousands of individual members.

Our Vision

To see evangelical Churches, institutions and individuals effectively witnessing the good news of Jesus Christ in word, deed and transforming nation.

Our Mission

As an evangelical alliance, serve churches, institutions and individuals through strategic initiatives, capacity building and forging solidarity, thus facilitating the mission of witnessing to the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed, and nation building.

Networks

- a. CEEFI (Christian Education Department of EFI)
- b. EFI Publication & Media
- c. EFI National Centre for Urban Transformation
- d. EFI Children @ Risk
- e. Evangelical Trust Association of North India
- f. EFI Micro Enterprise Development
- g. Evangelical Financial Accountability Council (EFAC)

Commissions

- a. EFI Women Commission
- b. EFI Theological Commission
- c. EFI Youth Commission
- d. EFI Religious Liberty Commission
- e. EFI Commission on Relief (EFICOR)

EFI is a Charter Member of the World Evangelical Alliance
An NGO in special consultative Status with the Economic & Social Council of the United Nations

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Evangelical Fellowship of India

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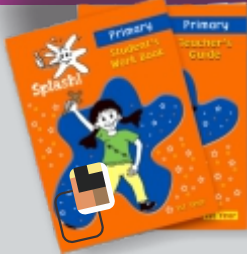
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