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# aim

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A Journey of Faith



International Girl Child Day



# A Journey of Faith

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# Editorial



Rev. Vijayesh Lal

September 2020 has been quite eventful. From the announcement on day one of the negative quarterly GDP, an important index of the national economy's health, to the stormy session of Parliament that saw Question Hour being dropped, the railroading of critical bills that will go against the interests of India's crores of farmers, and as a last straw, slamming through amendments to the already draconian FCRA which will starve civil society groups of funding they need to help the needy and the marginalised.

Activists Kafeel Khan and Devangana Kalita were finally granted bail while scholar Dr. Umar Khalid was arrested, Professor Apoorvanand targeted, and the

ailing Advocate Sudha Bharadwaj once again denied bail.

And meanwhile, our TV sets numbed us to the reality of the nation or to the pain of the people around us as high-pitched and high paid anchors led us to believe that all that mattered in life was gossip presented as expose of the film fraternity's flirtation with the dark side. In the process, some of the media's new favourites were given security reserved for top politicians, while the objects of their hate campaigns were arrested on hearsay.

We had a few losses as well in public life. Swami Agnivesh and singing maestro S. P. Balasubrahmanyam. India also lost Harley the Bike, while Amnesty the Human Rights

Advocacy group was forced to shut down operations. Religious minorities were targeted both in the villages of Kondagaon and Simdega as well as from the floor of Parliament. It was in the august chamber of the Lok Sabha that a former police officer turned politician sought to besmirch the memory of a martyr and his young sons burnt alive 21 years ago while serving the poorest of India's poor.

The month ended with the heartrending news of the police in Uttar Pradesh allegedly forcibly cremating the broken body of a rape victim, a 19-year-old Dalit woman, who was tortured, and gang raped by four high caste men in the State's Hathras district. This was one of many similar crimes in that state and others. She had been found on 14th September, naked and bleeding from her mouth, neck and eye, in Bhoogarhi village in the district. Her tongue was cut, eyes were bulging out and she had multiple fractures. The courts have questioned the police for their laxity. Civil society said the police sided with the powerful caste of the village.

The young woman died on the 29th

of September. Her family carried the body home, but policemen did not let them. Media showed visuals of policemen forming a human chain to keep people away from the burning pyre they had made for the body.

Another month in the history of a nation, and a civilisation.

India, along with other nations will observe the 'International Day of the Girl Child' on October 11. Let the observance move from mere tokenism to a firm resolve to tackle the menace of gender violence in our nation.

The Church in India must lead this cause, both within and outside and for good reason.

God created men and women equal and in His own likeness and image (Genesis 1:27). He blessed the woman and gave her authority along with the man over other living things (Genesis 1:28-30).

The Old Testament is full of examples of women who were leaders and used by God to fulfil His eternal purposes. Whether it be Deborah, or Miriam or Ruth or Esther, God's plan included both women and men. In the New

Testament, we find Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the Prophet Anna, who spoke about Jesus “to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.” (Luke 2:36-38).

Women were among the disciples of Jesus and when He was crucified and His closest disciples had deserted him, the women stayed. The early Church had women as leaders and in this the Church was markedly different from the culture around them.

The Church in India too needs to be

seen as a counterculture community in a nation that is saturated with patriarchy and structures that keep the women subjugated.

God is prejudiced in favour of the marginalized and the oppressed and identifies with them. The Church in India must follow the lead and challenge unjust power structures and work with Him, armed with His love and compassion to bring about justice and transformation, starting with our own homes.

Rev. Vijayesh Lal





I am not talking about the Corona virus, the Covid 19.

Pope Francis called Gossip, “a pandemic worse than Corona Virus.”

I wonder if he would call the “Girl Child” issues, a pandemic as well. Sadly, there are dozens more such Pandemics in our culture, claiming millions of lives annually.

**International Girl Child Day:** The fact that the UN has to set aside an International Day for it tells us that the pandemic is not just an Indian Plague, it is more wide-spread, affecting billions of lives. Like gossip, it is neither recent nor is there a vaccine against it.

**The Good News first.** The good news is that God is not for our undervaluing of girl-children and over-

valuing of boy-children. There are about 500 mentions of “children” in the Bible. Children, obviously, includes girls and boys. Girls are specifically mentioned when God gave the Commandment about REST, the fourth of the Ten Commandments. He knows well the human heart. He knew that we would discriminate against the girls. So, the fourth Commandment is the longest of all Commandments and note what it says about the females and refugees.

**Exodus 20:8-11: 8** “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with

you. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. (NASB. Underline is mine)

### **Did our Lord Jesus value girls?**

Matthew 18:1-6 tells us about who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. A “child”, “children” or “little ones” appears five time in this passage. Then in verse 6, The Lord Jesus said, “but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

If ever we doubted the value the Lord placed on a child, (girl or boy) this verse (18:6) should settle it. What message are we sending them? Stumbling stones or Stepping stones? It is no exaggeration to say that our culture has been a huge stumbling block to “Girl Children”.

Matthew 19:14 reads, But Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” So, all children are welcome by Him. He blesses them all without regard for their gender or race or caste or colour or status.

Consider the fact that just as our Lord went out of his way into Jericho to save a man, Zacchaeus He also went through the forbidden land of Samaria to save a woman, an outcast at that, the woman of Samaria. Again, just as our Lord raised a man, Lazarus from the dead He also raised girl, back to life.

### **A book “Lost Women of the Bible”**

is a study of nine women in the Bible, with the tenth chapter being a study of a group of women in Philippi. Among Carolyn Custis James' line up of women are Noah's wife whom she calls “The Unknown Soldier”. Sara is titled “Life in the Margin.” Hagar, the Egyptian slave is the “Invisible Woman”, Tamar is “Missing in Action”, Esther is “Sleeping Beauty”, Mary the mother of our Lord is “The First Disciple”, Mary Magdalene is “Apostle to the Apostles.” Her last chapter, about the women in the Philippian church who aligned themselves with the Apostle Paul for the Kingdom work is entitled, “Recovering the Blessed Alliance”. These women stood “shoulder to shoulder” with the Apostle Paul in the work of evangelising the world. Eve is her first candidate in the book and the chapter is called “A Forgotten legacy”. It is a great book that all women and men would benefit from reading.



In her “Conclusion: Lost and Found”, she goes on to mention times in the Bible when God sent a word to a woman. To Abraham, the Lord asked, “where is your wife, Sarah?” An angel spoke to that Egyptian slave girl Hagar and Abraham's family learned the great truth that God is a God who sees and hears all things, even sees a slave girl. Amazing, isn't it that God sent one of his main Angels, Gabriel to a village in Nazareth, to speak to a teenager Mary? When the Apostle Paul responded to the Macedonian Call, the people who actually welcomed him were a small group of women. (Please check out this book: ISBN – 13: 978-0-310-28525-0)

**The Creation mandate:** “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth. ... 31 God saw all that He had made, and

behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.” (Genesis 1:28-31.) God has not given up or replaced this mandate.

What God has “blessed”, let no man/woman or religion regard as “cursed”. These significant verses of the Creation Mandate need to influence India. It is good news for all human beings. Let us make sure that every Indian in India and abroad know what God has said about them. Let girls and women grow up knowing the great value God has placed on them as His creation, created in His own image.

**Sorry, Now the Bad News.**

**Gender-based Proverbs:** Here are a few proverbs about women from around the world, (I have excluded some real violent ones, it is a shame to repeat them). I take no joy in reproducing the ones below. I hope they makes you outrageous. I include these proverbs here to show us a terrible ungodly mindset has taken hold of us. Thus, we are all part of the problem. If these proverbs represent your mindset, then you need to repent. Not only repent but break the cycle of such thinking. And join the solution party.

Arab Proverbs: “A man loves first

his son, then his camel, then his wife.”

“A woman's heaven is under feet of her husband”.

Orthodox Jews' Prayer, a part of: “Lord, I thank thee that I was not born a woman”.

Punjabi Proverb: “If a wife dies, it is like a blow to the ankle. If a husband dies, it is like a blow on the head.”

Ancient Atharva Veda “The Birth of a girl, grant elsewhere; here, grant a boy.”

Nigerian (Yoruda): when an ass climbs a ladder, we may find wisdom in a woman.”

Confucius of China: “It is a law of nature that women should not be allowed any will of her own.”

Japan: “There are no wise women”.

Cambodia: Men are like gold; women are like white cloth.”

India. “A boy is an asset, a girl is a liability.”

Imagine girls growing up hearing these degrading outlooks about them. Surely, none of these proverbs are Biblical. Let us find Biblical

alternative for each of them. I hope all such proverbs against women can be eradicated from our culture by the power of the Word of God. We also need to eliminate all wife jokes, trying to get a cheap laughter. We should be crying instead.

All but the last proverb, quoted above is taken from the Appendix of the book “**SOS: Save our Sisters**” subtitled “**An Action guide for helping girls and women at risk worldwide**”. It is not an easy book to read. But “... this book goes beyond highlighting the ugly facts about female infanticide, child brides, girl soldiers, “honour” killings and other abuses. It is a book to inspire individuals and churches to action that can help turn the tide”. SOS is authored by Deborah Meroff and published by OM Books, available in India, in English as well as in a few other Indian languages. (KC Joseph <kcjoseph@ombooks.org>).

**30 days of prayer for the voiceless** is a small book addressing global gender-based injustice – abuse and suppression of women, particularly the young. Below are few of the 30 evils they highlight that ought to move us to prayer and other actions. Authors, Paul and Susi Childers (YWAM), are photo-journalists, bring these hidden victims before us to “see, know, feel, pray, and do” our

part. They “have not backed away from speaking directly about some of the most private and painful issues that impact voiceless women.” (ISBN 1-4276-0425-8).

**Child Prostitution:** 10 million children worldwide are engaged in some facet of the sex industry. Each year at least one million children, mostly girls, become prostitutes (most usually organised by an intermediary like, a parent, family member, procurer or teacher.) In Thailand, 10-12 year old girls service men in the sex industry. They typically have sex with men 10-15 times daily, sometimes as many as 20-30. Let us pray claiming what the Bible says, “Because of the oppression of the weak and groanings of the needy, God will now arise” Psalms 12:5. Pray that the Lord would arise and defend the little ones, that God would raise up lawyers, moviemakers and government rulers who will bring an end to this savage exploitation.

**Female Labourers:** (Definition: Female labourers are women who work too long, too hard and too much, especially in backbreaking manual work.) Out of the 550 million working poor in the world, an estimated 330 million, or 60%, are women. Majority of the women earn on the average about 3/4th of

the pay of males for the same work. On a one hectare farm in the Indian Himalayans, a pair of bullocks works 1064 hours, a man works 1212 hours and a woman 3485 hours in a year. Worldwide, over 60 % of people working in family enterprises without pay are women.

An African peasant woman typically works 16 hours daily, trudging long distances to fetch firewood, animal fodder and water, growing and harvesting food, tending crops and cooking and caring for her family. This leaves little time to seek education and training, the very things that enable women to break the cycle of low status and poverty. Let us pray because the Bible says, “Who is like our God who rescues the poor from those too strong for them” Ps. 34:10.

**Barren Women:** 50-80 million people worldwide suffer from infertility. The impact of infertility is compounded because women are generally held responsible for reproductive failure. This blame can result in divorce, husbands taking a second wife, difficulties with in-laws, domestic violence and economic abandonment. In some places, motherhood is the only way for women to enhance their status within the family and community. Let us pray that God would raise up

Christian leaders in traditional cultures to speak about the true value of women. Pray for “miracle” babies.

**Slavery:** Slavery is forced labour. For women and children this includes being sold for prostitution or debt bondage, used in pornography or armed conflict or being harvested for human organs. There are over 27 million slaves in the world today. There are 218 million working children between the ages of 5 and 17. An estimated 100, 000 women and children are forced to enter the sex trade in the USA each year. Children aged 7 to 10, work 12 to 14 hours a day, are paid less than one-third of the adult wage and are vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse. Because God is the redeemer of those in slavery, (Deut. 7:8), let us pray for the redemption of those trapped in slavery, that media would expose slavery, and for governments to enforce anti-slavery laws.

Well, these are just four of the 30 “Girl Child” related evils listed in the book. The list is long, it includes Domestic violence, Single Mothers, Education, Missing Women, Dowry, Rape, Honour Killings, Teenage Mothers, FGM, Trafficking, Starvation, Pornography, Incest, Purdah, Eating Disorders, Refugees and Abortion.

The book also mentions a few countries one of which is Afghanistan which I shall mention below, because it is a country that badly needs our prayers. And God is at work there.

**Afghanistan:** Afghanistan has had wars for decades. It had an extreme fundamentalist government until 2001. It is one of the ten poorest countries in the world. The female population is over 15million. Life expectance for women is 42 years of age. It is the only country in the world where girls are banned from secondary school education. Schools for girls have been attacked and set on fire. 57% of girls marry before the age of 16. Zaynab, 18, Afghan mother of five says, “My father forcibly married me to an old man when I was 11 and my husband treated me like a slave over the last seven years.”

Please pray that Afghanis would grasp the truth that when God created man and woman, He said it was very good. Pray that God would restore in Afghanistan His image which is distorted through oppression and exploitation. And that God would send many workers; educators and evangelists into its harvest fields.

**Are you outraged?** Grieved? Angry? Moved? Unmoved?

It was said of Robert Kennedy that his distinguishable quality was his capacity for moral outrage. “That is unacceptable”, he said of many conditions that we accept as inevitable ...poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, prejudice, crookedness, conniving - all such accepted evils were a personal affront to him.” ...One might say that apathy is the acceptance of the unacceptable.” (quoted by John Stott - Through the Bible Through the Year.)

May the Lord move us to prayer and actions and use as answer to at least one person's cry for help.



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"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,  
the fruit of the womb a reward."

**PSALM 127:3**

# Growing in Biblical Faith

Rev. Dr. David Mende



## The Necessity of Faith

In the last few decades, there has been a growing emphasis on faith in many churches. Most of us agree that faith is an integral part of our spiritual lives. The author of Hebrews says that without faith, it is not just difficult, but it is “impossible to please him [God]” (Heb. 11:6). Unbelief limited Jesus from doing “many mighty works” in Nazareth, his hometown (Mt. 13:58). The New Testament clearly teaches the need for faith to receive any blessing from God (Mt. 9:2, 22, 29; 15:28; Mk 9:23; 11:23-24; Jn 14:12; Jas 5:15). Thus, every believer must strive to grow in his or her faith. But there is confusion among several Christians regarding the nature of biblical faith.

In this article, I want to briefly explain the true nature of biblical faith by raising a few important questions about faith.

## Is Faith a Law?

Based on Romans 3:27, many so-called “faith teachers” preach that the “law of faith” is similar to the gravitational force. They believe that just as gravity works every time it is set into motion, the “law of faith” works every time a believer trusts God and makes a positive confession. Furthermore, many such preachers view faith as a formula. For instance, Fred Price argues that Romans 10:10 is a formula which anybody “could put anything in there [the formula] you want—healing, your needs met, new

job, car, home, whatever you need.” However, when one views faith as a mere law or a formula, there is a danger of reducing God to an impersonal being who invariably works on preordained laws (similar to deism) rather than the sovereign God of the Bible who is actively involved in the lives of his people. One should not think of faith as a magical formula through which we can manipulate or command God. Biblical faith is put in a person (God), not in a force.

### **Can we Possess God's Faith?**

Some preachers speak of having faith in our own faith. That is ludicrous. Mark 11:22 is clear that we must “have faith in God,” not in our own faith. The object of faith is God. But some contend that Mark 11:22 should be translated as “Have God's faith” or “Have God-kind of faith.” However, the Bible nowhere explicitly teaches that God has faith. Moreover, in Greek, the expression “Have faith in God” in verse 22 is an objective genitive, which implies that the object of faith is God. Jesus is teaching his disciples that we must trust God, his character, his promises, his purposes, his plans, and his will. We must have faith in God which is imparted to us by God

himself. God's people should recognize that God is the source and object of our faith.

### **Can we Receive Whatever we Ask?**

In Mark 11:24, Jesus says to His disciples, “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” Based on this verse, some teach that no matter what you want, you can “name it and claim it” through faith. This is not true. We cannot twist the arm of God by exercising our faith or through positive confession. While we must have a vibrant faith, we should not belittle the sovereignty of God. No matter how much faith we muster, our faith cannot override the sovereignty of God. The psalmist says “Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases” (Ps. 115:3; also, see Ps. 135:6). Further, the Bible teaches that “The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps” (Prov. 16:9). The entire Bible affirms God's sovereignty, whereas some of the “faith preachers” deny or belittle God's sovereignty and independence.

So, we must pray in faith, but we

must always seek God's will as we pray. The perfect model for such prayer is our Lord Jesus Christ. This is how Jesus prayed in the darkest hour of his life: "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mk 14:36). This verse demonstrates that Jesus had a strong faith in the Father's power, yet he was willing to submit to his Father's will. Similarly, we must have faith in God's power, but at the same time, we must be submissive to his will. We must have robust faith coupled with utmost submission to God's will.

### **How do we Grow in Biblical Faith?**

Faith comes by feasting on God's Word (Rom. 10:17). In order to grow in our salvation, "like newborn infants," we must "long for the pure spiritual milk" (1 Pet. 2:2). Merely reading the Word in order to perform a religious duty or to prepare a sermon will not enable us to grow in our faith. Reading the Bible for five to ten minutes and filling our minds with "the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things" throughout the day will "choke the Word" (Mk 4:19) and hinder our progress in

faith. We must read the Word, meditate on the Word, relish the Word, long for the Word, and live the Word. God's people must heed the advice of Charles Spurgeon, "Visit many good books, but live in the Bible." The Bible must become a part of our daily spiritual diet. Then, we will be able to grow in our faith and gradually become like Christ. May the Lord help us to grow in our faith each day!



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# A warrior for non-violence



Dr. Shantanu Dutta

For the last few weeks, I have been reacquainting myself with Mahatma Gandhi's legacy through the talks and lectures of the well-known biographer and historian Ramachandra Guha. He reminds us of the four pillars of his philosophy which to him were non-negotiable. They are, 1) Non violence or Ahimsa 2) Religious harmony 3) Abolition of Untouchability and other forms of social inequity based on caste, gender, ethnicity and 4) Economic Self Reliance. It is undoubtedly true that decades after his death, these tenets are of abiding relevance in India and the world. Christians claim that Gandhiji's teachings on and thought and nonviolence were inspired by the teachings of Jesus. It may be true and if so, the circle was completed when Gandhiji's life and thoughts went on to inspire other Christian leaders like Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr in their own respective struggles. In recognition

of this, his birthday October 2nd is observed as the International Day against Non-Violence. If Gandhiji were indeed inspired by the teachings of Jesus, where would he have looked. Since most associate him with his reading of the sermon on the Mount, I decided to begin there.

The Sermon on the Mount (found in Matthew 5, 6 and 7) is one of the most detailed teachings of Jesus Christ recorded in the New Testament. In this vital sermon, Jesus Christ laid out the central facets of the way of life He taught His followers. One of the central themes of the Sermon on the Mount is Christ's expectation that His followers be characterized by peace—not violence or war. In the famous opening to this great sermon known as the Beatitudes, Jesus taught, “Blessed [happy] are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). Christ's

followers should be characterized by living a way that leads to peace—totally the opposite of a life characterized by violence and strife.

The Christian standard of being a peacemaker is found throughout the New Testament. The apostle Paul wrote that Christians are to do whatever possible to “live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18). Many scriptures support the basic truth that Christians are to “pursue peace with all people” (Hebrews 12:14; see also 2 Corinthians 13:11; Galatians 5:22; James 3:17). You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matthew 5:21-22).

Jesus was expanding the meaning of the Sixth Commandment by revealing the spirit of the law against taking human life. Jesus showed that it's not just the physical act of murder that breaks the Sixth Commandment. Inner anger and hostility toward other human beings also break this law. Yes, having feelings of hatred toward other human beings is a sin and breaks the Sixth Commandment! The rest of the Bible elaborates on this key statement by Christ. Notice what

John wrote: “Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:15). Many other scriptures make it clear that hating another person is sin and breaks this commandment (2 Corinthians 12:20; Titus 3:3; 1 John 2:9-11).

Jesus called his disciples to love their enemies, to be abundantly merciful, to repent and forgive, and to offer no violent resistance to those who do evil. But he also modelled nonviolence by actively confronting injustice and violence, as when he defied the Sabbath laws to heal the disabled, confronted unjust power at the Temple, challenged a throng of assailants accusing a woman of adultery, and, on the night before he died, commanded Peter to put down his sword. Neither passive nor weak, Jesus' nonviolence is the power of love in action for the well-being of all.

Imagine nurturing a new identity as nonviolent people in a nonviolent church with a clear and deliberate commitment to preaching, teaching, activating, and boldly proclaiming Jesus' nonviolence at every level. We must return good for evil, break the chains of escalatory violence and revenge, stand up to systemic injustice not with violence but with determined love, and fully trust the God of love and truth rather than the power of violence. And if the theology and spirituality of gospel

nonviolence were more deliberately integrated into the life of the church, we would more clearly recognize the sacred way and work of peace, reconciliation, and nonviolent transformation in our time of monumental crisis and opportunity.

In its first three centuries, the church wagered that Jesus was utterly serious when he said “love your enemies” and “peace be with you” and therefore, consistently sought to embody the way and discipline of spiritually grounded nonviolence. Now, facing our turbulent age of global violence, searing injustice, and catastrophic climate change, we are dramatically invited again to recentre our lives and our church in the spirituality and practice of the nonviolent Jesus—and to be consciously freed from the alluring temptation that violence is the answer to violence.

There are no guarantees that nonviolence will in every case immediately end violence or injustice. But at the same time, violence cannot guarantee this either. Active nonviolence trumps violence in its ability to more often than not create alternatives, to mobilize people power, and to address the deeper roots of the conflict rather than simply suppress or obliterate one or another party. Speaking broadly, the just war doctrine hinders the discovery of new practices and stymies the

emergence of an overarching culture of nonviolence and just peace.

In a world where violence is so prevalent, so systematically woven through our lives and societies, so normal, we will be called to a determined, risky, and courageous formation process as people and church. We will be called to confess our violence, make amends for our violence, and give up our deeply-embedded belief in violence, what the late scripture scholar Walter Wink called our “myth of redemptive violence.” As Christians, our best contribution to this worldwide process is to reclaim the vision and mission of the nonviolent Jesus. This will mean acknowledging our violence, relying on the God of peace and nonviolence, and bringing this power of love-in-action into the concrete life of our church and our world.



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*(from the previous issue)*

The Tea Garden Churches in the Assam-Nagaland Border:  
A Missional Perspective

## The American Baptist Mission

Rev. Dr. Takatemjen



From the beginning, the Baptist Mission had looked at the Assam Field as a major area of operation for the Baptist missionaries because they believed that the tea trade in Assam would bring in more people from outside and will change the landscape of Assam. The first American Baptist Missionaries were very excited about the Tea plantations in Assam. Rev Brown prophesied that because of the Tea Industry a great change was about to take place in Assam, converting the impenetrable jungles into “the garden of the Lord”- a happy abode of industry. Even Mr. Ward was of the view that the province was sure to become one of the finest tea gardens in the world<sup>1</sup>. The immigration of Tea Labourers reached its climax in the last decades of the 19th century. The labour force in the Tea gardens increased to 510672 in 1891 and by 1901 the

figures had risen to 775844. By this time there were three Baptist mission stations, namely, Sibsagar, Nowgong, and Guwahati from where the Baptist Mission continued the mission activities. The interest in the Tea Tribes grew more and more amongst the Baptist missionaries because of the failure of the indigenous peoples, that is, the Assamese people, to accept the message of the Gospel. Year after year, the annual conference reports of the Baptist Mission had indicated that the Assamese people had failed to accept Christianity. At Guwahati, though the work had been started as early as 1843 and the converts to Christianity had numbered 1204 in the Kamrup district, none of them belonged to the indigenous population of the north bank of the Brahmaputra.<sup>2</sup> The immigrants continued to come and settled down in the Brahmaputra and Barak

valleys and these valleys became the chief attraction for the missionaries to do their work of evangelisation and to introduce other mission activities. By 1931, the Christians numbering about 350000 resident in the Brahmaputra valley were either Tea Garden labourers or descendants of ex-tea garden labourers who had settled in those areas.<sup>3</sup>

The Mundas or the Kols, who are believed to be of the Kolarian stock, amongst whom the Baptist missionaries started to work in Assam are the major tribe amongst the immigrants in the Tea Gardens of Assam today. They originally belonged to the large Ranchi plateau of the Chotanagpur region. By 1911, the missionaries could report that a satisfactory work had been done amongst the Mundaris and several churches established and they were brought together under an Association which met annually and became an effective agency to unite the Christians in fellowship.<sup>4</sup> One of the motives of conversion amongst the Tea labourers was for social progress. The Kols were often looked down by their neighbours. Christianity gave them respect and dignity of life. It gave them a unique social position compared to their neighbours. The work amongst the Mundas continued to grow rapidly. According to 1991 census, the Mundas in India numbered around 5,93,839 Christians. Of this 128000 were in Assam.<sup>5</sup>

However, not everything about the Christian movement amongst the Tea Tribes were pleasant. One of the regrets of the missionaries was that the number of leaders from the Tea tribes were very few. Moore wrote: “The problem of consecrated, trained, effective leadership for our churches is still unresolved. How can they be strong and aggressive unless they are rooted and grounded in the truth”.<sup>6</sup> Related with the leadership problem was the problem of poverty and ignorance and the worst feature in their society was the addiction to opium eating. The missionaries tried to help but they were not willing to help themselves many times. And hence such people were not permitted to participate in the Lord's supper. Another problem was the non-cooperation of the Tea management with mission. Some were anxious to have the missionaries visit the plantations, others were not so friendly and they even went to the extent of threatening the missionaries should they ever attempt to work there again. By 1900, work on the three gardens in North Lakhimpur had come to an end because the Tea management did not allow the coolies to meet for worship or to receive instruction. Apart from these problems, there were also unhealthy competition amongst the missions.<sup>7</sup>

Despite problems and discouragements, the church grew amongst the Tea tribes. By 1899,

work among them was carried on from 12 mission stations. The report shows that in the North Lakhimpur field there were 7 churches; in the Golaghat field, 4; in the Dibrugarh field, 4; and in the Sibsagar field, 2. Some of the churches were very small, being composed of the first few ingathering from different Tea Gardens.<sup>8</sup> The commission report of 1928-29 on Assam Baptist Mission<sup>9</sup> after touring Sibsagar, Golaghat, Nowgong and Gauhati mission centres of work reported that there was an extensive work among the tea garden coolie population, mainly immigrants from other parts of India. It was of great interest to the commission to visit one of these Tea Garden coolie churches some distance from Nowgong, where they found that having served their term as contract labourers, these people had settled permanently upon available tracts of land and were relatively prosperous compared to their former condition. There were also a number of Christians Mundari villages, with their little churches in the region which the commission visited.<sup>10</sup>

The Contributions of the American Baptist Mission to the Tea Tribes cannot be underestimated. Landing in Sadiya around the mid 1830s, the mission started its work amidst problems and discouragements till about the time when the missionaries were compelled to leave 1950s. Their contributions to the Tea

Labourers consists in rendering education through the opening of schools including boarding schools for girls and through their involvement in philanthropic activities, uplifting and liberating them from their socio-economic bondage. Through the establishment of churches and by bringing them together into unity and fellowships, the tribes were given an opportunity to embrace the moral teaching of the good news raising their understanding of morality and giving them a new sense of dignity and respect for life.

The Assam Valley Baptist Mission After the departure of the American Baptist Missionaries from Northeast India, around 1954, much mission activities had been carried on by local Baptist Churches amongst the Tea Tribes in the borders of Assam and Nagaland which continues till today. One such mission is the Assam Valley Baptist Mission. Before the starting of any evangelistic programs amongst these people, especially in the Jorhat District of Assam, the first contacts were made by the Ao Naga nurses and their families who were widely employed in all the Tea Garden Hospitals by the British Tea planters way back in 1930s. Slowly there were converts and they were organised into fellowships in different localities. In the beginning, all the churches (fellowships) were independent and as time went by

other Christian associations/Missions came and some of the fellowships were affiliated to different Associations/Mission agencies. As for example, in Jorhat district, under the Sibsagar Baptist Association there are 13 churches. There are also 6 churches affiliated to Golaghat Maidhaya Assam Baptist Association, and 10 Churches are affiliated to All Assam Soura Baptist Association, which is related with Orissa Baptist Convention.



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(to be continued)

**Endnotes**

1. Ibid
2. This is not the place to discuss or to examine the reasons for this negative response of the indigenous Assamese people to the message of the Bible, however, one thing is sure that the spirit of rejection amongst the Assamese population has had continued up to this day. The record of the CBCNEI Diary 2016 shows that under the Assam Baptist Convention there are 6 Associations with a total of 730 churches. The total baptized membership of these churches are only 34471. The break up of this membership is: Kamrup Asomia Baptist Sobha (KABS), 34 churches with 5683 members; the Madhya Assam Baptist Sobha (MABS), 98+4 churches with 9050 members; Nagaon District Baptist Association (NDBA), 23 churches with 2328 members; Sadiya Dibru Baptist Association (SDBA), 94 churches with 5473 members; Sibsagar Baptist Association (SBA), 102 churches with 8924 members; United Baptist Churches Association (UBCA), 25+28 churches with 1370 members- house churches 322 with 1643 members.
3. Sheila Bora, "The American Baptist", pp.14-15
4. American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 1911.
5. Sheila Bora, "The American Baptist" p.17
6. P.H. Moore, cited by Sheila Bora, "The American Baptist" p.27
7. Sheila Bora, Ibid., pp.27-28
8. P.H.Moore, Twenty years in Assam or Leaves from my Journal (Nowgong, 1901)
9. Sheila Bora, "The American Baptist", pp.30-32; see also ABMS, 1928-29
10. In the early 1970s the proportional size of the churches established by the Christian missions in Northeast India are as follows: Council of the Baptist Churches in Northeast India (CBCNEI), 55%; Presbyterian Church of Northeast India (PCNEI), 15%; the Roman Catholics (RC), 19%; and a number of small protestant denominations, 11%. By 1990, the comparative figures were: CBCNEI, 43%; PCNEI, 23%; RC, 26%; Others, 8%. The statistical break-down for 1990 is as follows: CBCNEI, 1,151,935; PCNEI, 623,971; RC,713,837; Others, 165,609. By 1900, although the great majority of Christians in the Northeast were associated with either the American Baptist or the Welsh Presbyterian missions, other Christian groups were also beginning to establish their mission, notable amongst which were the Anglicans, Lutherans and Roman Catholics. The church of England had chaplains supported jointly by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), and the tea companies for the benefit of the British Tea planters. They became involved in some missionary work, mainly but not entirely among the Tea Garden labourers. The Lutheran Santhal Mission of Bengal established a colony in Goalpara district where it eventually undertook a highly successful self-support scheme based upon a tea garden and other commercial operations. Though the neighbouring Boros were evangelized, the primary relationships of this community were with the churches in Bengal rather than with other groups in Assam. The Gossner Evangelical church of Chota Nagpur also followed its members to the Assam Tea Gardens and organised them into churches. The most successful work amongst the Tea Tribes were done by the Catholics. The 1931 Census reported that two-thirds of the Catholic community in the Northeast was found among the tea garden labourers of Lakhimpur, Darrang, Nagaon and Sibsagar districts. Over 40% of the Catholics in the region were Adivasis, living in the Brahmaputra valley in 1990. See F.S. Downs, History of Christianity in India (Bangalore: Church History Association of India, 1992) p.69, 86, 89-90, 104-115.



# WHEN ONE MONK LOST HIS COOL

Rev. Kuruvilla Chandy

Monks embrace a life of quietness and asceticism as they want to live apart from the world. They fill their days with meditation, prayer and chores done in silence.

So when a monk got all agitated and decided to do something out of the ordinary that would disturb the calm of not only his own life but that of the church community he belonged to, it must have been rather shocking and very disturbing. That is what happened on Saturday, October 31, 1517. The monk, a professor of theology, nailed 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. This was what finally ignited the Reformation.

There had been stirrings earlier. There was the Waldesian movement putting the Scriptures into the hands of peasants (12th century, France), John Wycliffe translating the Bible

into common English (1330-84), and John Huss (1369-1415) preaching in Bohemia (present day Czech Republic) against various malpractices in the church.

Martin Luther was a seriously committed monk of the German Augustinian order, of which Johann von Staupitz, (1468-1524) was the vicar-general. Under Staupitz's spiritual guidance Luther came to understand that salvation was entirely by the grace of God, that it didn't depend on him being meritorious, and that it had nothing to do with ceremonies, rituals and acts of penance.

The Reformation began in Germany with Martin Luther taking a stand against the malpractices prevailing in the Roman Catholic Church. It was never Luther's intention to break away from the church, but he was



forced to flee from the church when his life was threatened.

### **Grace Alone, Faith Alone**

The watchwords of the Reformation were “sola gratia, sola fidei” (by grace alone, by faith alone). They have reference to the doctrine of salvation. The Reformers insisted that we are saved by God's grace alone. We are not saved by good works—our own or anyone else's. Salvation is a product of God's grace and the only way to receive what is of grace, is to just accept it through faith.

The context for this insistence was that to collect money for the rebuilding of St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, the popes of that period had decided to sell special “indulgences.” People who were worried about the after-life and wished to escape purgatory could ensure their salvation by buying merit from a treasury where the excess merits of saints and martyrs were stored. They could even do this on behalf of departed loved ones so that they could escape the torments of purgatory. The most aggressive salesman of these indulgences in Germany was a monk named Tetzel. He had a sales jingle that would shame the advertising agencies of our day:

*The moment your coin in my chest rings,  
that moment your loved one's soul  
from purgatory springs.*

Luther was appalled. He was outraged by the crass materialism. He preached stridently against the sale of indulgences and the notion that salvation could be bought. That was what made Luther lose his cool. Finally, he wrote 95 theses against indulgences and nailed them to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenburg on October 31st, 1517. The next day was All Saints' Day. People, who came to church, read it, copied it and distributed it, rejoicing at Luther's boldness.

The Pope saw that it threatened his authority and the church's teachings. Luther was summoned to stand trial in Rome, but since the German ruler Frederick was protective of Luther, the trial took place in Germany.

### **Scripture Alone**

When asked to recant his errors, Luther said that they were not errors but the truths revealed in God's Word. His accusers appealed to the church's traditions, to which Luther countered with what became another watchword of the Reformation, “Sola Scriptura” (Scripture alone). The doctrines of the Church, he said, had to find their basis in Scripture alone, and not man-made traditions though they may have been held for centuries.

While Roman Catholicism has consistently held the view that Scripture and tradition are both the sources for the beliefs and practices

of the Church, it would be difficult to assert that they do not hold the doctrine of salvation by grace. Their practices however do not fit in with the doctrine of justification by faith. The prescription of penance promotes among the laity the notion that salvation is earned through the performance of good works. However there have always been proponents of salvation by grace in the Roman Catholic stream. The gospel of grace was never lost entirely. For instance, Catholic theologian Karl Rahner's *Theological Investigations* is Christocentric and stresses grace.

The Augsburg Confession, as the first Protestant confession of faith, symbolises the breach between Roman Catholics and Protestants. It was written by Philip Melancthon (1497-1560), Martin Luther's fellow-reformer. In 1974, the idea was first advanced that the Roman Catholic Church should “recognize” the Augsburg Confession. It received wider attention when Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI, took up the possibility of a recognizing the Augsburg Confession as Catholic. In 1980, Pope John Paul II went to Germany on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession. Imagine that! The Pope went to commemorate a confession of faith that memorializes the division between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Under Pope John

Paul II, in 1997, the Roman Catholic Church signed a “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” with the Lutheran Church. It declares that the old condemnations no longer apply. The Reformation wounds seem to have been healed. Biblical studies leading up to Vatican Council II, and the Council itself had provided the impetus for Roman Catholic dialogues with other Christians.

Today, a book that is influencing key persons in the Evangelical world (e.g. Philip Yancey, Dallas Willard, Larry Crab, Michael Card, Michael W Smith, U2 – and, me too) is *The Ragamuffin Gospel* written by the late Brennan Manning, who gave up being a Franciscan priest and kept his connection with the Roman Catholic Church.

### **Veneration of Mary**

While those like Manning, who have had a conversion experience, don't pray to Mary, almost all Roman Catholics do. The veneration of Mary and the saints is essential to the practice of Roman Catholicism. Most Catholics argue that they do not pray to her, but honour her and only ask her to pray for them. But that is praying. They pray to Mary (and the saints) to pray for them. They want Mary et al to mediate with the Lord Jesus on their behalf. It is ridiculous to suggest that there is a need for someone to stand between us and the God who came so close to

us as to take upon Himself our humanity, our sinfulness and our condemnation. The notion that anyone else can mediate between us and God, goes totally against the biblical doctrine that there is only one mediator between God and humans, the man Jesus Christ (1 Tim.2:5).

Moreover, the veneration of Mary is nothing short of worship, which is something that we are to offer to God alone. The words used in addressing Mary manifest adoration. For instance, when the Roman Catholic prays, “Hail Mary, full of grace...Blessed are you...” it is similar to the words of worship offered to God in the Psalms and the apocalyptic scenes captured for us in the book of Revelation.

The cult of Mary has grown steadily, not just in numbers, but also in increasing Mary's role in the salvation of the faithful. What the Bible says about Jesus alone, they say about Mary, and are bent on attributing more and more of what is divine power to her. Many Roman Catholics regard Mary, the mother of Jesus, as “Co-Redemptrix (Co-redeemer), Mediatrix (Mediator) of All Graces and Advocate for the People of God.” Sadly, even the much-idolised late Mother Teresa held this view. For a long time, the terms “mediatrix” and “co-redemptrix” have been applied to

Mary by some Roman Catholics. There were some attempts to make their use official at Vatican II. There were, however, dissenting voices raised against that.

During his pontificate, John Paul II had asked a commission of twenty-three Mariologist scholars to study the proposal for the new dogma. As those who focus on Mary in all their theological reflections, they were most likely to approve the matter. Instead, by a vote of 23 to nothing, the commission unanimously advised the Pope not to do it. The French theologian and specialist on Mary, Rene Laurentin strongly opposes the dogma for being unscriptural and offensive to the doctrine of Christ's uniquely redemptive death.

### **Transubstantiation**

The belief that in the Communion service, the ordinary bread becomes the actual body of Jesus Christ and the wine becomes the actual blood of our Lord is known as transubstantiation. Apart from the fact that no such thing happens, Protestants reject this view of the Communion. They focus on the words of Christ, “Do this in remembrance of me.” The bread and the wine only serve as memory aids. They remind us that just as food and drink sustain our physical bodies, Jesus is the spiritual nourishment of our souls, and that just as the food

and drink must be ingested to do any good, so too must the Lord Jesus be received into our hearts.

Even though I did not serve in the Anglican Church, whenever I administered the Lord's Supper, I said the words of the Anglican Communion Service to the participants: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ: take, eat and feed on Him in your hearts, by faith, with thanksgiving." I believe that, that wording captures the essence of what is involved in Communion.

### **Papal Infallibility**

This is the final major point of divergence. We must not think that the Roman Catholic insists that the Pope is always infallible. Rather, he is supposed to be infallible only when he speaks *ex cathedra* (for the church). The question is whether even this could be true of a mere mortal. History records the fallibility of popes. Some were downright immoral and one was insane while in office. Could what they pontificated have infallibility?

Roman Catholics insist that Peter was the first Pope even though there is no evidence whatever for this claim. If he was pope, all others were not made in his mould. He was not celibate, nor did he exercise the kind of hierarchical authority that popes have. Monarchical hierarchy was alien to the Early Church. There

were no bishops, leave alone a pope.

This notion that Peter was a pope derives from two sayings of our Lord. When Peter confessed that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the Living God", the Lord said to Peter: "I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (Matt 16:18-20)." Did Jesus mean that Peter would be the foundation on which the entire Church would be built?

In Greek, what Jesus said translates this way: "You are Petros and on this very *petra*, I will build my church." If our Lord had meant that Peter himself was to be the foundation, He would not have used a word different from the new name he had given him, but would have said, "You are Petros, and it is on you that I will build my church." While Jesus called Simon Petros (masculine gender), Jesus said that He would build His Church on this *petra* (feminine gender), the mother lode. Chrysostom, Origen, Eusebius and Ambrose are recognised by the Roman Catholic Church as Church Fathers. They held the view Jesus was saying that Jesus would build His Church on the confession that

Jesus is the Son of God, for Jesus Himself is the Rock (1 Cor.10:4), the foundation of the Church (3:11) and after Christ, all the apostles together, not just Peter alone, form the foundation (Eph.2:20).

Had the sale of indulgences not confronted him, Luther probably would not have revolted against Rome. After all, his own understanding of the grace of God had come to him through the ministry of the superior of the Augustinian order.

At the time of the Reformation, the office of the Pope had to some extent been corrupted and stood against all attempts to reform. However, the fact that there was a Counter Reformation initiative within the Roman Catholic Church shows that all was not lost. Then in the 1960s, Vatican II was held and it changed things a lot.

### **Recent Popes**

Many of the popes of our times have been rather admirable. John XXIII was known for his openness to change evidenced by his having initiated the Second Vatican Council intending "to bring the Church up to date".

Paul VI continued the Vatican Council and among other things permitted Roman Catholic laity to own and read the Bible in their native languages and designated non-

Catholics as "separated brethren".

John Paul II, coming from behind the Iron Curtain, was instrumental in dismantling it, by inspiring a longing for freedom throughout the Communist Bloc. While still a cardinal, he invited Billy Graham to preach in his pulpit in Krakow, going against the Polish Catholic establishment. In 2000, as Pope, he declared that Jesus is the "unique Saviour" of the universe. He was willing to take a stand: "In recent years, a mentality has emerged in theological and ecclesial circles which tends to relativize Christ's revelation and his unique and universal mediation in the order of salvation. In order to remedy this relativistic attitude, we must insist on the definitive and complete character of Christ's revelation...Therefore the theory of the limited character of the revelation of Christ, which can be complemented by other religions, is contrary to the faith of the church." Critical of those who taught that the truth about God "cannot be grasped and manifested entirely and completely by any one historical religion, not even Christianity", the Pope said, "This position contradicts the affirmations of faith according to which there is full and complete revelation of God's salvation in Jesus Christ," he said. "It is wrong to consider the church as a path to salvation equal to those of other

religions." Martin Luther would have no quarrel with that statement of faith.

Benedict XVI followed. He was known to be a hardliner, but he surprised the whole ecclesiastical world by resigning from the papacy. To top it all, Benedict promised submission to the authority of the new pope.

Peter had taken the lead initially, but he didn't keep increasing his powers to the point of diminishing others and subordinating them. Instead, he himself submitted to being questioned and investigated for behaviour considered suspect by the first believers who were all Jews and thought that their faith was just Judaism, in a new garb and reformed. Peter was criticised by the rank and file of the community (Acts 11:2-3), requiring Peter to give a complete explanation for his actions (vv.4-18). That's not what popes are subjected to.

More significantly, when the Judaising controversy erupted in the Church, with Jewish believers insisting on imposing Jewish practices on new Gentile converts, mainly requiring them to be circumcised, Peter was not the one who presided over the meeting. James (the brother of our Lord), a newcomer, presided over the meeting (Acts 15:13) and even gave


a chairman's ruling (v.19). Peter's view was that he was only a shepherd under the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

That one act of resigning shows Benedict XVI was truly following in Peter's footsteps. Question is, does the Spirit of Jesus rule in Protestant or Evangelical or Pentecostal churches or our parachurch organisations. Are there people willing to give up office within our circles or do we have popes who cling to office?

The Spirit of Jesus still moves within the Roman Church. Protestants are largely averse to admitting this fact. But there are persons who have at various times shown that Jesus still has a place in that church. They are continuing with reformation. Does the Reformation go on still among Protestants, Evangelicals and Pentecostals?



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TAKING CARE OF  
OUR OLD PARENTS –  
A SACRED AND  
BLESSED  
RESPONSIBILITY

Dr. Sanjay Avinash Mall

Our parents in their old age are our responsibility. When they were young, they gave their best to bring us to the point in our lives where we are today. They sacrificed many good things which they would have wanted for themselves but they put our needs before theirs and provided for us. This includes the best of education, food and clothes and many other things which cannot be counted. We do not know the number of sleepless nights they would have spent when we were ill either at home or in hospital. The list is endless. What children forget is that whatever they are in the world and society it is because of their parents. More than that they fail to realise that parents are not a commodity that cannot be bought from the local market. Once they die, they are gone forever and then only memories

remain. There is no sense then in decorating their graves with the most expensive flowers on Christmas and their birthdays. We need to take care of them when they are alive. We all have our regrets on the passing away of our parents which is alright. I just want to explain it this way: if we had taken our father or mother to such and such doctor then he or she would not have died. That is a regret that most of us would have. What we should not live with is repentance of not having taken care of our parents whatsoever the reason may have been when they needed us most.

In the present times, we find that old age homes have come up in the cities. Children who are not able to devote time and take care of their parents often have them admitted in these homes. They are under the

false impression that the care provided in these institutions will be of premium quality. In doing so, they think that they have fulfilled their responsibilities towards their parents. While the children may be spending their money in these old age homes, they are not providing the physical and emotional care that their parents need when they are in the sunset years of their lives. It is for us to reflect and think what would have happened to us if our parents had dumped us in such institutions during the years that we were growing up. Thankfully, there were no institutions for bringing up children where our parents could admit us and leave us at the mercy of the staff out there.

### **The Country Scenario:**

According to a report published by the NGO Helpage India, approximately 60% elders confirmed that Elder Abuse is prevalent in our society. Of those, who reported prevalence, 88% of them believed its existence is high. Nearly one-fourth (25%) elders have confirmed they have been victim of Elder Abuse ever with no gender variation. The most common form of abuse they experienced was disrespect (56%), verbal abuse (49%) and neglect (33%). The main

abusers were sons (57%) and daughter-in-laws (38%). Only 18% elders have confirmed that they have made an attempt to report abuse. And, only 35% of the total reporting was successfully resolved.<sup>1</sup>

We often assume that our greatest dangers are from strangers on dark streets or from violent men who might break into our houses. The sad truth is that the highest perils of brutal and persistent violence lurk within the intimate spaces of our homes, from those to whom we are closest. The author Little illustrates this with more poignancy and immediacy than a recent 12-city study by Helpage India. Its stunning finding is that every second elderly person who its researchers spoke to testified to suffering abuse within their families.

India is home to 100 million elderly people today. Their numbers are likely to increase threefold in the next three decades. People are now living much longer and couples are raising fewer children. Moreover, three in four elders still report living with their children. The result is that smaller numbers of adults are responsible for many more years of old-age care than in the past. Consequently, as the parents grow older and become frail relationships



within families have come under great strain.

The abuse, elders report are common across social classes and cities. Cities such as Bengaluru and Nagpur report the highest elderly abuse and Delhi and Kanpur the least. Four in ten old people testify to verbal abuse, three to neglect, and a third to disrespect. One in five recount enduring such abuse almost daily, a third around once a week, and a fifth every month. Six in ten report the daughter-in-law and an almost equal number the son as the major sources of abuse against them. Just 7% daughters are abusive of their parents. Nearly half the old people interviewed in the study, identified one common reason for their abuse at the hands of their children that they depend economically on their children.<sup>2</sup>

According to 2014 estimates, India has more than 100 million elderly people (60 years and above). And 10 million of them live outside their family homes, most of them evicted by their own children for property according to the activists. HelpAge India, an NGO working for the elderly, quotes that 53.2 per cent of all elderly abuse was due to “property and inheritance disputes”. “Daughters-in-law and sons

emerged as the top-most perpetrators (of abuse of the elderly),” a 2013 study by the NGO found. Wherever property or finances are involved, the children are nice to their parents till the time that it is willed to them. Once the legal formalities are completed for the property and the money, the parents are forced to leave the house. Though the elderly often don't report such abuse to “maintain confidentiality” of family matters, their children are dragging them to court. According to lawyers, daughters-in-law are often at the centre of such legal battles. “More and more criminal cases against old people are being filed by daughters-in-law, many at the behest of the parent's sons. The abuse of the elderly people in the country has increased from 23% in 2013 to 50% in 2014.”<sup>3</sup>

This is the real situation in our country regarding the care of the elderly and our parents who we are supposed to respect and take care of in their old age. What these shortsighted people forget is that one day they too will be old and be subject to such or even worse treatment at their hands of their own children.

### **What the Bible Teaches us about**

## **Taking Care of our Parents:**

One of the very good examples of a son taking care of his father and brothers in spite of all that he went through is Joseph. Once he had revealed himself to his brothers he asked them about his father. He then made all the arrangements to have his father and other family members to be brought to Egypt.<sup>4</sup>

In the Ten Commandments, it is written very clearly “Honour your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”<sup>5</sup>

In the Book of Proverbs, it is mentioned very clearly that children are to listen to their fathers who gave them life and not to despise their mother when she is old. This is exactly what is happening in the world of today. Children have totally neglected their parents in their old age and thus, break the fifth commandment.<sup>6</sup>

The strongest rebuke that Jesus gave to the Pharisees is found in the Gospel of Mark. In this passage, He is telling the Pharisees that they have violated the fifth commandment claiming that they have set money aside for the temple and so they cannot take care of their old parents. This is an excuse and a grave sin.<sup>7</sup>

The apostle Paul in his epistle to Timothy writes that taking care of our ageing parents is pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God. Children and grandchildren of widows need to practice piety towards their own family and also make some return to their parents for what they have done for them.<sup>8</sup>

Further on, the apostle Paul in the same letter mentions very clearly that if one does not take care of his family members and especially of the members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.<sup>9</sup>

The supreme example of taking care of His mother in her old age was exhibited by Lord Jesus. Even when He was on the cross he was worried about her as Joseph his earthly father had died, though it not mentioned anywhere in scripture. Jesus' concern for His mother is amply displayed in the fact that he wanted to ensure that she was well taken care of and so He placed the responsibility in the hands of the Apostle John who obeyed His command and took Mary to his home.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, we see that the Bible also lays a lot of importance of taking care of our old and aging parents who when

they were young did not leave a stone unturned to give us the very best that they could afford and at times even when they could not afford it.

What is the duty of the children towards their parents when they are old and frail? God gives us only one set of parents. It is for us to decide whether we will take care of them or not. If we take care of them then blessings will overflow in our lives. If not, then one day our own children will also abandon us, the way we abandoned our parents.

Life is all about choices. What will

be your choice is the question that I leave you with.

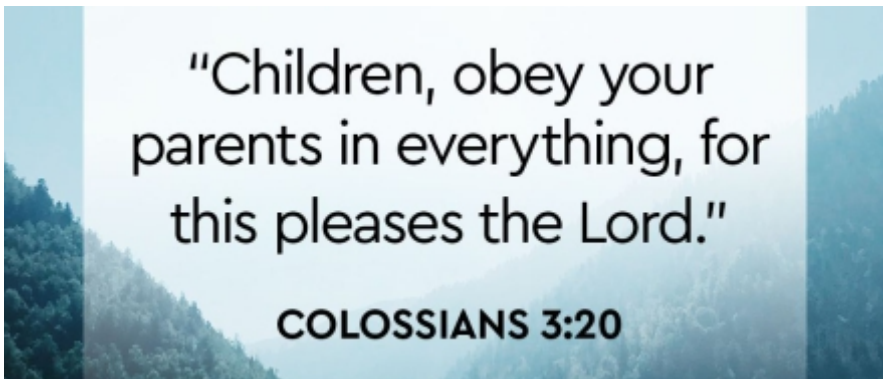
Submitted by:



**Dr. Sanjay Avinash Mall**

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1. Elder Abuse in India – 2018 Changing Cultural Ethos & Impact of Technology. A HelpAge India Report - 2018
  2. Neglect and Abuse: The Reality of India's Elderly People. Harsh Mander, The Hindustan Times, March 2, 2015.
  3. Till property tear us apart: Why children are taking their old parents to court. Avantika Mehta, The Hindustan Times, June 19, 2016.
  4. Genesis Chapters 45:18.
  5. Exodus 20:12.
  6. Proverbs 23:22.
  7. Mark 7: 9 – 13.
  8. I Timothy 5:4.
  9. I Timothy 5:8.
  10. John 19:25 – 27





## WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS TO THE OLDER GENERATION

Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj

It is a joy for me, a youth evangelist by calling primarily, to write an essay, to encourage older folk! I particularly do this as 1 October is being observed as the International Day of the Older Person.

Someone asked Billy Graham, the man who has been called the Greatest Christian in the world after Apostle Paul, this question: “What has been your life's greatest challenge?” In reply he said, that the biggest challenge of his life was old age (Read his 2013 book, *Nearing Home*). His book He was the man who had announced the Gospel to most number of people in the planet. He was the founder of a big Christian organisation. He had a lot of financial needs with regard to his organization. There were many critics of his ministry. But for him, the greatest challenge was old-age.

What was challenging for Billy Graham were these two things: having to live in the world for over 10 years after his dear wife Ruth Bell passed away (this made his feel so lonely, humanly speaking) and having to live till the ripe old age of 99 (this was his life's greatest challenge, he felt). He particularly recalled the time when after the age of 90, when he could not confidently carry off a video recording of a message he wanted to preach at the request of his son, Franklin, because of old-age related problems (shivering of hands, inability to stand, loss of memory, etc). This was heart-crushing experience for a man who had to take a helicopter to see the vast crowd that came to hear him preach in Seoul, South Korea (1.1 million people in the year 1973)!

So, if you are a person from the older

generation reading this article, I want you to know that I have a great regard for you! I take my cap off for you in respect!

What does God want to say to the older generation? Let us explore what God's word says to the older generation. Though I am much younger than the older folk who may be reading this, I want you to know that I speak with authority as what I convey comes from the written Word of God, the authority of which we are all under, irrespective of what our age is! I want to give four counsels for older people from the Bible.

### 1. REMEMBER

You must remember your creator before you become old and die. You must remember your creator now. This is a truth that I understand when I read Ecclesiastes chapter 12. "Remember your creator in the days of your youth" – so goes Ecclesiastes 12:1. After this verse, this chapter talks about the problems of old age. Ecclesiastes 12:3 from The Voice Version of the Bible, a contemporary English version of the Bible done by a Team of Scholars, makes gripping reading in this regard. It says, "Remember Him before the arms and legs of the keeper of the house begin to tremble – before the strong grow uneasy and bent over with age

– before toothless gums aren't able to chew food and eyes grow dim." Tremper Longman, a Bible Scholar says Ecclesiastes 12:4 talks about two common old age related problems: hearing loss and restlessness (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Ecclesiastes, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998, page 271). He summarizes Ecclesiastes 12 this way: "The metaphors (found in Ecclesiastes 12) of the darkening of the cosmic lights and the encroaching rain clouds are understood readily enough on a psychological plane as communicating Qohelet's (the author of Ecclesiastes') belief that old age is a catastrophe that endangers sorrow. As one grows old, one grows weak, having less control over body and mind. Finally, death comes...." (page 269).

The message of Ecclesiastes 12 is simple: 'Remember your Creator before you have the walking problem! Remember your Creator before you have the chewing problem! Remember your Creator before you have seeing problem – eye problem! Remember him before your sexual desires wane away! Remember your creator before you die (Eccl. 12:6-7 talks about death using a smashed earthen jar imagery)! Why should we

remember our creator, now? Because after we die, it will be too late to repent from sin (Luke 13:1-5) and put our faith in Jesus who died for us on the Cross (see Hebrews 9:27 which says only judgement and no salvation opportunity awaits us after we die). Dear older folk, let me appeal to you: 'Remember your Creator before it is too late! Remember your Creator before your possible death, something that can happen any second!' Come to Jesus right now in an attitude of repentant faith with all your burdens – including the burdens of old age – and you will feel light and discover rest for your souls (Matt. 11:28-30). And if any of us die without 'remembering our Creator' or without accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior, eternal hell is where we will go!

May I challenge all those older folk who have already known Jesus as Savior to sit with another older friend and read Ecclesiastes 12 with him or her? And transfer the above contents to that senior, silver-haired friend, the best way you know how, following the leading of the Holy Spirit! Tell that friend, “Before your silver cord is snapped, and the golden bowl is shattered, before your earthen jar is smashed, before you die, you must turn from your sins and put your faith in Jesus! Otherwise,

you will go to hell. But I want you to come to heaven with me!”

What second command does the Bible give specifically for older folk?

## **2. SURRENDER**

The Bible calls the older folk to surrender their body, soul and spirit to God. It does so through the example of Caleb, who was 85 years old (Josh. 14:10). The Bible talks about this amazing character in Joshua chapter 14. “The others who were sent as spies only discouraged the people and melted their hearts, but I obeyed the Eternal One, my God, completely” (Josh. 14:8 The Voice). Other versions use the phrase “whole-heartedly” here. Caleb, a member of the older generation, surrendered his whole self to God! It was not just Caleb's claim that he surrendered his life completely to the Lord. Moses, a man who saw Caleb from close quarters for many years, had this testimony about Caleb: “Someday the land on which you have walked will be given to you and your children as an inheritance forever because you have been completely faithful to the Eternal One, my God” (Josh. 14:9, The Voice). The assertion that Caleb followed Yahweh 'completely' is done again in Joshua 14:14. Three

times in Joshua 14, the Bible tells us that old Caleb had this golden virtue – the virtue of total surrender of life to Yahweh!

My older friend, have you surrendered every area of your life to the living God? Some mothers-in-law say, “My whole life is for Jesus! But I can never tolerate my daughter-in-law! She stole my son from me!” But the Word of God through the example of Caleb says, “Surrender everything and every area of your life to the Living God!” My esteemed senior friends, do not keep back an area of your life for flesh-gratification! Surrender every area of your life to the Lord!

A young woman from a particular Indian city wrote to us (my wife and I). She was talking about her old father. He had lost his wife when he was in his forties. There-after, to gratify his sexual desires, he would watch pornographic movies using CDs on his DVD player. One day, she accidentally bumped into one of those CDs, her dad had been watching. And when she played them, she was shocked. This first experience set her on a long path of addiction to pornographic movies. And now she wanted victory from this sinful habit. I showed from 2 Samuel 11:27 that God was not pleased with 'live-porn-watching'

King David and helped her out. Dear senior citizen reading this, I am appealing to you to repent from every secret sin and surrender every area of your life to the Lord!

Now, let me talk about the third counsel the Bible gives to the older generation.

### 3. SHOWER

The Bible encourages older folk to shower what you have, give what you have, for the work of God, through the example of Barzillai. 2 Samuel 19:35 says he was 80 years old. That was when King David was in trouble. David's son, Absalom was trying to kill his dad. King David was on the run, afraid of losing his life. On one occasion, David crossed River Jordan. He came to a town called Mahanaim. That's when Barzillai, a man who came from a town called Rogelim came to meet him (Check out 2 Samuel 17:27). When Barzillai came to meet the on-the-run King David, he showered the beleaguered King with “beds, basins, earthenware, wheat, barley, meal, parched seeds and grain, beans, lentils, honey, butter, sheep, and local cheese” for David and his men to eat, for he knew, David and his company, were “hungry, tired, and thirsty” there in the wilderness (2 Sam. 17:28, The Voice). Billy

Graham writes, “Barzillai saw a need, and he did everything he could to meet it in spite of his age and infirmities. If he had failed or if he had refused to help, David and his men might well have perished in the inhospitable desert beyond the Dead Sea – and the subsequent history of God's people would have been vastly different” (Nearing Home, page 11).

As we get older, we are perhaps thinking, “My income has come down drastically following my retirement! So, I hope I can get some help for me from somewhere!” I want to tell you older folk that if I am writing an essay for the younger generation, I will tell them to take care of the valued older folk in their lives – you can take my word for it! However, this essay is about what the Bible says to the older folk! So, I am talking to you, my older friend! I am challenging you through the example of Barzillai, dear older uncles and aunties, that you should bless the poor, the needy, the local church, those who have blessed you spiritually, with what God has graciously blessed you with! Though I run a ministry to bless young people primarily, a good chunk of my financial support comes via the sacrificial giving of the older generation who want to see the younger generation reached through my ministry! Dear people of the

older generation, shower gifts which will ensure that the Kingdom of God is built and expanded! For example, if you have a piece of land which do not use and your children are well-settled, consider giving that land for the work of the Gospel! One day when you die and go to be with Jesus. You will get to look down from heaven at that land you donated for the work of the Gospel! You will be super-thrilled to see many heathens come to Jesus because of the work of God going on in that land!

This brings to the final counsel from the Bible for the older folk.

#### **4. WARN ABOUT DANGER**

Who is the oldest man in the Bible? It is Methuselah! In Genesis 5:27, the Bible says, Methuselah lives for 969 years. He nearly lives for one millennium! Do you know the name of Methuselah's father? It was Enoch. In the Bible times, when a baby was born, the parents prayed and often God gave them a name for the baby he graciously gave the couple. This was particularly true of parents who worked closely with God! Enoch, who walked with God, had a son, he named his son directed by God as Methuselah and this name meant, “When he dies, it will come!” (“Muth” means 'to die' and it was used 8 times in Genesis 5 alone, T. A.



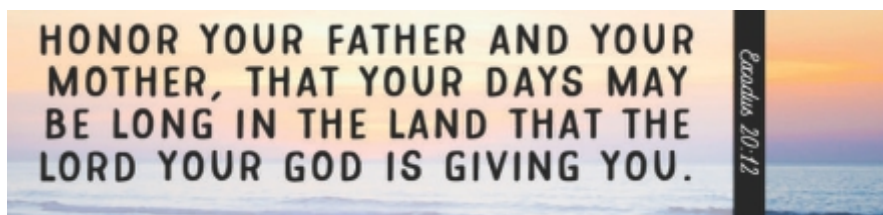
Pruett observes; “Shalak” means to send forth, the same author writes). What will come? God's judgement will come upon the human race! When Methuselah died – after having lived 969 years, the longest period of time any human being had lived – that's when the flood judgement of God came! Jeff Kinley writes that Methuselah was 849 years old when God spoke to his grandson Noah about building the Ark and the Flood occurred when Noah was 600 years old, exact year Methuselah died (after reading Genesis 5:25-27 and Genesis 7:6, and doing the math). This is a testimony to God's long-suffering love for us! So, for many years, Enoch was a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). He preached this message (I believe): “God's judgement is coming! When my son dies, God's judgement will come! God has given him a long life! That's a testimony to God's extraordinary patience! But that does not mean, you take his patience for granted (2 Peter 3:9)! Repent now! Otherwise, a judgement from God is coming!”

I want to challenge you older folk, to warn the younger generation about the coming judgement of hell, lovingly and persistently. Challenge the younger generation to get ready for the return of Jesus as you yourself get ready for the same. The younger generation may make fun of you! They may say, “Why this old man is talking rubbish?” They may scorn you. But you must keep at what God has called you for, without taking a break!



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# F. THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (1)

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



## Introduction-

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, his fruit is seen in us. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is described in Galatians 5:22-23. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." We can't be selective in fruit bearing, which fruit we want and which fruit we don't want. We need all the fruit in our nature and character. The fruit of the Holy Spirit enhance and give beauty to our Christian character. They make the gifts of the Holy Spirit authentic in us. I have never seen anyone praying and pleading for the fruit of the Holy Spirit. But I have seen people praying with fasting for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially 'speaking in tongues.' Why so? Because the gifts are more dramatic. They are spectacular. They draw people's attention to ourselves. We become

someone who has direct connection with the high. We become a mighty man/woman of God with supernatural power. We get large following and fat bank balance. Once there was a family in a certain city. Whenever I and my wife visited them and prayed for the family at our departure, they never said Amen to our prayers. When asked why they don't do that, they said point blank that we are not connected to heaven since we don't speak in tongues.

I remember, years ago I used to conduct one-month residential Bible study center course in Kotagiri, Tamilnadu. One night there was a heavy discussion in the men's section as to which one of them had how many gifts of the Holy Spirit. One person meekly asked, "What about the fruit of the Holy Spirit?" Others replied with tongues in cheek, "That's not our concern at present. What we want is the gifts of the Holy Spirit." But, we can't

emphasize the gifts at the expense of the fruit. Our Lord said in the context of the false prophets, “Thus you will recognize them by their fruits (Matthew 7:16,20). The fruit of the Holy Spirit are very much important to authenticate our life and ministry. They show whether we are genuine or false. We can't manufacture or manipulate the fruit of the Holy Spirit. If we are bad tree, if we are not born again, we cannot produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit in us. “Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit” (Matthew 7:16-18). Maybe, by our smooth talk and equally smooth behavior we can fool some people, but soon our true nature and character will be evident to everyone.

What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit? As it says in Galatians 5:22,23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” The cluster of the fruit is one. So, it's given in singular number. “The fruit of the Holy Spirit is” not 'the fruits of the Holy Spirit are' (plural number). Well, let's look at the individual fruit in the cluster:

**1. Love.**

Love is the hall mark of every Spirit-

filled Christian. Our Lord said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34,35). The Old commandment was, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18). But the new commandment is “Love one another: just as I have loved you” (John 13:34). Our love for one another should be selfless and sacrificial, unconditional and unlimited. This kind of love can be only the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We fallen human beings are selfish, self-centered and self-seeking. Our capacity to love unconditionally is very much limited. We have learnt to love one another from God. “Now concerning brotherly love, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another (1Thessalonians 4:9). As Christians, we love God (Deuteronomy 6:5). We love our family members (Ephesians 5:25,28,33; Titus 2:4). We love our neighbors (Leviticus 19:18). We love our enemies (Matthew 5:44). We love ourselves (Leviticus 19:18). 'Love your neighbor as yourself' entails that we love ourselves. If we don't love ourselves, how can we love someone else!

**2. Joy.**

Joy is another hallmark of a Spirit-

filled Christian. This joy is the joy of the Lord. “The joy of the Lord is your strength (Nehemiah 8:10). This joy of the Lord gives strength to a Christian to face and overcome any adverse situation. It helps him to be joyful at all times. This joy does not depend on situation or circumstances. Like his Lord he has been anointed with the oil of joy beyond his companions (Hebrews 1:9). The secret of this anointing with the oil of joy lies in the fact that he loves righteousness and hates lawlessness. Because of this joy, he can rejoice always (Philippians 4:4). The Apostles could rejoice even when beaten up, insulted and humiliated because for the sake of the name of their Lord (Acts 5:41). Someone has said that a sad and depressed Christian is a bad advertisement of the gospel. From where does a Christian receive his joy? Where does it come from? It comes from the forgiveness of his sins. It comes from the joys of salvation (Psalm 51:12). It comes from his name being written in the book of life/heaven (Luke 10:20). It comes from the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21). It comes from a clean and clear conscience (Acts 8:39). It comes from fellowship with God and with one another (1John 1:4).

### **3. Peace.**

Peace is another hallmark of a Spirit-filled Christian. His Lord has given

him his peace (John 14:27). No one and nothing can give him this peace, and no one and nothing can take it away from him either. As a result, he can lie down in peace and wake up in peace (Psalm 3:5). He enjoys the peace of God which surpasses all understanding because he presents his requests and petitions to God with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6). His God keeps him in perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3). The peace of God floods his heart like a river (Isaiah 66:12). Contrary to him, there is no peace for the wicked (Isaiah 48:22; 57:21). He has peace with God because the enmity between them is gone. He is no longer a child of God's wrath. He has peace with himself. He has been forgiven, his conscience has been washed and cleansed in the precious blood of the Lamb of God. It's no longer a guilty conscience. He is at peace with his fellow human beings. He knows how to love, forgive and accept them. He is at peace with his surroundings, situations and circumstances. He knows that 'in acceptance lieth peace.'

### **4. Patience.**

Patience is another hallmark of a Spirit-filled Christian. He does not do anything in a hurry. His God sees to it (Isaiah 52:12). He is not hasty or impulsive either before God or before men (Ecclesiastes 5:2). His each step, each decision, is well considered, soaked in prayer, before

taking an action in the will of God. He is patient with himself. He knows that he is not perfect. He knows his shortcomings and failures. He knows that he is still under construction. The Great Potter is still at work in him (Jeremiah 18:3,4). He is patient with others- in the family, fellowship and friends circle. He knows they have their own strengths and weaknesses. They have their own frailties and struggles in life. Some are fast, others are slow, some are quick to comprehend, others take their time. He is called to be patient with everyone (1Thessalonianns 5:14). The Bible says that love is patient (1Corinthians 13:4). The qualification of the Lord's servant is that he is patient with those whom he teaches (2Timothy 2:24). He is patient in affliction (Romans 12:12). When undergoing suffering and pain, he does not doubt God, question God or rebel against God. We learnt patience as we go through difficulties, trials and setbacks in life. God turns everything for our good (Romans 8:28).

We contradict ourselves when we claim to be Spirit-filled but have no love for God, for the lost, for the fellow believers, for our family members, for our enemies and for ourselves. We contradict ourselves when we have no inner joy in our hearts, reflected on our faces, when we go around with a gloomy face and a downcast spirit. We contradict ourselves when we get troubled in

our spirits and lose peace, and are worried and anxious like any unbeliever, as if God is not there. We contradict ourselves when we are impatient with ourselves and others, especially with our family members and fellow believers. We become perfectionist and demand perfection. We forget that only God is perfect. Let's have a look at ourselves and let the Holy Spirit do his healing and filling work. (to be continued).

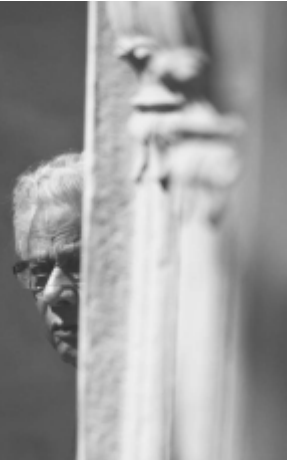


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# ELDERS: ARCHAIC OR CONTEMPORARILY RELEVANT?

Mr. Hansraj Jain



A businessman, having completed his business in the Karol Bagh, New Delhi, headed to his parked car a little distance away. To his horror, he found himself unable to take his eyes away from a 70+ years old woman. She sat under a lamp with a couple of metal trunks by her side. Taking courage, he walked up to the elderly lady. Squatting, he addressed her in English and said, "Madam, are you not Mrs. so-and-so?" Shocked by the stranger's direct approach and being recognised, she said in her old Principal's voice, "Yes, I am. Tell me, who are you?", she replied in perfect English. For the stranger, it affirmed his shock - she was indeed the Principal of his school.

The 'stranger' told her his name, bringing a smile to her face, after a long time. She had taught the

English Language in his Senior School.

At his persistence, she narrated how she had been forced out of her flat by her son. A few years ago, her son and daughter-in-law had persuaded her to sign over her flat to them, which she had happily done, thinking that she was getting old. They had lived with her for ten years since her retirement. Now, when she needed them most, they had forced her out of the flat. Her son had driven her and left her on the street with the two trunks by her side.

Tears were running down the young businessman's face as he heard her narrate her tale. Holding her fragile hands in his, he gently whispered to her, "Madam. Please give me a moment. Calling his driver on his

mobile to bring the car around to where he was in that crowded street, he gently asked her to stand up saying, *"I will not allow you to live on this street. You will come home with me right now. You are like my mother. I will not tolerate my mother left like this on the street."*

The world today tells us, the unproductive are liabilities, especially the ageing who today live longer lives. It's an open fact that we have convinced ourselves that ours is a time, where only the *"fittest are fit to live and will survive."*

Is there a counter-culture to secular mindset disguised as "informed modern thought and way of life and conduct, and expectations"?

The Bible embodies it through and through. Look at Exodus 20: 12. It reads, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you." (ESV).

Did people, really take such advice seriously? Did the Bible and its application and interpretation not change over time, environment, situation and lifestyle? Indeed, change of geography would have had its impact on the understanding and application of this directive?

One of the fantastic example the Bible presents to us where worldviews of the Elders (cf 1 Kings 4:2 ff) and "Contemporary Colleagues" (the Youth who grew up with King Rehoboam), clash, is in 1 Kings 12. The summary of this episode is simply this:

- Our attitude and conduct have the power to make or break, for good or bad immediate consequences for ourselves. There is a collateral consequence that involves those who are immediately associated with us, as family and friends. On a broad scale, it impacts our authority. The lesson here is that: "entitlement to rule and boss" does not exist even if, for generations, ours was the 'first family' in the land.
- The second lesson is that Elders need our ear and our trust. Listening to them and displaying respect for them does not necessarily mean following their advice. Still, it does mean giving them the honour by acts of appreciation and acts that demonstrate being held in esteem by us.

Unfortunately, Rehoboam failed in the fundamental criteria when he foolishly chose to be "contemporary and current" over against seasoned

with life-experience insight and shrewdness, advice.

### **Results for Rehoboam were:**

1. Rejection = loss to 11 Tribes
2. Rebellion = Ran for his life to Jerusalem.
3. Division of the nation.  
Jeroboam, without the Royal Blood, was made king of the Eleven Tribes of Israel.

### **Basic Lessons to be learnt are these:**

- Our elders are our benefactors and patrons.
- Our elders seek to see our progress and success.
- Our elders' love demands that they behave in ways that would demonstrate protection, welfare and blessings.
- Our elders seek to leave behind a legacy that they would like their progenies to treasure and be proud to inherit.
- When rejected and undermined, the elder usually neither rebel, nor do they work against us. They refuse to create any hurdles or an environment of fear and threat.
- When the chips are down, it is elders who rally together in support and encouragement while others abscond, fault, attack, revenge, reject, and cry for blood.

When we come into the New Testament, hundreds of years later after Exodus 20:12, we find that Jesus actually, becomes even more demanding in the application of Exodus 20:12. For example: Let us look at Matthew 15: 3-9. Promises made to parents by the children are to be honoured, always. Jesus goes on to say that true religion does not accept or sanction any deviation from it.

Sadly, today, a lot of young and old, think that such a directive would be archaic and that the honouring parents, is a thing of the past.

On the contrary, it is even more severe in its application in the New Testament. Such a view presented by the New Testament is the hallmark of all counter-culture worldviews. Why, because, as time has repeatedly proved, stability and consistency, trust and honour, are non-negotiable and a part of Christ's followers' way of life.

Everyone needs a rock to build their lives on. Firm-ground always helps our life stay steady, balanced and in progress, too.

We, humans, tend to digress easy, get distracted and deviate. Instead, we love to do that which is right in our own eyes or suits our own



unexpressed and inventive and creative frame of mind.

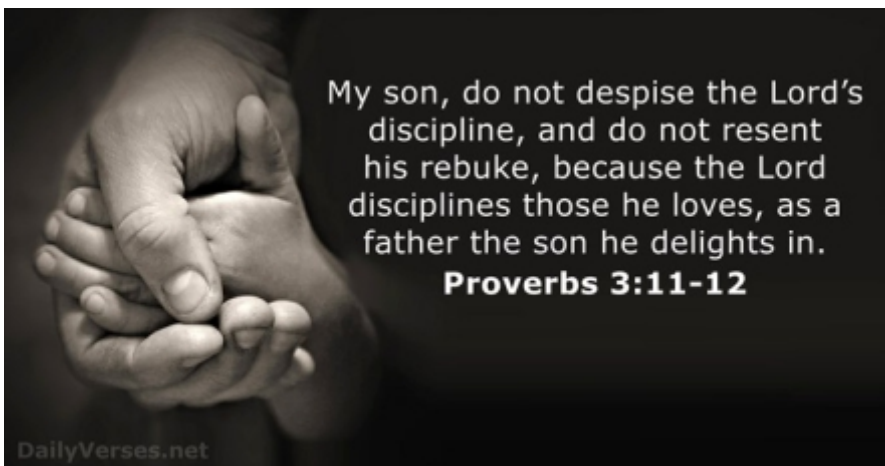
Then there is the element of emotion, and a sudden desire for momentary, diversionary and passion fulfilling acts. These tend to build on our weak, flirting hearts. Such moments are addressed, shown how to deal and overcome them too.

**As for elders:** *New Testament, as does the Old Testament, repeatedly infers that "Our Elders are not our enemies but friends with fragile bones available to us only for a 'season'. They are a treasure trough of insight, perception and wisdom. Only the truly wise know their worth!"*

**Come, let us demonstrate our love, respect, by holding them in esteem, and honour!!**



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



# THE BIBLE SOCIETY OF INDIA

invites applications from residents of West Bengal who are dynamic, result oriented, enterprising and committed to the Bible Cause for the post of **AUXILIARY SECRETARY FOR THE CALCUTTA AUXILIARY, KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL**. The applicant should be an ordained person who should have completed BD/M.Th. along with a secular University Degree from recognized and reputed Universities. He/She should have administrative experience in a senior position in Churches/Christian Organizations. Extensive tour of entire West Bengal would be involved. Candidates should be between 40 and 50 years of age and fluent in Bengali, Hindi and English. This post is in the salary scale of Rs. 10800-680-17600-760-29000-840-37400. Additional allowances like DA - 74% of basic, CCA – Rs. 1500/-, Medical – Rs. 1700/- and Children's Allowance - Rs. 1500/- per child for children upto the age of 21 years who are unmarried/unemployed will be paid. Residential accommodation and a vehicle for official use will also be provided. **Age/Salary/Qualification will be relaxed in deserving cases.**

Those called for interview will be eligible for actual train/bus fare from the nearest Railway/Bus Station to the place of interview and back by the shortest route plus 10% of the fare towards incidentals.

Application on plain paper with detailed resume including age, education, training, experience, salary now drawing and expected, contact details, Church background etc., along with copies of certificates/testimonials, two reference letters and a passport size photograph should be mailed to the General Secretary, Bible Society of India, LOGOS, 206 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore 560 001 in a sealed envelope superscribing "Application for the post of Auxiliary Secretary, Calcutta Auxiliary", to reach him by October 20, 2020. **Those who are presently working with Churches/Christian Organizations should apply with the endorsement of the concerned Head of the Church/Organization only.** Selected candidates need to undergo a thorough medical examination at own cost in a hospital recommended by the BSI particularly to see if the appointees suffer from any pre-existent illness and whether she/he is fit to take up the position offered.

Intercessory  
*Prayer*  
Points



October 2020

**1 THURSDAY** International day of the Older person. Pray that every senior citizen of our country may get a dignified life and a loving home. Pray for the care givers too, to serve them with compassion and grace. Pray also that God may comfort them.

**2 FRIDAY** International day of non-violence (Gandhi Jayanthi). Pray that every citizen of India would uphold and value non-violence. Pray that it will be practice in daily lives too.

**3 SATURDAY** Pray for all Christian agencies in our country to be accountable, faithful, consistent and focused. Pray that our works may display God's salvation grace that was revealed in and through His Son, Jesus Christ.

**4 SUNDAY** Today let us pray for our pastors, evangelists, missionaries and all those in church leadership. Pray that they may serve their respective responsibilities with deep

love and concern and put others ahead of them. May our churches display the love of God through our works and deeds.

**5 MONDAY** Pray for Nagaland. Pray for Christ to be the center of peoples' lives in this state. Pray for hunger and thirst for God's Word to grow.

**6 TUESDAY** Pray for believers in Odisha to be strong and courageous. Pray that they would share their faith boldly and wisely to their neighbours.

**7 WEDNESDAY** Pray for Rajasthan. Pray for God's light to shine on the people of Rajasthan. May God reveal Himself personally to those who seek Him.

**8 THURSDAY** Indian Air Force Day. Today we are celebrating 88th Air Force Day. May God Almighty continue to bless and use them to safeguard the country.

**9 FRIDAY** Pray for Punjab. Pray for God's servants to be strengthened despite many obstacles and challenges. Pray that the churches may grow.

**10 SATURDAY** Pray for revival in Jharkhand. Pray that the Word of God would be accepted and practiced and that it would change people's mindset and eventually their lives.

**11 SUNDAY** International girl child day. Pray for protection for each girl child. Pray for awareness that every child is special and are equal in the Maker's sight. Pray that parents would take extra care for their daughters with love.

**12 MONDAY** Pray for the ministry of Evangelical Fellowship of India. Pray that EFI would effectively continue to serve as the voice of the evangelicals. Pray for all the departments to reflect God's love and care as they function in their respective fields.

**13 TUESDAY** Pray for Delhi today. Pray that the love of God would overflow this city. Men and women would turn to God for help. Pray that the churches in this city would be revived and bear many spiritual fruits.

**14 WEDNESDAY** Pray for the people of Daman and Diu to have

fresh encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ in a new and fresh way. Pray for the Holy Spirit to work actively in believers' heart and minds.

**15 THURSDAY** Pray for Chandigarh. Pray for hearts that are teachable and ready to accept the message of the Cross. Pray that people who are sharing the Gospel would do it with the power of the Holy Spirit.

**16 FRIDAY** Pray for Lakshadweep. Pray for God's amazing grace and love to reach every individual in these 36 islands.

**17 SATURDAY** International day for the eradication of poverty. Pray for all those who work towards this goal. Pray that people may have the desire to love and share with others the material blessings that they get.

**18 SUNDAY** Pray for all the worshippers today as they gather to honor, praise and worship Jesus Christ. Pray for the Holy Spirit to fill their hearts as they empty themselves.

**19 MONDAY** Pray for Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Pray that God would open the way for those seeking to know the truth. Pray for believers in this place to love the Word of God and obey it wholeheartedly.

**20 TUESDAY** Pray for Puducherry.

Pray for spiritual awakening of the people of this UT. Pray that their spiritual hunger and thirst would be quenched with the Word of God. Pray for God's mercy and grace for this land.

**21 WEDNESDAY** Pray for Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Pray that the people may learn to seek God in times of trouble and need. Pray that God would provide the way to draw people to himself.

**22 THURSDAY** Pray for Caleb Institute, Gurgaon. Pray for the students and the teaching staff of this institute that they may be equipped and empowered to share the Gospel very effectively.

**23 FRIDAY** Pray for Evangelical Trust of North India (ETANI). Pray that God would give wisdom and discernment as they deal with church properties and legal cases.

**24 SATURDAY** Today is UN Day. Pray that the UN would continue to work towards international peace and security.

**25 SUNDAY** Let us continue to pray for our nation that Christ's light may shine brightly and that more and more people may see the love of God and develop a greater desire to know Him.

**26 MONDAY** Pray for the ministry of EFI through the publication department. Pray that God may bless and use the articles in the AIM magazine to bring hope, peace, comfort, guidance, love and strength to the readers.

**27 TUESDAY** Pray for your city today. Pray that God would heal the sick and comfort the bereaved. Pray for God's intervene and take away Covid19 soon.

**28 WEDNESDAY** Pray for our nation and its leaders. Pray for safety and protection from enemies. Pray for unity. Pray that every citizen would enjoy their fundamental rights and carry out their responsibilities with gratitude.

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

**30 FRIDAY** Pray for the victims of physical abuses. Pray for justice. Pray for healing both emotional and physical. Pray for the strength to forgive and move forward.

**31 SATURDAY** Thank God for His protection and all His blessings during the month of October 2020

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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

### Support EFI with your gift

Contribution can be sent to:  
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Bank Name and Address: Indian Bank, 47-48, Pragati House, Nehru Place, New Delhi- 110019  
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### Evangelical Fellowship of India

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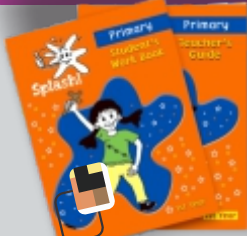
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