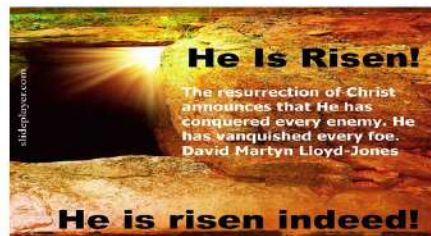


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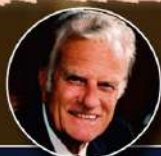
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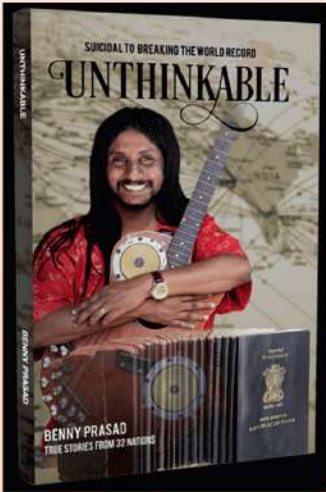


Safeguarding our freedoms

March 4: "It is the duty of the State to safeguard the secular character of our country, to protect every citizen, and ensure the enjoyment of his or her fundamental rights regardless of religion. But it [govt.] is doing little to protect religious minorities," says a letter signed by 93 former civil servants, urging the prime minister to reassure the Christian community of protection against increased attacks on them and to take preventive action. They said the violence could be stopped immediately with a word from the top leaders of the Central and State governments. There were at least 598 incidents of violence against Christians in 2022, says the United Christian Forum.

An unthinkable journey

"If my dreams can come true, yours can too. My sin and shame have been exchanged for righteousness and new life by the Almighty God who died to set me free... Remember, you are never too bad or sinful for God to redeem and transform," says 48-year old Benny Prasad from Bangalore, who now leads an outreach to depressed, suicidal and lonely young people through a cafe called **Chai 3:16**.



From contemplating suicide at the age of 16, Benny has had an "unthinkable" journey, going on to become in 2010 the fastest person to travel to each of the 245 nations and territories of the world within 6 years, 6 months, and 22 days! Some of his global experiences have been chronicled in his first book released last year, called **Unthinkable**. (Details: bennyprasad.com)

Converted tribals better off

The tribal communities in south Kerala that embraced Christianity have higher number of graduates and more employment-related migration to urban settings compared to their counterparts in the north, says a study by D Narayana, economist and former director of the state-run Gulati Institute of Finance & Taxation. Narayana attributes the educational achievements to the intervention of Christian missionaries in the south. The study cites the case of Malai Arayans in Idukki and Kottayam districts. British missionary Henry Baker's visit to the community's settlements changed its fortunes. He established 11 churches and 27 schools in this area. - *New Indian Express*

State can control college fees

In a verdict that will have far-reaching implications for minority Christian-run higher educational institutions in India, the country's top court has ordered that while a minority higher educational institution is free to devise its own fee structure, the state has the power to regulate it. The Supreme Court ruling on March 17 came while hearing a petition that challenged the authority of a committee set up by Madhya Pradesh state to regulate fees and admissions in minority-run higher education institutions in the state. The court also said there could be no capitation fee imposed on parents directly or indirectly or in any form. - UCAN

ICA celebrates 125 years

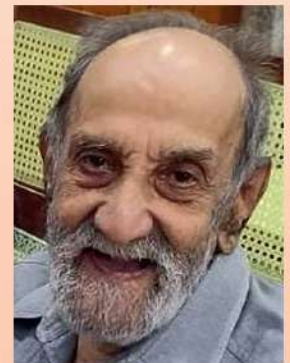
"Our constitution guarantees the freedom of worship and the freedom to propagate one's faith, and it falls upon us to resist all efforts to undermine our constitution and undermine our diversity,"



said Dr Shashi Tharoor, MP, speaking by video link at the 125th Anniversary Celebrations of the **Indian Christian Association (ICA)** of Tamil Nadu in Chennai, February. 25. He urged our "unity in diversity to be a guiding light." The ICA has a history of catering to the less privileged through its free healthcare clinics, community kitchens, tutorial classes, flood relief work, IAS coaching etc. (IndianChristianAssociation.org)

Never too old to be a pastor

If at age 85, Caleb could ask for a hill country where giants resided (Joshua 14), so can other senior pastors and believers. A prime example is pastor **William Ferdinand**, who at 97 years is the senior pastor of Revival Center Church in Bangalore. Though he doesn't preach much these days, except through his life and actions, he still signs all important documents and makes important announcements. He has faithfully grown and pastored this church for the past 50 years, all glory to God. His message to other believers? "Shine for Jesus whenever and wherever, not just inside the church." - Richard Moses



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"FIRST OF ALL, I would that...PRAYERS...be made for EVERYONE, for RULERS and ALL IN AUTHORITY...TO BE SAVED." (1 Tim. 2:1)

"To pray for others is of divine significance and represents the highest form of Christian service." - E. M. Bounds

✚ **BREAKTHROUGH:** Over 14,000 people in Ho Chi Minh City in **Vietnam** attended the *Spring Love Festival* hosted by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Assoc., March 4-5. It's the first time the communist govt has given permission for an evangelistic outreach with a foreign speaker outside of a holiday. Over 900 pastors and leaders from 60 denominations worked together to put on the historic event. Praise God for the increased freedom; pray that the gospel may reach every corner of Vietnam.

✚ **MORE EARTHQUAKES:** At least nine people died in Pakistan and four in Afghanistan when a 6.5 magnitude earthquake rattled much of the two nations on March 22. Parts of India too were affected. But the region may have dodged the mass casualties usually associated with a tremor of such scale, praise God.

✚ **NIGERIA:** Pray for the new rulers of Nigeria led by president-elect, **Bola Tinubu**. Pray for wisdom as he deals with a crumbling economy, high youth unemployment and widespread insecurity that saw 10,000 killed last year.

✚ **NEEDLESS DEATHS:** Gun violence and drug overdoses in the US claim over 425 lives every day.

✚ **CHRISTIANITY IN UK:** A new census shows the number of people identifying as Christian in England and Wales has fallen below 50% for the first time.

✚ **NORTH KOREA** has held a nuclear counter-attack simulation against the US and South Korea.

✚ **THAILAND'S ELECTIONS** are set for May 14. The more than 1.5 million Myanmar refugees and migrants who live here hope a new govt. can put an end to Bangkok's support for the military regime in Myanmar.

✚ **IRAN'S** mass uprising over the death of a woman in police custody for wearing a hijab has claimed at least 598 lives with about 22,000 protestors being arrested. There have been horrific acts of torture and savagery, including sexual violence against child protesters. Pray that this brutality will stop, in Jesus' Name.

✚ **DICTATORSHIPS:** As of 2022, there are at least 57 dictatorships in the world. (PlanetRulers.com) These include those in Russia, China, North Korea, Syria, Belarus, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela etc. Pray for the demise of all authoritarian rule and the flourishing of democracies.

✚ **CHAOS IN HAITI:** In less than three months, 627 people were killed by gangs and 365 people kidnapped, says an UN official. About half of Haiti's population is now in need of humanitarian assistance. Canada is providing \$100 million to help restore law and order. Most of Haiti's 12 million people are Christian.

✚ **CORONATION OUTREACH:** The upcoming coronation of King Charles III on May 6 is an "unprecedented opportunity" to reach the world with the gospel. *Living Waters* ministry is teaming up with other ministries to hand out 3 million gospel tracts. Billions may watch on TV. The ceremony includes Charles laying his hand on the Bible and making an oath before God to defend its truths.

✚ **'HOPE CALIFORNIA'** hopes to reach 10 cities with revival on April 1 & 2, and 'blitz the streets with the love of Jesus'. Ten large stadium events are expected to be held across the state. Pray for a rich harvest of souls.

✚ **AFGHANISTAN:** The UN has called on the Taliban rulers to end the harmful destruction of women's rights and lift restrictions imposed on them. Girls have been banned from secondary school and women from tertiary education.

✚ **PRAY FOR THE RELEASE** of thousands of Christians and others who are being unjustly imprisoned.

✚ **LEBANON:** About 80% of its nearly 7 million people are struggling. A third of its population is Christian.

✚ **REFUGEES** worldwide number over 100 million.

✚ **CANADA'S POPULATION** increased by more than a million people for the first time in history in 2022, almost entirely due to a surge in immigrants and temporary residents. This makes it the fastest-growing G7 country. Over 133,000 Ukrainians came in during the past year.

✚ **WARS TO END:** Pray for an end to all wars, especially those in Ukraine, Myanmar, Yemen and Syria. Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger show no signs of beating back stubborn Islamist insurgencies. The wars against hunger, homelessness, drug-overdoses, over-drinking, global warming, cyber-crime, terrorism, gun violence, dictatorships, corruption, abuse, cancer, AIDS, etc. also rage on.

✚ **UKRAINE:** Threats of a nuclear war are growing from Russia. Pray for God's intervention and protection. Over 70% of Ukraine's 44 million people are Christian.

✚ **PERSECUTION:** Over 5,600 Christians were killed for their faith last year (15/day). Pray for protection.

✚ **PRAY FOR ISRAEL:** The Israeli Defence Minister has called on PM Benjamin Netanyahu to halt controversial plans for an overhaul of the justice system. His intervention came as Israelis opposed to the changes held mass rallies nationwide for the twelfth week in a row.

✚ **PAKISTAN:** Pray for the repeal of its blasphemy laws.

✚ **PRAY FOR ALL RULERS** and those in authority.

✚ **HARVEST PLENTY; LABOURERS FEW:** Pray



"The king's heart is like a stream of water directed by the Lord; He guides it wherever He pleases." - Prov. 21:1

"Righteousness makes a nation great; sin is a disgrace to any nation." - Proverbs 14:34, GNT

"Pray for the city in which you dwell, for, in its peace is your peace, in its prosperity is your prosperity." - Jere. 29:7

"We cannot all ARGUE, but we can all PRAY; We cannot all be LEADERS, but we can all be PLEADERS; We cannot all be mighty in RHETORIC, but we can all be prevalent in PRAYER. - Charles Spurgeon

"He who runs from God in the morning will scarcely find Him the rest of the day." - John Bunyan

✠ **PRAY FOR ALL OUR LEADERS**, "that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness... [and for] all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:1-4)

✠ **BORDER DISPUTES:** Almost all the states of NE India are having a certain degree of conflict with their neighbouring state or states as far as borders are concerned. While talks are on for solving these disputes, repeated incidents of violence have delayed the process. Pray for a peaceful resolution to all these conflicts.

✠ **HUMAN RIGHTS:** The annual US report on human rights practices released on March 20 has listed "significant human rights issues" and abuses in India, including reported targeting of religious minorities, dissidents and journalists. Pray for more tolerance, equality and freedom of expression.

✠ **NEW GOVERNMENTS** in the recently concluded assembly elections in Nagaland, Meghalaya and Tripura have been sworn in. Pray for wisdom and integrity to the new rulers.

✠ **OPEN LETTER:** In an open letter to the prime minister, about 93 former Indian civil officials have urged him to take immediate steps to stop the surge in violence against Christians.

✠ **FORCED CONVERSIONS:** The Supreme Court is yet to receive a list of forced conversions from various states and in a letter dated March 11 the Union govt. has requested for four more weeks to furnish a list.

✠ **DISQUALIFIED:** India's parliament has disqualified senior opposition leader Rahul Gandhi from being an MP, a day after he was sentenced to two years in prison in a defamation case. He was convicted by a Gujarat court for 2019 comments about the prime minister's surname at an election rally. Mr Gandhi said he will appeal the verdict. Pray for a peaceful and just resolution of this issue.

✠ **EVICTION:** Pray for the nearly 53 families who have been living at the CNI Mission Compound in Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh, for the last 50 to 70 years, who are now being asked to vacate. A High Court hearing is set for April 3.

✠ **CYBERSECURITY:** In the first half of 2022, over 674,000 cybersecurity incidents occurred. Pray for security.

✠ **CHINA & PAK.:** Pray for peace with our neighbours.

✠ **HEALTHCARE:** 50% of all villagers have no access to healthcare providers. Pray for greater accessibility.

✠ **SALVATION:** Pray for India's healing and salvation.

✠ **SUICIDES INCREASE:** Over 164,000 suicides were reported in India in 2021 (450/day). Pray for their prevention.

✠ **ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS:** Six more states are scheduled to have their Legislative Assembly elections this year - Karnataka in April-May and Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana in Nov-Dec. The year may also see elections in Jammu & Kashmir. The next all-India General Elections are expected to be held by May 2024 to elect the 543 members of the 18th Lok Sabha. Pray that the right leaders and parties of God's choice may run and win; that corrupt and non-performance candidates will not return; that people will vote against communal parties with a hidden agenda against minorities; for a positive role of the media in educating the electorate; for free, fair and peaceful elections.

✠ **RELIGIOUS FREEDOM:** At least 11 states in India have anti-conversion laws. Pray that such laws will not be misused by extremists and will be repealed asap; for wisdom and courage to the High Court and Supreme Court judges to uphold our constitutional freedoms.

✠ **FOR AN OUTPOURING OF GOD'S SPIRIT** on all people; for miracles, signs and wonders; for a great revival, especially among our youth, that will empower the church to send out workers to gather the harvest.

✠ **INTERNET SHUTDOWNS:** India has topped the list for the highest number of internet shutdowns in the world for five years in a row, including in 2022.

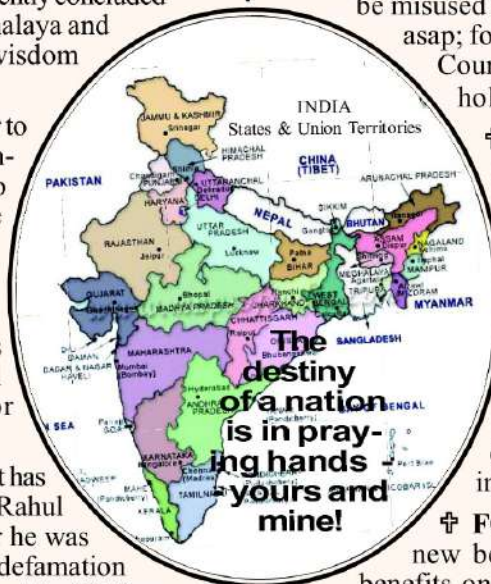
✠ **FOR JUSTICE:** Pray that millions of new believers who lost their economic benefits on conversion will have them reinstated. The issue is before the Supreme Court.

✠ **PRAY FOR THE POOR**, hungry, homeless, hurting, helpless, widows, orphans and the suicidal. One in every three children and one in seven adults live in poverty.

✠ **PRAY FOR THE PREVENTION of natural disasters** like earthquakes, landslides, cyclones, floods, famine, drought, fires etc, and **manmade disasters** like accidents, building or bridge collapses, home fires etc.

✠ **A COST OF LIVING CRISIS** may be emerging in India over the next two years, says the *World Economic Forum*. Pray that suitable steps will be taken to avert this.

✠ **PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN:** During the past 75 years after Independence, there have been plenty of laws, policies, plans and schemes set up to protect children and their rights. Pray that all these may translate into a better country for our children.



"If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you." - 1 Peter 4:14, NIV

MESSAGES

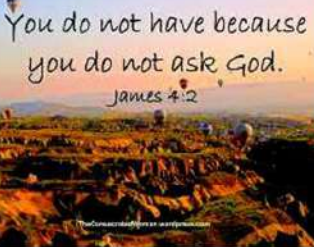
THE TORN VEIL

+ "When Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit. **At that moment** the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." - Mt. 27:50-51, NIV

+ "Therefore brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us **through the curtain, that is, His body...**" - Hebrews 10:19-22

+ "Let us therefore **come boldly to the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." - Heb. 4:16, NKJV

+ "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" - 2 Cor. 9:15



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A 222 Moment

"When you are cast down and humbled, you will speak with confidence, And the humble person He will lift up and save." -- Job 22-29, AMP

DATELINE

- + **Healing & Deliv. Mtg.**, B'lore, Sat. April 15, pg 15.
- + **Perspectives Course**, May 2-25, pg 1 (outer front)
- + **Int'l. Convocation**, Chennai, Fri. May 26, pg 56 (outer back).
- + **School of Worship**, Ambala, June 1-21, pg 42.

EASTER

+ "If the **Spirit** of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you." - Rom. 8:11, NIV

+ "The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits." - Dan. 11:32



forerunner

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Goal: To be a light to the world.

Mandate: Preparing the way of the Lord by "tell[ing] his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins. Because of God's tender mercy the morning Light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give Light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace." - Zechariah's prophecy concerning his son John, the forerunner of Christ. (Luke 1:77-79)

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WANTED a self-denying disciple of Jesus Christ to join the Lord's ministry. Mark 8:34. Contact: Ph: 9620712857 / 97390 75617.

RENT: Independent single bedroom house with hall, kitchen, on ground floor, at Lingarajapuram, 17 VST Rd, B'lore - 84. Rent: Rs. 9,000/ Contact at Ph. 9845581295.

CORRECTION: In page 12 of the March issue, the correct email address of Authentic Solutions (under 'Required') is: info@authenticolutions.in

PRAYER MATTERS

All are welcome!

+ **ALL NIGHT PRAYER** gathering at the Wesley English Church Hall, 19 Promenade Rd, opp. Coles Park, B'lore - 5. Every Wed. at 9:30 pm. (Ph. 9845581295)

+ **ALL NIGHT PRAYER** at the Pavanasar Lutheran Church, Bangalore-560051. For prayer call: 959 130 2854. Every Monday Online Prayer at 6:30 pm.

+ **JESUS CALLS PRAYER TOWERS:** 24/7 at Phone: 04445999000. (www.prayertowersonline.org)

+ **ALL INDIA UNITED CHRISTIAN VOICE,** Bangalore, Day of Prayer by Prayer-line: 08028443992. Every 4th Saturday 10 am to 12 noon by Zoom.

+ **CALVARY UNITED PRAYER:** Everyday prayer for the nations - Zoom Id 9343456677, P/W 195615 by Zoom meeting, 11 am-12:30 & 7 pm-8:30. (9343456670)

+ **SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS** meet at Jacob Ladder Prayer Centre, No. 406, 4th C Main Road, OMBR Layout, Banaswadi, Bangalore-560043. Prayer line: Phone: 8105975134. Every Friday: 10 am to 1 pm.

+ **THE OVER 2,000 DAYS OF PRAYER GATHERING** at the FGAG Church in B'lore continues to meet everyday, along with an All Night Prayer - every Friday, 10 pm - 4 am. Ph. 1 800 200 4411. Website: fgag.in

"A day without prayer is a day without blessing, and a life without prayer is a life without power." - E Harvey

"On your walls...I have appointed watchmen. All day and all night they will never sleep. You who call on the Lord, take no rest for yourselves..." - Isaiah 62:6

MATRIMONIALS

WANTED a Protestant girl, for a CSI Kannada groom, never married, 44 yrs, height 5'8", MBA, PhD; working as a Professor. Ph: 9886448374.

WANTED a born-again believer Christian groom from a good family, for a 41 year Telugu girl, ht. 5'2", BA, Languages: English, Telugu and Tamil. Ph: 8050990130 Email: kumarisujil1984@gmail.com

WANTED a born-again groom, for a Mumbai-based baptized spinster, Goan & Keralite, 31 years, ht. 5'1", fair complexion, MBA, working for an

American software Co. (WFH) as Product Designer. Contact by email: flojoelohim2@gmail.com

WANTED a suitable Protestant CSI groom, for a 28-year Kannada girl, MSc, (Physics) B.Ed., working as a lecturer in Mysore. Language no bar. Contact: 9738302321/7892766635.

WANTED a God-fearing, affectionate, educated suitable groom, for a 28-year, BBM graduate girl, wheatish complexion, working in an MNC, Bangalore. Contact at: Mobile: 9738523535. Email: gloriatanu22@gmail.com

More matrimonial ads are below and on the next two pages.

Parents searching for a God-fearing groom

(preferably Tamil speaking, 34 yrs & below),

for their daughter, who is 31 yrs, B.Tech., Medium Skinned, 5'6"ft, working in an MNC, Bangalore.

Expectations : Born-again, regular church-goer from a good Christian family, graduate, ht. above 5'8", settled & working in Bangalore.

Kindly contact: 9791693961, 9945241009 (whatsapp)

Wanted a suitable born-again groom,

for a Bangalore-based, Tamil Protestant girl, 26 years, ht 5', working as a Nursing Aide in St. John's Medical College Hospital, Bangalore.

Contact:

Phone : 8105888514 / 6363 902 179

Wanted a suitable groom,

for a 33-year, height 5'3', born-again, communicant believer at Methodist Church, Bangalore, BCA graduate, working as a Program Manager in an MNC at Bangalore.

Contact 9886584020.

Email: manuela.edward@gmail.com

MATRIMONIALS**Wanted a born-again Christian groom,**

for a 33-year Tamil girl, ht. 5', M.Pharm., working at a Central Govt. hospital in Bangalore and attending Bethel AG Church, Bangalore.

Contact: 9886838550

Wanted a born-again working Malayalee girl,

for a Bangalore-based, handsome, graduate boy, 29 yrs, ht. 5'5", only son for his parents. Profession: Teacher and Coach at NBIS; Editor, Decor Designer, Anchor Media Groups. Pursuing Digital Media Marketing (BYU). Contact:

Email: sanjayabhisek19@gmail.com

Wanted a suitable boy,

for a girl working in ANZ Bank, Melbourne (Australia), height: 5'1", DOB: 16th April, 1989, B.Com. / MBA Diploma.

Contact:

Ph: 9663211995 / 9986008655 / 9845465674

Email: lucia.mary@gs.com

Looking for a God-fearing groom

of equal status, for a 42-year AG Church spinster, ht. 5'4", fair and good looking, MBA, working in an American Bank MNC as Senior Manager in Bangalore.

Contact: 9591302854 / 9964422801

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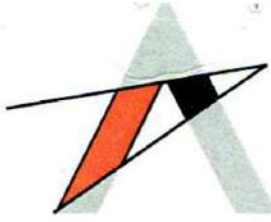
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*BOB'S BANTER

By Robert Clements*

Happy Easter, it's the police..!

Today the amphitheater lies decayed and unused, and as the sea winds from Marine Drive just across the railway tracks sweeps across the once famous open air theatre now lying in ruins, its resigned silence speaks about rock concerts, jazz yatras, tamashas and lavani shows held here in days long gone by. In 2003, this iconic open-air theatre was closed since courts refused to exempt it from silence zone restrictions.

But on an Easter, nearly thirty years ago, I'd written and directed a play here, called, *'Happy Easter, it's the police!'*

My mind goes to the main character, Anita, who on an Easter morning hears her husband humming a hymn and joins in as they get ready to go to church. And then catastrophe strikes as the police enter and arrest her husband for fraud and drag him to the police station.

All this on an Easter morning.

Desperate, petrified and scared she calls all the people she knows and even hears her father saying, she should never have married this man, who seems now to be exposed as a cheat.

Even as her faith is shattered, a strange man wearing an ancient attire enters her home, and asks her, about her

*Robert Clements is a syndicated columnist based in Mumbai whose articles reach six million readers daily. (bobsbanter@gmail.com) To receive *Bob's Banter* daily, please send your name and WhatsApp number to: rtgclements@gmail.com.

faith, her reading of the holy scriptures, and her relationship with her God: "Your husband was also going to sing a solo in church today, wasn't he?"

"Sir," screams Anita, don't mock me, not now when I am down and out!"

"You believed in God when everything was comfortable for you!" continues the strange man, "Now in a crisis, your beliefs are blown to smithereens!"

"Who are you?" whispers Anita.

"I am the one they call the Doubting Thomas!" says the man. "Like you, I followed Christ, saw Him doing miracles, giving sermons and doing all the things holy men do. But when he died and rose from the dead, I did not believe it was true! You know what he said to me when he finally stood before me: *'Thomas you believe now, because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen me and still believe in me!'*

I remember the hush in that amphitheater long ago, as everyone in the audience that Easter knew those words from the Scriptures were for them. And, for us! That, each of us wishing each other a Happy Easter, are blessed, because, unlike those who on an Easter over two thousand years ago, saw a Jesus risen from His grave, we who haven't but still believe, are blessed even more.

In my play, at the Rang Bhavan, it was a different Anita who faced the police after that, an Anita armed with the powers of a Risen Christ.

Happy Easter, dear reader, take heart; you are armed with the same..!

"With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

Mark 10:27

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"If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me." (Jere. 29:13, NLT)

Doubters, seekers and believers ... come!

Easter celebrations will come and go but the life-changing effects of Easter continue now and forever - hallelujah! It's not so much in the "egg-citement" of an event that happened over 2000 years ago but in the current and eternal implications of that event that are really important.

DOUBTING THOMAS AND EASTER: National Geographic (March 2012) featured the Apostles' early travels that are the origins of the spread of Christianity, such as Thomas' travels into India where he is said to have raised the first cross and performed one of his earliest miracles. The term "Doubting Thomas" is nowhere to be found in the Bible!

Disciple Thomas, also known as Didymus, earned his dubious nickname because of his one statement, "*Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.*" (John 20:25, ASV) He was a hero of the Gnostics. "The tomb is empty. Everyone admits that now, but... did anyone touch him?" This is the question the Apostle Thomas, who was not present when the risen Jesus first appeared to the disciples, raised. He was looking for a God who could understand his confusion but in fact God was looking for him! Thomas re-discovered his Lord.

DOUBTERS - GOD UNDERSTANDS: Peter's denial was worse than Thomas' doubts. When Thomas said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails," Jesus understood him. He showed up! When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, the rest of the disciples said, "Don't go back to Galilee; they want to kill you!" Thomas said, "Well, let's go with him and die with him." He was a brave heart. Many of the people God used mightily started out as real doubters and the Bible has not left them out. Abraham and Moses are just two of them.

The faith that Thomas had about his Master is not the one that could easily fade away. No doubt he had doubts but all it needed was confirmation and affirmation to take the next step of faith to cross the seas and oceans and proclaim about the One he could say "I know my Lord and I know my God" He is alive!

JOIN THE CLUB, YOU ARE WANTED! Honest doubt is better than mediocre faith. Thomas has been much blamed by expositors, but he asked only for proof that would be satisfactory in his circumstances, says Barnes. Frank Morrison who wrote a powerful book "Who moved the stone," was an investigative journalist, skeptic and a doubter of Christianity. Lee Strobel who wrote books like Proof of Jesus, Case for Creator, Case for Christ,

Case for the Real Jesus, was an atheist and a doubter. Josh McDowell the author or co-author of some 115 books, whose best-known book is Evidence That Demands a Verdict, initially set out to disprove the Bible. If you are a doubter, search for Him, search for Him with all your heart, you will find Him, He will show up.

BRING YOUR DOUBTS TO JESUS: Doubt is not the absence of faith. Rather, doubt is the reverse side of the coin of faith. They go together. Doubt is not a sin. It is the evidence of a thinking, reflective, realistic mind that is not fooled. Rosemary Clement-Moore says in Goodreads: "Faith isn't absence of doubt. It's belief without proof, not without question."

Even while believers and the church frown at your questions and doubts, Jesus understands your doubts, questions, confusion, frustration, and even disbelief. He welcomes your search for the Truth. Jesus did that to

Thomas. Then Jesus told Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Take your hand, and put it into my side. Stop doubting, but believe." John 20:27. A missionary came to life - for India!

DOUBTERS WELCOME AT "THE EMPTY TOMB": Josh McDowell, a Christian apologist, said, "After more than 700 hours of studying this subject and thoroughly investigating its foundation, I have come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is either one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted upon the minds of men, OR it is the most fantastic fact of history." The fact is - it is the most fantastic fact-the resurrection is true and Jesus is alive!

Thomas, who earned the infamous nickname "Doubting Thomas," makes an earth-shattering confession of faith - "My Lord and my God!" The message from Thomas today could be: "Dreamers and doubters, seekers and believers, all come with me. All that I wanted was just a reaffirmation from my Lord and I got it. I was ready to tell what I saw, what I heard, what I touched. I had no doubt about my Lord, that's why I came to India. I am no fool. I may have been the hero of Gnostics, but when I set out to India, I was ready to die for what I saw in my Lord. Join me in knowing Him and making Him known!"

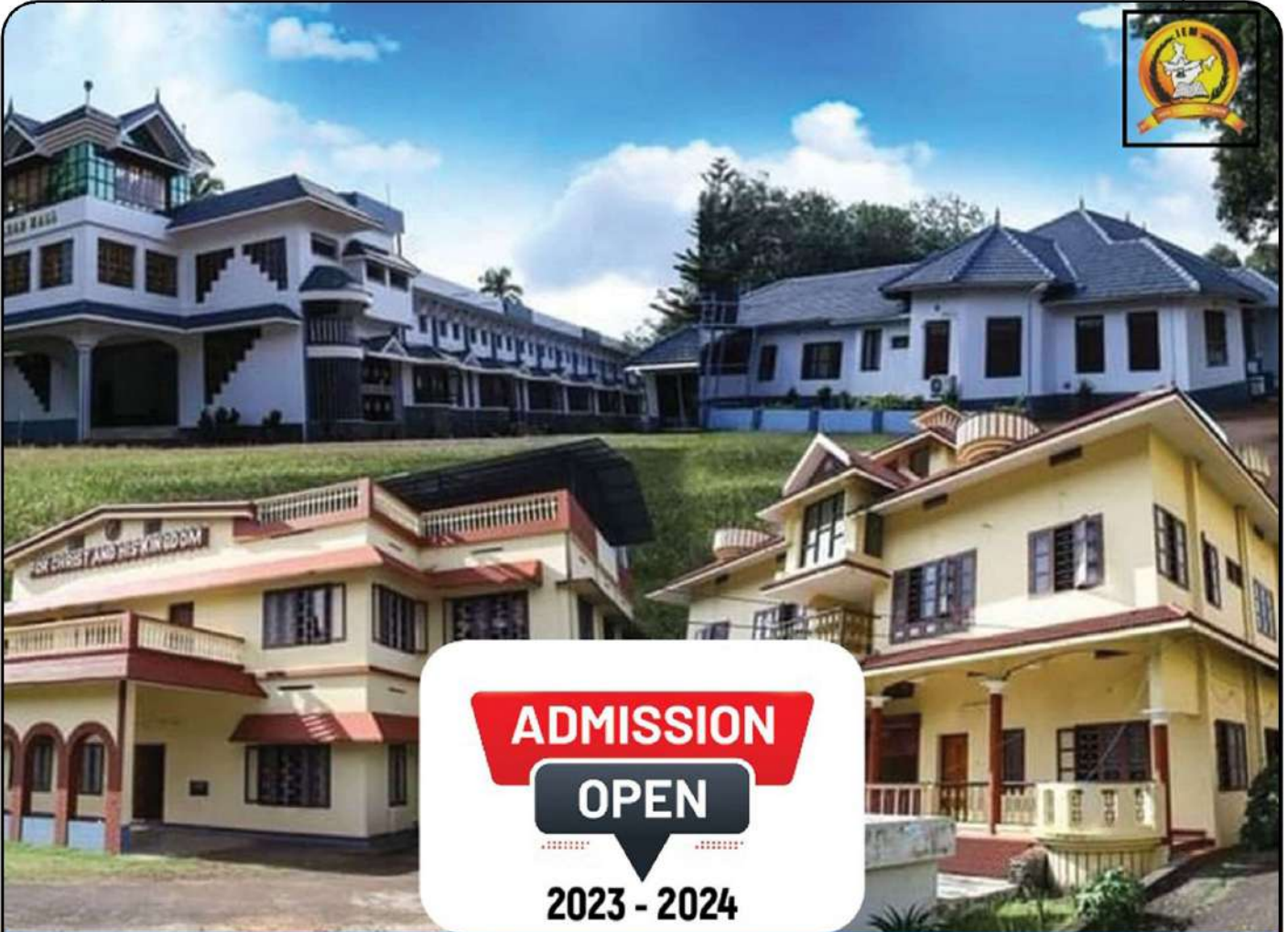
May this be our prayer today: "*I want to know You Lord, I want to hear Your voice, I want to know You more, I want to touch You, I want to see Your face, I want to know You more!*"

-- Jose T Nithi, josefnithi@gmail.com

"When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer." Psalm 94:19 (NLT)

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11:6

"You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me." (John 20:29, NLT)



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A centurion in Capernaum once came to Jesus and told him about his paralysed servant who was suffering terribly. "Jesus said to him, 'Shall I come and heal him?'"

"The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.'" (Mt. 8: 5-13)

"When Jesus heard this, He was amazed and said to those following Him, 'Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith...' Then Jesus said to the centurion, 'Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would.' And his servant was healed at that moment."

Another centurion was at the cross when Jesus was crucified. He must have been really tough to be a part of the cruelty during crucifixions. He had heard every word that Jesus spoke throughout the ordeal. He saw the two thieves on either side of the cross of Jesus. One of them accepted that he deserved to die due to his misdeeds, and said to Jesus - "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." Jesus replied: "I assure you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:42-43, NLT)

The centurion saw that those who passed by mocked Jesus, saying, "You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." (Mt. 27:40, NKJV)

"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many." (Matthew 27:50-54)

The centurion was a soldier who had seen many killings in his lifetime. But this was different. He saw the way Jesus forgave the thief. He heard Him asking God to forgive those who crucified Him saying that they did not know what they were doing. He felt the earth quake and heard the rocks split. It dawned on him that this was indeed the Son of God! He praised God and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (Rom.10:17) When God works, a thief can repent and go to Paradise, and even a hardened centurion can glorify God and see Jesus as God's Son!

Only Believe: The two centurions and the thief had something in common. They believed that Jesus was the Son of God and put their trust in Him. "Only believe, and [you] will be saved." (Luke 8:50, CSB) - VM



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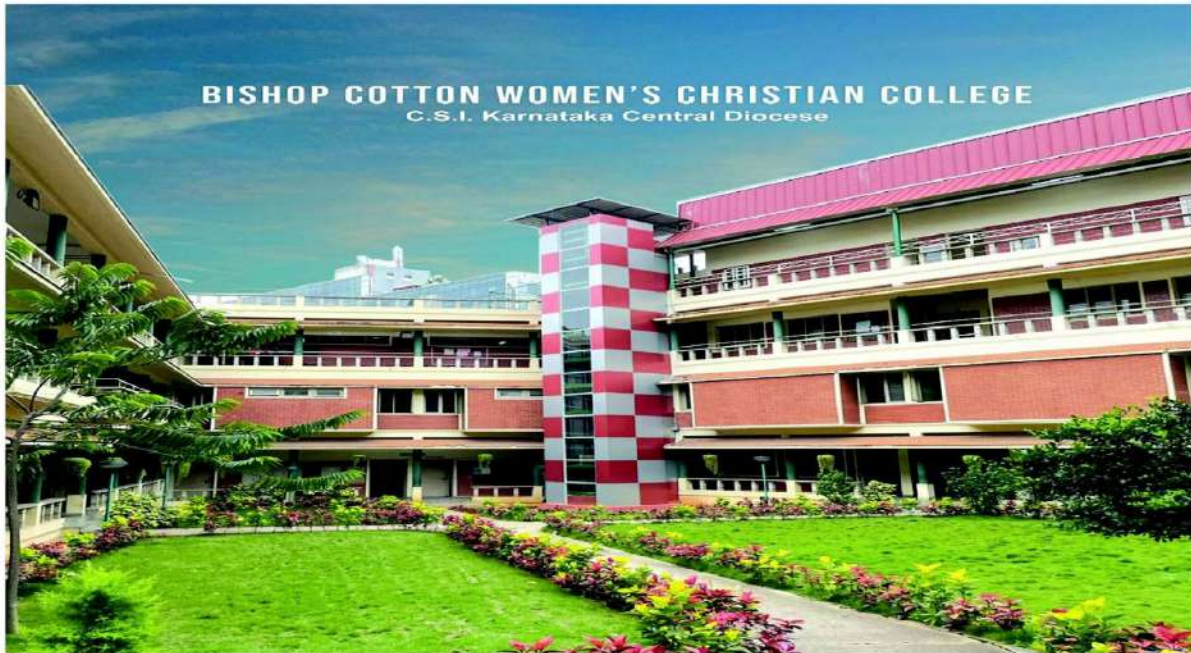


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"The disciples were amazed. 'Who is this man?' they asked. 'Even the winds and waves obey him!'" - Mt. 8:27, NLT



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“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” (James 4:8, NKJV)

By Dr Latha Christie*

Divine Appointments make a Difference

The phone goes ‘beep beep’ to wake us up from sleep. Our immediate response is to spend the first few minutes of the day checking for important messages. Studies say smartphone users check their phones more than 150 times a day. Many of us fall under this category.

The digital world has made our lives hollow. We feel crippled without our phones or even panic when our phone battery goes down. Our phones have become our world. Most of the information does not concern us directly, nor does it contribute to a better understanding or relationship with others.

Making time for God: In the busyness of life, how do we make time for divine appointments? The time to be alone with God, talk, and hear Him speak is diminishing from our schedules. We commend ourselves for the effort we make to attend church on Sundays. But even in church we are distracted by many things and fail to see God or hear Him speak to us.

God’s friend Moses: Before Moses could deliver His people from Egypt, God trained him in the desert to enjoy His companionship. When he led the Israelites, he would go up to the mountain and spend time with Jehovah. Moses began to enjoy God for who He was. He conversed with God as with a friend, face to face. And when God spoke, Moses listened. *“The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.”* (Exodus 33:11)

How Moses made time for God: Handling the mighty Israelites was a big challenge as they were stiff-necked and grumpy over any discomfort in their path. Amidst all these challenges in His mission to lead God’s people, Moses took time for God. In Exodus 24:13-14, we read: *“Then Moses set out with Joshua, his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. He said to the elders, ‘Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them.’”* Moses diligently asked the elders to take over while He went to talk to God. He did not throw away his responsibility to spend time with His Creator.

Praying at all costs: On another occasion (Ex.17), *Moses won the battle against the Amalekites by just lifting his hands towards heaven: “As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up - one on one side, one on the other - so that his hands remained steady till sunset.”* Later, *“Moses built an altar and called it ‘The Lord is my Banner.’ He said ‘For hands were lifted up to the throne of the Lord.’”*

Moses’ successor Joshua learned the importance of God in His life probably through the example of Moses. Once when Moses returned to the camp, his young

aide Joshua did not even leave the tent. Joshua learned to sit at God’s feet before God raised Him to the next level of responsibility.

How Jesus found time for God: During Jesus’ ministry on earth, He also took time to go to private places to pray, as given in these three passages: *“After He had sent them [crowds] away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray.”* (Mt. 14:23) *“Early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up and slipped out to a solitary place to pray.”* (Mk. 1:35) *“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”* (Lk. 5:16)

It was very difficult for Jesus to avoid the crowds. He had a busy schedule, felt weary, and needed rest too. Crowds came after Him for healing, compassion, miracles and prayers. (The crowds can be likened to the many messages and notifications on our phones, which need immediate attention.) But Jesus knew He needed to take everything to His Father in prayer.

The final prayer vigil: When Jesus knew His time was near, He took his disciples to Gethsemane to pray. He wept and poured out his anguish to God to the extent that his sweat was mingled with blood. As human as He was, He repeatedly prayed, *“Father, if it is Thy will, take this cup from me. Yet, not my will, but Thine be done.”* Jesus prioritized the will of the Father over His pain. The power to understand and give way to God’s purposes comes through our divine appointments. God uses the pain to draw our attention to Him, to weave us into His Grand Design.

Charles Spurgeon was used greatly by God to personally baptize 15,000 new believers and start at least 66 parachurch ministries. In spite of his busy schedule he continually lived his life in the spirit of prayer and dependence on God. He once said: *“There are times when solitude is better than society, and silence is wiser than speech. Why is it that some Christians, although they hear many sermons, make but slow advances in the divine life? Because they neglect their secret closets and do not thoughtfully meditate on God’s Word.”*

Following Jesus is to follow Him wholeheartedly and enjoy the constant companionship of Jesus in our lives, unlike following a friend on Twitter. Church fellowship is important but Jesus longs to have a closer walk with you. He waits to converse with you and longs for your attention, like how you would give for your phones. Take time to carry everything to the Lord in prayer. Divine appointments will empower you to face the encounters of this life.

**Dr Latha Christie is a scientist based in Bangalore who has served with the government of India for about 35 years. She is a certified Christian counsellor and the author of four books. Dr Latha is also the founder of the Deborah Rise Movement which advocates for women, children and families. Details: www.deborahrise.org or www.lathachristie.com.*





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Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify
your hearts, you double-minded. --James 4:8

Make Easter your Best Festival!

Easter is a disruption. It's meant to tear the veil of our routine. It's meant to shake our melancholy and give rise to meaning. It's meant to illuminate an everlasting presence, and let us see life and death, and everything in-between, in a whole new way.

The truth is, come Easter Sunday, rather than manufacture some false sense of excitement, I should recognise my need for resurrection, in this life and the next...

Resurrection Sunday should be the **biggest celebration** of the year! We should prepare and share the finest food and expect the greatest festivities.

The harder part is what comes before the partying. We must not forget that the most anticipated of Superbowl parties, the most memorable of wedding receptions, require a great deal of preparation—maybe even an entire season of getting ready. Resurrection is the single most climactic event in God's story.

The Resurrection was what God's story was building toward all along, and it is the only reason the story continues today. Easter Sunday is the reason we remember and reenact the truth that "He lives, to quicken all mankind."

In other words, **He lives so that we might rise to the fullness of life.**

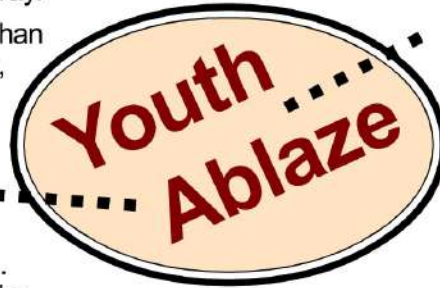
Resurrection is the greatest of gifts at the end of a 40-day season of preparation and initiation. Resurrection Sunday is the reason for it all.

As the Apostle Paul declared: "*Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.*" (1 Cor. 15:20-21).

So now, let me make another confession: I desire to be rambunctious for the Resurrection. It is my prayer that my excitement for the Superbowl will pale in comparison to my anticipation of Easter Sunday. And so too, I encourage you to do what you must do to make Easter notable and noticeably the most significant and unusual holiday of them all. For **it is because of this one day that we gather together every other Sunday.**

So share the story, break some bread, prepare a feast. Fill a delicate pastry with some escar-got and aged cheddar. Do whatever it is you need to do to make it meaningful, so that "*Your faith with joyful hearts you confess. Be bold, be Jesus' witnesses.*" (Charles Wesley)

- **Adam Kline** in *Love is Moving* magazine, Spring 2023. An excerpt. (loveismoving.ca)



It depends whose hands it's in...

A basketball in my hands is worth about \$19.

A basketball in Michael Jordan's hands is worth about \$33 million. *It depends whose hands it's in.*

A sling shot in my hands is a kid's toy. A sling shot in David's hands is a mighty weapon.

It depends whose hands it's in.

Nails in my hands might produce a birdhouse.

Nails in Jesus Christ's hands will produce salvation for the entire world. *It depends whose hands it's in.*

As you see now, it depends whose hands it's in. So put your concerns, your worries, your fears, your hopes, your dreams, your families and your relationships in God's hands because...

It depends whose hands it's in.

- Unknown

They risked their lives to save the lost and needy.

Saint Timothy

Birth : -AD 17

Death : -AD 97

Native Place : Lystra
(in present-day Turkey)

Place of Vision : Ephesus

One Missionary Biography

YOUTH CHALLENGE

Timothy (whose name means 'honoring God') was a disciple of Apostle Paul and the first bishop of Ephesus. He was born to a Jewish mother and a Greek gentile father. From an early age, Timothy put his trust in God as modeled by his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois. He accepted the gospel of Christ when Paul came to Lystra and became his disciple.

Timothy accompanied Paul during the latter's second and third missionary journey and helped establish Christian communities in the ancient cities of Corinth, Thessalonica, and Philippi. Paul assigned Timothy, whom he loved like a son, to important missions as he grew in faith. Alongside Paul, Timothy was mightily used by the Lord to strengthen the local churches. He was very careful at guarding the sound doctrine of the gospel. Whenever there were conflicts with the opponents of the gospel, he dealt with them very seriously by counseling his heart with the Truth and by holding firmly onto his faith.

While the rest of his contemporaries were seeking their own selfish ends, Timothy was a man of genuine concern for the believers. He was appointed by Paul to minister at Ephesus where he had to deal with spiritual charlatans. Stirring up his spiritual gifts he strived hard to uphold the gospel amidst the false teachings. He was never ashamed to speak of his Savior in the face of persecution and antagonism. He effectively carried out his pastoral duties and expounded the Truth of God accurately which led many disciples and believers to the knowledge of sound doctrine.

All through his life, Timothy never wavered as a disciple of Jesus which led to his persecution and finally to his martyrdom. It is said that he was killed by a pagan crowd when he opposed the veneration of their goddess.

Beloved, in the world of selfish pursuits, do you have a genuine concern for the ministry of God?

Lord, help me to endure a legacy of faithful Christian service like Timothy, Amen!

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THE RESURRECTION

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"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"
- Philippians 4:4, NIV



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"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.' Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples." - Jesus, Luke 14:28 - 33, NIV.

During Resurrection Week we celebrate the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross and His resurrection. But what is involved in celebrating and following Jesus?

The Jews of Jesus' day were expecting a military leader (Messiah), who would throw off the yoke of the Roman empire and re-establish the kingdom of David which, this time, would last forever. This expectation was the natural consequence of a series of traumatic events that beset the Jewish nation in the previous 500 odd years.

However, Jesus changed the rules of the game when He proclaimed a spiritual kingdom, not a political one, and the Jews didn't get it. They were sceptical. In this parable, Jesus was warning the Jews that business as usual would not work in the Kingdom. There are no half-measures. If you did not believe His message, then you were of this world and, consequently, an enemy of the Kingdom.

Following Jesus may not bring happiness and prosperity in a materialistic sense; in fact, just the opposite. In this life, Jesus' disciples would lose social standing, wealth, time and career, face alienation from their families and even death. Jesus does not promise instant blessings. The rewards of Jesus' followers would be in Heaven. Jesus wants us to count the cost of following Him and then decide.

Though a believer will go through much sacrifice and hardship, compared to the eternal glory that awaits us this is **light and temporary**. The Apostle Paul puts it this way: *"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned... We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body..."*

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." (1 Cor. 4:8-17) Jesus Himself said that His *"yoke is easy and [His] burden is light."* (Mt. 11:30)

So, dear brothers and sisters, commitment is costly. If He is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all. But when hardships come our way, and they will, He will always provide a way of escape. Good Friday may be hard to bear, but Easter Sunday is on the way. Are you ready to follow Jesus all the way?

- T J Joseph, tj.jayess@gmail.com

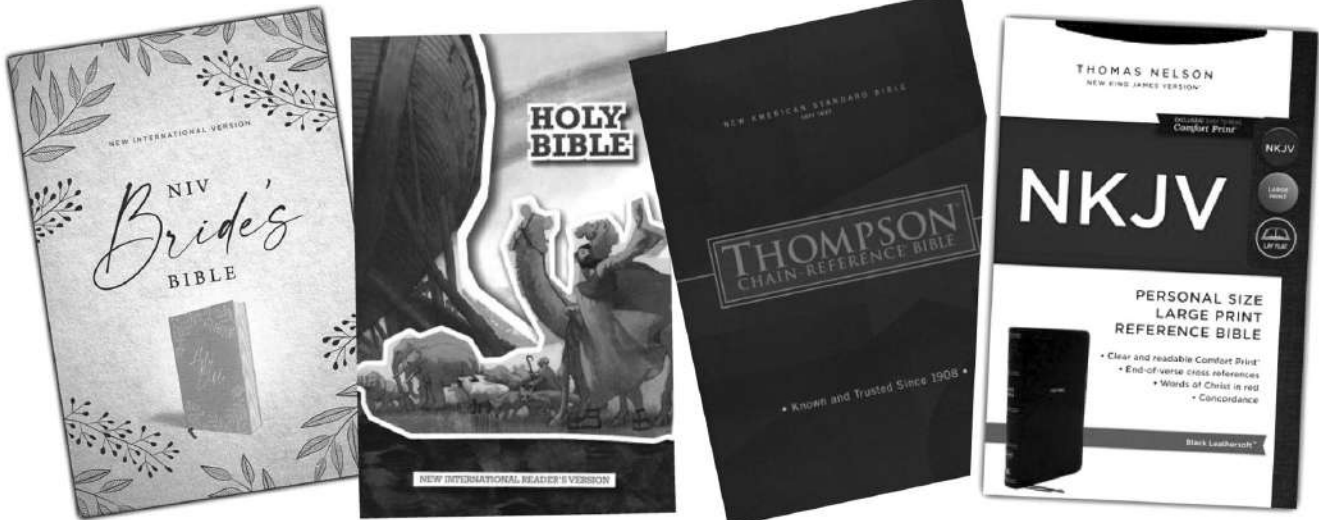


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Celebration is a Weapon of Choice in 2023

The resurrection by itself is cause to celebrate, all year through. They will know we are Christians by our love, joy and power.

By *Mandy Woodhouse**

My friend and I were recently discussing the difference between worship and praise, and she dropped a line straight from the Holy Spirit: **"Praise is a heart posture of celebration."**

"I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." (Psalm 34:1, ESV)

To CELEBRATE simply means to give honor or praise publicly. Sometimes, we "celebrate" publicly through holidays and times of remembrance, such as birthday parties or Christmas. The Hebrews were *and are* masters at this, as they diligently and intentionally take time to come together to celebrate all that the Lord has done (see Lev. 23)...

The Lord... reminded me of a dream I had last year, where some of my personal items had been bugged. It was as if there were surveilling and spying spirits in these personal effects, and I never felt safe; yet the Holy Spirit did not allow me to dispose off these items.

In the dream, my husband and I were aware that our things were bugged, but as we began to praise Yahweh and honor Him loudly, our celebration of our Lord was loud enough to drown out the sounds of everything else. The louder and more child-like we praised, the more we noticed that the "bugs" were leaving. This brought great comfort and peace to my heart.

"Through the praise of children and infants You have established a stronghold against Your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger." (Psalm 8:2, NIV)

Celebration Is a Weapon

Celebration is a posture of the heart and also a weapon. It is not in the language of the devil, so it brings intimidation to the enemy's camp.

The Lord brought to my remembrance my pre-teen years playing softball. For several years, I was on a team whose coach took the approach of honoring each team member for even the little, personal victories during games. If we won a game or had a personal victory, the coach would award us a little star that we were to iron onto our uniforms.

We were also taught to encourage one another with our words while on the field, which was very different from the chants of intimidation that came from other teams, and we learned to celebrate the wins even before we had actually won the game. This often caused great confusion for the rival teams, as we always came with uniforms covered in stars and a great air of celebration – even when we were up against the best rival team in the league. Our team was taught to celebrate *everything*, so when a curveball would come at us, we were not rocked. Soon we became undefeated in the league because of our confidence and ability to celebrate!

"God's high and holy praises fill their mouths, for their shouted praises are their weapons of war!" (Ps. 149:6, TPT)

I felt an URGENCY on this word that although you may be thrown curveball after curveball over the next few

months, and although it feels counterintuitive, it is imperative that you learn to CELEBRATE. Learn to praise. Learn to remember what the Lord has done, and honor Him publicly if necessary. Come what may, there is victory because of Jesus.

"Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated." (2 Chronicles 20:22, NKJV)...

The Lord's Celebration

... *"The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."* (Zephaniah 3:17 NKJV)

"So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city." (Joshua 6:20, NKJV)

God Inhabits Our Praises

"Yet You are holy, You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel." (Psalm 22:3, NASB)

God inhabits, abides in, remains in and makes His home upon our praises. **"Praise is a heart posture of celebration." When we celebrate Him, we enthrone Him again as King over EVERY circumstance.**

I feel the Holy Spirit wants to remind us that this is not just another "breakthrough" word; this is a way of weaponizing His people for the curveballs that will come in the months ahead. Our faith rises when we learn to celebrate Him from the heart. And as we celebrate Him in faith, that faith activates His closeness to us. And it puts Him, once again, as the supreme authority (King) over our lives.

I believe that this is another weapon that He is giving us for the upcoming months in 2023. I see that as adoration and celebration of Him become the posture of our hearts, the mouths of demons will be silenced. As we dig deep into His presence, allowing His celebration of us, personally, to wash over us with songs and quietness, we will continue to rise in personal victory.

We must allow our celebration of who His is and what He has done for us to drown out the intimidation and accusations of the enemy. If we use this weapon well when curveballs come, and we are postured for praise we will not be held captive to fear!

"But about midnight when Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise... suddenly there was a great earthquake... and at once all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened." (Acts 16:25-26, AMP)

**Mandy Woodhouse is an author and prophet to the nations, based in Brisbane, Australia. Condensed. (ElijahList.com, Mar. 13, 2023) www.mandywoodhouseoutrageoushope.com.*



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Easter Thoughts

VOICE OF SALVATION

“Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.” - Hebrews 9: 27-28, NIV

Dear Brothers & Sisters, This generation may well be the last before Christ's soon return and 'the new heavens and new earth' appear. Mankind will be given a fresh new start, hallelujah! (Read John 5:28-29, Revelation 20:11-15 & 21:8, Psalms 9:17, Psalms 89:14, Ecclesiastes 3:17 & 12:14, Psalms 7:8-16, Hebrews 9:27 and Psalms 50:4-6.)

- ★ **The Great Purpose of God:** “From one man He made all the nations... that they would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from any one of us.” - Acts 17:26-27, NIV
- ★ **The Great Promise of God:** “The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise [of His soon return]... not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” - 2 Peter 3:9, NIV
- ★ **The Great Present of God:** “Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” - John 17:3, NIV / “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” - 2 Cor. 9:15, NIV

For further study and meditation:

Psalms 17:14-15
Acts 1:9-11
Romans 6:17-23
Romans 2:7
Isaiah 33:15-17
I Chronicles 28:9

I Timothy 2:4
Hebrews 10:36-39
II Timothy 3:1-17
Isaiah 38:17-19
I Corinthians 15:19

I Timothy 1:15-16
I Peter 1:9
II Timothy 4:1-8
Psalms 15:1-5
Proverbs 11:28

John 14:1-3
Hebrews 10:26-27
Hebrews 13:14-16
Psalms 24:3-6
Proverbs 23:18

We wish all Readers a Blessed Good Friday and a Happy Easter.

With love, best wishes and prayers: **Bro. Vetha Thoothan**
& all the Family Members at Prayer Gospel Band,
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➔ TO THE WAY OF LIFE



You Prepare a Table Before Me In the Presence of My Enemies!!!

Memory Verse:

“Blessed be God..., who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” - Ephesians 1:3

Bible Lesson : Psalm 23:5(a)

Dear boys and girls,

In studying Psalm 23:1-4, we have seen how our kind Shepherd provides our daily needs. He leads and guides us in the right paths. Though He may allow us to go through dark valleys, which means difficulties or trials, yet He will watch over us with His protective rod and staff.

At the age of twenty-one, **Robert Moffat** reached South Africa as a missionary. Travel was difficult and dangerous... like death-traps. Rivers, rocks, swamps, and forests had to be mastered somehow. Always there were the wild beasts: lions, jackals, hyenas, crocodiles, snakes, monkeys and, worst of all, warlike and untrustworthy native bushmen.

For Moffat, such treks were deadly dangerous! But Moffat, motivated by his missionary call, meant to master all such obstacles. He learnt the country's customs and its languages, and he developed the great power of leadership which helped him be a blessing to multitudes.

In 1817 he set out for the village of the Namaquas. where the chief, Afrikaner, a blood-thirsty butcherer, was converted. That conversion was one of the great accounts of the grace of God on the mission fields. On that trip he saw for the first time the Bechuanas ... with whom he would spend most of his long missionary ministry.

The Bechuanas' reception of Moffat's ministry ranged from indifference to intolerance to rejection. Moffat, who had now married, "saw no reward for untiring work." He built, did farming, and at the same time preached.

Probably one of the most momentous events in Moffat's ministry was his attempt to defend his Bechuanas from the warring Zulus. He helped by procuring firearms and equipped his people in war. The Bechuanas conquered the Zulus and, realizing Moffat's bravery and compassion on their behalf, they began to respect him as a friend.

It was twelve more years before his message bore the fruit of revival. Suddenly the meeting house became crowded. Heathen songs were no longer sung in the village and dancing stopped. Prayers came to the lips of the Bechuanas, and the songs of Zion were sung.

They began to give up their dirty habits... many were baptized. Other tribes, hearing the news, sent representatives to learn of the white man's teaching. Moffat often would return with them and thus the revival message and results spread.

For Moffat, “Lord... You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” Psalms 23:5(a) may have been his daily prayer. After facing many years of difficulties like being in a valley, the Lord brought a revival among



Children's Corner

-- Dr. Sara Chandrakumar

the Bechuanas people of Africa through the sacrificial work of Robert Moffat.

Preparing a Table

Our God is the one who prepares the place, people and circumstances. David pictures God's work of preparation. How does the shepherd prepare the place before the enemies or adversaries?.

The sheep stay in a pen or with the co-shepherd, while the shepherd goes ahead early in the morning to prepare the place, like our mother prepares the table for our meals. He removes the

poisonous weeds and other things that might harm his sheep on the "tablelands."

If there are snake holes, he will pour some smelly oil over the pits so that the snakes do not come out and bite the sheep when they are eating.

The psalmist expresses his thanksgiving that God prepares the way in his life. God prepares a beautiful table for us, not with friends and family, but before our enemies or adversaries. Why does God do that?

Our enemy or adversary is the devil and those who are his. He always wants to trick us with his lies and disturb us with doubts. Psalm 23:2 tells us that the Lord makes us to lie down in green pastures.

The table illustrates abundance, satisfaction, and everlasting love. God's people can feast at His table of endless love and grace and no enemy of any sort can ever take it away. They can only feel annoyed that you were victorious and prosperous inspite of them.

When we put our trust in God, Psalm 23:5 reminds us that He can and will do everything to provide what you need, when you need it, until your soul feels satisfied.

UNSCRAMBLE 1 Peter 1:3 AND SEE WHAT A GREAT PROVIDER OUR LORD IS...

“Thou hast(dedivorp) for me all things(gniniatrep) both to(efil) and(ssenildog)), all things..... (etisiuqer) both for(ydob) and(luos), for (emit) and (ytinrete).”

foreign News

THE LAST WORD

Resurrection by Prayer

Taking the Gospel to Iranians

A US-based ministry has been able to share the Gospel with Iranians who are open to hearing about Jesus after fleeing the harsh authoritarian Islamic rulers of their country for neighboring Armenia. Evangelism is illegal in Iran and believers risk imprisonment and flogging on account of their faith. - CBN

Church shares blame for war

March 22: The spiritual head of the world's Orthodox Christians has said that Russia's powerful Orthodox Church shared responsibility for the conflict in Ukraine but that he stood ready to help in Russia's postwar "spiritual regeneration." Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's comments are a rebuke for Russian Patriarch Kirill, whose full-throated blessing for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine has splintered the worldwide Orthodox Church. Bartholomew, who in 2019 infuriated Moscow by recognising the newly established Orthodox Church of Ukraine, said Russian authorities were using the Church as an "instrument for their strategic objectives". Last month the Int'l. Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Putin, accusing him of the war crime of illegally deporting hundreds of children from Ukraine. - PCN

Scammed by email of \$793k

USA: An FBI investigation is underway after more than \$793,000 was stolen from *Elkin Valley Baptist Church* in North Carolina via an email phishing scam. The scammers posed as contractors of the new church building and sent an identical payment invoice for \$793k. The church office wired the required payment, but later realized they were cheated. - ChurchLeaders.com

Pray for Nigeria

March 14: The same radicals who recently murdered 17 Christians in Agwan Wakili attacked another Christian community in Mubushi and Langsong, killing 10 more people and wounding 14 others. The militants attacked during the night, when most of the villagers were sleeping outside due to the hot weather. "The attack is to displace Christians who will not vote for the ruling APC," an observer told ICC. One leader expressed frustration that the government remains silent as these attacks continue. - CBN

Church working for peace

March 24: A plan by the *World Council of Churches* to bring Christian leaders from Russia and Ukraine together to discuss steps to end the war has received support from Pope Francis. "Prayer must give birth to action," said WCC chief, Dr Jerry Pillay. - PCN

"Whenever God determines to do a great work, He first sets His people to pray," said Charles Spurgeon. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus didn't just happen. They were preceded by much prayer and petition. From the 400-year period of waiting and praying for the Messiah, to the many miracles that Jesus did, like raising Lazarus to life or feeding the 5,000, to the final Garden of Gethsemane prayer vigil (where His disciples dozed off), every event seems to have been preceded by calling upon or thanking God for His works of wonder, compassion and divine intervention. Peaceful protests and marches have their place, like when Joshua and his men, including priests, marched around Jericho, **but the church's unique weapon of choice is unceasing prayer at all times**, as this writer says. The three nights of prayer in Delhi, March 28-30, may well be a turning point in the life of our nation. **"If God wants us to pray without ceasing, it is because He wants to answer without ceasing!"** (Armin Gesswein) Expect Easter miracles to happen after prayer!

By R A Torrey*

If we would know the full blessing of the praying life, it is important not only that we pray in the *right way*, but that we pray at the *right time*.

Early morning prayer: In Mark 1:35, we read, "*Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.*" Jesus chose the early morning hour for prayer. In the morning hour, the mind is fresh and at its very best. The first thing we do each day should be to go alone with God and face the duties, temptations and service of that day, getting strength from Him.

All Night Prayer: In Luke 6:12, we get further insight into when to pray: "*In those days... He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*" Here we see Jesus spending the entire night in prayer...

In the night hours we can have undisturbed communion with Him. There will be time for our hearts to become quiet before God, time for the whole mind to be brought under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, plenty of time to pray things through.

Jesus also prayed before all the great crises in His earthly life. He prayed before choosing the 12 disciples; before the Sermon on The Mount; before starting out on an evangelistic tour; before His anointing with the Holy Spirit and His entrance to public ministry; before announcing His approaching death; before the cross. So ought we to do also...

Christ also prayed after His great achievements and crises. When He had fed the 5,000 with the five loaves and two fishes, and the multitude desired to take Him and make Him king, He went up into the mountain and spent hours there alone in prayer.

Jesus Christ gave time to prayer when life was unusually busy. We read in Luke 5:15-16, "*Great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.*" Some people are so busy that they find no time for prayer...

Our whole life should be a life of prayer. In 1 Thes. 5:17 we read, "*Pray without ceasing.*" We should walk in constant communion with God...[at times] even when we awake in the night.

*R.A. Torrey (1856-1928) was an evangelist, pastor and educator who helped found Moody Bible Institute and Biola Univ. (Adapted.)



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