

forerunner

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CHRISTMAS

AT

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CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24TH | 10:30 PM

ENGLISH AND TAMIL

VENUE: FGAG Church

189, 6th Main, Defence Colony, Indiranagar,
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Featuring
50
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CHOIR

CHRISTMAS DAY

@KANNURU

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25TH

7AM: TAMIL AND KANNADA

8:30AM: TAMIL

10:30AM: ENGLISH

12:00 NOON: HINDI

VENUE: FGAG CHURCH

Yerappanahalli Main Road,
Kannuru, Bangalore - 562 149



SCAN OR CODE TO
REACH THE LOCATION

CHRISTMAS DAY

@INDIRANAGAR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25TH

7AM: TAMIL AND KANNADA

8:30AM: TAMIL

10:30AM: ENGLISH

VENUE: FGAG CHURCH

189, 6th Main, Defence Colony,
Indiranagar, Bangalore-560 038.

REV. PAUL THANGIAH - FOUNDER & SENIOR PASTOR | PAS. SAMMY THANGIAH - ASSOCIATE PASTOR

For more details, please contact the FGAG Care Center : 080-6930 3030

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PRAYER
FOR EVERY
FAMILY FOR
THE NEW
YEAR

DECEMBER
31ST
2022

10PM
VENUE:

Yerappanahalli, Opp. FGAG Church,
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"Send portions... for whom
nothing is prepared...
The JOY of the Lord
is your STRENGTH."

Nehemiah 8:10

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Minorities express concerns

Human rights and religious liberty campaigners worldwide are sounding the alarm after the Supreme Court (SC) called on the govt. to act against supposed "fraudulent religious conversion." On Nov. 14 the SC said that forced conversions were "a danger to national security." In response, the interfaith *Coalition for Minority Rights* said in a submission to the UN that changing religion is neither "dangerous" nor "fraudulent." "It [SC] decries 'fraudulent religious conversion' as a 'nationwide problem' with no facts or data to support such allegations." - CT

Lighting up lives by a musical

Christmas programs and musicals are back with a vengeance, after a two-year covid hiatus, thanks be to God.



One that is bound to light up your life as well as that of others is the musical extravaganza in Bangalore titled '*Light up a Life*,' December 9-11 (see pg 51). Proceeds help to educate poor students through the **Reach Trust**. During the past two decades, the Trust has seen over 3,000 students break free from the cycle of poverty and make an impact on society. (lightupalife.in)

Unto us a son is given

The birth of Christ over 2,000 years ago may be the indirect cause for the relatively drastic decline in "son preference" or "daughter aversion" among the Christian community of India, compared to that of some other mainline faiths, says a Pew Research Center analysis released in August this year, and a report in *Christianity Today*. According to govt-backed data, Christians have maintained a "natural balance" of sons and daughters since 2001. Pew estimates that 52% of Indian Christian children are boys.

Forerunner wishes all its readers, subscribers, advertisers, supporters and prayer partners a joyful, prayerful and sharing Christmas.

Thank you for your valuable prayers and support this past year.

Merry Christmas

GOD BLESS EACH ONE!

"THANKS BE TO GOD FOR HIS INDESCRIBABLE GIFT."

Many reasons to celebrate

Apart from the birth of Jesus - the main reason why Christmas is celebrated - there are other reasons for rejoicing this season, not the least of which is that the deadly pandemic is almost over and life is fast returning to normal - an amazing Christmas gift to mankind. The church is also increasingly using social media like YouTube, Zoom, WhatsApp etc. to accomplish its global mission. Another cause for praise is the many souls from all over India who have been set free from sin and bondage, and blessed with "more abundant" and eternal life - thanks to Christ's birth!



Church stands up to casinos

Oct. 13: Following stiff resistance from the church and social organisations, the Meghalaya govt. has decided to scuttle its plans to open casinos in the state. The *Meghalaya Regulation of Gaming Act, 2021*, which is now being repealed, was introduced last year to promote tourism and revenue. Church leaders had been petitioning the govt. to repeal the Act, claiming that it was "immoral" and comes at a "high price" for society. Christians number 2.21 million, which is 74.59% of the state population (2011 Census). Meghalaya is one of three states in India to have a Christian majority. - The Print

Watch for 'The Appearance'

His family members are doing well, but he is a lonely man living in a big house in Bangalore - till one day he is admitted in hospital and encounters a divine appearance... What follows next is a blessing that forms the crux of this emotional family saga, now made into a film and set for global release in churches later in Dec. Written and directed by Sundeep Malani, it is produced by Rajesh Chowdhury under his banner *Ashmita & Amisha Films*. (W/A: +91 83101 98142)



Nine Christians hospitalized

On Sunday, Nov. 20, a mob burst into a newly built church hall in Koshalnar village, **Chattisgarh**, during the service, and mercilessly beat up church members. The founder-pastor of the church and his brother were also not spared. Nine were seriously injured and later hospitalized, according to Int'l. Christian Concern.



8:30 AM - 5:30 PM

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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)

"Intercession for others is the hallmark of all true prayer...We enter the richest fields of spiritual growth and gather its priceless riches in the avenues of intercessory prayer. To pray for others is of divine significance and represents the highest form of Christian service." - E. M. Bounds

✚ **THANK GOD** that the deadly Covid-19 pandemic that has claimed over 6.6 million lives worldwide (as of Nov. 27) is fast receding and life is returning to normal. The vaccines played and continue to play a major role in bringing the plague to an end, thank God. Pray for those regions or nations where lockdowns are still prevalent (eg China, where massive anti-lockdown protests erupted) or where people are still dying in large numbers (eg. USA where about 330 people are dying every day as of Nov. 27). Failure to take the booster shot is also resulting in more deaths.

✚ **MILESTONE CROSSED:** Praise God, the landmark 1979 'Jesus Film' has just been translated into its 2,000th language - the Zo language, spoken by 65,000 people in Myanmar. The film has drawn a reported 49 million people to Christ since its release over 40 years ago.

✚ **PRAY FOR NIGERIA:** At least 4,000 Christians here have been murdered and 2,300 have been abducted by Islamic jihadists this year alone. (ie 13 deaths and 8 abductions per day)

✚ **UYGHURS:** China has reportedly detained over one million Uyghurs against their will over the past few years.

✚ **IRAN'S** mass uprising over the death of a woman in police custody for wearing a hijab has claimed over 400 lives. Pray for freedom to women, justice and peace.

✚ **VINDICATION:** Glasgow's Sheriff Court found Franklin Graham and his mission, the *Billy Graham Evangelistic Assoc.*, were discriminated against when the Scottish Event Campus cancelled a 2020 ministry event. The venue has been ordered to pay almost £100,000 in damages.

✚ **THE US MIDTERM ELECTIONS** went off peacefully, praise God. Pray that the new leaders will tackle the most pressing issues first, like gun usage and drug overdoses that together claim over 425 lives every single day.

✚ **ERITREA:** The Eritrean govt. is still holding in detention 98 Christians who were arrested in Sept. This brings the total to about 300 Christians who are in jail for their faith.

✚ **PRAY FOR HAITI:** Millions of people are facing hunger, gang violence and insecurity. Nearly 5 million people face acute hunger, while cholera has claimed dozens of lives.

✚ **UNENDING NIGHTMARE:** "The situation in Myanmar is an unending nightmare for the people," said the UN Chief on Nov. 12. He urged authorities to release political prisoners and put democracy back on track immediately.

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

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

✚ **YOUTH FOR CHRIST:** Despite the onslaught of challenges and cultural confusion faced by many of America's youth, God is at work, says the Christian group *Youth for Christ*, which has 130 chapters in the US. Over 7,300 children and teens decided to follow Jesus this year, doubling last year's numbers.

✚ **PLAN TO REACH YOUTH:** The Church of England is partnering with a Christian charity *Youthscape* in a £1.29m project to help parishes connect with young people. 'Launchpad' will help priests create a plan for youth engagement within their parishes, as well as recruit and train 2,500 church volunteers for youth work.

✚ **ALGERIA** has closed down 16 evangelical churches in the past year as part of a crackdown on proselytization and perceived blasphemy against Sunni Islam.

✚ **AFGHAN CHRISTIANS** (about 11,000) are facing extreme human rights abuses. Beatings and torture are common.

✚ **ROHINGYAS:** Pray for their resettlement. Nearly a million of them fled Myanmar in 2017 to neighbouring nations.

✚ **REFUGEES:** Pray for the world's over 103 million forcibly displaced people, including 14 million from Ukraine.

✚ **PRAY FOR LEBANON** where over 80% of its nearly 7 million people are struggling.

✚ **STADIUMS OF SHAME:** As crowds enjoyed soccer in the bloodstained stadiums of Qatar hosting the 2022 World Cup, the Bible Society began distributing Bibles in 14 languages. Most of the 400,000 Christians in the country of 3 million people are migrants. Thousands of migrants have died since Qatar was awarded the Cup in 2010.

✚ **INDONESIA'S EARTHQUAKE** last month took the lives of at least 268 people. Pray for those affected.

✚ **PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS** is on the rise in at least 18 countries due to growing jihadism and nationalism. (ACN) Over 360 million Christians live in places where they experience high levels of persecution.

✚ **UKRAINE:** Massive missile strikes from Russia have left millions without light, water or heat, even as winter sets in (as of Nov. 26). At least 270 religious sites have been attacked, including 43 Baptist buildings and 42 Pentecostal facilities. (IRF) Pray for God's intervention.

✚ **GLOBAL WARMING:** The UN is urging the world's richer nations to 'lead by example' by taking 'bold and immediate actions' that will reduce global warming.



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

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

"Prayer is where the action is." - John Wesley

"The greatest thing anyone can do for God or man is pray." - S. D. Gordon

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

✠ **CHRISTMAS** is round the corner! Pray that India will hear the Good News of our Saviour's birth by every possible means - carol services, carolling, home gatherings, TV programs, radio, internet, social media like WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook, zoom meetings, nativity plays, public meetings, films, literature distribution, articles in newspapers etc. May we Christians be like the star which guided the Wisemen to where Jesus was. Pray for a mighty outpouring of God's Spirit on the people of India and for a rich harvest of precious souls for whom Christ was born!

✠ **POPULATION MILESTONE:** India has crossed the 1.4 billion population mark as of last month, while the world has surpassed the 8 billion mark. India's slum-dwelling population now exceeds 70 million. Thirteen states in North India are less than 1% Christian. Pray that the life-saving Gospel message may reach the unreached of India.

✠ **YOUTH:** 70% of India is under age 35, and 31% under age 15 - this is the generation that will shape India's future. Heavy competition prevails for affordable education and better job opportunities. Pray for wisdom to make the right choices; for their salvation; for the unemployed; for godly marriage partners.

✠ **PRAY FOR YOUR CITY** and other cities, for your nation and other nations, for your leaders and other leaders; for peace with our neighbouring countries.

✠ **PRAY FOR THE GOSPEL** to reach every village and town, especially the nearly 500,000 unreached villages (out of an estimated 700,000).

✠ **IMPRISONED:** A group of pastors in Uttar Pradesh have made a plea for the release of about 30 other pastors who are detained in various jails throughout the region. They have also requested the help of the police commissioner in Kanpur to shield the Christian pastors from intimidation and retaliation. (Christian Today)

✠ **PRAY FOR A STRONG OPPOSITION** in Parliament that will hold the ruling party accountable.

✠ **PRAISE GOD:** Christianity is growing in Punjab. Small churches are springing up on the rooftops of many villages. One megachurch, the Church of Signs and Wonders pastored by Ankur Narula, has a weekly attendance of over 3 lakh members, praise God. However, with increased growth comes increased persecution. Pray for God's protection.

✠ **PRAY FOR PASTORS:** Being a pastor is one of the riskiest vocations in India. Pray for protection, courage and financial support for church leaders and their families.

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

✠ **RIISING PERSECUTION:** Violence against Indian Christians is growing by the day and the federal and state governments need to act now to arrest the worrying trend, says the *United Christian Forum* (UCF). As per data compiled by UCF via its helpline, a total of 511 violent incidents were reported as of Nov. 21 this year as against 505 in 2021. Data shows the states of Uttar Pradesh in the north, followed by Chhattisgarh in central India, and Tamil Nadu and Karnataka in the south, were the worst places to be in for the nation's Christians. - UCAN

✠ **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.

✠ **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)

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

✠ **PRAY FOR THE POOR**, hungry, homeless, hurting, help-less, 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, forest fires etc, and **manmade disasters** like accidents, home fires, pollution, building collapses, etc.

✠ **INTOLERANCE:** Pray for an end to India's caste system, intolerance of other faiths, discrimination etc.

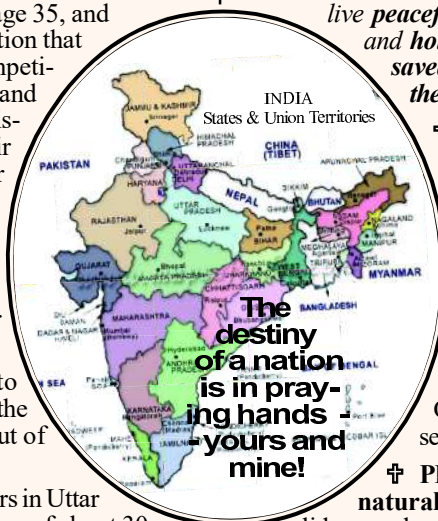
✠ **JUSTICE:** Pray that new believers who lost their economic benefits on conversion will have them reinstated.

✠ **PRAY FOR OUR CHURCHES** to be worshipping, welcoming, healing, missionary-sending, giving, Bible-based power-houses of prayer and compassion; for unity and zeal; for the maximum use of social and mass media.

✠ **CHILD LABOUR:** There are more than 10 million child labourers in India. Pray for their deliverance.

✠ **PRAISE GOD** for the many achievements of India and the progress made thus far in meeting people's needs.

✠ **PRAY FOR THE RICH** of India and their salvation.



"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

CHRISTMAS

+ "Behold, I bring you **good news of great joy** which will be for **all** the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." - Lk. 2:10-11

+ "You shall call his name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." - Mt. 1:21

+ "The blessedness of Christmas is all wrapped up in the person of Jesus Christ. Our relationship determines the measure of the blessing."

+ Christmas: a time for sharing.

+ Jesus was born to die; die to rise again, and rise again to give eternal life to all.

+ Christmas is a Son away from home.

Dear God,
As Christmas approaches, may my heart be fixed on You and Your glory. No earthly present I can receive compares to the gift I have in You. May I never take for granted what You have done and always remember Your gift of Christmas lasts the whole year through.
Amen

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A 222 Moment

*"When they cry out to me, I will hear,
for I am compassionate."*

Exodus 22:27, NIV

DATELINE

+ **Light Up a Life** musical, B'lore, Dec. 9-11, pg 51. (Color ad.)

+ **Matrimonial Meet**, B'lore, Sat. Dec. 10, pg 33.

+ **Blessing Meeting**, B'lore, Sat. Dec. 17, pg 23.

+ **Christmas Special Service**, B'lore, Sat. Dec. 24, pg. 1 (outer front cover)

+ **Watchnight Service**, B'lore, Sat. Dec. 31, pg 2 (color ad)

+ **New Year Mtg.**, Jan. 1, Sun., B'lore, color ad pg 49.

+ **Leadership Mtg.**, Sat. Jan. 21, B'lore, color ad pg 4.

+ **Kerygma National Conference**, B'lore, Jan. 23-25, pg 25 (color ad).

+ **Standing in the Gap** intercessory gathering at the Nilgiris, Jan. 24-27, pg 43.

+ **Prayer Conference**, Singapore & Malaysia, Feb.14-18, pg 36.

forerunner

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Goal: To be a light to the world.

Mandate: Preparing the way of the Lord by *"[telling] 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)

Motto: He Must Increase

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Readers are required to make appropriate and thorough inquiries before acting on any advertisement. This magazine does not necessarily agree to the claims or representations made by any advertiser.

MISCELLANY

RENT: Single room with attached kitchen and bathroom on 2nd floor at Banaswadi, OMBR Layout, Bangalore -560043. (Geyser, Cauvery water, wall cupboards) Rent: Rs. 6,500/- Contact : Ph. 9880046036.

CONTACT: Prayer & Deliverance for believers. Bro. James Kumar, #678, 1st floor, Post Office Lane, L R Puram, Bangalore - 84, Ph. 9448061596 / 9483514639

RENT: 2 BHK house in Banaswadi, No. 34 1st Cross, Chikkabanawadi, Bangalore -43. Rs.15,000/- Contact at: 9606833169.

RENT: Single BHK semi-furnished house on 1st floor

at No.55, 3rd Main Rd Vinobhanagar, KG Halli, Near Police Station, B'lore-45. Ph.. 9845083481.

RENT: 2 BHK ground house with all facilities in OMBR Layout, Banaswadi. Opp. Fire Station Road, Near Water Tank. Contact: Mob. 9740368770.

RENT: Independent single bedroom house with hall, kitchen on ground floor at VST Road, Lingarajapuram, Bangalore -560 084. Rent: Rs. 9,000/- Ph. 9845581295

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

MATRIMONIALS

WANTED a suitable God-fearing Protestant girl, for a God-fearing AG Tamil/ Malayalee boy, 38 years, ht. 5'3", BE, MS, working in Bangalore. For more details of the boy, contact at: Phone: 9986384504.

WANTED a God-fearing life partner, for a 50 year Kannada believer, without encumbrances and settled in B'lore. Ph. 9845712906.

WANTED a born-again Tamil / Kannada groom below 35 yrs from a medical / dental / PG engineering background for a Tamil born-again spinster, work-

ing medical doctor, MD & MBBS. Ph: 8217772403 / 9242107826. Contact email: samuellaurence85@gmail.com

WANTED a suitable B'lore-based Tamil boy, for a Tamil Christian girl, 32 yrs, ht. 5'4", wheatish, MA, B.Ed., working as a lecturer in Nagarjuna PU College, Yelahanka, B'lore - 560063. Contact: 9342991750.

WANTED a suitable Protestant girl, for a Tamil, handsome graduate boy, 28 years, ht. 5'10", working as an accountant in a pvt. office at B'lore. Contact: 8951518234 / 8197494734

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

PRAYER MATTERS

(All are welcome!)

+ **ALL NIGHT PRAYER** gathering at the Wesley English Church Hall, 19 Promenade Road, opp. Coles Park, Bangalore-560005. Every Wednesday at 9:30 pm.

+ **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.prayertoweronline.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:** Every day prayer for the nations - Zoom Id 9343456677, P/W 195615 by Zoom meeting, 11am-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 1,750 DAYS OF PRAYER GATHERING:** The FGAG Church in B'lore continues its prayer 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

Wanted a suitable groom,

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

Contact 9886584020

Email: manuela.edward@gmail.com

Parents looking for a God-fearing groom (preferably Tamil speaking)

for their daughter, who is 31 yrs, B.Tech., Medium skinned, ht. 5'6" ft, working in an MNC at Bangalore. Expectations: Born-again, regular church-goer from a good Christian family, 34 yrs & below, a graduate, above 5'8" ft, settled & working in Bangalore.

Kindly Contact: 9986263509, 9791693961

Parents looking for a suitable Christian boy from India / Abroad,

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Email: lucia.mary@gs.com

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willing to relocate to any country if need be.

Contact:

8095339555 / 7892159223

<jcjohnch@gmail.com>

Seeking a God-fearing, Protestant groom,

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Bangalore, without issues.

Contact: 8310712291

Wanted a suitable Christian boy,

for a 29 year, Christian Tamil girl, height 5'2",
fair complexion, B.Com. graduate, working as
an Accountant in Bellary, Karnataka.

Contact : 9738523535

Email: gloriatanu22@gmail.com

Wanted a born-again groom,

for a B'lore based Protestant Kannada girl,
BE, 25 years, (24 05 1997), medium com-
plexion, ht. 5'2", working in TCS, Bangalore.

Contact: 9742022053

Email: pvrathnam916@gmail.com

Parents looking for a born-again girl, spiritual and willing to serve God,

for their son, 28 years, ht. 5'8", fair and hand-
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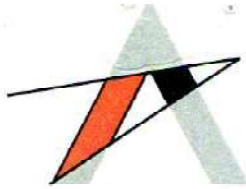
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BOB'S BANTER

An inclusive Christmas..!

Towards Christmas, in many shopping centres, malls, housing societies, church compounds and homes, little managers are made and plastic or wooden figures of Joseph, Mary and the little Jesus are installed. Since it's a manger, also seen are cows, goats and even a horse or two...

It was towards midnight that I was sure I heard a sound in the crib and manger that was installed near my Christmas tree. Without switching on the lights, I crept towards where the sound had come and found to my surprise that the manger had no animals, no shepherds or wise men.

There was only the baby Jesus and round Him were an odd set of people.

"Who're you?" I asked a man, who didn't meet my eye.

"I'm blind!" he said.

"And I'm lame!" said the next fellow.

I looked at a woman who seemed crying as she looked at the little baby in the cradle. "I've been raped!" cried the woman, "And can find no justice!"

"And you?" I asked.

"I'm gay!" said the man as he looked at me with sad eyes.

*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.

"Why have you come here?" I asked. "You guys don't fit into the scene."

"He came for me!" said the blind man and the lame person and gay pointing to the baby in the manger.

"He came for me too!" said the rape victim.

I watched astonished as the baby in the manger grew, and became a thirty odd year Jesus sitting on the edge of the crib, "Lord," they cried, "we are not welcomed by the world, especially not by the church You established. They look on us as filthy and broken people, who have no place inside their clean, decent sanctuary!"

I saw the Lord looking at me, "Is that true Bob?"

I looked away. "They're welcome if they would only get a wash and a change of clothes!" I ventured.

"Yes!" sighed the Lord, "I knew you'd say that. All those I met, I met outside the synagogues. All those hearts I healed, where at dusty wells, crowded market places, pot-holed roads and unsophisticated tree tops!"

I watched astonished as the lame, the blind, the rape victim and the gay sat near my Lord. "Lord," I said, "He's gay!" And I watched as my Lord stretched His hand and held the man's hand. There was peace in the man's eyes, and also in the eyes of the woman and the blind and the lame.

"I came for such as these!" sighed my Lord, "broken people, pushed out by you and others..!"

I wish each one of us an inclusive celebration of Christ's birth.

Merry Christmas!



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“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” – Luke 2:14

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Graduation group Photo

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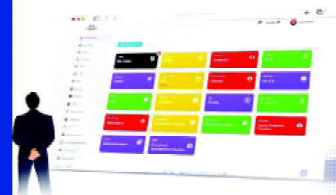
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"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." – John 1:5-11



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"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

The Invisible Word became Flesh

What is God like? That was the question I posed to a Bible Study group and asked them to draw a rough sketch or explain in a few words what came to their minds. Strange enough, some drew a picture of an old man with a grey beard! Most of them had the same picture of God as that of their earthly father. The group with tough fathers looked at God in a similar way and the group that had loving, caring fathers imagined God in like manner. The two non-Christians in the group looked at God with fear and trembling.

UNKNOWN GOD: Has anyone seen God? There may be several passages of Scripture that may seem to indicate people actually have seen God. "Then the Lord appeared to **Abram**." (Genesis 12:7) "And the Lord appeared to him [**Isaac**] the same night and said, 'I am the God of Abraham your father...'" (Genesis 26:24) **Jacob** said, "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." **Moses** hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. (Ex. 3:6).

"But He [God] said, 'You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live.'" (Exodus 33:19-23.) **Isaiah** the prophet records, "I saw the Lord, sitting on a throne, high and lifted up." (Is. 6:1)

Nobody has seen God or can see God, for, by nature, He is an invisible spirit, and with our natural eyes we can never see God! Jesus Himself has said that no one has seen God: "No man hath seen God at any time." (John 1:18) Paul wrote, "Who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever." (1 Timothy 6:16) These people of ancient times have seen only a "physical representation of Him" in some form - not the God in His entirety and Glory.

THE INVISIBLE GOD: The Invisible God did reveal Himself by His power, His 'presence' and His voice, to the people of the Old Testament.

GOD'S PRESENCE WAS FELT: Though God was invisible, He did communicate, show His nature, protect and provide for His creation. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)

GOD'S VOICE WAS HEARD: Adam and Eve heard the sound of God. (Genesis 3:8.) The Lord spoke to Moses. (Exodus 19:9) Isaiah heard the voice of God. (Isaiah 6:8.)

GOD'S POWER WAS SEEN: The nation of Israel had seen the power and the miracles of God on many occasions. The Book of Exodus is filled with God's second great demon-

stration of power, the first being that of Creation. The prophets too had their fair amount of God's power revealed through them.

GOD'S NAME WAS KNOWN: Throughout the Old Testament, God is known by his four-letter name YHWH - "the Self-existent". He was the "I AM" or God who spoke to Moses to go and deliver the Israelites!

"I, yes I, am the Lord, and there is no other Savior. First I predicted your rescue, then I saved you and proclaimed it to the world. No foreign god has ever done this. You are witnesses that I am the only God," says the Lord." (Is. 43:11-12)



THE UNKNOWN BECOMES KNOWN: The Christmas Story in a nutshell is the unknown becoming the known and the invisible becoming visible in Jesus Christ. "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace." (Jn. 1:14)

He is the same "I AM" or the God who spoke to Moses! When he was speaking to the religious leaders of Israel, who thought highly of themselves because they had Abraham as their father, He told them that "before Abraham was born, I AM!" (John 8:58). God, the Word, the Spirit, became flesh in Jesus to change history.

Man doesn't have to live and die in sin. The Son chose to come down, chose to dwell among His creation, die for them and rose again to give salvation to them. In this way they could see, feel and touch God, receive His love in tangible ways and could say, "We proclaim to you the One who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw Him with our own eyes and touched Him with our own hands. He is the Word of life."

The Word who became Flesh - Jesus Christ - showed His disciples what God really looked like. "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father," He said. The same Jesus was born to die, die to rise again and rise again to sit at God's Right Hand, interceding for you and me. And He invites us be where He is: "Where I am, you may be also." (John 14:3)

Christmas is a wonderful time to recognise the One who said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John 14:6) and receive what He offers - the forgiveness of sin, life and life eternal, and the privilege of sitting with Him in 'heavenly places' and interceding with Him for a lost and needy world.

- Jose, josetnithi@gmail.com



Loving care in a family-type setting can do miracles in the lives of children who are facing trauma and loss.

Our children need and deserve therapies that will help them to heal and to thrive. They deserve a good education when possible (depending on the level of their special need) and they deserve to know that they are safe and loved.

This is the primary purpose of the Alex Agape Home. To give this specialized love and care to the babies and children who need it the most. We become like a family to them and we love them as our own.



Alex Agape Home

Children's Home for Children with Special Needs and for Children in Need of Care and Protection

There are many homes in India caring for orphaned or abandoned babies and children. But the most vulnerable and needy orphan is the one who has a special emotional need due to abuse and neglect or a special medical need or disability. These are the children we care for in our home. We are a licensed Children's Home under the Juvenile Justice Care and Protection Act 2015, Registration No. 59/17.

Sometimes parents are unable to provide care for their babies because they are financially or emotionally unable to handle a child's special need or because they have no family support. Some children are removed from their own family in order to protect the child from abuse or neglect. We seek to be an arm of love, stability, and hope to these precious little ones.

You may find centers all around the world where abandoned children are housed. Where special needs children are left laying on mats or in beds without anyone to believe in them or help them reach their fullest potential. Where they lay in the same place day after day, fed and bathed but alone. In our home, no matter what their age, gender, or special need, our children receive therapy, medical care, lots of holding, hugging, playtime, music and singing, outings, and stimulation.

Most of all, our children become a part of our family and they are loved and cherished as if they are PEARLS OF GREAT VALUE.

"Every child is a precious gift. A child's gender, cast, religion, ability, or special need does not make him or her any more or any less worthy of our love and commitment. All are equally worthy. Every child's life and future is worth fighting for!"

~ Erin Hunlock, Founder Alex Agape Home

As of October, 2022, we have 45 children in our care. All of our children have been through the pain of abandonment, loss, abuse, or neglect. We are here to help them to heal and to find hope. With your help, we can see miracles take place in their young lives!

We Need Your Help!

The Alex Agape Foundation relies on support from individuals throughout India who see the need and want to help make a difference in the life of a child who otherwise would be utterly forsaken.

We are in need of sponsors to help us to care for our children! Partial sponsorship of a child starts as low as Rs 1,250 - Rs 3,000 per month. Sponsorship helps us to cover needs like nutritious food, milk, formula and diapers for infants, medical care, education, clothes, caregiver salary, rent for building, electricity and gas for cooking, cleaning, and household needs.

You or your organization can provide any amount towards the monthly sponsorship of a child. Your monthly donation will make it possible for us to give your sponsor child the care that he or she needs.

Together, we can make a difference in the lives of these children!

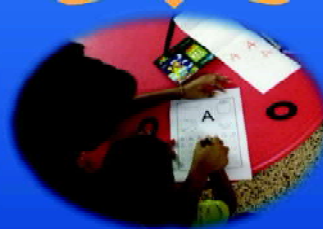
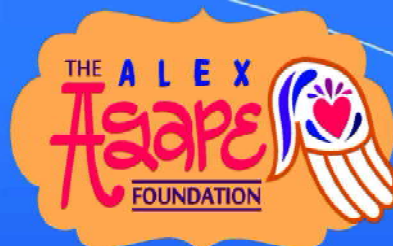


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WORD POWER

Jesus, the Perfect King!

When Prince Charles became King Charles III of the United Kingdom and its 14 other Commonwealth realms, many questions arose. Will he rule well? Will he be just and righteous?

In Biblical times, God (Jehovah) was considered head or king of the Jewish people. But there came a time when the people demanded of the prophet Samuel that they get a king like the other nations. Samuel was displeased and prayed to the Lord. *"And the Lord told him: 'It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king...' "* (1 Sam. 8:7)

Various kings were then appointed. Some did evil and some ruled well. **Jehoshaphat** was one of the good kings. *"He appointed judges in the land... He told them, 'Consider carefully what you do... for with the Lord our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery...' "* (2 Chron. 19:5-9)

When faced with a vast army Jehoshaphat prayed, *"We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You."* (2 Chron. 20:12) He then sent singers in front of the army to praise God and sing, *"Give thanks to the Lord, for His love endures forever."* (2 Chron. 20: 21) Needless to say, God gave them victory and peace in the land.

Jehoshaphat was not a perfect king! He *"made an alliance with Ahaziah, king of Israel, whose ways were wicked."* (2 Chron. 20:35) This led to some bad times. His son Jehoram who succeeded him to the throne *"did evil in the eyes of the Lord."* (2 Chron. 21:6) **King Jehoram was so wicked** that he slaughtered all his brothers and some officials too before becoming king!

But God kept His covenant with David - *"Nevertheless, because of the covenant the Lord had made with David, the Lord was not willing to destroy the house of David. He had promised to maintain a lamp for him and his descendants forever."* (2 Chron. 21:7) *"For this is what the Lord says: 'David will never fail to have a man to sit on the throne of Israel.' "* (Jere. 33:17)

A perfect king was born many generations later, in the same line of David, in a little town of Bethlehem - King Jesus! He would reign for ever and ever! Isaiah prophesied, *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever."* (Is.9:6-7)

King Charles III will not be perfect because no king has ever been perfect. But praise God for our perfect King Jesus! This Christmas as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, let us worship and praise Him as King of our hearts and homes. For He is the King of kings!

"For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome..." (Deut. 10:17) - VM

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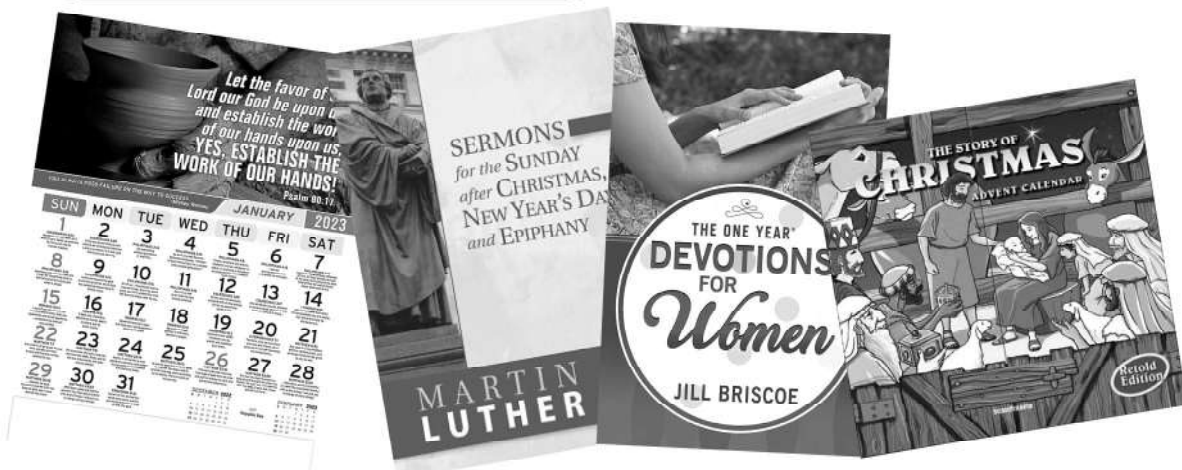
The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him. - John 1:9-10



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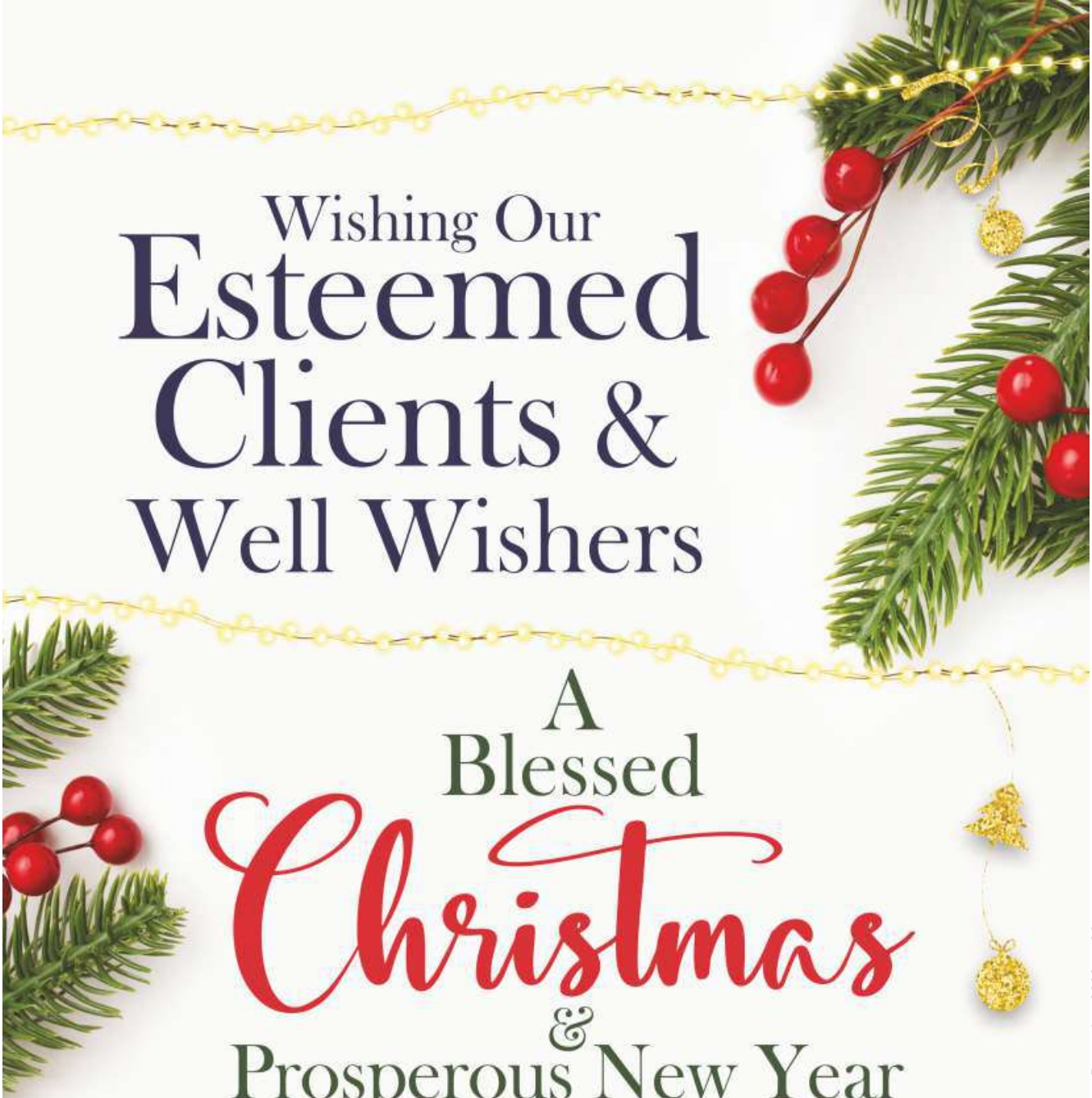
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By Dr Latha Christie*

The Guiding Star

Years ago, when we needed directions to a new city or place, we studied maps and took the help of local people. To locate a building, we enquired with people walking around or the shops nearby for directions. Now, those conversations are narrowed to the click of a button.

Our phones now help us locate any place at any time. We trust the Global Positioning System (GPS) more than the guidance of people. When the maps alert us with directions to keep us free from traffic and other disasters, we follow the voice without any hesitation.

The people and events during the birth of Jesus also followed a similar pattern. The first Christmas happened

where the child was." The wisemen travelled from afar, and the star led them to find Jesus.

God has placed different kinds of stars in each of our lives to help us find Jesus and worship Him alone. Likewise, He wants us to be the guiding star to lead people to Him. He can use all the experiences in our lives for His glory.

He left the splendours of heaven

I do not know the path you have walked in the last few years - whether you have been through much goodness or grief, comfort or loss. But as you celebrate this Christmas, know that Christ has chosen you as His precious gift. The eternal, infinite, Sovereign God of the Universe who forever dwelt in beauty and unapproachable light, stepped out of the boundaries of heaven and into this sin-sick and suffering world in human form.

Jesus Christ, King of kings, Lord of lords, Prince of Peace, the One that flung stars and galaxies out into space, left His glorious heavens, looked down on the lost and damned world and came down while the morning stars sang and the angels shouted out their praises. He came down so you can live in His abundant grace and enjoy peace in Him.

Hebrews 4:15 says, *"For we do not have a high priest, who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin."* He experienced every kind of human feeling and situation to empathize with us and give us the hope of eternal life and endless joy.

You can be a star for others

As we celebrate Christmas, remember that His birth can brighten every part of our life, whatever the situation. When we obey his call, joys will abound from our jars into others. Start from where you are. You can be the star for your spouse, children, friends and neighbours. It requires our decision to be like Jesus and shine for Him.

We will experience more of Christ's presence by our side when we obey Him and accept His directions. We are created for His glory, to prepare people to dine with the Lamb at His soon return.

Emmanuel - meaning 'God with us' - was born for you and me thousands of years ago. He lives as the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace and the Everlasting Father, for the whole world. Jesus, our Saviour, is our guiding Star and eternal GPS for 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.*



various crises, every heart longed to see deliverance through the Messiah.

The world waited for a royal proclamation announcing the royal birth. But, the Messiah did not appear in a palace as expected, nor as a government official or as a priest. The God who created the heaven and the earth took the form of a helpless, vulnerable baby in the womb of a simple virgin woman, Mary.

They chose faith and obedience over doubt

Mary responded in complete obedience and humility to the greetings of the angel. Unlike many couples today, Joseph and Mary had little time to plan and prepare for their marriage and baby. Imagine having to give birth to a child without knowing the place of delivery, poor facilities and no nurses to help.

But at every step the engaged couple received instruction from the Lord on how to go about the unique birth of the precious child, the Saviour of the world. Young Joseph and Mary did everything the Lord told them to do, without questioning. Joseph did battle doubts and wanted to divorce Mary in secret. But, when the angel spoke to him in a dream, he chose to obey rather than heed to his thoughts.

Everyone did as they were told

The Christmas story has so much to speak about obedience. The prophecy of the birth of Christ came true after hundreds of years, and everything happened in line with God's Word. Mary, Joseph, shepherds, wisemen - everyone did just as they were led and told. The census directed Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. The angels guided the shepherds to the place where Jesus was born.

Think about the star that guided the wisemen. Mathew 2:9 says: *"After they had heard the king [Herod], they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place*





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Dear Brothers & Sisters,



Christmas Thoughts

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift." (2 Corinthians 9:15)

This Christmas season, the Spirit of our Lord reminds us all of God's indescribable Gift to mankind - His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be thankful to Him as we celebrate this season of joy, wonder and worship.

- *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."* - **1 Timothy 1:15**
- *"For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."* - **Luke 9:56**
- *"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* - **Luke 5:32**
- *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."* **Mt. 5:17**
- *"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law...."* - **Matthew 10:34-38**
- *"You may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins...."* - **Matthew 9:6**
- *"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* - **John 10:9-10**
- *"Know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin."* - **1 John 3:5**
- *"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."* - **John 1:9**
- *"[Jesus] said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent."* - **Lk. 4:43**



For further reading: Isaiah 61:1-3, John 5:22-32, Revelation 22:12-17, Matthew 28:18-20, 1 Peter 1:9, Isaiah 61:6, 1 Peter 2:9-12 & verse 15, 1 Timothy 2:1-4, Mark 1:15, John 1:1-14, Titus 2:11-15, Titus 3:1-8, Philemon 1:6 and John 14:1-7.

"The people that walked in darkness (in sin) have seen a great Light [Jesus, our Saviour]."* - **Isaiah 9:2*

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*Happy Christmas to all the
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Forgiveness:

God is an all-wise God, and when He says "Forgive", there are good reasons behind it.

Why forgive? To a Christian, it is simply because it is a command from God that demands obedience. (Mk.11:25; Rom. 12:18). Having said that let us not forget the blessings that follow every commandment of God. "If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive yours." (Mt. 6:15)

Forgiveness is a gift you give to yourself:

Resentment has a high price tag and can be dangerously poisonous. The act of forgiveness helps you release the toxic, negative emotions from your mind and body so that you can move on to a life of peace and joy. In other words, you are actually doing yourself a favour!

Forgiveness sets us free:

"To forgive is to set a prisoner free only to discover the prisoner was YOU." **Jesus came to set us free...** Catherine Ponder, American minister of the Unity Church, says: "When you hold resentment towards another, you are bound to that person or condition by an emotional link that is stronger than steel. Forgiveness is the only way to dissolve that link and get free." We forgive others to gain control over our lives from the effects of hurting emotions...

Dr Phil McGraw, an American TV personality, author and psychologist, says that you have the power to either be miserable for the rest of your life or to forgive others and allow yourself to be healed.

Forgive and move on because there are greater things you need to achieve! Don't forget, God is on your side. ■

(Excerpt from the book "Kaleidoscope" by Dr Jose Thaya Nithi. For your own copy write to: josethnithi@gmail.com)

What do we sing about at Christmas?

By Edward Sowden, Youth Minister

*Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills
and plains; Repeat the sounding joy...*

I love Christmas carols! Singing about Jesus coming into the world. Singing about the birth of a Saviour.

Youth ... Ablaze

But hold on, why do I need saving? There is all this talk of Jesus coming to rescue us but rescue from what?

The Answer: Sin.

The Bible tells us that we all fall far short of God's perfect standard of living. We read that we all try to run

life our own way and in doing so reject God. A letter to the church in Rome makes it very clear:

"There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away." (Rom. 3:10-12)

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23)

This rejection of God, known as sin, creates a barrier between God and us. So this is where Jesus comes in. He came to earth on the 'first Christmas' as a human. He was fully God and fully man. Then he grew up living a perfect life of obedience to God (that we all fail to do). Then he died on the cross, taking on all our sin and the

sins of the world. He died and was buried. Then he rose from the dead and offers forgiveness from sin and eternal life with God, a renewal of our relationship with God.

Too often we can be comfortable in our own little world. We compare ourselves to murderers and thieves and think we are good people. But you and I still reject God in thought word and deed, putting idols before God, living for our own selfish ambition rather than the glory of God.

So this Christmas, sing about our saviour with repentance and joy. Knowing that you have sinned but thankful that God sent Jesus to forgive you, to save you!

*God rest ye merry, gentlemen
Let nothing you dismay
Remember, Christ, our Saviour,
Was born on Christmas day;
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray
O tidings of comfort and joy...*



- Source: Fervr.Net

They risked their lives to save the lost and needy.

Aune Emily Hyny

One Missionary Biography

Birth : 19-05-1914
Home Calling : 28-05-2004
Homeland : Netherlands
Place of Vision : Machilipatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India

YOUTH CHALLENGE

Aune Emily Hyny was a Dutch missionary known for her selfless ministry in Machilipatnam. Although Emily was a Christian, she did not have any fear of God in her youth. She was a nurse by profession and was also a trained athlete and a talented piano player. With all the fame she acquired, she did not have time for God.

Once her friend took her to a Salvation Army meeting in Pühajärve. There a woman asked Emily if she was born again. Emily irritably replied that she'll think about that in her old age. To this, that woman said that many people who planned to be born again in old age are already dead and are rotting in hell. That answer disturbed Emily very much. That day's sermon too worked in her heart deeply. Finally, Emily humbled herself and committed her life to God.

Emily, now a new creation in God, started Gospel ministry along with her other duties. In one Gospel campaign, she strongly felt the call to full-time ministry. She pleaded with God that she would give all her money instead. But God's call was clear that He wanted Emily, not her money. So obediently she went to London in 1947 and underwent missionary training at International Bible Training College (IBTI).

Emily arrived in Machilipatnam in 1951 and took charge of the Indian Christian Assemblies (ICA) orphanage. Till 1958, she extensively traveled in Krishna and Guntur Districts carrying out the Gospel ministry. After a short visit to her homeland in 1959, Emily established an orphanage in Varregudem with eight children. She never sought funds from anyone and only depended on prayers for all her needs. She sold her own ancestral property and built schools, orphanages, Bible schools, and churches. Among several others, the Hyny High School in Machilipatnam today stands as a testament for her ministry.

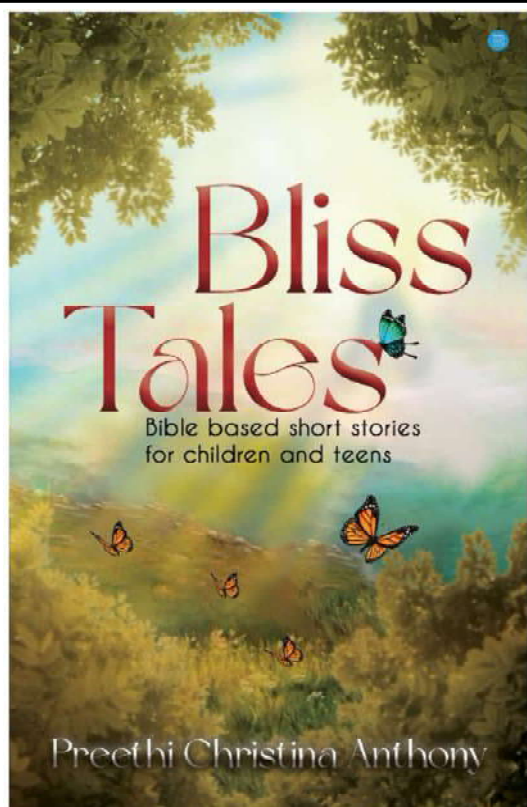
After more than 50 years of ministry in Machilipatnam, Emily who was lovingly called "Hyny Ammagaru" breathed her last in 2004.

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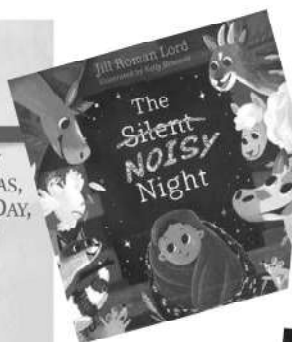
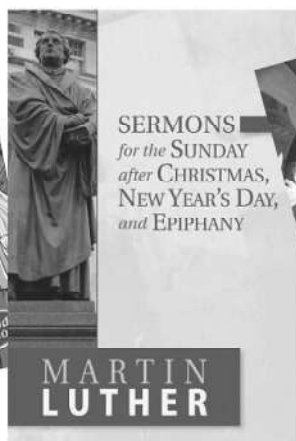


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"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 (NKJV)

Let us exalt God's Name together (Psalms 34:3)



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WORD-LY WISDOM

The Supernatural Catch

"And He [Jesus] sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, 'Launch out into the deep,' and let down your nets for a draught.' And Simon answering said unto Him, 'Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.' And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship... and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. ...And Jesus said unto Simon, 'Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.' And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him." - Luke 5:3-11, KJV

Jesus borrowed Peter's fishing boat to speak to the people. Peter must have been exhausted and depressed after a night of fishing during which they had caught nothing. After His sermon, Jesus asked Peter to "launch out into the deep" and cast their nets again. It is clear from Peter's barely civil answer to Jesus that he was most unimpressed. "What does a carpenter-turned-preacher know about fishing?", Peter may have thought. Probably Peter wanted to demonstrate to this itinerant preacher that he knew his business and that the preacher should mind his.

Nevertheless Peter listened to Jesus. The huge catch of fish that followed completely shattered Peter. All his experience in fishing suddenly seemed useless. He was obviously in the presence of someone far superior. He had no choice but to fall at Jesus' feet and confess his unworthiness. Jesus, of course, knew all along what was going on in Peter's mind. He knew exactly what would make an impact on Peter. If mere words could change people, one of Jesus' sermons would have done it. Even the healing of his mother-in-law (which Jesus had done earlier) did not impress Peter enough to change him. But when he saw the incredible catch of fish, it changed everything.

We are all like Peter. We go through life thinking we know it all. We struggle and survive and even consider ourselves fortunate, little realizing that our riches pale in comparison to what God can provide. We listen to sermons from pastors and evangelists, or watch umpteen videos on whatsapp, but it has little lasting impact on us. But when God steps into our lives, the change is always dramatic. In Peter's case he left everything - his business, colleagues, family, home, friends - in fact he left his comfort zone and followed Jesus. Thereafter he faced much persecution and was eventually crucified for his faith.

Like Peter we too can experience God's miraculous turnaround. All we need to do is invite Jesus into our 'boat' and ask Him to be in control. One touch of the Master's Hand will not only turn our life around but enable us to turn other lives around and become "fishers of men." With Christ in our vessel, we can 'launch out into the deep' and bring in a huge harvest of changed lives and souls.

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

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A Word for the Brokenhearted

*The overall purpose of Christmas is fulfilled when Christ's mission of love is continued through His church - to **heal** the brokenhearted, **free** prisoners, **comfort** mourners, **preach** the Good News and **share** His love with the poor. (Is. 61:1-3)*

By **Kathi Pelton***

"...He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound." (Isaiah 61:1, NKJV)

I wish that I could properly tell you how many beautiful people surrounded me at times in my life when I was brokenhearted. **I would not be where I am today if it was not for Jesus' faithfulness in the midst of my pain, or for sending those who loved and comforted me unconditionally.**

"The Lord hears His people when they call to Him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles." (Ps. 34:17)

During times when I was brokenhearted He never came and told me to change my thinking, to *do something to make me 'better'*, and He never made me feel as if I was less spiritual for being crushed in spirit. He just held me. He poured comfort over my broken heart and made sure that I knew that He was constant and present.

The Unconditional Love of Jesus

We come to these moments of experiencing a broken heart for many different reasons: the loss of someone we love, deep disappointment, and even sometimes our own sin or failure that has brought deep grief to us. Yet, no matter the source of our pain—Jesus comes with unconditional love, comfort and help.

In the seasons of my own personal grief, the sources have often varied—sometimes loss and sometimes my own failures—yet what has never changed is that Jesus has always come with the same love and comfort. He didn't question the source of my broken heart (He already knew) and He didn't limit His love or comfort based on if the pain came from my personal failings; He just came and loved me, right where I was.

I often wonder if many have become too 'wise' in their own eyes to just stop and give love and comfort. I have watched those in the Church, all too often, go to those with a broken heart with an agenda to *fix them* rather than *comfort them*. And yet, in my experience, that leaves the person in deeper pain and in more agony than before. In God's wisdom, He comes to the brokenhearted with love that has no agenda except *comfort and healing*.

Love Is the Key That Sets Captives Free

When we go to the one who is brokenhearted with the unconditional love of Jesus, it often will do a deeper work than any "words of wisdom" or agenda to fix them ever will do. **Love is the key that sets captives and prisoners free.** It releases the merciful love of God. *Mercy is love.*

When I was a new Believer, it was the love of Jesus that was transforming me day by day and healing my broken heart. About two years after my salvation I went to a Bible college and ministry that was well known but, I would quickly discover, was also very legalistic. I spent the next few years under the intensity of this teaching and loud

voices that said, "You should do this and you should do that!" This harsh representation of Jesus halted the beautiful transformation that had been taking place the two years prior. Suddenly, I was hearing that I needed to make myself change and if I didn't it seemed to me, through their words, that they were saying the Father would be mad at me if I didn't *fix myself*.

When I was newly saved, God came and healed my broken heart; He liberated me from captivity and He opened my prison doors. But during the years of being shown a *different Jesus* and a Father that *demand performance*, I found that I became a captive, once again. This time I was a captive to my own weakness and a prisoner to a religious message that was anything but unconditional. Rather than mercy triumphing over judgment, the message seemed that judgment was being held above mercy. It took me many years to get free from that heavy yoke.

Love Binds Wounds, Legalism Cuts Deep

Of course God desires holiness and for His character to be produced in our lives, but His love rarely needs help to accomplish that. His love was making me hungry for His Word, whereas religion made me afraid of it. His love was binding my wounds, but legalism cut deep. His love was revealing His face, but the law caused me to hide my face.

When you come across someone with a broken heart, just love! **Love will comfort, heal and set them free.**

I'm a 'fixer' by nature, so it is easy for me to want to go in and fix whatever is the source of what is hurting someone. However, I have had to learn (and still am learning) to just listen, love and often be silent. **His love will speak what needs to be spoken to their hearts.**

If you have a broken heart (or have had one) and someone brought a rod of correction rather than arms of love, please know how sorry that I am for that experience. If you needed a friend but received a *correctional officer* instead, I am so very sorry. If you cried out for help and—rather than receiving the oil of healing—you received vinegar, I pray that right now the sweetness of God's love will be like honey on your lips and wash away the bitter taste that it left.

Lastly, if you have lost someone and anyone has tried to tell you *how to grieve*, or *put limits on the time that you have to grieve*, then may our precious Comforter come to you now and make space for you to fully grieve and heal. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Remember that He wept with Lazarus' loved ones, even when He knew that He was about to raise Him back to life—that is how our precious Jesus is with us.

Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted; let's be like Him, and be a source of healing to those who are hurting.

**Kathi Pelton is an author, teacher and prophet. (Source: ElijahList.com. Dec.7, 2021. www.inscribeministries.com)*

"GOD SHAPES THE WORLD BY PRAYER." E. M. Bounds



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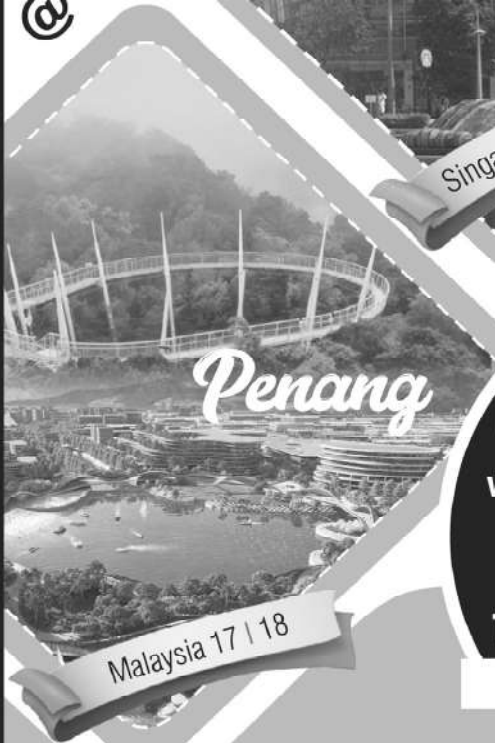
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Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to
the Father except through me." John 14:6

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Christmas is...

Christmas is a state of heart and mind
That can be enjoyed by all mankind.
It doesn't consist in cakes, cookies or wine
Or just going to church and feeling fine
(Though outwardly these things you'll find.)

But come with me if you will to a manger forlorn
Where almost 2000 years ago the Saviour was born.
In weakness there He lay on a pillow of hay,
And yet was God's only Son, so Christians say.

Jesus was His name and to this world He came
To bind the brokenhearted and heal the lame
To set captives free and make blind eyes to see
To lay down His life for you and for me.

He spoke about love and peace and purity
And practised all He preached so perfectly
His life was an embodiment of great humility
A classic example for proud humanity.

His standards are high for all who would follow
But His grace is sufficient for every tomorrow
His teachings are at times hard to swallow
But were meant just for us to keep away sorrow.

And so through ages past His words have been pondered
His life has been followed and His name hallowed
Even history's doors hinge on His birthday morn
But much more: Christ in a billion hearts is born.

So think for a time on His life so divine
And open up your mind for His light to shine.
Open up your heart and rejoice and pray
For that's why there is a Christmas Day.

-- Anon



Mary's Christmas

An angel of the Lord appeared to Mary
Announcing the birth of a unique baby
The birth of a baby would make her world happier
She was only engaged to Joseph the carpenter
Needless to say, immense was her delight.
On meeting her cousin Elizabeth
She comes to know that she is also expecting
Together they give praise to God and sing
His name would be called John, said an angel to his father
Who in future would be the forerunner of the Saviour.

Shepherds were seated around
When behold, they hear a great sound
Angels arrive on the scene
Announcing the birth of a King
Fear gripped them, as the light shone bright
Bringing joy as they anticipated the sight
"Good news we bring to all mankind
Peace on earth they can expect to find."

Born in a manger with cattle around
Where our Saviour, the Lord Almighty, was found
Mary and Joseph, delighted were they
The shepherds meanwhile hurried on their way
Wise men came from afar
And guiding them was a bright shining star

All of them worshipped and bowed in adoration
For they knew this Child would bring the world salvation.

-- John Antony

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Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,
with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. - James 1:17

Harvesting precious little Souls

India is home to about 31 million orphaned and abandoned children. The Times of India reports that nine out of 10 abandoned children are girls. Some families sell children into slavery to pay off family debts. Two-thirds of all children suffer physical abuse, and half suffer some kind of sexual harassment or abuse. Over 1 million end up in prostitution.

Christ's Harvest Mission (CHM) is a societal movement with a difference - it has been carried out by young people, most of them doctors and engineers. CHM was started while these doctors and engineers were students, to reach out to the most marginalized and the dispossessed of society. Their goal is to uplift, liberate and empower the penniless, the powerless and the speechless. In the glow of gratitude and glory reflected in the victims' eyes, CHM sees the reflection of Jesus' love, care and concern for each one of our neighbors who are in distress and dire need.

Interestingly, these young men and women of CHM chose Paraikankal, a forsaken area lying in the outskirts of Nagercoil, the

learning and tuition classes which help them promote their studies and reinforce and effectively supplement the ongoing programmes in the respective schools and colleges. The tuition classes are held in the evenings and the students are given snacks at the start and supper at the end to help meet their dire nutritional needs.

❖ **FREE MEDICAL SERVICES:** Another area of outreach is the health care and healing ministry. Paraikankal requires regular health care work and periodic health campaigns to help the locals sustain a hygienic and wellness-oriented environment. Doctors with different specializations volunteer themselves to come as a team and cater to the medical and health care needs of every person of the village.

❖ **SUNDAY WORSHIP:** Every Sunday a regular worship service is conducted in the chapel by way of offering spiritual food, moral instruction, ethical guidance and value-based education to the budding children and youth of Paraikankal. There are two Sunday church services



headquarters of Kanyakunari district, the southern most tip of India. Paraikankal is a poor area which lacks the basic minimum standards of life. It's common to find beggars, the demon-possessed, magicians, superstitious people, people who indulge in petty thefts and crime, and parents who have never cared for either the education of their children or their honest upbringing.

The 'river' that flows across and around Paraikankal is the gutters, sewages and drainages. A sheet of canvas or coconut leaves resting over four poles is their house. One cow-dung smeared room is their grand palace. Health and hygiene are words unheard of in Paraikankal. Parents initiate their children into the practices of stealing and begging.

It is in this unhealthy, crime-laden and poverty-stricken environment that CHM has chosen to operate in, taking God's love in so many ways to the people of Paraikankal -

❖ **CHILDREN'S HOMES:** CHM runs two homes for orphans, semi-orphans and the destitute - the *George Muller Children's Home*, where 56 children reside, and the *Amy Carmichael Girls' Home* which is under construction. The studies of 15 girls are taken care of. The goal of CHM is the all-round development of these children, teaching them to fish rather than just feed them with fish.

❖ **FREE TUITION CENTRE:** Both socially and academically rehabilitated adults of Paraikankal are given special coaching in the evening tuition centre. There are enough well trained teachers, the tutors who academically engage the school going and college going students by giving them regular, systematic, well planned and well structured special tuition classes. There are a number of students who undergo regular

conducted, one for boys and another for girls and the people living nearby. The worship service is well complemented through a well-knit and equally well coordinated network of its various ministries, like Sunday School, VBS, Fasting Prayer, All Night Prayer etc.

❖ **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL:** Besides the regular worship service and Sunday classes, Vacation Bible School (VBS) is conducted for a period of seven days. About 450 students attend this program.

❖ **MISSION FIELDS:** CHM takes the love and compassion of God to people in 5 mission fields, located in Kallakurichi dist. of Tamilnadu, where community development is focussed which paves a way to share the Gospel.

❖ **CHRISTMAS:** Christmas, for Christ's Harvest Mission, is a celebration of the liberation and empowerment of the hapless poor and the most side-lined sections of the community. Christmas throws up the challenge of loving others, living for others and sharing with others.

Every Christmas, CHM identifies and helps the least of the least brothers and sisters - the hungry are fed, the naked are clothed, those who are shackled with the sorrows and hardships of life are liberated. About 100 families are identified exclusively for this purpose and are given clothes, utensils and provisions for a Christmas meal, during a special Christmas program.

You are invited to contact this ministry and be a part of this critical outreach to the needy.

Ph. +91 99444 50999, christsharvestmission@gmail.com

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"STANDING IN THE GAP - 2023"

UNITED INTERCESSION FOR THE NATION AND THE CHURCH

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{Arrival on 24th at 5 pm and departure on 27th at 10 am}

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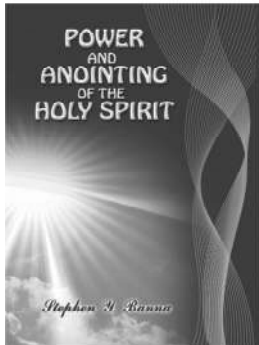
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“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” - Romans 8:1

Calendar 2023

It's all about Love

Roses are a universal symbol of love and beauty. Jesus too has been traditionally referred to as the 'Rose of Sharon' (Song of Songs 2:1)

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BONUS: Current list of World Rulers for your intercessory prayers.

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1 John 4:16

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Merry Christmas!!!

Memory Verse: Daniel 12: 3 ...and those who turn many to righteousness shall shine like stars forever and ever.

Scripture reading: Isaiah 9:6, Mathew 1:21 & 23

Dear boys and girls, Christmas means the coming of Jesus as a gift to us from God... and it was just the beginning. The name JESUS means Saviour – “for He will save His people from their sins” (Mt 1:21). Jesus’ LIFE, DEATH & RESURRECTION made it possible for you and me to be saved from death and punishment for our sins (1Tim 1:15).

Firstly, Jesus desires that every life should be a Bethlehem and every heart a manger. Remember that Luke 2:7 says that because there was no room in the inn that Jesus had to be born in a manger.

The inns at that time were preoccupied with many visitors to Bethlehem. Is the inn of your heart also filled with visitors? Visitors of selfishness, greed, pleasures, pride, mere celebrations and so on.

Christmas becomes meaningless without giving Jesus a proper place in your heart. Allow Jesus to be born in your heart today (Gal 4:19).

Secondly, Jesus wants the entire world to know who He is and why He came to earth. So, He needs your help to do this.

The Wisemen laid their gifts at His feet. The shepherds gave their tributes of praise. The angels sang their songs. What will you give Jesus this Christmas? Will you be like His star that guided the Wisemen to the manger?

Here is a true story of a slave boy who was set free -

Frederick Douglass was born on a plantation in Talbot County, Maryland, USA. His mother was a slave. As a fatherless seven year old slave He was sent to live at the Wye House plantation.

He seldom saw his mother who died when he was ten years old. At twelve years his new master's wife began to teach Frederick the alphabet. Slaves were forbidden to read. But, Fredrick persisted and he secretly taught himself to read and write.

When Fredrick was 13, he met two people who taught him about following God's guidance, namely, Rev. Hanson and Charles Lawson. He also found an old torn Bible in a filthy gutter which he loved to read every day for he testified that it gave him wisdom.

The two godly men influenced Fredrick to know Jesus, to pray and grow, obeying the Word of God. Fredrick did get free and endeavoured to free his brothers and sisters from bondage. Fredrick never forgot Rev. Hanson's and Uncle

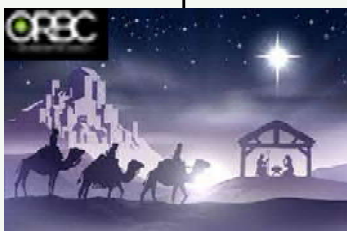


Children's Corner

-- Dr. Sara Chandrakumar

Lawson's words to follow God's guidance.

He followed God's guidance and helped millions of people. He was a faithful Christian and became one of America's respected diplomat, a counsellor to four US Presidents, a highly regarded orator, and an influential writer. Yes! God did guide Fredrick and he obeyed Him! He turned out to be a 'STAR' for Jesus.



It is a terrible thing to be in bondage. Bondage means to be a slave, whether physically, spiritually, and emotionally. But that is truly the condition of all of us without Jesus Christ. We're in bondage to our own desires, to the habit-patterns of the past, and we're in bondage to the devil

himself. Are you in bondage with gadgets like cell phone, TV shows and serials, computer games etc.?

But when you invite Jesus into your heart & life, then Jesus takes away the sin & gives victory over sinful habits. Now we are set free because of the victory Jesus won on the Cross. Jesus fills us with His Holy Spirit. We can boldly call Him, "Abba! Father!". What a joy to be God's children!

Dear boys and girls, please fill in the corresponding letters and learn about the characters around the CRADLE of baby Jesus -

1-A, 2-C, 3-D, 4-E, 5-F, 6-G, 7-H, 8-I, 9-K, 10-L, 11-M, 12-N, 13-O, 14-P, 15-R, 16-S, 17-T, 18-U, 19-V, 20-W.

- 1.The

20	13	15	15	8	4	3
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 King Herod.
- 2.The

20	1	12	3	4	15	8	12	6
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 Wise Men.
- 3.The

20	1	17	2	7	5	18	10
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 Shepherds.
4. The

20	8	10	10	8	12	6
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 Star.
5. The

20	13	15	16	7	8	14	14	8	12	6
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 Angels.
6. The

20	13	12	3	4	15	5	18	10
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 Saviour.

foreign News

A little gift goes a long way

Every year since 1993, *Samaritan's Purse* (SP) has collected shoebox gifts filled with toys, school supplies and hygiene items for children around the world. Over 198 million children in more than 170 countries have since received 'God's love' prayerfully packaged in an *Operation Christmas Child* shoebox. SP has also trained over 1.5 million church volunteers to teach *The Greatest Journey*, its follow-up discipleship course for shoebox recipients. Since 2009, nearly 31



million children have enrolled in this 12-lesson program and over 14.9 million have accepted Jesus. Last year, 9.1 million shoebox gifts were collected.

Harvest time in Ghana

"There were many tens of thousands of decisions for Christ documented (the team is still counting the decision cards) and so many amazing miracles took place," writes Evangelist Daniel Kolenda about his four-day evangelistic crusade in Kumasi, Ghana, Nov. 10-13. In addition, 2,862 separate outreaches that shook the region in a three-week period leading up to the crusade, resulted in 350,693 documented decisions for Christ. - Cfan.org

Bring your Bible to School Day

USA: There were over half a million participants in over 50,000 schools in the annual *Bring Your Bible to School Day* (Oct. 6), first launched in 2014. "Bring Your Bible to School Day is a terrific opportunity for our nation's students to boldly and freely put feet to their faith," Jim Daly, president, and CEO of *Focus on the Family* explained. "In this day and age of shifting values and children desperate for hope and help, it comes at the perfect time." The Day is sponsored by *Focus on the Family* and encourages kids to celebrate their faith by carrying their Bibles into the classroom and sharing the gospel. - CBN/GodTV

Massacres in Nigeria continue

Islamic jihadist groups in Nigeria, like the Fulani herdsmen, ISIS, Boko Haram etc, are responsible for killing at least 4,000 Christians and abducting more than 2,300 other Christians in the first 10 months of this year alone, according to a report released last month by the *Int'l. Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law* (Intersociety). This is an average of 13 deaths and eight abductions per day. At least 60,000 Christians have been killed in the past two decades. - CP

THE LAST WORD

Christmas - An Answer to Prayer

Most prophecies are conditional and some need our fervent prayers to either fulfill or negate them. At least 18 Old Testament prophecies concerning the birth of Christ, some made about 700 years prior to the event, were fulfilled - but not before thousands of devout Jews prayed and fasted for the promised Messiah for hundreds of years! This included Anna, the 84-year-old prophetess who "served God with fastings and prayers night and day" (Lk. 2:37-38) and the "just and devout" Simeon (Lk. 2:29-32). Both were allowed to see the fruits of their prayers - the birth of our Saviour!

By Steve Kramer*

Christmas is about answered prayer. For centuries the people of God had prayed and longed for the day God would come down and rescue them. Listen to this prayer from Isaiah 64:1-2, addressing God: "Oh, that you would rend the heavens and **come down**, that the mountains would tremble before you! As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, **come down** to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you!"

The people of God were praying for an intervention. They were tired of being oppressed and pushed around by the world empires century after century. And they longed for a new day when God would come and help them and re-establish them as a power to be reckoned with in this world.

When the time was right, or as the Apostle Paul writes in Galatians, 'when the time was fulfilled', God answered that prayer. **He came down**, not exactly as they had pictured it; but He did come down, as a baby of all things. God in the flesh, true God, true man... God does not always answer according to our wants. He answers according to our needs. This Saviour came to save us from powers greater than any world empire. God came down to give us what we really need...

This Child, born in Bethlehem, was on a rescue mission to rescue humanity from sin.... [On the cross] Jesus paid in full the debt we could not pay ourselves...

Christmas is about an answered prayer. **People of God prayed that God would come down. He did come down and gave them so much more than they asked for.** He set them free from sin and death... John tells us in his Gospel, "But to all who receive Him, He gives the power to become the children of God." (John 1:12) That promise is yours and mine.

Wouldn't this be a wonderful occasion to receive this gift and to go through the rest of your life assured that, if you died today, you would awaken in heaven with Jesus. That's why Jesus came, to give that to you and me...

I encourage you to join Phillips Brooks in the final verse of his prayer and make it your own. You know the words:

**O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.**

God answered prayer years ago, and He'll answer that prayer today.

*Steve Kramer is senior pastor of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Minnesota. (Source: ChristianCrusaders.com. Condensed.)

"For the Lord GOD does nothing without Revealing
His Secret to His Servants the Prophets." Amos 3:7

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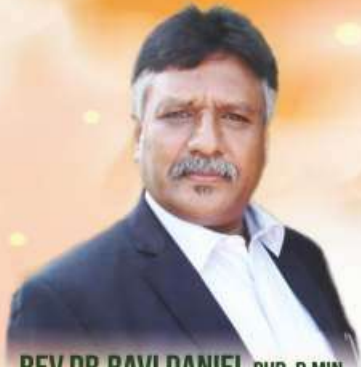
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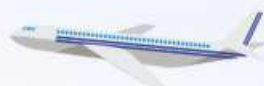
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