

VOL 10 ISSUE 02 JUNE – JULY 2020

What's in a Meal?
Spend Unhurried
Time With God,
Be Rest Assured

Christian Trends

ENGAGE • ENTHRAL • ENLIGHTEN

Did Jesus Cleanse
The Temple or
Curse it?
Sophia, The Outcaste

CT



The 'Rite' Things

₹ 60



9 772231 236046

YOUTH MOVEMENT DAY KOCHI

JOIN US NOW

**12TH SEPTEMBER
9.30 AM - 12.30 PM**

ONLINE REGISTRATION - WWW.KTN.CITY

ZOOM



IN ASSOCIATION WITH MOVEMENT DAY



www.ktn.city    



INSIDE

- 05 From the Editor
 - 06 Globe Crossing
 - 08 Unshakeable Trust in God's Faithfulness
 - 10 Lest We Forget The Cost Paid
 - 16 In Presence of Jesus and Fellowship with Others
 - 20 Did Jesus Cleanse The Temple or Curse it?
 - 24 Church Ordinances- An Impetus For Evangelism and Missions
 - 28 Ravi Zacharias: Defender of Faith
 - 32 Sophia, The Outcaste
 - 38 Communion: Not a Ritual, But Reminder of Christ's Covenant
 - 42 Stalked By Shadow Self? Step into Light
 - 46 The Overarching Narrative of Christianity
 - 50 What's in a Meal?
 - 54 Post-Truth Hospital Where Truth has Died
 - 58 Lead Like a Parent
 - 62 Waiting for The Dove to Return with The Olive Branch
 - 66 Spend Unhurried Time with God, Be Rest Assured
-

P42



FRONT DESK

Editor

Finny Philip
finny@ctrendsmag.com

Associate Editor

Charles Christian
charles@ctrendsmag.com

Assistant Editor

Prabhudas Kongara
prabhudas@ctrendsmag.com

Design

jOshy john
joshy@ctrendsmag.com

Web Edition

Blesson Philipose
blesson@ctrendsmag.com

Subscriptions

subscription@ctrendsmag.com

Contributing Writers

Ajith Fernando, Akshay Rajkumar,
Blesson Philip, Craig Keener,
Domenic Marbaniang, Jacob Cherian,
Joanna Pearl, Joanne Philip, John Lathrop,
Julian Panga, Kuruvilla Chandy,
Mark Raja, Paul Swarup,
Sabina Tagore Immanuel,
Shilpa Waghmare

Editorial Board

Ajith Fernando, Atul Aghamkar,
Havilah Dharamraj, Jacob Cherian,
Ivan Satyavrata, Paul Swarup

Advisory Board

Chris Wright, Godfrey Yogaraja,
Pieter Kwant, Richard Howell,
Santosh Shetty, Tim Stafford

Board of Directors

Finny Philip
Josh John

Publisher

Finny Philip



Christian Trends

ISSUE 02

June/ July 2020

VOLUME 10

© Copyright *Christian Trends* 2020. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited without the prior permission of the Publisher.
The writer of each article is responsible for the point of view expressed. Only the writings of the Editors represent *Christian Trends*' view point.

Printed, published and owned, by Finny Philip and Printed at Anaswara Offset Pvt Ltd, 48/2123-C, Perandoor Junction, Elamakkara, Kochi - 682026.
and Published at Filadelfia, Sanjay Park, Rani Road, Udaipur 313001 Rajasthan. Editor: Finny Philip



Baptism and Breaking of Bread – A Shaping of our Reflexive Behaviour

Tertullian, a Christian theologian from Carthage, Africa, in the 2nd century, wrote an intriguing comment: “Christians are made, not born”. So, how are Christians made? More recently, Alan Kreider, a scholar of church history and mission, informed us about *habitus*—a concept that was developed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu—a reflexive bodily behaviour that was a distinctive characteristic of Christians during the first few centuries.

The church grew in numbers and influence not by winning arguments, but because of their habitual behaviour. Their behaviour said what they believed. Christians maintained that if they were attractive, it was not because they were born that way. It was because they had been reborn—changed, concerted—to be attractive.

Outsiders could see the change, the results of their formation; but not the formation itself. The Christians were made in the *Domus*. The church was primarily a domestic phenomenon in the early Christian centuries—both in the physical space and the cluster of people who lived there.

There were both kin and not kin. Like us in the cities, they lived and worshipped in dwellings, many of which were within enormous *insulae*—architectural “islands”, multi-storeyed buildings that held apartments of a wide variety of sizes in the major cities of the time. In this *insulae*, many ranks of society lived close to one another. The neighbours, including Christians, watched each other and saw each other’s coming and going. It is

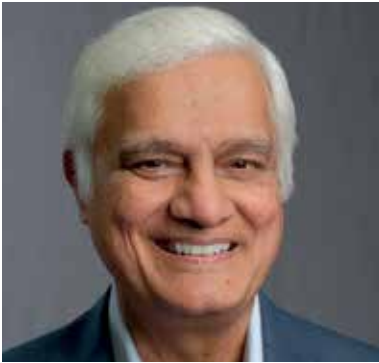
here that *didache* (training), baptisms, breaking of bread, sermon, the prayers, the kiss of peace formed the character of Christians. Baptism brought a sense of being washed, reborn, illuminated and animated by the Spirit of holiness. And in the breaking of bread, Christian communities remembered Jesus. It helped the early church to embrace the countercultural *habitus*. They were aligning themselves with God’s purposes and habituating themselves to the new ways of Christ’s church.

How are Christians made now? Present church environment shapes our behaviour. Increasingly churches look like the by-product of an industrial-enlightenment-modern-Western culture. This is what happens when instead of leading culture, the Church models, even caricatures, the worlds of business, politics, entertainment, and education. Our spiritual gatherings are made into time-based services, worship orders, rites and rituals, song lists, same seating, and momentary “meet and greet”. Faith was industrialised through sequenced curricula, age-graded classes and incentivised learning. Have we lost the formation of our reflexive behaviour?

What is baptism and the breaking of bread in a post-Western world? It is that desire to see a church that breathes Acts 2:42: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer.” The church needs to be familial having a desire to relate in a face-to-face manner to people whom we know and love. Our habits are formed when we baptise and break bread together.

FINNY PHILIP

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Finny Philip'.



CHRISTIAN APOLOGIST RAVI ZACHARIAS WENT TO BE WITH THE LORD

Ravi Zacharias, popular author and Christian teacher, who became an important voice for Christians through his ministry of apologetics, died on May 19 at his home in Atlanta, two months after he announced he had been diagnosed with cancer. The famous apologist was born on March 26, 1946, in Chennai. He was raised in New Delhi before he immigrated to Canada at the age of 20 and rose to prominence through his speech in 1983 at a conference for evangelists in Amsterdam. He founded the Ravi Zacharias International Ministry (RZIM) in 1984. In his 48-year career, he preached in more than 70 countries and authored more than two dozen books, laying out his arguments for the existence of God and the reasonableness of Christianity, of which his best-selling book, *Can Man Live Without God?*, sold about 500,000 copies in 1995. Ever since the ministry posted an update on May 8 saying Zacharias' cancer was deemed untreatable, and was sent home to Atlanta to be with his family, many Christians all over the world, including his high-profile followers Lee Strobel, Tim Tebow, and Christine Caine, posted tributes on social media with the hashtag #ThankYouRavi. He is survived by his wife, Margaret, and their three children.

EVANGELICAL THEOLOGIAN J I PACKER WAS CALLED HOME



James Innell Packer, one of the most influential evangelical leaders known to the world at large as an author and speaker, died on Friday, July 17, at age 93. Born on July 22, 1926 in a lower-middle-class family, brought up in nominal Anglicanism, J I Packer accepted Christ in an evangelistic service during his undergraduate studies at Oxford University on October 22, 1944. While at Oxford, C S Lewis exerted a powerful influence on Packer's life and work. He then grew up to be one of

the three most influential evangelical leaders in England along with John Stott and Martyn Lloyd-Jones. His first book, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God—a defence of the authority of the Bible*, sold 20,000 copies in its first year and has consistently been in print since. In 2005, *Time* magazine named Packer one of the 25 most influential evangelicals. His signature book, *Knowing God* has sold a million and a half copies. He served as general editor of the English Standard Version of the Bible, calling that project the greatest achievement of his life.

SCORES OF AMERICANS OPPOSE RELIGIOUS RELAXATIONS GIVEN AMID PANDEMIC

Most Americans oppose giving houses of worship religious exemptions from COVID-19 lockdown regulations, according to a new survey by Pew Research Center. According to the finding of Pew on August 7, 79% of respondents said religious institutions should be subject to the same social-distancing guidelines as secular businesses and entities. Respondents who identified as evangelical Protestant were more likely to support giving houses of worship more flexibility, nevertheless 62% of them also opposed exemptions. The findings were based on a survey taken July 13-19 among 10,211 adults in the United States. The survey also found that evangelical Protestants were less likely to believe that their churches should remain closed during the pandemic compared to other religious groups.

CHURCHES IN CHINA FACE NEW PRESSURE

On August 12, *Christian Post* reported that the state-sponsored churches in parts of China that were forced to close due to COVID-19 lockdowns are allowed to reopen only if they donate to the Chinese Communist Party. A Three-Self church director from Heze, a city in the eastern province of Shandong, told *Bitter Winter* that the state-run churches in the area were ordered to collect money, apparently, for coronavirus-affected areas, and shut them down if they did not consent. Authorities in Zhangcun town issued donation quotas ranging from 4,000 to 10,000 RMB (between \$560 and \$1,400) to Three-Self churches, while Christians in Xianju were ordered to donate 100 RMB (about \$14) to Wuhan, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak. When Christians requested to allow them to give their money directly to the victims of the pandemic instead through the government, officials from religious affairs departments refused. It was also reported earlier that the churches were allowed to reopen only if they praised the Chinese Communist Party in sermons and the President Xi Jinping—apparently, a move to sinicize Christianity.



According to a new report from the Delhi-based Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI), about 135 cases of persecution—a lynching, community ostracization, sodomization and murder of two men among other incidents—occurred just in the first half of 2020, even amid the coronavirus pandemic lockdown. Much of this opposition came from the Hindu extremists from their own communities. Uttar Pradesh, the most populous Indian state with nearly 200 million Hindus and only 350,000 Christians, stands first in the list with 32 cases of persecution. Odisha's Kenduguda village in Malkangiri district reported the death of a 14-year-old Christian boy, whose family had embraced Christianity three years back. Tamil Nadu reported a case of police brutality on Christian father-son duo—P Jeyaraj, aged 58, and



Benicks (Fenix Immanuel), aged 38—who succumbed to their fatal injuries. In Chhattisgarh, about six cases of targeted violence against Christians were reported just in April despite the national lockdown. In Jharkhand, Christian women were sexually assaulted and others socially ostracized. While 135 cases of persecution were reported, the actual numbers might be higher, said EFI. Even with those cases which were reported, the police were reluctant to register the FIR and those registered hardly went to court, EFI added.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES HELP VICTIMS OF BEIRUT EXPLOSION

The recent explosions, on August 4, caused by the detonation of 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate at the port of the city of Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, resulted in the death of more than 200 people, and injuries to nearly 6,000 people while a few remain missing. About 300,000 people were left homeless while some others were left to live in severely damaged homes without windows and doors. Amid the physical damage and financial crisis, a political tension rose in Lebanon when its Prime Minister Hassan Diab and the Lebanese cabinet resigned on August 10 as people protested against the government. Against this backdrop, many evangelical ministries have come to address the needs of the people. Arab Baptist Theological Seminary, Beirut, opened its dormitories to frontline



health workers who also partnered with the 'Our Home, Your Home' ministry, welcoming a fraction of the hundred thousand Lebanese displaced from their homes. Resurrection Church of Beirut sent volunteers downtown to clean up the mess for their community and others. Tony Skaff, pastor of Badaro Baptist Church in Beirut, told that the people lost hope "in their politicians, in the health situation, in everything" and that "the church has the calling to answer this need, by standing firm and continuing its ministry."





Craig Keener is professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary and author of *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (revised edition, InterVarsity, 2014).

UNSHAKEABLE TRUST IN GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

WAS IT CRUEL FOR ABRAHAM TO SEND HAGAR AND ISHMAEL AWAY?
GENESIS 21:14 SHOWS THAT ABRAHAM COULD TRUST GOD
FOR ISHMAEL AS HE COULD TRUST GOD FOR ISAAC WHEN OFFERING HIM

In Genesis 21:14, Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael away into the desert. Yet Abraham was not sending them to die of thirst there. He gave them a skin of water (21:14); vegetation could grow in that region, and it was habitable (21:30–33; 22:19; 26:23, 33). Unfortunately, Hagar and Ishmael apparently got lost before finding water or any habitation and so ran out of water (21:14–16).

Nevertheless, Abraham had God's promise concerning Ishmael (17:20), including at this time (21:13), and so could trust God for Ishmael as he could trust God for Isaac when offering him on Mount Moriah in the next chapter. And sure enough, the angel of the Lord again appeared to Hagar, reaffirmed the promise, and pointed her to nearby water (21:17–19). God heard Ishmael's cries (21:17).

People often blame their own cruel choices on God. That issue merits discussion in its own right, but it is not a discussion of the message of this passage. This passage instead celebrates Abraham's continued faith and obedience. He knew God's voice and had witnessed God act miraculously with Sarah's pregnancy and Isaac's subsequent birth. This is another step of obedient faith that brought him closer to being ready to sacrifice what will then be his only son, trusting God's faithfulness no matter what.

“PEOPLE OFTEN BLAME THEIR OWN CRUEL CHOICES ON GOD. THAT ISSUE MERITS DISCUSSION IN ITS OWN RIGHT, BUT IT IS NOT A DISCUSSION OF THE MESSAGE OF THIS PASSAGE.”





Rev. Dr. Paul Swarup is the Presbyterian in Charge of the Green Park Free Church, Diocese of Delhi, of the Church of North India. He holds a PhD in OT/Dead sea Scrolls from the University of Cambridge, UK. He is also in the Committee of Bible Translation (CBT) of the New International Version (NIV).

LEST WE FORGET THE COST PAID ON CROSS

ARE SACRAMENTS MINDLESS PERFORMANCES
OR MEANINGFUL REMINDERS OF
SUSTAINING GRACE?

What do we understand by sacraments and why do we need them? The word 'sacrament' comes from the Latin word *sacramentum* meaning 'oath' or 'allegiance'. It indicates God's faithfulness and commitment to us particularly for our salvation. Sacraments are outward signs of inward grace, something that God has done for us and cannot be expressed in words adequately.

The Protestant church follows the two sacraments that the Lord Jesus himself instituted—Lord's Supper and Baptism. There are five other sacramental rites—confirmation,

marriage, ordination, anointing the sick and reconciliation of the penitent—instituted by the church that we might receive divine grace and favour. We will be primarily looking at the Lord's Supper and baptism.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

In order to understand the Lord's Supper, we need to understand the context in which it was instituted. It was instituted in the midst of the Passover meal which was in remembrance of their [Israelites'] deliverance from bondage in ➡

“Since our faith as Christians is rooted in the history of the crucifixion event... it makes sense that God would want us to regularly draw our thoughts to the Cross.”

Egypt. In the Exodus event, the families were to gather and slaughter a lamb and smear its blood on their doorpost. When the angel of death passed over, he would not strike the firstborn of the Israelites because of the blood on their doorpost. They were to relive this incident every year through the Feast of the Passover which Jesus and his disciples were celebrating. However, three meals are running concurrently here—the Passover meal, the Last Supper which Jesus is having as a farewell meal with his disciples and, in the midst of that meal Jesus establishes the Lord's Supper. While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’ (Matt 26:26–28). Jesus used sacrificial language, indicating what was about to happen.

THE BREAD

The bread symbolised his body which was about to be broken on the cross. Bread is the symbol of food, and here Jesus is the spiritual food. He is our spiritual sustainer. Bread is also a symbol of God's gift and so Christ himself blesses God for the bread. ‘Which is given for you’—points to the imminent death of Jesus. Jesus speaks of himself in sacrificial forms. He himself is the true paschal (Passover) lamb offered once and for all for the sins of the whole world (Heb 7:26–28; John 1:29; 1 John 2:2).

In John 6:47, Jesus reminds the disciples that the way to eternal life is to believe in him. That eternal life begins here and now, and is not some esoteric life that we need to wait for. Jesus reminds them a second time that he is the bread of life. When he took the bread, he gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples. The disciples were

to do it in remembrance of him. Jesus was the true bread—the spiritual sustainer who came down from the Father, from heaven. Anyone who partook of this bread would live forever. In other words, Jesus was saying that if we appropriate his death on the cross for ourselves and see him as the one who sustains us then we will live forever.

THE CUP

After giving thanks for the bread and distributing it, Jesus took the cup and gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt 26:27–28). Jesus identifies his blood with the institution of a new covenant. The “blood of the covenant” is found in Exodus 24:7–8, where blood is sprinkled over the people of Israel when they agree to the original covenant they were making with Yahweh at the foot of Mt. Sinai. But the Prophet Jeremiah prophesied about the coming of a new covenant of forgiveness of sins replacing the Mosaic covenant:

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah . . .

“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord.

“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” (Jer 31:31–34 NIV)

In the New Covenant three things stand out. The law is internal: it will be written on the hearts and minds of people; knowledge of God is universal: everyone from the least to the greatest will know God. And finally, forgiveness is complete: no need for any further sacrifices. Jesus institutes

this New Covenant by the shedding of his blood on the cross. His death, resurrection, ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit fulfil all that was prophesied by Jeremiah. The blood of Christ shed on the cross is symbolic of the forgiveness of sins and the offer of salvation to all who believe that Christ died in their place. Christ commands his disciples to drink the cup in remembrance of his suffering and death, as the cross is central to the redemptive plan of God.

BAPTISM

The second sacrament that Jesus commanded us to keep is Baptism. The word ‘baptism’ comes from a Greek word and means ‘dip’ or to ‘immerse’. This was the ritual which was to signify the entry into the Christian community. Theologically it signified dying with Christ and rising with him. As we go down in the water, we leave our old sinful selves behind and we come up as a new creation cleansed by Christ. Jesus commanded his disciples to go out to the nations and make disciples baptising them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to dwell in every believer when we receive Christ in our lives and repent of our sinful life.

New life in Christ is a free gift of God. Three metaphors can be used to understand this sacrament: grafting, new birth and adoption. When we are baptised, we are being grafted on to the body of Christ—the church. We now belong to the wider family of God’s church, the new community that Christ established. We are to draw strength from one another as we become part of this body. The second metaphor is that of new birth. In this, we die to our sinful selves and we rise again with Christ as a new creation; and finally, adoption—we are adopted as the sons and daughters of God (John 1:12).

So, how can these sacraments be real and meaningful to us rather than being mere rituals? How can our hearts and minds be involved in it? A colleague of mine, Jim Herst, in a sermon, suggested five ways in which we can approach the Lord’s Supper which I am incorporating here.

1 SACRAMENTS CALL US TO LOOK BACK AND REMEMBER

The Lord’s command was to celebrate this supper in remembrance of him. Therefore, we are to call to mind intentionally and look back on what Christ has done for us on the Cross. Since our faith as Christians is rooted in the history of the crucifixion event, and since all the blessings we receive come out of that event, it makes sense that God would want us to regularly draw our thoughts to the Cross. Communion serves this very purpose.

Baptism, likewise, is a once-for-all event reminding us both of the death of Christ and his resurrection as well as our own dying to sin and rising again. We are to call to mind our baptismal vows where we pledged to resist Satan, the powers of evil and all our sinful desires. Therefore, we are called to remind ourselves daily that we are dead to sin and alive to Christ.

2 SACRAMENTS CALL US TO LOOK WITHIN AND INTROSPECT

St Paul said, “Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup” (I Cor 11:28). Whenever we come to the

Lord’s Table, it is a time to introspect and reflect on our own inner condition. Whatever is blocking God from working in our lives need to be confessed and removed. When we are feeling shame or remorse or bitterness due to sinful attitudes and behaviour, these inner realities obstruct the flow of God’s grace through our lives. “If we confess our sins,” wrote John, “God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Baptism calls us to see whether we are fulfilling the promises that we made seeking to do God’s will daily in our lives. We are to put to death daily the sinful self that we buried with Christ at Baptism. Unfortunately, our sinful nature keeps rearing its ugly head. Paul, writing to the Colossians, says, “For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God . . . Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry . . . You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices” (Col 3:1–9).

3 SACRAMENTS CALL US TO LOOK UP AND RECEIVE

Jesus declared: I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty . . . Whoever eats this bread will live forever . . . This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world . . .

“Baptism grafts us on to the family of God; it adopts us into the family of God. We need to remember that every believer is part of the body of Christ.”

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. (John 6:35, 51, 56).

Jesus shows us that he is the one who will sustain and nourish us just as bread nourishes our body. To participate in the Lord's Supper continuously is like eating our meals regularly. We are to receive the present provision of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross in order to thrive spiritually. The Holy Spirit who dwells in us is the one who makes this provision available: a provision of forgiveness, strength, grace, encouragement, healing—everything we need in the present hour to live the life that God is calling us to live.

In our baptism, we were sealed with the sign of the cross indicating that we belong to Christ. If we are children of God by faith in Christ then we have access to the Father. We can go into his presence and receive all the spiritual gifts we need. Just as in communion we receive forgiveness, strength and healing, here we have access to all the gifts of the Spirit. Above all, God gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to everyone who believes in Jesus.

4 SACRAMENTS CALL US TO LOOK AROUND AND REAFFIRM

Communion challenges us to reaffirm our unity with other believers in the body of Christ. The early church had its fair share of divisions and quarrels. Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth because of disunity over differences of theology (1:10–13), differences of giftedness and style (chapters 12–14), differences of social rank, differences of racial and cultural heritage. And when the church at Corinth gathered for communion, those divisions showed through.

Now the communion celebration, among its other meanings, calls us to reaffirm our unity as Christians. The word *communion* means to “share in common.” We share a common loaf and cup. If the communion celebration is supposed to be a symbol and witness of Christian unity, one can understand why

Paul had some stern words for the Corinthians in their practice of *communion*. While they came together to symbolise their oneness in the Lord's Supper, their attitudes and actions were a blatant denial of it. When we come to the Lord's Table, we must introspect—do we harbour resentment in our heart towards anyone? Is there anyone from whom we would withhold the forgiveness and grace which we ourselves want to receive? “Forgive us our debts,” we pray, “as we forgive our debtors.”

Baptism, on the other hand, is what brings us together as the family of God. Paul writes to the Ephesians: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph 4:4–6). Baptism grafts us on to the family of God; it adopts us into the family of God. We need to remember that every believer is part of the body of Christ.

5 SACRAMENTS CALL US TO LOOK AHEAD AND REJOICE

Jesus said to his disciples that night: “I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom” (Matt 26:29).

We look forward to the final banquet with Christ. We have a sure and certain hope. Therefore, we can endure the difficulties of today when we remember that these present troubles are only temporary. “I consider,” said Paul, “that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). Communion calls this future to mind.

Baptism reminds us of the inheritance that we have been called to. Paul says, “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory” (Eph 1:13–14).

Sacraments, therefore, are meaningful expressions through which we experience the grace and favour of God.



SUBSCRIBE NOW!

to the region's outstanding magazine

<https://ctrendsmag.com/subscribe-to-christian-trends>



Christian Trends

ENGAGE • ENTHRAL • ENLIGHTEN

ctrendsmag.com

info@ctrendsmag.com

ACCORDING TO JESUS



IN PRESENCE OF
JESUS
AND FELLOWSHIP
WITH OTHERS



Kuruvilla Chandy is freelance preacher, writer and counsellor living in Trivandrum, after serving as a pastor for 42 years in Lucknow. He has authored the recent book *Jesus God's New Way*.

COMMUNION IS NOT ABOUT THE BREAD AND THE WINE; IT IS ABOUT JESUS AND THE SUSTENANCE WE GET FROM HIM AND HIS BODY—THE CHURCH

Two years ago, on the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing, many Christians excitedly shared on social media that the first food that was eaten on the moon was communion bread and wine. It happened this way: Buzz Aldrin, who followed Neil Armstrong in getting down from the spacecraft to the moon, had asked his pastor if he could have consecrated bread and wine so that he could have communion on the moon. The pastor agreed. NASA gave him permission, but was told to do it without satellite communication to earth. That was because earlier when Apollo 8 entered the lunar orbit, the astronauts had read Genesis 1:1–10 over the radio. NASA was sued by Madelyn Murray O'Hair of American Atheists for violating the rule of separation of church and state, and NASA didn't want that to happen again.

While it is commendable that Aldrin wanted to mark this historical occasion by affirming his faith, we need to ask, did Aldrin have Holy Communion then? The answer is “no”, because there is no such thing as one-person communion. The word “communion” has its roots in the old French word for “community” or in Latin means “fellowship, sharing, or mutual participation”. The KJV renders 1 Corinthians 10:16 thus: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” The word “communion” is the translation of the Greek word *koinonia*, which means “fellowship” or “sharing”.

The more serious error in how people think about communion is the belief that the bread mysteriously becomes the body of Christ and the wine becomes the blood of Christ. Many, not just Roman Catholics, believe that in Holy Communion somehow, they are receiving the actual body and blood of Jesus. ➡

“The more serious error in how people think about communion is the belief that the bread mysteriously becomes the body of Christ and the wine becomes the blood of Christ.”

THE PASSOVER CONNECTION

To understand this sacred exercise of the church, we need to go back to the origins. Jesus initiated and instituted communion in the context of the Passover meal. The items on the menu were lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs and wine. The lamb of the Passover meal represented the blood sacrifice that covered Israel and rescued them from the angel of death moving through the land of Egypt. The unleavened bread was to recall that Israel left in haste and there wasn't enough time for the dough to rise. Bitter herbs were eaten to remind Jews of their slavery. The wine was simply the staple drink of the time.

When Jesus chose elements for the 'new' Passover meal of the church, He did not choose lamb, though it was the main item of the Passover meal. That's because He Himself was/is the lamb that takes away the sin of the world and there is no more need for sacrifice. Instead, He chooses the staples of food and beverage—the bread and the wine, to convey that Jesus is the staple food and drink for believers.

The Passover was observed in homes by extended families and sometimes neighbours got together if the number in one family was too small for a whole lamb. It did not need a priest's presence or function. That was how Jesus observed it with His followers. It happened in the upper room (guest room) of a friend's home, with just His disciples. When the early church commemorated the Lord's Supper, it took place from "house to house" (Acts 2:46). It was done

in the course of a full meal (1 Cor 11:17–22). And, of course, there was no clergy performing rituals, because it happened from "house to house" and at that time other than the apostles there were no functionaries. Clearly, 12 apostles were not enough to minister in the homes of 3,000 plus people (Acts 2:41).

The Passover feast was an aid to memory. It was to serve as a reminder to the Jews that God had liberated them from slavery. So too, communion serves as a memory aid. After all, the Lord's emphasis was, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22:19).

NO TRANSUBSTANTIATION

The big question is, what did Jesus mean, when He gave out the bread saying, "This is my body" and passed around the cup of wine saying, "This is my blood". It was in 1215 that the doctrine of transubstantiation was adopted and it has consciously or subconsciously dominated how communion is viewed.

When the Reformation happened in the 16th century, the reformers concluded that the idea of transubstantiation was heretical. Martin Luther, wanting to hold on to the idea of the real presence of Jesus in the communion elements, came up with consubstantiation—the notion that the body and blood of Jesus co-exist with the bread and the wine. This is just splitting hairs. Any idea that miraculously the body of Jesus is in the bread of communion and the blood in the wine (or, grape juice) is nonsensical and heresy.

At the Last Supper, Jesus was present in person. He was not in the bread and wine that He distributed to the disciples. He plainly could not have meant that the bread they were eating had become His body. If that was what He meant, then there was Jesus in the body and Jesus was also embodied (incarnated) in the bread and the blood. We certainly do not believe that.

So, what did He mean by saying that it was His body? It was symbolism. Jesus also said that He was the door/gate (Jn 10:9) and the way (14:6) and the vine (15:1). No one thinks that Jesus is a wooden door that swings on hinges, or that He is a road to walk on, or that He has branches growing out of His body. In

the same way, when He said, "I am the Bread of Life" (6:48) He didn't mean that He has to be eaten. So what Jesus was saying was that the bread was to be taken as representative of Him, when He would not be with them.

Jesus was saying, "I am yours. I am your sustenance." That is exactly what He said when He said He was the Bread of Life: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty...Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (vv. 35, 51). The Jews protested and asked how Jesus could give them His flesh to eat (v.52). Jesus responded: "Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me" (v.57). This is similar to Him saying that believers need to be branches of Him as the vine: "Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me, you can do nothing" (15:4–5). No Christian thinks that he or she has literally become a vine branch. If you have not turned into wood, why would you think that the bread has become the body of Christ?

When Jesus passed the cup, He said that the cup was "the

“We do not eat the body of Christ or drink the blood of Christ with our mouths. It is all a matter of the heart. It’s all about receiving Him in our hearts.”

blood of the New Covenant poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt 26:28), He was claiming that He had replaced the lamb of the Passover meal and the Old Covenant. We just need to live worthily, with an awareness of the high price paid for our redemption (1 Cor 6:19–20; 1 Pet 1:17–19).

DISCERNING THE BODY

The confusion has arisen because of what Paul said about partaking worthily at communion and “discerning the body” of the Lord (1 Cor 11: 27–29). We need to understand the context of 1 Corinthians. It was a letter written in reply to questions and issues that were raised by people at Corinth. So whatever Paul wrote about communion had to do with what was happening at Corinth.

It was a full meal to which people brought food from their homes. There were rich and poor in the church. The rich would bring delicacies and dainties (like *biryani*). The poor could bring only regular, plain food (like rice and *dal*). When it was time to share in communion, the rich would rush to the table because they felt that if they let the poor get ahead of them they would eat all the good stuff and they themselves would have to eat what the poor had brought to the table. While the rich would be full and even drunk, the poor would still be hungry at communion (vv. 21–22). This was the unworthy way in which they were observing the Lord’s Supper. They were failing to discern the Body of Christ—those in communion with them. That this is what Paul meant is apparent from the fact that he talked only of discerning the body and not of discerning the blood (v.29), and he referred to the consecrated bread as “bread”, not “the body” (v.27). In the very next chapter, Paul referred to the church as the Body of Christ, and talked of people as “members one of another”.

In summary, what Paul said about communion was:

- Share in communion as a way of proclaiming the sacrifice of Christ (v.26)
- Discern the Body of Christ, His people (v. 29; 12:12, 27)
- Wait for each other so that there is togetherness in communion (v. 33).

You see communion is not at all about the bread and the wine. It is all about Jesus Himself. Thomas Cranmer, the first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, though notorious for having sided with Henry VIII in the matter of his multiple divorces and remarriages, later on, leaned more and more toward Protestantism, and was instrumental in placing the English Bible in churches and drew up the *Book of Common Prayer*. Cranmer captured the essence of communion when he wrote, “Feed on Him in your heart, by faith, with thanksgiving... Drink this in remembrance that Christ’s blood was shed for you, and be thankful.” We do not eat the body of Christ or drink the blood of Christ with our mouths. It is all a matter of the heart. It’s all

about receiving Him in our hearts.

Have you ever wondered why Paul, when writing about the Last Supper, mentioned the betrayal by Judas (v. 23)? Sure, the betrayal happened that very night, but it had nothing to do with the Last Supper. The reason Paul referred to the betrayal was to say that when communion is not done right, we re-enact the betrayal and not the Last Supper. What was Judas guilty of that night as he sat down with the others for communion? First, he wasn’t thinking of Jesus. His mind was on getting out and betraying Jesus. Second, he broke fellowship and left—to betray. Those are still the issues when we have communion: being in a relationship with Jesus because without that we would not think of Jesus, and being in relationship with the others at communion.



DID
Jesus

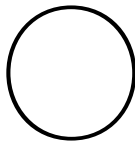
CLEANSE THE TEMPLE OR CURSE IT?

IN CLEANING THE TEMPLE, JESUS PROPHESED WITH DIVINE
AUTHORITY THE END OF AN ELABORATE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM AND
MADE CLEAR THAT ACCESS TO GOD WAS NOW AVAILABLE TO ALL
THROUGH HIM ALONE



Jacob Cherian teaches New Testament at Southern Asia Bible College, Bangalore

“So, in a sense, nothing was cleaned up. Instead, this action accelerated the Jewish overlords’ plan to eliminate Jesus. **They rightly understood that his actions posed a threat to the whole Jewish religious hierarchy.**”



One of the Holy Week events which all the four Gospels enact is the explosive scene in the Jerusalem temple.

The humble Jesus, meek-and-mild, who rode into Jerusalem on a lowly donkey, appears to have been suddenly transformed into a whip-wielding angry prophet.

The patient teacher from Nazareth is furious. The veins on his temple are bulging as he upturns tables and packs off the avaricious money changers with loud authoritative commands and wild gesticulations of his whip—all the while shouting words of prophetic Scripture.

What was he doing, for God’s sake?

What was he saying?

What was the meaning of all this commotion?

From childhood, this story is etched in our minds; commonly referred to as “the cleansing of the temple”. That’s how most headings in modern Bibles speak of this incident.

Some of us would find an excuse for our outbursts of so-called righteous anger in this solitary story. (Can’t I also lose my temper, once in a while, when even Jesus lost it, big time?) ➡

“... DON'T MISS THE WAY MARK 11 TELLS THE STORY... MARK INTENDS FOR HIS READERS TO THINK OF THE TWO EVENTS—THE CURSING OF THE FIG TREE AND THE PROPHETIC ACTION IN THE TEMPLE—AS ONE COMPOUND REALITY. JESUS HAD PROPHETICALLY CURSED THE TEMPLE!”

So, what did Jesus actually do?

How should we understand this event in the Holy Week?

First, we could begin by brushing aside the traditional heading (“cleansing/clearing”). Why? Simple. It is not original to the text. These headings in our Bibles (here and elsewhere) are not assigned by the Gospel writers; they are a matter of tradition. And traditions, by their very nature, are not *always* good or the best.

Second, Jesus’s actions were limited to a small section of the outer courts, frequented by the Gentiles. And for all the drama and commotion, the exploitative money changers and traders, who were caught off guard that day, were surely back the next, ready with reinforcements in case ‘that Jesus guy’ came around again.

So, in a sense, nothing was cleaned up. Instead, this action accelerated the Jewish overlords’ plan to eliminate Jesus. They rightly understood that his actions posed a threat to the whole Jewish religious hierarchy.

Third, we are pointed to the powerful significance of this

action when we heed Jesus’s words.

Jesus claimed that he was in his Father’s temple; hence, he had divine authority to set things right.

Among other things, he quoted Isaiah 56:7 (“My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations”) and Jeremiah 7:11 (“You are making it ‘a den of robbers’”).

All the three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 21, Mark 11 and Luke 19) mention these two texts. (We will come to John’s Gospel in a bit.)

Notice, that in Matthew and Mark there is another story linked to this temple action: the cursing of the fig tree. In Matthew, it follows soon after the temple drama.

But don’t miss the way Mark 11 tells the story: this is one hugely significant “Markan sandwich”. The story of the Temple action is sandwiched between the narrative of Jesus “cursing” the fig tree (Mark 11, verses 12–14 + 15–19 + 20–21). Mark intends for his readers to think of the two events—the cursing of the fig tree and the prophetic action in the temple—as one compound reality.

Jesus had prophetically cursed the temple!

Yes, instead of “cleaning” it for future use, he had pronounced God’s judgement on it and prophesied the end of this elaborate religious system!

Then, a few days later, Jesus died on the cross. This time God performed an arresting act: the thick temple curtain, that separated the most holy place from the rest of the temple, was torn, from top to bottom (Mark 15:38).

In essence, God said: “Enough of this drama in this temple. Sadly, its purpose is over.”

Again, remind yourself that when Jeremiah pronounced the words recorded in Jer 7:11, he was prophesying doom on Jerusalem. He was foretelling the destruction of the temple and the city by the Babylonians. That tragic event came to pass. Jesus chose those very words of Jeremiah.

Luke records in the previous passage (19:41–44) that Jesus foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem, and wept. In true prophetic posture, by his dramatic act, Jesus pronounced the doom of this whole temple establishment that had miserably failed God's ultimate intention—to be a house of prayer for all nations. Like that fig tree, the temple would soon wither away.

So, what about the temple of God?

Here John is helpful, though different from the other three Gospels. John forefronts this story (John 2: 13–25). John is not that interested in mere chronology; however, this does not mean, as some have mistakenly held, that there were two such dramatic actions.

The disciples remembered the burning zeal of Jesus (Psalm 68:9: “The zeal for your house will consume me”). They might as well have remembered other biblical texts, such as Malachi 3:1 (“Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come” says the Lord Almighty.)

Then Jesus speaks enigmatically about his death and resurrection—about destroying the “temple” of his body and that he would be raised in three days (2:19–22). The obvious derision and questioning that followed are understandable.

The Jerusalem temple was to be no more, forever! The Temple that was dedicated with great fanfare by Solomon, destroyed by the Babylonians, and later slowly rebuilt after the exile, was in Jesus's time quite a magnificent sight (see the awestruck disciples in Mark 13:1). This great monument was soon to be no more. Its fate was sealed! And the Roman armies under general Titus smothered Jerusalem and rubbished it in AD 70.

John is clearly pointing to this amazing truth: Jesus now takes the place of the temple. Access to God is now available to all people through the Lord Jesus Christ. What a seismic transition!

Later, when Jerusalem was celebrating the rededication of the temple (John 10:22, 36), Jesus points to himself as the one the Father had dedicated. For the Father, the celebration around the building of the Jerusalem paled in comparison to how Heaven viewed Jesus.

We can now enter the presence of God through the sacrificial death of Jesus, the Lamb of God. And wonder of wonders: the apostle Paul reminds the believers at Corinth that they, as a

gathered congregation, were the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16–17). [For those who may not have caught it, this passage in context (unlike 6:19), is not about the “body” of the believer but the church.]

So, we should not be surprised, when we read that in our future destination, “the new heaven and new earth”, there is no temple (Rev 21:22). Why would you need one when the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are present?

What a great and glorious salvation is now freely offered to all people!

A PERFECT GIFT FOR YOUR RELATIVES IN INDIA

Sending a gift magazine subscription is



EASY!

www.ctrendsmag.com



CHURCH ORDINANCES –
AN IMPETUS FOR
EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS



Julian Panga serves in pastoral ministry and theological training. He has an M.Tech. from RMIT University, Melbourne, and an M.Div. from SAIACS, Bangalore.

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER SET US, THE BODY OF CHRIST, APART FROM THE WORLD BUT NOT WITHOUT REMINDING US THAT THERE ARE MANY WHO HAVE NOT GIVEN THEIR LIVES TO CHRIST YET

B

aptism

and the Lord's Supper are ordinances that have been given by God to the covenant community of believers in the local church. They are not mere rituals or traditions lacking meaning or significance. In fact, they have been given as distinguishing marks of the church and for her growth and maturity. Baptism is a church ordinance which has a two-fold purpose—it allows a believer of Christ, to make a public confession of an inward faith

and profession of union with Christ. It also allows the church to affirm this person's understanding of the Gospel and welcome him or her to covenant fellowship through church membership. Communion is a church ordinance, by which believers who are part of that covenant community in a local church, gather together and partake of the communion emblems—the bread and the cup, remembering Jesus's sacrifice whilst proclaiming his death and resurrection until he comes again.

Jesus Christ, the founder and foundation of the church, did not ordain these ordinances as a means of salvation because if he did, then Christianity would become a religion of works. The basic tenet of the Christian faith is that of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone. We who place our faith in Christ, practise these ordinances not as a means of salvation or gaining merit with God, but rather because we have already received the free gift of salvation through grace. So, we can say that Baptism and the Lord's supper are an outcome of conversion and show evidence of faith, obedience and submission to God. ➡

“WE WHO PLACE OUR FAITH IN CHRIST, PRACTISE THESE ORDINANCES NOT AS A MEANS OF SALVATION OR GAINING MERIT WITH GOD, BUT RATHER BECAUSE WE HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED THE FREE GIFT OF SALVATION THROUGH GRACE.”

When we look at the biblical basis for Baptism in the New Testament, we see that this is something Jesus himself modelled for us. Although, he did not need to be baptised because he was sinless and needed no forgiveness from God, he chose to be baptised willingly to fulfil God's purposes (Matt 3:13–17). If Jesus himself chose to go through the act of baptism, how much more should we, who are sinners by nature and choice and needing God's mercy and forgiveness, follow him in that act of baptism. In Acts 2:38, Apostle Peter tells the crowd gathered in Jerusalem to repent and be baptised for the forgiveness of sins. Romans 6:4 says that through the act of baptism and being immersed in the water, we symbolically show how we have died to our sinful life, and the act of coming out of the water symbolises being raised with Christ from death, having received a new and transformed life in and through Him.

The danger, however, is that one could go through the waters of baptism and even make a public confession yet remain unchanged in their heart. Baptism, therefore, has to be a definite and determined step of obedience even as one publicly confesses before God and in the presence of the church that he/she has died to their old life and has begun a new life through faith in Christ. As believers, our ongoing mandate found in the Great Commission, is to

make disciples of people, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey all of God's commands. To this end, Baptism is an oath of initiation into membership in the covenant community of the body of Christ—the local church. The Lord's Supper is an oath of renewal by which we commit ourselves anew to Christ and his new covenant.

So, what do these ordinances achieve for the believer who is part of the church? First, they bring about unity among the members of the church around a common pivot point—the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It reminds us that we are sinners and deserving recipients of God's wrath and judgement. However, Christ demonstrated his love for us and died for us (Rom 5:8) and made a way for us to be reconciled to the Father. We are now adopted into his family (Ephesians 1:5), children of God and co-heirs with Christ (Rom 8:16–17; 1 Jn 3:1). Second, it also seeks to bring about sanctity and purity in the body of Christ. Baptism is a means of a believer professing his/her faith in Christ and the church's affirmation of the same. One who is baptised is admitted into covenant membership into the local church and shares in the covenant with every other believer in the church. They now have a God-given responsibility to care for and protect the local church from false teaching, heresy and division and to keep the bride of Christ pure, undefiled and blameless. Third, it separates the church from the world. We are no longer part of the world neither do we think or act like the world does. We who are washed clean, sanctified and purified in the blood of Jesus, have been set apart and have become holy unto the Lord (1 Peter 2:9). Fourth, it preserves the church from those with ungodly and sinful behaviour. Through the biblical mandate of church discipline (Matthew 16:13–20; 18:15–20; 1 Cor 5:1–5), the responsibility for admonition, correction, rebuke and reproof is rightly brought back into the hands of the covenanted body of Christ in the local church. Finally, it builds fellowship, accountability and deep relationship with each other. The act of affirming one's faith and understanding of the Gospel and their consequent acceptance into the church family, is a sign of

solidarity and oneness that the Gospel alone brings. Our responsibility for spiritual maturity no longer is in our own striving as individuals, but the onus is on the whole body growing and maturing the whole body (Ephesians 4:12,16).

However, we see that in many churches around the world, these ordinances are seen as mere traditions and practised ritualistically. Baptism often becomes a means to bolstering church membership without confirming one's inner conversion and profession of true faith. The outward confession of faith becomes a mere show to gain church membership or some privileges from the local church. The true understanding of these ordinances and their practise is incorrectly understood and there is a lot of ignorance and confusion about it within the body of Christ.

In a country like India and in many other countries in the world, where Christianity is a minority religion, a temptation for churches and mission agencies is to compel a believer to get baptised without correctly assessing true conversion. Such unbiblical methods may put numbers on a missionary's report or names on a church's membership roll but would fail to add them to the Kingdom of God. It would create a Christianity that is a mile wide, but only an inch deep. Such people will be drawn into the church, not by devotion, love and surrender but through a desire for power, fame and popularity. Many are drawn in by prosperity teaching and some others for signs and miracles and to experience their best life now. These wrong motives create consumeristic and superficial Christians and not self-denying, cross-carrying, totally surrendered disciples of Jesus. The sad reality is that there are many who recant their faith or get shaken up by the storms of life.

A deep-seated, biblically authentic understanding of Baptism and the Lord's Supper that comes about through a faithful exposition of God's word, creates a passionate impetus for mission and evangelism. Even as we consider that the mandate to baptise is part of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), we must strive to keep that mission at the forefront of our minds and priorities. Each time we see baptisms happening in the local church, it is a reminder that this is God's redemptive and transformative work in people's lives. We who have been given this commission to evangelise and make disciples of all nations should take that privilege seriously. And as believers who participate in the Lord's Supper, we

ought to be reminded that we who have received forgiveness of sin and the hope of an abundant life with God, should move out of our comfort zone, knowing there are many who have not given their lives to Christ and put their faith and trust in Him yet. There are many who are not part of the covenant community within the local church and each time we participate in these ordinances, God's love and burden for the lost should become ours, and motivate us to continue to share the good news with greater passion and a sense of urgency.

When effective discipleship happens, baptisms follow and when baptisms occur, converts are added to the local church and the church grows in its health and vision. Those who are welcomed in can participate in these ordinances and remember Christ's sacrifice and lift their hearts to him in love and adoration. The outcome is the worship of God in spirit and truth. It is high time that local churches everywhere, resist the forces that seek to divide and destroy them and be united in the right understanding and biblically faithful practice of these church ordinances and even as they do, let it be a stark reminder of the need for urgent mobilisation of resources and people for the cause of the Great Commission and its grand realisation. Let's pray to the Lord of the harvest so that he can give us a greater vision and desire that we disciple and mature people, baptise them and invite them to fellowship around the Lord's table and by doing that we are fulfilling God's Kingdom mandate and bringing glory and honour to Him and Him alone.

**"BAPTISM OFTEN BECOMES
A MEANS TO BOLSTERING
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP WITHOUT
CONFIRMING ONE'S INNER
CONVERSION AND PROFESSION
OF TRUE FAITH."**

RAVI ZACHARIAS: DEFENDER OF FAITH

A PASTOR REMEMBERS HOW THE SERMONS OF RAVI ZACHARIAS
CHANGED A 'BELIEVABLE LIE' IN HIS ONCE-DOUBTING MIND INTO
AN 'UNBELIEVABLE TRUTH'



Akshay Rajkumar is an author, publisher and pastor of a church in South Delhi. He studied literature in Delhi University and theology in Singapore Bible College. He has lived in Delhi since 1983.

"In Ravi's voice, I heard a confident, competent humility that was driven by love. In his vision, **I saw a credible Christianity that was simply captivating.**"

I was walking down a street in Singapore during my final year of Bible college when I noticed a peculiarly tall person with silver-grey hair walk past me through the crowd. It took me a moment to realise who it was and then a few more to believe it. I turned around and followed him cautiously to confirm my suspicion, caught up to him, and tapped him on the shoulder. He turned around and I asked him a silly question, "Are you Ravi Zacharias?"

Many years earlier, I was an evangelist's son wondering why I was a Christian and whether there was any truth to the Bible and its Jesus. Most Christianity seemed to me



“Ravi’s gift was a fruit of the grace of God matched with **the difficult, disciplined work of study.**”

not much more than spiritual sloganeering, motivational inspiration and heightened sensation. I could see there was goodness in its morals, wisdom in its principles and soundness in its teaching but none of that meant it was true.

I remember hearing my first sermon on the uniqueness of Christ, on my walkman in Delhi: a lecture by Sunder Krishnan, brother-in-law to Ravi Zacharias. I learned his [Ravi Zacharias] ministry’s RZIM library was a few minutes’ walk from my home. Every afternoon I would go and borrow a cassette, listen to the sermon and wallow in the wonder of the Gospel, repeating the process until I had exhausted their catalogue and had no choice but to go through it again.

In Ravi’s voice, I heard a confident, competent humility that was driven by love. In his vision, I saw a credible Christianity that was simply captivating. It was Ravi’s sermons that first showed me Jesus is not a believable lie. He is an unbelievable truth.

I was learning the truth could be *tested* but it was more than knowledge, the truth could be *trusted* because it was a person, and the truth could be *tasted* because it was a person who knew my name and had called me by name. I was learning the

Jesus of the Bible is not simply true, He’s good and beautiful—a taste of heaven for the meek of the earth.

At the time, I was a university student being told religion was about thought control and if I thought any differently I was under its control. Far from learning how to think, I was being told what to think. It was Ravi’s sermons that first showed me how to think and that I could think boldly, freely and curiously about God because He loved to spend time with His students.

Later, I found myself with speaking and preaching opportunities with questioners in university dorm rooms. I modelled myself after Ravi, to a fault. His stories were captivating. I told them. His arguments were compelling. I used them. His love, humility and compassion were genuine. I couldn’t fake them.

The fruit of the righteous is often more attractive than the root of the righteous. I had to find my own voice. Ravi’s gift was a fruit of the grace of God matched with the difficult, disciplined work of study. To this study, I devoted myself and went to Bible college in Singapore to prepare for a life in ministry.

When I met him on the street in Singapore, I told him of the impact his preaching had on my heart, how it sealed my faith in Christ and drew me to be equipped for a life in ministry. He received my gratitude with humility and found a way to give me a compliment. He was kind to a student. From what I know, he was always that way.

His legacy will not simply be his preaching but his example, followed by thousands upon thousands worldwide who continue to be charged to keep on keeping on until we finish our own race.

Ravi’s passing was neither sudden nor a shock. For this, I am grateful. In India, often when someone leaves the country to go abroad, the whole family goes to the airport to bid them a tearful goodbye. In the

past few weeks, his global church family was graciously given the chance to pray, to give thanks, and to say goodbye. But no amount of gratitude we had a chance to give him will match the welcome he has received from His Lord.

In one of his sermons, Ravi tells of the grief he felt when his mother passed away. He went to pray, and one word consumed his thoughts, “Gone. Gone. Gone.” He told of how God spoke to him then as if to say, “If you’re going to carry on this way, at least have the courtesy to complete the thought: “Gone, where?”

We grieve because Ravi is gone. But we rejoice because we know where he has gone—to his mother, to his father,

to his friends who went before him, to his faith heroes whose friendship he now enjoys, and to his Lord who chose him for Himself, kept him in Himself and has called him to Himself. Through the testimony of his own preaching, how well we now know this story is not a believable lie; it’s an unbelievable truth. The story is beautiful, the story is good, and the story is true.

(This article was originally published by Religion Unplugged)



City of Magic – Part XIV

**CHALLENGE: CAN YOU DECODE
THE HIGHLIGHTED WORDS?**





Domenic Marbaniang teaches at Hong Kong Baptist University. He is married to Goosie and they are blessed with two children, Jeremiah and Joanne.

SOPHIA,

THE OUTCASTE

A PROPHET, A BLIND MAGICIAN, HIS CHEERFUL BROTHER AND A LADY EVADING ARREST; READ THIS EPISODE TO SEE WHERE AND HOW THESE CHARACTERS LEAD THE PROTAGONIST IN HIS JOURNEY

I found myself in a wet, dark, chill, lonely street. The clouds above growled in anger dropping cold perspiration down on us.

“That was a narrow one, isn’t it?” I heard a familiar voice. I turned around and saw the little murmuring man that I had seen earlier. He now had a pleasant face and his hair was groomed well backwards. ➡

"Who are you?" I asked.

"My name is Seer," he replied. "They also call me **Prophet**. I've stayed behind to only let you know that it will not be long hence. Your liberation draws closer. I've only come to prepare the way. When the One is come, then you shall see the light."

"What shall I do now?" I asked.

"Keep walking. Keep moving until the coming of the One and the Great Battle of the Day!" he said.

"How long... how long shall I have to wait?" I asked, but at that moment he zoomed out of sight like a TV tube switching off, without waiting to hear, leaving behind a deep and hollow darkness.

I looked right and saw a dim light at a distance. I began walking in its direction. Now, as I walked I felt that I was being followed by someone behind. So, I turned back, but I found no one. So, I strolled on. But, the sense of being followed grew greater; so, I stopped again and turned behind staring into the dark, hoping to catch some form. But, I found none.

"What's wrong?" Inno gently asked.

"Nothing," I replied.

"Then why do you stop?"

"I thought there might be something behind us."

"I can hear some sound... tap..tap."

"Yes, let's go," I replied and walked hurriedly towards the dim light ahead. But, the faster I moved, the faster did the sounds of the tapping and the footsteps increase from behind. We reached the end of the alley, crossed the road and stood there waiting for the next.

A decent looking man wearing dark glasses emerged out of the darkness. He looked harmless, yet aggressive at the same time. He walked with a lifted head, his chest thrust forward, and held a walking stick in his hand, which I surmised to be the source of the tapping sound. He walked groping for the ground; by which I discerned that he must be blind. He held an umbrella open in his other hand, which did slow his motion.

He crossed the road and came to where we were.

"Who is he?" Inno asked.

"Oh, so there's really someone there?" he remarked. "A sweet little one, I presume. And who is your friend there?"

"I'm her uncle, Sir... just two of us here. It does seem to be a rather very lonely road," I answered.

"Yes, it is. All the citizens were summoned to the Gula's Banquet, you know. She has arranged a magnificent treat for her subjects; so, they have all herded to stomach as much as they can... By the way, if you haven't got an umbrella, please do come under mine."

"Thanks," I replied as we slipped under it, "Are you on way to there?"

"Yes. I just stayed back because I didn't want anybody to feel I was dependent. Once I knew they were all gone, I started on."

"Do you think you'd find the way?"

"No problem. My brother, Sensus will soon be here to pick me in his car. We have a programme there together anyway." He smiled. Then, turning half-way towards me, he continued, "I haven't introduced myself. My name is Imagination or Imagino in short, and I'm a magician by profession here. The people of this district are horribly given to surfeiting; so, I recently came up with a magical invention that would cure their surfeiting by means of magical surfing. A pouch of this powder added to any dainty brings all the power of it to sublime effect; for, what kind of experience is there more magical than that of devouring, for certainly in it is the entirety of experience realised.... Ah! A man would give up any pleasure for the pleasure of the perfect bite...., the smell of sourness that makes your tongue run its water down; the sight of the hot sweet that makes you forgetful of all promises ever; the touch of delicacy with the finger, the lips, the tongue; the insatiable taste of every serve; the sound of the gulp, bite, and the crunch... Truly, eating makes the perfect man!" I wondered that a blind man could speak like that. But, then I remembered that in the world where I had come there were some blind men who had been the best poets indeed.

As he was speaking, a car arrived and the driver, whom I instantly could recognise as his brother, called out with a large brimming smile, "Bellies for berries and berries for bellies, Imagino... Is there anything else worthwhile?"

"Chilies for cherries and cherries for chilies, Sensus... That will make it quite worthwhile,"

Imagino shouted back and they laughed together. Then, Imagino turned to me, "My brother Sensus prepares a special drink which he calls *Black Berry Beer*. When I add my magical powder called *Chilled Chilly Cheer* to it, it suddenly bursts into colors, which though I can't see, I quite visibly know, for my vision has greater power than those who aren't blind. You should see it when it happens. **Drink that and the rest is ecstasy.**"

"What kind of ecstasy? Do you know that?"

"Well," Sensus interrupted, "It helps one see things with closed eyes, you know."

"You mean just like in a dream?" I asked.

"What is that?" Sensus asked back, a bit puzzled.

"I mean they can see, eat, drink and enjoy things that aren't really out there," I mumbled.

"Well, how do you know they aren't really out there when you really enjoy them," Imagino countered.

"And, how do you know what you're enjoying now is more real than what you enjoy then," Sensus asked.

"You spend money for what you eat now; but, you perhaps don't for the other," I answered.

"That's it! That's it!" Sensus burst into laughter, growing red and pointing his finger at me. Then, he chuckled and added, "So, that's what you call a dream, ha! But, well you do have to spend you know, for they get to eat all those things in their "dream" because they pay us for having it earlier, you see," he raised

**"THE
HEAVENS
ABOVE
ROARED AND
BURNED
AFLAME.
I HAD
FORGOTTEN
THAT
I ONCE
KNEW
THE
STARRY
SKY.
THIS
CITY
HAD
NONE."**

his brow in a you-see-how-intelligent-I-am way, "It's like pay before you eat; and we profit thereby!" He laughed again. He certainly seemed to have a remarkable sense of fun. I wondered what it meant to have a dream within a dream. So, they sell dreams, I thought.

"Are you coming with us?" Sensus asked.

"Yes, aren't you coming with us?" Imagino joined in.

"No," I replied, "We are in a hurry to meet someone." I certainly wished to stay away from any more dreamy entanglements.

"Oh, you shouldn't miss our first shot..." Imagino sighed; then, handing over the umbrella into my hands, he said, "Okay, keep this one. You'll need this. May be, I'll get it back from you later on..." he said, "if we meet!" He got into the car and they grunted off leaving a smoky trail behind.

The heavens above roared and burned aflame. I had forgotten that I once knew the starry sky. This City had none. There was a sparkling train of flashing lightning and a loud peal of crackling thunder. Inno clutched me hard, as I pinned myself against the wall. A blue-white spark of fire fell right in front of us, but was absorbed immediately by the lamp pole nearby. The lamp burst and fell to the ground. A dim light flickered from a cleaving between the stones in the lower side of the wall. I bent down and touched the part and was amazed to find that the whole block of stones felt as if it could be moved. I tapped the place with the umbrella and heard a hollow resound. I put Inno down and tried to remove the block. It shook a bit and then was off. A dim light lit the room inside. It seemed that this was a room without a door, walled over, with only the camouflage of a stone tiled plank as the way in and out.

Suddenly, from the other side of the road I heard the sound of someone running. There were some men shouting aloud, "That way! That way!" and I heard hasty footsteps rushing towards us. It suddenly hit me that I was probably spotted by them. Quickly, I placed Inno in and entered the room; then, turning over, I drew the tile and shut it hard. I didn't want the light inside to spill of the gaps gathering suspicion in the dark; so, I turned off the lamp. Just then, in a thud, the tile pulled out and something crawled in pulling the tile on again in the swiftest agility.

Hurried steps followed and stood out. “She was just here!” one man shouted. “Disappeared in the dark!” another cried. “Divide the search!” one called. They divided and we heard the footsteps fade away.

“Stay where you are and move not an inch!” the voice of a lady commanded us. I held Inno tightly. An orange rod glowed slowly in her hands softly lighting the room. “Don’t move,” she repeated as she crossed over and switched on the light. The room had one chair, one table, and one bed. The lady we had just now encountered looked young and strong. Her face bore the marks of intense thoughtfulness. She removed her coat and, as she hung it on the back of the chair, I noticed that she wore a blue checkered shirt and a pair of navy blue trousers. She gave a quick glance at us, then sat on the chair. The room evidently belonged to her.

“What are you both doing here?” she asked, with an air of indifference.

“We got caught in the rain and, seeing the tile pull off and the light burn, we crept in to save our heads.”

“I see,” she noted. There was disbelief and apathy in her tone. “That was quick,” she said, “and, you already even seemed to have found some friends here. Isn’t friendliness quite incredible when showed by the blind?”

I was shocked. How did she

know that I had met Imagino? Did she also know anything more? She seemed to have noticed my consternation and answered it, “The umbrella... it is not something that is usually stolen; of course, it was lent and lent by the blind Imagino, for it belongs to him. Also, you haven’t been quite drenched; so, you’ve not been long in the rain. Apart from that, I am intrigued that you had to turn the lamp off.” She looked piercingly in my eyes.

“It.. it,” I was trying to reply something yet unknown when Inno interrupted: “We’re looking for my Mommy and Daddy,” she said. Some people had been trying to hurt us, so we must hide. Do you know where they are? Can you help us?”

The lady’s eyes turned to her and now I saw her face grow soft. “Come here child,” she said in a gentle voice. Inno ran towards her. “So, you’re the two escapees,” she remarked at me, though looking at Inno and smoothing her hair.

“Yes,” I mumbled hesitatingly.

“I am **Sophia**, the sister of Imagino and Sensus,” she said, “and, I am an outcaste of this City. Hamartia tried to use me at first to develop schemes of words against the One. She even got Imagino and Sensus fully on her side. Imagino is now her Chief Magical Advisor and Sensus is the Palatial Pleasure Advisor of Sarx. However, when I found that what Hamartia required was something against my very self—I couldn’t do it without contradicting myself—I refused. So, she commissioned Adikia, the Commander of the Armies of Injustice, to imprison me in the Dark Island inside Superbia. Adikia was on way to arrest me, when I managed to get away from Superbia and hide here in Gula. I am one of the enemies of the State.”

“Her mother’s name is Piety, and her father’s name is Faith,” I explained about Inno.

Sophia gave a startled look. Then, looking again at Inno, she said, “I saw them when they were brought to trial. It was a mockery. There is nothing called a trial here; it is just a one-sided game. The aim is annihilation.” She knew that Inno wouldn’t understand the terms.

**“JUST THEN,
IN A THUD,
THE TILE
PULLED
OUT AND
SOMETHING
CRAWLED
IN PULLING
THE TILE ON
AGAIN IN THE
SWIFTEST
AGILITY.
HURRIED
STEPS
FOLLOWED
AND STOOD
OUT. “SHE
WAS JUST
HERE!”
ONE MAN
SHOUTED.”**

“Where do we find them now?” I asked.

But, she had stood up, and placing Inno down, rushed towards me, snatched the umbrella off my hands and opened it. It was quickly examined, then placed on the table. She pulled her coat on; then, motioning us to be silent made signs for us to move out. “You must be tired; take some rest!” she said. She killed the lamp and we were out on the pavement, right across the road, and dashing off. From a distance, we heard the grunts of vehicles. We stopped and looked. They were on the spot of the room we had just left. A little examination by the agents and soon the tile was ripped and officers were inside.

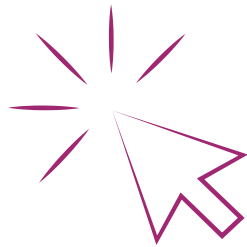
“Friendliness is not always the signature of a friend,” Sophia quipped as we rushed on and off the scene. The umbrella was a trap.

We hadn’t moved more than a few meters ahead when we realised that the trap was an insidiously well-managed one.

The headlights of two trucks and six motorbikes suddenly appeared from a turn ahead. They were closing in at a rapid pace. We looked back and saw that the road had been blocked by the officers. I was looking at the angry sky and wondering. Suddenly, there was a clanking sound and I was pulled down along with Inno.

Decoders:

1 Pet 1:10
Prov 20:1
Prov 1:20
Psalm 41:9



are you a

- CHURCH
- CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION
- CHRISTIAN BUSINESS
- CHRISTIAN ORGANISATION

ADVERTISE WITH ONE OF THE
FASTEST GROWING CHRISTIAN MAGAZINES

Christian Trends

ENGAGE • ENTHRAL • ENLIGHTEN

www.ctrendsmag.com

[email:info@ctrendsmag.com](mailto:info@ctrendsmag.com)



Communion: Not a ritual, but reminder of Christ's covenant

JESUS SHOULD BE FOREMOST IN OUR THOUGHTS WHEN WE PARTAKE OF HIS BODY AND HIS BLOOD; THIS FELLOWSHIP NOT ONLY SYMBOLISES THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS THROUGH JESUS' SACRIFICE BUT IT ALSO REMINDS US TO TREAT OTHER PEOPLE THE WAY WE WERE TREATED BY HIM



John Lathrop is a graduate of Zion Bible College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and is an ordained minister with the International Fellowship for Christian Assemblies. He has written for a number of Christian publications and has authored several books.

In most Christian churches, regardless of their denominational affiliation, you will find that two ordinances are observed. I am speaking here about water baptism and communion. Biblically speaking, both are for believers, that is, those who have personally placed their faith in Jesus Christ. Usually, a person is baptised in water only once, however, one may partake of communion many times in the course of his or her Christian life. The frequency with which a person partakes will, in large measure, be determined by how often it is served in the church that they attend. Some churches serve communion once a month; Christians attending those churches may take communion approximately twelve times in the course of a year. Other churches offer it more frequently: it could be twice a month or every Sunday. The communion part of the service is usually quite solemn. In my experience, it is also very much the same each time it is observed—the same two elements, bread and wine (or grape juice) are used, and the same Scripture is read. Our familiarity with these things may cause us to lose sight of the importance, or significance, of communion. We need to be on our guard that this does not become just a ritual to us.

The ordinance of communion has a direct

connection to Jesus Christ. In three of the gospel accounts, we find the apostles with Jesus when He associated the bread with His body and the wine with His blood (Matt 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20). As you can see the scriptural passages in the previous sentence are very short. When Jesus said these words, He was looking ahead to the cross. There are many significant things that we can glean from the texts mentioned above. First, three times Jesus spoke of the wine, which symbolises His blood, as

“The ordinance of communion has a direct connection to Jesus Christ. In three of the gospel accounts, we find the apostles with Jesus when He associated the bread with His body and the wine with His blood.”

being the blood of a covenant (Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20). This tells us Jesus is involved in an agreement, a strong agreement. Second, in one instance Jesus tells us that His shed blood is “for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt 26:28 NIV). This is in keeping with the scriptural principle that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb 9:22 NIV). Third, in the context of this first communion service in which Jesus took the lead, only *once* did He say that His followers should observe this service in remem-



brance of Him (Luke 22:19). He said this after He gave them the bread. Those who were with Him were specifically told to continue to partake of bread and wine in the future in memory of Him. There was nothing ambiguous about what He said. But was this instruction only for them, or did Jesus intend that others who would come to believe in Him should also continue this practice?

When I was a pastor, at almost every communion service, I read a significant portion of 1 Corinthians 11 (verses 23–32). This was the practice of the church before I

the text, Paul set forth the historical precedent for communion, part of which indicates that communion is to be an ongoing practice of believers, who are to partake of it in remembrance of Jesus (1 Cor 11:24–25), and it is so even until today. The truth of His crucifixion is so vital that we need to be periodically reminded of it. Regularly participating in a communion service will help us do that.

The believers in Corinth were not forgetting to have communion services; they were having them, but they were not behaving properly. One clear thing is that some in the Corinthian church were self-seeking (1 Cor 11:21–22; 33–34). This became evident in their communion service. Paul did not want this situation to continue; he did not want them to go on in their improper behaviour and just partake of the elements. Communion, while it includes the elements, involves more than bread and wine (or grape juice). When we partake of them, we need to look beyond the symbols to the One they represent. Jesus should be foremost in our thoughts. If He is, He will put our hearts and minds in their proper places. The selfish behaviour of some in the church in Corinth was in stark contrast to the selfless love of Jesus that was set forth in His death. Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13 NIV). Jesus certainly did that, but He did much more. He died for sinners, His enemies, including us (Rom 5:8). In fact, He died “for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2 NIV). The apostle John tells us that because of Jesus’ sacrifice we know what love is (1 John 3:16). Communion is a reminder of God’s love for us, the cross is a demonstration of that love (Rom 5:8). At the cross, Jesus took care of our sin problem (Heb 9:28; 1 Pet 2:24) and triumphed over the powers of darkness (Col 2:15). As believers, we are to love the Lord but we are also to love one another: Jesus commanded it (John 13:34). Paul gave the Corinthian church some practical instructions in order to help them show love to one another as they remembered the love that the Lord showed them. Our “remembrance” in communion should include significant contemplation of the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf. But it should also include a consideration of how we treat other people. If we find that our relationship with God or our relationships with other people needs repair, the good news is that the gospel is about reconciliation. Jesus paid the price for it and He can make it real in our experience if we ask Him.

“The truth of His crucifixion is so vital that we need to be periodically reminded of it. Regularly participating in a communion service will help us do that.”

became pastor and I continued it. I Corinthians 11:17–34 is perhaps the most definitive passage to show that communion was practised by believers other than the original apostles. Evidently, Jesus’ directive in Luke 22:19 to “do this in remembrance of me” (NIV) was understood by the early Christians as something to be carried on by all believers everywhere and at every time in history. Now historically we know that Paul was not at what we call “The Last Supper” when Jesus instituted the communion service. Paul was not even a Christian at that time. Yet it is clear from what he wrote that he knew about it because he included some of Jesus’ words at that event in his teaching (1 Cor 11:24–25). He said that the Lord gave him this information (1 Cor 11:23). So, in



Tell your story to life!

HEALTH

Stalked By

SHADOW SELF? STEP INTO LIGHT





Shilpa Waghmare is a counselling psychologist in private practice and is a consultant writer. She is the co-founder of Aarambha, a mental health initiative in Bangalore that exists to provide psychological, emotional and social support through therapy and community-based initiatives. She can be reached at shilpa.r1110@gmail.com

**DO NOT BE DECEIVED BY THE IMPOSTER INSIDE YOU
WHO URGES YOU TO LIVE AN EMOTIONALLY DISHONEST LIFE;
LIVE FOR CHRIST'S AFFIRMATION ALONE**

How do we respond when faced with the imposter, the shadow within us? This semi-autobiographical piece introduces the idea of the shadow self.

I was introduced to the writings of Father Brennan Manning during a difficult period of my life. While reading, I often found myself feeling with both panic and relief, "He gets me! He gets me!" His writings gave me a language to understand myself, a language I was able to embrace as my own.

Fr Manning speaks of the imposter self, the false self, or the shadow self. He describes it as "... the classic co-dependent. To gain acceptance and approval, the false self suppresses or camouflages feelings making emotional honesty impossible. Living out of the false self creates a compulsive desire to present a perfect image to the public so that everybody admires us and nobody will know us. The imposter's life becomes a perpetual rollercoaster ride of elation and depression."

Thomas Merton says, "Every one of us is shadowed by an illusory person, a false self..." My sense is that the false self in each one of us has been called out during this lockdown. The impact of more than 40 days of a national lockdown has been felt without and within. I don't mean just inside the home. I mean within one's self. Our relentless daily routines have stripped us of the awareness of being disintegrated, sinful creatures. Our imposter or 'shadow self' dealt with our anxieties and inadequacies by keeping us knotted up in lesser loves to avoid looking deep within.

A week before the lockdown, I was supposed to fly to New York City, a hotbed of Covid-19. I ➡

**"LIKE ME, DEPRIVED OF YOUR
PERSONAL 'MORPHINES' IN THIS
LOCKDOWN, YOU MAY DISCOVER THAT
IN ALL YOUR YEARS OF RUNNING
AWAY, YOU DID NOT INVEST IN THE
INTERNAL RESOURCES NEEDED TO
FACE YOUR TRUE SELF FRAUGHT WITH
BROKENNESS."**

had spent months in rehearsals and planning for the performances we were to present at New York University. Suddenly, everything came to a grinding halt. From days that packed in more than the hours could handle, I was now looking at an empty calendar and aimless hours. I felt disappointed, helpless, angry and terrified at the stripping away of this familiar construct of life.

This sliver of my life only represented the larger mechanisms by which I managed life, that of making sure that I avoided experiencing those parts of me that I did not want to face. So I made sure I worked hard enough to feel important and useful, socialised enough to feel popular and not face my FOMO (fear-of-missing-out), blended in enough to not be rejected, did enough 'family time' to feel responsible and belonging to some unit, exercised enough to ensure that physical pain replaced emotional pain.

The eminent psychiatrist James F Masterson summed up this approach well: "The false self plays its deceptive role, ostensibly protecting us but doing so in a way that is programmed to keep us fearful of being abandoned, losing support, not being able to cope on our own, not being able to be alone."

I hid my fears of rejection and abandonment behind the masks I put on and the roles I took up. Perhaps you do, too. Work is good. So is socialising, ministry, exercise and family. Morphine is good too. In monitored settings, it is a pain reliever. However, it can become an addiction and make one lose control. The employments of our shadow self are a bit like morphine going wild. What the lockdown has done is to make our personal 'morphines' inaccessible to us.

Like me, deprived of your personal 'morphines' in this lockdown, you may discover that in all your years of running away, you did not invest in the internal resources needed to face your true self

"But I'd rather that you and I fight it out in the presence of Jesus where that demanding, hungry, gaping hole within me will quieten down. Here your unbridled needs will be transformed into a passion for intimacy with Him."

fraught with brokenness. Your energies were instead invested in building the armour that your shadow self told you was needed to get through life. Now, stripped of that armour, you may find yourself quite naked.

With much of my armour stripped away, both the functional and dysfunctional kind, I've tried to stop running away from myself, something I have been aware of doing for the last two decades. Facing my 'naked' true self wasn't pleasant. All I wanted was to hide again, behind unhealthy relationships, hollow affirmations, and empty confidences. I had survived all these years without confronting my shadow self. Urgent whispers of "Slay the shadow!" offered easy ways out. But doing so would be tantamount to killing a part of me.

I am now getting to know my shadow self. I am allowing room for expansion within myself. It makes that gentle yet needed confrontation with myself possible. The natural outflow of this inner expansion would be the gradual integration of my shadow self with my true self. But exploring such intimacy with myself is overwhelming and scary because a loss of intimacy with myself was the price I paid to avoid seeing myself as I am— afraid, vulnerable, weak—and to

avoid feeling rejected. Divorced from the awareness of my needs, feelings, and beliefs, my shadow self could neither be intimate with me nor with another. And, I suspect, not with God either.

As a 'Brennan-inspired' part of that process, I wrote a letter to my shadow self. I share some excerpts from it.

Dear Shadow Self,

I have been trying to disown you from the time I became aware of you. I am truly sorry for this. In disowning you, I disconnected from a part of myself.

You taught me how to survive—thank you! You also taught me to hide myself away, shush my memories, my feelings, my opinions and fit into society like I was expected to. But you've outlived your role. Satisfying your needs surpassed my other allegiances, fidelities and responsibilities. I never confronted you. I just didn't know how to.

But let's slow down now, shall we? Stop running. Let me take you to Jesus. I want us both to coexist in His Presence. To be unknown to Jesus, in Merton's words, is 'altogether too much privacy.'

I know you will start acting out again. You'll resist change. But I'd rather that you and I fight it out in the presence of Jesus where that demanding, hungry, gaping hole within me will quieten down. Here your unbridled needs will be transformed into a passion for intimacy with Him. You will discover that He is enough. You will feel compassion for yourself and others. You will be able to love others and not use or abuse them. And in His 'risen ever-present-ness', you will discover what it means to live 'free' and for His affirmation alone."


The shadow, the unacceptable part of us, and the good acceptable part coexist in every one of us. If we make room only for the acceptable part of our selves, where is


the 'unacceptable' part to go? Fr Brennan uses the example of the response of Peter and Judas to their shadow selves. Both had failed. Both had let the imposter in them win. But, confronted by it, Judas could not face his shadow. Peter could. The latter befriended the impostor within. The former was shamed by the impostor and took his life.


What about you? Will you befriend your imposter, the shadow self, take it to Jesus, and be made whole?

**EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF INDIA
THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION**


**CORONAVIRUS
HOW CAN WE RESPOND
THEOLOGICALLY?**


CANON DR VINAY
SAMUEL


DR KEN GNANAKAN


DR LEELA MANASSEH


DR TAKATEMJEN AO


DR FINNY PHILIP

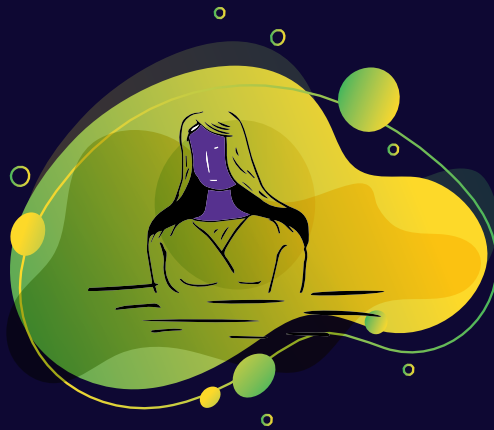
PLEASE REGISTER
1. SCAN QR CODE
2. FILL THE FORM
3. ZOOM DETAILS
WILL BE SENT TO YOU

A 5-SERIES WEBINAR:
6 Aug | 13 Aug | 20 Aug | 27 Aug | 3 Sep

WWW.EFIONLINE.ORG



IN QUESTION



THE OVERARCHING NARRATIVE OF CHRISTIANITY



Blesson Philip completed his Master of Theology from SAIACS. He currently serves as a faculty of theology at Filadelfia Bible College, Udaipur.

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER ARE THE IMPORTANT DOTS THAT CONNECT THE HISTORICAL STORY OF OUR SALVATION AND EXISTENCE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

So, *what is the narrative?* If you do a cursory scan of the news channels and newspapers, you are bound to come up against this question at some point. Whether it's the accusation that China is creating a narrative to facilitate its own exoneration from any form of complicity in the current health crisis, or the opposition parties at home blaming the government for surreptitiously fuelling a narrative of majoritarian hegemony, or the government blaming the opposition for creating a narrative that generates paranoia among the minorities with regards to the government, *narrative* has been the buzzword for quite some time now, especially in political circles and media establishments and by extension, everywhere else.

So, what is a *narrative*? A narrative is basically a story. Narratives can be historical or mythical and can be presented in various forms such as a “myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting...”, as pointed out by noted French literary theorist, Roland Barthes. Postmodern philosophers discovered a newfound attraction for narratives, for its randomness, fragmentation and uncertainties, which was a

change from the absolutism of modernism. Theologians of the postmodern era, like Kevin Vanhoozher and Hans Boersma, were fascinated by the theological possibilities of narratives and drama (which is essentially a narrative played out on a stage) and it was a much-needed shift from the propositional way of theologising in the modern and pre-modern era. But what has that to do with us? A lot, many will argue, and rightly so.

Much of what we have as *content* for our faith is a narrative, a historical story and perhaps nowhere does it reflect more than in the two ordinances that all of evangelicalism accepts and follows—baptism and Lord's Supper (also called the Communion or the Eucharist). While we do take them as ordinances (simply meaning, decrees or orders), the foundation of those ordinances are the narratives which the ordinances are connected with and essentially serve the purpose of reminding us about. Between varying

“...*narrative* has been the buzzword for quite some time now, especially in political circles and media establishments and by extension, everywhere else.”



IN QUESTION

theological interpretations of these ordinances along denominational lines, we often miss out on the core character of these ordinances. When it comes to the Lord's Supper, Jesus' own explanation for this command—*Do this in remembrance of me*—as we see in Luke 22:19, which is then affirmed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:24, shows the innate character of this ordinance. The Lord's Supper was instituted to help us renew the memory of Jesus Christ, of his sacrificial life and earthly ministry, and of his continuing ministry through the Holy Spirit in the Church (as the interconnected chapters 11, 12 and 13 of 1st Corinthians tell us), all of which is essentially a story, the story to which all of us are connected. It is a reminder of the story of salvation and of the existence of this new community called the Church which exists because of that salvation. The Passover, with which the Lord's Supper shares significant strands, is itself in remembrance of a powerful narrative about the Almighty God who delivers His people from bondage and oppression, both physical and spiritual.

Baptism, on the other hand, is a reminder of and a person's public witness to the sacrificial life and ministry of Jesus Christ, and his/her affirmation to live as such. The Baptism draws important theological parallels with the story of Israel crossing the Red Sea and Jordan river to enter into the Promised Land. But most importantly, it connects our life with the life of Jesus in a unique way as we follow in the footsteps of our saviour and are invited to

partake in the same renewed life that he has and shares with us. Baptism is that mile marker which declares that the story of our life is going in the same direction as that of Jesus'.

Why is this emphasis on narrative important? First, it tells us that we are a people with history. Irrespective of how much we dislike traditions and old-fashioned things, both Lord's Supper and Baptism tell us that we are intricately connected to our historical roots, all of which has shaped our faith and walk to this day. It tells us that God is actively shaping the story of His people, starting all the way back at the beginning of time (from a human perspective). Second, it's a source of comfort and peace, especially in these troubled times. I see and hear many people express their anguish over social media and personal conversations at the fact that this pandemic and the resultant lockdown has not allowed them to take part in the Lord's Table which, for many, happened on the first week of the month. Many wonder if, and how, we will partake in the communitarian elements of faith like these in the post-pandemic era. While sharing of and partaking in these elements is a crucial aspect of our faith and Christian life, and we must do so whenever possible, we also need to

“Much of what we have as *content* for our faith is a narrative, a historical story and perhaps nowhere does it reflect more than in the two ordinances that all of evangelicalism accepts and follows—baptism and Lord's Supper.”

remember that these are given to us to *remember*—to remember who God the Father is, what He has done through Jesus Christ His Son, and what He continues to do through the Holy Spirit in the church. And as long as we remember and live in accordance to that remembrance, we are essentially following the ordinances of Jesus Christ, our Lord and saviour.

हिंदी पुस्तकों पर विशेष पेशकश
इन दिनों के लिए आशा की किरण

अब अपनी कॉपी प्राप्त करें!

20 पुस्तकें केवल 750/- ₹

स्टॉक अंतिम तक मान्य है।

Call: 9351888356
Email: sales@opendoor.co.in

RELEASING SOON!

Use these powerful prayer resources to enhance your prayer life as you engage in praying for the nations.

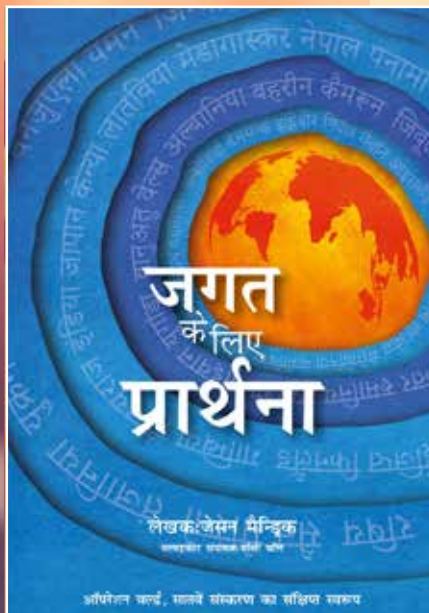
Coming Soon in Hindi!

For decades, *Operation World* has been the world's leading resource for people who want to impact the nations for Christ through prayer. Its twofold purpose has been to inform for prayer and to mobilize for mission. Now the research team of Operation World offers this abridged version of the 7th edition called *Pray for the World* as an accessible resource to facilitate prayer for the nations.

The Operation World researchers asked Christian leaders in every country, "How should the body of Christ throughout the world be praying for your country?" Their responses provide the prayer points in this book, with specific ways your prayers can aid the global church.

When you hear a country mentioned in the news, you can use *Pray for the World* to pray for it in light of what God is doing there. Each entry includes:

- Timely challenges for prayer and specific on-the-ground reports of answers to prayer
- Population and people group statistics
- Charts and maps of demographic trends
- Updates on church growth, with a focus on evangelicals
- Explanations of major currents in economics, politics and society Join millions of praying people around the world. Hear God's call to global mission. And watch the world change.





What's in a meal?

ACTUALLY, A LOT IF YOU COME TO THINK THAT JESUS SWAPS HIS PLACE
WITH THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB TO PAY FOR OUR SINS, AND NOT JUST
SYMBOLICALLY!



Joanna is a psychologist and writer. Her key interests are in the areas of mental health care and sexual trauma.



tick mark, the letter 'M' in bold, a bitten apple—ordinary, yet convey something more than their face value, don't they? And, if mere sign was not enough, there is a string of words to go with it. An implied word association—the symbol and the tagline go hand in hand, impacting our decisions.

There is a reason why the logo of a brand is often strategically placed—where it is most visible. One look at the logo, and you estimate the respect and value the person wearing it deserves. These may be mere symbols, but are associated with sophistication and satisfaction.

When an officer salutes another officer, we conclude simply by their action who is superior of the two. The wedding band on someone's finger communicates their marital status. The proximity between two individuals often communicates the nature of their relationship.

Symbols, signs, practices and traditions are languages we use to both communicate and interpret the world. Religion and rituals are more often than not categorised into one. Some rituals have meaning to it, but some have been a part of culture for long enough to become a way of life for no particular reason.

However, it is not the case with a Jew, and should not be with a Christian either. To a Jew, religious practices/traditions mark their every day, weekly and annual lives. Historically, the Jewish celebration of feasts and holidays were more than ritualistic customs—these were essential means to understand their roots, story and identity. Each feast of the Jews was indicative of actual historical events. The crown jewel of the Jewish calendar was the Passover. The Passover festival to a Jew was both remembering as well as participating in the foundational story of liberation from slavery.

A Jewish Passover platter contains various elements; each part telling a story. On the platter is unleavened bread, a bitter herb, a piece of vegetable dipped in salty water, a Passover lamb and four cups of wine.

The unleavened bread (a hurriedly baked bread with ➡

no yeast) signified the preparedness and the hasty departure of the Israelites from Egypt. The vegetable dipped in salty water indicating the coat of Joseph that was smeared with blood to cover up the truth about him being sold to Egypt. The bitter herb was both a participation and remembrance of their bitter past of slavery; the lamb indicated the Passover lamb that was slaughtered and whose blood was smeared on the doorpost that covered them from the judgement of God. The ritual consisted of blessing God, singing psalms and hand-washing before and after meals.

It is the same Passover of the Jews that Jesus and his disciples celebrate in wee hours before the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. The Passover meal of Jesus, also known as the Last Supper is the pivotal crossover of an ancient meal into a grander meaning. The Passover with Jesus was like no other Passover that the disciples would have grown around. Jesus was enacting a Passover meal transforming the meaning of the meal before them. The Passover elements that were to indicate the ancient history of the Israelites were used by Jesus to indicate what is to come.

At the crux of eternity past and eternity to come, Jesus enacts a meal that would be the highest revelation of God's purposes.

Luke 22 records for us the Passover of Jesus and his disciples. Jesus takes the first of the four cups of the Passover, gives thanks to God commencing the meal (v.17). He then takes the unleavened bread, and breaks it, signifying his soon-approaching crucifixion and death (v.19), following which they have Passover lamb that was slaughtered, signifying the unblemished lamb of God to be slaughtered, after the meal Jesus takes another (3rd of the 4th cup) cup, gives thanks and declares that it was his blood poured out for a new covenant (v.20).

Jesus uses the same storyline of slavery and redirects our attention to the greater slavery of mankind, the slavery to sin. Jesus swaps his place with the lamb and bread and offers a New Exodus through him alone.

A MEAL LIKE NO OTHER


The Last supper is the greatest story that could ever be told. Jesus institutes the meal to both remember and participate in the 'new' exodus. The symbols are seldom symbols when what they signify is a magnificent truth that is captured for us in tangible elements.

Christ, our Passover Lamb, ought to mark the calendar of our lives. Christ has prepared us a table and he invites us as often as we come. It is no ordinary meal, it tells us the foundational story of who we are, who we belong to and who our hope is in.

Tevye, a Jewish protagonist in the movie *Fiddler on the Roof* who desperately tries to keep traditions in place, says: "because of our traditions... Every one of us knows who he is and what God expects him to do."

SPECIAL OFFER

Set of 9 ATA Commentaries from Open Door Publications now @ just Rs 400/- + postage



LIMITED STOCK. ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY!

OPEN DOOR Publications Pvt. Ltd. M : 9351888836, E: sales@odp.co.in



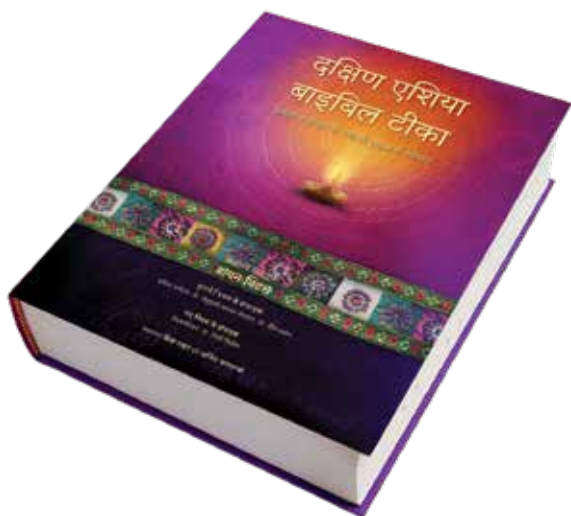
COFFEE TABLE BOOKS
— MAKE MORE OF THE MOMENT —

SPECIAL OFFER

PAY ONLY RS 1400/- FOR ALL FOUR BOOKS (inclusive of postage)

Email: SALES@ODP.CO.IN
Toll: +91-294-2432904
Mob: +91-9351888836

PRE-ORDER NOW!



**ANNOUNCING PRE-PUBLICATION OFFER FOR THE MUCH
AWAITED SOUTH ASIA BIBLE COMMENTARY IN HINDI**

Rs.2000 (~~Rs.2300 MRP~~) including postage

**For Bulk orders
please contact 9351888836
or +91-294-2432904**

**THE FIRST EVER ONE-VOLUME
BIBLE COMMENTARY WRITTEN
BY SOUTH ASIANS
FOR SOUTH ASIANS**

*This commentary is a special gift to students
of the Bible for use in their
ministry of the word.*

VINCENT M. CONCESSAO

*[This] will not only help theologians but
also pastors, lay preachers and grassroots
workers in teaching God's word.*

THE MOST REVD P. K. SAMANTAROY

*a splendid commentary –
faithful, clear and relevant!”*

CHRIS WRIGHT



Open Door Publications Pvt. Ltd

Sanjay Park, Rani Road, Udaipur 313001, Rajasthan, India

Tel: +91-294-2432904, +91 9351888836

Email : info@odp.co.in

Web : www.odp.co.in





Mark Raja is a digital product designer in the software industry. He is a graduate from the Fine Arts discipline and the founder of the Integrated Arts Movement.

POST-TRUTH HOSPITAL WHERE TRUTH HAS DIED

ARE ALL TRUTHS RELATIVE? IT'S IMPORTANT TO FIND AN ANSWER
TO THIS QUESTION AMIDST PANDEMIC OF MISINFORMATION

What if a person goes to hospital for a COVID-19 test and is sent back home after a misdiagnosis of the virus as flu? What if this person succumbs to coronavirus later, infecting many others around him or her? It is not uncommon to read or hear stories of patients' plight across hospitals in the country amid the pandemic-related pressure and stigma.

One hospital may think it is flu, another may say it is mild pneumonia, yet another hospital may suggest it is common cold—while the person might actually be infected with COVID-19!

There are chances that hospitals may be right, but with the rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases and growing mortality rate, it's more likely that the hospitals are either incompetent or are not telling the truth.

What would you do if this happens closer home? Would you sit back and enjoy your coffee, musing that truth is 'relative'? Is it ok to put people's lives on the line based on what a particular hospital 'feels' is true? Would you not respond within your capacity to prevent people from dying because health facilities are rejecting treatment?

Welcome to the *post-truth hospital* where there is no such thing as absolute truth—whatever serves a given purpose is the 'truth'. After all, as thinker and historian Yuval Harari says, "We're a post-truth species." The hospitals may or may not force you to accept their 'truth,' but you cannot make them accountable by your 'truth.' If anything goes wrong, you cannot seek justice because they believe that no one has the right to make an absolute claim to truth. Well, that statement itself is an absolute claim, but they don't want to talk about it.

So, would you prefer to make an appointment next time with a post-truth doctor or a surgeon? Come on, we are post-truth species, don't we need an appropriate treatment?

A few days back, I was talking to a friend about these COVID-19 testing-related incidents in hospitals. I forwarded him a few related news articles. I wanted to know his opinion since he believes in post-truth philosophy. Surprisingly, he was upset by the news and told me that we should take up the issue with the authorities concerned. He immediately



started tweeting on the subject—tagging such hospitals and the health ministry.

Then, I specifically asked him, “I know you believe that there is no absolute truth, so why are you so angry with these hospitals? Don’t you see they also seem to think the same way?” He instantly replied, “No, that has nothing to do with science. Science is objective. But, there is no absolute truth in morality, metaphysics, belief, etc.” So I asked him, “Don’t you think denying treatment to an ill person by telling lies and letting the person die is a moral decision? He paused and said, “Absolutely. But let us discuss this heavy topic sometime later.”

My friend seems to be avoiding this discussion; maybe he needs time to think over it. His dilemma is: while in the hospital scenario, truth ought to be objective, in the realm of morality or belief, it cannot be. This is a false dichotomy many believe in. But how can one separate morality from reality? When morality is grounded in truth, it corresponds to reality; if not, it fails the test of truth. Hence, such morality or belief is false. Just because false beliefs exist does not mean all beliefs are subjective or false.

In the hospital scenario, we were on the receiving end; if we were not, my friend would have taken the post-truth argument to free himself from any responsibility.

That is why people choose a post-truth perspective when they are on the side of a subject, but decide to fight against it when on the receiving end. It sounds like what Friedrich Nietzsche once said, “Truth is the name we give to that which agrees to our own instinctive preferences. It is what we call our interpretation of the world, especially when we want to foist upon others.”

Just like my friend, any sane person would ask for an investigation of the claims made by the hospital. Reason? Not because one hates these hospitals but because their

report does not correspond to reality—that people are dying. Well, the hospitals may be right, and people may be dying of reasons other than COVID-19. But, with the available information, there seems to be a gap. Why do I think so?

I think so because any truth claim that does not correspond to reality and is not coherent with other sets of related propositions is false. This is called correspondence and coherence theory of truth in epistemology. Two contradictory statements cannot both be true in the same sense. Either one or both are false. We all know that in this scenario, the hospital reports, the patient’s health history, and post-mortem reports should cohere to establish the truth.

Let’s say, the hospitals came back with their response after a week, saying that we [the patients] cannot question their claims because ‘truth’ is subjective—*everything can be true*. Now, my friend is confused: “If everything is true, then nothing is false?” he asked. “Not just that,” I said, “if nothing is false, then it would also be true to say that everything is false.” Isn’t this nonsense? When you make an assertion, you deny its opposite. Therefore, truth, by definition, becomes exclusive.

We came to realise that when the truth has died, justice becomes meaningless. But that leaves my friend more confused: If the truth is absolute and exclusive, how do I know it?

(Read the next part of this article, *Post-Truth Pandemic—Where Justice Has Died*, in the following issue of CT)

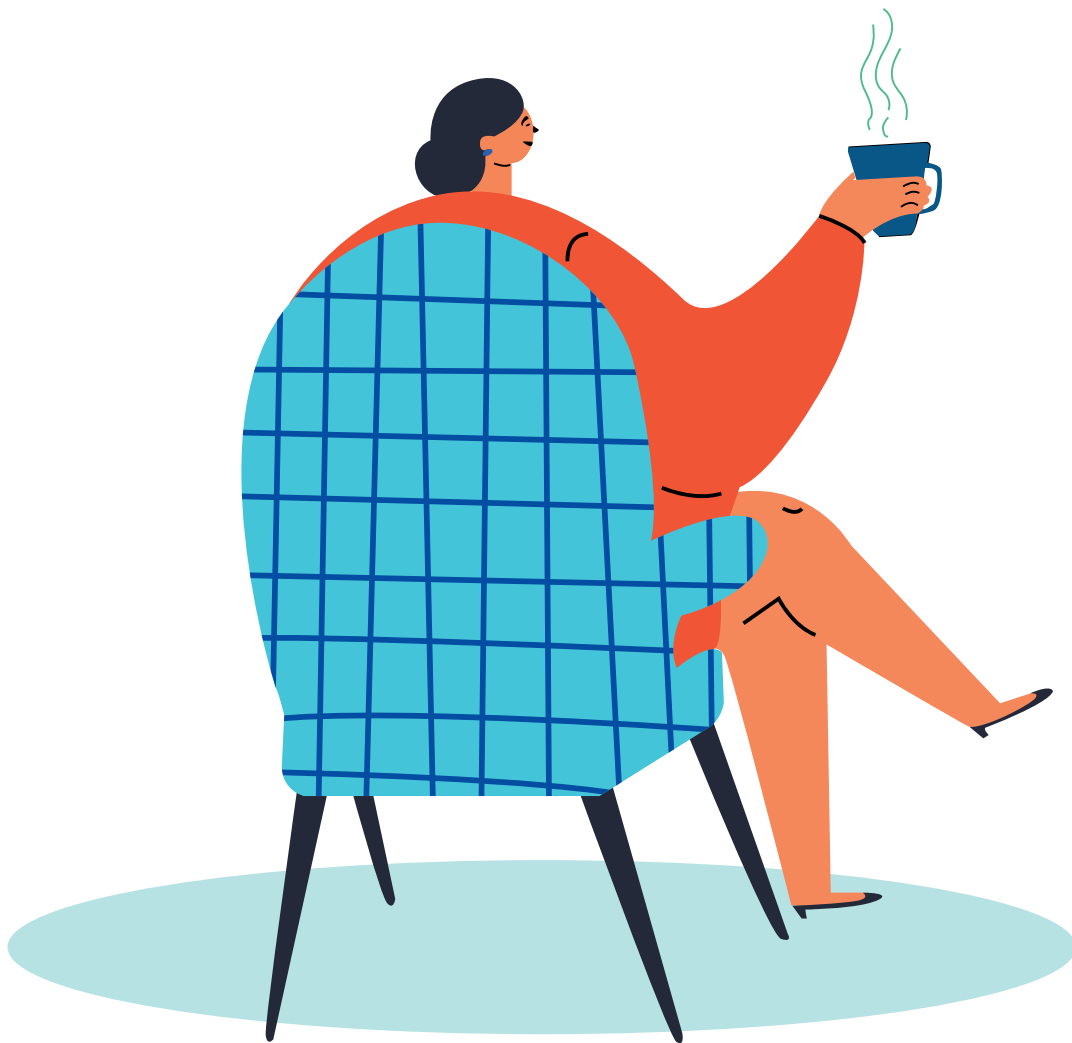
“Two contradictory statements cannot both be true in the same sense. **Either one or both are false.**”

If you are someone
oozing with
creativity
and enthusiasm,
interested in
freelance writing
and designing,

WE NEED YOU

Contact us at
prabhudas@ctrendsmag.com

LEADERSHIP





Sabina Tagore Immanuel is a writer and blogger. She and her husband, Immanuel, are part of NLAG Church, Little Mount, Chennai, where they serve as elders and life coaches.

LEAD LIKE A PARENT

THE WORLD IS OVERWHELMINGLY FAMILIAR WITH BOSSY LEADERS; IT HAS NOW COME TO DISCOVER THE VIRTUES OF A SERVANT-LEADER ALSO, BUT THERE'S A THIRD, NOBLER, KIND OF A LEADER WORTH EMULATING

An oft-repeated concept and term that we hear today not just in Christian circles but also in corporate sectors is 'servant leadership'. This has gained acceptance in contrast, and as opposed, to professional leadership.

A professional leader extracts work from a team and treats those who work under him or her as not deserving attention beyond what their work entitles them to. To such a leader, a team is only a set of people appointed to follow commands and do the job to produce results. His or her relationship with the subordinates is limited to the sphere of work. ➡

“We see this in the epistles where Apostle Paul addresses his young mentees or apprentices—Timothy and Titus—as sons and appeals for ‘my son Onesimus’.”

“... a parent-leader is never insecure that he has to fight to gain or hold his own. **He rests in the satisfaction of a job well done.**”

In contrast, servant leadership is a leadership philosophy wherein the main goal of the leader is to serve. This is different from traditional leadership where the leader solely focusses on the success of his or her company or organisation. Here, the leader goes beyond the work sphere and comes to an understanding that his people are his to care for. He or she does not consider them as those who serve, but feels equally responsible to serve them. A servant-leader steps into the personal space of his subordinate; not invading it, but seeking to build a relationship. Due to this, he or she is able to empathise and not just criticise; working to produce results, not by a rod, but by motivating and gaining the team's trust.

There is a third, higher and nobler, leadership strain or trait that exists, especially in the Bible—that of ‘parent leadership’. We see this in the epistles where Apostle Paul addresses his young mentees or apprentices—Timothy and Titus—as sons (I Tim 1:2) and appeals for ‘my son Onesimus’ (Philemon v. 10). John also write, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (3 John 1:4). Paul tells the Thessalonian church that they—Paul, Silas and Timothy—cared for them as nursing mothers and dealt with them as fathers (I Thess 2).

The mark of a parent is to desire the best for

his or her child, and a parent is happiest when they see their child superseding them in achievement and overtaking their position. So, a parent-leader is also the one who is thrilled when a team member or a subordinate or a disciple outgrows him or her, to take on a higher position or post. Such a leader is happy to have groomed a genuine talent.

Parents think nothing of laying down their life for the sake of their children and will not complain one bit about the sacrifices they make for them. Parent is the one person in the whole wide world who never minds the cost involved and the price they pay to see their child reach where they couldn't. Similarly, a parent-leader welcomes the role they play in the life of trainees or apprentices enabling them to push their limit and raise the bar of success. In fact, a parent-leader takes pride in the success of team members.

A parent is intuitively aware of their child's strengths and weaknesses, and then work on and with them in a way that fits the child's unique makeup. A parent then sets goals and milestones that challenge yet motivate their child, both boosting the child's morale and prodding him or her until they achieve what they deserve. A parent-leader, likewise, is able to assess their team members' personality quirks and traits that they know whom to entrust with which task. They also know whom to push and prod, and whom to cajole and encourage in the process of getting the desired output.

A parent may deal with their child in anger or with sorrow, but never will they give up on them. They will always accept and have a soft corner for their child irrespective of how many times they fail. Till the end, they will never give up on their child but always expect he or she will turn around one day. A parent-

leader, likewise, is ready to give their subordinate a second chance and in case they fail, they do not mind handing over their protégé to other leaders for his or her betterment.

A parent may expect returns or remuneration from their child, not as a right or as a payment for their work in rearing them, but more as a token and an acknowledgement of their input in their child's life. Their child's growth and progress are all the thanks they need to know that they have been honoured.

A parent-leader does not feel neglected when he is not acknowledged for the role he played in his disciple's achievement but will rest on the fact that his laurels are from the one who sees all and rewards openly.

Finally, a parent is never jealous of or in competition with his or her child, for he knows who he is and what role he has played, even when his child does not accept it. So also, a parent-leader is never insecure that he has to fight to gain or hold his own. He rests in the satisfaction of a job well done.

Can there be such parent-leaders and will we find them in this world?

Certainly, and for sure, because there have been such people of old! Many a teacher or instructor functions as a parent-leader, going the extra mile with their students whom they adopt as family. To be a parent-leader needs guts, humility and compassion. Which type of leader are you? What type of leader do you desire to be?

Receive the Best of Lausanne

Our best videos, articles, infographics and other resources from across the Lausanne Movement

•
Handpicked and sent to your inbox each week

•
Ideal for mission-minded Christians

www.lausanne.org/bol



Lausanne Movement



Keep your fingertips on the pulse of global mission.

Subscribe to **Lausanne Global Analysis** for free today!

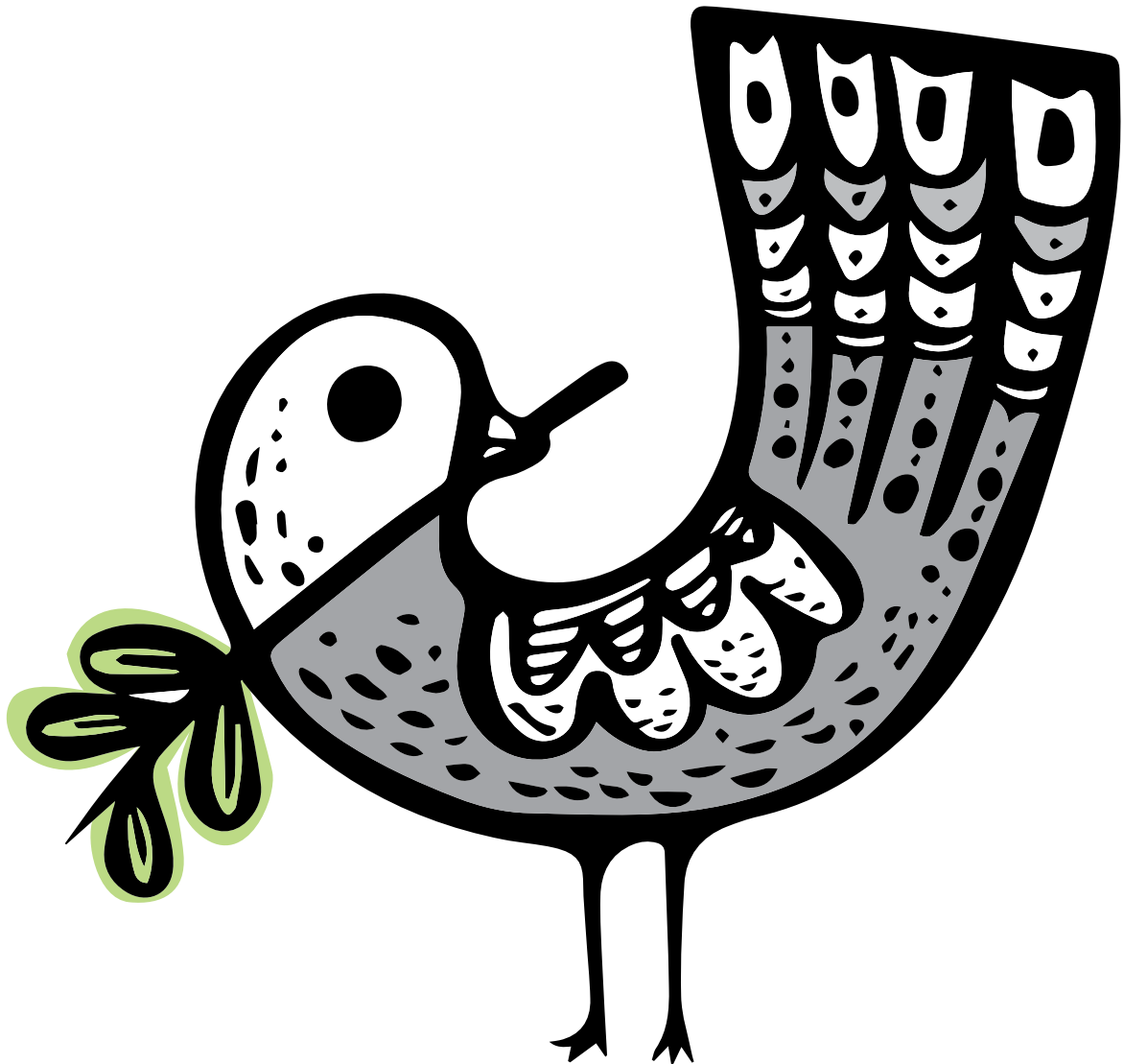
Every second month the Lausanne Movement's flagship publication delivers strategic and credible information and insight on the latest mission trends from an international network of evangelical analysts.

www.lausanne.org/lga



Lausanne Movement





**‘Waiting for the dove to return
with the olive branch’**

HOW A MEDICAL INTERN LEARNT TO QUIETEN DOWN
THE NOISE OF FEAR—WHILE NAVIGATING THE COVID-19
CHAOS ON THE FRONTLINE—TO LISTEN TO GOD



Joanne Philip is currently doing her medical internship and is passionate about serving God. She enjoys hiking, cooking and playing piano.

I work at the government hospital in Udaipur as a medical intern. One evening, I got a call saying I had to pack my things and reach the hospital in 15 minutes. There was a bus ready to take us—the group of interns—to Dungarpur, a city in southern Rajasthan. Adrenaline rushed through my veins; I couldn't believe it was real and tried to prepare my mind, remembering the time I wished I could be more useful during this time of pandemic.

As I dumped some clothes in a suitcase, I didn't know what to expect and for how long I was required to be there.

As we started the journey, within a few kilometers, it started pouring down heavily with hailstones. The cackling of hail sounded like nature was mocking our attempt to slow down this colossal global crisis. That is when I felt a sliver of fear creep in; I felt I was not ready. How could anyone be [ready] for something unknown?

The COVID-19 pandemic has frequently been likened to a war, where multiple ranks of society are bravely fighting to save humanity. Armed with meagre information about this novel

“One of the oft-repeated phrases I got sick of hearing was: That's how things work in India! I felt helpless seeing the lack of financial transparency, **political integrity and something as basic as protective equipment.**”

virus and no absolute cure yet, what confidence do we have in our own strength? The brightest minds in the world are trying to piece together the characteristics of this virus, frequently updating previous theories and guidelines.

Amidst these thoughts we reached Dungarpur. Here we were informed that our colleagues—who arrived a few hours before us—had already been sent to the Rajasthan-Gujarat border. This is where about 40,000 migrants were waiting for us to screen them before they could be allowed entry into Rajasthan and transported home overcrowded buses.

The noon sun's rays were piercing forehead as we sat at the rusty metal desks. We saw hundreds of silhouettes making their way to us



through the thick brown veil of dust. This army, carrying their children and belongings in heat—suffocated by masks and society’s inequality—had been walking for days trying to get back home.

We spent two weeks screening people at the border and in the nearby districts. And then, we were sent home when the authorities ran out of funds to provide food for our group!

The whole experience of participating in the screening process left my heart heavy about the state of things in our country. Although the work we did seemed good on paper, I don’t know how effective it truly was, considering that the virus hasn’t revealed itself completely to us yet.

One of the oft-repeated phrases I got sick of hearing was: That’s how things work in India! I felt helpless seeing the lack of financial transparency, political integrity and something as basic as protective equipment. It pained me to hear about the lives lost walking hundreds of kilometers, the woman who delivered her baby during such a journey and the thousands who were on the brink of starvation without any source of income.

Among all the devastating stories is a constant current of fear—what will the world look like a few months from now? Although in life, everyone experiences some sort of loss individually, this collective grief and uncertainty are new to us. This is bound to leave a substantial emotional mark on our generation.

“In this uncertain period, when we realise our own limitations and those of experts, we come face to face with God’s favour and power. We just have to listen.”

The world has slowed its pace, and in such a time the ring of grave reality can be quite loud. If trying times can reveal a person’s true character, then fear is one of the main propagators of the consequent action. Right now, it seems as though fear and anxiety are the loudest noises.

During my time in quarantine, I was reflecting on 1 Kings, chapters 18–19, the story of Elijah. In the first part, he was so confident in the power of God and was able to proudly establish this to those who worshipped Baal. However, once word reaches Jezebel about the events on Mount Carmel and the deaths of the prophets of Baal, she threatens Elijah and causes him to flee in fear to the wilderness.

Elijah had experienced miracles from God before, he should have known and remembered what God is capable of. Yet, here we see him hiding away, asking God to take his life. At that moment, fear was all he could hear, despite earlier being present at the display of God’s glory, he only heard his anxiety. So, God intervened. First God provided physical nourishment and then spoke to Elijah, not in the wind or the earthquake or the fire, but in a quiet voice. God instructs him on what he is supposed to do and later also assures him of 7000 faithful people to support him.

When fear overcomes us, especially during situations like lockdown, search for that still, quiet voice of direction. Psalm 46:10 reminds us: “Be still and know that I am God.” In this uncertain period, when we realise our own limitations and those of experts, we come face to face with God’s favour and power. We just have to listen.

Last week in our department, one of our patient's three-month-old baby tested positive for Covid-19. My colleagues and I had examined the baby with masked faces and a rubber touch. We facelessly comforted the mother who had just been hit with the diagnosis of her child. We could not hold her hand and confidently assure her that it will be alright because, in reality, we don't know.

This pandemic has affected every single person's life. Laymen have become familiar with terms like 'N95' and 'Hydroxychloroquine'

and can recognise the meaning of circles painted on streets. For some, it has allowed them to stay home with their families, develop hobbies and regard the vision of empty dystopian roads. In whatever way we cope with the situation, we all accept that it is a scary time. Maybe in the future, we will reflect on this pandemic from a place of more understanding, hopefully wiser in our decisions and better prepared to protect our vulnerable friends. Like in 2 Corinthians 1:8-10, may it be so that we do not rely on ourselves but on God, on whom we have set our hope for he will continue to deliver us. I, like everyone else, do not know how long it will take but am waiting with expectation for the dove to return with the olive branch in its beak. When we are continuously reminded of the "war," tell yourself to listen for the soft whisper of God that says the war belongs to Him!



**MAKE YOUR DAYS BEAUTIFUL
WITH US!**

EVERY DAY IS IMPORTANT - AND IT CAN BECOME BEAUTIFUL TOO...



SPEND UNHURRIED TIME WITH GOD, BE REST ASSURED

AS THE PANDEMIC PUSHES US TO REORDER OUR PRIORITIES, THERE
WILL NEVER BE A BETTER TIME THAN NOW TO RECALIBRATE OUR
RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS TIRELESS MINISTRY



Ajith Fernando is the former National Director at Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka. He has authored several books including *Jesus-Driven Ministry*, *The Supremacy of Christ* and *Acts: The NIV Application Commentary*.

Anyone serving in this needy world will have to fight the battle between rest and hard work. What I advocate for people in ministry is to make sure that the basics of life are in place. Foremost is an unhurried time with God each day. Then, we must religiously keep a Sabbath day once a week, in keeping with God's law. The Old Testament also advocates occasional longer Sabbaths which I take to being equivalent to vacations.

So, rest is important. So is watching our life and ensuring that we are acting and thinking the right way. As Paul said, "Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim 4:16).

Some people use the fact that there is so much burnout in ministry to argue that hard work and tiredness are wrong. That I don't agree with. The problem is more of **insecurity** than of hard work. When one doesn't have the peace of God ruling his life (Col 3:15), strives to achieve like a messiah, doesn't delegate and feels he must respond to every need, then he is heading for burnout. This is drivenness coming out of insecurity and we can drive ourselves to the ground.

Considering all the need we encounter in the world, we must work hard. Talking about the ministry of discipling, Paul used two strong words for hard work in Colossians 1:29: "For this I **toil, struggling** with all his energy that he powerfully works within me." We toil to the point of tiredness (the Greek implies that) and struggle, but God supplies the energy to do that. We must ensure that God has total reign in our life so that the channels are open for him to energise us. Who we are in Christ

is more important than what we do for Christ.

But we do not work for earthly applause, or for human success, or to be the biggest and the best. We can't let the false values of our celebrity culture ruin our joy. That's a recipe for burnout. Only a few will be leaders in the church, and only a few will be celebrities on earth. But we can all do the will of God, which is what is most important, because "the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:17). That's security, unruffled by the false values of this world. We work hard because we love Jesus. We strive for excellence, not because we want to be famous or better than anyone, but because we have seen and been enraptured by the glory of God and



"WE MUST ENSURE THAT GOD HAS TOTAL REIGN IN OUR LIFE SO THAT THE CHANNELS ARE OPEN FOR HIM TO ENERGISE US. WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT WE DO FOR CHRIST."

“But we do not work for earthly applause, or for human success, or to be the biggest and the best. We can’t let the false values of our celebrity culture ruin our joy.”

want to reflect it in all we do (1 Cor 10:31).

Then, not being recognised and appreciated does not devastate us. We want to please Jesus. If he sees, that’s enough. If he’s not pleased, we plead for mercy and receive his forgiveness. But failure also does not devastate us because there is abundant pardon with God (Isa 55:7). We are humiliated by our failure, but the most important thing in life is intact—we are loved with an everlasting love (Jer 31:3).

Then we must ensure that there are no serious unsettled issues that weigh us down. We serve our families like servants and make sure they know that, though our ministry takes us away from home often, they are deeply loved, enjoyed and cherished by us. We “strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). Few things debilitate us as much as uncleared issues with people and unhealed anger. That can drag us down and exhaust our minds. So like Paul we “always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man” (Acts 24:16).

Trying to be faithful in all these areas—personal life, family life and ministry life—will be tiring. But that is not a huge problem. After all, our hero Paul said, “...we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day (2 Cor 4:16). The main thing is to minister out of a heart set free by God, so that we can be “renewed day by day.” Then we can minister without unnecessary burdens that drag us down.

This is why unhurried time with God is so important. It helps us recalibrate our life daily rather than waiting for an emergency to do mid-course corrections. When we meet with him daily, we affirm God’s lordship over our life. Daily we confess sin. Daily we cast our burden upon the Lord. Daily we go to the Word like a hungry baby desiring to be fed. When we relax in the presence of God daily, we imbibe security by unconsciously letting the reality of Deuteronomy 33:27 hit us: “the Eternal God is my dwelling place and underneath are the everlasting arms.” That’s security! Don’t do ministry without it.

Perhaps this lockdown is a good time for us to reorder our priorities.



**EQUIPPING LEADERS
TO KNOW THE WORD
AND MOVE IN THE
SPIRIT**

**DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM
M.Div, B.Th & Dip.Th
(Accredited by ATA)
& an opportunity to do
B.A. & M.A. from UGC approved
Universities**



FILADELFIA BIBLE COLLEGE

DOWNLOAD APPLICATION FORMS@WWW.FBCUDAIPUR.COM
or Contact us: registrar@fbcudaipur.com or Call us +91 9783 53 6288 / 9828 82 4599



We are not renOvated
but regenerated

custom brand design & identity, redesign magazines/newsletters
website design & development, events.



fogdesigners.com
a redesign company

+91 974 600 4598