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1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Editorial

Dear precious brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings to you in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!



When we think of Christ's love for the perishing humanity, it is indescribable that we cannot fathom it. He bore everything for us on the cross. How precious and how wonderful! Would any of us, in our entire life ever think of making a huge sacrifice such as laying down our lives for the ones we love? Indeed, we do make sacrifices for our loved ones but we can never match up to what Christ has done for us all. His Agape love for us is great that it is incomparable.

Our human love has boundaries; many times we do things for others expecting a gesture of appreciation or gratitude. Our Saviour gave everything for us even while we were His enemies. We may come across people and we may think that they are unlovable, and that they do not deserve our love, but always remember, Christ died for us when we were unlovable, while we were in our sins and hence let us pass on that same love of Christ and show compassion to people. We live in a broken and hurting world and showing the love of Christ can bring about a huge change and make a difference.

Let us pledge our allegiance to Christ once more by choosing to love people. Love doesn't mean condoning the sinful nature. Many times, the term 'love' is misused or taken advantage of. While reading this, I encourage you to do some research and study about Christ's love and how we can be more like Him.

Loving may be a challenge, especially when it involves a difficult person. Take up that challenge with God's help and show God's unconditional love to the people around us including spouses, children, family members, colleagues.....

Our prayer at Sathyam Ministries is that you will be blessed in all aspects and may you spiritually grow more with God and in God's word. Love God and Love One Another!

God bless you!

Dr. C. V. Vadavana,
Founder & Chairman,
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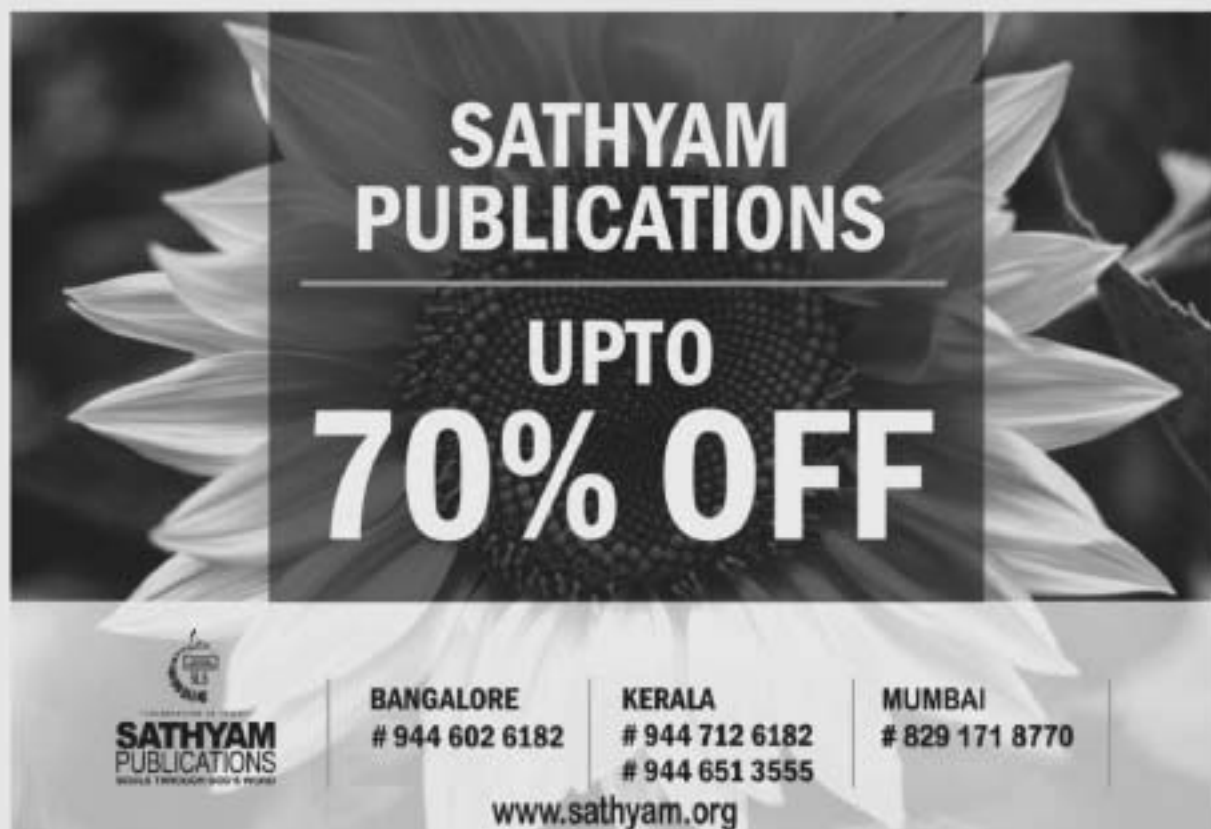
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Why Commission Matters

Malcolm Webber



Leaders must be set apart for the work to which God has called them.

Every leader was called to his ministry before the foundation of the world (cf. Eph. 1:4, Jer. 1:5, 2 Tim. 1:9). This calling then becomes known to the leader at some point in his life. For example, God revealed something of Paul's calling to him at the time of his salvation:

"Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me." (Acts 26:16-18, cf. Acts 9:15-16)

The commission follows, arriving at a certain God-ordained time, and constitutes the leader's "marching orders." Certainly the leader will be aware that he has the specific calling of God, and will likely experience the manifestation of certain gifts associated with that calling – but he has not yet been commissioned, so he does not yet possess divine authority for his ministry.

Paul was called to this ministry a long time before he was commissioned, and he would no doubt have experienced the manifestation of apostolic gifting in his life previously. However, he did not have apostolic authority until he was "set apart" in Acts 13:

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the

work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. (Acts 13:1-4)

This commission was given by the Holy Spirit ("sent on their way by the Holy Spirit"; Acts 13:4; cf. Matt. 9:38; 1 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Deut. 31:14) in the context

of the authority structure of the church ("they placed their hands on them and sent them off", Acts 13:3; cf. Acts 6:3-6; 15:28). Thus, the calling comes from God and is then confirmed by the community. This commission establishes and affirms the leader's right to lead – to himself as well as to his constituency.

Furthermore, commission must not be merely a response to an organizational need or vision. Too often we appoint leaders to fulfill organizational needs without spending the necessary time before God to know for sure that it is His purpose and timing. This is why many men fail – they are promoted to higher levels of leadership in response to a human need or vision but they are not called to those responsibilities or gifted for them. The Holy Spirit initiated Paul's commission in Acts 13 – it was not merely a human

response to the need for the gospel to be preached in new areas.

As you are faithful in what He gives you to do, God might expand your field of ministry (Luke 16:10). But remember that Paul faithfully taught for years before receiving his apostolic commission. The calling limits the commission and the commission limits the authority, and for it to be appropriate authority, the community must recognize and affirm the calling. Essentially, commission establishes boundaries. Authority does not come from gifting; it comes from commission.

★
***Commission
must not be
merely a
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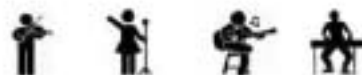
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Joni Eareckson Tada

"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Isaiah 40-28-31

It's very difficult to move forward when you're locked up in physical or emotional pain. In such moments, it's a comfort to remember that the love of Jesus toward you and me can never be exhausted. He gives and gives and gives. Look at a typical day in His life. In Matthew 14, after a hot, dusty afternoon of preaching to the crowds, Jesus learns the devastating news about the beheading of His friend and cousin, John the Baptist. But rather than taking time to grieve, Jesus attends to the needs at hand, feeding five thousand people. Then, He later rescues His disciples when a storm blindsides their boat. On the other side of the lake, He

takes on more crowds and nonstop ministry with no sleep.

And so, it is today. Jesus' love for you is endless. His concern never falters. He never tires of your journey. Jesus, your inexhaustible friend, can carry your load today.

Such a Friend! Praise You, Jesus, for Your strong arm around my shoulders through the demands of my day and the occasional endless, sleepless night. Thank You that even though I come to the end of my rope, Your rope has no end or limit! I find rest, sweet rest in You today.



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Shhh....

SECRET SINS ?

YOUR QUICKEST WAY TO BREAKTHROUGH



Pastor Kim D'Souza

Jeremiah, our six year old is a very sweet and helpful boy. He does a commendable job of tidying the house when I ask him to. But sometimes when he is not in a mood to help, he smartly shoves things out of place where my eyes cannot catch. So while the house does look clean, it is only matter of time before I find all things falling out from the hidden corners.

Many of us in our Christian life have a similar attitude. There are so many so called believers in the church who are shouting God's praises from the outside but are hiding their struggles and temptations. They are broken and condemned from the inside and wondering why God's plans are not working for them. And it is only a matter of time before things start falling apart.

But never forget this – What you hide has power over your life.

The devil wants you to conceal things – whether it is lust, pornography, addictions, fears, depressing thoughts etc, and he will bring you reasons like shame, fear, guilt to keep you from exposing it.

John 3:20 says, Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

When Adam and Eve sinned, the first thing they did was that they hid themselves from the presence of God. But it was God who came searching for them. Similarly when Cain murdered Abel, it was God who initiated a conversation with him, even as Cain tried to hide the facts and act as if nothing has happened.

If you are fed up with the way you are living and want a breakthrough in your life, the quickest way to get it is by exposing your struggles to God.

David wrote in Psalm 32:3-5 "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.' And you forgave the guilt of my sin."

David committed the sin of adultery with Bathsheba and schemed the murder of her husband Uriah. And God told him, What you did in secret, you will face the consequences of it in daylight before all Israel (2 Samuel 12:12). But we read in the next verse, David asks for forgiveness and IMMEDIATELY God forgives him!

If you are struggling with 'secret sins' and genuinely are hungering for a breakthrough in your life, here is what you can do.

1. Expose your struggles before God. Openly and loudly confess them. You see, the devil is not interested in just playing hide and seek with you. He has only one agenda and that is to knock you out of God's plan for your life and to completely destroy you and the lives that are connected to you. So run to God, who is merciful, compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. And once you bring your weaknesses under the blood of Jesus, it is covered. Don't entertain any feelings of guilt or condemnation and don't look at your past.

2. Share your struggles with a same-sex mentor, pastor or someone who is mature in the Lord, who can pray with you and guide you. The Bible says confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed (James 5:16). This person should be filled with the Holy Spirit and the Word and living a life glorifying Jesus. Also, don't assume that your pastor or prophet should know what you are going through and offer help. People are not God, instead you make time and reach out to them.

3. Hide God's Word in your heart: If there is one thing God is asking us to hide, it is not our sins, but His Word. David says in Psalms 119: 11, I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against thee! God's Word is light. And this Word will keep us away from sin. Pick up Scriptures that deal with your problem and start meditating upon them. Spend time with God's Word and let it not depart from your mouth.

4. Run away from small temptations that you think cannot trap you. It is these "small things" that we think we have control over, that can make us fall in the long run. Stay alert, your enemy, the devil is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. And above all guard your heart. Also very important, guard your eyes for the eye is the lamp of the body (Matthew 6:22).

5. Don't cut away from fellowshiping with the people in your church. This is what the devil will want you to do – to run away from God, from men of God and people in the church. Don't compare yourself to others and thus feel condemned. None of us is perfect, but God has created us to be fellowship beings. The Bible says, And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near (Hebrews 10:25).

Has God spoken to you? Is there anything hidden in your life that is worrying you? Remember the key to your breakthrough is not in hiding but in exposing it.

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FORGIVING GRACE

Brother Noble George



This behavior takes a toll in the spiritual life of a believer. When one says I am wounded, or in pain, or hurt, he is a victim of the enemy's attack; not a victor anymore. The difference is very clear, the victim says, he accused me - I am hurt, he spoke evil of me, I am wounded. The victim is busy nursing his perceived wounds. But the bible encourages the saints to be victors. A victor is the one, who when humiliated, accused, or persecuted, takes things gracefully and forgives and loves his enemies. That is the victor's attitude and it is a choice that the Holy Spirit enables us to make. Wounds might be real but forgiveness brings the healing. Apostle Paul exhorts us to "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you". Eph. 4:12.

A wounded man is a liability not an asset, especially on the battlefield. Story of Ahab, the king of Israel is written in 2 Chronicles 18:33. A certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel in a joint of the armor. So he said to the driver of the chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the fight, for I am severely wounded." Similarly, the story of King Josiah can be found in 2 Chronicles 35:23. The archers shot King Josiah, and the king said to his servants, "I am sore wounded, take me out of the battle". Even in an ordinary battle field, when a soldier is wounded, he is immediately removed from the battle line. A wounded man cannot fight the battle, especially the battles of the Lord. They faint and continually groan. (Lam. 2:12 As they faint like a wounded man in the streets of the city. Ezek. 30:24 so that he will groan before him with the groanings of a wounded man.)

Why remain a victim when dependence on the Grace of God can make us victors? If a believer remains a perpetual complainer about being hurt and wounded, he is ruining his own character, nobody else's. It is a moral suicide. But the grace of God not only heals the wounds and hurts, but provides spiritual insulation and generates springs of joy.

Daniel was thrown in to the den of lions but was not hurt by them because innocence was found in him (Dan.6:22). This world is a den of lions; but none can hurt us because we possess the grace of God and because we have the grace of God abounding in us, we

don't harm anyone else either. We can save ourselves from being ruined by hurt and hatred by dwelling in the grace for God and exercising the forgiving grace.

What is the forgiving grace? Is it that one feels hurt and then struggle to forgive the person who caused the hurt and eventually somehow manage to clean up the slate? No, it is not so. But when somebody tries to cause trouble or inflict pain, as human beings there will be a natural reaction. That reaction has a choice. The pain and hurt are real but the saint has the option to choose a reaction which is different from the natural one. Instead of harping on the pain and hurt one could choose to show compassion and love, but forgiveness precedes everything else. One can forgive only when filled with the same love Jesus had for those who chose to be His enemies foolishly. The principle can be found in apostle Paul's writing to Titus. "To malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us (Titus 3:2-5).

All things work together for good:

Romans 8:28 is often quoted when adverse situations in life happens and most often the quotation stops at "And you know that all things work together for good". When we slip, fall, and break a leg or arm, it almost sounds meaningless to say that "all things work together for good". One might even try to find something positive out of the negative experiences, but that is the kind of twisting the word of God. The most important part of the verse is its second half. It reads "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." (Rom. 8:28). The love for God translates into loving His other creation. 1 John 4:20, If someone says, "I love God", and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen".

(To be continued...)



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TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

- Women employment program
- Industrial training center
- Computer training
- Training program
- Self development programs
- Pre-vocational programs
- Printing technology
- Tailoring unit

ADVOCACY

- Awareness of rights
- Facilitating and asserting social benefits
- Facilitating the formation of self-help groups
- Parent training program



www.sathyam.org

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Sathyam Research Institute and Disability Center



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS
**SATHYAM
MINISTRIES**
WE CARE FOR THE BODY & THE SOUL

SATHYAM RESEARCH INSTITUTE AN DISABILITY CENTER A Ministry of Sathyam Service Trust, India

The Sathyam Research Institute and Disability Center, is the result of an immense need to uplift the disabled population in the Indian society. Sathyam Service Trust, a charitable society based in Kerala, India has been working in the field of Social Welfare and Charity for the past 25 years by shedding light to the down-trodden in society. Through its outreach programs, it has mainly focused its activities in the area of disability preparing thousands of individuals to become independent.

The Director, Mrs. Marykutty Vidyavathi, of SROC was initially burdened to do something for mentally challenged children because her second son Justin was born with a learning disability. After reading Rick Warren's book, The Purpose Driven Life, she began to pray to God for opportunities to serve mentally challenged children. God answered her prayer and we were able to open Sathyam Nalukettu - a disability center for mentally challenged children.

Justin's Home A school & home for differently-abled

It is an organization working for the rehabilitation of mentally handicapped children. This center provides services to children who are suffering from mental retardation, autism, down syndrome, cerebral palsy and learning disabilities.

OUR VISION

To empower the disabled population with the help of society

OUR MISSION

- To expose and develop the hidden skills and abilities in persons with disabilities
- To train and develop individual life skills
- To promote and direct employment opportunities for people with disabilities
- To remove social, cultural, and economic barriers that are associated with disabilities
- To implement a comprehensive, integrated program of research and training
- To develop rural community infrastructure in order to enhance opportunities for people with disabilities



FUTURE PLANS

Provide services to overcome physical barriers
Offer prosthetics (artificial limbs) and orthotics (devices to support and supplement weakened or abnormal joints) to remove barriers associated with physical disabilities.

Begin courses in community rehabilitation

Gain approval from ILO for conducting foundation courses in care-giving (6 month course) and DMR (MRP)

Gain approval from MG University for conducting rehabilitation courses.

Develop vocational rehabilitation programs

- Such as:
- Artificial limb manufacturing workshop
 - Printing technology
 - Umbrella making
 - File making
 - Envelope making



"Dead still speaks" – Four Things Allen Chau tells us



Brother Nelson Thomas

The sad death of the 26 year old American Evangelist John Allen Chau in the North Sentinel Island has aroused the passion of many around the world in one way or other. Many chose to condemn the efforts of this budding missionary, but some others took a balanced view and thus refused to denounce the commitment of Chau.

No doubt in his eagerness to share the love of Christ with the unreached and hostile Sentinelse tribe he broke many rules of the land. Naturally, the security agencies will find him guilty of many violations and he did pay the price for that. Activists who stand for the protection of the 'endangered tribes' also will be against any such efforts.

Worthless to the world

John Allen Chau himself knew very well of the response of the public. He wrote, "you may think I am crazy in all this but I think it's worth it to declare Jesus to these people." Yes, anyone who does not understand and follow the teachings of Christ will find it meaningless and even foolishness. But as Christians who share the same value and concern, what should be our view of the whole episode?

When Jim Elliot and other four missionaries were killed mercilessly by the Auca tribes in Ecuador on 8 January 1956, the response was the same. But after so many years we have seen the outcome of that martyrdom. That painful event led to the transformation of those murderers even the entire tribe. History very well establishes the truth, 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.'

At this juncture, without going to the controversial aspects especially the legal and security matters, let us consider what prompted John Allen Chau to travel to such a long distance risking his life to share the gospel with a very aggressive people group. Four things come to my attention.

1. He took the great commission of Christ really seriously.

While commanding His disciples to go in to all the world and preach the good news of His love, Christ spoke of every nation and even all creation. Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15. Chau realized the need to communicate the message of Christ with all the people groups that includes this tribe.

Notice what he wrote in his journal, "this is not a pointless thing. The eternal lives of this tribe is at

hand and I can't wait to see them around the throne of God worshipping in their own language as Reve 7:9, 10 states". He understood that God's eternal plan of redemption includes every tribe and nation and that reality prepared him even to die for that cause.

Is it not because of such zeal and dedication of the followers of Christ in the past that people who lived in utter darkness were led to the marvelous light of God. It was the effort of those missionaries that many evil inhuman practices like sati and cannibalism were abolished. People who lived in the remotest part in the most pathetic conditions could access modern education, health care, justice system etc. People like Chau felt, just as we enjoy life, God wants these illiterate tribes also come to out of gloom and enjoy new life in Christ. Cf. Matthew 4:14, 15; 1Peter 2:9, 10.

2. He valued every human being even the most primitive tribe.

The Lord Jesus said, "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" Mark 8:36. The Lord Jesus saw every human being as the precious, everlasting soul which is more valuable than the whole world. That is the reason why He came purposely to meet the Samaritan woman, the demon possessed man, etc. The society had already branded them as outcasts and abnormal. The Lord Jesus loved and sympathized with the marginalized and the downtrodden. Above all, He died as an atoning sacrifice for sins of the entire humanity.

John Allen was gripped by this value and love of Jesus Christ. That's why he wrote, "Please do not be angry at them or God, if I get killed." Just like the Lord Jesus He also prayed that God may forgive the boy and the others who shot arrows at him. He had no enmity or hatred against those who attacked them. He repeatedly yelled at them saying, "I am John, I love you, Jesus loves you."

He had only one desire that was so strong within him, that he ought to share the love of Christ to these helpless, ignorant people. Do we have such love and concern for strangers, the poor, the uninformed and the illiterate etc?

Sad to notice today people are concerned about animals but least bothered about the suffering human being.

(To be continued.....)



COURSE FEE

The course, food and accommodation is completely free.

COMFORT

Spacious dormitory facility is provided. Menu will be changed every day.

DONATION

Sathyam Theological Seminary is financed solely by the free will offerings God's people here and around the world. Your donations may be sent to SJS Trust.

WORK SCHOLARSHIP

All students must do the manual work to which they are assigned.

Chairman: Dr. C. V. Vidwan
Principal: Sunilmon Lukose B.Th/BCC, chathanoor,
 M.D.(BCCS, Bangalore), M.Th(BI)Chennai, P.H.D in
 Missions 10th IATA
Administrator: Dr. Matthew P. John



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS
SATHYAM
 THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
 WE CARE FOR THE BODY & THE SOUL

SATHYAM MINISTRIES

A Christian Institution to train faithful men to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and establish local assemblies according to the New Testament Pattern.

**Developing Christians of
 Influence in India**



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OUR AIM

- Teach Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology
- Teach the students to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15)
- Prepare students to fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord.
- Equip the men to establish local assemblies in the New Testament Pattern.
- Train men to preach the Gospel in various parts of India.
- Teach the laymen in the local assemblies to fulfill their duties in their respective assemblies.
- Give basic training in personal evangelism and homiletics.

WHY STUDY AT SATHYAM THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY?

- Ministry oriented training.
- Leadership training.
- Encouraging successful graduates for future ministry.
- Sports and games.
- Opportunity for research studies.

LOCATION

Sathyam Theological Seminary is situated at Kaviyoor, Thiruvalla, Pathanamthitta (DL), Kerala. We preferred this location with the aim of focusing church planting in different villages of South and North India.

COURSES OFFERED

Bachelor of Theology

It is a three year program in English. The minimum qualification is SSLC/Plus Two.

Graduation of Theology

It is a two year program in English and minimum qualification is 10th passed and above.

Certificate in Theology

It is a one year program in English and minimum qualification is 10th failed of passed.

Basic computer awareness course



PRACTICAL TRAINING

There are various ministry opportunities to help students to develop their individual ministerial skills. Every weekend students go for outreach Ministries in the nearby village and cities.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

One year is divided into three trimesters. Examinations are conducted at the end of each trimester. For a minimum pass, one has to obtain 60% aggregate marks in each subject.

CHAPEL SERVICE

We give prime priority to the Chapel Service. It is a must for every student to participate in the Morning and Evening Chapel Service. Priority students are given the experience in preaching from this service. Students will have the opportunity to lead a service and preach the Word of God.

LIBRARY

Seminary has gargantuan library having more than 50,000 books and almost all periodicals. Each year we plan to add more volumes. Books including commentaries of renowned authors, Basic Theology, Church History, Hermeneutics, Homiletics, Preaching Arts, Devotional Books, etc. with computer and internet facilities.



BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF SCIENCE

Dr Latha Christie



If for Richard Dawkins God is a delusion, for Stephen Hawking and Atkins, God is non-existent and the whole universe popped out on its own, and science has eliminated the need for a cosmic purpose. Is it true? Can scientific advances eliminate God? Is there a Creator behind the whole cosmos? If there is a Creator who is He? These are very important questions to be tackled.

More than a decade back, when I met the Lord of the Universe in a death bed while in ventilator due to a massive Pneumonia, and heard His Voice that He is giving me a new life, I knew for sure that He exists. And through the pages of the Bible, I found that this God is not only powerful but also extravagant in His love. As a scientist by profession for more than three decades, I wanted to know whether scientific evidence points to this God of the Bible or not. That propelled my research for the last few years on the origin of the universe and life—how did the whole universe start? Is it possible to know the agent and event of creation? How did the laws and constants of Physics come into existence and who controls it? If the universe has a beginning, will it have an end? How did life start on planet earth? How to account for all the complexities of life? This research gave birth to my new book—Beyond the boundaries of science: Exploring the cosmic story.

Beyond the Boundaries of Science helps the readers to think and reflect on that great question of origin that has haunted humanity throughout the ages. The book sets out on an unrelenting quest for the truth behind the origin of the cosmos and the origin of life. Like a detective trying to discover the truth by gathering all available evidence, it makes use of various approaches to empirical research, including the latest scientific evidence, to find out what happened before humanity even existed. In the light of the rapid pace of scientific developments, this book explores a few of the enduring and exciting mysteries of science and the many cosmic puzzles that accompany our greatest scientific advances. Such mysteries include quantum indeterminacy, black holes, the beginning

condition of the universe, the apparent fine-tuning of the universe, the transition to life from non-life, and transitions of one life form to another life form. The book presents all the available evidence meticulously by navigating the readers through various scientific fields like cosmology, archaeology, anthropology, biology, and geology.

As for me, the scientific investigation led me to a greater knowledge of God, the Creator of the universe and pointed me to a divine architect who has created a finely tuned universe that functions in a consistent manner expressive of the character and wisdom of its designer. The research also revealed that there are significant gaps in scientific understanding, which can only be filled by metaphysical truths, presented in the Bible and that science and Scripture are two sides of the same revelatory coin of the Creator God. I also found that the creative process described in Genesis 1 can be related to the latest scientific evidence. The details of this relation between the creation sequence to the evidence are presented in the book using a new model called Revelation model, that interprets Genesis chapter 1—as a description, divided into days of revelation, of a series of long epochs. This model could possibly solve the controversies between various Christian groups who interpret Genesis 1 differently. The evidence and interpretation presented in this book will help the reader dive into the mysteries of both science and Scripture, where faith and fact intersect. Our millennial youths should know that faith is not against reason if they have to stand boldly for the glory of God amidst such a scenario. This book is a great resource for many questioning minds. The book will be available in all bookstores by this month end (end of February 2019). You can also write to Sathyam publications if you need a copy of the book.

Dr Latha Christie is a senior scientist from Bangalore working with the DRDO, Min. of Defence for the past 31 years. She also completed her MDiv and working for the Lord.

<http://www.lathachristie.com>

LESSON 1

THREE ESSENTIALS
EVERY GOOD SERMON
MUST HAVE

Daniel Walker

**KEY CONCEPT:** *An effective sermon must have unity, purpose, and application.*

INTRODUCTION

Bryan Chappell says: "Well-constructed sermons require unity, purpose, and application."¹

When one or more of these are missing, the sermon will not be effective. Consider the two example sermons below each with three main points:

Example 1

1. The strength of Samson was in his hair
2. It is important to understand God's holy will
3. The proper way to get baptised is by immersion (under water).

Example 2

1. The Greek word for God's love is agape.
2. Esau was a hairy man.
3. Jesus was born in Bethlehem under the rule of King Herod.

In both examples, all the statements are clear, accurate, true and biblical.

But they are not sermons because they lack unity, purpose and application.

1. NO UNITY

There is no one BIG idea or single theme that unites or holds these statements together. They are just a series of random statements.

The listener will be confused: I don't understand what this person is talking about.

2. NO PURPOSE

There is no clear purpose or reason given for why the listener should pay attention. There is no explanation for why this is important and relevant.

The listener will be confused: I don't understand why I should listen.

3. NO APPLICATION

There is no relevance to the listeners lives or help to apply to life.

The listener will be confused: I don't understand how I should use this in my life.

A sermon that has some random thoughts from the Bible with no unity, purpose and application will not be effective to help God's people to grow more like Jesus. It will leave God's people confused.

**GOOD PREACHING IS HARD WORK**

Paul said to Timothy: Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word

of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

Good preaching is not easy. As preachers and pastors, we must be good workers and work hard in our preaching. It requires hours of hard work to develop a sermon that has unity, purpose and application.

"All of this means that there are no shortcuts or easy ways to produce faithful, clear sermons. Good sermon preparation always involves hard, prayerful work on the text – the of translating and thinking and reflecting and turning up other passages and asking the hard questions and wrestling to understand what God want to say. If you're afraid of hard work, then you should not be preaching regularly."²

Walter Russell Bowie also writes about the effort it takes to prepare to preach:

"Real sermons, which will feed people's minds and hearts, cannot be produced on the spur of the moment any more than ripe grain can be gathered from empty ground. There must have been preparation of the earth, sowing of the seed, patient cultivation, and then a justified trust in the long, silent processes of vital growth before the harvest can be reaped."³

But there is good news! The hard work will pay off!

"The good news is that the hard work is cumulative. Each time you do a word study, and each time you work passage by passage through a book of the Bible, God is shaping your heart and your mind. The next time you come back to preach this book, you will already have done much of the background thinking. You will be able to shop and pay attention to the parts now; it is not just the fruit of the last week spent in the study, but the last forty preaching the Bible. Good preachers, who spend their lives grappling with God's word, become better and better preachers over time."⁴

Work hard so that your sermons have unity, purpose and application.

Work hard so that your listeners understand clearly what God's Word is saying.

Work hard so that your preaching will help people to grow more like Jesus.

If you do this, you will be a good worker.

And remember, the hard work will pay off!

An effective sermon must have unity, purpose and application.

1 "Christ-Centered Preaching" Bryan Chappell, P44

2 "The Archer and the Arrow – Preaching the Very words of God." Phillip D. Jensen and Paul Grimmer, p59

3 Gibson, Scott M. Preaching with a Plan: Sermon Strategies for Growing Mature Believers (pp. 96-97). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

4 The Archer and the Arrow, p60.

(To be continued.....)

The Cruelty of Atheism

Dr. Joseph Mizzi

It's hard to defend the faith in the face of unbelief. Recently I was invited on a TV discussion about faith. The panel included a Roman Catholic priest (who happened to be a very good friend of mine), an atheist and a humanist (that's an atheist by different name).

The atheists presented themselves as non-religious, rational and scientific. They claimed that science has done away with the concept of God. Science has explained how we came about through millions of years of evolution, they said; we are not any different from other animals, it simply happened that Homo sapiens evolved a bigger brain. As humans we are not dependent on or accountable to any higher Being; we only have ourselves to decide what is good and bad for us. We can construct our ethic on the human value of love without any divine revelation. Furthermore, they said, there is no design in nature, and this is the only life that we will ever live. At death, we simply cease to exist.

It was impossible, of course, to answer in a few minutes all their claims, but I tried to expose some weaknesses and fallacies in their arguments.

I pointed out that science does not have an answer for the origin of the universe. The Big Bang theory, at best, explains how the universe unfolded, but it gives no clue as to how it all began. How can we account for the existence of the universe? Why should there be something rather than nothing? Can something come out of nothing? Science clearly states that there is no natural process that creates matter or energy. An atheist needs more faith (a blind, contrary-to-science faith) to believe that the universe has no cause. It is perfectly logical to believe that an eternal God 'created the heavens and the earth'.

Moreover science has yet to explain the origin of the genetic information in our bodies. I asked the humanist, who happened to be a computer

programmer, if software is written by chance and random processes. How then can the human genome, which is equivalent to the information in several hundreds of books, be written by blind processes? When we see a beautiful picture, we admire the artist; when we read a good book, we praise the author ... why do we find it so difficult to recognize the Mind that has written the blueprint of life?

But if, as the atheists say, we are here through millions of years of struggle for the survival of the fittest, why should we reverse the evolutionary process and adopt love as the main principle of our ethic? Why shouldn't we, if we want to be consistent with atheism, get rid of the weaker and handicapped among us to enhance human evolution?

Lord willing, my wife and I are expecting our third baby later on in June. I hope and pray that she will be a healthy baby, but what if she happens to have Down syndrome? In the atheistic worldview, people see little or no value in a handicapped child, and in fact, tests are routinely carried out during pregnancy and these children are aborted. That is cruel but consistent with atheism. As Christians, my wife and I will love, cherish and care for our baby just the same, for whether she is healthy or not, she is still made in the image of God.

Atheism is cruel. It takes away the value of human life. It takes away all hope. At death we cease to exist, our bodies are recycled and that's the end of it. On the other hand, our belief in God gives us hope that goes beyond the grave. Through his Son Jesus, we have the hope of eternal life.

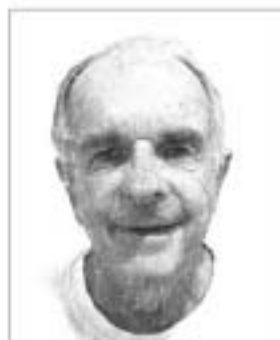
If atheism is true, life is absurd and cruel beyond words. But God is! Life is meaningful. Life is the discovery of the experience of his love, even now and for eternity.

Copyright Dr Joseph Mizzi

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TALKING TRUTH

HOW TO PREPARE & PRESENT GOSPEL TALKS



Alan Bartlem

THE MARKS OF AN EFFECTIVE PREACHER

2 Timothy 4:1-8

I. The Marks of his Message vs. 2-4

HIS PREACHING

1. The _____ of it – (Preach the Word!)

2. The _____ of it – (Be Instant!)

HIS PASSION

1. He _____ - (Reprove: to convict; rebuke)

2. He _____ saints (Exhort)

HIS PATIENCE

1. The Attitude of the _____

2. The Attitude of the _____

II. The Mark of his Mission vs. 5

HE WATCHES

HE WORKS

1. He _____ Suffering

2. He _____ Sinners

HE WITNESSES

III. The Mark of his Ministry v. 6-8

He is a _____ - (Fought = To agonize)

He is a _____ - (Finished = To bring to absolute completion)

HE IS FAITHFUL

1. He is _____ - He keeps the faith

2. He is _____

USING THE VOICE TO BEST ADVANTAGE:

ZING!

Like FedEx or a good obstetrician, preachers deliver. Week after week we face up to our fears, rise to our feet in front of a not-so-crowded church, and speak.

And here's where the rubber hits the road. Here's where you'll either spur people into life or put them to sleep. A lot depends on the work you've already

done in preparation – are you ready to be concise and crystal clear? A lot depends on your heart – are you passionate, excited by the gospel, enthused by your passage, and in love with the church the Lord Jesus has put under your care? If you're just going through the motions, it will show.

But a lot also depends on the skills and habits that contribute to your verbal energy – the ingredients of vitality and verve that either enliven or deaden the same words from the lips of two different speakers.

Sometimes we call it "personality" – the charisma, warmth, or charm that makes or breaks the careers of presidential candidates, TV anchors and megachurch pastors alike. But what exactly is it?

I call it a 'Zing' thing. It's zest and freshness and energy. You know it when you meet it. The communication zing I'm talking about comes from deep reserves of intelligence and graciousness and humour and wisdom. This zing doesn't just shape the words; it also shapes the way the words are spoken. The art of delivery. The pitch, the pace, the punch ... the perfectly placed pauses. That's a lot of 'p' words.

So what happens when we try to muscle-up the contrast in our preaching? Could you (in your wildest dreams) be more vividly emphatic without crossing over into corny? Louder without sounding aggressive, then softer without being silent? Could you talk faster than ever before, then more deliberately than you've ever dreamed possible ... without making people laugh?

Of course, context always counts. If you're preaching to 20 people in a small room, you'll be more constrained than on a large stage. But the same advice still applies ... don't be a wimp! You'll need to paint in bolder colours and broader brushstrokes than you expect just to keep people awake!

*"Saving Eutychus" Miller & Campbell

(To be continued.....)



BANGALORE NEWS

Vatican's doctrinal office, Indian theologians discuss Christian faith in India



A delegation from the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) and representatives of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) concluded a 3-day theological meeting in the southern Indian city of Bangalore, a CBCI press release has said. It said the January 21-24 theological symposium on Christian faith in a multicultural context was organized by the CBCI at St. John's Medical College. Forty-four 44 bishops and theologians from India participated in the colloquium. The Vatican delegation was headed by CDF prefect, Jesuit Cardinal Luis Ladaria, and the Indian side had representatives from the 3 ritual Churches of India – the Latin, the Syro-Malabar and the Syro-Malankara – that together comprise the CBCI, the apex body of the Catholic Church in India.

National Dalit Christian Artists Forum Set Up

A three-day Dalit Christian Artists workshop was held from 18th to 20th January 2019 at Indian Social Institute, Bangalore. Around 17 Dalit Christian artists from different parts of India, belonging to various denominations, participated in the workshop. The highlight of the event was the artists coming together to form a National Dalit Christian artist's forum to acknowledge and appreciate the Dalit artists who are



usually not recognised by the society. Fr. Devasagayaram, the Secretary for CBCI Office for SC/BC and Fr. Selva, the ISI director motivated the artists to come out with Dalit arts with Christian faith perspective. They insisted that the arts should not only bring out the pathetic reality of the Dalits but should also bring out the faith aspect as a Christian value of Hope which is one of the core values of Christianity. The artists also shared their artworks with other artists. Ms. Sarianna and Mr. Jussi, visitors to the workshop, shared their experience of art work with Dalit Christian artists. On 20th, an exhibition was held by displaying the artworks done by the artists. Mr. Kennedy the Regional SC/ST Commission joint secretary welcomed the gathering. Mr. Inbakumar, General Secretary of Students Christian Movement of India (SCMI) opened the exhibition. In his address, he said that Dalits have their own culture which is very rich and we should appreciate it and tell the society and the whole world about its richness. He also insisted that we should make use of our art forms as weapons of Dalit Liberation. The artists felt happy about their forum and the purpose of the forum is to identify and encourage the Dalit Christian artists. They also plan to conduct training programs for the young people, so that their artistic talents are nurtured. Mr. Robinson, one of the National Coordinators for the CBCI Office for SC/BC did the logistics of the workshop.

Christian Leaders Come Together to Appeal for Lok Sabha Seats



Christian leaders across Karnataka converged at Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Bangalore to find out the possibility of fielding Christians in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. Different leaders from the community deliberated on the matter and expressed their opinions which were positive and strong favouring the very idea itself. Christian Community Coalition, Karnataka, under the aegis of International Federation of Karnataka Christian Associations (IFKCA) organised this meeting to appeal for allocation of Lok Sabha seats for Christian community in Karnataka. IFKCA is an organization of associations of all denominations of Christians based in Karnataka and abroad and it has over 60 established branches in various taluks and districts of Karnataka, mainly in D.K., Udupi, Karwar, Chikkamagalur, Shivamogga, Mysuru, and Hassan.



Sathyam Ministries is an organisation dedicated to transforming the lives of the people and communities by showing love and care for individuals for the past 28 years. We are engaged mainly in charitable activities such as running orphanages, special schools for the mentally challenged children, mission schools, vocational training centers for women, providing free wheelchairs for the physically challenged (approx. - 100,000 wheelchairs already provided), relief works, sending our gospel team to various parts of India to spread the good news about Jesus and to serve the poor and organizing church leaders conferences all over India. Moreover, we carry out evangelical programmes and provide services to the people even in the outskirts of India. We, through Christ, continue our steadfast labor of love in proclaiming the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus, and our personal ministry to the saints and the unsaved. We strive to restore dignity and self-worth to the down-trodden of society, irrespective of their religion, caste, creed, race or gender.

JOIN US.

BE A PART OF OUR MINISTRY. Every good deed needs constant support. We need your good wishes. You can help in the following ways and contribution at any level will be greatly appreciated.

- By remembering us in your prayers.
- By sponsoring a child.
- Be part of a mission team in our mission fields.
- By providing ideas that can be executed to enhance our work and activity.
- By providing for donations, funds and other financial aid for the organization.
- By visiting our schools and orphanages to encourage our children.
- By helping spread awareness about the cause among family members, peer groups, colleagues and other social networks.
- By volunteering your time at Sathyam Ministries.
- By contributing in any ways possible.



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INDIA NEWS

In Navsari tribal village, 'ban Christian entry' banners spring up



Banners and boards have sprung up in Navsari district's Gandeva village, dominated by tribals, announcing a "ban on entry of outsider Christians". Local religious tribals, who have put up the banners, said that the "ban" was to prevent "outsiders from coming to the village and converting tribal Hindus". Written in Gujarati, a banner at the village entry point on Haripura street read: "Christi dharm parmar tamam bhai-behano Gandeva Haripura faliya ma bahano koipan vyakti e faliya ma pravesh karvo nahi (All the outsider brothers-sisters of Christian religion, should not enter into Haripura street)." The village has a population of 7,500 with majority of them belonging to Halpati community, a Scheduled Tribe, while others are Bakshipanch.

Hindu Version of Feng Shui Leads to Demolition of Church Building in Southern India

Hard-line religious extremists on Jan. 9 tore down a church building in southern India because it was built on the west side of a village, which they said violated Hindu principles of placement and positioning, sources said. The Vastu Shastra architectural and planning principles, a Hindu version of Feng Shui, were said to oppose the construction late last year of the church building in Namepadu village, Muppalla Mandal, Guntur District, in Andhra Pradesh state. Saying the building's placement opposed Hindu beliefs, the village president and her husband called a meeting of Hindus and Christians on Jan. 9.



Asia Bibi Is Officially Free: Pakistani Court Upholds Acquittal



Pakistani judges upheld their acquittal of Asia Bibi and she is now free to leave the country to join her family in Canada. After being imprisoned and placed on death row for some eight

years for purportedly insulting Islam, the Christian mother is finally a free woman. As Christian Headlines previously reported Bibi was arrested in 2010 when several Muslim women sparked an argument with her for offering water to other Muslim women after she, a Christian, had already sipped from the cup. Bibi was arrested for insulting the prophet Muhammad under the Islamic country's blasphemy laws. Bibi was held in prison until October 2018 when a panel of three-judges reversed her sentence for lack of evidence. After Bibi was released riots broke out in the streets, many people calling for her to either be killed or for the court to reincarcerate her. Protesters also called for the execution of the judges who acquitted her. Muslim radicals filed an appeal after the conviction was overturned which forced Bibi to stay in Pakistan. The Christian mother was immediately placed under protective custody in a discrete location while the court reviewed the overturned conviction.

Christian Acquitted of Blasphemy Charge after Two Others Sentenced to Death in Pakistan



A judge in Pakistan has acquitted a Christian accused of blasphemy one month after two Christians were sentenced to death in an online blasphemy case, sources said. Kasur

District Additional Sessions Judge Ijaz Ahmed Bosal dropped charges against Pervaiz Masih, 38, on Jan. 15 after prosecutors failed to submit any evidence against him. Masih's attorney, Aneeqa Maria of The Voice Society, told Morning Star News the prosecution failed to present even one witness against him during the three-year trial in Punjab Province. The case against him was registered on Sept. 2, 2015. Maria said this was also one of the rare cases under Pakistan's controversial blasphemy laws in which the accused was granted bail just 20 days after the submission of the charge-sheet against him. Pakistan ranked fifth on Christian support organization Open Doors 2019 World Watch list of the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian.



20 Killed, 111 Wounded in ISIS Bombing at Catholic Cathedral

A Roman Catholic Cathedral was struck by horror and tragedy during Sunday Mass this weekend when two bombs exploded killing at least 20 people and wounding over 100. According to the Associated Press, congregants stampeded out of the Philippines based Jolo Cathedral following the first explosion. About one minute after the first explosion, military personnel and police officers began to rush into the building when a second bomb, located near the church's entrance, went off. According to police reports, at least 20 people were killed in the blasts and 111 people were wounded. Of the 20 fatalities, 15 were civilians and five were military troops. Of those wounded the AP reports that 17 troops, two police officers, 2 coast guard members and 90 civilians were injured.

33 Vietnamese Christians Are Attacked, Raided after They Refuse to Worship Buddha



33 Vietnamese Christians were terrorized by government officials after they refused to

worship Buddha. According to International Christian Concern, Hmong Christians in Phá Lôm village, Tam Hôp commune, Nghệ An province were given an ultimatum by officials – renounce Jesus or face consequences. Pastor Hoang Van Pa told the ICC that four of the Christians were beaten and arrested and the village was raided three times, twice in November and then again at the beginning of December. After the raids, the ICC reports that authorities from the Vietnamese Interdisciplinary Inspection Team put 33 of the Christians in the community on public trial where they were asked to “abandon their religion and worship the Buddha statue instead.” CBN News reports that early last year, the Vietnamese government passed legislation which gave the communist government greater control over religious practices in the country.

Jailed For 'Blasphemy' 2 Years Ago; Christian Former Governor Of Jakarta Is Now Free



The former Christian governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, has been freed from prison after serving almost two years behind bars for blasphemy. Purnama, known as “Ahok,” was jailed in May

2017 for allegedly insulting the Quran by insisting that his political rivals were deceiving people by using the Islamic text to stop Muslims being led by non-Muslims. On the morning of Jan. 24, Indonesian authorities released the politician over three months early as a result of his good behavior while incarcerated. “Free in the morning,” he tweeted late Wednesday night. “Basuki Tjahaja Purnama got out of the (detention centre) around 7.30am,” his Secretary Ima Mahdiah told journalists, according to the Straits Times. “I am very thankful to God for allowing me to spend time in prison,” Ahok said just prior to his release, according to Christian Today. The politician has also requested that supporters do not hold a parade to welcome him home, citing a desire to keep the peace and not disturb public order. He also implored his followers to stay engaged in the political process.

2 Iranian Christians Refuse Judges' Offer to Renounce Faith, Sent Back to Jail

Two Iranian Christians this month refused to renounce their faith in court in exchange for freedom and were sent back to jail and told to await a verdict.



Saheb Fadaie and Fatemeh Bakhteri, both Christians, were asked on Jan. 15 by their respective judges, Hassan Babaee and Ahmad Zargar, to renounce their faith, according to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), a United Kingdom-based organization which supports religious freedom around the world. The two, though, would not deny Christ during the court hearing in Tehran. “They were subsequently told to expect a verdict in the appeal against their conviction ... within the next few days,” CSW reported. Their sentences for discussing Christian doctrine were 18 months for Fadaie and 22 months for Bakhteri. They were sentenced in September and had filed an appeal, which was heard Jan. 15 when the Iranian judges asked them to renounce their faith.

Muslim Police Officers, Others Beat and Arrest Christian in Kenya



Muslim policemen on Saturday (Jan. 19) beat and arrested a Christian man on the outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya in retaliation for

refusing to recant Christianity, sources said. Accompanied by two Muslims of Somali descent who had attacked him previously, the policemen arrived at the home where Hassan (surname withheld for security reasons) lives with his widowed mother, and the officers along with the two others punched, kicked, trampled and struck him with blunt objects, relatives said.

Grieving Christians Baffled by Muslim Fulani Herdsmen Aggression in Nigeria



Christians in a village in Kaduna state, in north-central Nigeria, don't understand why Muslim Fulani herdsmen shot a 70-year-old Christians and wounded two others there last month. They do know the herdsmen's cattle destroyed several of their crops last year, that since the attack many Christians have fled, and that many of those who have stayed are afraid to go to church meetings. Christians in Ginden Dutse village, near Jagindi in Jema'a County, reported the destruction of their crops by the Muslim Fulani's cattle, but they have not retaliated in any way, they said. Christians make up 51.3 percent of Nigeria's population, while Muslims living primarily in the north and middle belt account for 45 percent.



WORLD NEWS

Formerly Imprisoned Turkish Missionary Andrew Brunson Says His Captivity Fulfilled a Word of Knowledge



In a surprise appearance at a commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Toronto Blessing, Andrew Brunson spoke openly about the prophetic words and encouragement that sustained him while he was imprisoned in Turkey. And

Brunson desperately needed it. In 2016, the Brunsons were arrested. Officials released Norine after a few weeks, but they held her husband until last year. "As the time went on, I began to see that my imprisonment was part of the assignment in preparing for the harvest," Brunson says. "My imprisonment was part of our assignment to prepare for harvest," Brunson says. Brunson added, "I've imagined that satan realized that God had outmaneuvered him again. He was planning on destroying us, cutting us off, and then at some point, he becomes aware that there's a huge movement of prayer. God's people around the world are now pouring into prayer for me, but into this country, into this region, using it to sustain me, but much bigger than that, Turkey is the largest unevangelized country in the world."

New York's 'Reproductive Health Act': What the Pink Tower Says to Pro-Lifers



New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law the most radical pro-abortion bill America has seen in a very long time. The so-called "Reproductive Health Act" removes abortion and, get this, the murder of a pregnant woman's baby, from the state's criminal code. It also allows any doctor, nurse practitioner, or even midwife to perform an abortion all the way up to the moment of birth, provided the mother's "life or health" is at risk. That exception, which harkens back to *Doe v. Bolton*, is so expansive you could drive a mac truck through it, and includes "all factors — physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age — relevant to the well-being of the patient." In other words, there's no accountability or enforcement mechanism, and the healthcare provider has unfettered freedom to decide what constitutes a threat to "life or health." Governor Cuomo called this bloody, legal monstrosity "a historic victory for New Yorkers and for our progressive values." He then celebrated by ordering One World Trade Center—A.K.A., the "Freedom Tower"—and other New York landmarks to be lit up pink. This "achievement," he said, will "shine a bright light forward for the rest of the nation to follow."

Harvard Medical School Rewriting Their Curriculum to be More Transgender-Friendly



Harvard Medical School is undergoing a "comprehensive" review of what it teaches students about transgenderism as part of a three-year plan to unearth "wrong ideas"

about gender and change what is taught in the classroom, the school says. Last fall Harvard launched the Sexual and Gender Minorities Health Equity Initiative, a three-year plan to better equip students so they can be ready to assist transgender patients. To accomplish that, curriculum will be rewritten and traditional concepts about gender will be jettisoned, CBN News reports.

Lesbian Couple Plans to Help Their 5-Year-Old Boy Become a Girl

A married lesbian couple in Britain says they will help their 5-year-old boy transition to a girl in a few years. According to RedState.com, Greg Rogers, a woman who identifies as a male, and wife Jody, have a 5-year-old son, Jayden, who "hates



everything about being a boy," Greg told the Daily Record that Jayden needed an operation to correct her hearing, but when she began talking she told her parents she hated wearing boys' clothes. "At first, we thought it was probably just a phase but it's been consistent ever since," Greg said. "She is adamant she's a girl. 'We've had people saying we're using Jayden for attention and that she just wants to be a girl because I changed sex. It's ridiculous. Jayden knows nothing about my past. She just knows me as dad.'"

Making Freedom Great Again: US Jumps Six Spots on Global Freedom Index

In just one year, the U.S. climbed six places to 12th worldwide on the Heritage Foundation's 25th annual "Index of Economic Freedom." The U.S. index score of 76.8 is the highest since 2011, the report says. Heritage bases its annual rankings on a dozen different measures of economic freedom, such as tax burden, protection of property rights, tax burden trade policies, labor laws, judicial effectiveness. The reason for the U.S. gain was mainly the tax cuts and deregulatory efforts under Trump. The gains would have been bigger had it not been for the growing budget deficits, minimum wage laws, and Trump's trade battles. Nevertheless, it's a welcome relief from the previous eight years, which saw economic freedom steadily decline.

'I'm Not Here to Represent a Religion': New York Governor Stands Behind New Abortion Law



New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said he stands behind the new state law that legalizes abortion up until birth. Cuomo told WAMC radio that he supported the "Reproductive Health Act," which he signed in January. The law allows for abortions up to the point of birth if the life or health of the mother is at risk or the baby is not viable. "With the signing of this bill, we are sending a clear message that whatever happens in Washington, women in New York will always have the fundamental right to control their own body," he said last week. Cuomo is Catholic, but some Catholic bishops have said they would support excommunicating him from the church. However, Cuomo said in the radio interview that he doesn't "represent" the church. "The Catholic Church doesn't believe in a woman's right to choose...I understand their religious view," he said. "I'm not here to represent a religion." "I'm here to represent all the people and the constitutional rights and limitations for all the people, not as a Catholic."

History Channel Announces New Show Called Jesus: His Life



The History channel announced that they will be releasing a new TV mini-series that follows the life of Jesus as both a man and the Messiah, this March. The show which is called Jesus: His Life is set to be an eight-part television series that show's Jesus' life from the perspective of those who were around him. The Christian Post reports that episodes will show Jesus' life through the perspective of friends, family, and followers including, Joseph, Mary, John the Baptist, Peter, Judas, Caiaphas, Pontius Pilate and Mary Magdalene. According to TV Series Finale, each episode will take viewers on a journey through Jesus' life starting with his virgin birth and ending with his resurrection.

Irish Parliament Advances Bill that Will Outlaw the Sale of Israeli Goods



Ireland's lower house approved the Occupied Territories Bill which will outlaw the sale of products from Israel's Golan Heights, West Bank, and east Jerusalem. According to CBN News, the Irish Parliament's lower house passed the bill with a 75 to 45 vote on Thursday, sending it up the ladder to the third step in the process of the bill becoming a law. After the vote propelled the legislation forward, members of Parliament took to social media to share the news. When Israeli officials received news about the vote, they immediately voiced extreme disappointment over the outcome calling it "a clear expression" of discrimination. A statement from the Israeli Ministry reads, "This is a clear expression of obsessive discrimination that should be rejected with disgust. It continues saying that the bill "is indicative of hypocrisy and anti-Semitism."

Israel Launches Iron Dome Missile System to Tel Aviv



Israel launched the Iron Dome missile system to Tel Aviv as conflict rose between Syria and Hamas in Gaza. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke at an army base in southern Israel, saying he was "confident of our ability to defeat the enemy. "Iran has declared its intention to destroy us with nuclear weapons, weapons we must interdict. But they are also building up forces in our region, a forward base in Lebanon, with the help of Hezbollah, and a southern front, supported by Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Now they want to set up another front, on the Golan, right on our border. We must fight all these things," Netanyahu added. IDF says it is "determined to defend the citizens of the State of Israel."

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