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‘HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY’

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★ ABOUT TRUTH ALIVE ★

Ever since the first issue in 2009, Truth Alive has been a leading monthly magazine for Christian families around the globe. It is published by Truth Ministries, a humanitarian charity into social ministry, education and evangelization.



“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”

1 Corinthians 11:1

EDITORIAL



Dearly beloved in Christ,

Greetings to you in the most precious name of our loving Saviour Jesus Christ!

As we read in 1 Corinthians 11:1, Apostle Paul asks the church in Corinth to imitate him as he imitates Christ. This instruction was not only to the Corinthian church, it is applicable today, for every believer and the present day church as well. As Paul instructed, we ought to follow Jesus Christ alone and no one else.

Jesus our Saviour is our only role model who should be followed. Instead, we have followed many other prominent or famous “figures” who later disappoint us when they have failed in an area of life. Humans are never perfect. The only perfect person who lived on the earth was, is and will be Jesus Christ. He never fails us. We can always look up to Him for everything.

We are not followers of any person or religion, instead, we are followers of Jesus and hence we are to emulate His life and character. Jesus was passionate to obey His Heavenly Father and only perform His Father's will. There was, is and never will be anyone like Jesus who was perfect in obedience, His forgiving nature can be compared to none, He was filled with compassion, loved humanity even if it meant death on the cross, zealous to the point that He even got angry at the crowd for turning the temple of God into a business market. Jesus is the only infallible person.

The only person we need to strive to imitate is Jesus Christ. We cannot do it in our own strength. We are all humans and we fail but Jesus never fails. It is only because of the grace of God that we can enter the kingdom of God. Ephesians 2:8-9, Apostle Paul says “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

Strive to be more like Jesus. As we spend more time with God in praying, singing songs and meditating on His word, let our lives be purified. God has given us the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to edify us.

I pray that the articles in this issue of the magazine will encourage your walk with God and help you to be more like Jesus. All things are possible through Him if you humble and depend on God.

God bless you!

Dr. C.V. Vadavana
Founder & Chairman
Sathyam Service Trust

Do You Believe?

“Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”

Genesis 15:6

Joni Eareckson Tada



The panel of disability ministry specialists sat on the platform of the small auditorium. Two hundred students of Russia's first college for training social workers were gathered there to hear the specialists talk about disability policies in the United States. The specialists, as agreed, spent the hour talking about various issues such as housing, independent living, and employment. They were careful to respect the wishes of the school by not speaking of their faith but rather focusing on the issues at hand.

At the end of the presentation the moderator asked for questions. Several hands went up, but one student was most enthusiastic. He stood up and asked a question that shocked everyone: “Do you believe in God?”

The room was silent. Some students looked at the teacher; others nodded encouragement, eager to hear the answer.

The atmosphere became electric as the panelists leaned forward in their chairs and shared their testimony. The students had come to learn about human solutions to suffering, but what was on their minds was the most fundamental of all questions: God.

The essence of humanity, in both society and the individual, is found in how we answer that question. If we believe in God, it will make a difference in how we live and learn. The question should be asked on a daily basis as we ponder a decision, face a crisis, undergo a temptation. Our affirmative answer forces us to trust God and to yield to his way of life. And best of all, God affirms in our hearts that he is indeed in control. Do you believe in God?

Father, God of all, I believe in you. I affirm that your existence will govern my life today.

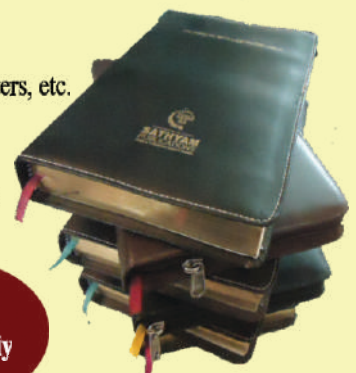


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THE DECLINE OF THE ASSEMBLIES

DR. ALEXANDER KURIAN

Is the Revival Movement in Need of a Revival?

Points to Ponder

The original Brethren renewal was a dynamic **revival movement** (not at all a denominational movement) that significantly altered the image of the 19th century Christendom. It witnessed great revitalizing and enlightening manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The only vision and objective of the early Brethren was to recapture the outlook and beliefs of the early church as revealed in the pages of the New Testament. From a very small beginning, this revival movement resulted in thousands of congregations. It had a far reaching influence across the world. Their revival spirit rocked surrounding communities and denominational churches. The Brethren were blessed with outstanding preachers, teachers, and brilliant expositors of the Word. Their spiritual dynamism and Christ-centered attractiveness blessed all those who came in contact with them.

I feel privileged and proud to be a part of this great revival movement. What an outstanding venture for the testimony of the truth of God's Word! I have served the Lord in full time ministry for more than 40 years in the company of the Brethren (I use Brethren only as an identifying name, not as a denominational label. I believe an identifying name becomes a necessity in the denominational confusion that exists today). As I wanted to know more about this great revival movement, its origins, theology, and its most cherished distinctives, I made it a point to read and study extensively on their history. This study has blessed me and at the same time, opened my eyes to some hard realities usually ignored by the Brethren. To address some specific issues I have written two abridged and summarized books on their history and beliefs (only one is available in print now: *Faith and Practices of The Brethren*, amazon.com). The spiritual dynamism of the Brethren deserves to be written in golden letters in the pages of church history.

But what is happening to the assemblies today? **Why are they in decline?** A huge drop of assemblies and members have happened within the last 30-40 years. Why many assembly halls have been closed? How will we explain the demise of many assemblies? **Why do many believers leave**

Many young people who were brought up in the assemblies (who still have admiration for their assembly heritage) have abandoned the assemblies; many of them for valid reasons. Why and how have we lost our influence and spiritual dynamism? In places where the Brethren were very influential and numerically strong with high profile spiritual leaders, and vibrant congregations, they are barely surviving with one or two halls here and there, with very few in number, mainly 3-4 elderly brothers and few faithful sisters. Though this is happening in many parts of the world (with very few exceptions), it may be more evident in UK and North America, New Zealand, and Australia. Some assemblies have lost their identity and have joined with other evangelical groups. Others have labeled themselves as independent churches and do not wish to be known as "assemblies." In most places, very few assemblies are newly formed.

Since this is a wounding truth to our spiritual pride, we do not want to discuss it. It is painful, shameful and humbling to acknowledge and admit the decline and demise of the assemblies. But to my surprise, most assembly believers are not concerned about it. We still maintain a spiritual elitism, spiritual pride, and critical of all other Christian groups. I am just honestly writing what I have seen all through my life and ministry in the assemblies (and I don't want to be politically correct to be popular). Here and there some brave, honest, and concerned souls have called our attention to this hurting truth of our decline. But it is only like a cry in the wilderness. They are usually misunderstood as not being loyal to the assemblies. We tend to ignore them. But in the recent past, eminent servants of God with great burden and anguish of soul have addressed this issue at least to some extent, including esteemed Brother Roy Hill of Bristol ("What is happening to UK Assemblies?" 2005, Plymouthbrethren.org/article/1707) and in the Q & A column of Precious Seed Magazine (Vol.69, Issue 4, 2014) Richard Collins answered the question, "Why are people leaving assemblies and meeting elsewhere?" No one can deny that this is really happening. Some concerned brethren are seriously alarmed by this trend. They have not tried to shy away from this issue though they might not have touched upon all the reasons. They have addressed some issues as it is more relevant to their region and locality.

Others have become very defensive and ignored the “real” reasons; still others who believe we are perfectly all right. They are never willing to discuss these matters.

What has really happened to the renewal movement that created the Plymouth Brethren assemblies? **Why are many young people, including those who are born and brought up in the assemblies, leaving us?** What are the real issues that have caused the decline of the assemblies? Are we not really concerned and burdened about this problem? Don't we feel responsible at least to some extent? Are we trying to dump the whole blame on people who have left us, or on the rampant carnality, lack of spirituality and the influence of superficial Christianity/Churchianity around us and wash our hands? Are others always at fault or are we at fault? Or is it a problem on both sides? Whatever be the cause, I believe there are important lessons to be learned from this situation. We must be willing to admit this problem and seek God's will in trying to do what we can to remedy this situation, at least to some extent. It may need a spiritual revolution, another great revival, willingness to act, and to make appropriate changes disregarding some enslaving traditions. This venture has to be soaked in fasting and prayer. I have seen people always talking about the need to pray for these matters, but never willing to act.

Numerical Growth of the Church

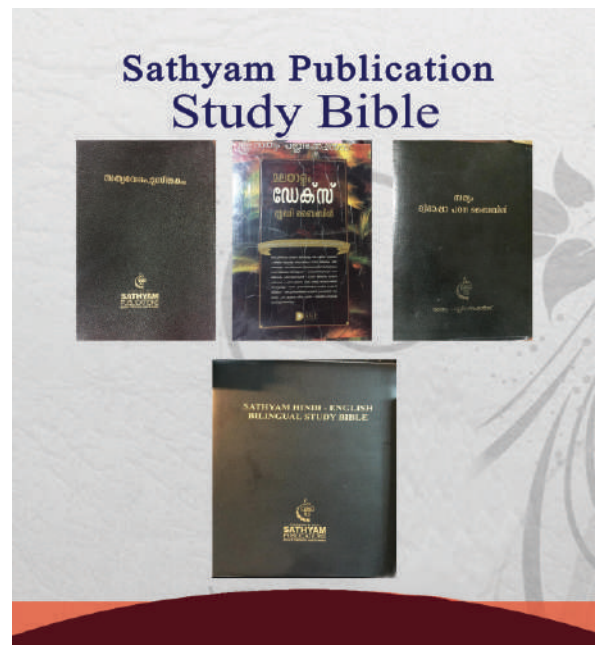
Growing up in the assemblies, I have **always** heard that the Lord does not look at numbers, but only the spiritual quality and condition of the assemblies. I have heard preachers trying to prove this point from the Lord's message to the seven churches (Rev.2-3). No doubt, quality is more important than quantity. But later, I discovered from the Word that our neglect of numerical growth is not Scriptural. The study of the Book of Acts convinced me that **God expects His church to grow numerically and spiritually**. The remarkable “church growth report” is given at least 16 times in Acts by Dr. Luke. Though we don't need to have an unhealthy addiction to statistics, Luke had a fondness for the numerical growth of the church and he readily reports it throughout his account of the history of the early church. If we study it deeply, it is not difficult to find that this is a part of Luke's theological purpose. Obviously, when Jesus' disciples ended up doing what was expected of them in the power of the Holy Spirit, it resulted in the numerical growth of churches which was in the plan and purpose of God. This was also very true in the early stages of the Brethren movement and we all believe that the numerical growth of the assemblies was the will of God.

It is the Lord's purpose that the churches grow spiritually and numerically – qualitatively and quantitatively. **The growth we find in Acts was numerical, spiritual, and geographical.** This still happens in many mission fields and I have witnessed it.

We do not have to seek to build attendance through gimmicks, entertainment, and marketing strategies. But when we are faithful to God's Word and diligent in evangelism, God will save souls. **“And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved”** (Acts 2:47). From a practical point of view, we may have to review our methods and strategies, and be willing to make appropriate changes, and be open to the Spirit to lead and guide us, rather than slavishly following our vain traditions. Then growth will happen. It seems to me that our tendency to downplay the numerical growth, probably is because many of our assemblies have no growth to report!

Let us not propagate the idea that small is always good and the Lord is pleased with small gatherings (I have heard this numerous times from the pulpits, even with suggestions about the maximum number in an assembly)! Then we try to scripturalize this concept with our own clever ideas. Let us not try to portray all large gatherings of God's people as unscriptural. If the Lord enlarges our assemblies, He will also show us the way to overcome the deficiencies and limitations of being large. Be willing to follow His direction. In some parts of the world, we also have large assemblies that stick with the New Testament pattern and principles. We are not at all sympathetic to the mega churches that do not honor the Word of God. But let us not promote a false “theology of smallness.” Both small and large churches have advantages and disadvantages. Some assemblies became smaller and smaller every day and finally ceased to exist!

(To be continued....)



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THE IMITATORS OF GOD :

ROBIN SMIT

We are to be imitators of God. Mimic Him. Imitate the pattern He has set. The amplified version says to *imitate Him as well-beloved children imitate their fathers*. The Message Bible says *watch what God does, and then you do it. Like children who learn proper behavior from their parents*.

I love that this verse starts with BE... just BE an imitator. You don't have to work at it. You don't have to practice it. You just have to BE. BE who you are IN CHRIST. You were made in the image and likeness of God. Genesis 2:7 says that He breathed life into man and he became a living being. In the Targum (the Aramaic translation of the Old Testament), the Jewish sages have translated "living being" as "speaking spirit." He made us a speaking spirit, made in His image, to create our world through our words, just like Him.

Romans 4:17 says God calls those things that are not into existence. Mark 11:22-23 shows us that God's faith "speaks." Job 22:28 says "you shall decree a thing and it shall be established." And of course, one of my favorites is 2 Cor 4:13 *But having the same spirit of faith according to that having been written: "I believed, therefore I have spoken," we also believe and therefore speak*.

God is a speaker! He spoke everything we see around us into existence. Hebrews 11:3 says, *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear*. It says faith understands. It understands that the worlds were framed by the (rhema - spoken) word of God. Faith understands that the spoken word contains power to frame the worlds. Power to accomplish or bring to pass what is spoken.

The word in Hebrew is *dabar* and is more than just the spoken word,

it's an act... something carried out or completed. *Dabar* is not just sounds... it's words that have within them the energy or power to accomplish what is said. God said "Let there be light. And there was light" "We lay hands on the sick and say be healed. And they are healed." We are speaking spirits just like our Daddy! The words we speak carry within them the power to accomplish what was spoken.

Isaiah 38:7b says "..... that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken;" In Hebrew it says Yahweh will do this. What will Yahweh do? The rest of the verse tells us, **this thing that is spoken (*dabar*)**.

John 14:13a says *And whatever you might ask in My name, this I will do*. Whatever you ask... whatever you call for. It also means whatever you understand. Remember Hebrews 11:3 says "faith understands that the worlds were framed by God's *spoken* word." Faith in us (His faith) understands that we are made in His image and likeness, and in Christ our worlds are framed by our spoken words. They have the power to accomplish what we say!

Let's read Isaiah 38:7b in light of John 14:13. *Yahweh will do this thing that is spoken (by us) IN CHRIST*. We are in Christ and what we speak has power! We are speaking spirits just like our Daddy.

Prov 18:21 tells us that death and life are in the power of our tongue. One meaning of the word power is border. I like that... it's within the "borders" of our tongue.. our words, what we say! One of the synonyms of border is hem. Hem yourself in with the border of IT IS FINISHED!!

A border is an edge or boundary of something. So begin speaking and framing your world with this as your border..... IT IS FINISHED!

To Be Rich, Is Not What You Have In Your Bank Account, But What You Have In Your Heart:

Someone asked the richest man in the world, Bill Gates, Is there anyone richer than you in the world ? Bill Gates replied, Yes, there is a person who is richer than me. He then narrated a story.

"It was during the time when I wasn't rich or famous. I was at the New York Airport when I saw a newspaper vendor. I wanted to buy one newspaper but found that I didn't have enough change. So I left the idea of buying and returned it to the vendor. I told him of not having the change. The vendor said, 'I am giving you this for free. On his insistence I took the newspaper.

Coincidentally, after two to three months, I landed at the same airport and again I was short of change for a newspaper. The vendor offered me the newspaper again. I refused and said that I can't take it for I don't have change today too. He said, 'You can take it, I am sharing this from my profit, I won't be at loss.' I took the newspaper.

After 19 years I became famous and known by people. Suddenly I remembered that vendor. I began searching for him and after about 1½ months of searching, I found him. I asked him, 'Do you know me?' He said, 'Yes, you are Bill Gates. I asked him again, 'Do you remember once you gave me a newspaper for free? The vendor said, 'Yes, I remember. I gave you twice.' I said, 'I want to repay the help you had offered me that time. Whatever you want in your life, tell me, I shall fulfill it. The vendor said, 'Sir, don't you think that by doing so you won't be able to match my help?' I asked, 'Why?' He said, 'I had helped you when I was a poor newspaper vendor and you are trying to help me now, when you have become the richest man in the world. How can your help match mine ?'

That day I realized that the newspaper vendor is richer than I am, because he didn't wait to become rich to help someone. People need to understand that the truly rich are those who possess a rich heart rather than lots of money. It's very important to have a rich heart

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HOW OUR EARTHLY LIFE WOULD BE ?

T.S JAMES

Praise God for His sustaining grace and mercy even in this troublesome days. I just want to share a sermon outline for the meditation. Kindly take some time to ponder over this and try to get the message for our spiritual edification.

Daniel: 12 : 13 . " But go your way till the end. And you shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the day . " . " What was the secret of Daniel's Victorious life to get such a Unique Commendation from God ? "

There are two important aspects involved in this unique commendation.

1. God's Permission. It involves a releasing order. "Go". For everything God has an appointed time. Even for Birth and also for Death. Eccle : 3 : 1 .

2. God's Promise.

A. Promise to Rest.

B. Promise to Resurrection.

C. Promise to Reward.

All these things are worth to consider, but I would like to relay on Daniel's Victorious life which enabled him to get such Unique Commendation from God. The Key Theme of the Book of Daniel is "The Most High Rules in the Kingdom of Man".

Daniel : 4: 34,35. Daniel lived up to his name. Daniel means " God is my Judge ". Daniel lived his life before the all seeing eyes of the Lord, and did the things that pleased Him. His ultimate focus was to accomplish God's perfect will and purpose in his life.

Similar glorious finishing of life we see in the life of Apostle Paul. 2.Tim : 4:7,8." I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept faith, Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all

who have loved his appearing."

7 " Fold Secret's of Daniel's Victorious Life.....

1. He was a man of Determination . Dani: 1:8. The key to Daniel's successful life and ministry was his determination to holiness." But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." He was a resolute man.

2. He was a man that Trusted and Believed in a Sovereign God. Dani: 1:10-12, 2:16, 9:4, 14. As a devoted Jew Daniel knew that there was but one true God, the Lord Jehovah, is the one who ruled all things with Wisdom and Power. In all the aspects of Daniel's life and service , he depended totally on the God of Heaven who is Sovereign over all things. Dani : 4:34-35.

3. He was a Disciplined man of Prayer. Dani: 2:18; 6:10; 9:3; 10:1. Jewish people accustomed to pray the third, sixth, and the ninth hours of the day, and Daniel carried that discipline with him to Babylon. Dani: 6:10.

Psalms : 55:17." Jesus Christ never taught His disciples to preach but to pray."

4. He was a man who Diligently Seeking and Studying the Word of God. Dani: 9:2. 7:16,20; 8:15;10:19; 12:8. Daniel did not study the Word to impress people, he studied it, ascertain the will of God and obey it.

5. He was a man of Concern. Dani : 2: 17-18 ; 2:49. When the king rewarded Daniel for his service, he asked him to include his friends, for they were an important part of the praying that brought the answer. And his prayer in Dan: 9 also proves this very clearly.

6. He was a man of Faithful and Upright. Dani: 6:1-5. 5:10-11; 6:16, 20, 22. He was a powerful and courageous witness to the Four Gentile Kings. Dani. 1:21. And also he was a faithful steward of the King of Kings. He did his service well, he was a faithful and dependable servant, and even his enemies couldn't find anything to

7. He was a man who sought only to Glorify God. Dani :2:28.

Dan: 2: 20-23." There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets." Daniel told the powerful monarch , giving all the glory to the Lord. This enabled even the king's to glorify the God of Danel.

Dani: 4:34-35. ; 6:25-27.During all of his long life Daniel was very strict to his own determination, strongly trusted and believed in God, prayed faithfully, studied the scriptures, very earnest concern of others, sought to serve God, and careful in witnessing and glorifying God. And also the Lord always guided him, protected him, and used him for His glory.

As the end of his life drew near, it was enough to know that he had been faithful to the Lord and would one day rest from his labours Rev: 14:13. He will one day raised from the dead and receive the reward the Lord has allotted for him. Mat: 25:21.

" I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness."

Psalms : 17:15. 1.John : 3:1-3. Romans : 8:29.

What a glorious finishing of Daniel's earthly life. It is not that important how we begin our earthly life, but it is very important that how we finish our earthly life..... Let's opt for it..... it.....



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THIS IS THE QUESTION THAT EVERYONE IS ASKING

Bob Shank

Dear Joe,

Am I a racist? *Are you?*

Writing this weekly message - blog? article? newsletter? - every Monday is stretching. For 30 years, I've sought to challenge you and my other friends (nearly 5000) to address the hot-off-the-press issues of the moment looking through the lens of Scripture. *It's 4:35a as I write today's edition...*

Jabez was a welcome diversion from the Covid-19 crisis. For five weeks, this column didn't mention the pandemic, closures, facemasks, quarantines; we looked back nearly 3300 years to pick up some insights that are still worthy of emulation today. Today, the headlines have shifted; history has meshed with histrionics as a violent and indefensible act by a policeman in Minneapolis has stopped the world in its tracks.

I grew up in a town surrounded by orange groves. The kids in the annual class photos at school were mostly white, but definitely mixed. I played football through junior and senior highs; our huddle looked like the United Nations. Samoans, Japanese, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Blacks, Whites; with our helmets on, there weren't any differences or divisions apparent. I was a lineman, blocking for Isaac Curtis who went on to play for over a decade in the NFL; a white kid opening holes for a black kid who went to Berkley on a football scholarship.

Nothing was wrong with that picture.

If we had been more sociologically savvy - and lined up based on demographic profiles - I would have stood in the Poor White Trash contingent. My dad was a gardener - before the task was reassigned to immigrant labor - and we mowed lawns in the neighborhoods where my White Privilege friends lived. Nobody seemed overly preoccupied by those differences; I did well in school, but our social studies classes weren't out to highlight inadequacies in the way we did life.

I didn't know I was PWT: my friends at school - and, at church - didn't seem to know they were growing up with WP. When we all graduated, I was the Class President. After graduation, most of my WP friends left for college; the month after graduation, I moved into an apartment (*I was 17, and lied about my age on the rent application*) and went to work, taking classes at the local junior college at night. Vietnam was raging;

back then, the only "lottery" was drawing birthdates to determine who would be inducted into the army. *The first hundred drawn were likely to head to southeast Asia...*

Racists? Those were the KKK guys who made the news, while Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was calling the nation to reimagine the values that we claimed as foundational. Assassinations and demonstrations were historic markers, but they seemed a world away from the neighborhood, before the era of breaking news and live coverage on our ever-present mobile devices. *Am I a racist?*

I have a great friend who played quarterback for a Division One school, got his business degree and has a vita far superior to mine. I have a grandson who started life in a Zulu village in South Africa and joined our family six years ago; he's my flesh-and-blood. Our family devotes significant time and resource to support the rescue and nurture of children orphaned by crisis in South Africa. I lead a color-blind ministry that invests in the leadership of Christians whose faith-based influence can change the world and build God's Kingdom. *Am I a racist?*

"Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

The followers of Jesus have checkered histories; life apart from redemption by grace came in various deficiencies, but those definitions were left in our past when the transformation made possible by the Lord Jesus redefined us, at the core. We were all something, before; but, today, we've been made something entirely different: *washed, sanctified, justified in His Name, by His Spirit.* **Apart from the reset of redemption,** people are defined - *secretly*, or *blatantly* - by the sin that has come to define them. Because of redemption, sin no longer characterizes the follower of Jesus: we may choose to re-enact the moral failures of our past, but those choices can be challenged by the power of God that makes victory over sin the game-changing option.

Am I a racist? No sin *defines* me, though any sin could *distract* me from living up to my potential in Christ. Being aware of the *egregious path* and choosing, instead, the *righteous path* is the daily exercise of following Jesus.



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Religious Persecution by China's Communist Party Intensifies: Christians Say 'We Won't Agree to These Requirements'

Andrea Morris



The next wave of persecution against Chinese Christians has escalated as government officials are now forcing house churches to join the Three-Self Church which is run by the state. The authorities in Ninghai county raided a church because the director refused to join the official church. They damaged sections of the church and took down a cross from the building's roof. Congregants were told that 27 additional church buildings throughout the area would have their crosses removed. 'They Threatened Our Children': Chinese Christian Families Facing Separation and Relentless Persecution.

Chinese Christian Tells of Increasing Persecution By Communist Government Chinese Government Orders Low-Income Families to Abandon Their Christian Faith or Lose Financial Aid. China's Communists Remove Hundreds of Crosses from Churches in Crackdown Campaign "When they demolished the cross, we, elderly believers, got on our knees to pray in tears," one parishioner explained. "We felt pain in our hearts every time they hit it. We can't stand up to them and prevent the forced demolition.

After the state started pressuring churches into following the Communist party, they insisted that the national flag take the place of all crosses and images of President Xi Jinping and Chairman Mao to be hung up inside all churches. Surveillance cameras were installed inside churches. Worship services can only be lead by government-approved pastors. Church finances were seized by the government and children under 18 are prohibited from entering the church. "We won't agree to these requirements," the parishioner boldly stated. Now, the Chinese Communist Party is ordering poor families of Henan, Shanxi, Jiangxi, Shandong, and other provinces who have been deeply affected by the coronavirus pandemic to renounce their faith or lose welfare benefits.

If they don't replace crosses, religious symbols, and images inside their homes with portraits of China's communist leaders, their financial assistance will be withheld. "All households without exception must display Xi Jinping portraits and take photos of themselves next to them," a Christian from Lin county told.

The faith community is perceived as a threat to Xi's regime. There are more Christians in China than Communist Party members. It's a reality that does not sit well with the party."The township Party secretary asked me to take down and throw away the cross and told me to pray to Xi Jinping from then on," another believer declared. "Xi Jinping is a man, not God. I feel saddened for the cross being taken down, but there is nothing I can do."

A religious calendar was removed from a Christian household and replaced with a poster bearing the words, "Be grateful to the Party, obey and follow the Party."And a 75-year-old Catholic man from Jiangxi's Fuzhou city, who is a military veteran was told that "veterans must follow the Communist Party, and those enjoying the minimum living benefits are not allowed to believe in God." Please continue to pray for the persecuted Christians throughout China

Bengaluru Covid Patients Leave Bills Unpaid, Christian Hospitals Seek Help:

A delegation of heads of hospitals run by Christian institutions in Bengaluru met Karnataka Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar stating some COVID-19 patient's refusal to pay bills has made it financially difficult for them to run hospitals. The delegation, led by Bengaluru Archbishop Rev Dr Peter Machado, was assured assistance "within a week".

Stating that these institutions have been running these hospitals in Bangalore for decades, Dr Sudhakar said, "The hospitals want the government to support them through rebates or taxes so they can make their ends meet. This is not about profit, but about service; they are not earning. If this they have brought to our attention as a delegation.

A I have told them we will release all payment due to these organisations within a week."

" We have told the government that we will fight against Coronavirus and we will do our best, but the ground reality is that there are three types of hospital - corporate hospitals with corporate funds, government hospitals with state funds, and then there is us. There is no profit, but we would not like to bear any losses else we will not be able to keep working," the Archbishop said. The delegation also spoke about the need for new burial grounds as all old ones are full.

Karnataka is the fourth worst affected state in India with over 1.78 lakh coronavirus cases and 80,000 active cases, with Bengaluru accounting for almost half the cases.

PRAY FOR INDIA

Christians Faced 135 Cases Of Persecution In First Half Of 2020; Believers Lynched, Sodomized

In India, 135 cases of persecution occurred in the first half of 2020, including a lynching, community ostracization, and the sodomization and murder of two Christian men, a new report has revealed.

According to a new report from the Delhi-based Evangelical Fellowship of India, amid the coronavirus pandemic lockdown, Christians faced more opposition than ever from their communities because of their faith, primarily at the hands of Hindu extremists. Between January and June, numerous reports surfaced of Christians being falsely accused, threatened, and attacked. Uttar Pradesh, ruled by the Bhartiya Janata Party, topped the persecution scale with 32 cases of hate crimes.

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India, with nearly 200 million people. However, only about 350,000 Christians live in the state.

In Odisha's Kenduguda village in Malkangiri district, a 14-year-old Christian boy was allegedly crushed to death with a stone by a group of people who then chopped the body into pieces before burying the remains in several places. In the report, police noted the victim and his family had adopted Christianity three years before the murder.

In Tamil Nadu, a Christian Father and son were tortured, sodomized with rods, and murdered by local police. In Chhattisgarh, there were six documented cases of targeted violence against Christians just in April despite the national lockdown being in place. In Bastar and Dantewada districts, Christians faced stiff opposition to bury their dead, and in Jharkhand, Christian women were sexually assaulted and others socially ostracized. In Pundiguttu village, Christian converts were ordered to renounce their faith or risk being denied water from the community well and other penalties.

While 135 cases of persecution were reported, the actual numbers might be much larger, notes EFI. Many cases go unreported due to fear among the Christian community, a lack of legal literacy and, the reluctance or refusal of police to register

The police have been very reluctant and slow to register FIRs in these cases involving recognizable offenses despite being duty-bound to do so under Section 154 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Even in the cases registered with the police, most never come to court.

“ The country is ranked at No. 10 on Open Doors' 2020 World Watch List of the countries where it's most difficult to be a Christian. According to the CIA World Fact Book, about 80% of India's population is Hindu.

THE UNKNOWN STORIES BEHIND THREE WELL-LOVED HYMNS

Mike Harland

Tragedy strikes all of us at different times in our lives. For the believer, those hardships inform our faith through the experience of God's grace at work in our lives. Difficulty is the place we learn the greatest lessons about God's faithfulness to us.

Paul and Silas found themselves wrongfully imprisoned in the jail in Philippi (Acts 16). The song they sing at midnight changes everything and demonstrates the power of the gospel to impact lives even in the worst of circumstances.

Consider these well-loved hymns—midnight songs, if you will—and the truth we find in the stories of how they were written.

1. "WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS"

In 1844 a young Irishman, Joseph Scriven, had completed his college education and returned home to marry his sweetheart. As he was traveling to meet her on the day before the planned wedding, he came upon a horrible scene—his beautiful fiancée tragically lying under the water in a creek bed after falling off her horse.

Later, Scriven moved to Canada and eventually fell in love again, only to experience devastation once more when she became ill and died just weeks before their marriage. For the second time, this humble Christian felt the loss of the woman he loved.

The following year, he wrote a poem to his mother in Ireland that described the deep friendship with Jesus he had cultivated in prayer through the hardships of his life. The poem was published anonymously at first under the title, "Pray Without Ceasing." Ten years later, he finally acknowledged this well-loved text had been written by him and his friend, Jesus. In 1868, attorney Charles Converse set the text to a tune and renamed it "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

Instead of thinking God was punishing him, Scriven cherished God's friendship through all of this hardship—a friendship he discovered in prayer. May we learn that our relationship with God will grow the same way in prayer.

2. "WHEREVER HE LEADS, I'LL GO"

It was 1936 and two friends serving together at a Sunday school conference in Alabama were at lunch, sharing what God was doing in their lives. One, a missionary to Brazil home on furlough, told the other, a hymn writer leading the music for the conference, that a health issue would keep him from returning to the country he had grown to love. The news, received just days before, had broken his heart.

The hymn writer asked, "What will you do?" And through tears, the missionary, R.S. Jones, told the hymn writer, B.B. McKinney, "Wherever He leads, I'll go." McKinney was so moved that he penned the classic hymn that afternoon and sang it that night after Jones had preached, recounts Terry C. Terry, a musicologist who wrote his doctoral dissertation about McKinney. Since then, this song has been sung at invitation times and crusades, revivals and worship services.

We may not always know where He will lead, but we do know we can choose to follow. The next time we stand at a crossroads of indecision and are asked what we will do, may we have the grace to reply like R.S. Jones and B.B. McKinney, "Wherever He leads, I'll go."

3. "IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL"

Attorney Horatio Spafford and his wife, Anna, had a wonderful family of four daughters. Tragically, the great Chicago fire destroyed most of his business in 1871. Then, two years later, his wife and daughters were aboard the ocean liner Ville du Havre when it was struck by another vessel. All four daughters drowned.

His wife survived and nine days later was able to contact her husband by telegraph with this question: "Saved alone—what shall I do?"

Spafford took the next available ship to join his wife. During the passage, the captain of the ship notified Spafford they were crossing the place where the Ville du Havre had sunk. After those moments of reflection and over the course of the rest of the journey, Spafford penned the words of this beloved hymn. May God teach us that

"whatever our lot" we can still say, "It is well."

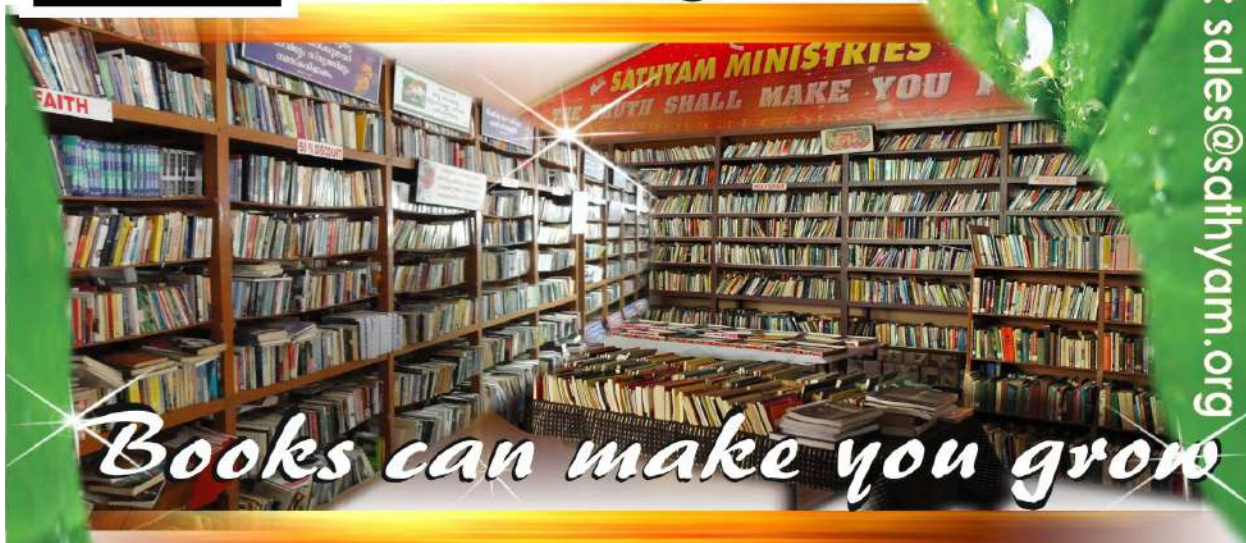
In all three of these stories, a circumstance of life confronts the child of God. And, in all three, God's grace enables his child to trust the heart of the Father. Life will confront us too. The songs we sing in the darkest of midnight will be the very songs that show the world the unwavering faithfulness of our Father who loves us so much. The darker it gets, the more we should sing.



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Poem

"Let The Pain Leave.."**Rishi Ekanayake**

Let this stormy, torrent rain
 Wash away your hidden pain,
 Let those unseen tear-drops pour
 Along your cheeks under the rain,

Let those drops that churn on skin
 Touch the scars that caused you sin,
 Let them heal those burning scars
 Let your hidden purity win.

Let the tempest blow of wind
 Sweep the sighs that you bore in,
 Let it wipe their traces away
 Defeating pain is not a sin !

May this rain fade your pain,
 Break your painful sighs of chain !
 At the cease of the tempestuous rain

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Kerala Flood - 2020

Once again on Friday, 7th August 2020, as incessant showers battered in Kerala. Life in the hinterland remained disrupted due to overflowing rivers, rivulets, uprooted trees and landslidings. Due to heavy rainfall in the monsoon season severe flood affected in different regions of Kerala. The flood resulted in the death of atleast 22 people.

Moreover, 18 people were killed and the wounding of several others in the Air india Express flight carrying 191 people crash at Kerala's Kozhikode airport ,after the plane skidded off the runway and fell into a 35- feet valley before splitting.



Air india plane crash

Furthermore, a land slide caused by heavy rain hit the plantation in Idukki district, crushed a settlement of 83 tea estate workers lived in single room houses that stood in two rows. So far , 55 bodies have been recovered, 12 persons have been rescued and many are still missing.



Searching Dead Bodies on river

The Sathyam Ministries headquarters's office at Tiruvalla, kerala also flooded due to downpour. Sathyam Publications Bookstore had closed for few days as flood water rised upto 5meters from the ground level. Pile of books got spoiled, other damages also occurred. Yet GOD is good at all times. We are grateful to all prayers and support you have shown during our difficult times.



Sathyam Ministries has been engaged in relief works and has reached out to several thousands in the past decades throughout natural calamities and we continue to do so even today. Kindly uphold our ministry and its various activities in your prayer.

What is Worship?

Randall McElwain

(continue....)



4) *Worship is fellowship with God and other believers.*

In the New Testament, the word “fellowship” is often used in the context of worship. The early Christians *“devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers”* (Acts 2:42).

As you worship next Sunday, realize that our worship today is a taste of the joys of worship in heaven. Someday, we will worship eternally in fellowship with God and with other believers. Our worship here should reflect the unity of our heavenly worship.

5) *Worship affects all of life*

Another New Testament term for worship, often translated “religion,” shows that worship means obedience to God in every areas of life. James wrote:

If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world (James 1:26-27).

Worship is more than what happens on Sunday. Worship includes all of life. Our weekly worship service is a focused expression of our worship; but we must go beyond a weekly service. We must maintain a “lifestyle of worship.” True worship is seen in daily submission to God.

What does that mean? According to James, if I sing praise songs on Sunday, but fail to control my tongue on Monday, my worship is false. “Pure and undefiled” worship includes both the practical aspects of service (visiting orphans and widows) and the daily discipline of obedience (keeping oneself unstained from the world).

Isaiah saw a vision of God on His throne and his life was transformed.

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

What is worship? Worship is a life changing response to God’s revelation of Himself. True worship transforms our life and makes us willing and effective servants of God. Worship is “the response of all that we are to all that God is.”



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Pastor Breaks Down How to Combat the 'Fear Virus'

When Culture Has 'Lost the Fear of God'



PASTOR ED YOUNG

Ed Young, senior pastor of Fellowship Church, is on a mission to help people combat the “fear virus,” warning that many today have “lost the fear of God” and that humanity suffers from “a systemic sin issue.” Young, who recently published a new book, “The Fear Virus: Vaccinating Yourself Against Life’s Greatest Phobias,”

“Our culture has lost the fear of God,” he said, going on to explain that “fear” in this context is more about respect than anything else. “I’m talking about having that awe, that reverence — putting God in the position that He’s supposed to be in in our lives and in our

world. Young went on to say that fear is something everyone deals with, but that our reverence for God should help us cope with the depths of uncertainty.

“If we fear God, then we shouldn’t fear anything,” he said. “But if we don’t fear God, we should fear everything.” Part of the problem with culture, Young said, is that there has been a focus placed on the self instead of on the Lord — a recipe for disarray.

“When I look inside myself and when I put myself at the center of my life, then chaos and absurdity rules,” he said. “And that’s what we’re seeing in our culture — chaos, chaos, chaos.” Young said people need to open up to God’s plans for their lives, to embrace truth and to be willing to tell others what that truth entails. “The vaccine starts with God,” Young said of fear. “It starts with the great physician.



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