



The 'Grace' of Giving

"Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' "(Acts 20:35)

The above words of our Lord Jesus Christ quoted by Apostle Paul may have been one of the

remembering at this point that our comfortable life can deaden our sensitivity to others' needs. They gave first to the Lord, and then to Paul and his fellow workers (v.5). What a model for us to follow! Christian generosity is an outflow of the generosity of God.

Christian giving is inspired by the grace of Jesus Christ as expressed on His cross (2 Cor. 8:8,9). The incarnation and the cross of Jesus Christ declare to us the renunciation of His riches and His poverty so that we might become rich by giving us salvation and all its rich blessings. As we give, we must reflect on the cross and all that was achieved for us through the death of Christ. How meagre are our earthly riches in comparison!

Christian giving symbolically declares the unity of the Holy Spirit through the gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 8:13). The Greek Macedonian churches sending money to Jewish churches in Jerusalem symbolically declares the unity of Christian believers, both Greek and Jews. Holy Spirit unites us all - there are no differences of caste and creed, rich and poor, white and black - in Christ, all are one, members of the same body of Christ. If one member is suffering, other members must share the burden. The essence of Paul's distinctive preaching of the gospel was the 'mystery' which had been revealed to him (Eph. 3.1-9) that Jews and Gentiles are admitted to the body of Christ on the same terms, so that in Christ they are heirs together, members together and sharers together. Christian giving is an illustration and declaration of Christian unity and fellowship.

When we contribute to evangelistic work, we are expressing our belief that the gospel is God's power for salvation and that everybody has a right to hear it. When we give for the upkeep and growth of the church, we acknowledge the rightful place that the church has in God's plan for the establishment of His kingdom and His desire that the church should be strong and bearing witness to the gospel in the society.

As we grow in other graces and virtues, we must "abound in this grace also" - in the grace of giving! (2 Cor. 8:7). Listen to the challenging words of David: "I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing!" (2 Sam. 24:24).

Principles of Christian giving:

Apostle Paul's thoughts as found in 2 Cor. chs 8 & 9.

popular sayings of Jesus, though not recorded in any of the gospels. Those words were probably quoted to motivate Christian believers to cultivate a habit of giving generously to others in need. Apostle Paul was certainly one such motivator. Philippian church, one of the churches that he founded in Macedonia, excelled in this noble attitude of giving. Paul expressed his great appreciation of the Philippian Christians, not only to them but to other churches as well. One can read this commendation in his epistles to Philippians (ch. 4:15,16), Romans (ch. 15:26,27) and Corinthians (2 Cor. 8:1-5). We are called to give generously and with joy and as a fruit of the Spirit. Paul saw the grace of giving as a core part of what it means for us to be members of the church.

Apostle Paul enunciates the principles of Christian giving in 2 Cor. chs 8 & 9. (Late) Rev. John Stott explains those principles in a booklet published by him some time ago. It is, indeed, appropriate to quote some of the points mentioned by the great Bible scholar which will, certainly, encourage us in the matter of giving.

Christian giving is rooted in three central themes in the gospel: the grace of God, the cross of Christ, and the unity of the Spirit. It is very significant to understand this combined involvement of all the three persons of the Godhead.

Christian giving is an expression of the grace of God (2 Cor. 8.1-6). Paul begins his message with 'the grace which God has given to the Macedonian churches' (v.1). The generosity of the churches of Macedonia is a result of the grace of God which they received. Our gracious God is a generous God, and He is at work in His people to make them generous too. The generosity of these churches could not have normally come about without the working of the grace of God because they were passing through "severe trial, overflowing joy and extreme poverty" (v.2). They gave even beyond their ability (v.3). It is worth



Johnson K. Samuel

"Finishing well"

People start in style, however the end may not be always as glorious as the beginning. In a sprinter event, every runner brims with confidence at the starting point and it is difficult to say which one will win. Some give up after a few feet, some trail far behind and the eyes of those in the gallery are no more upon them. Some may faint in the tracks. Some give up when they hear the crowd cheering the winner. However, there are a few, though the winner is decided, though the finishing line is far away, still run in style and finish. They don't care if they are the last. They were committed to the race.

Finishing the race and finishing it well is what is important when that race is Christian life. The Bible reminds us that Christian life is a race.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith ----" (Heb. 12:1-2 ESV).

In Christian life the price is not just for those who finish ahead of others but to all those who finish; it is not a race where only the first three are honored. It is a race where all those who complete the race are honored because it is not a test of speed but of perseverance.

Moreover, Christian life, is not a race with its end in itself. It is a qualifying race, a race that prepares us and qualifies us to another level of existence where there is no race at all. There time stands still, it is called eternity.

It is true that Christian is called to a life of eternity. But eternity should not be imagined only in terms of time but in terms of its quality of life. New Testament construes eternal life very much in line with the Greek concept where it is the life of the ages or the life of the gods. It is possible to have a taste of it while on earth. Jesus said, *"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him" (John 3:36 ESV).*

Jesus was not talking about eternal life in terms of its quantity but the quality. We are invited to live that quality of life now on earth but we will experience it for ever and in its fullness when life on earth comes to an end. For that to happen, the life on earth, which is considered as a race through alien land has to touch the finishing line. Finishing it well and in style is thus very important.

Finishing well first of all means to run the full course of the race and qualify for entry to the eternity waiting for us. Bible also gives examples of people

who gave up in the middle of the race. Paul has a few examples of those who gave up in the middle:

"This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, ---" (1 Tim 1:18-20 ESV).

Finishing well is more than dying and having a Christian funeral. It is dying with the hope and assurance that we are going somewhere better. We may call it dying with Christian hope. One of the criminals crucified with Jesus had that assurance before he breathed his last. He was so fortunate to have the saviour of the world by his "side" at the time of his death! No one will be so lucky. However, we can still die with the saviour by our side and be carried to the presence of God if we have faith and hope enough. Dying with a smile on the face is so great!

I have been by the dead bodies of modern day saints who died of various causes. One thing that I have noticed is the peace and tranquility that is frozen on their face. Sometimes a smile of great satisfaction still lingers on the frozen pale lips. They died peacefully and with lots of hope. That does not mean that their death was painless. Some died of massive heart attack, and some had painful cancer for years but at the point of death they had faith and hope that helped them "finish well."

Some years back I heard this story of a terminally ill godly patient counting down his days on earth. He had a bed by the window in the hospice room that he shared with others. Many of those who shared the same room with him were not believing Christians. He was so weak but he will turn his head towards the open window and describe the beautiful sights that he could see. He would look through the window and describe what he saw: of meadows, placid lakes, rivers, singing birds and flowers. When he died many of his roommates wanted to move to his bed by the window with a view that opens to beautiful landscape. One of them was lucky enough to get that coveted bed. He was disappointed the first morning itself. He looked through the window eagerly as the dawn broke but there was absolutely no view there. A high concrete wall just two feet from the window even banned breeze from entering that room. The patient who died was not seeing what is outside the window, he was in fact seeing through the roof, the sight of heaven above; because he knew he was going there and was filled with faith and hope.



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My mother has been my inspiration always though I had her only for the first eight years of my life - in fact six years, because she was bed-ridden for two years before she died at the prime age of 41. Most of my memories of mother are when she was sick and have to do with her death and funeral. She knew she was dying and those who loved her did not want her to die. But she had accepted the



fact that she is going home and did all that she could do to make the life of those she is leaving behind happy. She asked her husband to marry again, she called her children to her bedside and distributed her belongings according to their age. Prayed for them and entrusted them to God's hands. One day with her eyes widely open staring at the ceiling she told her family that she sees roses of different colors, angels in white glowing apparels and the like. She requested those around her bedside to sing songs of hope and requested her favorite ones.

Her friends and prayer partners were not willing to give up. One day they gathered around her bed in fasting and prayer, trying to twist God's hand. They were sincere people. When the prayer which lasted for hours was over, she told them quite calmly: "I have seen the shores of the Beulah land, I have to go, can't turn back now, don't hold me back! Let me go!" Within a few days she went, flew away to Beulah land and is enjoying the presence of her Savior and Lord. She finished well!

Some of us may be allowed lot of time to prepare for the Beulah land. But when sick, is important to know whether we are moving towards healing and being pulled out of the pit, or moving towards the shores of eternity. That requires some discernment which only God can give. However, a Christian has to



be ready for the home-call.

However, there is a false gospel that is so widespread that deprives Christians the privilege of "finishing well." They teach never to give up and they fight to the last minute even when it is clear there is no point fighting. I have come across sick people who hoped that they will be healed. They

could not think of sickness as a chariot God has sent to take them home. They were taught that all sickness could be fought and won. I came across a dear brother whose father died on a prayer mountain praying for his healing till the last minute. He could not take time to prepare himself for the shores of eternity. He was taught that all sickness can be healed by prayer.

I was by the side of a 51 year old widow who was diagnosed with some rare disease for which no cure is still found. Doctors have told her and the family that she will eventually die of this sickness but they cannot tell how soon it would be. Medical science has no hope for her. I knew it was incurable but also believed that there was nothing impossible for God. However, I felt the need to prepare her for eternity. One day I gathered enough courage after praying many hours for her to ask her a simple question. "If it is the Lord's will to call you home, are you ready? I will continue to pray for your healing." She replied that she is not ready to die and believed that God will heal her. She called people with gifts of healing and prophecy to pray over her. One after another continued to assure her that she will be healed. In spite of all the prayers, she died within a few months, still fighting a battle she was not supposed to fight at all. Her sickness was a chariot that was waiting for her, but she could not see it and those spiritual specialists deceived her.

The problem with the prosperity theology or the "name it and claim it" teaching and the triumphalist preaching is that it deprives people a closer walk with God towards eternity through their struggles. They are not teaching growth but survival. They teach people to do well in this life as if there is no life beyond. They don't prepare people to "finish well".

I knew of a young man who owned a brilliant mind that was corrupted by the prosperity teaching. He devoured the "name-it-claim-it" literature uncritically. He was convinced and preached that children of God will not die before they reach 70, never die in an accident, will not fall sick, etc. He used to drive at high speed since he believed that he will not die in accident. However, at a very prime youth he died in a car accident leaving behind his young wife and two children proving all that he claimed and preached were wrong. Sadly, the proof was his death.

*Historically, Christian church believed that people have to be prepared to go! The Last Unction or its equivalents in various traditions were saying bye to the dear ones and encouraging those who are dying to look forward to a life beyond the grave. That great tradition is wiped out and replaced by a mind-set of rebellious refusal to go! **It is that rebellion manifested in the form of healing ministries without discernment that should stop if we want to see more people "finishing well".***

Guidance from the Holy Spirit: Do we use this Helpline anymore? (Part II)

In the first part of the article (published in the previous issue), Pastor Shibu Cherian examined the Gospels and history and presented evidences to prove that the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer is as pertinent in our lives today as it was during any historical period. He continues in this second and concluding part to describe evidences from personal life experiences.

3. Evidence from Personal Life Experiences:

It is possible that anyone can argue differently from all the evidences that I have presented so far. However, no one can argue the authenticity of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in my life with the evidence of speaking with other tongues and the proven fact that God has been baptizing so many believers throughout history after the first century.

Let me start with my own example. From the moment I received Christ as my personal savior on December 31st, 1977, I became very sensitive to everything that was happening in and around me. I was no longer the same person as before. I had a real peace within my heart and I knew that everything was all right and God will take care of me. Also, I had a real joy within me, and I knew that Jesus was my Lord and Savior and He dwelled within me. I also realized that my name has been written in the "BOOK OF LIFE", and I do not have to fear about going to hell any more. Also, Jesus through His Blood that He shed for me at the Cross of Calvary has wiped away all my sins, which are forever "trashed" out. My life as a child of God became real to me. Never again did I desire to do the secret sins that I had committed before, as now I was a child of God. Everything I did was real and I was not acting as a hypocrite any longer. I had a genuine love for others now and my entire outlook changed. I realized that there are only two kinds of people in the world: those who are God's children and are going to heaven after they die, and those who are going after worldly pleasures and will go to hell after they die. I knew that I was enrolled in the first group. I started reading the Bible daily from that day onward, and wanted to know what God wanted to speak to me daily. I started spending time in prayer daily, as I needed to communicate with my Heavenly father and tell him everything that was happening in my life. I started going to church during the weekdays also, as I felt a real need to be in fellowship with my church family. I started "witnessing" to my friends regarding what had happened, and how God has changed everything in my life. I obeyed the Lord in water baptism on November 9, 1980, but I had to wait for two more years before I received the

baptism of the Holy Spirit.

On Saturday, December 24, 1982 at 10:30 AM in the morning, the Lord gloriously baptized me in the Holy Spirit in a small meeting conducted by an old Chinese lady called Margaret Unn. She told all the believers gathered in the room (close to 25 people, both men and women) to confess our sins to God and get cleansed by the blood of Jesus. The reason for that is that God was looking for holy vessels to empower. After we spent some time confessing our sins, she told us to look to the cross and start worshiping God through repeating only one word "Hallelujah". This is a heavenly prayer language that glorifies God intimately. As we were all engrossed in worshipping focusing on the cross, suddenly I felt the power of God hit me. I felt that force trying to take control over my vocal chords as I started to speak words that was I never knew before. The neat thing of my baptism in the Holy Spirit was that everyone present in the room were baptized at the same time as I was – and some even started prophesying as recorded in Acts 19:1-7. It is now over 29 years that I have continued to worship God in both known and unknown languages as the Holy Spirit as per His guidance. I challenge anyone to dispute my testimony and tell me that there is no such thing as the Holy Spirit baptism and speaking in other tongues! I confess and affirm that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who has taken a body of flesh to redeem humankind. As mentioned by Apostle John: "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God." (1 John 4:2)

The following extract from the August 1981 Assemblies of God Position Paper regarding the baptism in the Holy Spirit serves as a good summary for what I believe: "The Baptism is the crisis experience which introduces the believer to the process experience of living a Spirit-filled life. The expression initial physical evidence of the Baptism refers to the first outward sign that the Holy Spirit has come in filling power...While speaking in tongues has initial evidential value, it is designed by God to be much more than evidence of a past experience. It also continues to bring enrichment to the individual believer in



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The gifts of the Holy Spirit fits within the larger purpose of connecting us to Christ's current intercessory and advocacy ministries in heaven, a ministry that continues throughout this age.

personal devotions and to the congregation when accompanied by the interpretation of tongues...The ability is not achieved through a heightened emotional state or through the repetition of words or phrases. It is not the result of imitating the sounds made by others...The believer speaks by the supernatural and motivational power of the Spirit."

The Holy Spirit Baptism is still relevant today

Our early historical Christian fathers like Ignatius (AD 98-117), Justin Martyr (AD 100-165), Tertullian (AD 160-215), Eusebius (265-339), and Augustine (AD 354-430) have shown the evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism in their lives. The 5th century Church Father, Augustine of Hippo, was very insightful about the beliefs held by the early church regarding speaking in tongues and supported this view. From his comments about Acts 8:17-19, it was his assumption that Simon must have seen the Samaritans speaking in tongues as he wrote: "We still do what the apostles did when they laid hands on the Samaritans and called down the Holy Spirit on them by laying on of hands. It is expected that new converts should speak with new tongues."



According to Pentecostal historian H. Vinson Synan, "the basic premise of Pentecostalism, that one may receive later effusions of the Spirit after initiation/conversion, can be clearly traced in Christian history to the beginnings of the rite of confirmation in the Western churches". Synan traces the influence of Catholic and Anglican mystical traditions on John Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection, from which Pentecostal beliefs on Spirit baptism developed. John Fletcher, Wesley's designated successor, argued that the second blessing as a cleansing experience was the "baptism in the Holy Spirit". After his conversion in 1821, Presbyterian minister and revivalist Charles Finney experienced what he called "baptism in the Holy Spirit" accompanied by "unutterable gushings" of praise. Within the holiness movement, which began in the Methodist Church but soon spread to many denominations, "baptism in the Holy Spirit" was generally understood to be synonymous with the second blessing sanctification. Charles Fox Parham would later build on this doctrinal foundation when he identified speaking in tongues as the Bible evidence of Spirit baptism.

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Many people (both currently living and dead) have been baptized in the Holy Spirit over the last centuries leading up to this time, and the most famous incident of God baptizing many believers in one location was at the Azusa Street Mission in Long Angeles, CA at the turn of the 20th century

(1901). The Holy Spirit continues to give direction and insight to the Church (Acts 2:38-39; 1 Thess. 5:19-20), to heal and work miracles, and aid us in our witness to the world as the Advocate of heaven until Jesus Christ returns. The kingdom of God (Matthew 11:12) is forcefully advancing today through the workings of the Holy Spirit that was promised in Acts 1:8. Finally, the gifts of the Holy Spirit fits within the larger purpose of connecting us to Christ's current intercessory and advocacy ministries in heaven (John 16:7, 13-14), a ministry that continues throughout this age.

Conclusion:

What has been mentioned above is by no means exhaustive, but (I believe) sufficient for any honest Christian believer seeking the truth concerning the workings of the Holy Spirit today. Let me conclude with an extract that has been abridged from The General Council of the Assemblies of God official position paper on the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues:

"Tongues are not the only evidence of a Spirit-filled life, but they are always the initial, or first, evidence that one has been baptized in the Holy Spirit as the entrance into a Spirit-filled life. One purpose of baptism in the Spirit is to empower the believer for witness; therefore, enthusiasm and boldness in witnessing, divine guidance and enabling in the presentation of the gospel, and miraculous manifestations of God's power before unbelievers all may serve as additional evidences of baptism in the Holy Spirit, though not as substitutions for speaking in tongues.

The Spirit-filled life should also demonstrate progressive development toward a complete Christ-like character. The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23) should be developing in the life of every believer. It has been observed that some who have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and claim to be living Spirit-filled lives demonstrate less evidence of the fruit of the Spirit than some who have not received the Baptism experience. Such a fact does not destroy the truth that the Spirit takes raw material and, if given the opportunity, helps develop Christ-like character traits in every believer. Yet development of the fruit of the Spirit can, and should, be enhanced in those who have been filled with the Spirit.

Other supernatural gifts of the Spirit (besides speaking in tongues), though sometimes seemingly evident in the lives of believers who have not been baptized in the Spirit, do not in themselves give evidence of having been baptized in the Spirit. The manifestation of supernatural gifts in the life of a believer who has not been baptized in the Holy Spirit is possible, but being baptized opens the door to a more dynamic, more effective manifestation."

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Narayan Vaman Tilak

(1861-1919)

Narayan Vaman Tilak, the great poet of Maharashtra and the reputed nationalist leader of pre-independence days, was born in Karajhgaon in Ratnagiri district, a hundred miles from Bombay city. He hailed from the Orthodox "Chitpavan Brahmins" and was a distant relative of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the renowned patriot. His wife, Lakshmi Bai, herself a poet, was from the family of the Gokhales.



From his early days Narayan was an earnest seeker after Truth. When he grew up, he couldn't reconcile truth with the prevalent superstitions and caste distinctions, that made him revolutionary.

How to serve his country and his fellow beings from the staring problems was the question burning within him. Eventually he resorted to yoga, meditation and the various measures of renunciations. He retreated to a hilltop for two years. He established an ashram and published many books. But God, to him was far off - his heart longed for the living God.

God, through mere providence, brought to him a missionary while traveling by train towards Rajanandgaon. The living Christ was introduced to him by way of testimony. Though not happy about it at first, he began to read the Bible. Finally the truth of Christ and His gospel was made clearer to his heart. It was in 1894, he took Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. Great joy flooded within his bewildered heart. God gave him the assurance that all his past sins were forgiven. He was restored to sweet union with God. A new song sprang within him. He openly took the bold stand for Christ by taking baptism.

Now he had to pay a heavy price. Persecutions, were on every side. His life was threatened more

than once. But the Lord miraculously delivered him. But the severest of them all was the hostile stand of his wife. She refused even to accept water from her husband. Hence, they could no longer live together. She had intense love for her faithful husband. Living in two places, the Christian husband and the Hindu wife had a deal of correspondence both in prose and verse which are of immense literary value. But Lord in His own way touched her heart, and she too followed her husband's path. Their joint

endeavour for Christ brought great results.

Narayan Vaman Tilak was a versatile genius. He was a revolutionary social uplifter, great Sanskrit scholar, poet and nationalist. But above all, he was a preacher of the gospel. He wrote more than one hundred devotional songs in Marathi language. He strongly believed that the only hope for India is in Christ. His epic composition 'Khristayan', similar to Ramayan, is a literary jewel.

On May 9, 1919 Narayan Vaman Tilak breathed his last in Bombay. He was bed ridden for a few days. In intense pain, his face was radiant with the joy of God. To him, death meant the gateway to heaven, to be with Christ whom he loved the most, for ever.

Many mourned his death. The country lost a genuine patriot and a true follower of Christ. His life and message inspire thousands. The longing of his heart was expressed in these immortal words:

*"When shall I see my country lay
Her homage at the feet of Christ!"*

God awakens both the learned and the unlearned, the rich and the poor from the length and the breadth of this land for the great cause for which Narayan Vaman Tilak stood.



The brief biography of the great Marathi poet, nationalist leader and gospel preacher, **Narayan Vaman Tilak** was written by

Pastor Mathew Samuel

and published in 'Conviction' Magazine, August 1982

A song by Narayan Vaman Tilak (translated into English)

One who is all unfit to count
As scholar in Thy school,
Thou of Thy love hast named a friend
O kindness wonderful!
So weak I am, O gracious Lord,
So all unworthy Thee,
That even the dust upon Thy feet
Outweighs me utterly.
Thou dwellest in unshadowed light,
All sin and shame above

That Thou shouldst bear our sin and
shame,
How can I tell such love?
Ah, did not He the heavenly throne
A little thing esteem,
And not unworthy for my sake
A mortal body deem?
When in His flesh they drove the nails,
Did He not all endure?
What name is there to fit a life

So patient and so pure?
So, love itself in human form,
For love of me He came;
I cannot look upon His face
For shame, for bitter shame.
If there is aught of worth in me
It comes from Thee alone;
Then keep me safe, for so, O Lord,
Thou keepest but Thine own.

The New Testament Church – Part 4

Bible Study



**Pastor
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continues with the study of the New Testament Church and discusses the various metaphorical images of the Church: "The Building of Christ", "The Body of Christ", "The Bride of Christ", "The Family of God", etc.

It has now been understood that the church was founded by Jesus Christ through his sacrificial death, resurrection and by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the church has vital relationship with the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The dimensioned role of the church is linked with its picture of local status and universality.

It must be emphasized that the Church is an 'Organism' - a living and active community. It is not just an 'Organization'. For looking into this fact, we need to now begin the various metaphorical images, that are presented in the NT.

1. "The building of Christ":

The church is the building being built by Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:16-18). It is a living structure that is constantly in the process of being built. Jesus is the foundational corner stone providing "unyielding stability" to the building (Acts 4:11, Eph. 2:22, 1 Pet. 2: 6-7). The building image is grounded in the temple concept of OT, as the place where God's presence and glory were often seen. The church is now the place wherein God wants to be known and to manifest His glory so that the church's foundation is alive. The church, if it is to be a living, growing and healthy structure, it has to have a solid formation. The church has a heritage. The apostles and prophets are parts of the living foundation (Eph. 2:20). There is a connecting thread of life, unity of faith throughout all centuries of history. It is a spiritual building, composed of living stones. This portrait obviously shows the need to maintain interdependence between believers – a clear idea of fellowship. Do we have it now?

2. "The Body of Christ":

The Church is not like a club or society where people can gather together for certain entertainments. Today even believers think that, church is like any other social entities, This unscriptural notion leads many to disrespect the church. Keep away from such harmful and dangerous ideas. The church is the glorious body of the resurrected son of God. This historical and theological fact is emphasized to remind us that the church is a living organism and not a democratic or autocratic organization. Jesus Christ is the head of the church. He is in charge of everything (Eph. 1: 22-23; 4-15; 5-23). The Church is Christ's body in the world. Jesus has authority over His people and determines their direction and destiny. Each one

is a member of this body. No one has overriding importance (Rom. 12: 4-5; 1 Cor. 6:15, 12:12-13). While the oneness of body expresses the unity among members, the image of the body also shows that there is a great diversity. The body of Christ is a living, growing organism with Christ at the head and all the members functioning. The people of God are knit and joined together by Christ. Christ the son of God baptized every member into His body through the Spirit. Love is the trademark of believers (Eph. 4:16). Internal and external growth are characteristics of the living body. Do we have love and growth?

3. "The Bride of Christ":

The church is also depicted as the bride of Christ, the bridegroom. This image signifies the intimate living relationship and profound devotion to the Lord. The Lord is their betrothed (2 Cor. 11:2). This is based on His pure love that has been proved through the sacrificial death and sanctifying power of the blood (Eph. 5:25). As the bride of Christ, Church should strive for undiluted devotion to Christ who is a jealous husband (2 Cor. 11:2-5). The love, loyalty and purity should therefore be maintained in the body. We the members must bow before Christ, for His sanctifying power, so that He may present us spotless in the eternity before the Father. Have you realized this truth? Do we have pure love and intimacy with Christ who is our Bridegroom?

4. "The Family of God":

Apostle Paul in Eph. 21: 18-19 vividly indicates that believers in Christ are no longer strangers or sojourners to God. Instead, He is our Father. The redeeming work of God adopted us who were lost and unworthy into the family of God. We have been brought into a living relationship with all other Christians. The relationship with the Father through Jesus Christ is real and alive. We receive full rights and co-heirship with the Son of God. As God's family, the church forms a local and global brotherhood, for we share a common faith, have a common Father who sent His son to redeem us. We have now been forgiven and restored to the household of God. This compels us to love Christ and His church without any spot of hypocrisy. Do we feel that we are brothers and sisters, irrespective of status, personality, wealth and weakness? If not, it is the high time to realize the facts and return to the Lord.

Besides these images, there are a few more like, vineyard, sheep and shepherd, royal priesthood God, army etc.

(To be continued)

Get ready For the Rapture!!

"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming" (Matt. 24:42).

The Bible teaches that Jesus will return in two phases:

First,
"as a thief in the night"

"For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." (1 Thes. 5:2)

Second,
"every eye will see him"

Rev. 1:7- "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen"

The first return which causes the "rapture" of His disciples is analogous to a bridegroom taking his bride off the railroad tracks just as the train goes thundering by. The Bible warns of a very specific period of time referred to by many names that will immediately follow the rapture.

1) "the wrath to come"

1 Thes. 1:10: "and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come"

2) "the day of the Lord's wrath"

Zeph. 1:18: "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land"

3) "the time of Jacob's trouble"

Jere. 30:7: "Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it"

4) "the great tribulation"

Mat 24:21: "For then there will be



Pastor Jays Abraham
New York

great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be"

5) "the indignation"

Isa. 26:20-21: "Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, the earth will also

Rapture means
"to seize, to pluck away,
to take by force" from the
original Greek word
"harpazo" which was
translated
to Latin "rapture".

The Lord will
remove all those who
sincerely believe in and
trust in Jesus from the
earth before the great
and dreadful day of the
Lord's wrath.

disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain"

6) "the day of the LORD'S anger"

Zeph. 2:3: "Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, Who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden In the day of the LORD's anger"

7) "the hour of trial"

Rev. 3:10-11: "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the Earth. Behold, I come quickly!"

8) "the day of the Lord"

Isa. 13:9: "Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it"

9) "the day of the Lord's vengeance"

Isa. 34:8: "For [it is] the day of the LORD's vengeance, The year of recompense for the cause of Zion"

10) "the great and awesome day of the Lord"

Joel 2:31: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD"

Rapture means "to seize, to pluck away, to take by force" from the original Greek word "harpazo" which was translated to Latin "rapture".

Whether one believes that disciples will be "snatched away" before the great and awesome day of the Lord, or in the middle of it, or at the end of it, or if one just doesn't know, it doesn't really matter. The only thing that matters is that you shouldn't be left behind. The opportunity for salvation

God chose the weak!

Meditation

"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong"
(1 Cor. 1:27, 12:8-9)



Saju John Mathew

Reading passage:
1 Cor. 1:16-31

Most of the worldly wise do not choose a life of faith. They think they can manage by themselves. They think it "foolish" to give up on their wisdom and follow an "uncertain" life. Paul says, God chose the "Foolish" to shame the Wise. 'The Wise not choosing God', is only one side of the story. The reality is that God did not choose the Wise of this world!

Luke 19:28-40, talks about a "tied colt." Before crucifixion, Jesus had to enter in to Jerusalem, the King's city. He is the son of David, the everlasting King! Now it is time for this King of kings to have a royal procession. He needed a vessel to carry him. Which animal would be appropriate? An Elephant, as in the case of Eastern kings? Or, a horse as in the case of Western kings? Or, at least a camel as with the kings of the desert? No! God chose to ride on a colt! He asked His disciples to go to the village ahead of them, where they would see a colt tied, on which no one ever sat. ... We do not know why. May be no one ever wanted to sit on it.

In a minute, a colt no one wanted to sit on, became a "Royal colt!" Everyone started spreading clothes on its way. Yes, it is the King of kings and Lord of lords who is now seated on it. According to Paul, God chose a colt as His royal vessel to shame Mr. Elephants and Rev. Horses and Dr. Camels! They thought they were worthy beings to carry "His Majesty", but God did not consider them worthy to carry Him! Their feeling of 'worth' was their unworthiness, and the colt's feeling of 'unworthiness' was its worthiness! He did it this way, so that no one can boast before Him. (1 Cor. 1:29). Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31).

Prayer: Lord, I know that I am unworthy creature! You chose me for no reason but your mercy. Let me boast in you, and you alone, my Master, Amen.

For further reading: Luke 7:36-50, Mark 11:1-11

"Get ready for the Rapture!" Continuation from previous page

after the rapture is very limited - only for martyrs who are killed for harboring Jews and or who withstand the anti-Christ and Jews who believe in Christ during the tribulation period. The belief expressed here is that the Lord will remove all those who sincerely believe in and trust in Jesus from the earth before the great and dreadful day of the Lord's wrath.

When is this secret coming of the Lord going to occur?

i) no one knows:

"But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Mat 24:36).

"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming" (Mat 24:42).

ii) at an unexpected time:

"Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Luke 12:40).

iii) as a thief - unannounced:

"For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." (1 Thes 5:2)

Who will get "raptured"?

Those who wait for Jesus:

"and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thes 1:10)

Those who are citizens of heaven:

Phil. 3:20 "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ"

All people, whether Jews or Gentiles whether alive or dead who now wait in faith or died waiting in faith for Jesus' return who believe that Jesus Christ was crucified, buried and resurrected from the dead will be partakers of the rapture.

Dear friend, are you ready for the secret coming of the Lord? If you are not, believe in Jesus Christ and wait for His return and you will be caught up with Him in a twinkling of an eye.

“What a Friend we have in Jesus”

“A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity” (Proverbs 17:17)

The author of the song, “What a Friend we Have in Jesus” is Joseph M. Scriven. He was devoutly religious; he gave freely of what money he had, even his own clothing and his services to all poorer than himself who needed them. Those of you who know the history of Scriven know that this man went through so much agony and sorrow in his life. The night before his wedding, his fiancée drowned. The grief stricken young man moved to Canada. There he again fell in love, was due to be married and the young woman suddenly fell ill of pneumonia and died. He then devoted the rest of his life to helping others. In 1885, this is the poem that he wrote to comfort his mother in Ireland.

Let’s look at Proverbs 17:17: “A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity”. I’m going to read that again but this time I’m going substitute Jesus in the place of friend. “Jesus loves at all times, and in times of adversity He becomes a brother”. Each of us may have many friends and we may love many of them. Let me ask you a question. If any of us here has someone that we love even a little, isn’t there a reason behind it? Or it is so that you’ll receive something back from them. If one person loves another person, will he/she be able to love them at all times? And even if we can love at all times, can you love someone the same way all throughout? Can you love someone unconditionally? Wouldn’t there be some differences in the depths or heights of that love? There may be some incidences when love is lost as well.

But I want to turn your attention to a special friend named Jesus who does not ask for something back in return. There was no reason for Him to love us. We were not worthy of such love. Still He loved us and will continue to love us from the beginning until the very end and He loves us unconditionally. There is only one friend we have and that is the Son of God, Jesus Christ who made us his friend. How great a friend we have in Jesus, Amen. Let’s lift up our hands to



Koshy John
New York

give glory, thanks and praise to our Lord for giving us the grace to meet this friend who is always and always by our side at all times. We have a great friend in Jesus. Hallelujah!! Praise the Lord.

I will tell you why I love the Lord in just a few words. At the birth of Jesus, heaven spoke to the people (shepherds) saying “Today in the city of David is born unto “you” a Savior.’ So He was born for me. Again in 1 Corinthians 15:3, it says that “...Christ died for ‘our’ sins according to the scriptures, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures.” So not only was He born for my sakes, He died for me and He rose again on the third day for me. Praise the Lord!! And

**“Jesus loves at all
times, and in times of
adversity He becomes
a brother”**

**So think about it: Jesus
was born for me. He died
for me and rose again for
me. Ascended to heaven
for me and makes
intercession in heaven
for me. Not only that,
He’s coming back again
for me. What a friend we
have in Jesus!**

again He said, it is profitable for ‘us’ that He leaves the world as He was ascending to heaven. So from there He did not go to heaven for His own desires or pleasure. He went because it is profitable for ‘me.’ And when He is in heaven, He won’t take care of things concerning Himself. But what is He doing in heaven? He’s not sitting there and enjoying the glory of heaven. He sits on the throne on the right side of the God the Father, making intercession for me. So when He’s there, He is concerned about me and things concerning me. Praise the Lord!! Not only that, He gave us word that He’s going to prepare a place for me and you, so that where He is, we will be also. Hallelujah!! And He gave word that He will come back again. He’s is even coming back and returning for me and my sake.

So think about it. He was born for me. He died for me and rose again for me. Ascended to heaven for me and makes intercession in heaven for me. Not only that, He’s coming back again for me. That is truly a good friend. Have you had the opportunity to meet such a great friend? Let’s give Him praise. What a friend we have in Jesus. Let’s be thankful to the Lord and give Him praise. Praise the Lord.

Proverbs 20:6 says, “Many a man claims to have unfaithful love, but a faithful man who can find?” Friends of the world may have been good to us once in a while in some way or another. Potiphar was kind or good to Joseph. Laban was good to Jacob. But can either one of them be counted as faithful to his friend? Can you count on our friends at all times? They might’ve been good to us once in a while, but can they be counted faithful to us? My Jesus is not that kind of friend. My Jesus is not a friend that’s good to me once in a while, but He is always faithful and I can count on Him at all times. I can tell Him anything and everything. Sometimes we’re afraid to tell someone our prayer requests, because some people will look down on us or use it against us. But let me ask you, Has

CHRISTIAN SUFFERING

“Why is it always me? Why now?”

People who suffer, still find themselves borrowing Job’s own words as they cry out against God’s seemingly lack of concern. A Christian life is not always filled with prosperity, happiness, health or comfort! A Christian means follower of Jesus Christ; when Jesus was in the world He faced a lot of suffering. 1 Peter 2:21 says, to this you were called because Christ suffered for you leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps.

Jesus says in John 15:20, No servant is greater than his master. Christians had sufferings, they have and will continue to have sufferings. But why does a loving God allow suffering? Suffering is a tool in God’s hands to mould His creation according to His purpose. Suffering helps to turn us from trusting in our own resources and to live by trusting in God’s resources.

Bible also states some characteristics of suffering:

- 1) Suffering is for a little while (1 Peter 5:10, 1:6)
- 2) Suffering has a purpose, that is, to make us like Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:10)
- 3) Suffering is a process which gives an outcome, such as, perseverance, character and hope (Romans 5:3, James 1:3-4)

What does suffering accomplish in our life?



Jaison Varghese, Mumbai

- 1) It produces fruits i.e.: suffering brings forth patience (James 1:3, 1 Peter 5:10)
- 2) Suffering helps to glorify God:
In John. 9:3, Jesus says to a blind man that this happened so that the work of God may be displayed in his life.
- 3) To silence the devil :
In book of Job God allowed the devil to torment Job to demonstrate that His servant really loves God.
- 4) Suffering helps us to be moulded like Jesus (Phil. 3:10)
- 5) Suffering acts as a planning tool (John 15:1-5)
- 6) Suffering teaches us dependence on God
For example Paul’s thorn in his flesh caused him great pain but God said His grace is sufficient.
- 7) Suffering helps to refine our faith

and spiritual growth (1 Peter 1:6-7, James 1:2-4)

8) To enlarge our ministry : Paul’s imprisonment helped in the spread of gospel among the elite imperial guards.

9) As a witness and testimony to others (1 Peter 3:13)

10) To develop our ability to comfort others : With the comfort we ourselves have received from God 2 Cor. 1:4.

How should a Christian respond to suffering ?

Suffering has two sides to it. On one side suffering can be viewed as coming from God to bring out the best in us. On the other side, Satan tempts us to bring out the worst in us. Hence we should be careful how we react. 1 Peter chs. 3 & 4 say that we should not be surprised when suffering occurs, nor be ashamed of suffering or fear suffering. Remember the world is always watching how Christians are reacting to suffering!

Jesus has given a ringing conclusion in John 16: 21-22, “In this world you will have troubles but take heart, I have overcome the world!”

Dear brothers and sisters, there is a hope for all of us which Paul has given in Romans 8:18 “For I consider that the suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory that is yet to be revealed”

“What a friend we have in Jesus” Continuation from previous page

Jesus ridiculed, criticized, mocked or made you feel bad about any of your health issues or shortcomings that you’ve told Him? Has he made a gossip or a mockery and made you feel bad about any of the secret things that you’ve told Him? No, certainly not. You can confess any sin to Jesus. You can tell Him any pain or sorrow you’re going through. Any secret thing can be kept with Jesus. There is only one person you can really open up your mind and your heart to, that alone is Jesus Christ. You can always count on Him to keep the innermost things you’ve told him and He’ll keep it safely. He’ll never criticize or ridicule you about any of it. That is our

Lord Jesus Christ.

*“What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and grief’s to bear,
What a privilege to carry,
Take it to the Lord in prayer”*

Once, a righteous man said that when He gets to heaven, he’ll go near Jesus and hug His feet telling Him, “Jesus, thank you for forgiving me of all my sins”. After that Jesus would reply, “Friend, I remember forgiving your sins but what sin it was, I do not remember but forgot it right then”. Did you get that? He remembers forgiving us, but will not keep a record of our sins. ‘He keeps no record of evil.’ He doesn’t keep a record of the bad things or the sins we have

done. The only record He keeps is if we’ve done anything good in the world to reward us when we get to heaven. It is written in His book. So whatever sins or wrong things we may have done are washed away by the precious blood of the Lamb that was shed for us on that cross on Calvary 2,000 years ago. Praise be to His holy name. Let’s give praise to this great God who forgives our trespasses and only remembers the good that we have done for His kingdom. Hallelujah!! Let’s take this opportunity to just worship Him and give glory and honor to His great name because He is such a wonderful friend and companion especially in times of trouble.

Children's

T O P I C



Veronica was a lovely girl. She had a wonderful father who loved her very much and gave her everything that she wanted. But the sad thing was that she never obeyed her father whenever he asked her to do something. She did not do well in her studies. Her father always asked her to study well, but she found some excuse not to study. Yet her father loved her and bought everything she asked him to buy for her. Her father was sad when she got poor marks in her exams. Her father died when she was still studying for a bachelor's degree. She remembered her father's instruction to study well. She did study well and

Love the Lord by obeying His Word

scored good marks this time. But her father was no more with her to rejoice with her at the good results. She felt very sad that she never obeyed him when he was there with her.

Dear children, this is how we are with God our heavenly Father. God loves us and gives us everything we



ask him. But do we obey what he tells us to do in His Word? We hear our Sunday school teachers and pastors teaching us God's word. But do we obey what the word of God tells us?? Jesus said in John 14:15 "If you love me, you will obey my Words". It is by obeying His Word that we show our Heavenly Father that we love Him. Let us not grieve our heavenly Father by disobeying His Word. The crown of life is only given to those who love Him and not to any one who is disobedient to him (James 1:12)



Shiny Aunty

One day I will get out of nothing

Don't use my Utensil for Choir Practice

Peter was taking his dog for a walk, when,

Does your Dog got a License ?

NO, He is not old enough to drive

Mummy, How much am I worth to you ?

You are worth more than a Million to me

Well, could you give me 10 Rs.

By : P. Banage

By J.V.Arts



News & Views

J K S



Tim Tebow and John 3:16

Tim Tebow, a devout Christian and a football (American) quarterback, is now America's favorite active pro athlete, according to the ESPN Sports Poll, Wall Street Journal says: Tim is a great athlete with great character who says and does all the right things and is a relentless leader for his team. He made the verse, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him will not perish, but have



Tebow praying on the field

everlasting life", famous by painting John 3:16 on his eye-patch. After he lead his team to a stunning victory on January 8, there was an explosion of Google searches for John 3:16. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) reported that more than 150 people accepted Jesus as their Savior as a result of searching for John 3:16 on Google and then clicking on an ad for the BGEA's website PeacewithGod.net. (The ad was set to appear when people searched for John 3:16 and data showed that in total, 8,000 people searching for the verse clicked on PeacewithGod.net).

Tebow has used his gifts and his position as quarterback to create a powerful witness for Jesus. 'Time' magazine says: "With Billy Graham on the cool side of the mountain, Tebow is perhaps the most significant evangelical Christian in the country". Son of Bob, a Baptist missionary, Tim Tebow accepted Jesus as his personal saviour at a young age. Through high school and college,

he divided his time between football and ministry. At the University of Florida, He led fellow students in weekly Bible studies and preached in prisons, schools and hospitals. Another favorite verse of Tebow is Philippians 3:13,14: "But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus".

'Tebowing' is now used as a verb, meaning, to get down on one knee and start praying even if everyone else around you is doing something completely different, which is Tebow's trade mark pose of praying before every game that he plays. The liberal press mocks at him. What an outstanding witness for the Lord in the midst of an unbelieving and scornful society!

Traveling Repairmen

Brent Howard left his job in 2007, moved his young family into a trailer and began traveling to wherever he was needed. Over the past four-and-a-half years, he has helped build or repair Baptist churches in New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Iowa. While he works, his wife home-schools his 10-year-old son and 11-year-old daughter. Howard is part of a group of "missionary builders". Howard, 37, says: "The Lord puts you in places and positions, gives you the ability to do things, and it's not for your own gain, it's for his purposes, and that's basically why I do what I do now". Dale Murphy, 53, sold his house and moved his family into a 32-foot trailer after leaving his business of 24 years. Howard Fraser, a 56-year-old retired engineer is another volunteer with the group. Another volunteer is Ron Cornell, 61, who retired five years ago after 30 years as an electrician at a nuclear power plant. Howard feels that his kids are not at a disadvantage because they're traveling and moving all the time. He thinks they have quite an advantage over most kids in what they are able to experience in real-life situations and meeting new people and being adaptable to different circumstances.

Various are the ways in which God calls a person to work for His kingdom. The question is how one responds to the call!

Bibles for newly independent South Sudan



South Sudan which gained independence from Sudan last year has opened new doors for religious freedom. Bible translation organization, 'Wycliffe Associates' is giving high priority to assist Bible translators with financial and personnel support. Twenty-nine languages in South Sudan have no Scripture - approximately 20 percent of the population and six projects are currently underway. Wycliffe authorities say that translation needs of Sudan are great, with 21 million Sudanese waiting for the Bible in a language they can understand.

Wycliffe needs all our prayerful support.

Worship Service in Cairo's Tahrir Square

Cairo's Tahrir Square has been the central point of many protests and atrocities in Egypt during the last year. A New Year's Eve praise and worship service was scheduled to be held at Kasr El Dobra Church near Tahrir Square, but the congregation decided to move to the Square. Between 5,000 and 10,000 people joined the worship service as it moved from the church to the Square, peacefully proceeding down the street



Tahrir Square, Cairo

holding candles and singing songs. A satellite TV service broadcast the service to thousands more across Egypt. All went peacefully as Christians and non-Christians alike gathered to pray.

Let us earnestly hope that such a peaceful atmosphere prevails in Egypt in the new year.

Home! Sweet home!!

According to WORLD News Service, researchers at the University of Chicago have found that the greatest influence on boys' behavior at school is not the type of school they attend or the teacher they have, but the type of home in which they're being raised. On analyzing school suspension rates of the last 20 years, the researchers have found that boys in intact homes with both parents had the least behavioral problems and school suspensions. They do better in all measures of educational attainment than other students being raised in broken homes. They get better grades, they have no behavioral issues, they finish high school graduation and go on to graduate from college.



Conclusions from another study by the University of Arizona also make interesting reading. According to a report in USA Today, data collected by researchers show that divorced adults are 23 percent more likely to die early than married couples. Researchers found the risks associated with divorce were similar to other public health risks

such as heavy smoking, being overweight and heavy drinking. The leader of the studies said he was surprised by the results: "We knew there was some risk. But we didn't think the risk elevation would be as substantial".

It is doubtful whether this information will have any influence on the divorce rate in future! Marriage and a home consisting of parents and children are institutions established by God, Himself. Any departure from God's principles will, certainly, lead to disaster. When man returns to God and Godly principles, there will be peace and harmony in society.

'Father' and 'Son' missing from Arabic and Turkish translations

A new Arabic translation of the Bible uses an Arabic equivalent of "Lord" instead of "Father" and "Messiah" instead of "Son". Another translation removes "Father" in reference to God and replaces it with "Allah". The verse known as the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) reads, "Cleanse them by water in the name of Allah, his Messiah and his Holy Spirit" instead of "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". The translators say that these terms, 'Son' 'Son of God', etc. are offensive to Muslims. Concerned Christian missionaries, Bible translators, pastors, and national church leaders have come together with a public petition to stop these Bible translations. Rev. Bassam Madany, an Arab American who runs Middle East Resources, terms these translations as "a western imperialistic attempt that's

inspired by cultural anthropology, and not by biblical theology". A Turkish church leader Rev. Fikret Böcek said, "This translation is 'an all-American idea' with absolutely no respect for the 'sacredness' of Scripture, or even of the growing Turkish church".

An entire Christian library in the palm of your hand

According to reports, Bible League International and the Digital Bible Society are partnering to create thumbnail-sized chips containing an entire seminary library. They plan to distribute them to Christians in countries where possessing unapproved religious materials can result in punishment or death, such as Saudi Arabia and China. Each chip includes a library's worth of multiple versions of the Bible, Bible



commentaries, Bible studies, Christian books, movies and worship music. They are available in Arabic, Farsi, Mandarin and other languages. Pastors in these countries where there no training facilities, can make good use of the library for their ministries.

Have you heard this?

"Maturity has more to do with what types of experiences you've had and what you've learned from them and less to do with how many birthdays you've celebrated"

* * * * *

"Faith is daring the soul to go beyond what the eyes can see"

* * * * *

After the revival had concluded, three pastors were discussing the results with one another. One Pastor said, "The revival worked out great for us! We gained 4 new families". The second Pastor said, "We did better than that! We gained 6 new families". The third one said, "Well, we did even better than that! We got rid of our 10 biggest trouble makers!

* * * * *

"The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it"

* * * * *

"Life is like an onion: You peel it off one layer at a time, and sometimes you weep"