

The Impact

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JESUS!





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ditorial

Dear readers,

Some things in life just seem to go well in parallel, and, of course, it is the inseparable duo of the year- Holiday commitments and moments for the Cross beyond the manger. It is that time of the year when you are just too excited about the holidays. And by a trick or fate more accurately, you are totally gutted with social obligations and frantically hosting family and friends and navigating many other events. But through it all, we are yet again reminded that it is such a wonderful opportunity to focus and hear him over all else- JESUS! To be in possession of his Shalom that He lovingly gives us.

This, the last issue of the decade abounds with such inspirations and here, our contributors give you the tools to understand and delve more intimately with the one who is LOVE. Couple that with the heart to know your inheritance in JESUS as we co-labour in Him everyday to bring heaven on earth.

We wish you a “thinking” Christmas and an “inquisitive” New Decade!

Above all; In Christ,
The Editorial Team.

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Time

Greetings to you all,

Yet another year is coming to an end and it seems like days went by faster than anticipated but doesn't that happen every year? The cliché goes, time passes by so fast and whenever we say it, at the back of our mind we often calculate how much we have achieved or whether we have invested in our life wisely. Deep down in everyone's heart there is sense that "I could have fared better". It all boils down to the crux of how we have made the most of the time given to each one of us?

With that thought we understand that Time is our most precious resource. It is perishable and irreplaceable. God in his grace has given us all the same amount – 24 hours per day. The quality, joy, and impact of our lives are directly related to how wisely we use the time we have. This does not mean that we have to hurry or hustle through life. The Country band Alabama in one of their songs has this chorus or refrain, describing quite well a common lifestyle of our generation:

*I'm in a hurry to get things done
I rush and rush until life's no fun.
All I really gotta do is live and die,
But I'm in a hurry and don't know why.*

Then, what does the bible instructs us or what can we learn about life and time from Jesus. Bible never says that Jesus rushed anywhere. He was usually busy, but found time to pray a lot. His total ministry was accomplished in three short years, but he found time to play with children, to investigate a fig tree, to take a nap during a boat ride, to rest at noon-time beside a well, and to attend a wedding reception.

The Bible does not say, "If you hurry, you can catch up with God." It does say, "Be still (or cease your striving) and know that I am God." (Psalms 46:10) Jesus did not say, "Join up with me and I will work you eighteen hours per day." Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28). There are many biblical principles for managing time well but let us just focus on just two biblical guidelines.

First, in order to manage time well, we must know our PURPOSE. Paul stated it well in Ephesians 4:15: "we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is Christ." So, our purpose is to become mature in Christ. How do we do that? By receiving his salvation, being useful in his service, and becoming Christ-like in character.

Our culture will disagree upon it because most of us believe that our main purpose is to be happy and successful, to grab all the unbridled pleasure we can.



Arep Tzudir
Associate Pastor, Youth

But we Christians know we are not on this earth primarily for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. As much as those things are alluring, they are temporal. Maturity in Christ is our goal. Now, maturity is one of those things that cannot be hurried. It takes time. As Bruce Wilkinson beautifully says, “God does not want you to do more for him. He wants you to be more for him.”

Once you know your purpose, then you are ready for the second key word in managing time well. That word is PRIORITY. Priority just means knowing which things are more important and which are less. Once we know our purpose, our priorities should emerge. Jesus said, “seek first his (God's) kingdom and his righteousness.” (Matthew 6:33)

Jesus made an interesting statement about priorities in John 15:2. He seemed to be talking about a grapevine, but in reality he had people in mind. He said, “every branch that does bear fruit, he (God) prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.”

Expert vine-growers point out that the vine's ability to produce growth increases each year, but without intensive pruning, the plant weakens and its crop gets smaller. The same principle applies to people. Pruning activities and commitments enable you to become even more productive and creative. Most of us are spread too thinly because we hate to make tough choices and sometimes say no.

A story has been told of a wonderful church member named Mack who sings in 9:45 choir. Mack has been in retail sales for many years. Lately he sat for an interview for a new job. His prospective boss asked if he could be flexible in terms of hours. Mack said, “I can work for you anytime, except before 11:00 AM on Sundays and after 6:00 PM on Tuesdays.” The boss asked why. Mack said, “I worship at my church on Sundays before 11:00 and my choir practices on Tuesday evenings.” Mack got the job. I think the boss appreciated someone with clear and healthy priorities. Just a simple story but a striking lesson we can draw out from this story. He did not let his work demand come in between his priorities.

As a follower of Christ, when we set our purpose and priorities centered on Him and on His eternal time frame then I believe automatically we will understand Moses' prayer, “Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom” ([Psalm 90:12](#)). A good way to gain wisdom is to learn to live each day with an eternal perspective.. Knowing that we will have to give an account to the One who gives us time should motivate us to utilize it well. We should live as if each minute counts—because it really does.



Serving with Gratitude

Bendangtoshi
Finance Secretary KABA Youth



He will show you a large upper room. All furnished. Make preparations there. They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.' Luke 22:12

This verses talk about the preparation of the Last Supper before Christ was crucified. I would like to draw attention on the preparation of the room and the table that led to one of the most meaningful and humblest act of service. It must have taken some people to prepare the room and the table because we see how Jesus tells his disciples to do so. For something great to happen, preparation is always required and we see how Jesus specifically instructs his disciples for The Last Supper.

Even within the youth department in our church, there are people who work behind the scenes so that everything works out successfully and smoothly and yet most of the time we are not aware. We often fail to notice and also do not realize how much hard work, prayer, dedication, and even the smallest of details is done behind every programme which always remain unknown. For instance there

are youths who turn up voluntarily early in the church to welcome people, they would even clean the washrooms and the church premises without being asked to, there are those who stay late even after the church service is over to make sure there are no pending works, there are those who make sure all lights are turned off after the day is done.

There are youths who silently stand in the gap and bear the burden without seeking or claiming a name. They take responsibility without being asked and tirelessly pray for individuals and the church without them knowing. Everything done, seen or unseen, should be genuinely in the service of God. Everyone is called to serve and if we are to do so, we should do it joyfully. We should avoid complaining because it shows that we lack gratitude. When we complain while serving, we may receive the blessing since God is merciful but we miss out on joy. And what is the point of just doing things and receiving blessing when there is no joy. At the end of the day, it is always better to have done our work and have joy in our heart from serving God even though what we have done is not known or noticed by others. It is the peace and joy that comes from knowing that our part in any service has been God's will and the assurance that we have done it by his grace, is greater than any human recognition.

For something great to happen, there are many things that need preparation and we believers are called to do our own part and even though it may be unseen, let us do so willingly and eagerly and continue to prepare so that one day, we will witness the eternal glory of Jesus Christ. I encourage you all with this verse, 'Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.' (2 Corinthians 9:7)

May God bless you.

IDENTITY IN CHRIST



Arrki J.
Town Area
Youth Fellowship

Oh! How easy to say
I am a Christian
But difficult to act like Christ.

Are we a true Christian?
Are we leading an exemplary life?
Do we have the identity of Christ?

For many great people says,
If all Christians acted like Christ
The whole world would be Christians.

The more we accept
Who we are in Christ
Our behavior will reflect our true
identity.

For "He" created us in His own image
We declare praises of Him
Who called us out of darkness into
light.

Be a true identity of Christ;
Where people will be blessed through
our actions.

Let the aroma of Christ
Be produced through our identity.



JESUS!

Bendangsashi Walling
Asso. Pastor, KABA

“Who do people say that I am?” (Mark 8:27) this is one question that comes over and again when we speak about Jesus. Let us try to understand this big quest from the praxis of Jesus which I consider as one of the location where we can understand Jesus! very real to our lives and reality. Let us directly look into His work, Teaching and Ministry. The ministry of Jesus Christ includes performing miracles, healing, raising the dead, curing demon possessed, feeding thousands, walking on water, teaching etc., but all these also have the message of the kingdom of God, Liberation, Salvation and New Humanity.

Jesus' Theological and Ethical articulation are based on total salvation of human beings and their relationship with each other as members of the Kingdom of God. Jesus had set new paradigm in the understanding of the Old Testament, and had given new principles of human life and human community and the human relation to the rest of the creation. This is why the name Jesus! concerns so many. Keeping this in mind let us explore some of the below.

Jesus' teaching is totally a New Culture!

Jesus' movement was a counter movement to the existing unjust realities of His time. His Ethics were the complete opposite of what existed and therefore, a counter culture in His Ethical teaching. The basis of counter culture is “*change*”. We can see in the “Sermon on the mount” the counter Ethical values of the kingdom of God, Jesus' teaching challenge the unholy nexus and the feudal type of attitude and practice. He demands a righteous relationship from everyone and denounces the class ridden society.

Jesus' teaching is confronting!

Jesus acted more like a rebel, a reformer, a revolutionary, and a prophet. He was deconstructing the traditional oppressive structure of his day. He was reinterpreting the existing law which were oppressive and inhuman. He challenged the existing unjust laws and gave a new dimension of that very law to the present and future. His teaching is that law must be based on the foundational principle i.e., human and loving.

The role of Love in Jesus praxis!

For Jesus, Love is the norm; His central concept is Love your enemy and your neighbor, His Ethics is love. Whenever things went wrong, He made it right with love. When Jesus said Love your enemy, it is something to be questioned, how can anyone love their enemy? That is not possible, but the only thing possible is not to consider anyone as your enemy. And you need love to do that. Love has no boundaries, Love stands against the unjust rule. A very beautiful song lyric by Gaither Vocal Band reads like this “*If coal can turn to diamonds, and sand can turn to pearls, if a worm can turn into a butterfly then love can turn the world*”. And yes indeed Jesus turned the world with Love.

Liberating spirit in Jesus' praxis!

The Nazareth manifesto “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*”

The key element of Jesus' understanding of liberation is wholistic, physical, economic, social, political and total healing of humanity. His Ethics is from below, we can see people who were always with Jesus were marginalized people. He always



preferred to be for the poor and the people at the margins.

Kingdom of God! and the work of Jesus

When Jesus was saying the phrases like “Kingdom of God is at hand”, the Kingdom of God is in our midst” and “Enter into the kingdom of God” one thing is clear that He was not only pointing toward the future eschatology but also about the reality now and here. Many of the New Testament scholars opine that this Kingdom is manifested in the hearts of the people, which is expressed in the harmonious relationship with the co-creation.

According to Harnack, there are two stages of the Kingdom, the first stage of Kingdom had already begun to realize in the preaching and healing, and the second is the Parousia. Hence, Gospel contains the Kingdom of God, righteousness, *agape*, and forgiveness. Harnack opined that Kingdom of God is present where ever Love is exercised. C.H. Dodd who is the exponent of “realized eschatology” for him, the Kingdom of God was not going to come in the future but it had already come here and now, ergo for Jesus' Kingdom of God means the reign of God, in the hearts of the people. For Walter Rauschenbusch, the exponent of the social gospel movement, the key to the social gospel is the Kingdom of God, and this is possible because it is here and now, He stressed on two aspects of the Kingdom of God: The kingdom is the realm of love and it is the common wealth of labour.

Hence, when we look at the phrase that Jesus was saying the “Kingdom of God is at hand,” He was calling the people to move into that realm, the realm of love and righteousness, where God reigns in the heart of the people, to make the life meaningful, As Jesus himself was already involved in helping the people realize the kingdom of God, by his work and ministry.

Jesus and law!

In the incident of Jesus healing on the day of Sabbath, we can see Jesus stayed as close as possible to the fulfillment of human need, no matter how wide the Sabbath law was. Though Judaism varied the rules in such a way that human need is met. Jewish Ethics was legalism modified by humanitarianism hunted by legalism. But Jesus completely took side for the need of the people leaving the rules and laws behind. He was not stopped by the long standing tradition of rules and laws, but his love for human led him to reach out and act.

Jesus said that he came to fulfill the law. He reinterpreted the law in order to eradicate evil. Yet He never discarded the law but obeyed. Jesus exposed the real intention of the law, abolished some and corrected some.

Jesus the counter culture prophet!

Christ is the one who creates liberating culture, alleviates the oppressive structure, and fights against any unjust practice. This secular Jesus has impacted beyond the boundaries of Christianity because he live what he taught, keeping God the center in his life and in the heart of the world. Jesus' death is the consequences of this work for existential liberation. He transforms culture from complacency to resistance, individualism to communitarian salvation, and from fear to freedom.

Public Theology an alternative for a relevant Christology

In an article 'The Church as a Segment of Civil Society in India: Its Status and Role' by T.K. Oommen, it mentions the conceptual history of civil society as the 'third realm' between the state and the market: reflects about the role of Church in the civil society and this is the dimension that Church must fit in because state dwells on rights and duties of citizen and the market makes person a consumer, so the Church's role should be to produce communitarians who can altruistically transcend individual rights and responsibilities to cater to the needs and aspirations of group and collectivities. The challenge is that when it comes to number of Christians in India, it is too small to make the visible impact in the public sphere. **Whereas the picture of Nagaland is quite different to what T.K Oommen had mentioned in terms of number, because more than 93% are Christians in Nagaland yet the impression of Christian ethos and impact of Christianity is not visible in the public sphere. Is God or Christ limited to only the four walls of the church? How public is Christianity today?** Let us try to contemplate. God of Israel and the Bible was very much public, and not God of the temples. The God of the Old Testament acted in justice and righteousness in the public squares. Even Jesus when He was on earth His ministry was very much in public, and for public common good. He was always in the public realm of the social justice, religion, politics, and economy of the common people. But this publicness of the mission and witness of God and Christianity is not visible as Songram comment, “complete hijacked by the pietistic other-



worldly vision and mission where the concern is how to go to heaven rather than how to bring heaven down here and now.” When we look at Jesus' teaching, the reign of God was very much here and now. Yet the sad reality is that the relationship of Christianity and public sphere is like a divorced couple.

Public Witness out of Humility

Jesus entered the temples courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the table of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. He said to them, “My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers”. In this incident we can see how Jesus is breaking all the cultural, traditional, religious understanding of His time, he is not only countering the existing ideology in debates and teaching, but he is also taking up steps and action against such corruption that is happening right in front of Him. Jesus was just a carpenter's son, He was not given any authority to do all these by temple nor by government, but He had the authority from the love of Human, especially the poor and weak. This is the social engagement that the church and Christian in general must actively involve. However, it takes humility to be an actor in this engagement because it is a counter to the whole unjust activity and corruptions. It may cause what Jesus had to pay.

One thing is clear from all the above points, where ever Jesus went there was change. The structures that were static and absolute for long were moved to flux towards a new understanding of the whole humanity and God. **Jesus' praxis was based on CHANGE** therefore anyone who professed that they are in Jesus Christ and still live the same old life (*living a life for self*) is a liar, because if Jesus is in one's life change is inevitable, as CHANGE always accompany where Jesus goes. All the above happened through the medium of CHANGE. This Christmas are you ready for the change? Are you ready for the coming of Jesus Christ? God changed His mind that is one reason why we have Christmas, if not we were to be judge. God changed His mind, and the price he had to pay was His precious one and only son. Yes, when we accept change there is Kenosis, however the result was life to all creation. Therefore if we are to accept change Kenosis is unavoidable, and that is where the Grace of God takes over our life to a beautiful horizon of impossible possibilities. Bonhoeffer stated “*When Christ calls a Man (Woman), He bids him/her come and die*” one must die to self if change is to happen, because one cannot live for self and live for Jesus Christ at the same time. As JESUS to me means CHANGE. “Who do you say that I am?” still remains a beautiful and a very powerful question open to everyone even today. What is your response to the question, this Christmas?

Eschatology: *the part of theology concerned with death, judgement and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind.*

Parousia: *the reappearance of Jesus as judge for the Last Judgment ; Second coming of Christ*

Kenosis: *the renunciation of the divine nature, at least in part, by Christ in the Incarnation.*

Taküm Kuli

Mrs. Aremla Longchar
A. G. Youth Fellowship

Ni Kristan kibong ka nung soa ain aser ni lanuwa nungi kü tsüraburi ku taküm Tsüngrem asoshi bendanga agutsuba tenangzukba mapang aben shia liasu. Parnok dang Apijemtsü shin 3:9 ajanga jembia liasu, “Ne takaba agi aser ne renlokba nung, mezüngbuba süngjang agi KIBUBA tushiang” Meyilongi ni tanur asü dang nungi sayutsüngiba nükshia liasu aser temelong nung kenübo nia missionary ka akumtsü jangra liasu. Saka shidakba nung ni mission mapa ji kecha mangateti liasu. 2000 küm kü temeim kubo alima nungi pila ao aser ni theology azungtsü bilema aliba matalok. Kum ana Tsungrem dang sarasadema atar Tsungremi “Lanuchuba Mission” ajanga ni theology azungtsü sponsorship leman lapoktsu. Saka iba mapang tashi ni Tsungrem angashiba dak alaka kü takum nung chichiba Tsüngrem majangshi liasu. Oda ken ashitsu agi tema tazütsü dang, saka Tsungrem tajungi ni kodanga medoktsu. Joshua 1:5. Ni theology züngzüker kulen missionary aotsu merang dang saka tamakok dang asü. Iba sentong tamakok anguba ya Tsüngremi dang kaket ka azüngba ajanga kü tebilemba sayu aser teratet angubaji ni samaba tanelatem asoshi masu saka ni tajangzuk asoshi bilemba ta jangja jangja angatetdaktsü.

Ni Tsüngrem dang ni Evangelist asutsü kodanga masüng dang. Mapang ka mission trip aodang ku melong nung yamala evangelist ka ama nibo masutsü ta ni bilem. Adangji, kodang ni Evangelist inyaksü asung dang ni iba mapa meinyaksü ta shisatet. Kechiba sura iba mapa ya yangkhu azüker ki ka nung suma senzutsü ano iba mapa ya kanga tila aser nüma medangi bilemba aser ni ku sasa kanga ulua bilem.

Anogo, mapang suitema aodang kenü ni Tsungremer tajaba ka asoshi yongya liasu, anungji ni lumia sarasadem. Anogo ishika suir kulen ku dangi tajaba ka aru aser ni melongsoa hai ta langzü. 2014 kum nungi AG Youth Evangelist inyaktsu tenzuk aser inyaka arudang 2017 nung ajungbena kunu Imlirenla car

accident nung takum sama. Oda iba mapang ku melongi arubaji, iba tejashi aser takoksa ya kecha agia suneptsütsü makok ta bilem. Saka ni kodang Tsungrem O azungtsü tenzuk iba mapang nungi ku melong nung anizungzuk aser tiptem angu.

Ni kü teraksa melongjang Tsungrem nem bendanga agutsu aser ni ku temenen ajak temai adoka sayuang ta ni sarasadem. Tsungrem temeimi koda talangka aremzucker yamaji pai ku dang, ku takum tila pai agizuk. Iba kum ya ku temenen jungkai adokjen adokba kum ka liasu. Ni amar aliba temenen sayu, aser ni temein nung anünga aliba metetdaktsu. Joko tai adoktsu, benshitsu tangatetba ka agutsu. Tangar dang tatok magütsüba ajanga ku nela tip matemdaktsu. Iba mapang nung kibong nungi tenzuka ni tatok agütsütsü melongtet.

Yamaji Tsungremi pa taochi ajanga ku dang mezungdangtet tai tokogo ta amanger.

Ku takum nung Khrista ajurur kulen ku telongtiba nungi temelenshi liasu, pa taochi ajanga ni kumzük, aser pa chir Yisu Khrista shiba kangki nung ni asoshi takum tenla agutsü, pai teti tatem maka dak alitsu ni kumzuk ta ni amanger. Iba yongji ni Tsungrem asoshi alitsu, pa O azungtsu aser Khristan takum ka ama inyakba dang masu saka Khrista ku takum nung aliba kuli sua alitsu. (1 Cor 11:1)

Takum nung tashi mait aika dang lir aser Evangelist ka ama inyak dang tamakok aika dang lir saka Tsungremiu ni kodanga metoktsu. Yohan 15:16...

Tsungremi ni tepetruk tia nung liaka teti tatempang makaba lima nung pa den alitsu ni kumzuk. Pa O, sarasadem, temeim, aser taochi meteniang ni ya tashi alitsu tamakoktsu. Anungji tatem nung ni ya lephsia shiner “Tsungremi ni aneptsu, anitet aser kumzuk, ya ajak asoshi temtiba teyanglur Tsungrem tenu ng sanger. Amen.





A Message to those who are trying to find the light in the Tunnel

Maynaro Jamir
Bayavü Youth Fellowship

Most of you will think that I am going to share a sob story about my pathetic unemployed life. The struggle is real, the pain and the stigma in our society is real. The recent statistics about Nagaland holding the highest rank among unemployed youths in India is just a number. This number is made up of real young men and women full of resources and skills and ideas who are crippled by the sad stigmatized tag of being an unemployed youth. When I heard a man who took his own life right after appearing NPSC Preliminary exam a couple of years ago, it filled me with deep sorrow. Because I know how he must have felt. The shame, the pressure and the depression is ever present. I know because I have been in that dark place and I still struggle and fight my battles.

Here is a message. There are good things in every season of our lives. And surprisingly enough, despite all the dark grey days I have had, my unemployed season has been one of the most bittersweet, fruitful and memorable phase.

For one, you have the most powerful resource in the entire universe i.e. time. Everything is in your favour because you have time. Armed with your talents and skill and ample amount of time, you can put all this creative energy into rediscovering who you are and what you do best. The best works are created under pressure. Remember diamonds are formed under pressure. Even preparing for exams and facing interviews and competitive exams becomes an enjoyable venture. Though expensive, taxing and tiresome, it brings out the best in you. Failures and mistakes, and little victories, they teach us to become humble and grounded, preparing us for the bigger battle called life.

I believe in love and friendship and I also believe that the person who loves you when you have nothing and when you are nobody is the person who loves you true. What great time to find out who are the genuine people in your life who love and respect you for who you are and not because of what you do and how much you have. Friendships and relationships gets redefined then, and your inner circle becomes really smaller as you learn that materialism runs high in our society and true friends and supporters are few! In this short life of ours what more do we need other than being surrounded by loved ones, friends and finding our real purpose and truly living it. Because getting a job is not the final destination.

All this struggle and pain in this season of unemployment becomes bearable when we hold on to Jesus. Hold on to Jesus with your dear life. During my darkest days God's love has sustained me. This can be a time for us to give up and become depressed. It can lead us to pick up addictive vices and habits. But if we allow God to work in our lives, this season will be one where

we will experience and see the hand and favour of God working in our lives. Let us strive to love God with all our hearts and all our mind and all our soul. Will I be able to love God and worship Him even if I am just an unemployed nobody to the world? Will I be able to give Him the same time and devotion when I become better off? Let us hold on to our first love no matter what season we are in.

This is a season that will bring out the best in you. Not everyone is meant to be an officer or a fashion blogger. Not everyone can be a teacher or a businessman. But every one is meant to live a happy and fulfilled life. This is our birthright, our gift of life given by our creator the day we were born. Just because you failed to crack some exams and secure a white collared job does not make you less worthy. Why waste and throw away your life in that failure! Is our life just worth a job? If you ask your loved one how much you are worth, I believe he or she will never put a price tag on you because there is only one 'you' and if they search the ends of the world to find another you, it will be futile. That much you are worthy. Why let society decide your usefulness and your importance just because you are unemployed. Go live your life. Find your purpose and live it surrounded by the people you love and those that support you. For what does it gain a man if he gains the whole world but losses his own soul? (Mark 8:36) heaven is our destination and greater work awaits us. Why should I be discouraged when Jesus is my portion and my constant friend in need. Live bravely and fight fiercely this battle called life. Don't you give up for there is light at the end of the tunnel.



Freedom

Trapped in the World of injustice and Naysayers,
I stand on my feet to face them with courage
Ne'er wanting to be the Victim but a Victor.
Different minds and concepts arise in rage
Where people fight for their own rights
As They're treated in an aggressive manner.
I see Them in pain, singing songs of sadness
That They face as the Sun kisses the Land
Till to that of the Moon vanish in silence.
Ah! It's a sad thing to see Them enduring the pain.
But here I am, a man with Dignity and Grace
Standing firm with my head held high
Ne'er to bow down to the World of Sin and Pain.
That's the motivation of being myself,
Ne'er wanting to be weak and feeble
Where I'll be covered with fears and tears.
Freedom is for everyone who accepts it truly.
So I stand strong ne'er to be fallen apart.



Limatoshi Longkumer
Town Area Youth Fellowship



My Last Christmas Eve.

Aimless and speechless
I stand before Him, lying down in a coffin.
I wanted to say something
But I know He won't hear me cry.
When they are with sparkling eyes
Filled with amusement and merrymaking where
The decor done so well with lights everywhere,
I stand in pain with tears in my eyes.
Nothing feels right nor wrong;
Just being confused whether He left me for real.
When She come to hug me though She in pain,
I felt the warm hope of growing old together.
I saw Her pain for losing the love of Her life
But Death is an inevitable being, which
Everyone has to welcome and accepts it.
Then I heard the dirge singing unison ally to which
My heart sank deeper and darker, but I pretend
To be happy when She looked at me in pain...
Cause 'We made a promise ne'er to shed a tear.
It was indeed a hard time for Me and Her
To let Him go without hearing His last wish.
But as the night gets colder and darker,
I closed my eyes pretending it was a mock trial,
Moving on with a new life where
She and I stand in our own feet together
Singing the song of the past, spent with Him.



THE CASE OF YATI

Yati sat down aware of his heart beating against his chest. His father did not turn off the TV but pressed the volume down.

He said, "Is it money you need?" when Yati fidgeted. Yati sighed inwardly and took the leap in his mind, "Oba, err..I...can we talk about Odi Sashi?"

His father quite surprised, "Hmmm... what about him? What is there to talk about?"

"I miss him, we never really talked about it after the week he died. Oba, it is not easy but can we at least start to accept it, can we as a family pray about it, and live with it?" Yati said nervously.

"Yati, he is long gone, what else can we do? We are all dealing with it in our own way."

His father seemed defensive but calm as he was, he maintained his posture. Yati had already started the conversation and he only wished it would go somewhere that bridged the gap between everyone in the family.

"Oba, I know he is gone but I am talking about us, those who are alive. It would be much easier if we talked about it. If we can all deal with it together, this family won't seem so hopeless."

"Hopeless?" his father said quizzically.

"Yes, Oba. It is like we have forgotten to live after Odi Sashi died. It affects me, I wish we addressed it openly so it is not so hard for me to deal with, it..is..hard...err... to see us all like this."

His father did not reply but he paused for a while. Yati did not speak either but the silence did not feel awkward. They sat thinking and his father stared at the muted TV screen flashing a sports channel. It might have been hard to spell the words that drifted their family apart despite the love. How do you expect it to be just okay when struggling with it in the isolation of the mind?

After sometime, Yati's father broke the silence; he spoke with certain depth,

"It has always bothered me too. I loved Sashi dearly; your mother and I still wonder where we failed as parents. What gave him the strength to take his life...and why is it so hard to talk about it to others. People hush any topic of suicide when I am around, it makes me feel I did something wrong in raising your brother."

Yati did not know what to say. His father had for the first time said something like that. This was even for him, a new territory of father-son talk. He felt glad and astounded that his father of few words told him that.

"Oba, I...I think it is not our fault, I mean it is not your fault. Suicide is actually not a taboo, it is something most people struggles with, few admit it and people do it mostly to quiet their minds, maybe Odi Sashi did too, we never know. But only those of us who has lost a loved one by suicide knows the struggles of coming to terms with it," Yati said quite thoughtfully and freely as his father opened up.

"Hmmmmmm..." his father became silent again.

"Oba... I think we should talk to Oja, and when Oya comes, let's talk and pray about it."

"Well... We should."

Yati sat there glad that he saw a glimmer of hope. He felt that his father had said enough for a night. So he got up silently and left his father staring at the TV. His father sat like that for sometime before he took the remote and the room filled with the sounds of football commentators. Yati whispered in his heart, "Oba, we



will be fine.”

Three weeks later, Yati came to visit me. I sat in my room and he seemed lighter than much before. I asked him straight,

“So?”

He smiled, “Ahh, it will take time but I guess...it is better than before.”

I teased, “Then what problem brings you here?”

He laughed, “human problems are never ending.”

He told me how he had talked to his father. With his sister still yet to return home, he along with his parents had taken to prayer time a little bit more seriously than before. It wasn't easy when their emotions and thoughts clashed when they talked but he was glad, home felt like home. Communication made everything hopeful.

“So, how is college?”

“As usual,” he said.

“I am proud of you for speaking up to save your family.”

He said, “Oh, well...Thank you.”

I told him, “In the meantime, don't forget you are a teenager.”

He gave me a knowing look and said, “I will.”

“People make mistakes, even you. It is not the end of the world; don't you forget that, alright?”

He paused and said, “I don't know why my brother did what he did, I loved him and I love my family, I shall do better than that.”

“That sounds better,” I said knowing he talked out of experience.

I only said a prayer for him and his family. I knew in time, they would all testify openly about the experience. This seventeen year old had taken a step which for most of us doesn't go beyond our mind. Still very young for our society's mentality and still forging ahead for an answer. We talked about a lot of things and when it was time, he got up to leave.

“Thank you,” he said simply and I knew he meant it.

“You are welcome.”

(Concluded)

Jesus in the Old Testament



Mezi
Minister Hill's Angami Baptist Church

The Bible talks about Jesus in the Old Testament and I never took it seriously until I discovered Jesus in the first book of the Bible and it changed my life forever. In the book of Genesis, when God tested Abraham's faith, it was the ultimate test of faith (Genesis 22).

The very first time the word “love” is mentioned in the Bible is the verse “Take your son, your only son, whom you love” Genesis 22:2, it is not coincidence that the first “love” was the love of the father for the son, and in this case the God head themselves, God the Father and God the son. When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, He himself knew He would have to give up His son, His all.

We need to consider the fact that at this time Abraham was 112 years old and all the promises God had given him was in fact connected to his promised son, Isaac. To willingly sacrifice his son and become childless at this age was the most painful and humiliating experience as a middle east man and in such a culture, Abraham would much rather sacrifice himself than his only son. Tremendous test and Abraham really showed his loyalty to God by obeying God's demand. But we also understand that God would not ask anything of Abraham that He Himself was not willing to sacrifice.

It is interesting to notice that the place God asked him to sacrifice his son would be in the city of Salem, in the land of Moriah. This city later became Jerusalem and the hill would later become Calvary. It was a three days long walk to the hill and during those three days Isaac was the same as dead to Abraham. Imagine his heart as a father as he went through this journey, the heaviness, the emotions, the pain he experienced through every step of the way. Isaac carried a

wood on his back as he climbed up the hill, as Jesus did with the cross on his back, towards the atoning sacrifice (lamb for a burnt sacrifice), as **Jesus is the lamb of God who atoned all the sins of the world**. Abraham built an altar and placed his son on it, and lifted the knife to sacrifice, when suddenly angel of the Lord comes and stops him. And she named the place “Jehovah Jireh” meaning “The Lord will provide” and provided he did 2000 years later, when He sacrificed His son, His only Son, whom He loved most as the atoning sacrifice for all the sins of the world.



The undeserved open door

Repakaba Tzudir
AG Youth Fellowship

To share about what God has done for me seems very minuscule in such an article as the pages required would be infinite. However, I would love to share a fraction of my life testimony and how God's grace remains static though I live a dynamic life.

Let us take a plunge into the reminiscence of my life and how it all began. I will let you view my life through the lens of a lost soul and how it was back then. So there I was born in the capital city of Nagaland so called Kohima, through the communion of two souls without the Lord's blessings. Unlucky was I, who ended up with both parents premature in parenting skills and lack of financial sustenance to raise the so called unlucky son. But there was a break through; my mother's elder brother was willing to take me in, as he and his wife were barren. And suddenly when you realize that things are going your way, it turns out to be worst as my uncle was an alcoholic and the new family that I ended up had financial crisis too. What an irony right? But it did not stop there. Born with the tag Christian I realize that there were certain obligations that I had to follow whether I liked it or not, the only time I felt like going to church was during special occasions like Christmas and New Year as we got free food yet not knowing what it really meant. One thing I did enjoyed was going to Sunday school with my neighborhood friends just for the sake that we got presents at the end of the year for memorizing few bible verses, uncertain of its meaning and application. My conception was still young and untamed; I had no clue about who Jesus was but the only repeated words that I heard was, He died for us which was utterly meaningless for a teenager who was still confused about the world, I do remember praying every night to a bearded man with a long chin without any scope or determination but just for the sake that I was told to do so. Years went by with the same premature



mentality of a vague Christian with little to no perception of God. Forwarding the year, in class 7, I was, where the teachers hands out project work for the first time, where we are meant to refer from the internet. Here my life changed completely, wait! Hold your horses, we are still in the lost soul topic, moving on there I was, a raging teenager who came in contact with the most beautiful thing I had ever witness, a trend that had taken over the young generation captivating their physical, emotional and cognitive state. For a layman it would be hard to know what I am talking about, in humanly level it is what we call a computer, soon I began to realize that I was getting addicted far beyond my comprehension. Computer café personified as heaven in my conception which also worked as opium in my life to ease the personal depression, the only excuse I can craft out was that I wanted to stay away from my alcoholic dad. I began to develop a

sense of emotional detachment and hatred towards him as I was blinded by his addiction and treatment, (now God has taken him away from us, I now see the real picture of how he played an important role in my life and I consider him as my best earthly father God has ever provided), it is quite likely that staring at the visual technological gadget does imply some financial charges, of which I had discovered a solution, stealing yes! Best way to earn in a guilty manner. It lingered for some few years, at 12th grade I dropped out in selection exam because of my addiction but my ego did not give me room to learn, I enjoyed blaming the institution rather than myself for the failure. For a family that was hardly sustaining, it was easy to trace the money which went missing; fortunately I was caught by my mother. One thing that startled me and made me emotional was when I noticed the tears rolling down from her eyes, I felt as though the world gave up on me and I was a lesser creation, (I decided not to steal from that day). The situation became so tense and nothing was working out in my favor, binding the frustration I ventured to find a new solution. I was nowhere near to face God so in order to escape Him (because I could not follow His commandments) I came out with the most brilliant conception of easing my way in as an atheist believing the limited science that I knew. I started questioning the existence of God defending my thoughts with the limited understanding of Biology and Physics at my own interpretation. Trust me it got me nowhere, in fact it made me more depressed and peace was not in me as my family situation got worse also my spiritual life was at the point of decay. All hope went in despair as I continued to follow the dark path that lead to nowhere, even as an atheist, one of the thoughts which bothered me was death. It was something I was always scared of as I could not explain the phenomenon behind death.

Little did I know that God would still wait for a deluded person like me who deserved nothing but damnation. The undeserved door opened for me in my BA days when I came in contact with the Evangelical Union. My interest grew deeper to know more about Him though the dilemma still lingered as I was always in a position to compromise where ever I can and as a young believer I doubted everything. My perception was still unclear because of the lack of Bible study. However I found it intriguing that in His presence I was happy and

peaceful. For a person like me who has drawn far away from the cross, imagining the concept of God loving me back was proximately close to none, which sparked my interest towards knowing the Grand weaver and the way He has developed the art of Grace for humanity. Things in the family remained as it was, my dad was still pursuing his desires and my mom was struggling to support the family in her best possible ways. Even at that situation God still permitted me to relinquish my dream which was pursuing a Masters degree, for I always thought that it was not going to happen. But Jeremiah 29:11 clearly says *“for I know the plans I have for you”*, God already had a plan for me which I discovered after I ended up in the University. There is a camp held by Evangelical Union every year in the university, the camp prolongs for a week, pardon me for I am a person who is not good at dates or numbers. It consists of numerous topics for preaching and discussion, my inner voice was poking me to attend the camp, my only interest of



attending the camp was to get an insight about the topic, “science and religion”. So I decided to be part of it, and it was at that moment I gave my life completely to Christ, the feeling of immense joy and happiness rushed through my veins, it was as though I was floating in the air in peace, my burdens and my heavy heart began to lighten. I felt like I was a completely different person, 2 Corinthians 5:17, *“therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation”*, my conception of life completely changed after I encountered Christ. I began to rectify the wrong ways I had been walking and decided to shift my path. I wanted to work for Him so I decided to join the Sunday school ministry under Nagaland University Christian fellowship which was a blessed experience then after the completion of my masters. I was planning to take a gap from everything in order to prepare for my PhD examinations. I remember our youth evangelist and some of the AG youth members approaching me to be part of the ministry as a Gethsemane member, my first thoughts was that it was not a new thing as A.G. youth always tried to reach me out as a part of their mission since my high school days but because of my arrogance and initially being an introvert I always denied them. But that evening was different as God spoke to me through a book written by Rick Warren, “What on earth am I Here for?” After some few days I decided to join the prayer group, and I still believe that it was the best decision I had ever made in my life. The blessing that I received was multiplied and my way of thinking changed completely, I began to observe life in an optimistic manner, though my dad's addiction and my family problems was not getting any better. I had a good family of youths who were ready to consider my problems and most amazingly pray for my family which was always comforting. I began to realize that tense and desperate situations elevated our consciousness to pray deeper which was like reminder from God that He is always there.

My life in the AG youth ministry was short lived and I could not accomplish much but in return the blessing I got from God was beyond what I deserved. I managed to clear my NET exam and also got a job I always favored, by His grace. A reminder

to my dear friends who are serving in the youth ministry or any other ministry, do not give up no matter how long it takes, He has a perfect plan for all of us just pray and seek His will. I am testifying with assurance that He never fails on His promises unlike us, what has been set by Him cannot be uprooted by any forces of the world. Life of being a Christian is not always filled with treasures and moments of happiness but inevitably filled with problems set by God to build you. As I rephrase my life back then from the moment I was born till today all the hurdles that I faced were a constant indicator of changing my personality as to who I am today. As a matter of fact I would never be the same person without those problems in my life for which I thank God. And I am obliged to be a follower of Christ and to learn new things every day, It is quite easy to be filled with the spirit when I am around people who are sincerely devoted to Christ but the reality of being a Christian is to be like Christ when we are dealing with the rest of the world rather than being confined to Christians. Now God has assigned me to establish His ministry in the academic world of which I am pursuing though I am liable to make mistakes, unlike before I am less afraid as I have Jesus Christ by my side to confront me. And for the rest of my dear friends who are reading this, do not worry too much, I know God is working for you as He has for me. At the end I would like to thank our almighty God for everything that he has done from the beginning of my life till today. I was lucky enough to have wonderful parents as well as many great spiritual mentors and friends who have helped and taught me through their words and life experiences and most importantly prayed for me. Thank you for the beautiful journey and for the wonderful things that you have taught me, though I may not mention you by names you already know who you are, always know that in your darkest hours there is always someone who is praying for you. You may give up everything in the world but never give up on Christ because in Christ we are complete, leaving all of you with my favorite verse Matthew 5:16, *“In the same way, let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven”*. God be with you all.

God, we need to talk

Imlikokla Jamir
AG Youth Fellowship

Lately, I often find myself questioning if my happiness is attuned and pleasing in the sight of God. I always keep bumping into God in the most unusual places. And when I do sit down alone, close my eyes, and talk to Him, sometimes it is wonderful, the inexpressible delight and peace that comes from the communion is beautiful. And most times, I just want to be the one talking, I find myself not wanting to hear Him. I just want Him to agree with my reasons on everything. Yes, it is selfish. If you plan to finish reading this, I hope you will grant me the same grace God gives you when you commit a folly much smaller than mine but bears the same name, Sin.

I am utterly fallible, and I know He is Immutable and Supreme but I struggle to understand because I am, in the deepest sense of the word "limited". God does not move so it is the "self" I battle with. And given the choice of free will, it is between my "self" or Him every single day. Of course, my choosing Him or not is for me. It is not for God. He is, was, and will be. I was, am, and will not be if He did not. I have to keep reminding myself of most circumstances in the Bible, the chaos created when we nonchalantly choose ourselves over God. I have to admit, nothing brings much shame when you truly become aware of what a dim-witted sin-knotted, hypocritical, entitled, undeserving human you are and it is still only God who can untangle you and He will do so, ever lovingly. This is me, in a nutshell.

Thinking about whether what makes me happy is really God's will, has led me to understand to some extent about suffering. I am always closest to God when I suffer. I hardly hear His voice but I have always felt Him and His leading. I never have to ask, He eases and comforts me. I know what I am like and how desperately aware I am of God's love in suffering. You see, I stay where God needs me to be when I am in pain and oddly I am learning to appreciate it more as I grow up. I should not swear but I swear suffering is hard and yet I have struggled less with suffering because I see where God stands, it is in suffering I realize how insignificant but purposed I am. Suffering still bothers me but it has always redirected my focus. It is impossible to know who truly Christ is without suffering. I strive to be more accepting of it, one day at a time.

I have come to a point in my life where I understand that more than suffering, I struggle with the "ups" in life. In suffering, I am grounded in God. In no way, I mean to say that being happy is wrong or should be an issue. But if what makes me happy involves only what God can do and not God Himself, I have definitely missed out. If what makes me happy derogates the Savior or unconsciously refrain praise from Him, is it worth it? If I hesitate to thank God, if I rejoice in the selfish desires and struggles of others, what is my happiness?

Yes, I am happy when everything goes "my" way, I rarely question it. I have, in my case, sense that praising God after getting what I want, if not careful, can become just choice vocabularies and no heart. Joy is a discussion for another day. What I mean to say is, something as temporary as happiness can reveal a lot about a human. When we are in the "ups" and in the laps of success, what we desire, and what we can control we are always more prone to pride and destruction. I find myself walking on eggs whenever I assume I hold the reins.

For me, I see Christ clearer when everything seems okay or when I become too comfortable. It



is like my senses vibrate to a pending purpose, idleness lurking, and lethargy creeping. I am in danger when I am self-decidedly content. I am likely to focus too much on where I am stepping as I climb the ladder, what if I dismiss for whom and why I was given the opportunity to climb the ladder because I became consumed with stepping for my own glory? I have been there. I tried to be the centre and soon enough I have realized, I can't. I am ashamed I even thought of it. I am clay, I cannot mould myself. The Potter could easily unmake me.

In my experience, I have heard Christ the loudest when my pride peaks, when I revel blindly in my temporary happiness, and when I make it all about me. He speaks through everything; He will push, poke, nudge, startle, and remind me. It is undeniably a wonder how alarmingly aware I am made of God's aura when I lean towards complacency and tries to conform to the world. The subconscious guilt is inescapable, there were times when I greatly disliked the discomfort of this bugging sense but in repentance, I understood it was His love that wanted to save me from myself. He chased me down to my wickedness and I have no words to describe how grateful I am. I, now, resonate with the depth when Justin Peters said, "Many think God's most fearsome acts of judgment as earthquakes, fires, pestilence, and famine. Not necessarily. The most fearsome act of God's judgment is when He simply gives people over to depraved minds. The wrath of God's abandonment is His most fearsome act of judgment." I shudder at the thought of becoming unduly prideful and full of myself to know where God stands, becoming depraved and ultimately blind because He has abandoned me. What will even be the purpose of living?

I have never been so glad for the obstacles and suffering that consciously positions me, I am in awe of how God speaks to us so that we are in Him. Perhaps for me, living in these instant, positive reinforced and super individualistic times, balancing the "ups" of life will be a constant battle antithesis to the Bible roaring with ground realities. I fear how deceitful my heart can be, and how choosing Christ daily is the heart and mind and soul battling against me. It is the easiest and the hardest decision in the moment; easy because I already know whose side I am in, hard because I have to conform the "me" to it. I fight nomistic thoughts every day especially when it comes to, what makes me happy? What should be actually okay? Because the answer should in all ways attune to Christ no matter the reason. It is tough. No kidding, even

my personal relationship with Christ will always be tampered from my end; it is He who makes it worth because I always need repairing. It is He who comes seeking, not me. And to think, I should be proud and happy on and for my own, I am nuts!

I want to be happy with what pleases God; I want the reason of my happiness to be His will even if it is nothing similar to how the world defines it. Phew! There I said it. For that I must always abate and remove myself, and really work hard at listening to his Voice which is a battle in this loud opinion-overloaded-generation. I am thankful that I feel God nudging me; it means He loves me and hasn't abandoned me.

Lately, He has been poking me, "what makes you happy? Why does it make you happy?" I talk and when I get to listening, the answer is nowhere near what will please him. I berate my own self and when I tell Him, "God, we need to talk", it is only because he extends his grace and He first knew we needed to.



YOUTH AND MODERN DAY IDOLATRY

"Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry." 1 Corinthians 10:14



Dr. Noksangrenla Longchar
Lerie Youth Fellowship

Tim Keller defines idol in his book 'Counterfeit Gods' as good things that we take and turn into ultimate things, things more important than God.

God doesn't leave any room for confusion in the commandment: "You shall have no other Gods before Me." Exodus 20:3.

What exactly is an idol? What does it look like in our modern culture? Idolatry is not only about bowing down to idols and images but idols are anything that takes God's place in giving us satisfaction, fulfilment, security or significance. Many of the things that we have idolized both past and present are not necessarily bad things, but good things that become the priority in our lives. It is not necessarily a specific object but rather something which is more valuable to us than God. It is something that occupies the place of God in our lives. An idol is anything we want more than God, anything we rely on more than God and anything we look to for greater fulfilment than God. Idolatry is thus the hidden sin driving all other sins.

Idolatry in today's world: We may not literally bow down to statues, but we do obsess about things we want to own or accomplish to the point that we are worshipping them instead of God like work, career, money, cell phones, celebrities etc. all of these things have the potential to take number one spot in our lives if we aren't careful. When it comes to idolatry, the danger is not in the item... it is in us.

Money: Money is probably the number one idol of our culture today. An obsession with having money and material things can easily take the place of following God. Many people look to money for a sense of significance and security. There is much value in money but not the most valuable thing. While there is nothing wrong with it, but they become a problem when we begin to believe that they satisfy us more than God.

The danger of serving two masters: "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the other and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the other and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." Mathew 6:24

Cell phones: Our mobile phones-tools or idols? Well.. most of us would have a hard time pulling away from our phones for an extended period of time, even when we're on vacation. We seek our answer on Google before taking them to God in prayer. We rely on the calendars, app, social media and email. Phones went from nonexistence to indispensable in less than a decade. Most of us suffer from nomophobia which is fear of being without our mobile phone. It's a tool to use on occasion for specific purpose, not an idol to have and to hold on 24/7. Lets knock down any idol of technology in our lives. Remember, anything good may become an idol if it becomes too important to us.

People: Many people in our lives can take the front seat, consuming our thoughts, actions and energy. This could be a public figure, an entertainer, sports figures, musicians or actors. As we all know Kpop is taking over the world and Korean culture is spreading like wildfire in Nagaland. The way we dress, hairstyle, hair colour, food we eat and even beauty products are inspired by Korean culture and Korean products are selling like hot cakes. Admiring people for their abilities and accomplishment isn't a bad thing when it motivates and inspires us to do and be our best. But when you and I glorify and model some media version of who they are then we are making them our idol. None of these things are evil in themselves, but any of them can become idols when we love them too much.

How to recognize idolatry in our lives: idolatry is hard to spot sometimes because it comes in different forms. Sometimes idolatry is obvious and sometimes idolatry is subtle. But idolatry is universal among human beings, and so we should be wise to take a closer look. If we ask God to show us our motives, we will discover where we have idols.

Lets pray and ask God to reveal the idols which may have crept into our lives, even the innately good things which we've elevated to a higher place than they ought to be. Let's uproot the lies we may believe at our core and make certain that we are never worshipping created things over our Creator.

One of them, an expert in the law, tested Him with this question: "Teacher which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind". Mathew 22:35-38

Social media: Social media is the new human Achilles heel. The subtle idol of self in its full modern glory comes in the form of likes and shares and follower counts and I'm guilty of it too. Social media can be very productive in reconnecting with old friends and family but spending an unhealthy amount of time on social media can quickly turn into idolatry. While the world warns us of these idols, many of us aren't even aware we're worshipping them. In the age of facebook, snapchat and instagram, we can be obsessed with projecting the image of a perfect life, perfect relationship, perfect friendship but the Christian faith is about the joy found in God, more than in ourselves or the things of this world.

Modern form of idolatry tends to be less obvious and more dangerous. So we should always be on our guard and evaluate our actions and make sure that they are not creating a gap between us and our true Lord. Someone who tries to play the balancing act of serving both God and earthly idols is doomed to fail. Double minded man is unstable in all his ways. Even if we begin with pure desire to serve God alone, this determination can drift away if we allow ourselves to be distracted by earthly idols.

virtue of faith

Inscribed in my heart His sacrifice,
His words: "I'm the way, the truth and the life".

As I tread on this narrow road,
Alone I cannot carry my load:
This cross of suffering and pain;
With thy own strength, It'll be in vain.
The way seems long;
In Him I'm made strong.

And I keep myself going;
Continue doing what I'm doing.
He said: "Never will I leave you,
Nor will I forsake you".

These words my soul recites ;
And His peace resides.
Fears keep blinding my sight;
Loneliness I'll have to fight;
Whilst i keep walking in His light.

The mountains we're climbing;
The goliaths we're facing,
They can be moved and removed.
All from us He need:

Faith as small as a mustard seed.
To trust in His being;

To trust in His doing;

To trust in His all knowing.

Let your faith shake not or divide;

His Love forever will abide;

His grace bountiful provide.

Bear patiently the cross;

For He died and rose.

Ahead He has gone to prepare a place;

For you and I to find solace.

This my faith: we'll meet Him face to face ;

One day in that beautiful place.



~ Ajungla Longchar
Merhülietsa Youth Fellowship

Better than who?

Imlibenla Mongro
Clinical Psychologist; CIHSR, Dimapur.

Philippians 2:3, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves..."

But there is one constant resonating sentence I hear from almost all of my patients with depression and anxiety. "I wish to be as I was before". "I was never like this". "I want to go back to myself before this happened". They miss their old self. They don't miss being someone else.



Well some may say I have taken this Bible verse out of context for what I am about to write or say here. You be the judge of that after you are through reading this.

Let me start off by saying, we as humans have a basic tenet in us, a longing that we are all born with, our very nature, to always look for something to better ourselves. To have better, to feel better, to be better, to do better. Better than who?

Now that the question is out there, it is pretty obvious I am talking about a lot of things revolving around comparison of self with others or competing with one another. We keep hearing things like, never compare yourself with others, you are unique, stop comparing yourself with others etc. While they may have calloused our hearing and our hearts due to the constant repetition of these supposedly cliché phrases, it is worthwhile to look into the impact comparison has in many aspects of one's life.

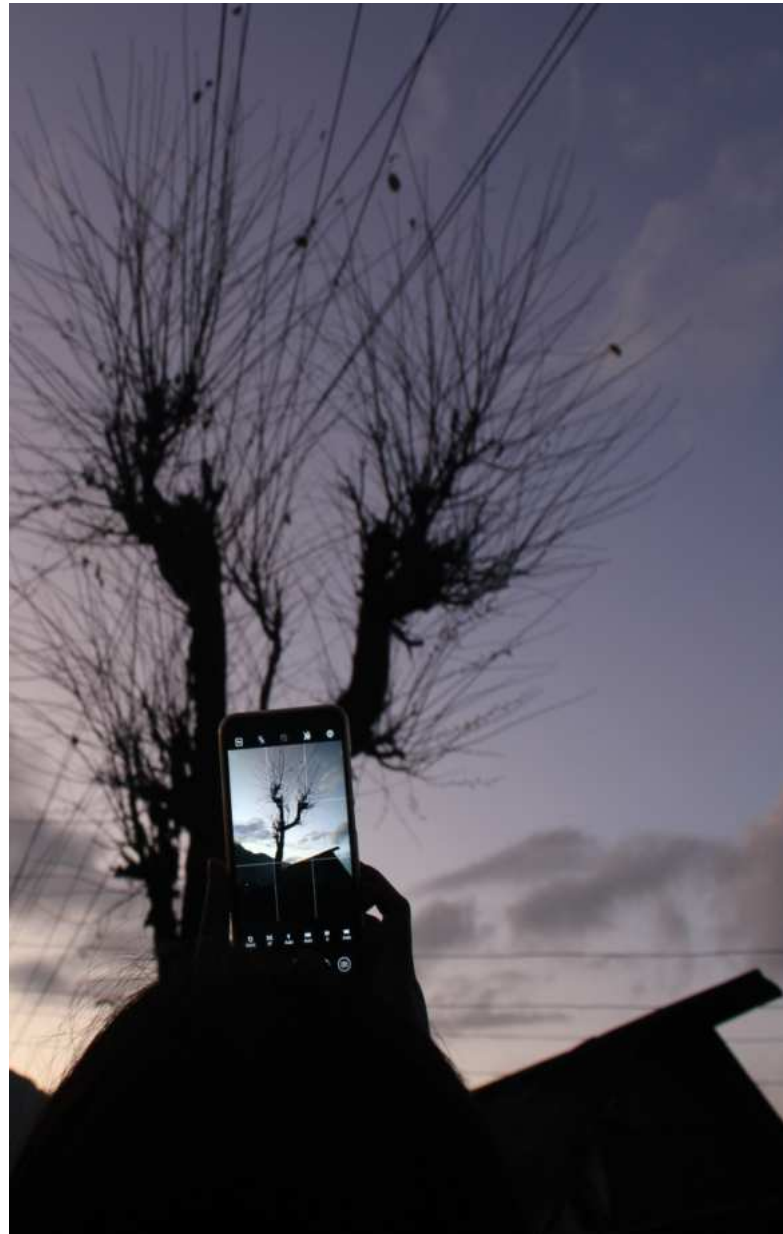
Comparing self with others affects your mental health which will in turn affect your physical health. We must admit that whoever you meet in life, there will always be someone better than you in one thing and likewise you will be better than another person in another area. However I have found an interesting streak when it comes to mental health issues. We may think, at least I used to think that, many people suffer from anxiety and depression because they have a tendency to

compare themselves and their unhappiness with those of others. But there is one constant resonating sentence I hear from almost all of my patients with depression and anxiety. "I wish to be as I was before". "I was never like this". "I want to go back to myself before this happened". They miss their old self. They don't miss being someone else. In fact it is like they are someone else when they have depression and anxiety.

How am I trying to bring Philippians 2:3 in all these then? The only way to be truly accepting of yourself and being happy about whom you are is to accept that you can't always be better than others. Not in all areas of life. Someone once told me that life is a competition but the competition does not necessarily have to be with others. Just compete with yourself. It took me a few seconds to register that. He explained that one needs to be better than how he or she was yesterday. Or a while ago which ever suits the situation best. So, I Abenla, want to be better than the Abenla I was yesterday. I want to be a better version of myself.

The Bible is very clear. "In all humility, consider others better than yourselves". This is not just a "Christian-y" principle we need to mindlessly follow. This will bring about your own happiness. Our ego will say, how can you be happy when others are better than you?

But hey, it is not Gandhi, it is not Confucius, it is not King, it is not Mother Teresa, it is not even Albert Einstein. It is the Bible. It is God's word. It is the Kingdom principle of being happy. I think we will have fewer chances of slipping and falling when we look at our path and how we walk it instead of looking at others, trying to find their flaws and best them out. I highly doubt God is going to ask us at the end of our lives, after we have given an account of everything, "Have you been better than others though?"



I want to end this write up by putting up a particularly common quote on comparison and competition.

"A fish cannot call itself stupid for not being able to climb up trees like a monkey nor should it try to climb any tree lest it starts to believe he is really stupid".

Will you be a beauty for Jesus ?

"Beauty is Fruit of the Spirit"

*Sentikala M Lemtur
Mentor at the Builders
The Lighthouse Church, Dimapur
(Sinai Ministry)*



What comes to your mind when you hear the word 'Beauty'? Well, I am sure everyone will have different verbal and virtual thoughts on it. Beauty of a particular person or a thing in this worldly realm cannot be generalised, this is my personal opinion. Because I think, the definition or recognition of beauty solely depends on one's perspective of seeing things. One may see a person or a thing as a beauty while it may differ for someone else. Just like not everybody's favourite colour is 'green', not everybody would find something or someone as a beauty. For instance, an old outdated typewriter in an office store maybe regarded as an old useless trash for some while it can be a beautiful centre piece for a vintage item enthusiast.

You see? Personal taste is the hero here, in deciding the beauty which comes from choice, preference and perspective again. Now, the humanly term of seeing beauty also varies. I have come across discussions about the beauty or look of a person, especially celebrities or anybody in general. And what I have learnt is, not everyone has the same opinion. The favourite face celebrity for one can be a 'not so good looking

face' for another. Some would even go to the extent of describing particular facial structure to support their favourites and still some won't be convinced; some stay silent, who I think are the wisest at times. So basically, to see beauty in something or somebody is a personal thing. But there is this particular type of beauty in the spiritual realm that I feel can be generalised which I will later describe in God's perspective as you read along.

Beauty is such a beautiful word itself. We would be belittling the meaning of the word if we do not use it to do justice to what it means. Let me tell you ladies and gentlemen, that recognition of beauty cannot be based only on a 'make up on fleek', 'camera on point', 'toned six pack abs', 'sharps and cuts' or those pictures which has gone through high quality edits, effects and filter.

No! Beauty is much more than that! It is more than that presented face and body structure you see. Take time to have godly thoughts on real beauty and you will surely see it. Remember, the way you see things also speaks a lot about you; who you are inside and the condition of your heart and mind. With that, I want to focus on things with spiritual, textual support to remind ourselves of things we are hardly or rarely taught in churches, at home or at school. Also, we must also keep in mind that we won't be taught everything like, 'A for Apple' to 'Z for Zebra'. There are some things we must learn ourselves through clear thinking and usage of wisdom from God. We cannot always give the excuse of not being taught. When we seek understanding from God, we receive! Not just receive but we apply and live with it. That is when you are transformed and all area of your thoughts become godly. While I am thinking and writing this, I am also reminded of the times I have unnecessarily opinionated or indulged in discussions on outward appearances of people; sometimes intentionally and at times ignorantly. And with much realisation, repentance and being forgiven, I write this.

Here are some few questions to ponder upon. Do you think God will create anything less than beauty? Do you think God make mistakes or trash? Do you think God after completion of His creations called it as ugly? No, No, and No! Let us go back to Genesis again! It is not a new story especially to my fellow believers. We know Genesis, the first book and chapter of the Bible starts with the creation. These are first things all of us were taught in Sunday Schools but we hardly give heed to it. 'So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female he created them.' (Genesis 1:27) When it is mentioned mankind, it means all human beings. Not only that, He created all human beings in His image. Again I say, in His image which says we were all created in His image, in His likeness. So when you unnecessarily, intentionally or ignorantly, say someone is ugly or give a negative statement about anyone especially on their outer appearances, remember that you're referring to God's image, to God's creation, his abilities, his creativity and his wonders is in a way, insulting God. It is true that it is your choice. And every individual is given the freedom of choice to allow Jesus as our personal Lord and saviour. We are given the liberty to choose good and evil. But is the choice that comes from your heart a delight in God's eyes? The statement and speech you use, is it gracious and merciful to built and encourage someone? Or is it evil that can hurt, break, and steal happiness and give birth to condemnation and insecurities in a person? So before you have your perspective and state it, remember every human being is made in God's image. Lately, I have been thinking of this and I realised it is so unnecessary to even think or say or comment on one's appearance or anybody for that matter if not for a godly intent. Sometimes silence and

not being too unnecessarily picky and opinionative can help. If you don't have anything good to say because your heart has nothing good to see than it is better to keep quiet and search God more and ask what is wrong with your heart having no good thing to think about.

Staying quiet about your evil thoughts can prevent a person from stumbling or getting hurt. Instead, it is much better if you would mind godly business. I said earlier that there is a certain type of beauty that can be generalised. I mean Godliness, which speaks of oneness in the spiritual realm where godly minds can think and live the same way, it is a collection of godly virtues. The FRUIT of the SPIRIT which is LOVE , JOY, PEACE , PATIENCE, KINDNESS , GOODNESS , FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS and SELF CONTROL.(Galatians 5:22-23) LOVE, being the first. A heart overflowing with God's love I believe, will possess all the rest of the fruit of the Spirit. I don't have to precisely breakdown all these godly virtues and share with examples. These are simple words we always use but cannot apply fully without the Spirit of God because to do anything without genuine love of the spirit is next to impossible. The Fruit of the Spirit is nine specific godly virtues but why is it presented in a singular word 'fruit' and not in plural word 'fruits'? Paul wasn't using a tricky grammar here or there was a misprint in the Bible. But it was the Spirit of God speaking to him to convey that all these cannot exist separately. It has its own godly ecosystem of co-existing in Spirit together. There is no bargain, no compromise, one fruit is as important as the other. And I say, a person who possesses the Fruit of the Spirit is the perfect definition of ' BEAUTY '. And to possess this, is to be more like Jesus and being a beauty for God and for mankind. Beautiful in a godly way and complete with the wholeness of the Holy Spirit is what God wants and what the world needs.



To the ones reading this, You were fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalms 139: 14) created in God's image (Genesis 1:27). You are beautiful ,you are precious ,you are loved because God made you and loves you .And you can always choose to be God's beauty both in and out by allowing the Holy Spirit to rule over your heart and your life. Only the Spirit of God can help you see and choose well by making your preferences and perspectives godly. Thus, it is your choice. "Choose God and the Spirit will follow and help you choose godliness and be a beauty ". The question is, 'Will you be a beauty for Jesus?'

Calling...



Charemnaro Pongener
Northeast Mission Co-ordinator
Asia Soul Winners

Whenever I meet people they usually say, "You are so brave." "You are such a strong woman." "How do you manage to adapt to all the travelling?" Some pat me on the back and say, "Way to go. Good job." While others ask, "How do you find the strength to do what you do?" Well here is a disclaimer; I am not really very brave. I am not really very strong. I have not figured all things in life and I am not doing anything spectacular. I am simply doing what God has called me to do as a person who follows Him. He said to feed His sheep and He said to care for "the least of these." So that is what I am doing with the help of a lot of people who makes it possible and in the company of those who makes my life worth living.

Becoming fully myself, the person God made me to be requires my conscious involvement of dragging "FAITH" out of my religious cupboard and releasing it in the marketplace where it belongs.

"I think most of us are looking for a calling, not just a job. Most of us have jobs that are too small for our spirit. Jobs are not big enough for people: Nora Watson"

This quote really hits a realistic chord, as there seems to be a growing hunger to creatively connect our life to both a larger sense of God's purpose and the needs of the world.

Once we understand our relationship with God we can make connection between God's work and our work. What we are doing in our small corner fits neatly into God's cosmic purpose. Whatever you are doing and wherever you are, as you begin to understand and put into practice your faith, your life will gain a real sense of direction.

So, if you yearn for more than you are presently experiencing, you can be sure that this is a sign that you were created for more. The hunger for significance is not a sadistic attempt by our Creator to push us to the brink of



despair and frustration. Rather, it is a call to destiny: a pointer to a greater measure of purpose and fulfillment.

God's calling is not simply to work in a particular job or profession but He has called us to join as His partner in His work. In fact His intention is for every part of life to be meaningful: not just employment but our relationships, our learning and our enjoyments.

Now let me share something closer to home, most of the youths and working youths have voiced out their concern that there are so many people who have so many gifts and skills who are already doing so many things that are important, so "who needs me? What can I as one individual contribute to the overwhelming needs of Mission?" But the truth is, we could do so many things if only we put our faith in action. Talents, gifts, skills, qualifications are just in abundance. And that is what the Mission needs.

So with much prayer I initiated the "SUSTAINABLE LOVE" project, which is a platform whereby you can use whatever talents and skills God has given you to inspire the lives of people in mission where direct evangelism is not possible.

Many of my friends and well-wishers came forward and contributed with their skills and talents. To name a few, Achet and Senti graffiti the school walls in Silonijan. Dr. Moajungla along with her team gave free health clinic. Both these initiative not only inspired the students in the school but also made the non-Christian within the area know that we care not only for their kids but their welfare as well.

So if ever you ask this question, "Does one person make a difference? Can I make a difference?" "what is my calling?" Remember this...

God so loved the world that He did something. He didn't select a committee. He didn't theorize how great it would be for someone to come to our rescue. He did something! And in turn, the Son of God said to God the Father, "I will go." He did something about it. And that is why we are saved. We don't believe in theory; we believe in the person of Christ, who died and rose again that we might live and make a difference. Christ made a difference and so can you, who is made in the image of Christ.

It is high time we come out of our comfort zone, our false modesty, our laziness, and our excuses. Enough of the easy life, it is time to stand in the gap and be the person who is like Christ.



JESUS! | 30



THE IMPACT • DECEMBER 2019

Chapter -2 Introspection

The deafening noise plummets into screams, spiraling, ascending higher and higher as the engine suddenly breaks down into a slow, screeching halt, refusing to budge any further. The supposedly pleasant, cool air is filled with the weird smell of metallic friction as it sends an unwanted chill to the spine; and as numbness sets in, the quivering gloved hands try to desperately grope the switch on the intercom...and everything else becomes blurry...

What do you do when you have somehow succeeded in partially plating up the first entrée and there is an assortment of a few Master Chef Critics and well wishers, waiting to gorge down the next written course on the hidden menu of the artist? It unnerves the mind in a way, with much to lose and the general saying that sequels usually become boring and uninteresting. If that's the case, the emergency breakdown will make some or almost all of the passengers get off the tedious ride on this train of thoughts. The irony is that an engine driver cannot abandon the train at any given situation, like it or not it is a responsibility...they say. The 'tasters' are already seated and waiting for the next course in an unfeeling, neutral stance or maybe it is just a whim of the imagination.

Does numbness affect one's emotional taste buds too? It is not trails this time, but rather about fragments. Will you be able to taste it...the fragments?! The trails shut off on their own, setting forth dehydrated fragments- fragments of imagination and reality...or a mixture of both...

Fragment 1: Write an essay on your aim in life...a simple question as a homework project for class presentation. The work behind that simplicity is not so subtle though, as the following weekend fires up in a frenzy of different brains -of a flustered ten year old trying to make sense towards perfecting that one aspiration, and an even more flustered pair of tensed parents trying their best to help express- not just a few words on a neat single-lined note copy but the requirement on a full 'chart' paper of torture. Finally, a way of resort- elder siblings or seniors with experience- an ultimate boon especially when coordination between brains, fingers and paper become messed up, a moment when one believes in heroes and the day is saved by a full written essay on "My aim in life" as it makes its way to the display board of the whole school- in that moment you capture – a pair of eyes, beaming with pride, determined, asserting again 'that is my aim!' Setting a goal for the future has never been more certain, a goal not just for the sake of one but for many who believe in those bright, blazing eye and in the individual's ability.

Fragment 2: The heart seems enveloped by a thick blanket of emotional turmoil. It is a question of so many whys engulfing this life; not just life, but days and minutes, a situation when part of one's existence gets questioned. A feeling of hopelessness and despair sets in when the ones whose trust we desperately need disappears without a trace; and there is just a vacuum left- a hole that is left gaping wide open. It hurts!!! More so when all alone...but it hurts the most when you realize you are the one causing them pain. Words--harsh, careless, blunt, makes one

slump back...disappointed, discouraged, disillusioned. Is that it? No fight backs? No heroic speeches of "I have a dream"?! No relief to soothe the pain? Is it plain selfish to just want to breath in the pleasant air of acceptance and encouragement, though you have known all along that you're the one failing the ones who've trusted you?

Fragment 3: Hey kiddo! What is your aim in life? Okay! That's great... Have you always wanted to be one of those? I mean, why do you aspire to be one, besides the fact that it seems to be a really cool profession... besides the fact that those around you say so? Yes, of course you would say that!!! It is refreshing to see you kid, playing with friends, pretending to be in that profession is also not a bad idea, so that's how you chose your future...playing with toy cars, dolls, marbles, besides playing in the rain and mud or fearlessly sliding downhill on a bearing of horizontally placed sticks with three wheels...and, sigh.. Finally, just going with the system...What do you mean, you hate the system? And who are you??? Where did the kid with the bright, fiery eyes and impish grin go? What do you mean there was no one around? Wait! You do look similar! Are you an older sibling or a relative perhaps? Have a seat, you look tired...your eyes are listless and lack brightness...Wait!! Wake up! Do not float away like a shadow...not just yet! There is more to you...there are golden fields waiting to be gleaned!!!

Fragment 4: Sitting in the dim lit compartment of the halted train, Introspection looks at you... What do you do when more than once, everything seems to be the right thing to do? In the course of a journey when there is so much to do alongside the path ahead there are choices to make... You look on either side of the window, realize you are needed there and just stop on the track; plunge straight ahead alone, even if the tunnel is dark, maybe expecting to see the bright end soon... Is there a limit to selflessness or is there a thin line between that and foolishness? Sure... there is the goal ahead to remind us again and again. So, which is a better sacrifice? Maybe, it is your own goal or the never ending act of doing the right thing for everyone. The answer is obvious; just that it is silently ignored, choked, strangled, and quietly placed in a corner.

He gets down from the boat with conviction, gradually walks on water, his eyes intent and focused on the one calmly walking towards them all...then he realizes what he had just done as his focus changes- he sees and hears the huge waves buffeted by the wind's force, feels the biting lash of water on his skin, he can smell doubt, fear as the cold water starts pulling him. "Lord, save me!" he cries out in desperation. Immediately, warm hands pull him up, a chiding voice full of love, firm yet gently reaches his ears...buzz...eyes open, facing the intercom, the evidence that before the numbness and blacking out, the unintentional stop had been announced. The smell of winter immediately brings nostalgia of doughnuts, carols, presents and much more... and the whole being of one's existence still buzzing with these words, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" focusing ahead, fear and doubt slowly fade...

The engine starts again as the radio plays Christmas melodies in the background...the journey continues... "For unto us a Child is born..." the radio chirps joyously. My dear passengers, this is Ed, we are now prepared and moving forward, equipped with a new set of hands and guide onboard...before the final pit stop of this journey, Wish you all a blessed and meaningful Christmas!!!

Theyievino Whiso holds a degree in linguistics and is currently working as a speech trainer in Kohima Science College (Autonomous). She wishes to pursue her studies and further specialize in the field of speech-language pathology.

Asks at 26

Can I say I'm a Christian?
That I delve in the Bible daily.
That I fully affirm the belief that
God's commands apply to me.
That what I learn from the Bible
I put much into practice-
My actions reflecting the Word.



Can I say I'm a Christian?
That I know the ways of Christ, and
That being a Christian means way beyond
Just going to Church.
That Monday through Sunday
My actions reflect the Word.

Can I say I'm a Christian?
That I can explain what I believe -
The essential message of my Christian faith.
That I fulfil His commandments
And respond with love and care,
My actions reflecting the word.

Can I say I'm a Christian?
That my obedience to Him comes first ,
That I am led by the Spirit-
My thoughts and actions guided.
That I am fully trusting in the Word
And I daily feed on it,
My actions reflecting the Word.

Can I say I'm a Christian?
That I am here for good reason
And life is but for a season.
That when my race is run
And my time is come,
I will know, for me
there's room enough
Within the heart of Him.
For the good and faithful
servant I've been,
He'll say "well done! Well done! "

The Ultimate Call

Nukshijongla Ozükum

B.D Serampore College, Kolkata.

Dear friends,

I have been pondering what I should write to the benefit of the readers of Impact Magazine. After brooding over it, I decided; as simple as it could be through my testimony, to share about Jesus Christ. So here it is,

Born into a Christian family, I accepted Jesus Christ when I was in grade 7 at a revival program. Beyond my home, Sunday school taught me about God. Keen to my childhood memories are going to Sunday school early morning with my friends, and taking part in church services. While in high school, God would speak to me through dreams, songs, and revelation. At times, things occurred exactly as I had seen in my dream or vision and sometimes I woke up from my sleep with songs in my heart in line with current life's situation. But little did I know or understand the meaning of message behind them as I did not yet receive the gift to interpret them. By then, I was a member of our colony worship team and I really thank God for the lives of our senior youth leaders for the great impact they had on my budding Christian life.

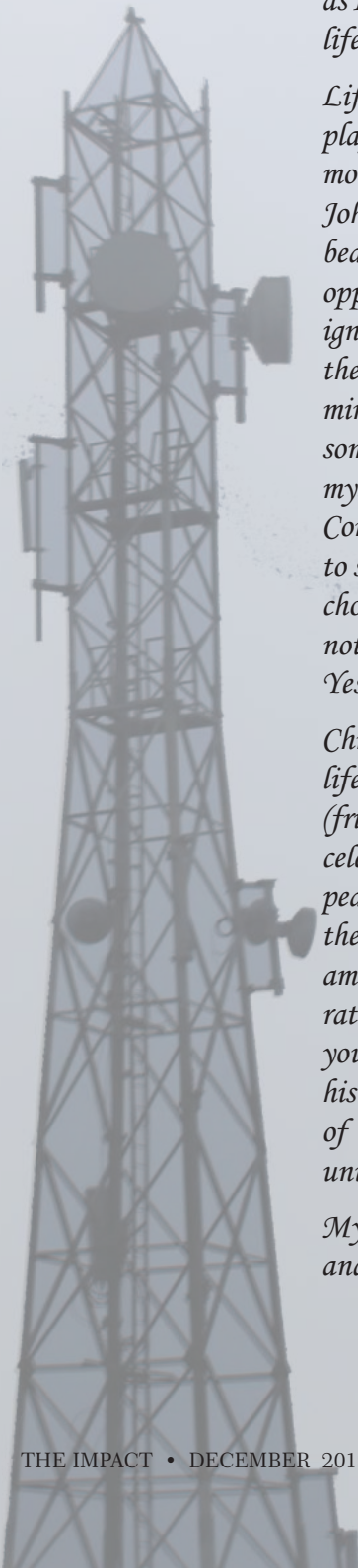
Mid adolescence however was the roughest times of my life – anxiety, depression, rebelliousness crept in. As a young girl fond of enjoyment, I liked hanging out with friends and going places but since it mostly coincided in the evening, my parents especially my mom (who was quite strict back then) would flat out prohibit my requests. I despised my life because of this. I felt as though I was the most unfortunate being on earth because of the barriers they put on me; though now I have come to understand that their intention was to raise me into a modest disciplined child. And although I took part in church programs I lacked commitment and was also not really sure as to what I was doing.

It was when I entered college that I decided to 'surrender all' and commit myself fully to the will of God. The journey to my under graduate studies is a hilarious one. My family decided to send me to Shillong (the place I hated the most and swore never to pursue studies there) and I remember crying in the bus from Dimapur to Shillong! Surprisingly, I enjoyed my stay there and I was blessed to be a part of ABAS (Ao Baptist Arogo Shillong) family as a worship leader.

Fast forward to post – graduation, I was perplexed on the question of whether to continue studies or take up a professional course. As I was praying over it, God showed me dreams which were detrimental to what I would be pursuing in the following years. One night, I dreamt climbing a steep cliff. Many people, old and young, were climbing it trying to reach the top so as to save oneself. Among them was a certain woman tired of trying, having lost all hope on the verge of giving up. I encouraged her to continue striving, not to give up and helped her get to the top of the cliff and together we were saved.

Another distinct dream was seeing my dad and I, travelling to another city and arriving at a college to pursue my studies. Still at other times, I would dream wearing white and working with people. I could not





comprehend what the dreams meant. Later on, two women of faith, on different occasions as each prayed over me prophesied that God has called me to a full time ministry. This to me was a great surprise since the thought of studying theology never crossed my mind. However, the revelation now made sense of the dreams I had earlier. Since then, I decided to study theology. I went to pursue theological studies in Kolkata and to my surprise when my father and I arrived at the institution I was supposed to be admitted, the place and the building was exactly as I had seen in my dream! This made me even more convinced of God's calling in my life.

Life at theological seminary was riding peaks and troughs. Yet such experiences played a tremendous role in my faith journey as it was there that I got closer to God more than ever before. Reflecting on how I began, I am constantly reminded of John 15:16 "You did not choose me, but I chose you. And appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last..." (NRSV) Not only did the Lord gave me opportunity to serve him but also saved me from bad influences in life. In my ignorance, I tried to enter the wide gate but all along Jesus Christ helped me tread the narrow road that leads to life with relenting open arms. While my call to ministry came unexpected, it left me wondering how and why would God choose someone like me - the least 'perfect' among my siblings (as I have always thought of myself), one with so much flaws to serve and work for him? In my amazement 1 Corinthians 1:27 heartens me saying, "But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God" (NRSV) Yes, God is great! His plans surpass human imagination.

Christ first loved us (1 John 4:19) and chose us to be his people. But it is our lifestyle that often distances us from Him. We may have all what we want (friends, money, fame, beauty etc.) yet feel empty deep down inside after every celebration if we really don't have a personal relationship with Christ. Real joy and peace- we find only in Jesus Christ. In order to live life in fullness and to actualize the purpose of our creation Jesus is calling us. All we need to do is say 'Yes, Here I am... I give my all to you Lord'. I am not implying a principle of detachment but rather of making Christ as our first and sole priority in all that we do. You may find yourself lacking, not among the finest but God is ready to use your brokenness for his glory and make you the person you were meant to be. Let each day be a reminder of the valuable opportunity God has given us to do more of the work he has uniquely called us to do in his kingdom.

My prayer for you is that you will put Jesus at the center of your life, trusting him and fearing not. God bless us all!

With love.



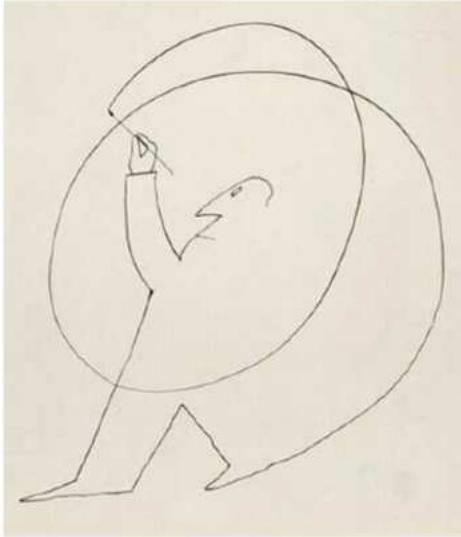
Unshakeable 2019 in three frames





*"When wild
Meets Worship"*





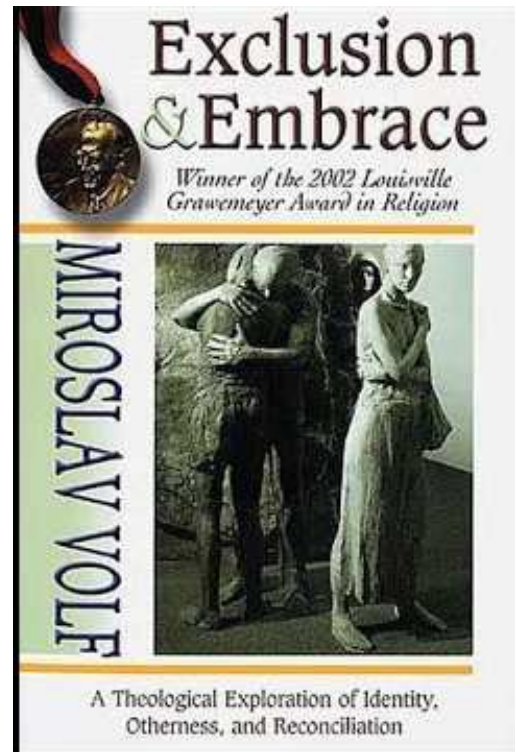
This book is born out of a personal witness of the Balkan war. It is a profound theological response to a world gripped with conflict and violence. It is one of the most apt book to address a society which is diluted with –ism.

The author brilliantly dealt with the issue of self which is the epicenter of every problem. He interestingly brought an illustration from the story of Abraham. In order to be a blessing to others, Abraham had to leave the familiarities and comfort of his life. The message is simple and striking-sometimes you have to be an exodus to be a blessing to others.

He strongly asserts that Christ transcends all culture. He contends that we do not let go of our cultural identity by being a Christian. In fact, having responded to the call of the gospel, they have one foot firmly planted in their culture and the other outside their culture which paves the way to embrace others through the work of the cross. He brings in a very stark reality that as followers of the cross, salvation comes as we are reconciled to God and learn to live with one another but there is a calling higher than that where we have to take the costly step of opening up to others, clasp him/her in the same embrace with which we have been enfolded by God.

This book covers a whole range of issues that our present society is also witnessing. Having proudly professed ourselves as a Christian state, this book gives an in-depth challenge to what we believe and profess. Get hold of the book for an intense interesting theological ride addressing our misplaced identity.

The context of the author and ours could differ but the message of the gospel remains true and unhindered.



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T



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