

# Harvester

ANNUAL MAGAZINE 2023-24



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# Editorial



Greetings to you in the matchless name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Presenting Harvest Mission College's Yearly Magazine brings me immense pleasure. It stands for the institution's gates, through which thousands of people have journeyed in search of enlightenment while overcoming tremendous intellectual and spiritual obstacles. The publication of this magazine is an act of gratitude for His faithfulness to HMC. The faithfulness of God means God is unchanging in his nature, true to this word and will keep his promise forever. He is worthy of eternal trust no matter how unlikely his promises seem. Nothing in heaven or on earth can prevent God from accomplishing all that he has promised his people through Jesus Christ. This reliability of God should be a great source of comfort and strength for God's people as they repeatedly fail and go through trials and suffering.

Now that the academic year is coming to an end, it is appropriate to reflect on the last year and consider our responsibilities, successes, and sense of fulfillment. The magazine is filled with interesting works that will pique our interest, including poems in the graphical part, thought-provoking articles, experiences and activities from daily life at HMC, and views on pertinent topics. This effort will continue to demonstrate God's faithfulness in every person's life.

We, the editorial team, Kevin Babu, Mojesh. K, Freeda Rajakumari D would want to express our gratitude to everyone who made it possible for Harvester Magazine to be published this year. We are grateful that you, our valued readers, are a part of the larger HMC family. As a means of communication for our shared relationship in the ministry, we sincerely hope and feel that we will be able to stay in touch with you through this publication. All glory and honour to God alone.

Wesley Andrews  
Editor



## Principal's Desk

**Rev. Dr. Biju John,**

Greetings, cherished students, esteemed faculty, and dedicated supporters of our Bible College,

As I take some time to write this message for our annual magazine, I feel a deep sense of gratitude and expectation. This previous year has truly shown the enduring spirit of our community and the divine guidance that has led us through challenges and victories. I am grateful to share some thoughts and hopes as we continue on the journey of faith and education together.

### **Reflecting on Our Progress**

This year has been characterized by significant growth and resilience. Our students have delved into their studies with passion, embodying the core of our mission—to equip and inspire for a life of service and ministry. Our faculty have shown unwavering dedication, not just as teachers but as mentors exemplifying Christian principles and integrity. The support from our partners and donors has been a true blessing, enabling us to improve our programs and facilities.

### **Embracing Change and Creativity**

In a world that is constantly changing, our commitment to providing a strong and relevant theological education remains firm. We have embraced numerous progress, that expand our reach and enhance our educational offerings. These advancements ensure we remain at the forefront of theological scholarship while preserving the personal, face-to-face interactions that define our community.

### **Cultivating a Culture of Compassion and Service**

Our dedication to nurturing empathetic leaders is evident in the various service initiatives and outreach projects our college have undertaken. From local community endeavours to national missions, our students are living out their faith in practical ways, bringing hope and healing to those in need. These experiences not only broaden our horizons but also deepen our understanding of the transformative power of the Gospel.

### **Looking Forward: Vision for Tomorrow**

Looking ahead, our vision is clear: to continue fostering an environment where academic excellence and spiritual development go hand in hand. We aim to expand our classes by introducing new short term courses that address contemporary challenges facing the Church and society. Additionally, we are committed to enhancing our campus facilities to create environments that inspire learning, contemplation, and community.

## A Call to Unity and Prayer

In these times of significant change and uncertainty, let us hold on to the words of Paul in Philippians 4:6-7: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." I encourage each one of you to remain steadfast in prayer, united in our purpose, and supportive of one another.

## Appreciation

I express my sincere gratitude to our hardworking faculty and staff, whose relentless dedication has made this year's accomplishments possible. To our students, thank you for your enthusiasm, inquisitiveness, and steadfast faith. You are the driving force behind our pursuit of excellence. To our partners and supporters, your generosity and prayers are the foundation of our ongoing success.

May each one of you be abundantly blessed, as we all set to celebrate the 25th year of existence of our ministry 2024-25!!  
In His service,

**Rev. Dr. Biju John,  
Principal,  
Harvest Mission College.**





## Director

**Rev. Babu John**

Dear Students, Faculty, and Friends of Harvest Mission College,

As we reflect on the previous year and contemplate the future, I am glad for the wonderful community we have built together. Our path has been distinguished by trust in God, learning, and advancement, and I am always inspired by everyone's dedication and excitement for our college.

Throughout the year, we made significant progress in our academic programmes, adopted new courses, and expanded our outreach. These achievements genuinely demonstrate our common commitment to excellence and service.

As we move forward, let us stand united in our objective to train minds and spark hearts for a lifetime of ministry and service. Together, we can continue to have a significant impact on the world around us.

I convey my heartfelt gratitude, for your unwavering support and commitment. May God's grace and wisdom illuminate our path in all our endeavours.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication. May God's grace and wisdom guide us in all that we do.  
Blessings,

**Rev. Babu John**  
Director, Harvest Mission College.

## FACULTY, STAFF AND FAMILY PHOTOS



**Rev. Babu John  
(President, RRWM)**



**Rev. Dr. Biju John  
(Principal)**

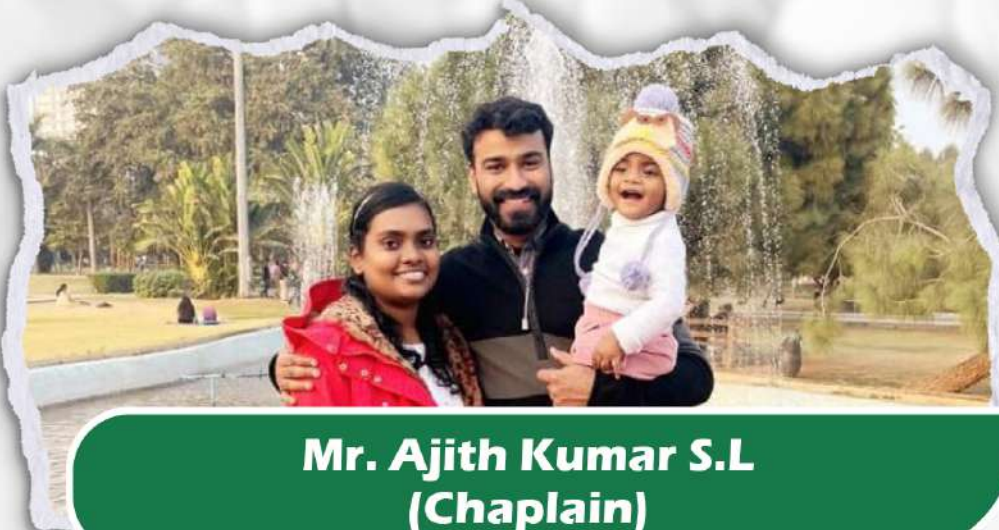


**Rev. Dr. Joy E. Rajaretnam  
(Vice - Principal)**

## FACULTY, STAFF AND FAMILY PHOTOS



**Mr. Blessen G. Samuel  
(Campus Manager)**



**Mr. Ajith Kumar S.L  
(Chaplain)**



**Mr. Wesley Andrews  
(Lecturer)**



# FACULTY, STAFF AND FAMILY PHOTOS



**Mr. Siju Abraham**  
(Registrar)



**Mr. Jinsmon Chacko**  
(Dean of Students)



**Mr. Goupaul Siing Samte**  
(Lecturer)



**Mr. Samuel Jose**  
(Lecturer)



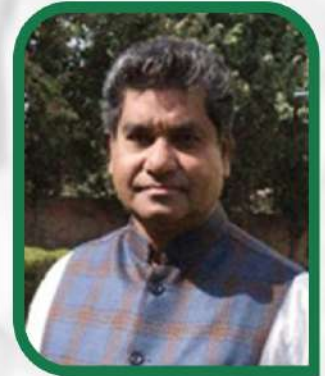
**Mr. Bula Joseph Steven Stanley**  
(Lecturer)



**Mr. Stanley John**  
(Lecturer)



**Mrs. Mercy John**  
(Librarian)



**Mr. Paul Panampotayil**  
(Maintenance In-charge)



**Ms. C. Pavithra**  
(Ass. Librarian)



**Ms. Rachel Anna Crown**  
(Receptionist)



**Mr. Mulayam Singh**  
(Supporting Staff)

## Faculty Members



## Faculty & Staff



# Graduates of 2023-2024

## BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY



Chandani Kumari



Cin Suan Kap



Divya Kumari



Kevin Babu Abraham



Mark Van Dawt Lian



Martin K



Nang Lun Khup



Nang Sian Hau



Priskila Sonar



Sarita Kumari



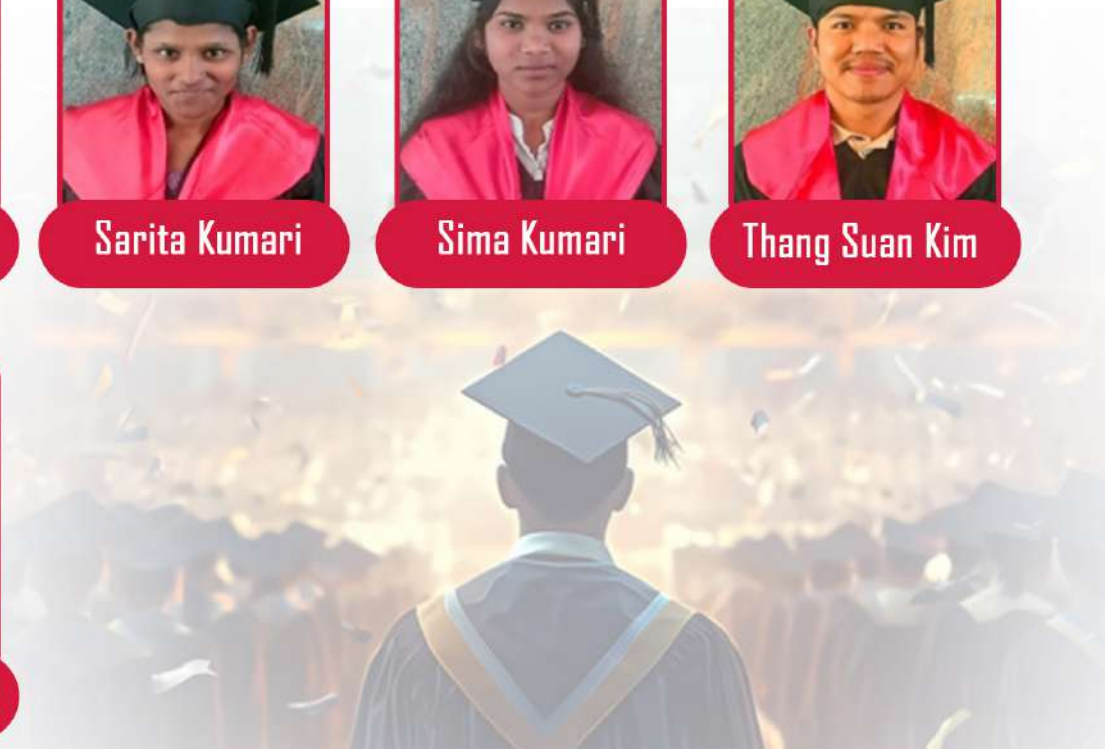
Sima Kumari



Thang Suan Kim



Vishwanath Chauhan



# Graduates of 2023-2024

## BACHELOR OF MINISTRY



Cin Sian Thawn



Cin Sian Thawn

## DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY



Khin Sui



Tin Za Par

## CERTIFICATE IN THEOLOGY



Ashish Khati



Manisha Vishwakarma



Mansi



Priyanshu Devi



Rahul



Rani Kumari



Robin Khati



Saritha Gautam



Sonam M.P



Sonam U.P



# CLASS PHOTOS



**Master of Divinity**



**Certificate in Theology**



**Bachelor of Theology III**



**Bachelor of Theology II**



**Bachelor of Theology I**

## CONFESSING THE CONVICTION IN THE MIDST OF CONFUSION



**Siju Abraham**  
Lecturer in Christian Theology

We are inhabitants of a world caught up in the web of uncertainty, vagueness and chaos. People lack a clear opinion about the essentials of life. The matter of great dismay is that the world often fails to understand the true identity of Jesus too, the greatest essential in one's life. In such a scenario unclearness and mist prevailing over our surroundings, what are my role and your role in bringing clarity?

This devotional is titled “**Confessing the Conviction in the midst of Confusion**” and is taken from the Gospel according to **Matthew 16:13-20**.

A conviction is not an opinion, position or a view that you have as it merely voices your preference. But a conviction is that which is rooted in your conscience.

Who do people say Jesus is? This is an important question that we need to ponder upon. What we think of him determines who we are and it shapes our eternal destiny. But, does the world around us have a clear conviction about him or are they confused?

### **I. A Confused Mankind without a Clear Conviction (vv. 13&14)**

Jesus and his disciples are at the region of Caesarea Philippi which is predominantly a pagan territory identified with multiple religions and faiths. It was some twenty-five miles from the Lake of Galilee and about seventeen hundred feet higher; hence there was a need to stop along the way. It had been a center for Baal worship; a grotto devoted to the worship of the Greek deity Pan was there. Moreover, Herod had also dedicated a temple for the worship of Caesar there in order to please the emperor Augustus Caesar.

Here Jesus is putting forth a question “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” Of course, Jesus knew the answer and nor was he desirous to hear his own praises. Jesus has been involved in his earthly ministry and his fame was spreading across the regions of Palestine. But, do the people have the right conception about the Son of Man?

The immediate reply of the disciples indicates that they were well aware of their master's reputation and that is how a disciple is expected to be. People compared him with John the Baptist, but both were dissimilar in their ministries (Matt 11:18-19). It had been prophesied that Elijah would come again (Mal 4:5), and some thought that this prediction was fulfilled in Jesus. His judgment oracles (Matt 11:20-24) or downplaying the temple may have evoked the comparison with Jeremiah. Jesus' teachings were certainly similar to theirs but all these replies were flattering.

It is unfortunate to see vagueness and uncertainty prevalent in those days about the Savior. They laid him in the prophetic tradition. But he was not just God's mouthpiece; he was God's Messiah himself. He was not just speaking God's word fearlessly against the rulers and authorities; he was the king himself. Obviously, they held him in a seemingly high esteem; but it reduced Jesus of his real identity as the Son of the living God.

It would have broken Jesus' heart. God in Jesus took the paramount effort to reconcile the lost creation back to him. He made his dwelling among them and they all beheld his glory. Yet, the creator is misconstrued by the creation. It doesn't matter how they view him; what matters the most is the conviction to confess the real identity of Jesus. His heart's cry at these unreliable perceptions would have been like the one he expresses to the Samaritan woman in John 4:10 "agar tum jaanti mein kaun hun." "Oh how I wish you knew me."

Plurality of religious beliefs and faiths were clearly seen in Caesarea Philippi and are seen much more in our country too. India is the birth place for some of the major religions of the world and home for millions gods and goddesses. People don't have a problem in adding one more to the list as Jesus. Whom to worship, which one to follow, there exist complete confusion and improper discerning in our generation. In the midst of such a confused generation who lacks a clear conviction, you and I are placed. How do we respond to this life's most important question? Let's stand in union to clear the mist and haze prevalent by projecting the right identity of Christ in such a scenario.

When the people's response couldn't explain the true identity of Jesus, he turns the question to a more personal one. Turning to his own disciples he asks, who do you say I am? What will the reply be?

## **2. A Convinced Man with a Clear Confession (vv. 15&16)**

In the midst of confusion ruling in the unreliable convictions of the world, Jesus turns the generality of the question into a sharp personal inquiry. "But what about you, who do you say I am?" Here, with the second person plural pronoun 'you' the question becomes more personal and emphatic. It intends to contrast the opinion of persons outside the circle of disciples with the opinion that the disciples themselves held of Jesus. Now it was their time to answer to the most vital question of their life.

Of course, it was an unexpected question but the answer followed was very precise and accurate. The impulsive and fervent Simon Peter exclaimed, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

In the Old Testament and in Jewish tradition, "Son of God" is frequently used of persons whom God has chosen to act on his behalf. However, here it speaks of Jesus' divine origin and of his deity. The adjective 'living' affirms that God possesses life and he himself is the source of all life. It was a sharp attack on the local lifeless deities of that region and objects of gentile idolatry. Thus, the confession that Jesus is the Son of the living God means that in a unique way Jesus shares in that life, and that he himself has power to impart life to others.

Peter's confession revealed that he grasped Christ as the Messiah, the fulfillment of the prophecies. His confession exalted Christ as the Son of God; it lifted him above of humanity and crowned him with deity. In the midst of confusion overpowering a generation, Peter, a convinced man confesses Jesus, the supreme essential in life.

Caesarea Philippi was hardly the most expected site for a divine revelation. It was a place where the citizens



were required to enter Caesar's temple and proclaim the mantra "Καίσαρας είναι Κύριος" "Caesar is Lord!" Peter's confession counters issue of sovereignty amidst imperial implications. When Rome claimed that Jupiter determined human affairs; that history is under Rome's control; that the emperor is god himself, Peter who had the truth conviction didn't keep it for himself, but he openly confessed it out that "Ἰησοῦς είναι Κύριος" "Jesus is Lord!" Thus, Peter is standing against both Roman imperium which projects Caesar as Lord and Judaism which was still waiting for the promised Messiah.

We too live in a Caesarea Philippi like milieu where such a conviction may seem very tough to confess. The question to us today is we daring enough to take a stand for the divine illumination that we have received? Not just taking a stand but confessing it out in hostile conditions too is demanded of us.

So, when a confused generation is struggling to comprehend the Savior with all their elusive ideas, a convinced man comes up with a clear confession. Daring enough to confess the conviction is never a vain effort. What follows after that is incredible.

### **3. A Cheerful Messiah with Countless Confirmations (vv. 17-19)**

Peter was the only man with the clear confession and it brought cheer in the Jesus' heart and we see a cheerful Messiah with countless confirmations.

In verse 17, Jesus starts with the phrase "blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah or in Aramaic Barjonah. This was a standard form of blessing in those days combined with the family identity as we see a series of these in the beatitudes. The term "flesh and blood" used in some translations is a typical Jewish phrase used for symbolizing 'human beings.' Though Jews emphasized on learning by studying the Scriptures, they also recognized and prioritized divine illumination and revelation. A clear confession doesn't flows out of just human intellect, but the divine assistance is undoubtedly needed. God is the one who reveals so to openly confess.

In vv.18, Jesus' words, "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church" has initiated countless controversies over the centuries of Christian establishment over the question of who exactly is the foundation of the church. Here, we need to investigate the two Greek words used. Πέτρος referring to Peter which is masculine singular noun meaning little stone and πέτρα which is feminine singular used as indirect object or dative case meaning a large rock. Now, a glance into the Old Testament makes it clear that rock is a symbol used for God himself (Deut. 32:4, Ps. 18:2). Thus πέτρα used here is a direct reference to Jesus as he is the foundation rock on which the church is built.

In vv.18, we see the first occurrence of an important word in the Bible – Church. Jesus here points to the entire universal qahal (called out assembly) built on the same confession of faith that Peter made which even the Gates of Hades cannot withhold. Gates represent authority and power. Hades is understood as the realm of the dead. So, by his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ would conquer death, and its authority would not be able withhold the ekklesial endeavor. This is a declaration verified by the highest amount of certainty.

Jesus says in vv. 19, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." A key is a sign or a badge of authority (Isa 22:15, 22; Lk 11:52). Keeping of the keys was the most important role of a household servant and of a royal official (Mk 13:32-34). Moreover, only a trusted steward kept the keys to his master's possessions, in the royal kingdom (Isa 22:20-22) and in the temple of God. Keys here refer to the authority to admit people based on the knowledge of the truth about Jesus. Thus, a clear confession like that of Peter is essential for the entry into God's kingdom. Just as we use keys to open doors, Peter was given the privilege of opening the door of faith to the Jews at Pentecost (Acts 2), to the Samaritans (Acts 8:14ff), and to the Gentiles (Acts 10). The concept of binding and loosing was familiar in the Rabbinic Judaism as forbidding and permitting. Here when Jesus says this, he doesn't mean that God would obey what the disciples did on earth, but Peter (and other apostles too) should do on earth whatever God had already willed. In short, "whatever you bind on earth (forbid to be done), shall have been already bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth (permit to be done), shall have already been loosed in heaven." So the bottom-line is that, Church does not get human will done in heaven; but it obeys God's will on earth.

A clear confession brings cheer in Messiah's heart and he bestows countless confirmations. Jesus confirms this confession and announces his intention of building on this reality an ekklesia – the lived-out expression of heaven on earth. We too are confirmed with such authority because of our confession and become an extension of Christ himself on earth. The portrayal here is an awe-inspiring one. To be the kingdom! To reflect Jesus in our world! To express him, his grace and judgments! This is who we are called to become. This is who we are!

Vv. 20 here is the Messianic secret found in the gospels where Jesus warns his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. Peter and the other disciples haven't yet grasped the truth completely about the nature of Jesus' mission which evident in the very preceding verses (21- 23) and chapter 17. Before preaching that Jesus as the Messiah, they need to learn what it meant as identifying Jesus means identifying the nature of his mission.

To conclude, Jesus used the tragic backdrop of paganism and false worship in Caesarea Philippi to make a fuller revelation about him to his disciples. Majority of the people held him in high esteem and counted him on high. But all of those perceptions reduced Jesus of his true identity. They all failed in perceiving the greatest essential in their life and ended up being a confused generation without a clear conviction. But we see a man Peter who stood up for his conviction with boldness and nerve turning out to be a convinced man with a clear confession. The veracious confession brings cheer in Jesus' heart and we see a cheerful Messiah with countless confirmations.

We live in a world which still conceives Jesus to be just a baby at Christmas or as some random guy on a cross at Easter when he is the crucified and risen Lord. Our country with all its religious multiplicity considers him to be one among many or as just a way when he himself is the way, the truth and the life. Call him a good man, great teacher, prophet, liar or a lunatic, but it won't change the fact that He the Son of God and our only hope for salvation.

"Who do you say I am?" the significant question first asked by an anxious Galilean in the far- off solitude of Caesarea Philippi. It has thundered down through the centuries and has become the mightiest question in the world today: "Who do you say I am?" Let us confess our conviction in the midst of confusion that "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."



**Jinsmon Chacko**  
Lecturer in Pastoral Theology & Counselling

### **INTRODUCTION**

Attachment is an emotional bond with another person. Children develop attachment with their primary caregiver at very young age, and this emotional bond with their caregiver plays a vital role in their overall development. Children who grow up in a safe environment develop a secure attachment, whereas children who are ignored and rejected by their caregiver cannot develop the proper attachment, which may affect their development. Thus, proper attachment in childhood plays a major role in the development of children.

### **Definition of Attachment**

Attachment is the deep and enduring connection established between a child and caregiver in the first several years of life. It profoundly influence every component of the human condition- mind, body, emotions, relationships and values.

Factors that make secure attachment possible

- Touch
- Eye Contact
- Smiles
- Talking and singing
- Movement
- Meeting all the needs

### **Children Who Are Securely Attached**

They would perceive themselves as

- Good
- Loved
- Having values and being competent
- And the world they live in as: a safe place and life as worth living

### **Children With Insecure Attachment**

They would perceive themselves as

- Bad
- Unwanted
- Not loved
- Without worth
- And the world they live in as: not a safe place and life not worth living.

### **Theory of Attachment - John Bowlby**

John Bowlby (1907 - 1990) was a British child psychiatrist and psychoanalyst (like Freud) and believed that mental health and behavioral problems could be attributed to early childhood.

According to him, there are four attachment strategies present in the human beings: secure, anxious, avoidant, and anxious-avoidant.

- **Secure Attachment Style:** People with secure attachment strategies are comfortable displaying interest, affection, being alone and independent. They're able to correctly prioritize their relationships within their life and tend to draw clear boundaries and stick to them. They obviously make the best romantic partners, family members, and even friends. They're capable of accepting rejection and moving on despite the pain, being loyal and sacrificing when necessary. They have little issue of trusting people they're close to and are trustworthy themselves.

- **Anxious Attachment Style:** Anxious attachment types are often nervous and stressed about their relationships. They need constant reassurance and affection from their partner. They have trouble being alone or single, irrational, sporadic, and overly-emotional and complain that every one of the opposite sexes are cold and heartless, have trouble in trusting people, even to the closest. They'll often succumb to unhealthy or abusive relationships. Women are more likely to be anxious types than men.

- **Avoidant Attachment Style:** Avoidant attachment types are extremely independent, self-directed, and often uncomfortable with intimacy, no commitment or intimate contact. They're commitment-phobes and experts at rationalizing their way out of any intimate situation. They regularly complain about feeling "crowded" or "suffocated" when people try to get close to them. They will always keep an exit strategy in all relationships. Men are more likely than women to be avoidant types.

- **Anxious-Avoidant (Disorganized) Attachment Style:** it also known as the "fearful type", who are not only afraid of intimacy and commitment, but they distrust and lash out emotionally at anyone who tries to get close to them. Anxious-avoidants often spend much of their time alone and miserable, or in abusive or dysfunctional relationships. Typically they have a multitude of other emotional problems in other areas of their life like substance abuse, depression, etc.

### **Attachment Disorder**

There are different levels of insecure attachment from anxious attachment to the most severe form of non-attachment which is often called Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD). It is called 'Reactive' because the child will later react to the trauma experienced in early childhood. Even though it is often assumed that the child does not yet realize what is going on in his life and will later forget what happened to him.

#### **Causes for Attachment Disorder**

- The absence of a primary caregiver.
- A caregiver who is there but causes pain, or does not protect the child from pain

#### **Symptoms of Attachment Disorder**

- Unable to give or receive love. They have never learned that.
- Don't like to be touched. These children are like a piece of wood when one try to give them a hug, or shrug off the hand.
- Low self-esteem: Because of their negative working model they think they are bad and unloved, and therefore think very lowly about themselves.
- Not in touch with their emotions, cannot feel sad or cry or feel really happy and laugh. They will laugh inappropriately about other people!
- Hyperactive, constantly on the move and very tensed, like an animal on the run from the hunter!
- Have no meaning in life, no values, no faith and do often identify with the devil. I am so bad!

### Effects of Attachment Disorders in Later Life

The attachment disorders can continue into adolescence and into later adulthood, causing a number of long-term negative effects. Some of these effects may include:

- Poor self-esteem
- Delayed physical growth or learning
- Delinquent or antisocial behavior
- Temper or anger problems
- Relationship problems
- Eating problems leading to malnutrition
- Academic problems
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Substance and alcohol addiction
- Unemployment or frequent job changes
- Inappropriate sexual behaviors

### Help for Children with Attachment Disorder

- Children with attachment disorder need to learn to attach, something they never learned when they were infants. Like an infant they cannot attach to many people at once, so they need one or two caregiver.
- There are four basic things that need to be taught to the Attachment Disorder child.
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Resourcefulness
- Reciprocity

### Evaluation and Conclusion

If the child does not receive proper care at home, it will lead to various problems in their life. If the attachment between child and mother or immediate relatives is absent, then the child may feel alone in life. A secure attachment forms naturally for a child when a parent or other primary caregiver can help the child feel safe when frightened or uncomfortable, secure enough to explore the world, and can aid in their growth, development, and emotional management. Therefore, the secure attachment style is a positive approach towards children's growth and development.



## MEANINGLESSNESS IN THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES



**Ajith Kumar S. L**  
Lecturer in Old Testament

“Life is not primarily a quest for pleasure, as Freud believed, or a quest for power, as Alfred Alder taught, but a quest for meaning” (E. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, 8). The book of Ecclesiastes tries to quench human’s deep-seated thirst of finding the meaning and destiny of life. Unlike plenty of writings on the phenomenon of life, Ecclesiastes gives the most realistic view of it. Understanding the use of the word ‘meaningless or vanity’ is very important to know Qohelet’s philosophy of life.

This article briefly looks at the various usages of the word meaningless in the book. Meaningless is one of the major themes in the book, but it is not consistently translated. The interpretation of the word is so crucial in understanding the central message of the book. However, many translate it as vanity or meaninglessness by looking at the superlative phrase in 1:2. Based on this, English language commonly renders the meaning of this word as vanity. Those who translate it as meaninglessness or vanity hold the view that the central theme of the book is meaninglessness of the best of human affairs and actions under the sun. Even the major and recent English versions (KJV, NASB, NRSV, ESV, NIV, and NKJV) translate it as vanity.

Following are the various usages of the word vanity to picture the realities of life and events in the world,

### I. ENIGMATIC

Solomon, son of David is the Qohelet speaking in this passage. Solomon, with the inherent wisdom, applied his heart to closely observe the reality of human life and the actions happening under the sun. The object of his observation is not wisdom itself, but everything under the heavens. The phrases ‘under the heavens’ and ‘under the sun’ (1:13, 14) are interchangeable used to show everything in the world. After a thorough and intense investigation of life and the world around, he says, everything is meaningless and “a striving after wind” (1:14, 17).

Everything is meaningless doesn’t mean that all that he saw and perceived was vanity, but the very process of his search to explore and discover what is happening around is described itself as meaningless. His effort of trying to know everything around him is described as vain. In summary, the thrust of the usage is that there is something fundamentally wrong with the life on earth. Since the world as it is has come about as a result of God’s will, there is absolutely nothing that humans can do about it.

The essentially flawed nature of the world is something self-evident and cannot be disputed (Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, 62). This is the complexities attached to the reality of life and the mechanisms in this world. Man necessarily doesn’t have the power to change any activities in the world. Even if anyone tries, it is like trying to grab the wind in vain. The

reality of life itself is so complicated that it is beyond the human level of comprehension. The flawed nature of human will never be able to explain the phenomenon of life and the puzzles attached to it. Because the activities around us are unpredictable and incomprehensible, the effort to know the reality is considered to be enigmatic. Life and the end of it can't be grasped intellectually and physically. Complexities of life and the events of this world are beyond human ability to grasp.

## **2. BREVITY OF LIFE**

The most concrete meaning of the Hebrew word for vanity (לְבָרָה) would be 'steam, vapor, gas, breath, hot air, or breeze.' Human life is like a steam or vapor that quickly disappears. Solomon metaphorically uses this word to picture the shortness of human life. As steam appears and disappears quickly, life appears and disappears swiftly. Trying to hold life is like striving to hold steam or vapor in vain.

Ecclesiastes chapter 2 mentions about pleasures in life, great works and toil of a man, the splendor and glory of a king, and earthly possessions and wealth, but death makes the entire works and wealth of the human being as fruitless. He speaks of the transitory nature of human life in terms of their numbered days (5:18). In the other portions of the book, he speaks of the common fate of death for the wise and the foolish, humans and animals, and the righteous and the wicked as meaningless (Seow, Ecclesiastes, 103). It is used to talk about the shortness of human lifespan and also the life itself. Death is another unavoidable reality that he talks about. The reality of the shortness of life hinders man from experiencing great wealth and positions, so he uses the word 'vanity' to describe the brevity of life.

## **3. TRANSITORY NATURE OF LIFE, POSSESSIONS, AND HUMAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Chapter 2 begins with Solomon's announcement that he will explore the real value of pleasure. He will narrate what he means specifically in the following verses, but for now he simply states his intention and anticipates his ultimate conclusion. There is no lasting meaning in the pursuit of pleasure. He speaks about his great accomplished works: "I made great works, I built houses, I planted vineyards, I made myself gardens and parks, I planted all kinds of fruit trees, I made pools, and I brought slaves" (2:4-7). Further, he talks about his great possessions: "herds and flocks, silver and gold, treasures of kings and provinces, singers, concubines, and wisdom" (2:7-9). However, at the end of the description of his great wealth and achievements, he says, "everything is meaningless and striving after wind" (2:11). The word is used in a metaphorical way, signifying either the uselessness or the meaninglessness of a thing or its transitory nature. It connotes the transitory nature of life, possessions, and human accomplishments. As human life is momentary, all the terrestrial works of man will also be transitory in nature (Grenshaw, Ecclesiastes, 77-78).

## **CONCLUSION**

In summary, the word meaningless or vanity can be understood as referring to the realism of life. Life is difficult to explain since the unexpected events can make a different shift in life. Consequently, life is always lived between the tensions. It is always tossed between hope and despair like a pendulum. However, life's unexpected turns and shifts hold a potential meaning under any conditions, even the most miserable ones.



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### स्वतंत्रता का जीवन

सारे मानव जाती को यह समझना जरूरी है कि स्वतंत्रता क्या है? भारत को स्वतंत्रता 1947 में मिली। भारतीय अंग्रेजों की गुलामी में अपनी जीवन व्यतीत करते थे। मगर एक दिन भारतीयों को उनकी गुलामी से, उनके शासन से, उनके दबाव से, उनके जकड़ से, उनके बंधन से भारतीयों को आजादी मिली। मगर बाइबल या पवित्र शास्त्र यह सिखाता है कि यीशु मसीह ने स्वतंत्रता के लिए हमें स्वतंत्र किया अतः इसी में स्थिर रहो और दासत्व की जुवो में फिर न जूतों (गलातियों 5:1 ) यीशु मसीह के जीवन के द्वारा इस जगत के सारे लोगों को आजादी, मुक्ति या स्वतंत्रता मिली है। यीशु मसीह मानव जाती को बहुत सारी बातों में स्वतंत्रता दी है। मगर उनमें से मैं कुछ विषयों के बारे में इस लेख में लिखना चाहता हूँ। पहला-यीशु मसीह ने मानव जाती को पापों से स्वतंत्रता दी है। दूसरा- बीमारियों से स्वतंत्रता दी है। तीसरा- अनंत मृत्यु से स्वतंत्रता दी है।

### पापों से स्वतंत्रता

पहले सारी मानव जाती को यह समझना जरूरी है कि पाप क्या है? परमेश्वर के विरुद्ध कार्य करने वाली हर एक बात पाप कहलाती है। पाप, 'मनुष्य और परमेश्वर' के संबंध को तोड़ डालता है। परमेश्वर की आज्ञा का उलंघन मानव जाती को पाप में गिरा देता है। बाइबल हमें यह सिखाती है कि शुरुआत में ही मानव जाती परमेश्वर की आज्ञा का उलंघन करके पाप में गिर गयी। और इस तरह मानव जाती और परमेश्वर के संबंध टूट गए। मानव जाती को वापस परमेश्वर के साथ एक नया संबंध बनाने के लिए परमेश्वर ने स्वयं मानव रूप को धारण किया और मानव के बीच अपने डेरे को डाला और उस परमेश्वर का नाम प्रभु "यीशु मसीह" है। बाइबल बताती है कि, प्रभु यीशु का जन्म पवित्र आत्मा के द्वारा हुआ। और यीशु के माता मरियम जो कुँवारी थी, वह पवित्र आत्मा के द्वारा गर्भवती पाई गई इस तरह यीशु मसीह, जन्म में ही पवित्र ठहराया गया।

बाइबल हमें सिखती है कि मानव जाती को पाप से स्वतंत्रता के लिए लहू बहाना अत्यंत जरूरी है। बिना लहू बहाये मानव जाती को पापों से आजादी नहीं मिल सकती थी। इसलिए मानव जाती परमेश्वर के साथ सम्बन्धों को जीवित रखने के लिए मेमने का बली चढ़ाते थे। मगर जब यीशु मसीह को जाते हुए एक भविष्यवक्ता ने देखा, तो उसने चिल्लाकर कहा "देखो, यह परमेश्वर का मेमना है, जो जगत के पाप उठा ले जाता है" (यूहना 1:29) और जिस प्रकार भविष्यवक्ता ने कहा था उसी तरह यीशु मसीह सारे मानव जाती के लिए क्रूस पर अपना लहू बहाकर मानव जाती का परमेश्वर के साथ सम्बन्ध को पुनः स्थापित किया। अब इस जगत की समस्त मानव जाती को अपने पापों की स्वतंत्रता के लिए लहू बहाने का जरूरत नहीं, क्योंकि सारी मानव जाती के लिए एक बार और अनन्तकाल तक के लिए यीशु मसीह ने कलवरी क्रूस पर अपना आखरी लहू तक बहा दिया।



इसलिए प्रिय जनो, हमें पापो की जकड़ में, उसकी फंदे में, उसकी जुए में जुतने की फिर जरूरत नहीं है। हमें यीशु मसीह ने पापो से स्वतंत्रता दी है। यीशु मसीह कहता है “जो कोई पाप करता है वह पाप का दास है और दास सदा घर में नहीं रहता मगर पुत्र सदा रहता है। इसलिए पुत्र (यीशु मसीह) तुम्हें स्वतंत्र करेगा, तो सचमुच तुम स्वतंत्र हो जाओगे” (यूहना 8:34-36)। अगर आज तुम विभिन्न नशे के पदार्थ से, व्यभिचारों में, लीला क्रीड़ा में, पियक्कड़ पन में और बुरी अभिलाषाओं में अपना जीवन व्यतीत कर रहे हो तो आज यीशु मसीह इन पापो से स्वतंत्र करने के लिए तुम्हें बुला रहा है। उसकी आवाज सुनकर जो उसके पास आएगा उसको यीशु मसीह स्वतंत्र करेगा।

### **बीमारियों से स्वतंत्रता**

परमेश्वर ने मनुष्यों को शरीर, प्राण और आत्मा दिया है। जब हम शरीर की बात करें, तो हम उसे देख सकते हैं। उसे आहार, पानी, कपड़े इत्यादि चीजों की जरूरत होती है। जब हम प्राण के बारे में बात करें तो उसे हम देख नहीं सकते जिसमें बुद्धि, विवेक, विचार, चाहत, भावनाओं का प्रयोग होता है। जब हम आत्मा की बारे में बात करें तो उसे भी हम देख नहीं सकते। बाइबल कहती है कि परमेश्वर ने मनुष्य को भूमि की मिट्टी से रचा और नथनों में जीवन का स्वास फूंक दिया और इस प्रकार मनुष्य जीवित प्राणी बन गया। परमेश्वर ने मनुष्य को अपने स्वरूप में बनाया, इस कारण मनुष्यों में आत्मा भी पाया जाता है।

यीशु मसीह समस्त मानव जाती को बीमारियों से स्वतंत्र करता है। यदि कोई इंसान बुखार, सर्दी, खासी, सिर दर्द, टाइफाइड, हृदय रोग, कैंसर, फेफड़े का रोग इत्यादि रोगों से ग्रसित है तो यीशु मसीह हमें स्वतंत्र करता है। इंसान यह न समझने पाए कि बीमारी सिर्फ शरीर में ही होती है, मगर उनका प्राण भी बीमार रहता है। जैसे इंसान का बुद्धि बिगड़ जाती है, और वह अपना संतुलन खो बैठता है। कई इंसान एक ही गलती को जान बूझकर बार-बार करते रहने के कारण वे अपने विवेक को मार देते हैं। कईयों के विचार उन्हें भ्रष्ट कर देते हैं और कईयों की चाहत उन्हें गलत मार्गदर्शन देती है, और कईयों की भावनाएँ उनका जीवन बर्बाद कर देती हैं, इस प्रकार कई इंसान की प्राण बीमार रहता है। मनुष्य अपने दैनिक जीवन में विवेक के द्वारा अपने शरीर से जो भी कार्य करता है उसका असर मनुष्य की आत्मा में पड़ता है। यदि वह बुरा करे तो उसकी आत्मा अपवित्र होती है, यदि वह भला करे तो उसका आत्मा पवित्र रहता है।

यीशु मसीह समस्त मानव जाती को बीमारियों से स्वतंत्र करता है, चाहे वह शरीर, प्राण अथवा आत्मा की बीमारियाँ क्यों ना हो। बाइबल बताती है कि यीशु मसीह के मार खाने से सारी मानव जाती चंगे हुई (1 पतरस 2:24)। यीशु मसीह ने क्रूस पर अपना लहू बहाने के द्वारा सारी मानव जाती की दुर्बलता अपने ऊपर उठा ली। बाइबल बताती है कि उसने स्वयं हमारी दुर्बलताओं को ले लिया और हमारे रोगों को उठा लिया (मती. 8:17)। यीशु मसीह ने मानव जाती कि शरीर, प्राण और आत्मा की रोगों को अपने ऊपर उठा कर समस्त मानव जाती को स्वतंत्र किया है। यीशु मसीह की कार्यों पर विश्वास करने वाले समस्त मानव जाती अपनी सारी बीमारियों से स्वतंत्रता प्राप्त करेंगे।

## अनन्त मृत्यु से स्वतंत्रता

समस्त मानव जाती को यह समझना अत्यंत जरूरी है कि उनकी मृत्यु नहीं है। मानव, शरीर में मरते तो जरूर है, मगर उनकी आत्मा सदैव जीवित रहती है। स्वर्ग और नरक की जानकारी समस्त मानव जाती को होना अत्यंत जरूरी है। जिस मानव की आत्मा परमेश्वर की आत्मा के अनुसार कार्य करेगी वह स्वर्ग जायेगा, परन्तु जिस मानव की आत्मा परमेश्वर की आत्मा के विरुद्ध में कार्य करेगी वह नरक जायेगा और उसे अनन्त काल की मृत्यु कहते हैं। यीशु मसीह मानव जाती को अनन्त काल की मृत्यु से स्वतंत्र करने आया है। बाइबल बताती है "परमेश्वर ने जगत से ऐसा प्रेम रखा कि उसने अपना एकलौता पुत्र दे दिया, ताकि जो कोई उस पर विश्वास करे वह नष्ट न हो, परन्तु अनन्त जीवन पाए" (यूहना 3:16)। इसलिए यीशु मसीह पर जो भी मनुष्य विश्वास करेगा तो वह उसे अनन्त काल का जीवन देगा।

प्रिय जनों, यीशु मसीह मानव जाती को उनके सारे विषयों में स्वतंत्र करता है। मगर मैं ने इस लेखन में तीन विषयों के बारे में चर्चा की है कि- यीशु मसीह मानव जाति को पापों से, बीमारियों से और अनन्त मृत्यु से स्वतंत्र करता है। मानव यह विश्वास करते हैं कि अच्छे कर्मों या चढ़ावा या बलिदानों के द्वारा उन्हें मोक्ष या मुक्ति मिलती है। मगर प्रिय जनों बाइबल हमें इस बात को सिखाती है कि यीशु मसीह समस्त मानव जाति के लिए प्रायश्चित्त हो गया। इस का अर्थ यह है कि अब मानव जाति को मोक्ष या मुक्ति के लिए चढ़ावा या बलिदानों की आवश्यकता नहीं है। क्योंकि यीशु मसीह समस्त मानव जाति की मोक्ष या मुक्ति के लिए बलिदान हो गया। अब मानव जाति को मोक्ष या मुक्ति के लिए उस यीशु मसीह के बलिदान पर विश्वास करने की आवश्यकता है। जो भी मानव उस पर विश्वास करे, वह अपने जीवन की सारे विषयों से स्वतंत्र पाकर यीशु मसीहा के साथ एक नया जीवन का आरम्भ कर पाएगा।

**परमेश्वर आपको इस लेख को पढ़ने तथा, विश्वास करने के द्वारा बहुत सारी आशिष देंगे॥**

# TEMPLE IMAGERY AND ITS SHIFT IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PAULINE METAPHOR



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The transition on the understanding of "Temple of God" has been one of the most interesting topic for a further detailed studies. This article in short will discuss on the transition of its understanding basing from the Old Testament, Qumran Community and the New Testament.

## I. TEMPLE OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Garden of Eden is one place where there is a glimpse of the concept of the temple of God. Gregory K. Beale used it as a metaphor to explain about the temple of God. The metaphor used here give a glimpse about the physical structure and the requirement for the cleanliness of the temple of God. Here, the Garden of Eden should not be seen as a physical structure rather on the basis of visualization on the concepts of the future temple. So, the Garden of Eden was the first sanctuary in sacred history. Adam responsibility was to widen the boundaries of the Garden which would include the goal of spreading the glorious presence of God. But Adam failed and God started using different people especially Abraham and his descendants to re- establish his temple.

God also wanted to dwell among the Israelites where he asked them to build a sanctuary known as tabernacle so that He can dwell among them. In the book of Exodus, there is another progression in the development of the idea of temple of God in Israel's encounter with the Lord in Mount Sinai and in the subsequent creation of the tabernacle. In Numbers 10-21, the tabernacle sanctuary was regarded as the Lord's tent or the dwelling place of God in the midst of Israel as they were travelling from Sinai to Canaan. When God dwell in the tabernacle which was built in Sinai after the completion, His power and glory started to dwell among them after they were redeemed and they would be His dwelling place, His Holy Temple and also His Sanctuary. The tabernacle was built to provide a way for God to have fellowship with his people since He wanted to live among them (Ex. 25:8).

One of the most important achievement of Solomon was the construction of the Jerusalem temple (2 Chron. 5:1). The climax of the dwelling of God with the people of Israel comes in the completion of the first physical temple during the reign of Solomon. This construction was interpreted as evidence of Yahweh election of Jerusalem as his sole abode among the tribes of Israel. Solomon temple was also regarded as the embodiment of Israel's religious as well as national identity. The setting and the design of the temple manifested the presence of Yahweh. Since the temple is the dwelling place of Yahweh, the Bible and the subsequent traditions

represented this edifice as the idealized high point of Israel's history, cultural expression and religious experience. During exile, the tabernacle was built in order to aid them recognised that realized the goodness as well as the presence of Yahweh among them.

Now, it was shown and represented through the temple constructed by Solomon. There is a clear transfer of God's dwelling solely in the tabernacle to his dwelling in the temple made by Solomon which is demonstrated by the new house of the Lord being filled with cloud (2 Chron. 5:13), now, the presence and glory of God hovered over the Temple which signifies God's blessing and benediction.

## **2. TEMPLE OF GOD IN THE QUMRAN COMMUNITY:**

The Qumran were a Jewish monastic group that lived in the Judean Desert during the Second Temple period. They were also known as the Dead Sea Sect and were known for preserving the Dead Sea Scrolls. They were also known for their strict and separatist way of life. They refer themselves as the "the sons of Zadok." The rebel of the Qumran started by around 152 B.C. when the office of the high priest was conferred by a pagan and that the individual who receive the office was not from the line of the old Zadokite dynasty. They believe that priest should only be from the line of Zadok. But later, a group of people known as the Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran found out that a certain man carried the role and duties of the priest without belonging to the family of Zadok. They followed the tradition recorded in the book of Ezekiel that only the sons of Zadok might serve in the new Temple (Ezek. 44:15). They started to revolt against this because in the view of Qumran Community and literature, the Teacher of Righteousness is the one chosen by God.

The Qumran community saw themselves as the house of holiness and a foundation of the holy of holies for Aaron (IQS 8:5, 6) and also as a dwelling place (ma'on) for the holy of holies (IQS 8:8). Ma'on is used in Psalm 26:8 and 2 Chronicles 36:15 to refer to the Temple as the dwelling place of God and IQS 12:2 speaks of the angels in God's holy abode (ma'on qodesh) in heaven (cf. IQSb 4:25). Qumran Community not only describe perfection in terms of purity but also in terms of holiness. The Community describe themselves as 'the men of perfect holiness' (CD 20.2, 5, 7; IQS 8.20) and the members of the community are called 'the holy ones' (IQS 5.13, 18; 8.17; 9.8). Some of the other terms of the description which they gave to themselves are like the community of holiness (IQS 9.2), the holy congregation (IQS 5.20; IQSa 1.9, 12), and many more.

The above study shows that the Qumran Community start to consider their body or themselves as the temple of God and maintain up to the degree or level of purity that was maintained in the Jerusalem Temple even in their body. They started to see themselves as a separated beings from the polluted world that surrounds them. Here the progression of the thought on the body as a temple of God which Apostle Paul mention in his epistle to the Corinthians started to developed.

## **3. TEMPLE OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:**

The Qumran community texts contain a consistent temple symbolism in which the community was represented as the new temple. Just as Jesus is the fulfilment of both Adam and Israel, He also is regarded as the fulfilment of temple itself. One of the first major confrontations that Jesus has with the Jews takes place in the temple during Passover (Jn. 2: 13-22) where the temple built by Herod the Great was used for selling animals for sacrifices inside the temple (Jn. 2: 14) for the celebration of the Passover in Jerusalem temple. So, on seeing this incident Jesus got angry and started to react by whipping all the animals and turning over their

tables. In this scene, business is disrupting the worship of God by serving as distraction and inhibiting those that come to be in his presence. In John 2: 16, Jesus claims that temple is His Father's House and not a house of trade. D. A. Carson believes that, "Jesus is the new temple i.e. the new meeting place for God and his people or sinners."

The interpretation of the temple has been seen by some scholars as being reflected across all the Gospels especially in the Gospel of John. The prologue to John's Gospel sets the scene. In John 1: 14-16, the word 'dwelling' signifies the presence of God among His people in the wilderness tabernacle. But at the New Testament time, the presence of God no longer resides in a tabernacle/temple but instead in the form of an incarnated Word i.e. Jesus Christ who manifests the Father's glory. Looking at the Gospels, Jesus specifically identifies himself as the true Temple which takes priority over the Jerusalem temple. "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days" (Jn. 2:19) was the first occasion where one finds Jesus refers his own body as the temple of God.

In the context of Apostle Paul, there is corpus of literature flooded with temple imagery. Ekklesia is the most frequent term used by Paul to refer to group of people who met together in the name of Christ. Paul also used body in Greek 'soma' for the community of believers or the church. He addresses letters specifically to "the church of the Thessalonians..... the churches of Galatia." The term 'the church' is taken out from the Greek word ekkaleo which means 'call out.' More plausible is the suggestion that Paul's usage was drawn directly from Israel's self-identity. Ekklesia occurs about 100 times in the LXX where the underlying Hebrew word is qahal which means 'assembly,' most notable are the phrase qahal Yahweh or qahal Israel. Since Paul often speak of "the church of God," it's hard to doubt that he had in mind this distinctive background. The term 'the temple' is used metaphorically in the New Testament to denote the people of God. The apostles in particular develop this picture of the temple or church as a community of the redeemed one which through the process of the sanctifying activity of the Holy Spirit is constituted as the dwelling place of God. This idea mainly appears in 1 Corinthians 3: 16, 17; 2 Corinthians 6: 16-18 and Ephesians 2: 20-22.

The progression on the understanding on the temple of God from one stage to another was interesting. The variety use of temple does not produce disunity but rather show a more of a complete picture of what the new dwelling place of God looks like and what it is founded upon, Jesus Christ. Paul, especially in his writings used the temple theology or imagery as a foundation to his teaching on important topics like holiness, worship, relationships, leadership, etc.



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## THE IMAGE OF 'SHEPHERDING' AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN JESUS CHRIST

The article "The image of 'shepherding' and its significance in Jesus Christ" deals with the 'image of shepherd' and its usages in various contexts of the Bible and the Ancient Near East. The role of shepherd is unique yet important to the understand the teachings of Jesus Christ. The image of shepherd is often associated with the founder of Christianity. Lot of powerful images in the books and calendars usually picture Jesus with a lamb in his bosom. The importance of shepherding is very much also related to the teachings put forward by Jesus Christ. This image of shepherd is attributed to Jesus because He is humble, gentle, and saviour of the mankind. The article brings into light the meaning associated with the 'image of shepherd.' As we progress, we will begin to also understand the theological and practical significance of the term shepherd and its meaning applicable to the believers today. Bible is a book for the ages and Jesus himself is an astounding person in the history that influenced, inspired and changed numerous lives with a greater impact. Anyone who wishes to understand the shepherd are not left alone by him rather a gentle, calm, and soothing voice and message calls them and changes them from the roots. The life of Jesus is so powerful and so likewise the image of shepherd too contains the powerful salvific message.

### 'SHEPHERDING' AS A TENDER CARER

The term 'Shepherd' comes from the Hebrew root word "ro'eh" and greek word "poimen" which means "to tend" or "the one who tends". Shepherding employs guarding, feeding, and tending the sheep. Shepherd carries a sling with him and it protects the sheep. He has a stick with him and it looks like cane with a sharp bent on one end. He carries a staff which is about 30 inches long. He has a cloak as a protective wear for resting in night. He also carries a flute to entertain himself in contenting the sheep. He leads the sheep; he knows all of them by name. Sheep knows the shepherd's voice. He takes care of them and puts them all in safe place. This role of shepherding emphasizing the caring aspect of Shepherd. By nature, a shepherd has the nature of tender compassion, love and care. Shepherding can be done with compassion and care. The etymology of Shepherding from the root languages mean to care and to show compassion.

### 'SHEPHERDING' AS A ROYAL DIGNITARY

In the Mesopotamian history the 'image of the shepherd' is used for designating gods and kings. It is also used for attesting titles of the king from every period. The

image of the shepherd is in use as an epithet intended to dignify rulership as good, just, and beneficent for the people of the kingdom. Assyrian kings used this designation style. Sumerian deities were sometimes known as shepherds.<sup>2</sup> Even in the Egyptian prominence just like Mesopotamian, the imagery was depicting gods, kings, and various other important figures. Though it implies centralized monarchy but the concept and thought of 'king as shepherd' is extensively used. In the Grecian world, the common phrase associated with shepherding is 'shepherd of the host' this metamorphic usage is often used for technical for compassionate features in Mesopotamian and Egyptian Literature. It is the symbol of rank and authority usually seen in context of the 'shepherd of hosts.'<sup>3</sup> This role of shepherd is mainly used in non-biblical literature but the overarching theme of shepherd as a designation for royalty. The similar notion is found even in the Bible where shepherding is also used as title, when it is in use the main interest is about importance of prominent figure as a stature of a king who is very much concerned of the well-being of his people.

### **'SHEPHERDING' AS A RULER**

Most of the Jewish people look shepherd as worthless inferior but many Jewish people are being employed in the same field. They have their own respect for the shepherds other than few members of the nobility who considered shepherds lower than peasants. Not all the people looked shepherd down uniformly. None of the prejudices in those days were imposed in the biblical records of shepherds.<sup>4</sup> 'Shepherd' is an image used for rulers or leaders. It is used for David (1 Samuel 16:15,34-37; Ps.78:70-72) as a shepherd who has taken care of his father's flock and then became a shepherd for Israel's generation and for the future (2 Sam.5:2; 1 Chr.11:2; Ps.78:70-72; Ez.37:34). It is used for Moses as a forty years experienced shepherd (Ex.3:1) and a shepherd of Israel (Ps.77:20; Is.63:11). This image is also implied to Davidic Messiah (Micah.5:2-4; Jer.23:1-6) and sometimes to Jewish teachers. Leaders like priests, rulers and official are also shepherd (Num.27:17; 1 Kings 22:17; Jer. 3:15). Sometimes the portrait of Israel's Shepherd is applied to God Himself (Ps.23:1-4; 74:1-2; Isa.40:11; Jer.13:17; Ez.34:11-17; Micah7:14; Zech.9:16)<sup>5</sup>. Though there is negative understanding of the aspect of Shepherd, majority of it is seen as a character of humility rather than inferior when it comes to the leaders in the Bible. So, for example David is seen to be a shepherd before becoming a king. Though he became a king he carried on the nature of humility.

In Old Testament, Psalms 23 and Ezekiel 34 give insights on 'shepherding.' This idea from psalms 23 and Ezekiel 37 denotes emphasis on a shepherd as looking forward to Israel's reconstitution. 'They shall all have one shepherd. They shall dwell in the Land where Father dwells. I will make a covenant. I will bless them.' In Jeremiah, shepherd image is observed as the one 'looking in faith' towards the event of Israel's recreation (23:3-4). In the prophetic writings of Isaiah, Yahweh is seen to be in the role of shepherd. Ezekiel 34 begins with prophetic condemnation of the shepherds who are not faithful only feeding themselves not the sheep. Therefore, Yahweh Himself has compassionately taken the role of shepherd over Israel. He Himself would search the sheep, seek them, and rescue them (Ezekiel 34:11, 12). In New Testament, the figures of sheep and shepherd found in the Bible passages, profoundly applied to Christ as the good shepherd of all the sheep. This is boldly articulated in closing benediction of Hebrews in simple phrase "Our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep" (Hebrews 13:20). The relationship between Christ and men is expressed explicitly in Mark.6:34 as to that of a shepherd and sheep. After Jesus saw the great multitudes, He had compassion on them because they are like sheep without shepherd. The parable of lost sheep said by Jesus resembles the Old Testament

Ezekiel 34 emphasizing the role of Jesus as the good shepherd. He feedsthem and will watch over them. Christ is the one who saves, sustains, and redeems the life of all who will hear His voice and come to Him. (John 10:7-9).<sup>6</sup>

### **JESUS THE SAVING SHEPHERD**

In John 9:39-10:18, Jesus addresses the blind man as one of His sheep (true Israel) and the Pharisees as the false shepherds comparing them to Jeremiah 23:1-2 and Ezekiel 34:1-10. He is not the hireling but the ultimate Shepherd who came to save the lost sheep (John 10:11-16). He fulfils the role of God as assigned in Hebrew Bible (Ezekiel 34:11-22; Jeremiah 23:6). In Revelation, Jesus' role as shepherd and the lamb are closely related to each other. Jesus is the leader of the flock, not only a leader but He also took the human form and died. The role of God in Isaiah 49:10 resembles to the role a shepherd. In Hebrews 13:20, Jesus and salvation He grants, the new exodus is compared with the Moses and the first Exodus (Heb.3:1-6). As God brought the shepherds of Israel from the Dead Sea so also in the same way He brought the great shepherd from death. In 1 Peter 2:21-25, Peter quotes Isaiah 53:9 proving Christ as unjustly punished like a silent sheep in the context of servant. He says that the death of Jesus reconciled the wandering sheep to the shepherd.<sup>7</sup> As a royal shepherd Christ united the Israel and the Gentiles into the grand plan of God. A shepherd's sees that no sheep gets lost in the valleys, desert or astray. It is only a true shepherd that has real concern for the sheep, even to the extent he goes for the one lost sheep to make it united with the flock. Jesus is the royal shepherd who laid down His life for His people. There is no greater royalty than laying down for the lives of people for a true shepherd.

### **JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

In the gospel of John chapter 10 we observe that Jesus is presented as 'good' shepherd. The nature and quality of the shepherding here depends on the act of the shepherd. A shepherd who is willing to die for the sheep marks the quality of a real shepherd. The real good shepherd knows the sheep, the knowability of the sheep by the shepherd is compared with that of the knowability of God to Jesus. Another important quality of a true good shepherd is that shepherd unites the sheep, the sheep knows the true shepherd and recognises his voice. They are attached to the voice of the shepherd and are known to be recognizing their shepherd. The act the shepherd does is purely out of his love and voluntarily, he does not feel otherwise like the false shepherd. Good shepherd leads the sheep, loves the sheep, lays down life for the sheep, unites the sheep, tends the sheep and rescues the sheep. This act of the shepherd demonstrates the substitutionary death of Christ on behalf of all people.

### **JESUS THE GREAT SHEPHERD**

Hebrews 13:20-21, elaborates this aspect of the greatness of the shepherd. The good shepherd suffers for the sins of the world, and faces the unjust suffering all by Himself for the sake of substituting the sinner. A great shepherd makes perfect covenant by shedding the perfect sinless blood on the cross to make an atonement for the sins of the world. He not only suffered as a Shepherd but He also rose again as a living shepherd to tend the sheep. . The great shepherd sanctifies the sheep. He makes the m holy and helps them to live a life pleasing to God. Psalms 23 is an example of how psalmist explains even I walk through valley of death I fear no evil, as



## JESUS THE GRAND SHEPHERD

1 Peter 5:1-4, explains to us the aspect of the grandness of the shepherd. Here the shepherd is exalted in nature. Through the power of God, Jesus rose again to life and lives now and forever. It is the grand shepherd that is sovereign. He will lead the people into the glorification of the believers. He grants life of crown for all the people who remained faithful. He is a rewarded of the sheep.

Having seen and observed usage of the shepherd imagery in the Old Testament New Testament and in the Ancient Near East, we are led to understand all these portray the true nature of a real shepherd and it is Jesus Christ. Through the life of Jesus, we can understand, the word shepherd has found its complex meaningfulness. Insights can be drawn from the shepherding role of Jesus as Servant, Substitute, Sacrifice and Sovereign Lord to be drawn in our day to day living as we encounter several challenges in our spiritual journey. At the times when we were lost and away, the good shepherd gave up his life and saved us from the clutches of sin. As a sheep recognizes the voice, we are to heed to the voice and recognize our master. At difficult and steeped terrains in our lives we are to depend on our guide, the great shepherd, and the sanctifier as he purges away all that is unnecessary and makes us who we are in his likeness. As we live with hope, we are not to be discouraged as the grand shepherd, oversees everything and He is in control and he rewards eternal for those who diligently seek, know, and hear his voice. Jesus is the good, great, and grand shepherd. He is the tender carer; He is the ruler and He is the sovereign dignitary who oversee over the happenings over the world. He lays his life for the sheep. He grants life and He exalts.

### End Notes:

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## “Rabboni” The Teacher of Teachers



**Mercy John**  
Librarian

Battered and bruised, shattered and suffering  
Lost all the hope, Lost all the scope  
Beauty and wealth could not spare her from seven

Possessed by the demons, assessed by the humans  
Behold! The Son of Man, traced her in darkness  
Perceived her future not what the parameters

Cast out the demons, repented and restored.  
Forged from the freedom, free of her ailment,  
Followed her Lord and fueled her giving.

Tread on the heels, till at the end  
Cross or the shame, dark or the tremor  
Nothing could stop her, till at the tomb.

Set off at dawn with spices she set up  
Startled at seeing the stone that is shifted  
Sobbing and searching, heartrending spot.

B.C and A.D paused for a span  
Just for this lady, Mary of Magdalene.  
“Mary” Him calling, spring up her senses.

Kneeling and clinging, forgot her spices.  
Calling Him Rabboni, The Teacher of Teachers!  
Made her the daughter, daughter of His Father.





**Bharat Bhooshan  
Staff**

## ममता से भारी नारी

नारी तेरी गजब कहानी है  
तू कितनी प्यारी प्यारी है  
जिसने तुमको बनाया वो कितना न्यारा है  
नारी तेरी गजब कहानी है

नार से निकली वह नारी है  
नारी गर्भ में वो आया, जिसने उसे बनाया है  
नारी की ममता में वह भी पलने आया है  
नारी तेरी गजब कहानी है

नारी की ममता में जो पहले आया है  
एक नारी के द्वारा वह संसार का उद्धार बनकर आया है  
इस नारी को वह आज माँ कहने आया है  
नारी तेरी गजब कहानी है

नारी तेरी बड़ी कहानी है  
आज जरूर उस नारी की है जिसने उसे बनाया है  
कि करें वह मृत्यु पर जय वह एक नारी से आया है  
नारी तेरी गजब कहानी है

नारी की उस ममता को देखो जिसने अपना बेटा लुटाया है  
वह नारी है वह प्यारी है वह ममता में भारी है  
नर से निकली नारी वो सबसे प्यारी प्यारी है  
नारी तेरी गजब कहानी है

दुःख की घड़ी में सब कुछ सहती वह नारी है  
दुःख में भी वह सुख से रहती वह नारी है  
सुबह-सुबह वह प्रिया के कब्र पर पधारी है  
वह नारी है वह नारी है नारी तेरी गजब कह

# ऐ खुदा

Rachel Anna Crown  
(Staff)



ऐ खुदा तुझे पाना मेरा खुशनसीबी है।  
और तुझसे दूर जाना मेरी बेवकूफी है।

रहम जो तूने मुजपे किया है,  
कैसे करूं मैं बयान ऐ खुदा  
कागज स्याही काफी नहीं है,  
शब्द भी थोड़े पड़ते ऐ खुदा।

चांद सितारे और सूरज,  
सब करते तेरे कार्यों को बयान ऐ खुदा,  
समुद्र जो इतना विशाल है,  
वो भी तेरे वचनों से बना है ऐ खुदा।

जिन पर तू दया करना चाहे  
उन्ही पे तू करता ऐ खुदा।  
मैं शुक्रगुजार हूं इस बात का,  
जो तूने मुझे उस दया में चुना ऐ खुदा।

**Song**  
**“LET US USE OUR LIFE FOR GOD”**

**Thang Suan Kim**  
**(B.Th. III)**



There is time to come  
And there is time to go  
There is joy full time and  
There is sorrow too

CH: Oh..Oh...friends life is like this only je...je...je  
How did you spend your time for the glory of God?  
Our time is not in our hand  
Our life is very short  
Let us use our life for GOD

One day we were born  
And one day we will die  
Some believe in Christ  
And some don't know who is Christ

Bri: let us share the good news that we learn in H.M.C

Jesus said that you go and teach all the nations  
Because he gave us the power of Heaven and earth  
If we don't go and not share the good news of Christ  
Instead of us who will go, who will share  
We....we all are God's servants, we...we are the light of the world.

## GOD'S MISSION COMMENCEMENT

**Daniel Puli**  
(M.Div. I)



Mission is the divine activity of sending intermediaries, whether supernatural or human, to speak or do God's will so that his purposes for judgment or redemption are furthered. Missiology is the study of the mission of God and it is at the foundation of everything. This biblical concept is expressed using verbs meaning "to send", normally with God as the expressed subject. We know that a mission involves sending a person for a specific purpose. It happened that Father God sent his only begotten Son to the earth, although no one can send God but he Himself. God's mission is to fulfil His purpose and spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. The Latin phrase "Missio Dei" refers to the mission of God. The mission of God is often seen as the redemption and salvation of humanity through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This mission is rooted in the belief that God send his Son Jesus to Earth to reconcile humanity with God and to offer the gift of eternal life.

In the Bible, the word "mission" is not mentioned, but interestingly the entire Bible can be seen as a mission. The mission was ordained by the Triune God - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Father is the Creator, the Son is the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit is the Propagator of this mission. Up to the 17th Century, there were various expressions for the concept of what we now call mission like establishing churches, spreading the gospel, and propagating the Christian religion worldwide, converting non-believers, and bringing salvation to unbelievers. As we know, God's mission began in Genesis 3:15, where he introduces the concept of the Redeemer Jesus Christ. The main idea of God's mission is primarily and ultimately the work of the Triune God for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate. Mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a boundless source of love which is the ultimate foundation of mission. It is impossible to dig any deeper; there is a purpose because God loves people. It sustains because

1. "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son..." – John 3:16.
  2. We are children of God. He is showing great agape love towards us.
- Today, the mission is sustained by the Holy Spirit (John 14:15) and it belongs to God. We are the agents of God and as a agent of God, we should actively participate in missions.



# THE USE OF THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD IN GENESIS 1:26-27

**Priskila Sonar  
(B.Th. III)**



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Questions regarding the origin of humanity are as old as the history of human race. There is no unanimous consensus among the seekers of the origin of life. However, the Bible says that 'humankind was created in the image and likeness of God.'<sup>8</sup> In the context of popular theories and scientific approaches to the origin of humankind, biblical understanding of it is doubted, if not, outrightly rejected by the world. World finds it difficult to understand the real meaning of humankind being created in the image and likeness of God. Many take this in a literal sense and conclude that the physical form of man is identical with the physical form of God. Many believers are also confused in this regard. Consequently, many think that God is like a human being.

The purpose of this paper is to understand what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God. The use of the image and likeness of God across the testaments will give a holistic understanding of it, but it is beyond the scope of this paper. So, this paper tries to bring out various nuances of the use of the 'image and likeness of God' in Gen. 1:26-27. This paper will do a survey of the use of it from the early church to the contemporary scholars to see various usages of it.

## 2. THE ORIGIN OF HUMANKIND

Few passing references to the origin of humankind will give a foundation to the understanding of God creating man in his own image and likeness. Evolutionists<sup>9</sup> say, man has evolved out of a process, a long and progressive process. Creationists<sup>10</sup> say that man is a direct and immediate creation of God. "Humankind was made out of the dust by a special and divine act, with a body which is structurally similar to the 'higher vertebrata'<sup>11</sup> and soul formed after the image and likeness of God."<sup>12</sup> Theistic evolutionists<sup>13</sup> write, "God intervened in the past, even in the midst of a long evolutionary process, and created humankind as an entirely new factor."<sup>14</sup> They suggest that human body was developed through a long evolutionary process, but God broke into the process and directly created the soul, bringing human into being."<sup>15</sup> Irrespective of all these views, the Bible declares that God is the creator of mankind. This paper starts with the premise that mankind is the creation of God. However, admitting God as the author of life doesn't solve the complexities attached to it. Rest of the paper will show more light on the concept of creation of humankind in God's image and likeness.

## 3. ETYMOLOGY OF 'IMAGE AND LIKENESS'

The Hebrew word used for 'image' in Gen. 1:26 is **לְמַצַּח** (tselem) which literally means 'shadow.' This word is derived from the parent root **צל** (tsal) meaning 'a shadow.' Thus, tselem means an outline or shape of a shadow of an image. It occurs seventeen times in the Old Testament, among which the most common meanings are 'status,' 'model,' or 'picture.'<sup>16</sup>

The Hebrew word used for 'likeness' in Gen. 1:26 is **דְמוּת** (demut) which literally means 'an image.' The parent root **דָּם** (dam) which means 'blood.' One descended from the 'blood' of another often resembles the one descended from. Thus, demut means a 'resemblance' or 'to be like' something else in action or appearance. This word is used twenty-six times in the OT.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4. EARLY CHURCH VIEW

Early church fathers like, Irenaeus and Tertullian drew a distinction between the use of the image and the likeness of God. They argued that the use of image refers to bodily traits, whereas the latter refers to the spiritual nature of mankind.<sup>18</sup> However, Clement of Alexandria and Origen rejected the idea of any bodily analogy and held that the word image denotes the characteristics of human as human, and the word likeness refers to the qualities which are not essential to human, but may be cultivated or lost.<sup>19</sup>

#### 5. CONTEMPORARY VIEWS

Both the early church and the contemporary theologians grappled with the concept of humankind created in the image and likeness of God. They have come up with various nuances to approach this concept. Charles L. Feinberg has stated, "At no time in the history of theology the doctrine of the 'Imago Dei'<sup>20</sup> had a more challenging pastoral relevance or more provocative theological implications than it does within the currents of contemporary theology."<sup>21</sup> One has to delve into the doctrine of the imago dei to understand the complexities regarding the creation of human in God's image and likeness.<sup>22</sup>

##### 5.1 THE DOCTRINE OF IMAGO DEI

Imago dei is a Latin phrase frequently used in theology to refer to the image of God mentioned in Gen. 1:26-27.

"Doctrine of imago dei states that humankind is the highest of God's living creation on the earth. Created out of material elements (the dust of the earth), man received his spirit or life when God breathed into him. Human alone is made in God's image (Gen. 1:27; 2:7-8; 5:1; 6:7). He has free will, can love and think abstractly, and has a personality because he was made in God's image. Gen. 2:7 describes how God fashioned a clay model of human and breathed "the breath of life" into its nostrils. Thus the first human being was created. Humankind is a compound of matter and spirit. The matter is flesh made of the soil of the earth; the spirit is the life-giving breath of God in him. At death the body turns back into soil, and the spirit returns to

God, who gave it (Eccl. 12:7; Job 34:14-15). Doctrine of imago dei views man as a whole unit that cannot be divided into separate parts, each with its own separate existence."<sup>23</sup>

Much has been written attempting to explain the doctrine of imago dei.

##### 5.1.1 The Corporeal View

Corporeal view relates the image of God to human's corporeality (physical stature). This view strictly relates the image of God to the material aspects (look, size, tangible physical body parts, and the like) of humankind.<sup>24</sup>

Two obstacles to accept this view are,

- a. Since God is spirit, how could the image of God in which humankind was created be fully corporeal?
- b. Animals have tangible body parts, but they are not created in the image of God. So corporeality does not necessarily have to be related to the image of God.<sup>25</sup>

##### 5.1.2 The Incorporeal View

Incorporeal view connects the image of God to the immaterial aspects (soul, virtues, emotions, and the like) of humankind. It emphasizes moral likeness, dominion, the exercise of will, and intellectual faculties (ability to speak, organize, etc.) as specifics of the incorporeal image of God.<sup>26</sup>

##### 5.1.3 The Combination View

The combination view suggested a combination of two previous views as follows:

Human's body is included in the image of God. Though God doesn't have a physical body, there is a sense in which even a



human's body included in the image of God, for human is a unitary being composed of both body and soul. However, Adam was not only a unitary being, but a living, intelligent, and determining being. He was able to have unhindered fellowship with God. Humankind is the only being created to be like God. God created humankind with both intelligence and will that enabled them to have dominion over the world (Gen. 1:28). So, humankind is the combination of both corporeal and incorporeal images of God.<sup>27</sup>

## 5.2 ANTHROPOMORPHISM

Theologians coined the term 'anthropomorphism'<sup>28</sup> to explain the amazing, yet complex creation of human. Anthropomorphism uses human characteristics to explain the divine work or attributes of God. Human body is indeed a work of art; an amazingly complex organism that only the wisdom of God could design and create. Among all the creations, only mankind bears the image of God. It is true beyond dispute that the focus of interest today is upon mankind.<sup>29</sup> The physical matter for Adam's body came from the ground, for the name "Adam" means "taken out of the ground," but the life Adam possessed came from God.<sup>30</sup> By the use of 'image and likeness of God,' it indicates the mental and moral nature of mankind. Human being has the power of reason and intelligence. His free-will and self-consciousness and his communion with God set him apart from all other creations.<sup>31</sup> Erdman says, "God created humankind in his own image is the most rational explanation of the origin and nature of human being."<sup>32</sup>

## 6. EPILOGUE

Considering the views of the early church and the contemporary theologians, here are few key points regarding the concept of mankind being created in the image and likeness of God,

### 6.1 Spiritual Likeness

God is spirit and does not have body parts like a human. Hence, the likeness is the spiritual nature in which God created mankind. Human's inherent longing to be spiritual is the result of this spiritual nature.<sup>33</sup>

### 6.2 Mental Likeness

Hodge says,

"God is spirit and he possessed the essential attributes of the spirit. The essential attributes of the spirit are reason, conscience, and will. In making human after his own image, God endowed him with those attributes which belong to his own nature as a spirit."<sup>34</sup>

### 6.3 Moral Likeness

Human being bears and reflects the divine likeness among the habitants of the earth. The inherent desire in human to be moral (to be good, righteous, and kind) is the result of the image of God. In the language of the reformed theologians, morality of mankind distinguishes them from the rest of the creation.<sup>35</sup>

### 6.4 Social Likeness

God's social nature is grounded in his affections. He finds the objects of his love in the trinity. As God has a social nature, so he has endowed human with the same. Socially, humanity was created for fellowship. This implies that human communed with his maker.<sup>36</sup>

## 7. BEARING THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD

What it means to bear the image and likeness of God?

**Firstly**, it is through man's natural capacity for goodness, love, mercy, justice, compassion, and holiness. These are all attributes God shares with human, that he causes human to demonstrate in this world.<sup>37</sup>

**Secondly**, it is through taking care of the creation of God. God has given authority and dominion over the creation. As the divine image bearer, humanity is to subdue and rule over God's created order. . Human is called to care all that God has made, seeking to shape and develop creation and to make the most of it for his glory.<sup>38</sup>

**Thirdly**, it is through relationship. Human is the crowning work of God, and is established over the fair creation with divine wisdom and skill to love people and to love God.<sup>39</sup>

## 8. CONCLUSION

This paper presented various nuances regarding human being created in the image and likeness of God. Human stands at the zenith of all creations, because human is the most complex, yet amazing creation of God. The creation of human does not take place through a word addressed by God to the earth, but as the result of a divine decree, "let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness."<sup>40</sup> It proclaims the distinction of human above all the other creatures of the earth. Humankind is the image of God by virtue of his spiritual nature and becomes a living soul by the breath of God. The soul of human is nothing but the breath of God. The rest of the world exists through the word of God, but humankind through God's breath.

### End Notes:

1. Genesis 1:26-27. This paper uses the NIV (New International Version) translation for all its biblical references.
2. Evolutionists believe that the earth is much older than the Bible describes, and that plants, animals, and humans are a result of a natural progression called evolution. There were no common ancestors (Adam and Eve) from whom we came; it was a natural selection process, stemming from inorganic compounds and nature.
3. Creationist is a person who believes that the universe and living organisms originate from specific acts of divine creation, as in the biblical account. Creationists believe that the earth is young, and that organisms are fixed, every organism that we see today is the same organism that God created a few thousands of years ago. Adam and Eve are the beginning of the human race, and we are separated from every other species by the soul that God gave us. Higher vertebrata is an animal with a backbone. They also have an internal skeleton and the system of muscle and bones that allows them to move easily. Millions of earth history believes that human came from the vertebrate. Science' belief of human came from monkey has originated from this.
4. Edward J. Carnell, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetic* (Antigo, Wisconsin: The Edward Carnell Library, 1955), 238.
5. Supporters of theistic evolution generally attempt to harmonize evolutionary thought with belief in God and reject the conflict between religion and science; they hold that religious beliefs and scientific theories do not need to contradict each other.
6. Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition* (Michigan: Zondervan House, 1971), 12.
7. Henry Coherence Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 151.
8. Martin Davie, *New Dictionary of Theology* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 438.
9. R. Laird Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol.1 (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1980), 192.
10. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1949), 202.
11. Terry L. Miethe, *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Word* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1988), 134.
12. *Imago Dei* is a Latin phrase frequently used in theology to refer to the image of God mentioned in Gen. 1:26-
13. It is a theological term applied uniquely to humans, which denotes the symbolical relation between God and humanity.
14. Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Image of God* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1972), 235.
15. Lee Feinberg, *The Image of God*, 235.
16. Robert Bratcher, "Biblical Words Describing Man: Breath, Life, Spirit," *Sage Journals* (April 1986): 20, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/026009.4383040020?journalCode=tbtd> (13 Nov 2023).
17. Charles C. Rayrie, *Basic Theology* (Canada: Victor Books, 1986), 190.
18. C. Rayrie, *Basic Theology*, 191.
19. C. Rayrie, 190.

20. C. Rayrie, 191.
21. Anthropomorphism is a theological term which means, by derivation, the study (logos) of humanity (anthropos), and usually refers to the related science of physical or biological anthropology (belong to the natural science) and cultural or social anthropology (belong to the social science). But the term used in Christian theology which may be more strictly designated as theological anthropology, often referred to in the past as the 'doctrine of man' and the now, with recent developments in usages, as the 'doctrine of humanity.'
22. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 116-117.
- 23 Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Basic: Believing the Simple Truth of God's word, Genesis 1-11* (Secunderabad: David C Cook, 2015), 29.
24. Charles R. Erdman, *The Pentateuch: An Exposition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 11.
25. R. Erdman, *The Pentateuch: An Exposition*, 13.
26. Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 154.
27. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol.2 (Michigan Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1981), 96-97.
28. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 99.
29. Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 157.
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31. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: The Pentateuch. No. 1* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, September 2011), 39.
32. S. Ridout, *The Pentateuch*, 107.
33. Gen. 1:26.

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# THE STUDY ON ALCOHOL ADDICTION AND ITS EFFECT ON LATE ADOLESCENTS: FORMULATING PASTORAL COUNSELLING APPROACHES

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## INTRODUCTION

In the present time, alcoholism is a major concern worldwide. The use of alcohol is a global problem resulting in millions of deaths, including hundreds of thousands of young lives lost. It is not only a causal factor in many diseases but also a precursor to injury and violence. The main objective of this paper is to highlight the factors that influence alcohol consumption and analyze its effects on individuals, families, and society. Through this paper, the researcher also provides suggestions to overcome addiction and demonstrates how pastoral counselling can be effective in dealing with alcohol addiction among adolescents.

## 1. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

### 1.1 Alcohol Addiction

As a drug, alcohol is a substance that changes the way a person thinks, feels, or behaves. Alcohol is a depressant and it affects every organ in the body.<sup>41</sup>Alcohol addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences. It is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain—they change its structure and how it works. These brain changes can be long-lasting, and can lead to the harmful behaviours seen in people who abuse drugs.<sup>42</sup>

### 1.2 Adolescent

The word 'adolescence' comes from the Latin word 'Adolescere' which means "to grow" or "to grow to maturity".<sup>43</sup> Adolescence is the period of transition between childhood and adulthood. It includes some big changes - to the body, and to the way a young person relates to the world. Late adolescents (18-21) generally have completed physical development and grown to their full adult height. They usually have more impulse control by now and may be better able to gauge risks and rewards accurately. <sup>44</sup>

### 1.3 Pastoral Counselling

Pastoral counselling is the practice of talking with individuals, couples, and families to increase their understanding of emotional and religious conflicts and to help resolve problems using religious and other resources. Pastor is a biblical word for shepherd, one who cares for the health and salvation of believers, as in the sentence, "The pastor is a shepherd of the congregation." Pastoral counsellors are called and entrusted by religious communities to help people strengthen their faith in God.<sup>45</sup>

## 2. ADDICTION

### 2.1 Types of Addiction

Today, most experts recognize two types of addiction and they are as follows.

a) Chemical Addiction. This refers to addiction that involves the use of substances. The addictions which comes under chemical addictions are Alcohol, Nicotine, and Cocaine etc. <sup>46</sup>

**b) Behavioral Addiction:** Addictions which comes under behavioral addiction are gambling, food addiction, sex and porn addiction, addiction to phone and devices.<sup>47</sup>

Although there are different types of addiction, in this paper the researcher is dealing with alcohol addiction, which falls under the category of chemical addiction.

## **2.2. Causes of Alcohol Addiction**

It is obvious that no one want to become an addict. But there are some factors that lead into addiction. The following are some factors:

### **2.2.1 Heredity and Genetics**

Our genes not only determine our height, eye and hair color but also tendency to engage in compulsive behaviors. The influence of genetics on addictive behaviors has been studied in genetically identical twins raised in the same family, twins that have been raised by different families, and even in genetically selected animal models. Overall, the studies suggest that genetic contribute to approximately 50% to 60% of all cases of addiction. There are studies which also investigated family histories and have shown that if one of the parent is an alcoholic, the chance of becoming alcoholic increase by one-third. If both parents and a grandparent are alcoholic, then chances are nine times more likely.<sup>48</sup>

### **2.2.2 Peer pressure**

Peer pressure is often identified as the source of all sorts of teen behavior. As the adolescents are separating from their families and exploring new ways of living life on their own, they rely on connections with people their own age. "Hanging with a bad crowd" is blamed as the cause of many teen's problems with substances and other unhealthy habits. Or they may find themselves in places like concerts and sports events where "everybody" seem to be drinking or smoking. The judgment center of the brain is one of the later parts to develop, so teens are more likely to make bad decisions in such circumstances. <sup>49</sup>

### **2.2.3 Curiosity**

Curiosity among human beings to know the unknown is natural. But the curiosity that an adolescent has might be more than elderly person. The curiosity inside is provoking them to try it at least one. As a person, who have never tasted an alcohol, when he taste it, he might like it or he might not like it. The first taste and its effect on the user greatly influence whether the individuals to take it or not.<sup>50</sup>

### **2.2.4 Ignorance**

If the alcohol gives the effect that the individual is seeking then the user's lack of knowledge about health consequences continues to motivate him to drink.<sup>51</sup>

### **2.2.5 Social Influence**

In the 21st century, social influence are not just down on the corner or at the mall, they're in the media and on the internet, and messages there can have a big impact. There are uncountable advertisement of alcohol or beverages on social media. And the characters in the movie or series, are holding a glass of beer or wine and cheering. It has much effect on young people. <sup>52</sup>

## **2.3 Effects of Alcohol Addiction**

The harmful use of alcohol is one of the world's leading health risks. It is a causal factor in more than 60 major types of diseases and injuries and results in approximately 2.5 million deaths each year. The harmful use of alcohol is especially

fatal for younger age groups and alcohol is the world's leading risk factor for death among males aged 15–59. Approximately 4.5% of the global burden of disease and injury is attributable to alcohol.<sup>53</sup> The following paragraph will explain how the alcohol has effect on the body, the family, and the society.

## **2.3.1 Physical Effects**

### **2.3.1.1 Digestive system**

Alcohol is not digested like other foods; it avoids the normal digestive process and goes straight into the bloodstream. About 20% of the alcohol consumed is absorbed in the stomach, and about 80% is absorbed in the small intestine. Alcohol increases acid in the stomach, which in heavy drinkers can lead to severe stomach pain or sores in the intestines. One way to help prevent the increase of acid is by eating while drinking, as food slows down the rate at which alcohol is absorbed by the body.<sup>54</sup>

### **2.3.1.2 Central Nervous System**

One of the easiest ways to understand alcohol's impact on body is by understanding how it affects the central nervous system. Slurred speech is one of the first signs of too much drink. Alcohol can reduce communication between the brain and the body. This makes coordination more difficult. One may have a hard time balancing. One should never drive after drinking. As alcohol causes more damage to an individual's central nervous system, one may experience numbness and tingling sensations in the feet and hands.<sup>55</sup>

## **2.3.2 Psychological effect**

In the long run, the effects of alcohol on the brain can be both psychological (mental health problems) and physiological (damage to brain tissue). People who drink heavily are particularly vulnerable, and alcohol is an influential factor in a number of conditions, including anxiety and depression, psychotic disorders, and suicide. For instance, it is common for people who have a mental health problem such as anxiety, depression, or schizophrenia, to 'self-medicate' the distressing symptoms of their condition using alcohol.<sup>56</sup> In England and Wales, it is estimated that alcohol is associated with 15 – 25% of all suicides and 65% of all suicide attempts. In Scotland, 53% of people committing suicide who had contact with mental health services in the 12 months prior to death had a history of alcohol misuse.<sup>57</sup>

### **2.3.2.1 Effect on Education**

The consumption of alcohol will effect on their education area as well. The more they consume, the more they will be weak in study and the amount of school/college absence will be more. Their school performance will reveal, how many time they consume in a week. Carol J.Loveland-Cherry reports that school attachment and receiving good grades have been associated with adolescent with less alcohol use, while absenteeism and poor grades are associated with early initiation and increased levels of alcohol use.<sup>58</sup>

## **2.3.3 Social Effects**

The most commonly affected areas in addicted person's life tend to be family and social relationships. The addicted persons are the heavy burden of the family members in all the aspects. The society also not considering the addicted persons as respectful person. The people are not giving any importance to their speech in the public forums simply refuse their words and them also. It was understood that the alcohol addiction affected their social life.<sup>59</sup>

## **2.3.4 Effects on the Family**

Consumption of alcohol is primarily effects on family and their members, like parents, brother, sister. The family members are psychologically sick for thinking about their alcohol user son and daughter. They always demand money to family

members but denied to giving money, to the alcoholic person that results in starting of regular clash and query against family members. It results the loss of peace and harmony among family. Father and mother always admonish their children for using alcohol. A family bonding are also degrades due to habit of consuming regular alcohol.<sup>60</sup> National studies indicate that more than 90% of perpetrators of family violence had used alcohol and other drugs (AOD) the day of their arrests and more than 70% had a criminal history of AOD-related offenses.<sup>61</sup>

#### **2.3.4.1 Economic and Financial Issues**

As the problems of financial status for the alcohol consumption youth; the youths which are less responsibility on family and less interest on work are beginning of poverty and financial crisis. They were less intention on earning money otherwise demand from family for their drinking.<sup>62</sup>

#### **2.3.5 Effects on the Society**

Although chronic alcohol consumption is associated with alcoholism and organ damage, the acute consumption of alcohol has been associated with increased risk of injury in a wide variety of situations including motor vehicle crashes, bicycling accidents, incidents involving pedestrians, falls, fires, injuries in sports and recreational activities, and self-inflicted injuries. Frequent heavy drinking and frequent drunkenness are associated with injury, particularly injury resulting from interpersonal violence. <sup>63</sup>

### **3. BIBLICAL VIEW ON ALCOHOL ADDICTION**

Drunkenness is a sin - Ephesians 5:18 says, "Do not be drunk with wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead be filled with the Spirit." Drunkenness leads to foolishness and often debauchery, meaning indulgence in sensual pleasures and promiscuity. When a person is drunk, they are no longer sensitive to the Holy Spirit, which is a defining factor of our identity as believers! Drunkenness clouds the fruit of the Spirit within us, hindering our self-control among other godly characteristics, and is mentioned in lists of sins in Galatians 5:21 and 1 Corinthians 6:10. The Bible leaves no room for ambiguity regarding drunkenness.<sup>64</sup>

Some Biblical examples toward alcohol

- Noah - Gen. 9:20-27
- Lot - Gen. 19:30-38
- Belshazzar - Daniel 5:1-6
- The warning against the use of Alcohol - Prov. 23:29-35
- Jesus and alcohol - Matt. 27:33-34, 48.

The term "wine" as used in Scripture does not always refer to fermented wine but can also mean grape juice.<sup>65</sup>

### **4. RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTION FOR ADOLESCENTS, PASTORS AND CHURCH**

#### **4.1 Recommendation for Adolescents**

##### **4.1.1 Self-role**

An individual who wants to overcome the addiction, the first step in overcoming is to make up one's mind that I want to quit from this addiction. It is really important to be aware of what an individual is going through and what one is suffering from. There are some methods by which an addict can help himself for recovering.

##### **4.1.2 Scheduling**

Scheduling may be a difficult and boring task if you're not used to it. It is, however, an important part of the recovery process. People with substance use disorders do not schedule organized. Buy a schedule book and work with your counsellor. Thorough scheduling of your activities is very important to treating your substance use disorder. Remember,

your rational brain plans the schedule. If you follow the schedule, you won't use. Your addicted brain wants to be out of control. If you go off the schedule, your addicted brain may be taking you back to using drugs or drinking. Just be sure you do what you wrote down. Follow the schedule; try not to make any changes. By following the activities that are written down in the schedule book, a person can overcome addiction.<sup>66</sup>

## **4.2 Recommendation for Pastors**

Pastors can play a major role in helping the alcohol addicts by following the given points below.

### **4.2.1 The rapport**

The preceding discussion about techniques indicates that the usual preaching-teaching approach is ineffectual in the counselling framework. The important concept of relationships which plays a crucial role in counselling include the notion of rapport, but relationship also extend beyond rapport in a connotation of depth of feeling and understanding. Relationship is viewed as the unifying construct by which counselling proceeds.<sup>67</sup> Rogers has emphasized the central position of the counselee in client-centered counseling, especially the relationship between the counselor-counselee. In the emotional warmth of the relationship with the therapist

, the client begin to experience a feeling of safety as he finds that whatever attitude he expresses is understood and is accepted.<sup>68</sup> Building trust is important; clients who trust their counselors and patients who trust their therapists tell them their secrets, and in doing so they often tell themselves what they knew yet did not know—that they were drinking alcoholically.<sup>69</sup>

### **4.2.2 By Reconciliation**

It is believed that every patient needs to reconcile to person or with God. Drug abuser and addict must have directly or indirectly sinned against fellow men and God. It is the duty of the minister to lead the patient into having a repentant heart and thus reconcile with God and man. By so doing, the ministry of care through the practical steps of healing, sustaining, educating and guidance will be effective. "Many emotional problems arise from the problem of interpersonal relationship. A person in such problems must be assisted to make reconciliation quickly with others and those involved".<sup>70</sup>

### **4.2.3 Best Attention**

The giving of the counsellor's undivided and complete attention is one of the basic principles of counselling and will take real effort and concentration on the part of the pastor.<sup>71</sup> A person will readily sense whether or not the counsellor is listening whole heartedly to what is being said. The counsellor attention should be only upon the counselee. So that he will not miss any single point that has been said by the counselee. That's why paying the attention is very important in counselling.

### **4.2.4 Encourage Self-Reliance**

Counselling is a maturing process and should help the counselee to overcome dependency upon the counsellor and to develop self-reliance. He should constantly check himself to see if he is encouraging the counselee to accept responsibilities which aid in personality growth and self-reliance.<sup>72</sup> Encouragement will give the counselee the strength to step forward. The pastor who is effective in counselling will encourage his counsees to develop self-reliance.

### **4.2.5 Use of Scripture**

The use of the scripture is another resource in pastoral counselling which should be utilized. Since the pastor knows his people, their problems and the scriptures, he should be able to join the counselee and the word in an appropriate and needed place.<sup>73</sup> Scriptures can be very easily used for homework to help the counselee into closer communion with God



and on to maturity.

### 4.3 Recommendation for Church

"The church is not a building. Greek word "Ekklesia" never mean a building. "Ekklesia" is a collection of people. When we become followers of Christ, we become member of his church.<sup>74</sup>As a follower of Christ, we have a task of caring each other in time of difficulties. So the following paragraph will explain how the church can help those under addiction.

#### 4.3.1 Church's role

- With proper planning, the church can reach out to those who are suffering from alcohol addiction by establishing an effective program.
- With additional training and more focus on evangelism and forming outreach ministries, the church can become more sensitive to the needs of other people.
- The church can conduct Alcohol Recovery Program within the church for the people under the alcohol addiction.

### CONCLUSION

In the present scenario, the young generation is addicted to alcohol at a very high rate. Alcohol has a negative impact on human life and is also becoming the cause of many deaths. Alcohol affects the human body in a negative way causes serious problems in life. This paper discusses how adolescent become addicted, how alcohol influences the body, the biblical view on alcohol addiction, and how pastors can help addicts. The researcher sheds light on all these areas. Pastoral ministry is an important ministry, and pastors can play a vital role in helping people overcome their alcohol addiction. Pastoral counseling is an essential ministry of pastoral care. Thus, pastors and churches have a great responsibility in freeing these adolescents from the grip of alcohol addiction. By helping them overcome their addiction, the church can bring out the best in them so that they may know and understand the importance of their new life, which they can have in Jesus Christ.

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## THE UNANSWERED PRAYERS ARE THE ANSWERED PRAYERS

**Awi Sian Hung  
(B.Th. II)**



Prayer is a way of contacting God. In prayer, we have a conversation with God and in that we praise him for His being and describe our gratitude towards him for all His goodness in our life. Moreover, we ask what we want such as forgiveness for our sin, blessing for our future and also for others and we pour out all our desire and supplication before Him believing that He would fulfill all our desires-desires for deliverance from troubles from unfavourable circumstances, desire for better and successful life. But we don't even think what God want from us and what is His plan for us.

Christians, as human beings, we, to have desire and bring them into our prayer and pray to God, might be wholeheartedly and with proper intention. Sometimes our prayer, however, seems not answer by God and we say, 'I have asked God but I haven't received what I asked for, though I prayed wholeheartedly.' And we blame God for not keeping His word, 'Ask it will be given to you' (Mat. 7:7). This is one of the reasons that most of us lose our faith and become back-sliders saying that our prayers are not responded in a way we want.

But notice that, in the Bible, God frequently refuses to grant because it is not a right time or He wants to do something more or better for the person than what the person is requesting. When Prophet Elijah prayed to God that 'he might die' after hearing all the prophets of God were killed by the king and while he was running for his life in 1 Kings 19:1-5, God did not grant his request, for He had specific and better plan for his life that is to anoint Elisha as his successor.

Jesus prayed in the Garden of the Gethsemane before he was arrested, "My father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me..." (Mat. 26:39). Paul prayed to God to remove a thorn from his body in 2 Cor. 12:8-10. Did God answer their prayers? God answered them, but not in 'YES,' but in 'NO.'

Likewise, sometimes God may not give us the answer we wanted and hoped for. He might say 'No' or 'Wait' to our request since it is not His plan nor the right time. But we must not falter in our faith nor say 'God does not answer my prayer' especially at the point of unpleasant circumstances. Rather, we must realize that His plan is much more better than ours and His keeping of silence is His blessings towards us.

In conclusion, God gives an answer to all our prayers. He responds in His way, but not in a way we expect. And His answer is always better for us than what we had hoped for. Paul says in Romans 8:28, 'In all things, God works for the good of those who love Him. God never neglects our prayers if we pray according to His will (1 John 5:14), and we know his will when we abide in Him (John 15:7). God answers all our prayers not in the way we ask, but in a way that will lead to our greatest good.

## ALL MIGHTY FATHER

**Niang Huai Cing  
(B.Th. II)**



Open my blind eyes,  
So that I can see.  
Open my deaf ears,

So that I can hear your voice.  
Touch my dumb mouth  
So that I can praise your name.  
Change my futile heart,  
So that I can believe in you.  
Clean my dirtiness,  
So that I can be white more than snow.  
Fill my stomach,  
So that I will be no more hungry.  
Quench my thirst,  
So that I will be no more thirsty.  
Raise my dead-life,  
So that I will be no more dead.



# WHAT IS ACCEPTING JESUS CHRIST IN OUR LIFE?

**Glory Tha Chin Par  
(B.Th.II)**



Accepting Jesus Christ as our personal saviour is one thing that every believer must understand . When we accept Jesus Christ as our personal saviour what to your response ?

- We repent from our sin and ask forgiveness to God for saving our life .We thanks to God he send his only son Jesus Christ to this world in order to save the Sinners
  - We took baptism to express that we accept Jesus as our saviour.
  - We joined the church activities and enjoy in God's presence .
- So many Christians are finish our journey by all these . But actually this is just the beginning of the Christian journey . What is means by accepting Jesus Christ in our life? Let's see some examples from the Bible .

(1) **John 4 : 1-37:** Jesus talks with a Samaritan woman by people .she was always hiding herself .when Jesus left Judea and went back in Galilee intentionally He went through Samaria to save Samaritans through the Samaritan woman . When Jesus was got down by the well of Jacob this Samaritan woman came to drop water it was about noon because during this time no one came to drop water from the well . After having conversation with Jesus she understood who is Jesus . What is her response after she realized Jesus on Messiah? She was not just simply sitting and talking with Jesus rather she left her water of jar, went back to the town and spread the news of Jesus that she met with the Messiah who knows everything that she did

A woman who was hiding herself after meeting with Jesus able to stand and share to people who Jesus is . All her fears and shame are gone after she met with Jesus who knows everything. No one tell her to go to the town and share about Jesus . A person who really met with Jesus and really understood who is that Jesus cannot simply sit.

(2) **Mathew 9:27-31:** Jesus healed two blind men

After Jesus healed a sick woman at synagogue as He went from there two blind men were calling Jesus to have mercy on them . Jesus ask to them, " Do you believe that I am able to do this ? " As they believed in Jesus . Jesus healed them . But Jesus order them not no tell anyone about this. What did they do ? Did they silent ? The Bible says they went out and spread the news about Jesus all over their region

. After experiencing the healing power of Jesus , nothing can stop them to share that Power of Christ to others . They did not say we are healed so let us silent . Rather they spread the knew of Jesus not only to their neighbour but to all over their region . What is our response after we meet Jesus and experience his power on our lives ?

Accepting Christ in our lives means we realised the love of God. Whoever realised the love of God have a burden heart to share that God's Love to others. Those believes cannot silent and they never selfish. They have a burden to save the lost as they are saved .

Jesus Christ save us not only for our life but for others too so Accepting Jesus Christ is not only just finish in Thanksgiving, living a good life , joining with Christian community and participate in church activities. A transformed life must attracts other to saviour.

This is all the responsibility of all the believers who accept Jesus Christ as their personal saviour . This is not only the responsibility of apostles, prophets, evangelist, Pastor's , teacher's etc. But this is all believer responsibility .

Let's look at our lives are we sharing God's love to others? If we don't , we cannot claim that we accept Jesus Christ in our lives

What is our position now?

# Accept Christ as Your Lord and Savior





## NO LONGER A SLAVE

**Anamika  
(B.Th. II)**



**Galatians 4:7** says *"Therefore you are no longer slave, but Sons and Daughters, and if Sons and Daughters, then heirs of God through Christ."*

This verse is very a powerful statement with the assurance of one promise: the promise of our redemption and adoption as Sons and Daughters of God. The promise of us receiving "the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit in our hearts that called Abba, Father".

A slave ceases to be a Slave when he obtains his freedom. He gains the power or right to act, speak or think without hindrance or restraint. The feeling of being free in every aspect of the word is a relief.

As adapted children, we have received the spirit of God, "For we have not received the spirit who makes us slaves again to fear, but we have received the spirit of Son-ship" (Romans 8:15) Being His adopted children, we become heirs of an inheritance which is not physical but which is eternal and invisible. "As Co-heirs with Christ, we share in his sufferings so that we may also share in his Glory" (Romans 8:17b). As adapted children, our purpose is to bear the likeness and character of our Father in heaven.

### **Prayer.**

*Father God, thank you for adopting us and calling us your children. We love you and we want to be recognized by all who know us as your children. Amen.*



# HOPE

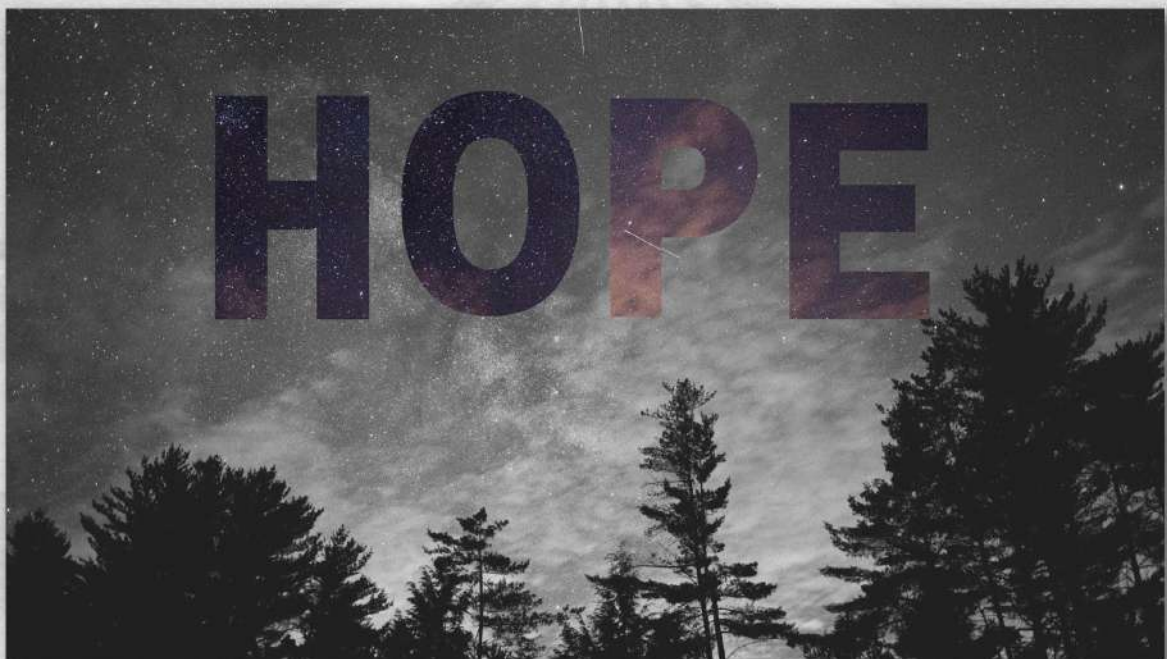
**Sujata Bhartiya  
(B.Th. I)**



Hope is a given name derived from the middle English hope, ultimately from the Old English word *hopian* referring to a positive expectation. I would like to talk about hope. When we lose hope, dark clouds of despair hang over heads. It paints tomorrow in an array of bright colours. As we live in a broken world. Sickness, Suffering, Poverty, and Disease afflict both the righteous and the unrighteous, but here is the difference: Those who put their faith in God are filled with hope. Our hope is anchored in a God who will never let us down. As Rom. 15:3 says "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. So that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope".

This Promises of God reveal hope for today, tomorrow, and forever. They speak with certainty. In an uncertain world. They encourage our hearts and give us the sense that we are not alone in this world. They speak hope to our troubled minds and peace to our anxious spirits.

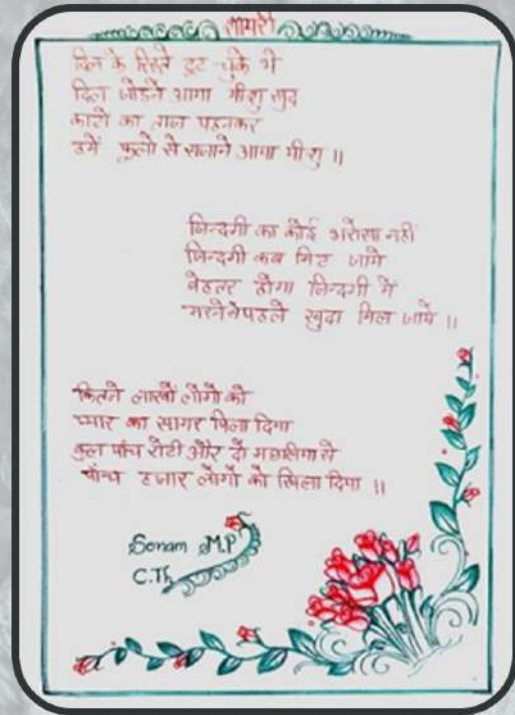
He came to provide us with the hope of a better tomorrow. Today let your heart be filled with hope. One day soon Jesus will come, and the heartaches and trials, the challenges and difficulties of life, will be over, and we will be living with him forever.



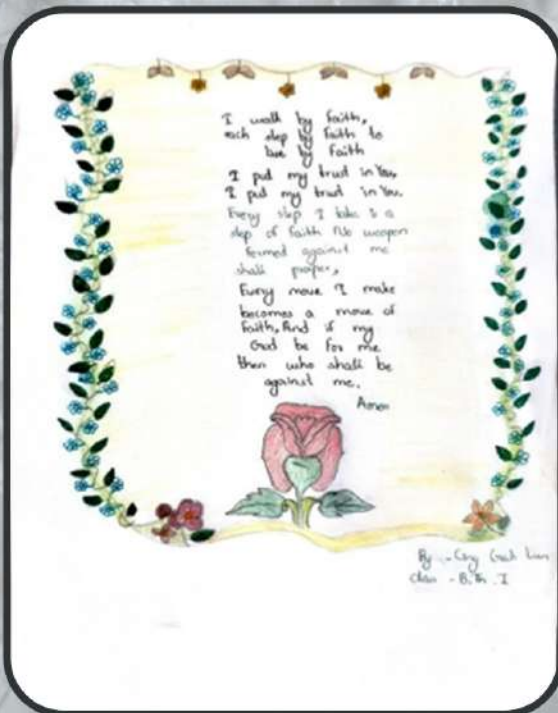
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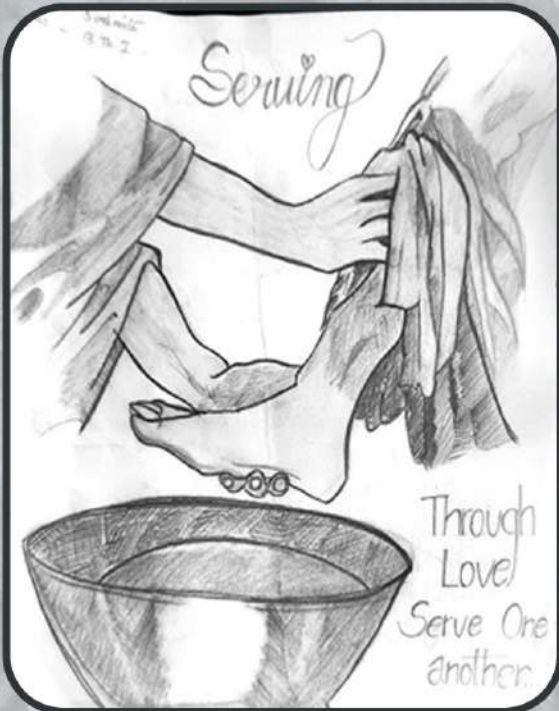


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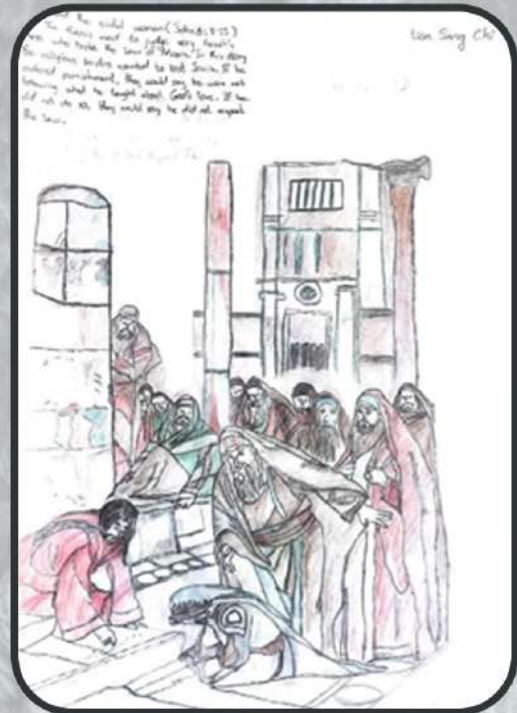


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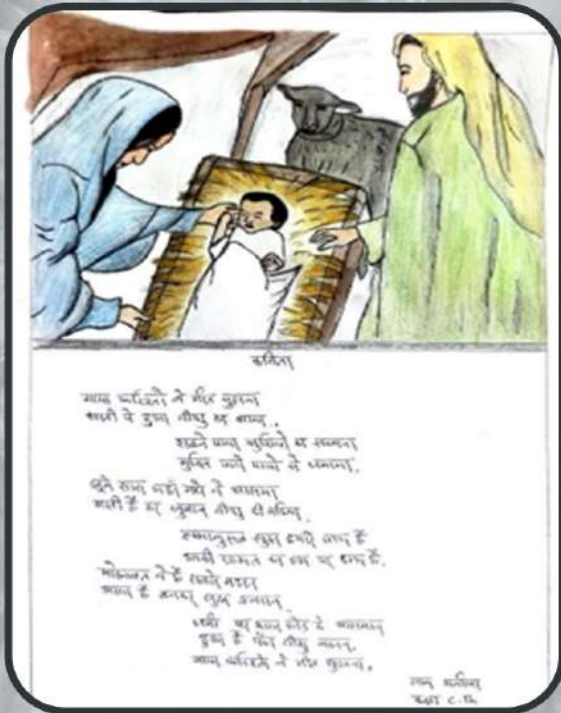
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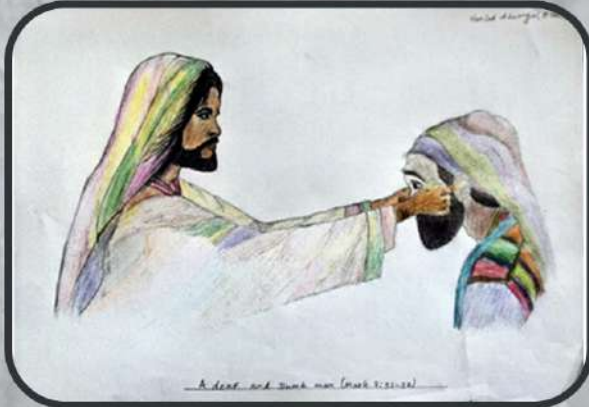


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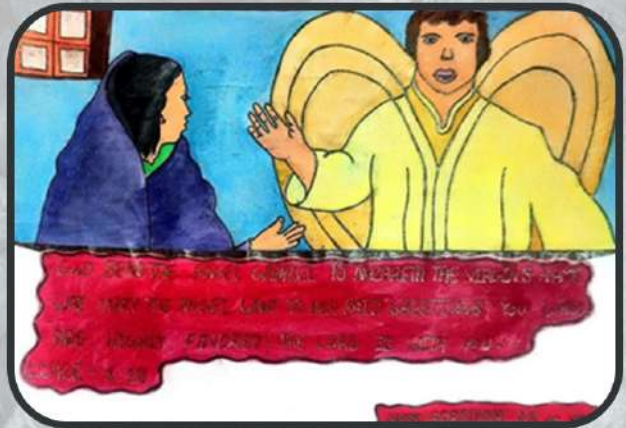


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