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# MAN PROPOSES, **BUT GOD DISPOSES**



**T**he din and dust kicked up by the Presidential election in the USA settled and the two presidential candidates' race to the White House was even more breath-taking with the two running neck and neck till the very end. So, this time Americans are destined to wait inordinately for the official announcement as to who is to lead the country for the next four years. It is equally a

nail-biting period for the rest of the world too with many countries reserving their felicitations. Russian President Vladimir Putin will not congratulate President-elect until legal challenges to the US election are resolved and official declaration is made.

Obviously, Russia finds the situation in the US totally different as being stated by the incumbent

President. So, Russia considers it correct to wait for the official announcement. Likewise, leaders of China, Brazil and Turkey just hold back from offering their congratulations. Mexican President Lopez Obrador was more cathartic and said that he would wait to comment until the legal challenges over the vote issue were resolved.

Definitely, there must be an end to everything including the impasse over the official declaration of 'President elected' after counting the votes. People are waiting inordinately for the official declaration of the election results. It may be pertinent to note that the US like many other major countries, is going through a rather tough time due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The country's smooth journey was unhindered till the end of 2019, when the Covid-19 pandemic struck the world killing hundreds of thousands of people and infecting millions of people.

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## Israel moving ahead with East Jerusalem settlement

**I**srael is said to be moving ahead with the construction of hundreds of homes in East Jerusalem, resulting in parts of the city claimed by Palestinians to be cut off from the West Bank. Israel Land Authority has opened up tenders to build more than 1,200 new homes in Givat Hamatos. The approval of such a construction will be a further setback to an internationally backed partition deal that would bring a Palestinian state alongside Israel. This development comes on the heels of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's intended travel to Israel this week where he is expected to visit Israel's settlement in the West Bank. Palestinian authorities who have already cut-off ties with the Trump administration over its favorable policies for Israel have now denounced Pompeo's planned visit.

## CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN JOURNALISM



**E**thics in journalism is the quintessential character expected of any media outlet, without which truth will not be reported, and justice eludes the deserved as the aftermath. Gathering, updating, and providing correct information throughout a news story's life is one of the tenets of Professional Journalism. Most stories will have at least two sides; impartial and balanced reporting will build trust with its consumers. It is expected of journalists to act independently of special interests, whether political or cultural and be conscious of the impact created by their words and images on others.

The integrity of the Word of God lies in the fact that the inspired writers of the history books reported what they found to be true. Holy Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of Truth, aligned the writers over the centuries to communicate what is factual

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### Health Corner



### The Tree in a Storm



**BROKEN BREAD** Page 04

EDITORIAL

# THE CHOICE TO STAND

In the book of Genesis, the very first question asked by God is, "Where are you?". Adam was then in the Garden of Eden, and with just two people on earth, this query was not about physical location but spiritual relation. It shows God's purpose behind placing Adam in the Garden of Eden - to choose God and not fall for the tempter. This may not be a question, but more of a heartfelt cry of the Father at the son's graveyard. Adam, the son of God, died in the garden planted by God in Eden. He was not created dead but got killed by the creation. The creation in question is not merely a fruit, but more so the ability to choose to obey or not. The ability to choose is a valuable possession God bestowed on every individual.

Adam chose to consume the forbidden fruit based on Eve's choice. Eve, in turn, made her decision based on half-truths told her by the serpent. The serpent was cunning enough to tell two truths and one lie based on what God told Adam, thereby convincing Eve to disobey God's command. The author, Jonathan Swift, has said, "A lie can travel around the world and back again while the truth is lacing up its boots." We see this in the case of Adam and Eve. Even before God reached the garden, the lie had done its damage. Half-truths can lead the innocent astray by violating divine

## The ability to choose is a valuable possession God bestowed on every individual.

instructions. However, the curse of God fell on the serpent with no room for repentance, as evident by the ignominious ending destined for him! To stand firm in faith is a choice we need to make regardless of the falsehoods thrown at us, not only by Satan but by carnal men as well. Unlike Eve and later Adam, who failed to ask God the veracity of the serpent's claims, let us be careful to seek the truth and stand up for it since the punishment for propagators and half-truth (liars) is the lake of fire.

The Spaffords are an example of standing firm in faith amidst severe trials. After facing numerous irreparable personal losses, Horatio Spafford, who wrote the oft sung hymn "It is well with my soul," moved to Jerusalem along with his wife; and their daughter Bertha started the Spafford Children's Center that serves poor children in East Jerusalem. The Spaffords' showed the world that standing firm in faith requires not just words but also deeds. Let us choose to stand firm amidst the storms in life, whether there be temptations to sin, personal losses and griefs, vicious attacks on character, or virulent false teachings that harm the soul.

### Theme for December : You in Christ (2 Cori 5:17)

#### Our Advisors



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## CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN JOURNALISM

and truthful irrespective of the shortcomings and failures of the protagonists in their respective books; and this is proved through the precise interlinkage of what is written over a span of 1600 years. We believe the Bible as the communicated Word of God not only because of our religious affiliation but also because it is divinely inspired for its trusted accuracy! If the truth of the Word is in question, then our salvation is in question. If our salvation is in question, then our eternity is in question. If our eternity is in question, then our conduct on earth can be according to the worldly patterns of eating, drinking, and making merry to live according to the lusts! If our behavior is such, then we are no different from the people of this world system; all that we do in the name of the Lord Jesus is vanity. But that is not the case since we believe and practice the written and revealed Word of God.

As Christians who are led by the Spirit, we have a responsibility to be ethical in our journalistic practices not to mislead those who consume our content. The recent reporting of the U.S. Presidential elections by mainstream media have put many innocent minds at odds with the truth. The incorrect and preposterous declarations followed by the deluge of conspiracy theories that are still unfolding have only confused the general populace of what to believe. This, sadly, is undercutting the fundamental precepts of fair journalism. In such a time as this, it is expedient that we refrain from spreading falsehood and wait for the electors in each State of the U.S. to complete their Certificates of Vote and the Congress to declare the winner. Irrespective of who wins an election, and no matter which media chimes for one candidate, let us as children of the Great King do our due diligence to pray and wait for His will to come to pass and for truth and justice to prevail!

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## MAN PROPOSES, BUT GOD DISPOSES

TK Nandan, a freelance writer, is presently employed with an Indian Government Organization. While studying for MA (English), he took up the job of a copywriter. Thereafter, he got an appointment as sub-editor in one of the leading publishing companies in India. Married to Jayasree, who is a nurse by profession, he lives in Kochi. Athulya Grace and Sam Thejus are their children. He is a regular contributor of articles to several English dailies in India.



**TK NANDAN**  
Freelance writer

The pandemic still rages across the world to wreak havoc on maximum number of people. There is no sign of a silver line in the distant horizon of possible vaccine of curing the pandemic. 'How long will people have to wait for the vaccine' is still a million-dollar question for which a clear-cut answer still evades even the medical experts. Though 'wait' seems to be eternal and unendurable, it may, however, bring glad tidings. So, let us keep our fingers crossed and accept wholeheartedly a President God selects and appoints as per His will. Proverbs 16:33 says, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord."



# FAITH IN THE TRUE FAITH

Rev. Jackson Kurian is an ordained Pastor and Bible Teacher. He also serves as the Mission Director at Fellowship Ashram Church of India. He holds a B.Th (FBC, India), M.Th (Laidlaw College, New Zealand), and M.A in Sociology (Karnataka University, India). He lives in Auckland, New Zealand, with his wife Reny and two children and teaches at Ebenezer Pentecostal church.



**PR. JACKSON KURIAN**  
Auckland, New Zealand

**THE POWER OF SALVATION DOES NOT LIE IN HOW ONE BELIEVES BUT IN WHAT ONE BELIEVES.**

Paul urges Corinthian believers never to shy away from this great faith, the true doctrine. Be it a threat or enticement; he pleads with them not to alter the truth of the gospel under any circumstances.

Paul's command is undeniably relevant to Christianity today. One's personal faith is much celebrated and focuses on Christendom above the unique Christian doctrine. Everybody is a believer, but what is believed is unequivocal. To change this, churches should encourage and educate believers to articulate Christian faith accurately to withstand all hostile powers. A believer should always acknowledge that it is not one's own act of believing that brings salvation, but it is the very power of the gospel. Personal faith can vacillate at times, but the true faith revealed through the story of Jesus is never changed. One's faith in Jesus can be stronger than others and or weaker than others. However, the salvation one enjoys is no different from others because it is based on Jesus and Him alone. Therefore, while the personal faith is necessary, it is not the faith that believers in Corinth were commanded to stand firm but on the TRUE FAITH, the pure doctrine about Jesus.



Stand firm in the faith..." (1 Cor 16:13, NLT). Paul, in this verse, begins his final exhortation to the Corinthian church. He beseeches his readers to take hold of five final imperatives that would remind them of their unique identity as Christians. These commands are military metaphors that show the staunchness and vigilance with which a believer should live. Before understanding the meaning of "stand firm in the faith," it is crucial to grasp what it does not mean here. Some translations put this statement as "stand firm in your faith," referring the faith here to an individual's personal trust in Jesus. The faith of which Paul writes in this statement is not one's own (subjective) faith or trust in the Lord. Rather, it refers to the true doctrine about Jesus Christ, which embodies His life, death, and resurrection.

Paul is concerned about the factual content of the Christian faith. Although a believer's faith is indispensable, the power of salvation does not lie in how one believes but in what one believes. Knowing this great mystery,



# CONFIDENCE IN THE POWER OF SELF: THE BIGGEST HURDLE FOR CHRISTIAN FAITH TODAY

PAUL'S APPEAL TO STAND FIRM IN FAITH IS PROPOSED AS AN ANTIDOTE FOR THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH'S SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL CHAOS

science and the influence of postmodernity. The burgeoning violence in the name of religion is a compelling reason for others. The reasons that led to the present plight are endless. The decline of Christianity giving way to a subjective spirituality is observed as a significant paradigm shift taking place in the West, according to a study (Heelas and Woodhead © 2006). Their investigation reveals how people began to turn from external, objective roles, duties, and obligations towards a life lived by reference to their own subjective experiences.

Consequently, strengthening an authentic connection with the inner depth of self is now preferred over the traditional worldview of conformity to an external authority and power that is in charge of the existence of the universe and especially human life. The far-reaching consequences of this subjective turn have surfaced in many forms. Changing perceptions of gender identity, family, moral choices are a few examples.

Paul's appeal to stand firm in faith is proposed as an antidote for the Corinthian church's social and spiritual chaos. He presented God's life-changing power manifested through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (1Cor 1, 2). The subjective turn towards the power of self and common sense is a major hurdle for faith in Christ today. It is essential to recognize and address these impediments of faith as we preach Christ today.



*Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.” (1 Cor. 16: 19)*

Michael (name changed) born into a Christian family, was baptized and attended Sunday school regularly, and grew up in an age-old Christian denomination. Things began to change when he encountered a personal crisis. Seeking help from the leaders of his denomination did not help him resolve his problems. Finally, one of his friends introduced him to a Buddhist priest. It did not take very long for him to become a devout Buddhist.

This is one of several hundreds of testimonies I have heard directly from people as part of my work as a Healthcare Chaplain in England. The majority of them who were raised as Christians no longer have any religious faith. This is the grim reality of a nation that was once the cradle ground of numerous mission organizations, missionary legends, renowned theologians, and revivalists. While massive cathedrals, abbeys (some of them aged over a thousand years), and multiple church buildings continue to remain as the vestiges of Christian influence over this nation, the twentieth century witnessed the United Kingdom becoming a post-Christian nation.

Many blame it on the World Wars; some perceive it as the triumph of

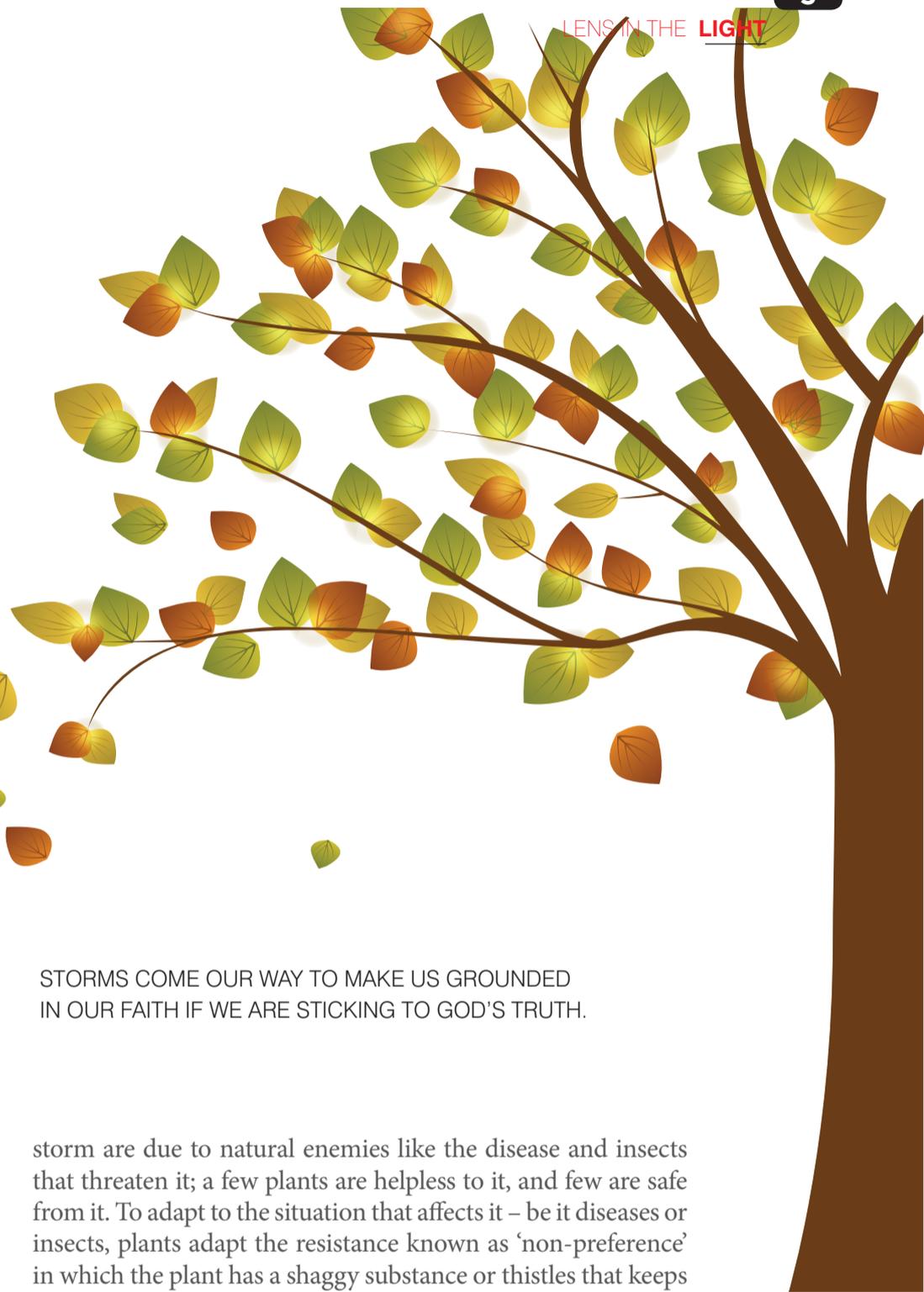
Rev. Thomas Samuel is Minister at Word of Hope Christian Fellowship Luton (affiliated to AOG, U.K.), and Chaplain at NHS Bedfordshire Hospitals U.K.; online Discipleship Coach with Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He has an M.Phil (New Testament) from Middlesex University, London; M.A in Sociology from H N Bahuguna University, UP, India; and M.Th from SAICS, Bangalore. He is a former Lecturer at IPC Theological Seminary, Kottayam, Kerala. He is married to Praisya and they have three children.



**PR. THOMAS SAMUEL**  
Word of Hope Christian Fellowship  
Luton, UK



# The Tree in a Storm



STORMS COME OUR WAY TO MAKE US GROUNDED IN OUR FAITH IF WE ARE STICKING TO GOD'S TRUTH.

Grace George Kathettu is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Entomology at Apollo Institute of Agriculture Technology and Research in Hyderabad, India. She holds a degree from Annamalai University (BSc., Agriculture) and Pondicherry University (MSc., Agricultural Entomology). She is the daughter of Pastor K.V George (ministering in IPC Kumbanad Centre) and the Late Mary George; and sister of Gifty George.



**GRACE KATHETTU**  
Assistant Professor  
Apollo Technology and Research  
Hyderabad



Ever ponder why typhoons and strong winds cause only a couple of trees to fall on the ground while others remain upright? The reason for a tree to bend during a breeze is because of its shallow roots in the soil and its past wounds. The tree that has not fallen in the wind shows its strength from the quality of the wood in the tree and how firmly it is rooted.

As His children, we need to confront many storms in our lives. When our life is typical, it's simple for us to cling to God and stand firm in our faith. Yet would we stay the same when we face the storm? Our strength in the storm determines our spiritual life quality and that strength comes from the Lord. Our response to the storms of our lives shows us how deeply rooted we are in Christ and how strong our trust in Him is. Past wounds that weaken the trees and break down easily in the

storm are due to natural enemies like the disease and insects that threaten it; a few plants are helpless to it, and few are safe from it. To adapt to the situation that affects it – be it diseases or insects, plants adapt the resistance known as 'non-preference' in which the plant has a shaggy substance or thistles that keeps the insects from destroying it.

In our Christian life, the devil, our adversary, uses different ways to assault us by his acts. Satan consistently tries to dismiss our faith in God with his plans, yet the Child of God with the armor of God and who stands by His Word won't be affected by Satan's plans. "Put on the full armor of God, that you can stand against the schemes of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). With this adaptation, our quality is more grounded, and our roots in Christ are deeper, making us firm in the faith. Storms come our way to make us grounded in our faith if we are sticking to God's truth.



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GOD CAN PROVIDE ALL KINDS OF HELP AND PROTECTION FROM ALL EVILS IF WE HAVE FIRM FAITH IN HIM.

# Have Firm Faith in God



Every day we face specific challenges in our lives, and these challenges can sometimes shatter our faith in God. But a true Christian will be stronger in HIS faith in God as he knows that this mundane world cannot provide comfort and consolation. There are numerous ways and means which beckon us and try to distract us from the faith in God. Further, there are several instances in which those going after the glitters of this world have failed to bring good results. Obeying God's commandments is a definite problem-solver, and the Bible gives us illustrations of many God-fearing people in this regard. In addition to the Bible, history has proved that taking refuge in people is foolish and needless, but taking refuge in God is a great thing and perpetually rewarding. "He who stands firm to the end will be saved." (Matthew 24:13).

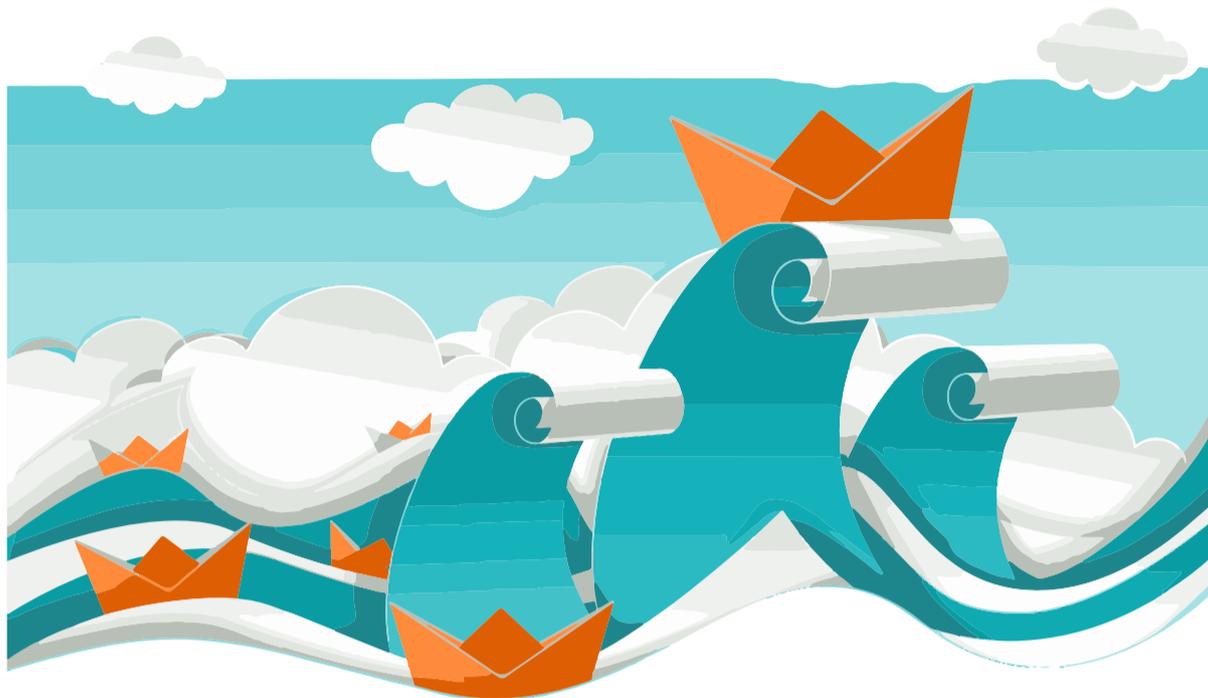
The incident portrayed in the book of Daniel about the three Hebrew men Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, reveals a great truth. These three Hebrew men were about to be thrown into a fiery furnace for not obeying King Nebuchadnezzar's decree issued to them to kneel before the king. They reacted to it, saying, "Oh Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter." Then the king commanded some of the strongest soldiers to tie them up and throw into the blazing furnace. The king's command was urgent in nature, and the soldiers started executing it by tying the three Hebrew men. But the furnace was so hot that the fire's flames killed the soldiers instead when they threw in the three young men (Daniel 3:20-23). Eventually, God Himself sent an angel to rescue them from that fiery furnace. The Hebrew men knew the consequences if they disobeyed the king. But nothing distracted them from their determination. They decided that nothing would separate them from the love of God

even though 'they would lose their life.' They knew that If God is with them, nobody could take away the eternal life from them. This teaches us that God Almighty can provide all kinds of help and protection from all evils if we have firm faith in God. The Bible says, "The eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him (2 Chron. 16:9). "If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all." (Isaiah 7:9b).

Dr. Binu Daniel is a management consultant, teacher, author, and educationist. He has penned many books and has worked as an editor in academic publications. He was the chief editor of the Golden Jubilee publications of Christ Ambassadors of AG in Kerala. He holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala; and qualified JRF-UGC in India. He has written numerous articles in well-established English dailies on Economics and Management issues. He lives in Germany with his wife Reena and two daughters, Sharon and Naomi.



DR. BINU DANIEL  
Dusseldorf, Germany



## STANDING FIRM IN FAITH



As human beings, we tend to have this inherent belief that things will work out. We operate on the theory that there is a higher being that is always watching over us. What happens though when our belief is shaken? Do we continue to stand firm in our faith or cry out in despair? What does faith in action actually look like? Some of the most well-known hymns provide insight into this.

The hymn 'It Is Well With My Soul' was written after Attorney Horatio Spafford and his wife, Anna, experienced a series of losses that began with losing their only son to a sickness. Then the great Chicago Fire of 1871 struck and they incurred heavy losses in their business. Two years later, the Spaffords lost their remaining four children when the ship they were on struck another vessel and drowned. Spafford, who was unable to accompany his wife and children due to pressing business matters, received a telegraph from his wife 9 days later telling him: "Saved alone—what shall I do?" Can you imagine the deep-seated faith Spafford must have had to write these words?

"When peace like a river, attendeth my way,

When sorrows like sea billows roll

Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say

It is well, it is well, with my soul!"

Joseph Scriven was a young man who was traveling to meet his bride-to-be the day before their wedding. Having completed his education, he was ready to settle down in life with the love of his life. Picture his surprise and devastation when the first scene that greets him is the body of his fiancée who had fallen off her horse over a creek and drowned. Scriven eventually moved on with his life and it seems that fate had favored him once more in love. He met another beautiful woman and was all set to marry her when she fell ill and tragically passed away a mere few weeks before their wedding. Despite his fate, this young man did not rage against God or mourn his loss. Instead, he turned to God and it is during this period in his life that he wrote the hymn:

"What a friend we have in Jesus

All our sins and griefs to bear

And what a privilege to carry

Everything to God in prayer."

Both Spafford and Scriven could have at any point questioned their lot in life. Yet, they do not. How were these men able to remain unshaken in the midst of such tragedy? Perhaps the most simplified response to this question can be found in 1 Corinthians 16:13 (NIV)

which advises us as believers to:

1. Be on our guard because the enemy lies in wait.
2. Be courageous because standing firm in faith is not for the weak-hearted.
3. Be strong because if God has promised us He is for us, who can be against us?

Spafford and Scriven knew that it was in these moments when they were being tried and tested, challenged and broken, devastated and defeated that God would see their true character and faithfulness to Him. They also knew without a doubt that, "there [was] a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens" (Ecclesiastes 3:1) and it is this blessed assurance that keeps them praising God even in their darkest hour. It is this promise that allows them to stand unwavering in their faith.

Divine Leonardo is an educator with the New York City Department of Education. She holds a B.A. in Communicative English, a B.A. in English, an M.S. Ed. in Adolescent Education/English and an M.S. Ed. in Educational Leadership. She resides in New York with her husband, Eapen Leonardo, and her two children.



**DIVINE LEONARDO**  
Educator, New York, USA

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# Security beyond the Grave

## PART 2

LIFE ON THIS PLANET IS A PROBATIONARY EXISTENCE WHERE WE GO THROUGH VARIOUS EXPERIENCES

Dr. George Samuel is the author of the Bestseller 'Courage in Time of Discouragement'. A scientist who specialized in the application of radioisotopes in medicine, Dr. George Samuel is currently Director of Value Education Centre and President of Navajeevodayam Bible College, Thiruvalla. He has had many stressful experiences, especially while caring for his two sons suffering from the threatening Cystic Fibrosis. He firmly believes that despite the problems at home, God is in control!



**DR. GEORGE SAMUEL**  
Navajeevodayam Bible College  
Thiruvalla, India

### What do you say about rewards and punishment in the afterlife?

The justice of God demands a reward for good as well as punishment for evil. When we consider God's virtues, it is wrong to think God is simply a loving being. We usually tend to care only for God's 'softer virtues' like love and tenderness while we forget His 'hard virtues' of holiness and justice.

Every human being has the freedom to choose God or reject Him. We can accept God's salvation to serve and worship Him, or we can rebel and remain sinners. It is a personal choice that we make for ourselves. The Bible declares that wickedness is a condition of how we stand in God's sight. The very fact of refusing God's remedy for sin is itself a sin (Heb 10:29).

When we are not connected with God through a vital relationship, we are separated from the source of spiritual life (Eph 2:1). This death remains forever unless we are brought to life through

God's gift of life (Eph 2:5). Hell is the place for those separated from the body by physical death and separated from God by continued spiritual death.

To some extent, hell is also the end of a path some have chosen now in their day to day life. We are preparing ourselves each day to either be with God and value those He values or decide not to engage with those things. Hell is the natural consequence of a life lived in a specific direction.

### How seriously should we consider the life that is on this side of death?

The hope of life beyond should not destroy the significance of all the responsibilities, here and now, we have on this side of death. True, we will be designed to live in a new environment. Also, we have an indescribable glory to anticipate (Rom 8:18). With this assurance of hope, we persist in service now through thick and thin. Because of the certainty of hope, we are able to set the priorities of today.

We take seriously the responsibilities of today without neglecting the world. Life on this planet is a probationary existence. It is part of our probation to go through various experiences. Obviously, this probationary period, although short, is significant.

We need to consider what we carry with us into eternity. We carry with us the character quality that is developed in our personality. Also, we carry with us a share of reward for services, which resulted in developing such qualities in other people's lives. This means we must be involved in services that will help others receive the character quality of Jesus, while we become partakers of His quality and grow in His likeness.

Many unforeseen things may happen and shake us. But we know that only the shakable can be shaken. The unshakable cannot be shaken! There is no need to be anxious if our grip is on the unshakable.

# From Darkness to Light

FROM IDOLS TO LIVING GOD

I was born and brought up in a village called Ayarkunnam in Kottayam, Kerala. Though I was a Hindu, my neighbors used to encourage me to visit their Catholic church during my childhood. Since I learned the stories of Jesus from my friends, I visited the church a few times to pray. Later, after finishing my B.A degree I got a job in the erstwhile P&T (Postal & Telegraph, Government of India), which is present-day BSNL, and went for training at Trichur. While staying there at a YWCA, I met a girl not wearing ornaments, and my colleagues told me that she is a "Pentecostal." After training, I was posted at Kannur, and the Pentecostal girl named Achamma was also posted at the same place. For five years, we were roommates at a hostel run by Hindus.

One day, Ciciliamma, who was one of the colleagues at work, gave a flyer for a Musical Evening, and she took permission from the hostel to take me to the three nights of meetings. Bro. Kunjumon Chacko gave the final message, and I was touched by the word "Jesus is the Light of the world." When I returned to the hostel, I asked Achamma about it, and she shared the Gospel with me, and I decided to follow Jesus. My decision infuriated the hostel management, and they began to abuse me verbally. But Achamma and her family became my new family. During one of the vacations, I received water baptism, which created more troubles from my family, and some decided to search for a Hindu to marry me. But Achamma's sister Leelamma and her husband A.C. Varghese found a young man from their church (IPC Tabernacle, Kottayam) working with India Every Home Crusade. Though my family strongly objected, the church Pastor, Achamma, and a few sisters, came for our wedding.

After my wedding, I got transferred to Kollam where we were associated with the nearby A.G church, and the members of the church became

Sarasamma is a retired BSNL Officer, serving the Lord along with her husband Pushkaran (Gazetted Officer-Retired from Income Tax Department). They live in Kochi, Kerala and travel to various places with the Gospel. They have two children, Ashish and Jyothis, who are married and settled in the USA. Ashish is leading a Mission Organization.



**SARASAMMA PUSHKARAN,**  
Kochi, India

our brothers, sisters, and parents, which was a huge relief for us since I was pregnant with our firstborn, and we had no family in that place. After our two children's birth, my husband Pushkaran was selected by SSC to Income Tax Department as a Gazetted Officer and was posted to Kolhapur, Maharashtra. During this time, his younger sister stayed with me, and she accepted Jesus. In the early eighties, we moved to Cochin and started Gospel work; we shared the good news of Jesus with Catholics and Hindus, leading many to Him. We were able to take care of some ostracized by their families due to their faith in Christ. We have been truly blessed to be a blessing to others! (Achamma and Leelamma have gone to be with the Lord.)



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## CHRISTIANS AS GOOD SAMARITANS IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISES - PART 3

Preethy T. Thomas is a dual certified APRN (Family Nurse Practitioner and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner) currently employed in Oklahoma, as a PMHNP providing psychiatric treatment and medication management for children and adults. She obtained her BSN from CMC, Vellore; MSN in Family Nurse Practitioner from Georgetown University, D.C, and Post Masters in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner from Stony Brook University, New York. Her favorite part of working in Psychiatry is 'being able to help those who can't help themselves.'



**PREETHY T THOMAS**  
Oklahoma City  
USA

**MAY CHURCHES BE MORE OPEN-MINDED TOWARDS MENTAL HEALTH AND ATTEND TO THE MENTALLY ILL'S NEEDS WITH MORE COMPASSION AND LOVE.**

### WHAT SHOULD CHURCHES DO?

Living with mental illness is challenging for individuals as well as their families. Although there are some advancements in incorporating mental health training and counseling into pastoral training and ministries, mental illnesses continue to have stigma and discrimination in our local churches. Churches and faith communities are usually the number one place people turn to for help when they are in distress. Hence, it is important that churches have a safe and supportive environment for such individuals and should be willing to accept them as they are and affirm their faith amid their suffering. However, our church leaderships are often not adequately prepared or equipped to help individuals minimize their mental agony and suffering daily. They need the most of our sincere acceptance, utmost compassion with tactful sympathy, and appropriate guidance on time. This is possible only if we promote awareness and education about mental health issues and the available resources through educational forums and other opportunities to our congregations and communities. Hearing the medical facts and treatment approaches - both medical and biblical approaches - from the church pulpits can break the stigma, give people hope for acceptance and confidence, and provide an opportunity to support the fellow believers in the mental health crisis better. God is still the ultimate healing source, and bringing them close to Him and the faith is the most crucial part. It is not always the medications they may need. Sometimes, all they need is an understanding ear, a loving touch or presence, a word of advice, a timely referral, or a simple prayer. Guide them also with the wisdom that God can work through medical treatments and skilled professionals as well.

Throughout the Scripture, there is evidence for people dealing with

depression, hopelessness, and doubting the existence of God. Let the church be encouraged and empowered by Biblical characters such as Job (Job 3:26), Elijah (1 Kings 19:4), David (Psa. 38:4), King Saul (1 Samuel 15), etc. who dealt with the deep emotional distress of depression, loneliness, despair, anger, and anxieties. They also experienced how God provided healing and comfort to His people, and how He used different individuals in comforting them in their distress and suffering.

The parable of Good Samaritan in Luke 10 again teaches us how God wants Christians to respond to the needy in a non-judgmental and unconditional manner. Let them feel that being mentally sick is not a sin or not their fault. Let them realize that there is hope and healing and that they are loved and their lives matter. Instead of ignoring and neglecting them on the risky roadside, Jesus is telling us to "Go and do likewise" in Luke 10:37.

In today's context, our churches should be willing and prepared for such critical situations, take care of the injured and traumatized persons' immediate needs, be present in their painful times and sufferings, advocate for them when needed, etc. We need not know all the answers or fix everything by ourselves. We can be a little more caring, loving, and compassionate and partake in their healing process. I pray that our churches be more open-minded towards mental health and attend to the mentally ill's needs with more compassion and love. We are called to be the refuge for the weary, sick, and the brokenhearted and love just like Jesus loved us, ultimately representing Christ through our deeds. So often, all it takes to save a life is being a Good Samaritan by being present and willing to help in their painful and frightening times with every possible resource.



# Diabetes – What We Should Know

Dr. Litty, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, CDCES, is a board-certified Family Nurse Practitioner in the Department of Internal Medicine's Division of Endocrinology at UT Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, Texas. She focuses on diabetes management in both inpatient and outpatient settings. She earned her undergraduate, graduate, and doctorate degrees at the Texas Woman's University, U.S.A. Dr. Litty resides in Sunnyvale, Texas with her husband, Litty C. Baby, and three beautiful children.



**DR. ANITHA LITTY**  
 Dallas, USA

**SEEKING MEDICAL HELP IS NOT DENYING GOD'S POWER, WHETHER IT IS OUR PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH.**

**D**iabetes Mellitus (DM) is a chronic disease that occurs when the pancreas is no longer able to make insulin or when the body cannot make good use of the insulin it produces. This will lead to high glucose levels in the blood called hyperglycemia. DM is a global pandemic – 463 million people in the world have diabetes and of that 77 million belong to India (International Diabetes Federation, 2020).

**KNOW THE WARNINGS SIGNS OF DIABETES**

The onset of diabetes is often insidious, so know the following symptoms to seek help early:

- Increased thirst and frequent urination
- Increased hunger
- Sudden weight loss
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Slow healing sore or ulcers
- Frequent infection
- Areas of darkened skin
- Know your numbers

Test	Normal	Prediabetes	Diabetes
Hemoglobin A1C (HbA1C)	<5.6%	5.7%-6.4%	>6.5%
Fasting Blood Glucose	≤ 99 mg/dL	100-125mg/dl	≥ 126 mg/dL
Random Blood Glucose			≥ 200mg/dl + Symptoms of hypoglycemia or hyperglycemic crisis

(American Diabetes Association, 2020)

**WHY WE SHOULD CARE ABOUT DIABETES?**

Diabetes is the leading cause of cardiovascular disease, blindness, kidney failure, lower-extremity amputation, dental diseases, and pregnancy-related complication. So, be sure to take these following precautions:

1. Have your eyes checked by the retina specialist yearly
2. Know your ABCs to prevent the risk of cardiovascular disease
  - a. **A – Hb A1C** - <7.0%
  - b. **B – Blood pressure** - <140/90
  - c. **C – Bad Cholesterol (LDL)** -<100
3. Monitor your renal function: Check Urine Microalbumin: Creatinine ratio yearly
4. Do not walk barefoot and check your feet daily
5. Maintain good oral health and keep a routine appointment with the dentists
6. Diabetes should be tightly controlled during pregnancy to prevent maternal and fetal complications



## LIFE MAY RETURN TO NORMAL BY LATE-2021



## Thousands of dead in Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict

**T**he Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict has killed thousands in both countries after six weeks of intense fighting. The highly contested Nagorno-Karabakh region that had been under the control of Armenia is being handed over to Azerbaijan, which is part of the ceasefire agreement. Thousands of civilians are leaving the area, and the distraught departing residents are setting their houses on fire to render them unusable to the Azerbaijanis who would move in by November 25. There are broad concerns about the cultural and religious sites, especially by Christians of the Armenian Apostolic Church monastery, which dates back to the ninth century. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has assured Russian President Vladimir Putin that Christian churches will be protected. Azerbaijan is 90% Muslim, and Armenia is mostly Christian.

**O**ne of the scientists behind the Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine for COVID-19 says that this new potential cure may return the world to "normal" by the end of next year if sufficient vaccination rates are achieved. BioNTech CEO Ugur Sahin expressed confidence that this will happen since many companies that produce vaccines have been instructed to increase the supply to have a wider reach by winter of next year. The goal is to deliver millions of doses the world over by March-April so that by June-July, the infection rate will go down. Once a high vaccination rate is achieved by September of 2021, the world may return to normal by December 2021. It is extremely relieving that the preliminary results from the tests conducted indicate that the vaccine is 90 percent effective.



## FAMINES FEARED IN 2021

**T**he head of the World Food Program has issued the warning that there may be "famines of biblical proportions in 2021". In April this year, David Beasley cautioned the U.N. Security Council that not only is the world battling the coronavirus pandemic, but also "on the brink of a hunger pandemic"; but because the world leaders responded with money and stimulus packages, the famines were averted. He said that the money available in 2020 needs not to be accessible in 2021, which will exacerbate the situation that will have a lasting impact for the next 12 to 18 months. In addition to raising funds from governments, Beasley hopes that the billionaires will step-up and put their money to good use. It is estimated that 135 million people faced hunger or worse so far in 2020. With the prolonged pandemic, an additional 130 million people will be pushed to the brink of starvation by early 2021. Acute food insecurity is being faced in Yemen, South Sudan, northeastern Nigeria, parts of Afghanistan, and many other countries in the African continent.

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