

“One faithful witness is worth a thousand mute professors of religion . . . Our faith grows by expression . . . we must share it—we must witness.”

Billy Graham

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ILLUMINER

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BEING SENT TO WITNESS: ON HOLISTIC MISSION

One of the main motivations that make Christians unique from others is our fervour to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ that transformed our lives. Every Christian desire to live out Jesus's words to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28: 18-20), which the later theologians termed the ‘Great Commission.’ However, in the pursuit of enacting those commissioning words, we Christians have somehow missed the holistic nature of ‘making disciples.’ We have become known

to be more efficient in preaching ‘Jesus loves you’ to others and have lapsed in demonstrating Jesus’ love the way He demonstrated it, in its holistic sense: by preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God as well as demonstrating through healing acts (as a foretaste of the Kingdom of God).

Such lapse has been since the early church. Acts 6 narrates an instance where we see the early onset of dichotomising the preaching and the demonstration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As the number of

disciples increased, as Acts 6:1 reads, “the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food.” Somehow in the pursuit of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the practice of ethnic harmony (amid existing cultural diversity) and taking care of the needy (widows) got side-lined. However, the early church leaders recognised the lapse and soon instituted a way to preach and serve to uphold the holistic demonstration

Continue on Page 10



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Withhold no part of the precious truth, but speak what you know and declare what you have seen. Do not allow the toil or darkness or possible unbelief of your friends to dissuade you. Let us rise and march to the place of duty, and there declare what great things God has shown to our soul.

- Alistair Begg



FROM THE
editor

BE MY WITNESS

I was curious about the latest AI tool, ChatGPT, so I fed a topic to the tool: "Jesus said, 'Be my witness'." A fascinating response appeared. "When Jesus said, 'Be my witness', he invited his disciples and followers to spread his message and teachings to others. Jesus wanted his followers to share their experiences of his life, death, and resurrection with others and to be a testimony of the truth of his message." However, I was fascinated to see the final statement that came with it. "As an AI language model, I can provide information regarding Jesus' teachings and principles, but I cannot be a personal witness to your experiences or beliefs." This statement establishes the fact that regardless of all the highly sophisticated technological advancement, "personal experience" and testifying those experiences to others is irreplaceable.

Witnessing is not a program or a project. It is not just sharing information or knowledge about Jesus or the Christian faith, although it is a significant part of witnessing. It is, instead, a lived experience that reflects Christ's life, teachings and character both in private and public life. This may involve a heavy price similar to that Christ himself paid for the most significant cause of the redemption of humanity. The term 'martyr' is derived from the Greek term *martyros*, translated as a witness in the New Testament writings.

Witnessing is the act of attesting to facts, events or experiences. Three significant factors are inevitable for witnessing. First, the witness must have a direct personal involvement with the subject. Second, the witness must be truthful and genuine. Third, witnesses must be willing to testify to the facts truthfully. The opening letter of John's first letter encapsulates the activity of the early witnesses of Christ. "Which we have heard, which we have seen with our

"Effective witnessing is possible only when individuals live in response to what their eyes have seen and their hands have touched and by incarnating the message through their lives in different contexts where they belong."

eyes, which we have looked at, and our hands have touched." The early witnesses are reliable because there is a great cloud of witnesses, as the writer of Hebrews put it. All of them were testifying to the same truth without any discrepancies. The church's first three centuries are full of witnesses who paid a heavy price while testifying to the truth of God's redemption of the world through Jesus. Sadly, it was corrupted by institutionalisation, tradition and politics in the following centuries. However, every season, the Holy Spirit continued to raise numerous witnesses who handed down the life-giving message of the gospel manifested through the life, teachings and ministry of Jesus Christ.

The Christian message that overcame the hurdles and challenges of twenty centuries has the power to triumph over the threats raised by the technological, philosophical, political, and ideological strongholds of the present. But effective witnessing is possible only when individuals live in response to what their eyes have seen and their hands have touched and by incarnating the message through their lives in different contexts where they belong.



WITNESSING WITNESSES

"Witnessing is a supernatural act carried out by the power of the Holy Spirit, and courage is a gift. We are called to herald the story of Jesus by our words and actions, even if it means laying down our lives."

Humans were created in God's image and likeness. They were constructed as image bearers to reflect and witness his love and majesty to the rest of creation. Because of the manner they were physically created, they were the visible witnesses of the invisible God. Despite their failure to keep their witnessing vocation, God chose men and women from this fallen world to bear witness to His unending kindness. Humans failed once more; Israel, chosen to bear witness, could not live up to the task bestowed upon them. When the time was ripe, God sent his Son, the ultimate and faithful witness to this earth (Rev. 1:5), who radiates his glory and the exact representation of his being. Through his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus manifested Who God is and what God has done for his people. Jesus entrusted the act of witnessing to his disciples before his ascension, and now He calls everyone who believes in Him to bear witness to this wonderful salvation.

MEANIN

Martus is the Greek word that we

translate as a witness. According to its original meaning, a witness is a person who testifies in court about what they saw or heard and has first-hand knowledge of an incident. However, this term was originally used more broadly, referring to a witness who affirms a truth that he/she believes to be true. In the New Testament, the term witness commonly alludes to Jesus' disciples who accompanied him during his earthly ministry and were eyewitnesses to his death and resurrection; as stated in Luke 24:48, "You are witnesses of these things."

MOTIF

"Witness of these things" in Luke clearly points to the life and ministry of Jesus, particularly His death and resurrection. So, the content of this witness is Jesus and His work for our salvation. As His disciples, all they could offer the world living in sin and darkness was a genuine testimony to Jesus' life and mission, regarded as the gospel. There is a specific focus in Acts and other NT texts on bearing testimony to Jesus' resurrection, the greatest news ever heard by this world—that death had been defeated.

MANNER

Because this witness was unique, no one could have done it with human ability. Therefore, the disciples were guided by the Holy Spirit to comprehend everything that happened and interpret these historical occurrences as essential to human redemption. Jesus instructed them to stay in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit because this was a witness delivered through the power of the Holy Spirit. The "dynamite" of the Holy Spirit enables redeemed sinners to witness Christ and His marvellous works. It was not just a powerful witness but also a courageous witness. As the church underwent persecution, a faithful "witness" becomes one who confirms his/her confession of faith by means of martyrdom; Stephen was one such example. It is worth noting that the terms 'martyr' and 'martyrdom' are derived from the words "martus" (witness) and "marturia" (the act of witnessing).

Today, every disciple of Jesus is called to be a witnessing witness. To be a witness, one must understand and have personal experience with Jesus' life-changing story. Those who

believe this story is true must not remain silent but must bear witness. Witnessing is a supernatural act carried out by the power of the Holy Spirit, and courage is a gift. We are called to herald the story of Jesus by our words and actions, even if it means laying down our lives.



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Being Evangelism: The Manner of Authentic Witnessing

Witnessing Jesus daily before others is not a choice but an obligation of his true disciple. The Lord instructed the Spirit-empowerment as a pre-requisite to becoming effective witnesses (Acts 1:8). Luke's story narrates the earliest Christian witness to the gospel as flowing out of Jerusalem to the ends of the earth like the waters gushing out of the open floodgates uncontrollably. The signs and wonders accompanying Christian witness to the gospel make it an irresistible and victorious Spirit-empowered phenomenon.

Interestingly, a similar phenomenon repeated at the dawn of the twentieth century triggered a worldwide spiritual revival and an unprecedented world evangelization. Despite its emphasis on moral regeneration and holy living, the Spirit-filled movement became known for missionary zeal and the operation of charismatic gifts. Missionary enthusiasm to convert others into their fold by believing in the gospel became the chief evidence of Christian witness in the world.

Sadly, with time passing, the call to holy living in several pockets of the larger Spirit-filled community became private and exclusionary. Schisms and corruption among them began to exhibit their ugly heads. It did not merely weaken the revivalist character of the worldwide movement but disarmed it with a mighty tool of bearing witness

in public space. The over-reliance on Acts broadly determined their model, mode, and means of witnessing, predominantly preaching accompanied by the signs and wonders in the power of the Holy Spirit. As a result, moral regeneration got relegated to a private space indicating an individual's conversion. Often forgotten truth in it was the necessity of moral uprightness and ethical living within a society called "being Evangelism," a well-founded teaching of the New Testament.

"Being evangelism" includes Christian life as a witness within and outside the church. Setting the context for the appeal to the believers in Colossians 4:5-6, Paul requests their prayers for his witnessing mission, the "doing evangelism," in 4:3. Appealing the believers to practice "being evangelism" in Colossians 4:5, the apostle says, "[w]alk in wisdom towards outsiders, making the best use of the time." The appeal has two important aspects: their way of living before others and the urgency in practicing ethical living. The latter could be born from the apostle's sense of his impending death in Rome or the strong expectancy of Christ's return at any time soon. He reminds them that the shortness of time demands an urgent response making the best use of time. In other words, it is living ethically as Christian witnesses before others. The expression "walk in wisdom" in 4:5 refers to a pattern of life lived by "spiritual

wisdom" (1:10) coming from the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 2:10-16, Paul teaches that the Spirit alone understands God's mind, which is inevitable for their spiritual living. For Paul, walking in wisdom includes graciousness in their speech, like "seasoned with salt" (Col 4:6), preserving and adding flavor to others' lives. Only by this will they learn "how they ought to answer each person" who may seek clarifications concerning their new faith. In this sense, endorsing the gospel proclaimed to others with a lifestyle is foundational to witnessing.

Concerning witnessing within the family context, Peter encourages wives to submit themselves to their husbands in "purity and reverence." He encourages wives to prioritize their inner beauty, an "unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit" greater in worth before God above the external one. For him, the reason is purely missional. A wife's "being evangelism" at home can attract her unbelieving husband to her faith. By her witnessing within the family, he might be "won over without words." (1 Peter 3:1-4).

Sadly, Peter's original intention is often missed in the interpretations where the witnessing dimension of a wife's submission is lost while using his words to prohibit her from adorning herself completely, marking spirituality. Even in the context of the persecution of his readers, Peter repeatedly reminds them of the power of bearing witness through ethical living before others to silence the unjust accusers and to cause them to glorify God in the eschatological times (! Peter 2:12; 3:16).

Let's not miss the essence of "being evangelism," summarised in the famous words ascribed to St Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel at all times. Use words only when necessary." Witnessing is integral to the call of a disciple of Jesus. However, becoming a witness for Jesus in the world is much more and deeper than mere oral exercise. It involves the whole being of a disciple. Being and doing evangelism are two arms of bearing true witness for Jesus before others. The latter is inauthentic without the former.



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THE WITNESS—MANDATE!

Captured by raiders who invaded the land of Israel due to its porous borders was a girl who ended up in the house of the commander of the raiding forces. Although she once lived free in Israel and is now relegated to be a servant in an alien land for no fault of hers, the circumstances did not determine the communication of what she knew. Moved by compassion instead of hatred towards her captor, this girl bears witness to someone she knows in her homeland. It is not a probable clause but a surety of what is possible if only Naaman can go to be with Elisha. The purification of the putrid and gradual eating away of a life that achieved the higher echelons of society was made possible by the humble obedience to accept the words of a seeming commoner. The learnings we receive in the house of our pilgrimage should result in a compulsion of love to speak Christ to those who do not know Him.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only One who can cleanse a corrupted and leprous mind. Wasted lives become winning only through the acceptance and personal obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only Way to God, the absolute Truth, and the source of everlasting Life. In a world seeking answers for the maladies of spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical battles, the rest for their weary souls can be found only in Christ, Who is the solution to them all and even more. Interestingly, the witness given by the sincere believer of Christ will result in those who accept the witness becoming a servant or disciples of Christ.

"CHRISTIANS ARE HELD TO A HIGHER STANDARD BECAUSE THE TOUCHSTONE IS OF A HEAVENLY STANDARD. HENCE, IT IS EXPEDIENT THAT THE ONE WHO BEARS WITNESS TO CHRIST WILL ONLY BE A CONTINUAL BETRAYER OR DENIER OF CHRIST IF THEY HAVE BEEN RESTORED THROUGH GENUINE REPENTANCE RESULTING FROM LOVE."

It is a Christ-follower's responsibility and mandate given by Christ Himself to proclaim Him so that even the worst of all sinners will be set free from the works of the Devil. Compulsion from the Spirit to communicate Christ with a compassionate heart to the dying world is essential for witnessing. Although one cannot and should not wait to bear witness of Christ until they have been made perfect in practical righteousness, the need for holy conduct cannot be discounted since the witness is given not for a person of this world system but for the One who is Holy and Righteous. Christians are held to a higher standard because the touchstone is of heavenly standard. Hence, it is expedient that the one who bears witness to Christ will not be a continual betrayer or denier of Christ unless they have been restored through genuine repentance resulting from love. Nevertheless, whether for selfish ambitions or with a clear conscience, it is a matter of joy to the Christian to bear witness to the resurrected Christ!

Joshin John
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Finding Divine Presence in Everyday Encounters

Becoming a true witness of Jesus is a marvellous and unique experience. Believing in Him does not alone qualify one to become a true witness, but it requires living out His teachings and reflecting on His character daily. Acts of service and selflessness characterised Jesus' ministry. Today, we can witness his hands at work through individuals who dedicate their lives to serving others. To be an authentic witness of Jesus, it is essential to have a personal and intimate relationship with Him -- spending time in prayer studying the Bible, seeking His guidance, cultivating a heart open to His presence, and following His teachings.

Jesus' teachings emphasise love, compassion, forgiveness, humility, and selflessness, and one must strive to incorporate these principles into daily life. Treat others with kindness and respect, forgive those who wronged you, practice humility, and show compassion to those in need. Let your actions speak louder than your words. Authenticity is crucial in being a witness of Jesus. Be transparent about your struggles and shortcomings, and share how your faith in Jesus has transformed your life. People are more likely to be receptive to your message when they see its genuine impact on you.

Many of us mistakenly think that only inner feeling is enough to be a witness. However, it is also necessary to have an outfit that fits the witnessing. Witnessing Jesus our Lord is a holy thing, as we replicate the feeling we experienced with Jesus and show others how to live a life that accomplishes the will of God. It differs from testifying in court or any other place what you have seen and felt. Testifying to Jesus our Lord is an experience; it is a way of life, and it is eternal.

To fulfil this, we must obey and follow the principles of God. In Leviticus 18:3, God declares to the Israelites, "You must not do what they do in Egypt, where you dwelt, and you must not do what they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. You shall not live according to their customs. This is also true for believers today. When we witness Jesus, we must do the same and show others that we are the people of God and special so that others will also see the difference in us.

Jesus' message of forgiveness and redemption remains relevant in today's world. We witness His spirit in those who exemplify forgiveness in the face of adversity. It could be a victim who forgives their perpetrator, a friend who offers a second chance, or a community that seeks reconciliation after conflict. When we witness forgiveness, we witness Jesus' transformative power to heal wounds, restore relationships, and foster a more compassionate society. Integrity is an essential characteristic of a true witness of Jesus. Let your actions align with your beliefs. Avoid hypocrisy and strive to live a life of honesty, integrity, and moral values. People are more likely to be influenced by your witness when they see consistency between your words and actions.

As a witness of Jesus, share the good news of His salvation and grace with others. Be prepared to articulate your faith and the impact of Jesus on your life. However, it is important to approach evangelism with sensitivity and respect for others' beliefs. Seek opportunities to share your faith in a loving and non-judgmental manner.

Encountering Jesus is not limited to churches or worship centres. His presence can be witnessed

"By recognising the compassion, wisdom, service, forgiveness, and love permeating our daily interactions, we can deepen our understanding of Jesus' message and strive to incorporate it into our lives."

in all walks of life, in the faces and actions of ordinary people who embody His teachings and exemplify His qualities. By recognizing the compassion, wisdom, service, forgiveness, and love permeating our daily interactions, we can deepen our understanding of Jesus' message and strive to incorporate it into our lives. Let us remain open to the divine presence, for Jesus can be witnessed in the most unexpected places, inviting us to embody his teachings and make a positive difference in the world.



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Witnessing - A Christian Mandate

“But you are A CHOSEN PEOPLE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR GOD’S OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellences of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9, NASB).

Christianity, from its very inception, is a missionary religion. Each Christian bears witness to Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world 'to testify to the truth' (Jn. 18:37). The Scripture says about Jesus, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14). Apostle Paul reiterates that Jesus is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15) and, in Him, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily (Col. 2:9). He is the only way to God and the real Truth and the real Life. No one can come to the Father through Him (Jn 14:6).

Christ's death as the substitution for our sins is the heart of the gospel. Through our faith in Christ, God has forgiven, justified, and provided us eternal life; also, we have been given the Holy Spirit as the foretaste and guarantee of our future glory and inheritance (Rom. 8:23; Eph: 1:14). Therefore, as the special people of God's possession, we are obliged to proclaim God's marvellous deeds, virtues, and perfections, who called us into His marvellous light through Jesus Christ.

In the Great Commission, Jesus instructed His disciples to make disciples as they entered the world and to baptise and teach them (Mat. 28:19-20). He promised to His disciples that when they received the Holy Spirit, they would become powerful witnesses of Him (Acts 1:8). On the day of Pentecost, after being filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter's proclamation of the resurrected Messiah enabled 3000 people to believe in Christ Jesus. From that day onwards, there was exponential growth in the spread of the gospel, and after many generations, we are here to carry forward the baton of the good news.

We are called to witness the good news with both words and deeds. Together with the proclamation of the gospel, the Christian life should put God's goodness to display. Using the metaphors of salt and light, Jesus illustrates this idea. In ancient times, people used salt to preserve meat and to bring out a food's distinct flavour. Like salt, Christians must positively and gracefully impact the people they contact. A lamp put on a stand illuminates the world around it. Likewise, the good deeds of Christians reveal the Father in heaven and bring glory to Him. Christian witnessing is not just verbal testimony. Apostle Paul, in Phil. 2:12-15 instructs Christians to live with honesty, patience, and grace. He encourages us to live a life "worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27) and claims that when Christians live out their faith, the good news will be proclaimed through their values.

We are Christ's Ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20), on a mission to represent Christ through our words and actions to convey God's love to the people we encounter daily. Jesus repeatedly claimed that our lives demonstrate whom we belong to. He said, "This is to my Father's glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." Apostle Paul restates that the Spirit's fruit is "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). As Christians bear fruit, the good news is proclaimed through our daily lives, and we transform like an open letter of God's grace – A letter that all can read and admire!

Highlight: As Christians bear fruit, the good news is proclaimed through our daily lives, and we transform like an open letter of God's grace – A letter that all can read and admire!

"Spiritual warfare is not a metaphorical or symbolic concept but a genuine reality with significant implications. The spiritual realm profoundly influences the physical realm, shaping events, thoughts, and the overall well-being of individuals."



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SLEEP AND HEART HEALTH

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it the wellspring of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)

It is estimated that a human heart beats about 2.5 billion times over the average lifetime and pushes millions of gallons of blood to every body part. This steady flow of blood carries oxygen, nutrients, hormones, essential cells, and a host of other compounds and, at the same time, whisks away the metabolic waste products.

HOW LONG CAN HEART CELLS LIVE WITHOUT OXYGEN?

So, imagine what happens if the heart stops? If the heart stops (cardiac arrest), you can become un-conscious and may not have a pulse. This is why you need to call 911 or start CPR (if you are a by-stander witnessing an event) immediately as one’s chances of survival are better with prompt help. If the blood and oxygen supply is cut off, the heart suffers damage and dies (infarct). Permanent damage begins within the first 30 minutes of blockage. The heart muscle may then no longer work as it should. The first hour after a heart attack is known as “the golden hour.” Taking appropriate action within this first hour will reduce the potential damage and can save a patient's life.

WHAT ARE THE 4 SIGNS THAT YOUR HEART IS SLOWLY FAILING?

- Shortness of breath
- Chronic coughing or wheezing
- Fatigue

- Swelling
- Loss of appetite

RELATION BETWEEN SLEEP AND HEART HEALTH?

Sleep plays a vital role in the overall health of our human body and getting the right amount of sleep is an essential part of good heart and brain health. About 50-70 million Americans are estimated to have chronic or ongoing sleep disorders. Studies show poor sleep or lack of sleep is associated with high blood pressure, diabetes, arrhythmias (irregular heart rhythm disorder), stroke, dementia, neu-rocognitive problems, depression / mental health issues, obesity, etc. Poor sleep triggers chronic inflammation which contributes to plaque formation and hardening of the arteries leading to coronary artery disease (CAD).

WHAT IS THE BEST TIME TO SLEEP TO REDUCE HEART DISEASE?

After tracking more than 3,000 subjects for an average of 5.7 years, researchers found the lowest incidence of cardiovascular disease among those who nodded off between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m.

HOW MUCH SLEEP DO YOU NEED TO KEEP YOUR HEART HEALTHY?

Adults should aim for an average of 7-9 hours; babies and kids need more sleep, depending on their age.

SLEEP DISORDERS AND HEART HEALTH:

The heart is significantly impacted when the body doesn’t get enough sleep. Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) or sleep apnea is a breathing disorder where the person stops breathing during sleep (pauses) linked to heart disease, obesity, diabetes, stroke, and high blood pressure. Conditions of abnormal movement during sleep, such as restless leg syndrome and periodic limb movement disorder, have also been linked to heart problems. Circadian rhythm sleep disorders (usually happens with shift workers), which occur when a person’s internal clock is misaligned with day and night, have been associated with cardiovascular problems.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP HABITS?

- Exercise regularly
- Avoid excess caffeine.
- Establish an evening routine
- Manage stress
- Avoid alcohol and stop smoking

IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP HYGIENE:

- Move it - Charge your device as far away from your bed as possible.
- Dim it - Dim your screen or use a red filter app at night. The bright blue light of most devices can mess with your circadian rhythm and melatonin production.
- Set it - Set a bedtime alarm to remind you that it’s time to wrap it up for the night.

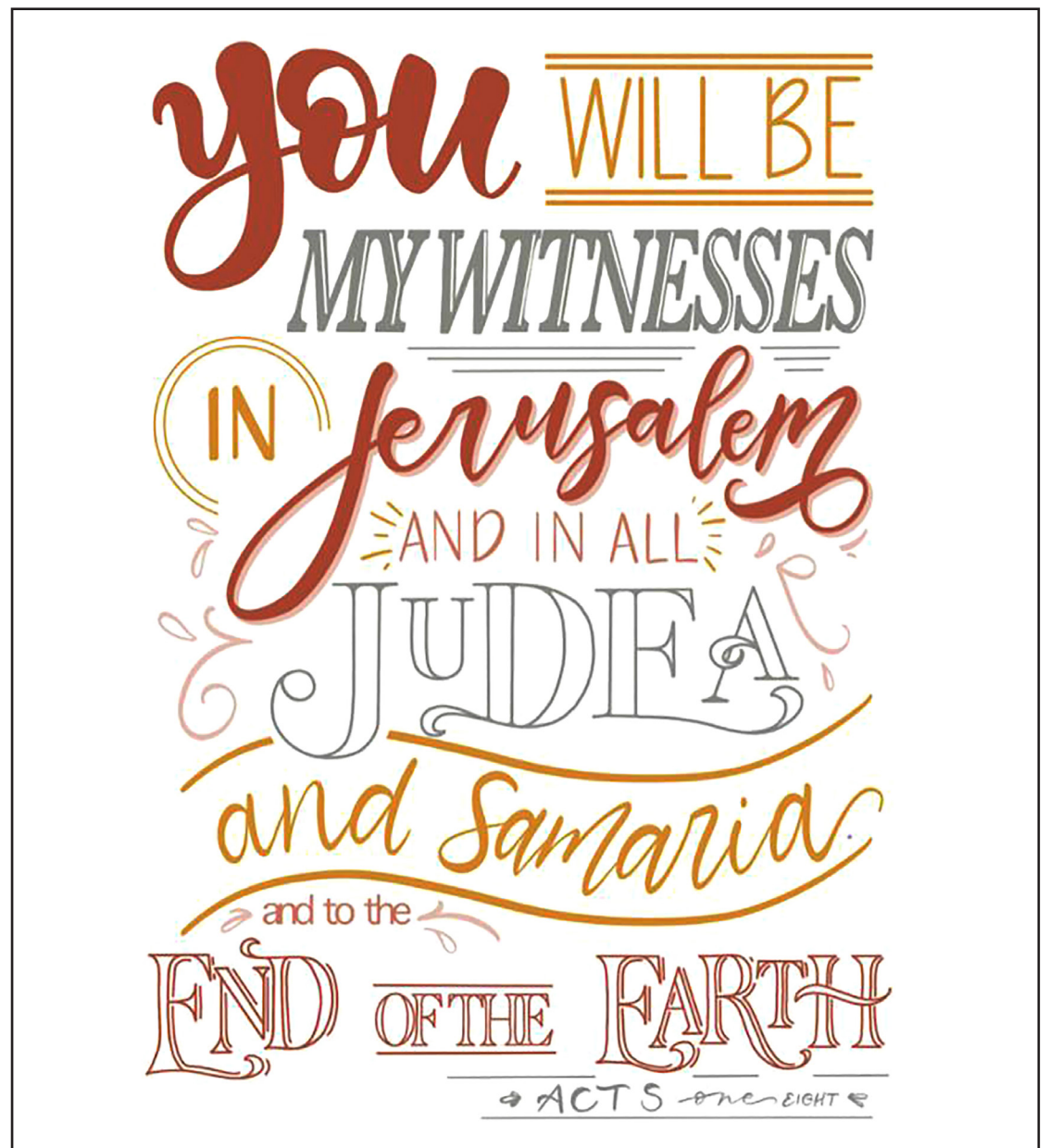
- Lock it - Try an app-blocking app that makes it impossible to get lost in after-hours emails, social media, or gaming.
- Block it - Put your phone on "Do Not Disturb" mode to block it all out when trying to sleep.
- When should you see a health care professional for a sleep disorder and concerns about cardiovascular health?
- If you suspect you have a sleep disorder or any sleep problems like difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, waking up gasping, coughing, choking or short of breath, witnessed apneas, unrefreshed sleep, or feeling tired all the time, you should consult with your doctor to explore a possible diagnosis or consult with a sleep provider for further management and treatment.
- By allowing our bodies to rest properly, we can reduce the risk of developing serious diseases and improve the quality of life.

References: American Heart Association, Sleep Foundation, American Association of Sleep Medicine



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BEING SENT TO WITNESS: ON HOLISTIC MISSION

of the Gospel. Ever since the first century, the local churches in their given contexts wrestled with how to engage in witnessing holistically. Time and again in the history of Christianity, Christians fell into prioritising preaching (or evangelism) and forgot the action-oriented aspect of Gospel witnessing. At the same time, Christians throughout history also attempted to remind the church to adopt a holistic witnessing nature.

For example, in 1974, Western evangelical Christians were reminded of the importance of holistic witness by their Latin American counterparts during the Lausanne Conference. Consequently, during the narration of the Lausanne Covenant, which acts as a predominant manifesto of worldwide evangelical Christians, there was a solid pursuit to communicate the integrated nature of social action and evangelism. The covenant states, "For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and Man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation also implies a message of judgement upon every form of alienation, oppression, and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. ... The salvation we claim

should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities" (Lausanne Covenant, paragraph five).

Since 1974, in the evangelical missiological discourses, such an integrated notion of witnessing is known as a 'holistic mission' or 'integral mission.' Holistic mission emphasises the mission of God carried out by followers of Jesus Christ in and through words (direct evangelism) and deeds (social action) as an inseparable mandate. Often it is assumed that the holistic mission practitioner who engages in the holistic mission should be able to perceive the social needs of the community or the individuals and contextualise the Gospel in a manner that engages both physical and spiritual needs. Therefore, anthropological, sociological, and psychological dimensions are discussed in missiological analysis to provide a more holistic intelligence for practitioners to present the Gospel holistically in their particular context.

In summation, being sent to witness means to bear witness to the Gospel holistically. One cannot communicate the Gospel without showing action-oriented love of Jesus Christ. In short, faith without deeds is dead (James 2:26). The holistic nature of the Gospel warrants an inseparable nature of

proclamation and practice in our witness to the good news of Jesus Christ. The concerns of the widows, poor, refugees, and other marginalised peoples will be at the forefront of the Gospel witness. Suppose we attempt to dichotomise the holistic nature of the Great Commission by sidling serving the poor to prioritise 'preaching' the Gospel. In that case, we are at risk of witnessing a truncated Gospel. Hence, we must ensure that the Gospel is communicated, heard, and experienced as the good news in its holistic nature.

"THE HOLISTIC NATURE OF THE GOSPEL WARRANTS AN INSEPARABLE NATURE OF PROCLAMATION AND PRACTICE IN OUR WITNESS TO THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST. THE CONCERNS OF THE WIDOWS, POOR, REFUGEES, AND OTHER MARGINALISED PEOPLES WILL BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE GOSPEL WITNESS."

ISRAEL WITHDRAWS FROM JENIN



It follows a major two-day operation inside the city's refugee camp which killed 12 Palestinians. An Israeli soldier was also killed on Tuesday night during the withdrawal, which triggered more gun battles. Early on Wednesday, the military said it intercepted five rockets from Gaza. Shrapnel from one of the interceptor missiles damaged a house in the southern Israeli town of Sderot. No militant group immediately claimed that it was behind the launches, but the Israeli military said fighter jets struck an underground weapons manufacturing facility used by Hamas, which governs Gaza, as well as a raw materials manufacturing facility for

rockets. The military said it held "the Hamas terrorist organisation responsible for all terror activities emanating from the Gaza Strip and will face the consequences of security violations against Israel". Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said: "Whoever thinks that such an attack will deter us from continuing our fight against terrorism is mistaken." He also warned that the Jenin operation would not be a "one-time action". "We will continue as long as necessary to uproot terrorism. We will not allow Jenin to go back to being a city of refuge for terrorism," he added. Palestinian leaders accused Israel of mounting an "invasion" in Jenin.

World News

Gujarat High Court dismisses Congress leader's appeal

The Gujarat high court has dismissed Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi's appeal seeking a stay on his conviction in a criminal defamation case. Mr Gandhi was sentenced to two years in jail in March for his 2019 comments about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's surname at an election rally. He was disqualified as an MP following his sentencing. But Mr Gandhi will not be arrested until he has exhausted all legal appeals as his arrest was put on hold. Friday's decision is being seen as a setback for the Congress leader as it means he cannot contest national elections due next year. He is expected to appeal in the Supreme Court. While dismissing his appeal, the Gujarat high court said Mr Gandhi's conviction was "just and proper". Mr Gandhi lost his seat in parliament a day after his conviction on 23 March due to a Supreme Court order which says that a lawmaker convicted in a crime and sentenced to two or more years in jail is disqualified with immediate effect.



FDA approves first Alzheimer’s drug

The US Food and Drug Administration on Thursday granted traditional full approval to the Alzheimer’s drug Leqembi, the first medicine proven to slow the course of the memory-robbing disease. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said Thursday that it will now expand coverage of the drug, broadening access for up to an estimated million people with early forms of the disease. “Today’s action is the first verification that a drug targeting the underlying disease process of Alzheimer’s disease has shown clinical

benefit in this devastating disease,” Teresa Buracchio, acting director of the Office of Neuroscience in the FDA’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, said in the announcement. “This confirmatory study verified that it is a safe and effective treatment for patients with Alzheimer’s disease.” Leqembi, from drugmakers Eisai and Biogen, received accelerated approval in January based on evidence that it clears amyloid plaque buildups in the brain that are associated with Alzheimer’s disease.

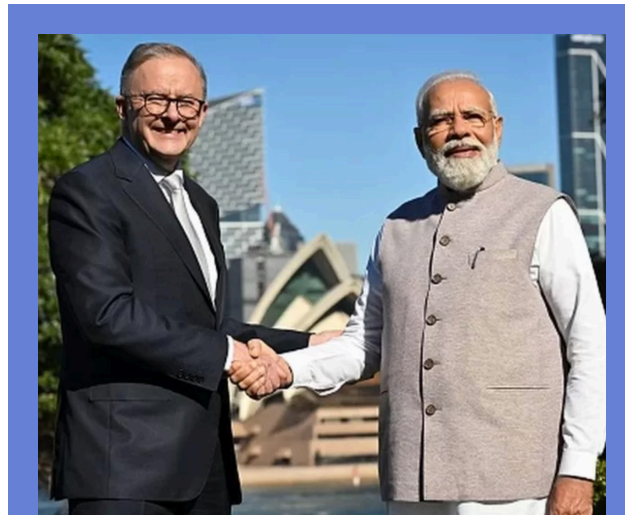
World News



Facebook parent Meta launches Twitter competitor – Threads

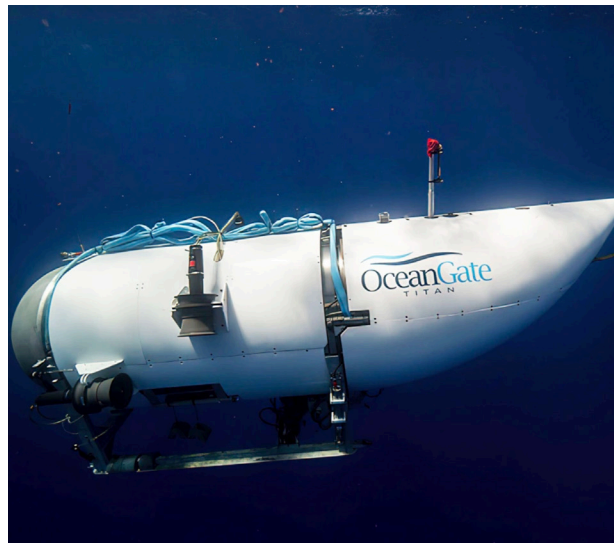
Facebook-parent Meta on Wednesday officially launched its Twitter competitor, Threads, after first confirming its plans for the app just three months ago. Threads is a new app from the parent company of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. Threads is already off to a strong start: the app received 30 million sign-ups as of Thursday morning, according to the company, including a large number of brands, celebrities, journalists and many other prominent accounts.

As of Thursday morning, Threads was the top free app on Apple’s App Store and a top trending topic on Twitter. Threads could pose a serious threat to Twitter, which has faced backlash since Elon Musk took over the platform in October 2022. But Twitter has become particularly vulnerable in recent days, angering users over a temporary limit on how much content users can view each day. And for Meta, Threads could further expand its empire of popular apps and provide a new platform on which to sell ads.



Australia announces migration deal with India

India and Australia have announced a migration deal as they aim to strengthen their economic cooperation. The announcement came after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met his counterpart Anthony Albanese in Sydney. The deal aims to “promote the two-way mobility of students, graduates, academic researchers and businesspeople”. Negotiations for the migration agreement had been going on for a couple of years. Australia already has a significant number of people who have migrated from India - census data shows that of more than a million people who moved to Australia since 2016, almost a quarter were from India. According to a statement, the finalised migration agreement will also lead to the creation of a new scheme called MATES (Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early Professionals Scheme), which has been “specifically created for India”.



OceanGate suspends all activities

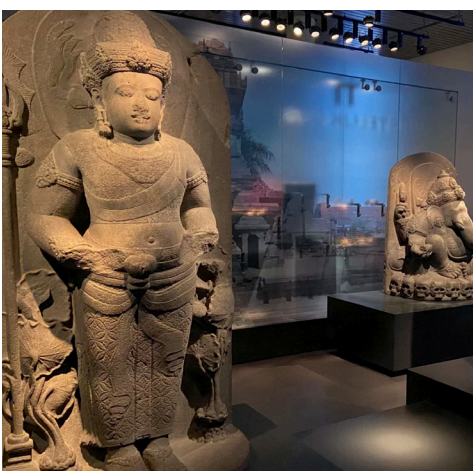
OceanGate, the owner of the Titan submersible that imploded last month, killing all five passengers on board, has fully suspended its activities. The company posted a one-line note on its website saying it had stopped “all exploration and commercial operations”. On its website the company had also advertised tours of the Portuguese archipelago of Azores and the Bahamas. An investigation is ongoing into how the sub imploded during a dive to the Titanic wreck on 18 June. Led by the US Coast Guard, authorities said the inquiry would aim to prevent similar accidents in future.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND PROPOSES TO RENT OUT POORLY ATTENDED CHURCHES



To combat dwindling congregations and a significant drop in regular worship attendance, the Church of England has proposed a plan to rent out underused parish churches instead of selling them, giving them time to "lie fallow" with the potential for future reopening. The proposal comes in response to the current practice of merging poorly attended churches with larger parishes and selling off the vacated buildings. To be debated at the Synod this week, the plan promotes allowing churches to "lie fallow," suggesting that such a move will "enable the church and community to remain open to new opportunities for witness and service as circumstances change." This concept is not about hibernation but rather a form of "waiting on the Lord," allowing churches to reopen when the time is right. Campaigners who have long accused archbishops of overseeing the rapid disintegration of parishes have hailed the proposal as a victory.

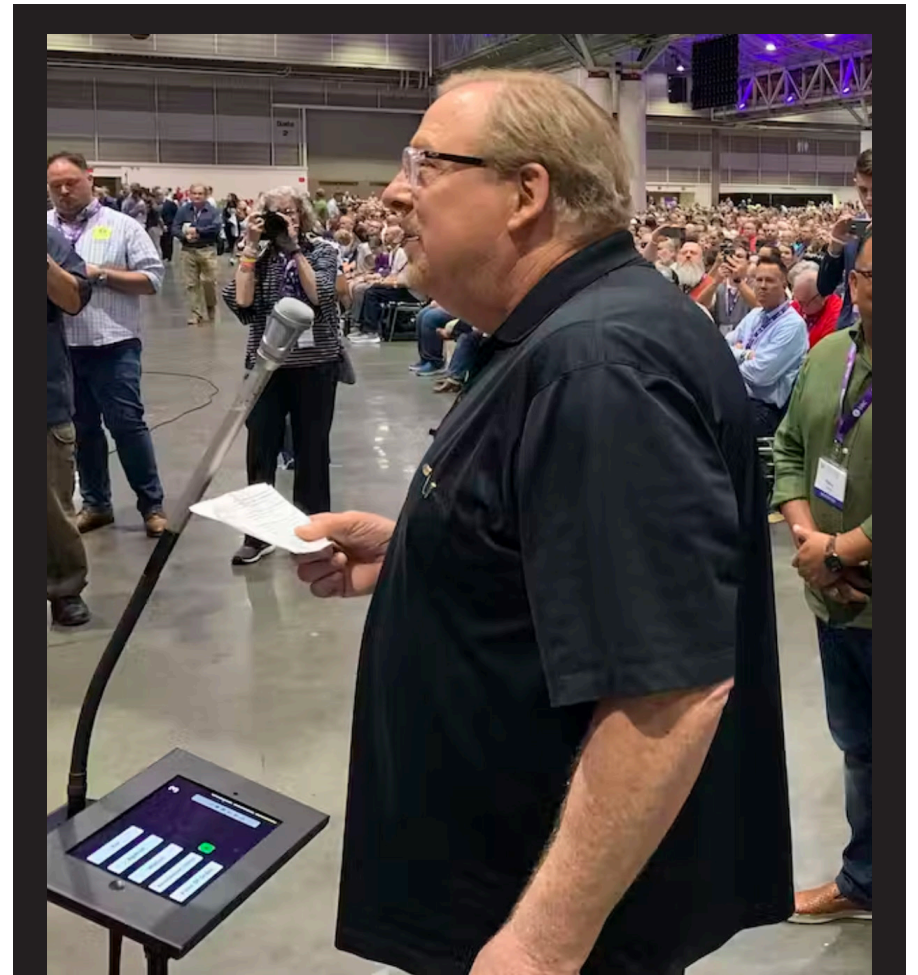
Artefacts looted from Sri Lanka & Indonesia to be returned from Dutch museums



Two Dutch museums are handing hundreds of cultural artefacts back to Indonesia and Sri Lanka — from a richly decorated cannon to precious metals and jewellery — that were taken, often by force, in the colonial era. The government announced the planned restitution of 478 "cultural objects".

Some Western nations are returning looted artefacts and other objects as part of a reckoning with their often brutal colonial histories. A Berlin museum announced in January it was ready to return hundreds of human skulls from the former German colony of East Africa. In 2021, France said it was returning statues, royal thrones and sacred altars taken from the West African nation of Benin. Last year, Belgium returned a gold-capped tooth belonging to the slain Congolese independence hero Patrice Lumumba. "This is a historic moment. It is the first time that, based on the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Return of Cultural Objects from Colonial Context, we are returning objects that should never have been in the Netherlands," said State Secretary for Culture and Media Gunay Uslu.

World News



Southern Baptist convention votes to expel Rick Warren's Saddleback church

The Southern Baptist Convention has upheld the removal of Saddleback Church from the denomination due to the California megachurch allowing a woman to serve in the office of teaching pastor. In results announced Wednesday morning at the SBC Annual Meeting in New Orleans, Saddleback's expulsion was upheld by 9,437 votes (88.46%) to 1,212 votes (11.36%), with 19 ballots disallowed. Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, spoke against Saddleback's appeal, warning that Saddleback was threatening the unity of the SBC and that the issue was not nonessential. "It's not just a matter of church polity; it's not just a matter of hermeneutics," Mohler stressed. "It's a matter of biblical commitment, a commitment to the Scripture that unequivocally we believe limits the office of pastor to men."

"Here we face the unusual situation in which Dr. Warren himself has made repeated statements, and the church has taken repeated actions that make very clear it rejects the confessional understanding of the Southern Baptist Convention on this issue." The issue is Pastor Andy Wood, who succeeded Saddleback founder Rick Warren as lead pastor of the megachurch last year, listing his wife, Stacie, as the church's teaching pastor.