

BROKEN BREAD Page 03



Faith in Action

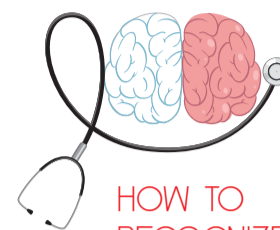
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THE BODY OF CHRIST CARRIES THE HEART OF JESUS!



Corner Page 06



HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND PREVENT STROKE

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ILLUMINER

ISSUE 43

VOLUME 04

JANUARY 2024

OUT OF THE SALT SHAKER



“It’s not our job. The Lord will come and fix this broken planet.” This anthem of defeat has crippled the Church. May she find grace to rise from her state of disgrace and apathy to fulfill her role as the salt and light of this planet!

Across the tapestry of human society, dark threads of injustice are intertwined with the bright strands of progress. Poverty, inequality, discrimination, and violence weave patterns of suffering that stain the very fabric of our existence.

Poverty, like a gaping hole in the fabric, reveals the vulnerability of millions. Hunger gnaws at it. Shelters crumble. Opportunities disappear into a chasm of economic disparity. On the other hand, wealth is increasingly getting concentrated in the hands of a few. The gap between the haves and have-nots is widening by the day. Those who do not understand the causes of poverty blame the poor for not working hard enough or for not having enough faith.

Austerity is out of fashion. The shameless flaunting of wealth is praised. The illegal practice of demanding or offering dowry is tolerated in the name of tradition, although hundreds of women have suffered and died on

account of this. Christians, too, have not been immune to these influences. Silence is complicity.

Discrimination, another corrosive thread, darkens the tapestry with prejudice and bigotry. Caste-based discrimination, along with its notions of hierarchy and purity, plagues every Indian community at home or abroad. Colourism makes it worse. Race, gender, religion, ethnicity, color, disability – these arbitrary lines, too, become instruments of exclusion and oppression.

Violence, a jagged tear in the fabric, leaves scars both physical and emotional. War, domestic abuse, rape, human trafficking, and societal unrest inflict widespread pain and shatter communities. Instead of calling for peace and reconciliation, Christians have become cheerleaders who celebrate revenge, military occupation, and genocide! Has the “salt of the earth” lost its saltiness?

Environmental degradation, a growing rip



Pr. Philip P Eapen
Cochin, India

Philip is an environmental scientist by training, devoted his life to proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ ever since he realized that the world needs Jesus Christ more than anyone or anything else. Apart from sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, Philip teaches Christians to equip them for service. Philip is married to Dr. Jessimol, and they are blessed with three sons and a daughter.

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Our Advisors

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Chief Editor
Goodnews
Weekly

T.M.MATHEW
Publisher
Goodnews
Weekly

The Vision : To illuminate God's Holy Word through Spirit-filled insightful pen.

The Mission : Provide the reader with guidance for life and godliness through inspired authors.

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- We value Integrity and Excellence in all our work.
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Annet Sam, Binu Daniel, Jasmin Jacob, Philip Eapen, Rajesh Sebastian

**Theme for February 2024:
Spirituality and Progress:
The Christian attitude towards
"progressive thinking"**

DESIGN : WWW.FOGGENERATION.COM

Justice is never given; it is exacted and the struggle must be continuous for freedom is never a final fact, but a continuing evolving process to higher and higher levels of human, social, economic, political, and religious relationships.



A. Philip Randolph

FROM THE editor

THE COMPLETE GOSPEL

Jesus, the Son of God, has demonstrated the perfect model to be a 'Christian' by striking a balance between going about teaching and preaching (Mt. 4:23; 9:35) and doing good and heal-ing (Acts 10:38). History witnessed the Christendom oscillate between these two poles of dog-matism and pragmatism in its two millennia of existence. The correlation between faith and prac-tice always posed a challenge before Christianity. While both had a tremendous positive influ-ence on society, the way Christian social action, well rooted in the scriptures, influenced the world is unparalleled. John Stott rightly states how the evangelical revival inspired by eminent leaders like John Wesley, William Wilberforce, and others in England has paved the seeds of so-cial reforms of the nineteenth century. This includes, to name a few, the abolition of the slave trade, prison reforms, Human Rights Act, similarly, Charles G. Finny in the United States, on the other side of the Atlantic, who was instrumental in evangelical awakening in the United States, asserted that "the great business of the church is to reform the world."

On the one hand, when the colonial masters rampaged around the world plundering the third world nations, on the other hand, Christian revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centu-ries inspired social reform that was woven not only into the fabrics of Western civilization but also into its judiciary system and the moral psyche. A similar dichotomous impact of the West is evi-dent in Indian society during the colonial period. William Carry, a dedicated missionary, raised his voice to abolish 'sati', a brutal practice of burning the wife with her deceased husband in his fu-neral pyre, which stands as an untenable testament to this dual impact of colonial rule. Even in the post-colonial world, although many Western nations' foreign, economic, and migration policies are arbitrary and debatable, their humanitarian and philanthropic activities in response to human predicaments are derived from cardinal Christian values like kindness, generosity, and concern for the poor.

Has the body of Christ lost its edge by drifting away from its primary call to

"Jesus clearly indicates that the gospel is incomplete without dealing with hunger, ine-qualities, shelter, health and well-being, and injustice. Unless the church is willing to incarnate in the societies it serves by witnessing and demonstrating the compassion and righteousness of Christ, its proclamation will remain ineffective and irrelevant."

be the salt and light of the world? The disjunction between the high ideals derived from the Bible, especially the justice and righteousness of God, and the failure to translate them into the church's practice continues to be a major impediment to the realization of God's kingdom in many societies world-wide.

Regrettably, Pentecostalism, which just turned its first century of its existence, relin-quished social action from the very outset, as they perceived their primary mission is "witness-ing," which is confined to preaching and teaching. Pentecostal theology that emphasises person-al ecstatic experience and operation of the gifts of the Spirit rarely finds the need to engage in social justice and economic, political, and moral crises around them. Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goat in Matthew 25:31-46 warns of the danger of neglecting social action. Jesus clearly indicates that the gospel is incomplete without dealing with hunger, inequalities, shelter, health and well-being, and injustice (25:35-36). Unless the church is willing to incarnate in the societies it serves by witnessing and demonstrating the compassion and righteousness of Christ, which involves liberating people from hunger and injustice, its proclamation will remain ineffective and irrelevant.



Faith in Action

Beyond its spiritual import, Christianity obligates adherents to engage actively in the pursuit of social justice. Grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ, emphasising love, compassion, and servitude, the dedication of Christians to social justice forms a pivotal tenet within their faith. Central to the biblical doctrine is the principle of loving one's neighbour. Christ's teachings emphatically prioritize loving others as deeply as oneself. The unequivocal declaration in Mark 12:31 resonates: "Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." This foundational directive accentuates the significance of empathy, compassion, and proactive measures in nurturing an equitable and fair society.

As the guiding text for Christians, the Bible serves as a framework for comprehending and addressing social injustices. It persistently urges adherents to uphold justice, extend mercy, and advocate for marginalised groups. Micah 6:8 encourages followers to "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God," encapsulating the essence of Christian dedication to social justice by emphasizing the fusion of justice and mercy in daily life. The life and teachings of Jesus Christ epitomize the Christian commitment to social justice. Jesus engaged with marginalized communities, displaying compassion and solidarity with society's outcasts. He dined with sinners, healed the sick, challenged oppression, and confronted unjust societal norms, setting an example for his followers to emulate.

Moreover, the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) illustrates our obligation to display compassion and aid to the needy, transcending societal barriers and prejudices. It underscores the mandate to care for one's neighbour, irrespective of social status, ethnicity, or background differences. Additionally, we are called to be peacemakers and agents of reconciliation in a world fragmented by divisions and conflicts. Matthew 5:9 affirms, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." This verse emphasises Christians' responsibility to foster peace, justice, and reconciliation in their communities and beyond.

The Christian commitment towards social justice extends beyond individual acts of charity. It encompasses advocating for systemic change, challenging unjust structures, and striving to create a society that mirrors the values of justice, equality, and dignity for all individuals. Historically, Christian communities have played significant roles in social movements advocating justice and equality. From abolishing slavery to the civil rights movement and modern endeavours addressing poverty, human trafficking, and environmental conservation, our community have been at the forefront of these causes.

Matthew 25:35-40 illustrates the concept of social justice, emphasising the necessity to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and care for the sick and imprisoned. Jesus's teachings stress the transformative power of selfless service and compassion towards the marginalised to achieve social justice. Furthermore, the Bible challenges the status quo, advocating for societal transformation by correcting unjust systems and encouraging believers to strive for fairness and equality in their communities. This commitment towards social justice is not merely a suggestion but a divine mandate.

Galatians 3:28 addresses the equality among believers, disregarding social distinctions: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This verse highlights the biblical stance on eradicating social barriers and promoting equality among all individuals. The Bible's teachings on attitudes towards social evils and commitment towards social justice serve as a guiding beacon for believers, inspiring actions that prioritise others' well-being, challenge unjust systems and advocate for a society founded on fairness, compassion, and equality.



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Dr. Binu Daniel is a management consultant, teacher, author, and educationist. He has written numerous articles in well-established English dailies on Economics and Management issues.



The Bible challenges the status quo, advocating for societal transformation by correcting unjust systems and encouraging believers to strive for fairness and equality in their communities. This commitment towards social justice is not merely a suggestion but a divine mandate."



JUSTICE: AN INTEGRAL PART OF TRUE SPIRITUALITY

One of the events that touched my heart deeply was being part of a medical mission camp in a controlled red-light area in India. Upon my return, I told my wife, Alice, "Hell cannot be much worse." Most people there were trafficked into that compound and cannot escape."

I always had a high sense of justice; however, my appreciation for agencies like IJM, Crossroads Asia, and others involved in rescue, orphan care, etc., has multiplied since that day.

THE FALSE DICHOTOMY

On the one hand, I have seen part of Christendom focusing on social justice and social action and ignoring the Gospel that saves the soul (WV International could be a good example). On the other hand, some organizations ignore the issues of this world and focus on the eschaton alone. Aren't they all around us?

ATTRACTION OF DEVIL'S OPPOSITES

C.S. Lewis wrote, "The Devil always sends errors into pairs of opposites... He relies on your extra dislike of one to gradually draw you into the opposite. However, do not let us be fooled. We must keep our eyes on the goal and go straight through between errors. (Mere Christianity). A Christian, or a Christian tradition, might be seduced to one end because they disliked the

other. Having been saved from the evil desires of this world, one might go to the other extreme where he wants nothing to do with this world. In contrast, not having an eternal perspective of the kingdom of God can get a Christian or a denomination too entangled in the affairs of this world; there by, they ignore the importance of preaching the Gospel.

JUSTICE TO BE LOVED AND SOUGHT

False notions of Christian spirituality could result from a wrong understanding of what God considers spiritual. The dearth of balanced biblical views can lead one to live a life that seems to be spiritual but lacks depth. The Bible clarifies that God cares about the world in which we live and considers justice essential and foundational to kingdom life (Isa 9:6-7). Below are biblical man-dates to love and seek justice while we hope for the eschatological kingdom. Micah commanded, "Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God" (6:8). Isaiah exhorted, "Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression, bring justice to the fatherless, and plead the widow's cause" (Isaiah 1:17). James seems to have these mandates right when he reminds the church that "the only Religion that God considers pure is to look after the orphans and widows..." (James 1:27).

CONCLUSION

Loving and seeking justice is not an option for a Christian. The hope of the fullness of what is yet

"The Bible clarifies that God cares about the world in which we live and considers justice to be essential and foundational to kingdom life."

to come should not make us blind and insensitive to the little difference we can make in the lives of a few little ones here today (Mat 25:40). You can be a bit Christ like when you set a little one free from any kind of bondage. Start it today. Begin with a little one. Shalom!



Dr Rajesh Sebastian
Texas, USA

Dr Rajesh Sebastian has a Master's Degree in Philosophy and Religion, a Th.M. in Systematic Theology and an earned Ph.D. in Theology and Apologetics. Raj co-founded Crossroads Asia Ministries. Raj is a Philosophy and Religion faculty member at Southern Florida Bible College and Theological Seminary.



THE BODY OF CHRIST CARRIES THE HEART OF JESUS!

"Our call to serve means to be the ear that listens to people's burdens, a shoulder to cry for people without judgement, and approachable regardless of the time of day to pray and share troubles."



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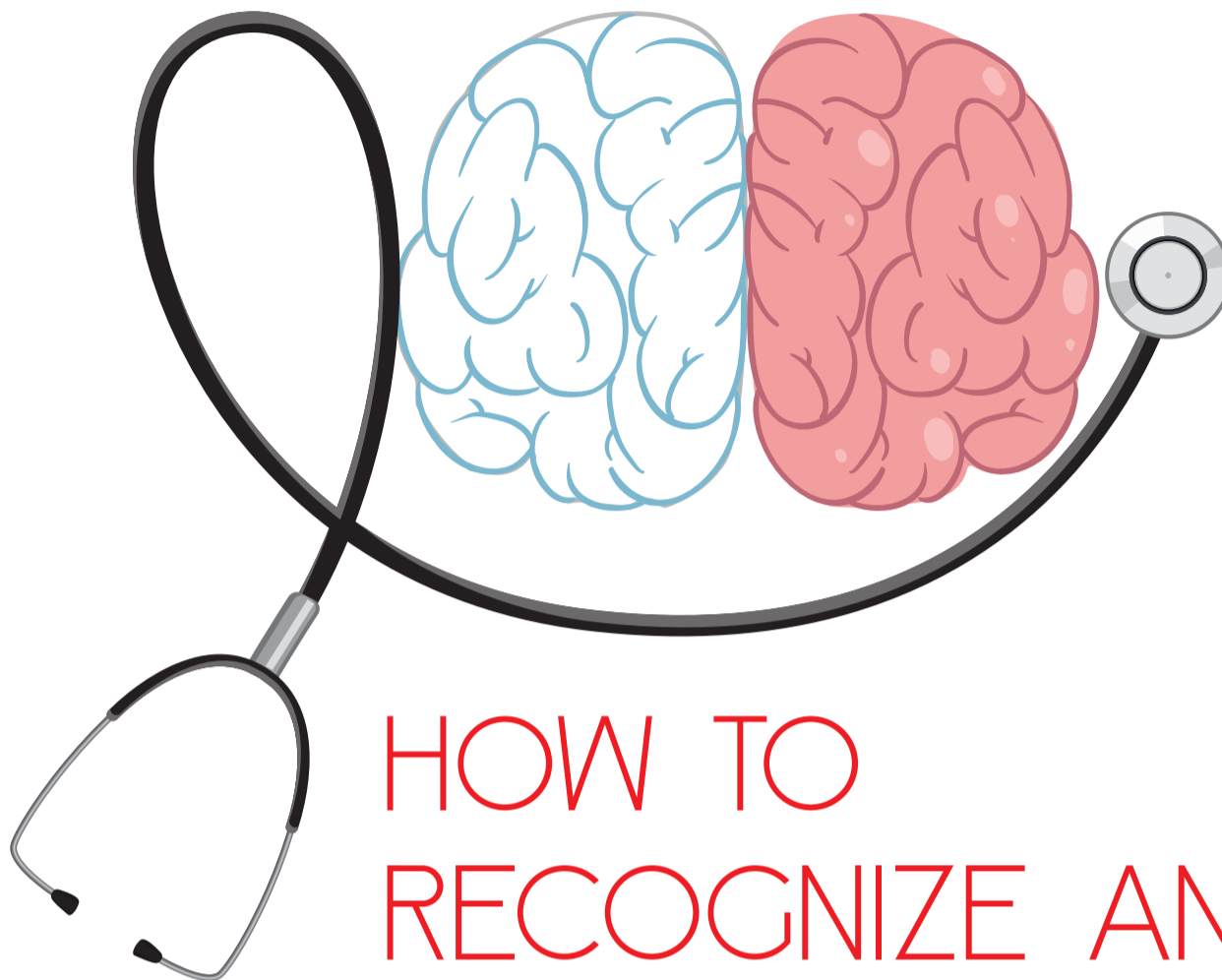
Various case studies have proven that crime and injustice worldwide originated because of hurt, lack of love, and society's neglect. Dividing society into financial classes and strata, and year by year, this gap between the privileged and unprivileged just widens. As a community, we often observe these changes rather than act as the Body of Christ.

Norman Mckinnel, in his book "The Bishop's Candlesticks", displayed a beautiful picture of how having compassion and mercy changed a heartless convict, Jean Val Jean, into a changed per-son. From the context of this story and the Bible in Mathew 21:31-36, the bishop's actions shadowed the Christian attitude to label or mistreat people in our society. Throughout the story, we see acts of kindness; he invites the hungry man to eat supper with him, listens to his past, gives him a place to sleep, and does not accuse him. His actions eventually change the convict to mend his ways.

Christ, during his worldly ministry, was the voice of the unheard friend of excommunicated people of the society like tax collectors, prostitutes, and lepers. Are we really living up to the name "Body of Christ" today? Are we serving the people around us or just being a Sunday show up to worship kind of believer?

Our call to serve means to be the ear that listens to people's burdens, a shoulder to cry for people without judgement, and approachable regardless of the time of day to pray and share troubles. Be kind to people around you, and pray for the ones your spirit reminds you of. Smile at the passing stranger and help the depressed neighbour who has not come out of the house in days. A heart of Jesus that sees brokenness and attends to it beyond our church circle and cultural barriers.

The titles we gain in our church or community will not matter on the day of judgment because we will be segregated based on how we acted in faith and how mindful we were of those in need. May we be hands and feet of Christ, flavouring the earth and spreading his love & light this season



HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND PREVENT STROKE

Stroke is the second leading cause of death and disability worldwide. According to the statistics released by the Global Stroke Factsheet in 2022, 1 out of 4 people are estimated to have had a stroke in their lifetime. The lifetime risk of developing a stroke has increased by 50% over the last 17 years. Stroke is a clinically defined syndrome of acute focal neurological deficiency attributed to vascular injury (Blockage in blood supply, bleeding) of the central nervous system, developed by a wide range of risk factors, disease processes, and mechanisms. It is estimated that almost 85% of strokes are related to ischemia, a blockage in the blood supply to the brain.

What causes a stroke?

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a blood clot or bursts (ruptures), leading to that part of the brain not getting the blood and oxy-gen it needs, which kills the brain cells. High blood pressure is the chief cause of stroke and a higher possibility among people with diabetes.

What are the risk factors?

Risk factors are similar for both ischemic and haemorrhagic strokes.

- Hypertension (High blood pressure)
- Physical inactivity
- Obesity
- Smoking
- Birth control pills
- Diabetes
- Heart disease/High cholesterol
- Irregular heart rhythm (Atrial fibrillation)
- Poor diet

- History of TIA (Transient ischemic attack)- and Blackouts (Miniature stroke)
- Abnormal blood count/clotting abnormalities

What are the symptoms of stroke?

A stroke is a medical emergency, and every second matters in saving the victim's life, so it is vital to know how to identify the symptoms of a stroke and to seek help immediately. Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately if you see any symptoms below.

- Weakness or numbness of the face, arm, or leg, usually on one side of the body.
- Difficulty speaking and understanding the conversation.
- Problems with vision include dimness/ blurriness or vision loss in one or both eyes.
- Dizziness or problems with balance/ coordination.
- Trouble moving or walking.
- Fainting (loss of consciousness) or seizures
- Severe headaches with no known cause, especially if happening suddenly.
- Sudden nausea or vomiting not caused by a viral infection/illness.
- Brief loss or change of consciousness, such as fainting, confusion, seizures, or coma.

How to act FAST?

FAST is an easy way to remember the signs of a stroke. When you see these signs, you'll know you need medical help. **FAST** stands for:

- **F-** Face drooping. One side of the face is drooping or numb. When the person smiles, the smile is uneven.
- **A-** Arm weakness. One arm is weak or numb. When the person lifts both arms simultaneously, one arm may drift downwards.
- **S-** Speech difficulty. You may see/hear slurred speech or difficulty speaking. The person can't repeat a simple sentence correctly when asked.
- **T-** Time to call 911 or your nearest emergency number immediately. Call even if the symptom goes away. Make a note of the time the symptoms first appeared.



Dr. Jasmine Jacob
Dallas, USA

Dr. Jasmine Jacob, DNP, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, is a family nurse practitioner specialising in neurology/sleep medicine. She is currently working in a state county hospital in Dallas, Texas. Her expertise includes a variety of sleep disorders, insomnia, narcolepsy, and neuromuscular disorders.



What to do if you witness someone having a stroke?

The most important thing to do is to call 911 or your nearest emergency number and note the onset of symptoms.

- Perform CPR if needed and place the person on a flat surface.
- Do not leave the victim alone or go to sleep.
- Do not take or give any medications, food, or drink.
- Do not drive if you have any symptoms of a stroke; do not let someone else drive you to the emergency room. Paramedics are usually faster, and they can give you emergency care as needed along the way.

How can you prevent a stroke at home?

Up to 80% of strokes can be prevented through healthy lifestyle changes and working with health care practitioners to control stroke risk factors. Most stroke risk factors can be medically modified, treated, or changed.

- Check your blood pressure/blood sugar regularly and ensure it is within normal limits.

- Eat a healthy diet; eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables – avoid fast food.
- Stay at a healthy weight.
- Exercise regularly and be physically active.
- If you smoke – focus on quitting.
- Take medicine as prescribed by your doctor.
- Stay hydrated.
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol.
- Adequate rest and sleep.

What to expect at the hospital?

Once in the emergency room, let the healthcare personnel care for you or your loved one. Don't waste time asking them unnecessary questions; allow them to treat you as quickly as possible. Your doctor may order blood work (labs) and a stat CT scan of your brain. The targeted goal is to review the CT scan within 45 minutes of arrival and start treatment. Staying calm will result in the patient being calmer; this is key during the event of a stroke.

Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.

Psalm 82:3



FROM HISTORY

The Eight Hundredth anniversary of St Francis's re-creation of the Nativity

Eight hundred years ago in December, St. Francis of Assisi curated what is thought to have been the first re-enactment of the nativity scene to involve live animals. Francis was not, however, the first to show reverence to or re-enact the nativity scene or the Christmas crib. In his time, at least two three-dimensional representations of the crib scene existed in Rome, and relics of the original manger had supposedly arrived in the city in the seventh century.

Early performances included two groups of clerics (representing shepherds and mid-wives) performing a set dialogue and pulling away a veil from an image of Mary with the Christ-child. By the mid-12th century, plays that are more complicated existed in which actors played the three Magi (each with specific and prescribed character traits), Mary, and the infant Jesus.

The re-creation was quintessential to Francis. While the caricature of him preaching to the birds is over-emphasised, animals were nevertheless very important to him. He placed an ox and an ass (not from the Gospels, but of Isaiah 1.3 fame) at the centre of the drama. They are the real actors: there was no Mary, Joseph, or Christ-child. Likewise, Francis taught an active remembrance of the Gospel events, and this recreation was a very performative mode of exegesis, allowing those present to place themselves into the Gospel event.

Five of the thirteen early legends about (or Lives of) Francis feature this re-creation. Some differences were introduced in the 1260s, in St Bonaventure's "Major Legend", but an overall narrative can be drawn out of these texts.

In mid-December 1223, Francis retreated to the hamlet of Greccio, in Rieti, in the Lazio region of central Italy. There, he summoned a particularly reputable nobleman, John of Greccio, telling him that he wished to bring to life the memory of the Christ-child, "to see as much as is possible with my own bodily eyes the discomfort of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, and how . . . he rested on hay".

On the night of Christmas Eve, many spectators came as the manger was prepared, hay was carried in, and the animals were led to the spot. We are told that mass was celebrated, and Francis even started talking like a bleating sheep; from this event, "Out of Greccio is made a new Bethlehem." The celebration of mass at an event remembering the nativity underlines that the entirety of Christ's life is present in this scene.

One of those who attended — anonymous in four versions but named in Bonaventure's account as John himself — was granted a vision in which he saw a child lying in the manger: when a visionary Francis approached the child, he woke from a deep sleep, causing Christ to be impressed on the memories of all in attendance.

The hay used in the event became a relic in its own right: animals were reportedly cured of disease by eating it, pregnant women who lay on the hay experienced a trouble-free delivery, and many others were healed from an assortment of unnamed illnesses.

The location became (and remains) a pilgrimage site; the construction of a church on the site meant that — as Thomas of Celano tells us — where the animals had eaten hay, humans would eat the body of Christ. Thus, Francis re-creates a historical event and, in doing so, creates a historical event that enables others to contemplate Greccio and Bethlehem.

The most famous visual depiction was created by Giotto as part of his so-called "St Francis Cycle" of frescoes in the Upper Basilica of St Francis of Assisi, created in the final years of the 13th century. While a stunning piece of art, Giotto's work differs greatly from the events portrayed in (at least) the earlier Lives. Francis and the Christ-child now become the centre of our attention, and the two animals are barely noticeable, each being the same size as the Child.

The crucifix is added to the scene in Giotto's depiction; this again reminds us of the inextricable link between birth and death.

Courtesy: [source:churchtimes.co.uk/december2023](http://source.churchtimes.co.uk/december2023)

Continued from Page 01

COVER STORY

OUT OF THE SALT SHAKER

in the fabric, threatens the very foundation of our existence. Deforestation, pollution, over-exploitation of natural resources, and climate change cast a shadow over the future, jeopardizing life.

Why do Bible-believing Christians ignore these social evils and injustice? Why do they act as if they aren't supposed to take action? "The Lord will come and fix this broken planet," many say. This anthem of defeat has crippled the Church. She is in no hurry to cover up her apathy.

Jesus taught his disciples, "You are the light of the world. ... let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Matt 5:14-16) Christians, called to embrace love and compassion, cannot turn a blind eye to social evils. Their faith must compel them to mend society's torn fabric, pursue justice, and advocate for the marginalized.

The teachings of Jesus, who identified with the poor and preached radical redistribution of wealth, motivated several churches and Christian NGOs worldwide to fight against poverty.

Volunteering and charity, while essential, are merely patches over the hole; true justice demands a complete reweaving of the economic landscape. Christians must address the systemic causes of poverty through advocacy for equitable wages, adequate compensation to people displaced by "development" projects, equitable

access to resources, and responsible economic policies.

Similarly, guided by Christ's command, "Love thy neighbor as thyself", Christians must actively dismantle discriminatory structures. Challenging prejudiced narratives, promoting fair representation, and fighting for equal rights are all threads in the intricate tapestry of building an inclusive society.

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you, don't resist an evildoer. On the contrary, if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also." Inspired by such teachings of non violence and peace, Christians are to be agents of reconciliation. Promoting conflict resolution, advocating for disarmament, and supporting victims of violence are all crucial steps in weaving a society free from fear and blood-shed.

Goaded by the biblical mandate to care for creation, Christians must vigorously pursue environmental justice. Protecting natural resources, advocating for sustainable practices, raising awareness about ecological issues, and speaking up for the rights of indigenous people are threads in the urgent task of mending the planet.

However, addressing social evils is not merely a matter of individual actions or isolated initiatives. It demands a collective effort, a tapestry

woven with the threads of collaboration and community. Christians can partner with other faith communities, civil society organizations, and government agencies to amplify their voices and broaden their impact. Collaborative advocacy, joint campaigns, and shared resources can strengthen their fight for justice.

Furthermore, Christians must acknowledge the limitations of human efforts. As far as a Christian is concerned, his hope does not rest on the might of his works but in the transforming power of God's love. Prayer is an essential thread in the pursuit of justice. A Christian seeks divine guidance and strength through prayer. Only through a combination of human action and divine grace can the torn fabric of society truly be mended.

In conclusion, Christians, guided by their faith and empowered by love, have a sacred responsibility to engage in the battle against social evils. By addressing poverty, discrimination, violence, and environmental degradation, they weave justice and equity into the fabric of society. This pursuit requires individual commitment, collaborative action, and unwavering faith in the power of love to mend the torn fabric of our world. Like Joseph, who gathered small lots of grain to bring sustenance, let us gather our efforts and resources to stitch together a tapestry of hope, justice, and peace.

SPEAK UP FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES; ENSURE JUSTICE FOR THOSE BEING CRUSHED. YES, SPEAK UP FOR THE POOR AND HELPLESS, AND SEE THAT THEY GET JUSTICE.

PROVERBS 31:8-9





Boeing 737 Max review to take more time: FAA



Alaska Airlines says emergency inspections of its fleet of Boeing 737 Max 9 planes mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration “will take more time,” warning flight disruptions will likely continue after the terrifying incident aboard one of its flights in which a section of the plane blew off the aircraft mid-flight. On Saturday, the FAA ordered all Boeing 737 Max 9 aircraft to be grounded until they are carefully inspected. Eighteen

of Alaska’s 737 9 MAX aircraft operating on Saturday after being inspected have now been pulled from service “until details about possible additional maintenance work are confirmed with the FAA,” the airline said. The Federal Aviation Administration ordered the temporary grounding of Boeing 737 Max 9 aircraft, the model involved in an Alaska Airlines emergency landing in Oregon on Friday after a section of the plane apparently blew out in midflight. The FAA said the planes must be parked until emergency inspections are performed, which will “take around four to eight hours per aircraft.” “The FAA requires immediate inspections of certain Boeing 737 Max 9 planes before they can return to flight,” FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker said Saturday in a statement. “Safety will continue to drive our decision-making as we assist the (National Transportation Safety Board’s) investigation into Alaska Airlines Flight 1282.” The order impacts 171 Boeing 737 Max 9 jets, the agency approximates. Boeing said the company supported the FAA’s grounding decision.

World News

The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.

Proverbs 29:7



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Ecuador's security situation deteriorates

World News

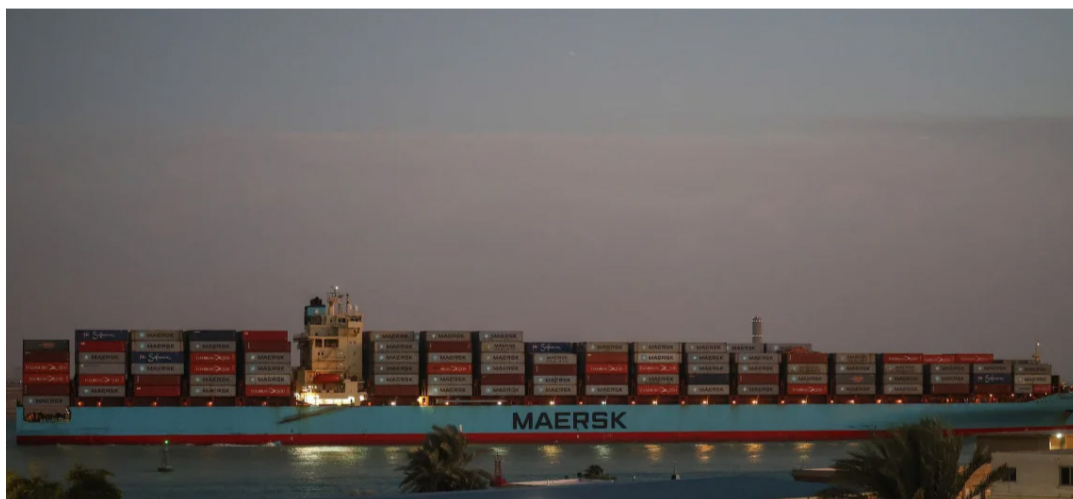


Ecuador's worsening security situation deteriorated further in spectacular fashion this week, with gunmen armed with explosives storming a TV station during a live broadcast. The country has been rocked by blasts, police kidnappings, and prison disturbances in a wave of violence authorities are struggling to contain.

Ecuador, home to the Galapagos islands and a tourist-friendly dollar economy was once known as an "island of peace," nestled between two of the world's largest cocaine producers, Peru and Colombia. But the country's deep ports have made it a key transit point for cocaine making its way to consumers in the United States and

Europe. And its dollarised economy also makes it a strategic location for traffickers seeking to launder money. Ecuadorian gangs are working with foreign syndicates, including Mexican cartels, Brazilian urban gangs, and even Albanian mafia cells, fueling the ongoing conflict. The root of this week's violence is the escape of high-profile gang leader Adolfo "Fito" Macías from a prison in Guayaquil on Sunday. In response to the escape, President Noboa declared a nationwide state of emergency, and more than 3,000 police officers and members of the armed forces were deployed to find Macías. Noboa has declared an "internal armed conflict" in the country, ordering security forces to "neutralise" several criminal groups accused of spreading extreme violence. The state of emergency will last for 60 days and imposes a nightly curfew from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m., Noboa said Monday, adding it grants security forces "all the political and legal support for their actions." Noboa also said he had authorised security forces to retake control of the restive prison system, which he said "has been lost in recent years."

UN demands Houthi's stop brazen attacks



The United Nations Security Council on Wednesday approved a resolution calling on Yemen's Houthi rebel group to "cease its brazen" attacks in the Red Sea, as the United States and Britain hinted at military strikes. The warnings come as the Iran-backed militants continue a weeks-long campaign to launch drones and missiles at vessels in the commercially vital shipping lane, which they say are revenge against Israel for its military campaign in Gaza. The UN Security Council vote was eleven in favour, zero against, and four abstentions, including Russia and China. The US and other nations have several ships in the Red Sea as part of Operation Prosperity Guardian, a multinational effort of more than 20 countries to safeguard shipping in one of the world's most critical waterways. US Navy warships have shot down many of the Houthi projectiles in recent weeks, including a particularly sustained barrage of attacks. There have been at least 26 Houthi attacks since November 19, threatening the global economy by preventing shipping through the Red Sea and Suez Canal to the north. US Navy helicopters sank three Houthi boats in the Red Sea after coming under fire on December 31 as they aided a commercial ship, the Maersk Hangzhou. The crews of the Houthi boats were killed. There have been at least twenty-six Houthi attacks since November 19, threatening the global economy by preventing shipping through the Red Sea and Suez Canal to the north.

Japan tightens its air traffic control processes

Japan has tightened its air traffic control protocols after a fiery collision at Tokyo's main airport in which five people died. Still, hundreds escaped to safety, the government said on Wednesday (Jan 10). All 379 passengers and crew on the airliner were swiftly evacuated, but five of the six crew died on the smaller plane, which was heading to deliver supplies to an earthquake-hit region. Under the new requirements nationwide, a staff member must constantly watch a monitoring system that alerts control towers when runway incursions occur. And to prevent misunderstandings, controllers must not tell planes what number in line they are for take-off, the ministry said in statements uploaded to its website. "One of my biggest missions is to restore confidence in aviation as public transport," Transport Minister Tetsuo Saito said Tuesday. The ministry will set up an expert panel to investigate further ways to improve safety, with their recommendations to be announced this week. A transcript of communications released by the ministry last week suggested that the JAL plane was cleared to land, but the Coast Guard plane was instructed to halt before the runway.

Controllers told the Coast Guard plane it was "No 1", meaning next in line for take-off. But the Coast Guard pilot - the only survivor - has reportedly said he believed he had clearance to move onto the runway, where his plane stood for around 40 seconds before the crash.

Maldives & India spat after Modi Lakshadweep visit



Narendra Modi/X (Twitter)

Pristine beaches in India and Maldives have emerged at the heart of a spat that has erupted between the two countries following derogatory comments posted by Maldivian ministers about Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and subsequent calls by Indians to boycott the picturesque archipelago as a holiday destination. The incident occurred when Maldives was seen moving closer to China under President Mohamed Muizzu, who took office in November. Indians accounted for the largest

number of visitors to Maldives' tropical beaches last year, making up more than 11% of tourists. Tourism accounts for about a quarter of the gross domestic product of Maldives and is vital for the nation of half a million. According to domestic media reports, India's foreign ministry summoned the Maldivian envoy in New Delhi on Monday to convey its concerns over the comments about Modi. The controversy has erupted as ties between Maldives and India have strained since President Muizzu took office. Muizzu is currently on a state visit to Beijing – he broke the tradition of newly-elected Maldivian presidents heading to India for their first foreign visit. He had campaigned on an "India Out" platform, saying he would reverse his predecessor's "India First" policy. Since taking office, he has asked New Delhi to withdraw a small contingent of 70 military personnel deployed on the islands to assist in maritime surveillance, search and rescue operations and medical evacuations. He has also scrapped an agreement with the Indian navy for a hydrographic survey and said he will review over 100 agreements signed by the previous government with India.

Bottled plastic bottles, hundreds of thousands of microplastics.

Microplastics have been found on every part of the planet. The tiny particles of this anthropogenic material have been found buried in Antarctic Sea ice, inside the guts of marine animals inhabiting the deepest ocean trenches, and in drinking water worldwide. A new study has found that bottled water can contain up to 100 times more tiny pieces of plastic than was previously estimated. According to a study by researchers at Columbia and Rutgers universities in the US, the average litre of bottled water contains almost a quarter of a million nanoplastic fragments. The researchers analysed five samples of three common bottled water brands and found nanoplastic levels ranging from 110,000 to 400,000 per litre, with an average of around 240,000. The scientists say much of the plastic appears to be coming from the bottle itself and that it is unknown whether plastic ingestion poses a serious health risk. Plastics aren't just ubiquitous in water. They are also spread widely on agricultural land and can even end up in our food. A study from Cardiff University in the UK found that 86 trillion to 710 trillion microplastic particles contaminate European farmland yearly. This means that, unwittingly, we may be eating tiny plastic fragments with every bite we take. But some plants seem to take up these plastics more than others. For example, some analysis indicates that plastics tend to accumulate in plant roots, meaning leafy vegetables such as lettuce may have lower concentrations than carrots, radishes, and turnips. While the health effects of ingesting microplastics are still unclear, they have been found to make their way into the human bloodstream. Swapping out plastic packaging could help reduce exposure – tap water has lower levels of microplastics than water from plastic bottles. But it would also have environmental repercussions. While glass bottles have a high recycling rate, they also have a higher environmental footprint than plastic and other packaging used for liquids, such as drink cartons and aluminium cans. This is because silica mining, which glass is made of, can cause significant environmental damage, including land deterioration and biodiversity loss. Even with these non-plastic receptacles, it's hard to escape microplastics entirely.

India deploys warships to Arabian Sea after attack on tanker

India has said it is sending three warships to the Arabian Sea after a drone hit an "Israel-affiliated" merchant vessel off its western coast last week. MV Chem Pluto was attacked about 200 nautical miles (370km) off the coast of the western state of Gujarat. The attack triggered a fire but the crew quickly extinguished it. There were no casualties. The vessel's crew included 21 Indians and a Vietnamese citizen. The MV Chem Pluto is a Liberia-flagged, Japanese-owned, and Netherlands-operated chemical tanker. British Maritime Security firm Ambrey said the ship was linked to Israel but didn't specify the connection. Indian media reports said the vessel was transporting oil from Saudi Arabia and was heading to the Mangalore Port in southern India when the attack took place.

After the attack, an Indian Coast Guard ship accompanied the MV Chem Pluto to Mumbai on Monday. "Considering the recent spate of attacks in the Arabian Sea, Indian Navy has deployed Guided Missile Destroyers, INS Mormugao, INS Kochi and INS Kolkata in various areas to maintain a deterrent presence," the navy statement said. The navy added that it was also regularly flying a long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft to monitor the situation. India heavily relies on fuel shipments from the Middle East, particularly from Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Any disruption in this route can be problematic for India. "India plays the role of a net security provider in the entire Indian Ocean region," Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said.