

# MAITRI 2024

IN PURSUIT OF MATURITY IN CHRIST



**PRESENCE**



**LOVE**



**COMPASSION**



**COURAGE**



**Be still, and know that I am God** Psalm 46:10

**Maitri**  
**2024 Bible Studies**

**Chaplaincy**  
**Christian Medical College**  
**Vellore**

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*Dear Friends,*

*It is with immense joy that we publish the twenty second volume of Maitri for the year 2024. "Maitri" in Sanskrit means "Friendship". This was prepared with the intention of providing a framework for our weekly departmental reflection of the Bible for our institution.*

*The theme for the year, as reflected in the cover page, is "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46: 10). We have included biblical reflections, which speak about experiencing stillness within in our relationship with God and with one another. This stillness will enable us to be kind, humble, compassionate, loving, gentle, joyful, forgiving, hopeful and courageous, and to have patience and empathy. The emphasis on 'Patient First' will lead us to become 'Good Samaritans,' and caring for the 'Strangers.' The reflections on missionaries and mission will surely inspire us.*

*We take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to this volume and those who took pain to edit, translate into Tamil, design the cover page and make the production possible on time.*

*May our discussions and reflections bring clarity in thinking, commitment in our work, and peace and harmony in our relationships. May we grow deeper in our maturity in Christ.*

*With best wishes and prayers,*

*Chaplain*

*January, 2024*

## **Aunt Ida's Prayer**

*Father, whose life is within me and whose love is ever about me, grant that Thy life may be maintained in my life today and everyday; that with gladness of heart, without haste or confusion of thought, I may go about my daily tasks, conscious of ability, to meet every rightful demand, seeing the larger meaning of little things, and finding beauty and love everywhere and in the sense of Thy presence may I walk through the hours breathing the atmosphere of love rather than anxious striving.*

## **VISION STATEMENT**

The Christian Medical College, Vellore seeks to be a witness to the healing ministry of Christ, through excellence in education, service and research.

## **THE OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the Christian Medical College, Vellore is the establishment, maintenance and development of a Christian Medical College and Hospitals in India, where men and women shall receive an education of the highest grade in the art and science of medicine, nursing, or one or other of the related professions, to equip them in the spirit of Christ, for service in the relief of suffering and in the promotion of health.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The primary concern of the Christian Medical College, Vellore is to develop through education and training, compassionate, professionally excellent, ethically sound individuals who will go out as servant-leaders of health teams and healing communities. Their service may be in promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative or palliative aspects of health care, in education or in research.

In the area of research, CMC strives to understand God's purposes and designs, fostering a spirit of enquiry, commitment to truth and high ethical standards. Research may be aimed at gaining knowledge of the fundamental bases of health and disease, at improving interventions or in optimising the use of resources.

In the delivery of health care, CMC provides a culture of caring while pursuing its commitment to professional excellence. CMC is committed to innovation and the adoption of new, appropriate, cost-effective, caring technology.

CMC reaffirms its commitment to the promotion of health and wholeness in individuals and communities and its special concern for the disabled, disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable.

CMC looks for support and participation in its programmes in education, service, outreach and research, from friends and like minded agencies in India and abroad, in a true spirit of partnership.

In its role as a living witness in the healing ministry of Christ, CMC seeks to work in partnership both with the church in India and the universal church, and their institutions.

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## **Dr. Ida Scudder's Words of Faith, Hope And Love**

'I especially thank God for leading me to India to work among these women I love and for whom I love to work' *Dr. Ida Scudder, 1901*

'Follow your gifts with prayers, dear friends. We need help and guidance, strength and patience and this can only come from our Master' *Dr. Ida requests prayers from her supporters, 1906*

'We shall endeavor to instill into their minds [students'] the great importance of a pure self-forgetful large hearted service... that all who go out from here will be filled with the same spirit of love and sympathy which was manifested by the Christ when he was on earth' *Dr. Ida, during inauguration of the medical school, 1918.*

'Our master has called each one of us to serve Him and that is why we came to India – not for money or possession – we came to serve – and in serving Him, to serve India and to help prepare you to serve this great land of yours' *Dr Ida, welcoming students in 1922*

We learn very little in this life from success. Success feeds ego, failure chastens it. Success makes you look up and the sun dazzles you; failure forces you to look down and you mind your steps. Those who can fail and learn, who can try and fall and get up and go on, who can make a new start, and be defeated and still go on are those who succeed at the end.' *Dr. Ida, 1934*

'We would often have been faint hearted and have lost courage and have been ready to give up the struggle, but as someone has said "our steps of faith have often fallen on a seeming void, but we have always found the rock beneath.' *Dr. Ida, 1940*

'... problems have been tremendous and insurmountable, and had we not turned again and again to the Master's promises... we would often faint hearted and lost courage and been ready to give up the struggle... Many a time during the past years we have had to go to the watch tower of prayer and have bowed in silence awaiting God's instructions and commands to us...' *Dr. Ida, 1940*

Life, a full marvelous life is opening before you – Go out into it with Christ – your Saviour and Master. Keep very close to Him. He is always near, ready to uphold you. Like the sunshine. When you stand in clear beautiful sunlight you do not ask – where is the sun light? No – for it is all around you. That's like Christ's love – enfolding you.' *Dr. Ida, 1948 at the age of 78.*

**“Show Me Your Ways”****Exodus 33: 12 - 23****Key verse:** *The LORD said, “My presence will go with you, I will give you rest” Exodus 33: 14*

Moses was given the seemingly impossible task of leading a stiff-necked group of people. During this time of crisis and helplessness Moses asks God a lot of questions.

**Verse 13: “Show me your ways”:** Like Moses, all of us expect God to show us the blueprint of our lives. We want our future to be made clear to us. We want God to act as a fortune teller. But God says, **“My presence will go with you, I will give you rest” (v.14).**

We can travel by road using a map or GPS or we can travel with a friend who knows the way. When Moses said, “Don’t let me go unless You go with me,” God replied, “I am in control. I will go with you!” Let us have this assurance of God’s presence and depend on him as we begin this year. The future may not be known to us, but God will be with us each and every step of the way!

**Verse 18: Show me your glory:** We expect God to perform great things in miraculous ways in our lives. God says to us, “I will show you my grace and I will show myself in your helplessness—where you cry for help, where people struggle for living.” Instead of expecting God as a miracle worker, can we hear God’s voice in the places and in the lives of our patients who experience pain and suffering? Prophet Elijah found God neither in the earthquake nor the wind, but in the still small voice (1 Kings 19). Let’s ask ourselves, “Are we looking for God in the wrong places?”

**Verse 20-23: Longing to see God’s face:** This is like asking, “Show me your face.” Moses wants to see God, but God does not reveal his face to Moses. Instead, God allows Moses to see his back so that Moses will know it was indeed God. Moses may have not seen God the way he expected to see God, but there was no doubt that God was there!

When we pass through troubles, we may not

be able to see God. But looking back we will know that God was present in the midst of our pain. At times, we may fail to experience the certainty of God’s presence. We may be taken to Gethsemane or Calvary—places where even Jesus cried out, ‘My God My God Why hast Thou forsaken me?’ But remember, God is always with us!

As we begin this year, as we enter uncharted territory, let us trust God and be assured of his presence. The mother eagle breaks up its nest and allows the eaglets to fall. She does this so that her babies will get a chance to open their wings and learn to fly. Let the Lord teach us to fly. Don’t resist. He stands watching to protect us and carry us. God’s ‘goodness and mercy shall follow’ us. The ever-faithful God who has led us this far, will continue to lead us!

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. How can we experience God in times of certainties and uncertainties in life?
2. Take time to “look back” in your own life and “recall” moments when God has indeed shown up and answered your prayers.

*Pray for:*



**Directorate**

**Promotion and PTP Office**

**Hospitality and International Relations**

**The CMC Vellore Association**

**Quality Management Cell**

**Development Office**

Missions Department

CSI Trichy – Tanjore Diocese

Hospital: CSI Mission General Hospital, Trichy and others

**Importance Of Personal Devotion**

**Ephesians 6:10-18**

**Key verse:** *“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions will all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying...” Ephesians 6:18*

If we turn to the person sitting next to us and ask them whether they think spending time with God is important, I think it is safe to assume that the answer will always be “YES” every time. However, the fact of the matter is that, even though we are quick to agree that it is important, we are all too busy! Since personal devotion and spending quality time with God would mean reading the Bible, meditating and reflecting on what we have read, praying, listening for God’s voice, so on and so forth, who has time for all that, right?

*1. Remember to set time apart for God, not because it is easy, but because it is necessary!*

We have to remember that spending time with God is not an option. This realization needs to happen sooner than later. In spite of our very busy schedule, we do not forget to eat because we know that our body needs the energy, and we never forget to charge our phones, or put petrol/diesel in our vehicles. If we are convinced that we **have to** do certain things and we truly put our minds into it, we make sure it happens. I once came across a meaningful writing that goes, “When God wanted to create fish, God spoke to the sea. So, if you take a fish out of water, it will die. When God created trees, God spoke to the earth. So, if you remove a tree from the soil, it will die. Likewise, because we are made in the image of God, if we are disconnected from God, we too cannot go on living.”

*2. Remember communication is not a one-way street, it is a conversation!*

Personal devotion is not only about giving our lists of demands to God. It is also about listening to God, and listening for God’s voice. If we are willing to sacrifice our time, God will definitely speak to us. The more time we spend with God, the closer we are to God. So, listen!

We lose out on many things because we do not give enough time for God. Like the hymn writer wrote:

What a friend we have in Jesus  
 All our sins and griefs to bear  
 What a privilege to carry  
 Everything to God in prayer.  
 O what peace we often forfeit,  
 O what needless pain we bear,  
 All because we do not carry  
 Everything to God in prayer.

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. How do we honor God as individuals and as an institution?
2. “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy” (Exodus 20:8). Discuss.

*Pray for:*



**Anaesthesia**

**Neuro Anaesthesia**

**Operation Theatre, SICU & HDU**

Christian Assemblies in India,  
 Hospital: Tiruvalla Medical Mission,  
 Sankeshwar Mission Hospital,  
 Ambajipeta Women’s Hospital,  
 Narsapur Christian Hospital and others

## Nehemiah: His Plans and Priorities

Nehemiah 2: 11 - 18

**Key verse:** "I told them that the hand of my God had been gracious upon me... Then they said, "Let us rise up and build!" So they committed themselves to the common good" Nehemiah 2:18

We live a very busy life doing many things, yet miss out doing things that are important. Most of us spend time on what is urgent and not what is important. Hence, prioritising and focusing on the non-negotiable in life become inevitable.

When Nehemiah, a cupbearer to the King of Persia living in Babylonia as an exile, heard the news about the devastating condition of his city, Jerusalem, and his people, he was deeply distressed. He then set out to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem so that his people would be able to live safely.

Nehemiah gave God the utmost importance. His foremost priority was prayer. Nehemiah prayed continually before approaching the king. He prayed for nearly four months for the restoration of Jerusalem. Prayer is needed even before our planning starts.

Some other qualities too are evident in Nehemiah's life. These qualities helped him to prioritise and remain focused:

1. He was **compassionate** - when he learned of the suffering of his people, he sat down and cried (Chapter 1).
2. He was a **visionary** - he captured the hearts of the people to help in rebuilding the walls. He was a masterful motivator. To show up and be able to rally the people to work together was an amazing feat (Chapter 2).
3. Faced oppositions with **courage** - when he confronted opposition, he held the people together, spoke with strength and determination and confidence (Chapter 4, 6).
4. **Organising** people around the focused work - Nehemiah quickly assembled working teams to rebuild the wall (Chapter 3)
5. **Integrity** - when Nehemiah learned about various practical issues of the people, he quickly brought light to it and put a new

solution and system in place (Chapter 5, 13). Coming to CMC and its founder, Ida Scudder accomplished God's plan through an enlightening experience she had when she was unable to help three women in childbirth. That experience convinced her to revisit and rework her priority – to return to India as a medical missionary now topped her priority list.

God has given us the vision and call to build the broken lives of people around us through our prayer and action. We can achieve extraordinary things for God by setting our priorities right.

### **For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. What are some of the plans you are having as a department or as a unit? What are the qualities you need to fulfil your plans or meet your goals?
2. How do we keep a balance between achieving our goals and building our teams with compassion, courage and integrity?

*Pray for:*



### **Accounts**

#### **Internal Audit**

Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Hospital: Baer Christian Hospital, Chirala,  
Ruth Sigmon Memorial Lutheran Hospital  
Guntur and others.

Arcot Lutheran Church

Hospital: Danish Mission Hospital, Tirukoiloor  
and others

All India Association for Christian Higher  
Education

Australian Board of Vellore CMC

**Patient First****Deuteronomy 15: 7 - 11**

**Key verse:** “So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets” Mathew 7: 12

The Director of CMC had expressed through a broadcast sent on 27 June 2023, that he was delighted to reach out to the staff to unveil the ‘Patient First’ campaign, a significant initiative that embodies the very essence of our institution.

He wrote: “What does ‘Patient First’ mean to us, as members of the CMC Vellore family? Could it be that we treat every patient with the same level of care and compassion as we would for our own family members? Perhaps it is through listening to them attentively, offering a warm smile, or making their journey as smooth as possible, removing any unnecessary obstacles along the way. Each of us has a role to play in the patient journey through our portals, from a welcoming entry to a fulfilling exit, all the while, ensuring their wellbeing throughout.”

As individuals, we are like tiny grains of sand, which collectively ensures that the pillars of our institution stay upright. Could we all, in our unique ways, carry a little more weight to lessen the burden around us? In doing so, we uphold and reinforce our commitment to the Institution’s Vision and Mission.

The following values emphasize and reaffirm our dedication to providing the highest quality of patient care, in line with the healing ministry of Christ by enhancing communication with our patients, and attending to their needs with utmost care:

- **Service with Compassion** - Providing compassionate care in all interactions
- **Empathy & Care** – Looking after patients putting ourselves in their shoes
- **Respect & Courtesy** – Greeting patients with a smile to brighten their day and being kind
- **Valuing patient’s needs** – Providing patients with what they need by going the extra mile.
- **Integrity & Unity** - Being honest and trustworthy; compassionate to each other & working together as a team

- **Commitment** - Resolving to give patients the best care possible

- **Excellence** - Doing our best in all situations
- As we read in 1 Peter 4:10: “Each of us should use whatever gift we have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms”, let’s keep in mind that ‘Together we are Patient’s Experience!’

Deuteronomy 15:10 instructs us to “Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to”. In the Bible, the term “giving generously” has a profound meaning. It does not just imply financial help rendered to those in need, but also using God-given time and talents to selflessly serve people. May our conduct and communication reflect Christ through acts of kindness and compassionate care.

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. How can we win the trust of our patients? What steps can we take to improve staff-patient relationship?
2. In our busy work schedule, how can we show compassion and kindness to people around us?

*Pray for:*

**Accident & Emergency Medicine**

CSI Karnataka Dioceses

Hospital: CSI Hospital, Bangalore,

CSI Basel Mission Hospital, Gadag

CSI Holdsworth Memorial Hospital, Mysore and others

CSI Krishna – Godavari Diocese

Friends of Vellore, Sweden.



**Be Still before God****Psalm 46**

**Key verse:** “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him...” Psalm 37:7

The world around us can be very noisy. Life has got its own challenges and we find it difficult to face them. We long to have stillness and peace. When a prominent and respected person enters a room, we see a significant beauty of silence expressed among the people in the room. God who created us delights to offer himself to us, whereby we experience stillness and peace. The word ‘Still’ used in Psalm 46 is the translation from the Hebrew word Rapa which means ‘to cease’, ‘slacken down’, or ‘let down’. Let us look at three pathways to understand the stillness in God:

*1. Seek God:* “Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near” (Isaiah 55: 6) - In your stillness, seek God. Allow God to speak to you. God is eagerly waiting to embrace you with his love. He is never far away from any of us. He responds to our call. He takes us to the quiet waters and the green pastures. He restores our soul. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life.

*2. Ponder anew:* To ponder means to “weigh carefully in mind” and “consider thoughtfully”. “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19). At the birth of Jesus, Mary witnessed the mighty act of God. She was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. She was pleasantly surprised to bear the Saviour of the world in her womb. Her eyes were opened to see the God of possibilities.

How often do you allow the mighty and wonderful deeds of God to occupy your mind?

Joachim Neander in his famous hymn wrote: “Ponder anew what the Almighty can do, who with His love doth befriend thee.” When we do it, the outcome is peace, joy and gratitude.

*3. Experience Salvation:* “In repentance and rest is your salvation; in quietness and trust is your strength” (Isaiah 30:15). The world gives importance to dominant voices. The ‘mighty’ and the ‘loud’ seem to get away with what they want. But God’s way is just the opposite. In quietness, we are asked to mend our ways and trust in God. That is the way to salvation.

Therefore, let us seek God, ponder his deeds and experience his salvation. Much happens when we are still.

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. What are the events which disturbed your inner peace in the last week?
2. In the midst of a busy and burdensome day what are some of the practices which can be practised to experience stillness within?

*Pray for:*

**Clinical Biochemistry****Biochemistry**

CNI Synod –

The Synodical Board of Health Services

Hospital: St. Stephen’s Hospital, New Delhi,

Lady Willingdon Hospital, Manali.

Fruit of the Spirit - Love

Mark 12: 28 - 34

**Key Verse:** *If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing” I Corinthians 13: 3*

In the gospels, when Jesus was asked “What is the greatest commandment?” he replied saying, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” Having received this most important command from God, we should make efforts to follow this and be persistent in our efforts. In most of Jesus’ sayings and teachings we find that love plays a central role.

Let us understand the word “Love.” Today, in the context of language and communication, this is probably one of the most misused and misunderstood words. We say things like, “I love my coffee. I love this dress. I fell in love. I love you. I love this scenery. I love samosa.” As we can see, the word “love” here is used to express an emotion. But is love just an emotion?

What then is love? Love is not just an emotion or feeling. Instead, love is a verb. It means to do something. If we love another person, we will do something for them, not just have feelings about them or for them. Says so in the letter of James, “What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works?” (James 2:14).

So, how do we love God? The Bible says, “The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also” (1 John 4:21). We love God by loving others, which includes, spouses, co-workers irrespective of their designations, neighbours, strangers, patients, people who are against us, and yes, even our enemies too. We love God by displaying and practicing the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5: 22).

We can recognise love by the acts of services we do for another. Not by what we say we are,

not by the symbols we wear, but by our actions, that should be the identity-marker. Sometimes this will mean going out of our comfort zone, sacrificing for others, taking risks, or even going the extra mile. We must put the interest of others before our own. We need to deny and sacrifice ourselves. We know that love is patient, love is kind, it is not rude, it bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things, and that love never ends.

God wants us to obey him, follow him and worship him as a response to his love. We should do it because we love God. We show our love to God by loving others through our actions. Love is the highest attribute. (MN)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Can you imagine a world without love? How do we grow in our genuine love for God and love for one another?
2. Share experiences where love transforms lives and situations.

*Pray for:*



**Chaplaincy**

Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI).

Christian Nurses League of the CMAI  
Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI)

Hospital: St. John’s Medical College and Hospital, Bangalore and others

**Look to the Cross****Lamentations 5: 1-5, 19-22**

**Key Verse:** “Why have you forgotten us completely? Why have you forsaken us these many days? Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored” Lamentations 5:20-21

There is something about the Book of Lamentations that leaves us with a heavy heart, and at the same time, allows us to make a strong connection. One scholar describes the Book of Lamentations as a “heart-breaking cry of pain and grief”. Yes, this book tells us about some of the most agonising forms of human misery. Many people lost their lives, their properties, and their livelihoods. They lost their freedom, their security, and their community. Simply put, the people felt God-forsaken.

This feeling is very common here in CMC. Our patients often come to feel as if God has left them, that God is not listening, and they cry, “God, where are you? Why are you not helping us?”

In our suffering we cry out like the person lamenting over the destruction of Jerusalem. We see our suffering as a sign of God’s absence, or indifference, or anger, and we too cry out, “Why have you forgotten us completely? Why have you forsaken us these many days?” (Lamentations 5:20).

This is when we look to the Cross, remembering that Jesus too cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34) Jesus came to suffer for us, and to suffer with us. We look to the Cross, knowing that Jesus understands our suffering. We look beyond the Cross to the Easter moment. We look to the Cross, the place of suffering and victory, the place where God chose to enter into the full depths of human experience at its most painful

moment. Yes, we look to the Cross because it is not a place of abandonment, but of meeting and sharing. We look to the Cross because it is where true healing occurs. We look to the Cross because it is where redemptive relationships are made.

(Reference: John C.B. Webster, *Hearing, Preaching, and the Indian Congregation.*)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Have you ever heard patients share moments when they felt abandoned by God? Share an experience.
2. How can we bring hope to people when they go through pain and grief?

*Pray for:*



**Ida Scudder School**  
**Balavihar School**  
**Campus Kids Corner**  
**Aadhya Vikas Kids Corner**  
**College Hill Nursery School**

CSI Dornakal Diocese

Hospital: CSI St. Mary’s Mission Hospital,  
 Khammam and Bishop White head Hospital  
 and others



## The Discipline of Reflection

Mark 10: 46 - 52

**Key verse:** "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" Mark 1: 35

Birds are known to have heightened levels of sensory sensitivity. Their ability to perceive sound, hear, see, and feel is incredible! Some birds have visual acuity for a few kilometres and possess the ability to see beyond, so to speak. The ability to see not just what is in front of us, but to look beyond is extremely important. It is also equally important to look behind, and learn from the past. A person is considered to be wise and possess great wisdom if he/she is able to look forward, backward, and inward!

One person started a retreat home where people could come and spend time to reflect upon their lives. Here, one could practice silence, do Bible based meditation, learn skills for listening with the heart, communicate with attentiveness, do certain acts of kindness, be attentive to the voice from within, improve upon self-directed learning, etc. These disciplines are extremely important.

When Jesus met with Bartimaeus, the blind man cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Then Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" Bartimaeus replied, "Let me see again!" This person knew exactly what he wanted. Though he was unable to see, he was clear and focused and knew exactly what he needed; though he was unable to see, he knew exactly who would be able to help him (Mark 10: 46 - 52). Though he was blind, he was able to see Jesus!

Another story was when Jesus met a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years (John 5). This man was sitting beside the pool of Bethesda, waiting for the pool to be stirred and waiting for his turn so that he could be healed. Jesus, upon seeing this man asked him, "Do you want to be made well?" The answer to this question is obvious. This man was at the pool

because he wanted to be made well! Then why did Jesus ask this question? Jesus wanted to hear about this man's life; Jesus was concerned about this man's pathological reality and what he really went through; Jesus wanted to hear about the struggles this man faced each and every day of his life; and most importantly, Jesus wanted those present there to hear this man's story!

What makes our life's journey insightful is the way we reflect upon our lives and live pursuing the call from within. All humans have this prospect of living from within, guided by the insight that comes by practicing the discipline of reflection and finding instruction for the path ahead. (MCM)

### **For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Practicing silence and solitude, meditating on God's Word and listening to God speaking to us can be practiced and developed – Discuss.
2. What opportunities and occasions are present in our day today life to improve our discipline of reflection? Do our department retreats help us to grow in this discipline?

*Pray for:*



### **Cardiology**

#### **Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery**

CSI Kanyakumari Diocese

Hospital: CSI Mission Hospital, Neyyoor and others

CSI Karimnagar Diocese

Friends of Vellore, Germany

## The Woman who Anointed Jesus

Mark 14: 1-11

**Key Verse:** “She has done what she could...” Mark 14:8

During the festival of the Jews, the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. While the festival was supposed to be a time of recollecting God’s redemptive act towards the people of Israel, it became an occasion for plotting Jesus’ murder.

During this festival, Jesus was in the house of Simon in Bethany. A woman with a bottle of very costly perfume opened it and poured it over Jesus’ head. Many became angry because of what the woman had done. But Jesus said to them, “Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? **She has done a beautiful thing for me.**”

Those people gathered at the house were only able to see the value and worth of the perfume in terms of its monetary value. What they proposed was to sell it and distribute the money to the poor. However, what they failed to see was the spirit of love, gratefulness and reverence with which the woman in the story performed this symbolic act, and that, as Jesus noticed, “She did what she could...” (Mark 14:8), or in other words, she did her level best for her Jesus.

This woman gave herself as an offering of worship in this symbolic act. Hers was an act of giving which made others envious and critical. Her pure and innocent action was misunderstood and misinterpreted (intentionally or unintentionally).

Even today, good intentions and generous acts of people can be viewed with suspicion. Our act of giving, even though it is an act of generosity, hospitality and self-giving, may still be seen by some as redundant, insignificant and trivial. It would be attributed to the motive for gaining favour in return. It may arouse suspicion; some

may even hate our actions.

Remember, God sees our hearts. Do not let what others say and think stop you from giving your all to God. Jesus said of the woman, “She has done what she could,” she has done whatever she can, she has given her best for me! Can you imagine Jesus saying this about what we have done for him, “He/She has done a beautiful thing for me!” (MCM)

### For Reflection and Discussion:

1. How can we stop judging people by looking at their external appearance and doings?
2. Do you think it is possible to have a deeper understanding about the feelings and good intentions of people who come into contact with us?

*Pray for:*



**Biostatistics**

**Bioengineering**

**Anatomy**

**Physiology**

Kristiya Seva Sansthan Sarenga, West Bengal  
and others

Christian Services Society of Bengal,

Orissa and Bihar Baptist Convention

Christian Mission Service, Germany

**Moral Numbness**

**John 12: 1 - 8**

**Key Verse:** *Jesus said: “He [my Father] cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful” John 15:2*

Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, conspired with the chief priests to betray Jesus. It is said that Judas “was a thief, and having charge of the money bag he used to help himself to what was put into it” (John 12:6). His behaviour was a self-annihilating act that lasted three and half years.

Having had a deceptive nature to his character, during the final meal with Jesus, he was given yet another opportunity to change by witnessing the self-giving act of a woman (John 12). For her, grateful living took precedence over attention to abundance of material possessions.

Before we fall into a moral slip, we are given gentle reminders for self-correction. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Levite and the Priest had an opportunity to recover from their moral numbness. But they ignored it and went on their way without helping the wounded neighbour!

When our moral bankruptcy is confronted, instead of finding the recovery path of restoring our moral fortitude, most of us fall into a self-deception. The woman used the meal time to renew her commitment to Jesus; Judas used the occasion to gain some more money. Judas finally lost the battle within himself.

We may think of occasions in our lives when there is a battle within us. Sometimes we may struggle to be transparent and truthful, but at the same time there may be this compulsive spirit that wants us to be successful at all cost, and a strong desire to self-promote. Sometimes it seems more convenient to mute our conscience and ignore Jesus’ words. We all have a mixture of these experiences—renewal and denial experiences!

When Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, he washed the feet of all his disciples, including the feet of Judas who he knew was going to betray him. Jesus also washed the feet of Peter who he knew was going to deny him (John 13: 6).

This is the hope that this Maundy Thursday brings to us! Jesus is still kneeling before us, washing our feet, knowing we are sinners. Jesus can only be loving and giving! That is why Maundy Thursday is an occasion to respond to his loving gestures towards us! (MCM)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Share about human moral numbness in life and our nature of falling into self-deception.
2. How can we come to have moral sensitivity and experience cleansing that Jesus brings to us?

*Pray for:*



**General Superintendent’s Office  
 Personnel Office  
 Hospital Management Studies &  
 Staff Training and Development  
 Hospital Annexe  
 Transport Department**

CSI Coimbatore Diocese,  
 Hospital: CSI Hospital, Erode.  
 Canadian Baptist Overseas Mission Board  
 Canadian Council of Churches,  
 Vellore - Ludhiana Committee of Canada

**Endurance on Good Friday**

**Matthew 26:36-46**

**Key Verse:** *“For consider him, who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself so that you may not grow weary and lose heart!” Hebrews 12: 3*

One needs to walk along the journey from Gethsemane to Calvary to feel the intensity of desertion Jesus suffered. One message from Good Friday, among other significant ones, is that pilgrimage is a lonely journey; the journey to be Christ-like may have to be taken alone. Yes, this can be a lonely path!

Jesus experienced aloneness of abandonment when he prayed in desperation in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross. Following the Gethsemane, a few followed him afar and some even lost their hope!

While Jesus was being led to Golgotha, there were some women who were following him, mourning and lamenting (Luke 23: 27). They had a strong desire to accompany the suffering servant, when he suffered and endured. But it was a very difficult experience. In the beginning they were willing, but as the journey kept going, even his own disciples deserted him (Luke 22:55-57).

There may come a time when we have to endure difficult moments alone, times when we walk through the valleys of life all alone! The proximity of others is not permanent or assured. Those who have good intentions to be companions may also fall out when they can no longer endure the challenge of fear, anxiety, alienation, or intimidation!

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews summarised the enduring life mission of Jesus of Nazareth; in Hebrews 12:1-3: *“... let us run the race with endurance the race that is set before us. Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before*

him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down the right hand of the throne of God. *For consider him, who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself so that you may not grow weary and lose heart!”*

The above passage is a call for endurance, and not to lose heart! The Good Friday is therefore a symbol for living enduringly and to not give up or lose heart! We endure and we keep on hoping because what followed the first Good Friday was Resurrection!

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Share any of your experiences of grief, loss and loneliness.
2. Patients and family too walk a lonely journey. Are we able to recognize and support them to bring strength and hope?

*Pray for:*



**Radiodiagnosis**

**Interventional Radiology**

South East Asia Union of Mission of Seventh

Day Adventists, Singapore

Hospital: Penang Adventist Hospital,

BMS World Mission

## Doing Good in Difficult Situations!

Luke 23: 50 - 56

**Key verse:** *“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” Galatians 6: 9*

Joseph of Arimathea, considered to be a righteous man, went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus so that he could bury Jesus in a tomb. His request was granted. So, Jesus' body was brought down from the Cross, then was wrapped in a linen cloth, and finally laid in a tomb.

It was a hopeless and fearful occasion – all the series of acts of hatred, rejection, scourging, humiliation, violence, etc. Jesus' followers watched all those ugly sights from a distance. It looked as though there was no space for fairness and justice, and the scene was of indignation and oppression. It was in that hostile setting that Joseph volunteered to offer Jesus an honourable burial, knowing fully well that this could have invited the wrath of the religious rulers and the civil authorities.

Yet, Joseph set out to be kind to Jesus. Joseph set out even when there seemed to be no space to do good. He, through his act of kindness, was able to give Jesus an honourable burial. Joseph created space to do good in the most unacceptable situation.

Joseph of Arimathea was a good and righteous man. He was one of the groups that waited for the Kingdom of God. He was a member of the local council who had not consented to the plan and action to crucify Jesus of Nazareth. It was the abundance of this goodness which enabled and empowered Joseph to honour Jesus and act differently from others in the Council.

To be present in difficult situations is straining and stressful. To find space to do acts of kindness and thoughtfulness is even more difficult! It takes intentionality. It takes courage. It takes wisdom. It is risky. To do the little or act kindly in a limited way, in a demanding or inhospitable situation, often is not the norm! But if anyone can do that, it is symbolic of the good news, and this can bring godliness in a difficult situation.

Remember, do not just give up when situations turn indifferent or stressful! Rather, create space to express acts of kindness towards others! This is a mission worth pursuing! (MCM)

### For Reflection and Discussion:

1. How do we see the hate and violence around us (war and communal clashes) where innocent children and ordinary people are killed? Is it possible to do good in those difficult situations?
2. How can we risk doing good, without being affected by self-pity, fear or anxiety in our day-to-day life?

*Pray for:*

**CMC Ranipet Campus**



**The experience of the Risen Christ**

**Luke 24: 28 - 35**

**Key verse:** : “Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him... They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road?” (Luke 24:31-32)

On the first day of the week, when some women went to the tomb where Jesus’ body was laid, they found the stone was rolled away (Luke 24:1). When they entered the tomb, the body of Jesus was not there. While they stood frightened, they encountered two men with bright clothes, saying, “He is not here...He has risen.” While the women were on the way to tell the disciples about the risen Jesus, Jesus himself appeared to them (Matthew 28: 9).

On another occasion, two confused followers of Jesus walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus during the afternoon came to experience the risen Jesus (Luke 24:13-35). They thought that Jesus was a stranger. But when their eyes were opened, they were able to see that it was Jesus who was with them.

On yet another occasion (John 21), we see how Jesus appeared to the disciples who went back to fishing. They toiled through the night and caught no fish (John 21:3). This speaks about the way the risen Jesus would appear to us! He would surprise us with his unusual and unique way of touching us at the time of our need.

- **The stones could not contain the purpose and plan of God:** The life events which make us feel stifled do not have the final word about our life or our future. The risen Christ has the final say on matters that are beyond our control!
- **We observe the spirit of the women who sought for Jesus:** It is those who search who shall find. In a parable that Jesus spoke about the woman who lost a coin, she searched till she found it! “Seek and you shall find...” (Matthew 7:7)
- **The experience of the two men:** The two men not recognising Jesus gives us some

consolation. We too may have gone through life on many occasions not noticing the presence of Jesus! Jesus is in our midst as our companion. The risen Jesus appeared to those who were waiting to see him (John 20: 24).

Looking for Jesus is a lifelong search for many of us. We experience Jesus at ordinary times. We might be more ready to experience him at difficult times. When life is caught in complex situations or in a web of constraints, the consciousness of the presence of the risen Christ can lead us to sense opportunities and pathways to proceed. (MCM)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Can we recall and share situations in our lives when the risen Christ have indeed accompanied us in our journey? Pause and reflect.
2. How do we come to experience the presence of God who is present and can direct our lives in our day-to-day life?

*Pray for:*



**College of Nursing**  
**College of Nursing Library**  
**Community Health Nursing**  
**Student Nurses Hostel**  
 Uttar Pradesh Regional Board of Health Services  
 Hospital: Christian Hospital, Kasganj, Memorial Hospital, Farrukhabad and others.

## Dr. Frank Garlick and His Call and Concern for Medical Professionals

**Philippians 3: 7 - 12**

**Key verse :** *“I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” Philippians 3: 14*

Dr Frank Garlick served as a Professor of Surgery in CMC, Vellore, between 1962 and 1970.

One time a student commented, “We are often told to consider the mission hospital as our future place of work. If we were to go to a mission hospital, who would care for us there?” This question moved Dr. Frank and he decided to become an itinerant surgeon. He visited mission hospitals to support young doctors and mentor them so that they could find fulfilment in their work. Dr. Frank had left his position at the CMC, Vellore in 1970.

For Dr. Frank, deciding to leave CMC Vellore was not an easy decision. He was an accomplished surgeon with extraordinary surgical skills and diagnostic acumen. He was popular among students and residents for his teaching and engaging skills. His colleagues looked up to him as a leader and mentor.

Dr. Frank Garlick worked with the Union of Evangelical Students of India (UESI), during 1970 - 1972. It was during this time that an attempt was made for the very first time to bring doctors and medical students together for a conference at Madras in 1972. There was an overwhelming response to the idea of forming a fellowship of medical students and doctors. The goal would be to bring focus on missionary vocation and ethical practice of medicine, to promote health and work towards healing and wholeness in health care.

Dr. Frank explored the vision for the formation of a fellowship, which led to the formation of the Evangelical Medical Fellowship of India (EMFI) in 1976.

Dr. Frank would address the tensions that health professionals would face in their lives –

the choice of a life partner, their place of work, how they set up a home and maintained healthy relationships, how they can trust God during uncertainties and failures to trust God, so on and so forth. He would challenge people to live integrated lives in conduct and character.

Dr. Frank referred to himself as a “Pilgrim doctor,” because he understood that he was on a journey to find the purpose of God in his life. This title suited him because he kept moving forward, rather than holding on to his achievements. His heart was set in following his Master’s call. Dr. Frank Garlick went to be with the Lord, leaving behind his wife, Val, and family in Brisbane, Australia on 13 January 2023. (MCM)

### For Reflection and Discussion:

1. Dr. Frank Garlick stood firm to fulfil the call of God in his life. What is the specific call that God has placed in front of you as individuals fulfilling the healing ministry? Share your thoughts.
2. As staff of CMC, what are the fellowships we have that bring encouragement in our life journey?

*Pray for:*



**Medical Superintendent’s Office**

**Private Consultation Facility**

**Alpha Clinic**

**Information Reception and Main Enquiry**

**International Relations Office**

**What is Christian in a Christian Hospital?**

**Colossians 3: 12 - 17**

**Key verse:** “And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity” Colossians 3: 14

Our institutions need to re-invent itself by renewing the vision at every stage, through a group of committed people at the heart of the institution.

What are the hallmarks of a Christian Hospital?

1. It should be open to the Grace of God through prayer, worship and retreats. Remembering that healing ministry is sacramental in nature. Mother Teresa said, “I see the face of my Lord in the mass in the morning, and I can then recognize his face in the sick and the dying on the streets of Calcutta.”
2. We are open to the needs of the world. Our agenda is set for us by the needs of the world around us. It is in the world that we meet the reality and the challenge of God.
3. There is a need for a small group or community of dedicated Christians at the heart of the hospital, committed to Christ and committed to the cause of the institution. For them, the cause of the institution is greater than their personal futures.
4. The ethics and standards of the institution should be higher than that of the world. This includes our ethical standards, our concern for the poor, our dealings in management especially with relation to the lower paid or junior staff.
5. Healing should be understood in a Christian hospital as involving body, mind and soul – restoration to the purpose of God.

6. The recognition of the healing team, where God, the medical team, the patients in care and family meet at the point of pain and suffering.

(Excerpts from Rev. A C Oommen’s talk in 2009)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. How can we grow in the spiritual dimension of our work when we are caught up in the daily demands of our lives?
2. What makes us unique and what are the non-negotiables as a Christian Hospital?

*Pray for:*



**Purchase**

**Stores**

**Central Receiving Section (CRS)**

**Central Sterile Supply (CSS)**

CSI Madras Diocese

CSI Kalyani Multi Speciality Hospital, Chennai

CSI Rainy Multi Speciality Hospital

CSI Hospital, Ikkadu and others.



**Fruit of the Spirit - Patience**

**Colossians 3: 12 - 17**

**Key verse:** “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience” Colossians 3:12

Working in the hospital is stressful. In our daily work, showing patience is extremely challenging. As a result, we are not patient enough with colleagues, juniors, or patients. In the hurry, often rude words are spoken which causes a lot of hurt and anger. Stress was very much present even during Ida Scudder’s time. The following are some excerpts from the book on Ida Scudder. (DC Wilson, *Dr. Ida Passing on the Torch of Life*).

“Patients crowded around her pulling at her dress, all talking at once.”

“Many were not content to be seen only once but must come back to tell of things forgotten, ask more questions or have directions repeated.”

“My one room is very crowded, and it is often hard to be patient. I always have to repeat my directions as to how and when to take their medication, how much and whether to take a special diet, etc.”

What is amazing about our institution is how even though it is extremely challenging and difficult, many doctors, nurses, technicians, MROs, and house-keeping staff are patient with everyone. How do they do it? What is their secret?

*1. Putting ourselves in the other person’s shoes:* Patience is one of the attributes of our loving God. We will be patient if we put the concerns of the other person before ours. When we are dealing with patients, we have to constantly remind ourselves that our concerns are much smaller than the concerns of patients. It is also important to try to understand their true situation and the struggle they have undergone to reach this place. When we think of all the struggles and troubles the patients have been through, e.g. long and difficult travel to visit the hospital and see the doctors, do tests, get reports, get medicines, etc., we realize the least we can do for them is show patience.

*2. Pray and ask God to grant us patience:* Having strong faith in the ever-loving and patient God will help us to be patient with others. If we ask for patience, he will give us patience (Luke 11:9-13). “So, I say to you, Ask, and it shall be given to you” (Luke 11:9) “If your child asks for bread, will you give a stone?” ... “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” (Matthew 7:9-11).

*3. Remember that patience is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22):* As Scripture reminds us, “Better to be patient than a warrior, and better to have self-control than to conquer a city” (Proverbs 16:32), “Patience leads to abundant understanding, but impatience leads to stupid mistakes” (Proverbs 14:29). (MN)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Is there any particular exercise we can follow in the midst of our busy and crowded working areas to keep our patience?
2. How did Jesus show patience when he was provoked by the Pharisees and Sadducees?

*Pray for:*

**Dodd Memorial Library**

**Gault Library**

**Archives**

CSI Jaffna Diocese

Hospital: Green Memorial Hospital, Manipay

CSI Tirunelveli Diocese

Hospital: CSI Jeyaraj Annapackiam Hospital,

CSI Bellpins Indrani Chelladurai Mission

Hospital, Palayamkottai and others



## Being a Good Samaritan

Luke 10: 30 – 35

**Key verse:** “But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him” Luke 10: 33

The parable of the Good Samaritan is one of the most popular parables. Today the word “Good Samaritan” has come to mean: “One who voluntarily renders aid to another in distress although under no obligation to do so,” or “Someone who helps people in trouble,” or “Someone acting selflessly to benefit others, even if total strangers.”

On September 23, 1909, Dr. Ida wrote in capital letters in her diary “THE NEW MOTORCAR CAME TODAY!” She was now ready to take “road-side clinics.”

Dr. Ida would stop to conduct a clinic under a shady tree or any convenient place in the village. Initially, at each of these clinics, anywhere between ten to fifty people would wait in line. Hearing the rattle of the engine and blasts of the horn, people would drop whatever they were doing and come running across the fields. They came with all sorts of ailments and diseases—dysentery, blindness, scabies, lameness, abscesses, broken bones, foreign objects in ears and noses, elephantiasis, leprosy, tumours, etc.

On November 24, 1909, she wrote in her diary: “Such a full day! 122 patients in Gudiyattam and 108 on the way, and I could have treated many more if there had been time. My heart was saddened by their need.” (Dorothy Clark Wilson, Dr. Ida Passing on the Torch of Life, p.129).

The statement, “My heart was saddened by their need,” has a profound meaning. In the passage we read today, the good Samaritan attended to the needs of a man who was bleeding and dying on a road at Jericho. The injured man was not known to him and he was not from his community. In all likelihood, he may not be able to pay back the expenses incurred by the Samaritan for his healthcare. That did not deter him. Aunt Ida was one of the best examples of

being a good Samaritan. Day in and day out, she toiled for the underprivileged people she came to serve, that too in a foreign land.

We as CMC community, are privileged to stand on the shoulders of giants like our founder Dr. Ida Scudder, who has responded to the call to be a ‘Good Samaritan’ leaving behind a legacy to be emulated. The ‘patient first campaign’ initiated in our institution re-emphasizes this legacy of compassion.

Understanding patient’s needs/expectations through the eyes of the patient is important, to provide best patient care. Everyone needs best treatment, a caring environment, cost effective & and efficient system.

### For Reflection and Discussion:

1. In our busy schedule as an institution, we need to contemplate how we can put into practice this concept of being a good Samaritan to all our patients.
2. What are the challenges to be a good Samaritan? Can we make this happen in our own creative ways?

*Pray for:*

Chaldean Syrian Church of the East  
Hospital: Mar Timotheus Charitable  
Hospital, Trissur  
Council of Christian Hospitals  
Serango Christian Hospital  
Christian Medical Centre Pithapuram  
CBM Bethel Hospital, Vuyyuru  
Star of Hope Hospital, Aikividu.



## Healing Ministry: Bridging Secular and Spiritual

Psalm 8: 1 - 9

**Key Verse:** *“What are human beings that you are mindful of them, and mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned them with glory and honour” Psalm 8: 4-5*

No matter where we turn to, there is always this tension between “the secular” and “the spiritual.” This is particularly evident in the healing ministry, where there is an on-going discussion on whether there is a correlation between science and faith, or whether they should remain separate entities. There is a great temptation to separate the two.

For the sake of our discussion, when we consider a person from a secular viewpoint, let us consider him/her, with all the working body parts and systems, as an efficient machine, which is wonderfully made with chemicals that can be repaired in a medical workshop. To this extent, we even can consider this “machine” with no emotions attached, and address this person as objectively as possible, even to the extent of calling this person an “it.” However, when we bring the spiritual aspect into this healing ministry, man or woman becomes so much more than just a machine. One of the main reasons is because man and woman are made in the image of God, and there is so much more than what meets the eye.

A big part of Jesus’ ministry involved healing the sick and suffering. His healing work was much more than just repairing a broken-down machine. For Jesus, the human person was not just a mysterious engine, but the abode of a Spiritual Reality. One cannot separate human beings into secular and spiritual; ***they are integrated instruments of divine purposes in building up God’s Kingdom. Healing, thus, is restoring a person for the purpose for which God created him or her.***

This divide between the secular and the spiritual, or the lack thereof, needs to be addressed. Medical work, with its scientific methods and technology, cannot be considered

to be a separate entity. Medical work needs to be seen for what it is, i.e., a gift from God, a channel, an instrument through which God works. It is not separate from the healing work done with focus on the spiritual. Medical work, science, the secular, or whatever or however we want to address it, is a gift from God, given to us to be used for holistic healing. They work hand in hand in the healing ministry because a person needs to be healed in body, mind, and spirit.

In the words of Mother Teresa, “When we touch a dirty, dying sick person, we are really touching God.” This is the unique mission entrusted with the healing ministry. (ACO)

### **For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Genesis 1: 26 - 28; 2: 7 and Psalm 139: 13 - 16 speaks about God’s intimate care in creating human beings. How can we come to fathom God’s creation of human and nature?
2. What should be done to endorse the inherent value and dignity of human beings, especially the patients whom we come to treat?

*Pray for:*



### **Computerised Hospital**

### **Information Processing Service (CHIPS)**

United Methodist Church of America  
Voluntary Health Association of India  
Vellore Christian Medical College  
Foundation Inc., USA

**Hypocrisy**

**Isaiah 58: 4 - 8**

**Key Verse:** “They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good” Titus 1: 16

Though rarely talked about in public, hypocrisy dominates private conversations. As much as we hate to admit, hypocrisy is very much around us. What may that look like in our context, in the context of CMC? Much may be said about many things, for e.g., with connection with our work ethics, or our expectation of our colleagues, or even the obvious case of punctuality, where a person who is hardly ever on time expects everyone else to be punctual.

The dictionary definition of the word hypocrisy is the practice of professing standards, beliefs, etc., that contradicts one’s real character or actual behaviour, especially concerning the pretence of virtue and piety. How should we deal with hypocrisy? How do we deal with our own hypocrisy? What do we do when we come face to face with other people’s hypocrisy? Jesus quoted from Isaiah, “These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Mark 7:6). Matthew 6 teaches us a great lesson on how one should not behave. Jesus reminds us that doing good deeds, helping others, praying, giving offertory, etc., should not be done in order to impress others. Rather, these should be a result or a direct outcome of our love for God and others. We need to take extra care when we are doing good deeds because it is so easy to lose focus and forget why we are doing what we are doing in the first place. We have to be alert and be very cautious because it is easier than we think to fall into the trap of hypocrisy.

In Matthew chapter 23 Jesus talks about hypocrisy extensively and is quite instructive. It is important to know what we should do when faced with hypocrisy. “So, observe and practice all they tell you: but do not do what they do, for they preach, but do not practice” (Matthew 23:2). Jesus’ instruction is to “Do as they say, not as they do.”

Those around us should be able to tell what we truly believe in, not by the symbols we wear, or by what or who we say we are. Our actions need to reflect what we truly believe in. God will be the judge. James 1:22-25 reminds us to be doers, and not just hearers of the word. The standard of comparison of our actions is supposed to be God’s standards and not against the standard of others. (MN)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. How do we check and prevent ourselves from falling into the trap of hypocrisy?

*Pray for:*

**Department of Medicine**  
**Geriatric Medicine**  
**Medical ICU and HDU**  
**Clinical Epidemiology Unit**  
**Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology**  
**Acute Medicine**  
**Poison Control Centre**  
 CSI North Kerala Diocese  
 Hospital: CSI Mission Hospital, Codacal and others



**Key Verse:** “For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it...” Luke 14: 28

In the 1930s, the struggle for independence with the message of social equality and economic justice was heard aloud in Kerala. Many youngsters were willing to throw away their future and securities to follow their ideals. On the other hand, the Student Christian Movement (SCM), a fellowship of the university students, best represented the spirit of Christian commitment. The young Tharien was part of the fellowships that met regularly for Bible study and prayer. Tharien was deeply touched by Christ and so he wanted to carry the message of Christ in his life and demonstrate it in his work and service.

In the 1940s, A. K. Tharien joined Miraj Medical School to do Licensed Medical Practitioner (LMP). He married Mariamma and spent some time in Ankola Ashram, Karnataka. They were both convinced that they would never fall into the trap of seeking after wealth. They also knew that they should serve only in a needy and backward region in India. They would accept a simple lifestyle, taking minimum for them and identifying themselves with the poor among whom they would be working.

After his MBBS at Stanley Medical College, Madras, while working at C.S.I Hospital, Kanchipuram, to gain practical experience under the missionary surgeon there, Dr. Tharien searched for a very needy place. The search led him to a famine stricken rural area in Oddanchatram, in Tamil Nadu.

Oddanchatram was a famine-stricken backward area in every respect. There was hardly any water supply, no electricity and no educational facility. There had been no rain for eight years. Missionaries who visited this place had seen people eating sawdust and raw leaves to mitigate the hunger. It was a place of high morbidity and mortality with chronic illnesses like leprosy, tuberculosis, deficiency diseases, malnutrition and water borne diseases. As there was so much poverty and unemployment, people were migrating to other areas in search of water, food and work. There was no doctor for an area of over 57 km.

Dr. A.K. Tharien invited Miss. P.I. Kujamma, who worked as a nurse in a mission hospital. She responded to God’s call. She came to Oddanchatram and started a clinic from July 1st 1954 in a house which was abandoned due to superstition, and

was given freely. From January 1955, Dr. Tharien started giving his full-time service to the Christian Fellowship Clinic, Oddanchatram. He occupied a small room with no facilities like furniture, latrine or bathroom. He adopted a lifestyle of the local villagers, sleeping on a mat on the floor and using the outdoors for a toilet. By June 1955, he got a mud walled bamboo house, meant for a coffee shop, for his wife and the children to stay.

Many others joined the community and the team was called the Christian Fellowship. Dr. Tharien and others agreed that God wanted them to venture out in faith and make an experiment with only Indian resources, saying ‘no’ to foreign aid. The goodwill, love, kindness and concern of the local people, irrespective of religion and caste, were the Oddanchatram Fellowship’s greatest asset.

The story of the Christian Fellowship is a testimony to the faithfulness of God in what can be done through a few men and women who tried to obey the divine call and submitted to God.

Reference: Jesudas M. Athyal, *An Adventure in Faith – The Story of Dr. A. K. Tharien*. Tiruvalla: CSS, 2004.

### **For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. As followers of Christ, how much are we able ‘to count the cost’ of following Christ? Can we commit to a life of simplicity, denial and sacrifice? How can we implement this teaching of Christ in our day-to-day life?
2. What are the things which we consider as our ‘rights’? And how far are we willing to give up our rights?

*Pray for:*

**Nursing Superintendent’s Office**  
**CSSD**

**Staff Nurses’ Hostel**

CMC Ludhiana, Punjab

CNI Nagpur Diocese

Hospital: Mure Memorial Hospital, Nagpur



## Interdependence

## I Corinthians 3: 5 - 15

**Key Verse:** *“For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field; you are God’s building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it...” I Corinthians 3: 9, 10*

Jennifer Breheny Wallace, in The Washington Post (August 14, 2023) writes: Many parents tend to focus on raising their children to be independent and self-reliant. Independence is undoubtedly valuable. It helps our children think for themselves, develop and pursue their passions, and become self-sufficient and capable.

While acknowledging the importance of independence, Jennifer quotes McLaughlin to stress the importance of emphasising interdependence in parenting. Lasting self-worth cannot come from approval based solely on external rewards, such as admission into a good college, good grades, good job, etc. Rather, an understanding of one’s inherent value comes from knowing one’s place in a community — from the sense that others value you and that you add value to others. **Only by building interdependence can children gain social proof that they do indeed matter.**

Children trained in the skills of interdependence better handle setbacks or the uncertainties of the future because they are grounded in their community.

One of the ways in which parents can teach their children interdependence is to model it themselves. The claimed virtue of independence has injected a large dose of selfishness, self-promotion and insensitivity in our generation. This shift can be seen in our personal life, married life, corporate and national philosophies. With technology allowing this kind of virtual cocooning, the feeling of “I can do it all” is contradicting the adage of “no man/woman is an island.”

Going beyond the realm of parenting and children, interdependence is needed in the workplace too. Someone expressed that

the “how to rely on others and how to be a person whom others can rely on” is valid for the workplace, given the relative increase in work-from-home (isolated employees), and freelancing. It is a good reminder for all of us. We all need friends we can rely on – and, in turn, have to be sure we are there for our friends and co-workers when they need us. (SC)

### **For reflection and discussion:**

1. As parents and adult members in the family and workplace, how can we model interdependence to our younger generation?
2. In I Corinthian 3: 5 - 17, when addressing the divisions in the Church, Apostle Paul expresses how each worker is important in building God’s building as ‘God’s fellow workers’ (v.9). Discuss the meaning of this imagery of building God’s building and working in God’s field (v.9).

*Pray for:*



**Clinical Haematology**

**Medical Oncology**

**Centre for Stem cell Research**

CSI Madhya – Kerala Diocese

Rev. George Mathen Mission Hospital and

Bishop Jacob Memorial Hospital

CSI Madurai – Ramnad Diocese,

Hospital: CSI Christian Mission Hospital,

Madurai.

## Growing in our understanding of God

Exodus 3:11 - 15

**Key Verse:** “God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you’” Exodus 3:14

Images are powerful! We now live in this visual environment and we are easily influenced by what we see and watch on televisions, social media, etc., and they tell us what we “need”, what we should want, what to possess in order to live a “successful” life, what a “happy” family should look like.

*Our limited understanding of God:* We all know that knowledge is handed down from generation to generation. This is true also for our understanding of God. We imagine and visualise God according to what has been told to us by our family and Church. We confine ourselves to those concepts of God we are told. For instance, we understand God as One who punishes, One who provides and blesses, One who stands for us against our enemies, and One who is interested and involved in our personal well-being, etc. We understand God’s nature to serve our purpose!

*The Revealed Names of God:* In the Bible we find many names that are given to God, and with these names certain images come to our mind. These names, or images, that we have of God are important because they reveal to us the character, nature, and attributes of God. These names and images define and help us understand God better and allows us insight into the person of God.

Here are some of the names of God we find in the Bible: Jehova Jireh (The Lord will provide), El Shaddai (Lord God Almighty), El Elyon (Most High God), Jehova Nissi (The Lord is our Banner), Jehova Raah (The Lord is my Shepherd), Jehova Rapha (The Lord our healer), Jehova Shammah (The Lord is there). These names reveal and describe who God is and what God does.

These *revealed* names are not given by

us. Rather, they have been revealed to us. Therefore, it is important that we know these names and what they represent. We do this so that we may be able to relate to God at a deeper level. This means that we cannot just pick and choose certain names, images, characteristics that fit our wants while simply ignoring the rest. We have to focus on who God actually is. The question is not just, “Who do you want God to be?” but rather, “Who is God supposed to be.”

(Reference: *A Sermon Workbook: Exercises in the Art and Craft of Preaching*. Eds. Thomas H. Troeger and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale).

### For Reflection and Discussion:

1. Come up with some more names/ characteristics of God. Which of these names and “images” of God stand out when we think of God? Which of these names and “images” of God is least focused in your personal life.
2. What understandings of us that limit who God is?

*Pray for:*



### **Dental and Oral Surgery**

CSI Medak Diocese

Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod

Hospital: Synod Hospital, Durtlang, Mizoram

Marathi Mission

Hospital: Willis F Pierce Memorial Hospital, Wai and others

## Letting-go of Anger and Resentment

Ephesians 4:26-31

**Key Verse:** “Do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil”  
Ephesians 4:26-27

Letting go of anger and resentment in our heart is part of experiencing life within us. Anger and resentment when held inside the heart is likened to a monster which causes harm to us in many ways, physically and spiritually. When we let go of anger and resentment, we are the recipient of all the benefits.

The following quotes will help to understand this:

- “Hate is a poison more deadly to the hater than the hated.”
- “Resentment is like a poison we carry around inside us with the hope that when we get the chance, we can deposit it where it will harm another who has injured us.”
- “Resentment is the most potent poison generated in the human body. It causes physical and spiritual wreckage if allowed to boil within.”
- “Keeping resentments is like swallowing poison and expecting the other person to die”

There are many reasons why letting go is difficult.

- The hurt or wrong is very personal; they are committed against our precious self.
- It affects our self-identity.
- It feels so unjust and disproportionate.
- Others may have been treated differently.
- The feeling that, “I could have been forgiven.”
- It is personal and it hurts our pride and dignity.
- We may feel that we need to forgive only if the other person asks for it.
- We may think that we need to forgive only

if the other person changes their ways.

- We may have been belittled or put to shame in front of others.

The Bible allows us to be angry, because this is part and parcel of life. But it also tells us that we should not hold on to our anger. Holding on to it will give the devil a foothold and cause us to sin. Letting go of anger and resentment is not easy, but the idea of realising that it is difficult is not to avoid doing it, rather to persevere and find ways of doing it. When we let go of our anger and resentment, physically, the blood pressure comes down, our stress level is lessened, our sleep is improved, and our relationship with everyone improves. Be angry, but do not sin. Be angry, but be careful what you do with that anger! It is safest to just let it go. (MN)

### **For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Anger and resentment is suppressed or we are controlled by it in our day to day life – Discuss.
2. What ways can we handle our anger in accordance with the teachings of the Bible?

*Pray for:*



**Paediatrics**

**Developmental Paediatrics**

**Paediatric Surgery**

**Paediatric Emergency**

**Paediatric ICU**

United Mission to Nepal

Hospital: United Mission Hospital, Tansen and  
Okhaldhunga Community Hospital.



**Fruit of the Spirit - Kindness****2 Peter 1: 3 - 9**

**Key-verse:** *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32*

What is kindness? The answer to this question may depend on the context. The need of the hour may be a kind word, a friendly smile, a greeting, offering our seat to someone else, buying a meal for a needy person, letting someone else go ahead in a queue, being sympathetic and sensitive, creating a positive outlook and instilling hope, so on and so forth.

The choices for doing and showing acts of kindness are literally endless. Every day is a new opportunity to be kind to another. Is it possible to be kind, even if we don't have anything to offer, for example a terminally ill patient? It is possible. Just being with them and offering a reassuring touch, a kind word, a prayer, and anything else they may need at that moment is very important.

Why do we need to be kind? (1) It makes the world a better place for everyone. (2) God is kind to us every moment. (3) Any act of kindness makes a difference in the lives of others. (4) Being kind has plenty of benefits, both for the giver and the receiver. Studies show that being kind brings about happiness, creates a stronger immune system, reduces anxiety, stress and depression, improves relationships, and even leads to a longer life. We show acts of kindness, not to receive the benefits. We show kindness without expecting anything in return.

How can we be more kind? We must resolve in our mind to be kind. We must ask God for help when we find it difficult to show kindness. We can start with small acts of kindness, practice it over and over again, until it becomes a habit.

Why is kindness difficult? There may be many reasons. Sometimes it may be because we are in a hurry, or have so many things to do but so little time, and therefore forget to show kindness; it may be because we have not had

enough rest; it may be because we are in a bad mood, and the list is endless. Depending on the situation, we may need to take a break, take care of ourselves, eat something, or share our burden with someone else. More than anything, we need to rely on God to be kind to others.

This is an excerpt from the book on Dr. Ida. “A woman recovering from a sudden attack of acute malarial mania seized the hand of her doctor and demanded, “Why?” “Tell me, I want to know! Why didn't you lose your temper with me that time I went out of my mind?” It was not the doctor who answered but a woman in the next bed. She sprang up with a glowing face. “Don't you know why?” she replied eagerly. “That's what her God is like!”

Unfailing courtesy, kindness and consideration for others are some of the greatest ornaments for the character of the child of God. “The world can understand these things even if it cannot understand the Christian doctrine,” Bishop J C Ryle. (MN)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

- 1) For it is in the heart that our real allegiance lies. Discuss.
- 2) Is it possible to handle disagreements without judging? If so, how?

*Pray for:*

**Distance Education****Endocrinology**

Khasi Jaintia Presbyterian Assembly  
Hospital: Dr. H. Gordon Roberts Hospital,  
Shillong,  
Norman Tunnel Hospital, Jowai

## Practical Lessons in Mentoring

I Peter 5: 1 -11

**Key Verse:** “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be...” I Peter 5: 2

Christ-like leaders are needed. The problem is not the lack of understanding about what Christ-centred leadership looks like, but that many leaders fall painfully short.

“Pride” – “I am always right,” harsh, uncaring, refusing to listen and critical – seems to be the primary cause of poor leadership. Christ-like leadership involves integrity, authenticity, humility and spiritual maturity. Leaders of these qualities have great responsibility to mentor others. Mentoring can play a vital role in shaping another person to become a leader.

A few valuable lessons can be learned from the life of Dr. Frank Garlick, who became a mentor and role model to many:

*Immerse yourself in the truth of God’s Word (Proverbs 4:20-23):* Dr. Frank Garlick used to carry flash cards in his pocket everywhere he went. When asked why he always had a flash card with him, he explained how each flash card had a Bible verse written on it, and he had it with him at all times so that he could read it and memorize it during the day. This became a habit of his, and this was one way he lived a life immersed in the truths of Scripture.

*Listening Carefully (James 1:19-20):* One of the many things special about Dr. Frank was his skill in listening. When differences of opinions arose, he would first listen instead of being defensive or arguing. After different opinions were shared, he would invite everyone to be quiet and ask them to spend some time in reflection. This period of silence spent in quiet reflection and prayer allowed space for personal review and revision of thoughts. He took into consideration the opinions of others and pondered over it before making a choice or decision that would be suitable for the context.

*Discernment (Philippians 1: 9 - 10):* Dr. Frank nurtured a spirit of discernment through his

spiritual exercises. One exercise he practiced was to make notes of what he heard from people. He would later return to his notes so that he could read it several times and listen from within. He did not form immediate impressions or go by the first impressions but believed in arriving at a considered opinion on matters. He was not in a hurry or haste.

*Becoming a role model and mentor (I Peter 5:2-3):* Dr. Frank and his wife, Dr. Val, became the path-finders for anyone who had set out to follow God’s call, and needed a light to guide them. Dr. Frank’s opinions, on matters which needed wisdom, provided the light to proceed. Dr. Frank in his conversations and messages helped others to be forgiving of oneself and others. This brought a liberating ambience for spiritual formation. (MCM)

### **For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. How can we grow to become leaders and mentors?
2. How can we practice the mentor-mentee relationship within our departments and units?

*Pray for:*



**Obstetrics and Gynaecology**

**Gynaecologic Oncology**

**Reproductive Medicine Unit**

**Neonatology Unit**

Mennonite Medical Board of the Mennonite Church in India

Hospital: Dhamtari Christian Hospital, Chattisgarh and others

## A Way in the Wilderness

Isaiah 40:1 - 11

**Key Verse:** “I am about to do something new... I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert” Isaiah 43:19

Here in CMC, whether we are staff, patients, or relatives of patients, we have all experienced “wilderness.” Wilderness may be understood as a place that is very dry and barren; not only is this place hot and without water, it is a place where one could easily get lost.

In our wilderness moments, sometimes we wander around with no clear sense of direction. Sometimes our limits and boundaries and our capacity to endure is questioned and tested. Sometimes we come to a point when we even doubt our own faith and question the integrity of our relationship with God.

Everyone, including Jesus, experiences his or her own share of the wilderness. So remember these points:

1. The wilderness serves as a place one might have to pass through in order to get somewhere else.
2. When you find yourself in the wilderness, remember to keep moving. It is not a place where you can settle down and call it home.
3. It is neither comfortable nor a very secure place.
4. In the wilderness one may feel God-forsaken. It may feel like a place without meaning or purpose, a place where you feel all alone and burdened down.
5. The wilderness may be filled with events of testing in the face of major temptations, and wild beasts, but remember that it is also accompanied by ministering angels. The wilderness is about a time which brings us forth in faith, hope and love to proclaim the good news of the reign of God.
6. In the end it is very worthwhile. It is a place where the most powerful testimonies are born.

Yes, God is there with us in the wildernesses of our lives. No doubt about it. You can expect it and count on it. Jesus experienced that and knew it to be true. The people of Israel experienced it, and in their most lucid moments, also know it to be true. (*Reference: John C.B. Webster. Hearing, Preaching, and the Indian Congregation.*)

### For Reflection and Discussion:

1. Have you ever felt forsaken by God? Have you ever felt as if your prayers have not reached the heavens?
2. Share your wilderness experience, and how God led you out. Did it make you stronger?

*Pray for:*



**Engineering  
(Civil & Planning) Department  
Mechanical Engineering  
Electrical Department  
Air Conditioning Engineering  
Environmental Engineering  
Electronic Engineering  
Communications**

CSI Rayalaseema Diocese

Hospital :CSI Arogyavaram Medical Centre,  
Arogyavaram

MLL Hospital, Madanapally and other

CSI Campbell Hospital, Jammalamadugu

## Assessment and Judgement

Leviticus 19: 13 - 18

**Key Verse:** “You shall do no injustice in judging, you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the rich, you are to judge your neighbour fairly” Leviticus 19:15; Refer Proverbs 31: 8 - 9

Our brains make constant judgment about anything and everything we see. For example, when we see someone, the brain automatically categorizes the gender, the clothes, hairstyle and much more. All this is happening in the background, and it is instantaneous. Many believe all these attributes of the brain helped early humankind to identify danger quickly and survive.

In society we make judgments about how a person is dressed, what is the rank in class, the outcome of a game, so on and so forth. In fact, society is based on deciding where everyone stands in the hierarchy. And this happens constantly. In CMC, the students and trainees need to be assessed on various occasions. In the clinical setting, everyone is responsible for patient care and there is a need for constant assessment. We must wonder whether we are judging everyone all the time. Is assessing and judging different?

Ideally, when we assess someone, we should identify their strengths and their weaknesses. This is done to help the person focus on areas of improvement. But, when we judge, it usually places excessive focus on the weakness and the intention is usually not to help the other person. A lot of preconceived notions, feelings and emotions are used in judgment. And once we judge a person in one aspect, we tend to apply that in all areas of their life without reconsidering anything else. We all have felt judged at some point in our lives by others and it does not feel good.

What does the Bible say about judging others? In John 7:24, we read, “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.” Of course, there has to be judgment calls, but it has to be done with righteousness. Deuteronomy 1:16-17 says, “Hear the disputes between your people and judge fairly... Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of anyone, for judgment belongs to God.” It is not our place to judge anyone. So, how can we assess without judging? Few things we might find helpful:

- Whenever we are assessing anyone, the starting point should be humility. We should place the concerns of the person getting assessed before ours. It should not be done to satisfy our ego.
- It is a great idea to learn more about the person as a human before assessing. Many circumstances in an individual’s life play a part in their behaviour and performance.
- Assessment should focus on the positives, to help the other person grow!
- While assessing negatives or weaknesses, we should double check what we are going to say. Assessors should be honest with their motivations.
- The tone of our voice should not be accusing; rather, it should be helpful.
- It is good to have actionable endpoints and suggestions to improve areas of weaknesses. (MN)

### **For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. What are some of the occasions in our work in which we come to judge/ assess those who work with us? What can we do to avoid judging/ assessing wrongly?

*Pray for:*



### **Gastrointestinal Sciences**

#### **Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology**

#### **Welcome Trust Research Laboratory**

#### **Medical Genetics**

Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church

Hospital: Christian Hospital, Nabarangpur and Bissamcuttack.

Church Mission Society

## The Cost of Discipleship

Luke 9: 23 - 25

**Key Verse:** “No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God” Luke 9:62

Dr. Crozier, the father of medical missions in northeast India, found leprosy patients coming to the Alipur Mission Hospital near Silchar, Assam and did not know what to do with them. Leprosy at that time was not curable and the patients had to be admitted to leprosy colonies for lifelong segregation. There was no leprosy colony nearby until the Makunda Leprosy Colony was started. Makunda Christian Leprosy and General Hospital, today, had its beginnings as Makunda Leprosy Colony in 1950 on 1000 acres of land purchased by the Baptist Mid-Missions, USA.

When the hospital had been started, Dr. Gene Burrows, and his wife, Mrs. Bette Burrows, a nurse, went to this remote rural Makunda Leprosy Colony in Assam in the 1950s. Dr. and Mrs. Burrows moved from comfortable homes in the USA to Makunda which was almost a day-long journey on a bad road from the nearest town, Silchar. They found many leprosy patients with very little support.

Leprosy patients were admitted for surgery, ulcer care, reactions and often simply because they were thrown out of their homes and villages. The Burrows spent 3 days a week in the community diagnosing patients with leprosy, and the remaining 3 days managing general medical patients in the rapidly growing hospital. They had seven children who went to boarding school as there was no suitable school nearby.

In the 1980s, 25 years after they joined Makunda, they had to leave India when the government asked all expatriates to leave the country. They went on to serve in Bangladesh and Sierra Leone till Dr. Burrows was diagnosed with cancer and had to return to the USA where he died. Mrs. Burrows stayed in

a retirement community till her death. When she was asked whether she had any regrets, she said, “I wished we had the privilege of dying and being buried at Makunda. We went out from the USA to the mission field and never expected to return”

The Burrows were like many missionaries who persevered under many constraints for many years and built mission stations, schools, colleges and hospitals across the world. They followed Jesus’ exhortation, “No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). Mission compounds across the world were built with the sweat and blood of missionaries who went far away from home and comfort to serve in foreign lands. Many lost their lives and faced severe hardship. Compared to these, are not our problems today simply temporary and trivial inconveniences?

### For Reflection and Discussion:

1. How do we understand and apply the teaching of Jesus in Luke 9: 23, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me,” in our lives today?

*Pray for:*

**Dietary**

**Dermatology**

Assemblies of God in North India

Hospital: Mission of Mercy Hospital and Research Centre, Kolkata.



**Empathy****John 11: 32 - 40**

**Key verse:** “Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled... Jesus wept” John 11:33,35

Dr. Hilda Lazarus, a skilled gynaecologist trained in India and UK, became the first Indian Director of CMC in 1948. She was a very close friend of Dr. Ida Scudder, the founder of CMC. Dr. Hilda recalled an incident about her mentor, Dr. Ida, which was recorded by Dr. Ida Scudder’s biographer, Dorothy Wilson, as follows:

One time Dr. Hilda had a health problem and came to Dr. Ida. She was told she would require surgery and Dr. Ida Scudder agreed to do the surgery herself. On the day of the operation, as Dr. Hilda was walking towards the hospital, she saw Dr. Ida sitting on the stone steps weeping.

“My dear, what is it? Is something the matter?” Half ashamed, Dr. Ida wiped her eyes. “I can’t help it,” she confessed. “I – I’m just so sorry I have to hurt you!”

“You have already healed all the hurt,” Dr. Hilda assured her gently, “with all your tears.”

We see in the incident when Jesus was at Lazarus’ tomb. Jesus joined in the grief of the sisters and others in the community. His tears revealed his identification with their emotional pain. He was going to relieve their distress through a miracle but that did not stop him from empathizing with the bereaved family. Dr. Ida also demonstrated empathy through her concern for Dr. Hilda who she was going to operate upon.

In the health profession we are often problem solvers. This may make us feel superior to those who have the problem. An emotional distance often develops between the professional and the patient. Dr. Ida was unconsciously showing how a true carer needs to be humble and empathetic with the one being cared for.

Often, the problem cannot be solved, and even in these situations, empathy may be the only response we can have towards the one in grief. However, as followers of Christ in healthcare, we need to share in the sorrow of others without losing the hope that we have. “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one

another” (Romans 12:15-16).

Empathy is not automatic and may not come naturally. We can, however, cultivate the habit of identifying with others, not only in grief but in daily life. We can listen to others with attention and seek to understand rather than be understood. It is possible to develop a lifestyle of caring and empathy.

References: Wilson DC. *Dr. Ida: Passing on the Torch of Life*; Kapil R. *Practicing Empathy as a Mental Health First Aider*.

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Either we have not learnt to become sensitive or we have become insensitive to the pain of others in our work in the hospital. How do we avoid emotional fatigue/ exhaustion?
2. How do we have a balanced disposition of an empathetic and sensitive heart, at the same time more purposeful and hopeful in bringing holistic healing?

*Pray for:*

**General Pathology****Forensic Medicine****Cytogenetics**

Council of Baptist Churches in North East India

Hospital: Satribari Christian Hospital, Guwahati

Jorhat Christian Medical Centre

Tura Christian Hospital

Christian Hospital, Babupara and others.

Eastern Regional Board of Health Services

Hospital: Evangelical Hospital, Khariar,

Christian Hospital, Mungeli and others.

Friends of Vellore, U.K.

**Having Stillness within****Mark 6: 45 - 52****Key Verse:** *“Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid!” Mark 6: 50*

We are always occupied. We occupy ourselves with our ideas, thoughts, work, responsibilities, vision, aspiration, family, plans, etc. Sometimes these preoccupations create a sense of clutter, which reduces the inner space within us. What then is our inner space? The inner space occupies the true identity of a person.

Jesus lived in his inner space and reached out into the outer space. On one occasion, Jesus withdrew on his own to the mountain while his disciples set out in a boat to go to Bethsaida. Jesus perceived the struggle of his disciples to steady the boat in the wind, although he was physically away from them in a distant place (Mark 6: 48). Jesus reached out to the disciples in response to the promptings he received during his time alone in the mountain.

We need to get a sense of the inner readiness that is required to respond to different situations. The inner space is what offers us an awareness of how we are to respond in various situations. It also creates an awareness about how and whom we are to engage in an attitude of mindfulness.

The inner space is where God abides! It is this reality, which makes our inner space, in one sense, serene and sacred. To keep the inner space in that godly orientation is possible through periods of silence and waiting in God’s presence!

In preparation for the winter, the trees lose their leaves and would be devoid of leaves. Thus, the outer identity of the tree would change depending on the seasons of the year. But the inner identity of the tree is rather constant. The outer event of the tree shedding its leaves is a

sign of preparing for transition for the winter. The inner space needs readiness and receptive orientation to welcome the outer events.

The inner space is a sacred space within each of us, where we live. The outer space is our theatre of activity into which we come to be present from our inner space! Remember, the two are not separate entities, they are interconnected. (MCM)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Have you ever experienced situations in life where our inner space and our outer space are not working in tandem?
2. In this very busy and noisy environment, how can we bring this inner quietness into our lives and prepare ourselves to understand the pain of others?

*Pray for:*

**Neurological Sciences**  
**Paediatric Neurology**  
**Neuro Chemistry**  
**Dept. of Infectious Diseases**  
**Neuro ICU**

CSI South Kerala Diocese  
 Hospital: Dr. Somervell Memorial CSI Medical  
 College and Hospital, Karakonam and others



## Our Perceptions about Others

James 2: 1 - 13

**Key Verse:** “For God sees not as mortals sees, they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” I Samuel 16: 7

“Why do you look at the speck in your neighbour’s eye, but fail to notice the log in your own eye?” (Matthew 7:3). As this bible verse suggests, people often recognize biases and flaws in others and yet overlook their own in everyday life. Double standardness also frequently appears when people accuse each other of being irrational and biased while believing themselves to be rational and impartial.

During a cloudy day, the visibility of the mountains, trees or buildings around us are not clear to us. The clarity of what we see is lost, not because the object is faded. In the same way, there are occasions when our own outlooks and perceptions are cloudy, and because of our inner perception, we fail to see clearly.

Our perception of people who have not been supportive or open towards our ideas and opinions are often reduced, and our attitudes towards them are usually negative. Because of the disappointments we have towards them we may be very subjective and have strong feelings against them. We look at them through a very narrow lens. The inner vision is a defining optic! We need to revise our attitudes towards others, even if they have been difficult on some occasions! This is a journey often started but not continued!

We keep others prisoners of our expectations—we expect others to behave as we expect. We view others with prejudices that come from our past experiences. Remember, the person

with whom we find faults too may have various good qualities and character. Our poor assessment of them does not reduce their nature and character.

Let us move from a position of bias to be open-minded so that others may receive acknowledgement and recognition for who they are and not conditioned by how we see them! Let us see others as they are, as they are also created in the image of God! (MCM)

### For Reflection and Discussion:

1. How can we see others in a positive light in spite of our perception about them?
2. How can we apply the bible teachings of ‘loving our neighbour’ and ‘being created in God’s image’ in the way we perceive others?

*Pray for:*



**Clinical Microbiology**

**Clinical Virology**

CSI Vellore Diocese

Hospital: Scudder Memorial Hospital, Ranipet  
and CSI Hospital, Vandavasi.

Council for World Mission



**FREEDOM****Psalm 33: 12 - 22**

**Key Verse:** “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance” Psalm 33:12

Seventy-seven years of an awesome journey! Someone born on 15th of August 1947 would be in his/ her seventy seventh year. Some of them would have witnessed the unfurling of the tricolour on the first Indian Independence Day. To many in this generation it will be a narrative of an experience getting increasingly distant. Yet we remain the beneficiaries of the quest for freedom, paid for by our forefathers.

What does Freedom mean? To be free to do whatever we want? Or to be released from restraints on personal and collective growth? To have unfettered liberty to create, innovate and develop? It means something different to different people. Here are a few thoughts to reflect upon:

1) *Freedom is not free:* It is expensive. Thousands have given their lives to secure this. Thousands gave their blood, sweat and toil to achieve freedom. Thousands were displaced from their homes, to rebuild their lives from scratch. More than seventy years later we are still rebuilding our nation. Freedom continues to demand expensive inputs of time, energy, money and patriotism from its citizens.

2) *Freedom is about discovery:* When we are free, it encourages us to explore and discover the expanse of life. We are free to be creative, be novel and innovative. Sky is the limit to possibilities. Nobody is there to restrain you from originality or put limitations to prevent growth. You breathe easy and full. You fly to soar above the eagles. You discover hidden potential, talents and capabilities that remain shackled by bondage.

3) *Freedom is about accountability and responsibility:* Freedom initially may seem tempting enough to have no holds barred. To have unrestricted freedom is to attempt the unacceptable and the dangerous. Freedom paradoxically has its spectrum. Freedom comes packaged with tremendous responsibilities – To be accountable for the time and space we enjoy;

to be using our freedom for the betterment of our neighbour; and to benefit society and its people.

We are seventy-seven years young. A young nation at the threshold of a breakthrough. Provided we can free our people from the chains of poverty, ill-health, casteism, prejudice, violence, racism and loneliness. Only then will the tricolour flutter vigorously as it did on the 15th of August 1947. (SC)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Think of Mahatma Gandhi in India, Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Martin Luther King Jr. in America, and the countless individuals who fought to bring freedom – they all paid the price to secure freedom. How do we appreciate their courage and sacrifice in the midst of physical and emotional pain and suffering?
2. What responsibilities do we have today as we value the freedom we have received and dwell in the nation as God’s people (Psalms 33: 12-15)?

Pray for:

**Division of Surgery**

**Endocrine Surgery**

**Surgical ICU**

**Hepato Pancreatic Biliary Surgery**

**Vascular Surgery**

**Trauma Surgery**

Kotagiri Medical Fellowship Hospital,

Kotagiri



**Source of our strength****Psalm 121: 1 - 8**

**Key verses:** *“I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth” Psalm 121:1-2*

We now live in a world where everything is made super-easy for us. We can buy almost everything without having to step out of our home. When everything is moving at a fast pace, we sometimes struggle to keep up. In such moments it is tempting to look for short-cuts, or find comfort and solutions in “horses and chariot.” (Psalm 20: 7). Psalms 40: 4 reminds us that God is our only true source of strength, and that even though it may be tempting to look for temporary solutions that the world provides, we are only to trust in the name of the Lord.

Samson’s story is a very good example to remind us that our true source of strength comes from God alone. For those who grew up going to Sunday School, we were told about how an angel appeared to Samson’s mother and instructed her to never cut Samson’s hair. Samson grew up to be the strongest man and no enemies could stand against him. Towards the end of his life, we find that a woman cut his hair, and once he lost his hair, he could no longer defeat his enemy. For those who are familiar with this story it is easy to believe that Samson’s strength came from his hair, that he was strong because he had very long hair, and that he lost all his strength once his hair was cut.

But if we carefully look at the Bible, we find that whenever Samson is about to do something spectacular and demonstrate his strength, we find a verse that precedes the event. The Bible tells us that whenever Samson is about to demonstrate how strong he was, it says, “the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him” (Judges 14:6, Judges 15:14). And once his hair was cut, Scripture tells us, “The Lord had left him” (Judges 16:20). It is clear now that Samson’s source of strength does not lie on the length of his hair, but rather the Spirit of the Lord which empowered him and gave

him strength to defeat any harm and danger that surrounded him.

God promises us to be “our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1). Let us be reminded that our strength comes from God, and that we need God, that without God nothing is possible, but WITH God, all things are possible.

**For reflection and discussion:**

1. When we are faced with problems in our lives many of us turn to our “horses and chariots.” Let us share what these may represent in our lives, and what can we do to stay focused on our true source of strength?

Pray for:



**Principal’s Office,  
Medical Students,  
Allied Health Students,  
Men’s Hostel, Women’s Hostel  
DJ Hostel, Fitch Hostel  
CMC Alumni Association  
Registrar’s Office  
Medical Education Department  
Continuing Medical Education  
Bioethics  
Inter Ashram Fellowship  
Hospital: Christian Fellowship Hospital,  
Oddanchatram and Ambilikai  
Christian Fellowship Hospital, Rajnandgaon  
and Khariar Road.  
Bishop Walsh Memorial Hospital, Tadakam**

**Blessed are the Peacemakers****Matthew 5: 1 -10**

**Key Verse:** “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord” Hebrews 12: 14

*Incident 1:* Late Rev A C Oommen, the head of the Chaplaincy at CMC, Vellore, once told about the way Dr. Frank Garlick brought a reconciling touch to the community, following a prolonged strike of the employees (during the 1970s’), when some employees were made to leave the institution. When the hospital resumed normal work after several weeks of disruption of hospital services, the wounded hospital community needed a healing touch to recover from the terrible experience the staff went through.

It was Dr. Frank who suggested that the chaplains, along with the director Dr L.B.M.Joseph, take the initiative to visit the homes of the staff members and usher in a friendlier atmosphere in the institution. It was this suggestion that led to group meetings with the staff and subsequent retreats that focused on dissolving differences and bringing a cohesive atmosphere in the hospital.

Even during the strike, Dr. Frank along with a few other faculty members tried to bring a sobering atmosphere between people who had taken polarised positions. He emphasised that what was needed in a conflicting situation was a forgiving and upbuilding attitude. Dr. Frank practiced this as his way of responding to difficult situations on other occasions as well.

*Incident 2:* Two doctors trained at CMC Vellore decided to start a mission hospital in a rural area for which Dr. Frank offered his support. They were well known to Dr. Frank from their student days. Dr. Frank used to make frequent visits to the hospital to help them develop their surgical skills and make that hospital a

welcome place for the local people, who did not have any other health care in that region.

Later a conflict arose between the two doctors. Dr. Frank undertook regular conversations and several visits to bring a working relationship between them. Although one of them left to work elsewhere, Dr. Frank maintained cordial relationships with both families and had hoped that they would be reconciled. The thoughtful ways Frank accompanied them to restore a broken relationship was a surprise to them. One of them mentioned that Frank’s kindness and non-judgemental attitude helped towards accepting the situation although with much grief! (MCM)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Give examples of various potential conflicting situations that can happen in our OPD, IP Wards, within departments, among staff members, between staff and patient relatives.
2. What disposition, attitude and interventions should we bring to ease the situation to bring peace, reconciliation and joy?

*Pray for:*

**ENT Department**

American Leprosy Mission

Hospital: SIH-R&LC, Karigiri  
and others



## Metaphor of the Shadow

I John 1: 5 - 10

**Key Verse:** *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" John 8: 12*

The light can be dazzling, which is why protection from sunlight might be needed sometimes. During summer months, people are advised to protect themselves from direct sunlight during the mid-day to prevent heat stroke. The sun gives light and the light casts shadows when the light is obstructed. The shadow can carry two metaphors.

Firstly, shadow provides **protection**. For instance, the saplings we plant need shade (shadow) for protection from the sun till they take roots and new shoots come up. Once they are grown, they provide shade and protection. Children grow up in the shadow of their parents. They are protected physically, emotionally, and socially, until they are older and are able to make choices and participate in life's journey. What a shadow parents offer to children, one that is caring, conversing, engaging, supporting, educating, providing, etc. Eventually, the protected becomes the protector!

A Banyan tree grows to a magnificent size and its branches spread high and wide, with its aerial prop roots that mature into thick, woody trunks. Its benefits are seen in its ability to provide a comfortable nest and good shade for small birds and animals. However, **this leaves little room for other plants to take root**. Although other plants may begin to grow under the banyan tree, the lack of light or nourishment prevents new young shoots from maturing to the size they are meant to be. This brings us to the second metaphor.

Shadow also stands for darkness, darkness that **hides visibility**. This thought may bring anxiety in our mind. Imagine living lives concealed and hidden from others. Some people have different outward appearance, and have a hidden self that is not easily visible to others. This dichotomy of inconsistency between our outer self and concealed self is the common reason for mistrust and conflict between people (Read John 3: 19 - 21).

It is obvious as to which metaphor of a shadow we should aspire to. We should avoid living

in darkness, avoid two-faced lives, and give importance to moral values and spiritual orientation. Most importantly, we should try and provide shade and protection to others, including those who are less experienced than us, especially within our departments/units. We cannot hinder the growth of others like the Banyan tree. Yes, we can either promote others, or prevent them from growing. Are we going to stop people from moving up, or are we going to protect, promote, and support? That is the question! (MCM)

### For Reflection and Discussion:

1. Do you think you are doing enough to provide shelter and shade to others around you? If not, how may you improve upon it? You may discuss on the Banyan tree metaphor.
2. How can we come to remove the dichotomy/ inconsistency between our outer self and concealed self?

*Pray for:*



**Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation,**

**Mary Varghese Rehabilitation Institute**

**Physiotherapy Department**

**Occupational Therapy Department**

**Prosthetics & Orthotics**

Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church

Hospital: Joseph Eye Hospital, Trichy and others.

Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church

India Evangelical Lutheran Church

Christian Welfare Centre, Malapuram and others

**'Everything' to God in prayer****Psalm 10: 12 - 18**

**Key Verse:** *"In the days of his flesh Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to him who is able to save him from death" Hebrews 5:7*

Many of us have been brought up in a tradition that teaches us to always be happy with God; we have been told to never feel angry or show resentment towards God. But what are we to do when situations we face beckons those emotions? After all, we are all human beings.

One of the many beauties of the Book of Psalms is that it does not hide or try to cover up such feelings. We see over and over again how the psalmist pours his heart out to God and does not hold anything back.

Psalm 10 begins with a complaint against God and asks God a very bold question. We can clearly see how the psalmist's anger and frustration are directed at God's own self! Does this mean we too are permitted to do the same? This psalm suggests that it is far better to yell and scream and complain to God than to anyone else! Bring "everything" to God.

The psalmist poured out his shame, anger, and frustration to God, and God accepted it. God did not strike back! God heard and understood. As a matter of fact, God reached out in compassion and touched the psalmist. We witness the change in the psalmist around verse 13 and 14. All the anger is out and gone. All the frustration is out and gone. The raised fist is lowered and unclenched. Something happens. The psalmist is changed and we can see it in the words of the psalmist.

You see, God is bigger than we think. He can handle our frustration, our anger, our cries.

Like the hymn says, "Take it to the Lord in prayer." Whatever it is we are going through, let us lift up our head and tell God all about it. God will help us. God cares!

(Reference: John C.B. Webster, *Hearing, Preaching, and the Indian Congregation*).

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Elizabeth Lewis Hall, in her article, "Suffering in God's presence: The Role of Lament in Transformation," says, 'Lamentation' or 'allowing one to cry out' is all about our vulnerability and being honest and truth-telling about our broken state. Our tendency to fix the problem or control, at times, does not understand the pain and suffering of people - Discuss.

*Pray for:*

**Ophthalmology****Low Cost Effective Care Unit****Family Medicine****Shalom Family Medicine Centre**

International Service Fellowship (Interserve)  
Christoffel Blinden Mission

**Ego-centric Vs. Self-giving Life****2 Corinthians 4: 6 - 12**

**Key Verse:** *Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain” John 12: 24*

In 1970, when Dr Garlick Frank was the Head of the Surgery Unit Office in CMC, Vellore, the wall text displayed the verse of the Bible, **I Corinthians 4: 7: “For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?”**

This verse speaks about Dr. Frank Garlick’s perspective on life. All that we have we received; they have been given to us. Do not take full credit for your personal achievements, they are given to you by God. This was what Dr. Frank stood by.

The knowledge and acceptance that all that we have is given to us should help us lead a life of self-giving. One needs to learn the following lessons:

1. Jesus’ parable of the talents invites us to live conscious of the fact that the talents are given to us; we have to *be mindful of the Giver and grateful for the gift received*. There is something beyond every pathway one chooses. The choice one makes will lead one to either an ego-centric way of living or a path of self-giving. When one attributes his/her position and status as his/ her own acquisition and effort, there is a temptation to make that as a mark of one’s identity and live life with a sense of pride.

2. Secondly, to live a life of self-giving, *one needs to allow brokenness and pain*. A plant, after it is pruned, sprouts with fresh leaves. New learning in life emerges after a life experience. A traumatic or stressful experience may shock us or it may leave us stunned and stunted. But if one can pay attention to the experience, learn from it, and grow out of it, new life emerges with clarity and hope.

Dr. Frank Garlick referred to the experience in his life when he lost the status associated with being a surgical professor, but through struggles he went through, he was able to see new shoots emerging in his life.

3. Self-giving life makes you a *blessing for others*. After taking the tough decision and willingness to submit to the call of God, Dr. Frank continued to become a blessing. He gave leadership to the formation of the EMFI in 1976. From 1977 to 1989, he started the Emergency Medicine Department at the medical school in Australia. He revived the Pathan Hospital in Kathmandu, Nepal. And his wife, Val and him became a blessing to many young couples through their Family Enrichment Programme. (MCM)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. How do we bring to our conscious mind that all that we have is received and given to us?
2. What attitude do we need to develop to live a life of self-giving?

*Pray for:*



**Orthopaedics**

**Spine Surgery**

**Paediatric Orthopaedics**

**Hand and Leprosy**

**Reconstructive Surgery**

Malankara Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church

Hospital: MBMM Mission Hospital,

Kothamangalam

St. Mary’s Hospital, Manarcadu

Mandiram Hospital, Manganam and others

**Forgiveness****Matthew 6: 9 - 15****Key Verse:** *“Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us”**Matthew 6:12*

**Forgiveness is possible:** Forgiveness is not easy. It may even seem impossible sometimes. But we have to remember that it is indeed possible. One of the best examples is Jesus on the cross, who had all the power and the capability to “re-act”, but instead chose to forgive those around him. Jesus chose to forgive those people who were torturing him and hurling insults at him. Jesus chose to forgive them even though they did not ask for forgiveness!

Gandhi said, “The weak cannot forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.” When we are weak and unable to forgive, we must pray and ask for strength from God. Even though forgiveness is difficult, remember that there are many examples of people around the world who forgave others, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Gladys Stains, just to name a few. They forgave those who imprisoned them unjustly, oppressed them, killed their families, etc. How did these people do it? Should I only forgive if the other person asks for forgiveness? There are so many questions and thoughts to ponder upon. Remember what Jesus did on the cross. He chose to forgive and said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

**Forgiveness begins with you:** Everybody makes mistakes. Everyone is in need of forgiveness. Forgiveness involves an intentional decision to let go of resentment and anger. Forgiveness should begin with us and within us. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he taught: “And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” And in Matthew 6: 15 and Mark 11: 26, Jesus says, “But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” We are called, instructed, and commanded to forgive

so that we can be forgiven. It requires a lot of effort, and it may take a long time. But when we do it, we are blessed, spiritually, emotionally, and even physically.

**Forgiveness is a Way of Life:** Like any other discipline, forgiveness is something we need to work on. If we read God’s Word, meditate on it, and pray, he will give us the strength we need to be able to forgive. When Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive, Jesus replied seventy times seven (Matthew 18: 21, 22). This basically means that we should not keep count, and we should keep forgiving. Forgiveness is not a one-time act. It is a process, a way of life, and an attitude we need to develop. (MN)

**For Reflection and Discussion**

1. What are the practical difficulties you have come across while bringing up your children?
2. How does being faithful to our Father God in our life helps in providing a role model to our children?

*Pray for:***Pharmacy Service****Pharmacology****Clinical Pharmacology**

Reynolds Memorial Hospital, Washim

Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Church

Reformed Church in America

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## Justice and Injustice

Micah 6:6-8

**Key Verse:** “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting” Psalm 139: 23-24

It feels like injustice is woven in the fabric of society. Almost everyone, at some point in their lives, feels wronged by someone – family members, neighbours, supervisors, colleagues and the strangers on the roads. At the workplace, the employees feel that they are not getting their due. And the experience of injustice brings out anger, resentment, hurt, reduces communication and further damages interpersonal relationships.

**Perceived Injustice:** In dealing with injustice, the first thing is to differentiate between perceived injustice and real injustice. Many times, we are very quick to say that injustice has been done to us. This happens commonly in situations where there is mistrust already. For example, a colleague is undergoing personal difficulties which are confidential, and the unit head or supervisor gives him some time off or reduces his workload. Unfortunately, the extra workload falls on the other person. In this situation, one who carries the extra work perceives injustice without having all the facts and without talking to his colleagues.

In this time of perceived injustice, we need to examine the circumstances, get all the facts, talk to people, iron out mistrust, examine our own motivations before reaching a conclusion. On the other hand, whenever anyone accuses me of being unjust to them, even though my first response is to deny it, I must examine my own heart, my motivations to make sure that I am not consciously or subconsciously being unjust.

**Real injustice and the Long Road to Justice:** In today’s world there are many real injustices too and that cannot be denied. We need to realise that dealing with injustice and fighting for justice is difficult and it is likely to be long

drawn. Fortunately, there are good examples on how to deal with injustice. One such example is Mahatma Gandhi.

When faced with injustice, he examined himself, his motivations, chose to respond only in love and made his followers to promise that. Then he openly wrote about it, letting the other party know why it is unjust and how it can be solved. When the injustice persisted, he rallied his followers and broke the unjust law peacefully without violence. And he and his followers were willing to face the consequences which included getting beaten and being put in prison. But over time, he was able to conquer the injustice.

Definitely, it is a very long and difficult road. But all the steps may not be needed in all contexts. This provides the framework or the principles for a solution.

Because it is such a difficult task, we should seek the help of God. (MN)

### **For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. When we perceive that injustice is done to us, what attitudes we need to have and what steps to be taken? We may avoid bitterness and self-pity and come before God in humility. We too need to be cautious that we do not show partiality and judge wrongly. What does the Bible say about this?
2. How do we differentiate between perceived and real injustice?

*Pray for:*



**Pulmonary Medicine**

**Respiratory Medicine**

Poona Christian Medical Association

Hospital: Jalna Mission Hospital, Jalna



**Acts of kindness towards those who work for us!**

**John 6: 4 -12**

**Key Verse:** *Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on” Mark 12: 43 - 44*

Holiday homes give people an experience of relaxation and change from one’s routine! One of the workers from one such place shared his slice of life to one of the guests (who happened to be one of our senior faculty). He spoke about what happened during the COVID-19 pandemic, how he lost his job and therefore had to return home to India from Dubai, etc.

While he was working in Dubai, he worked as a technician in one of the factories. Now, the only job he could find is this maintenance job in a holiday home. To add to his pain, he lost his father during the pandemic, and even though two years have passed since the death of his father, his mother was still not able to cope with the loss. His house is in a very bad state and in desperate need of repair.

The man also shared the plight of other workers, their painful experiences, and the struggles they faced every day of their lives. Many of them owe money to the bank because they had taken out loans to support their children’s education or build a house. Now, because of their current situation, they are struggling with debts. Most of them are the sole breadwinners. Since they are so burdened, many would turn to alcohol in an attempt to drown their sorrow and grief.

Many people go to holiday homes to relax and enjoy themselves. Here, workers do their best so that the guests may have an experience of a lifetime. Little is known that these people (workers) have a story of their own, and unfortunately, a sad one at that. This is the paradox of our social setting.

Sometimes, even though we are aware of this, we may feel disturbed and withdrawn, not knowing how to feel the pain of people around us. We may feel as if the little we can do is not enough to make a difference. It is important to

remember and be able to see those small acts of kindness that matters, that even though the starting point is small it will lead to a bigger result. We can each reach out with small acts of kindness towards those who are in need! The act of kindness of a boy, who gave his meal packet of five loaves and two fish to Jesus, fed thousands of people (John 6: 4-14).

After sharing his story, the man said, “Thank you for listening to me. I came here two years ago and this is the first time I was able to share something about my life since I came to work here!” We live among people who are longing to be heard! That is where one can begin to show forth mindfulness! (MCM)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. We are surrounded by needy people who work in our garden, who manage hospital waste, who do maintenance work, outsourced workers, security persons and others. How can we make it possible to take a few minutes to listen to them?

*Pray for:*



**Staff and Students’ Health Service  
Outpatient Services  
Medical Records Department  
Medical Assistance  
Clinical Assistance  
ACCESS**

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church  
Catholicate of the East  
Hospital: M.O.S.C Medical Mission Hospital,  
Kolencherry and others

Reflecting on God’s Word

Luke 15: 11 - 19

**Key Verse:** “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword... is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” Hebrews 4:12

In the book, *What Do They Hear?* Mark Allan Powell shared an incredible experiment he conducted using the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). In this experiment, he read the parable aloud to 100 American students. He then asked them to share what they have heard. In their retelling of the story, all the 100 students mentioned that the younger son squandered away (wasted) his inheritance. Also, out of the 100 American students, only 6 students pointed out that there was a famine.

Powell conducted the same experiment with Russian students in Russia. This time, almost all the students mentioned that there was famine. According to Powell, the majority of the Russian students “noticed” the famine in the given passage because Russia, in the past, had experienced severe famine and thousands of Russians lost their lives as a result of this famine. This detail was not obvious to the students in America because this experience was not part of their historical memory.

Powell conducted this same experience in Tanzania, East Africa. He was surprised to find that the students in Africa attributed the young man’s starvation to the fact that nobody gave him anything to eat, and they understood this as a social failure to show hospitality towards strangers.

If we look at the passage carefully, we find that none of them are wrong, and that all the three things are all mentioned in the Bible. Powell’s exercise is an eye-opener and a useful reminder that “the word of God is living and active” (Hebrews 4:12) and speaks to every particular situation.

As we come together for the reflection of the Scripture, we need to be aware of these:

1. How we interpret things is always based on what we have learnt and experienced in life. These factors shape our beliefs and practices.

2. We need to be aware of our presuppositions. We need to listen to ‘other’s point of view’ instead of thrusting ‘one’s own point of view”
3. Allow everyone to express their understanding of the Scripture and listen to them.
4. When we emphasise one point of view, we miss out many instructions from the Scripture

(Reference: Mark Allan Powell, *What Do They Hear?*)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Like the parable of the prodigal son, think of other passages from the Bible which, because of our over familiarity of the passage/story, we have missed out details within the story. Do you see any difference looking at the passage from a different angle?

*Pray for:*



**Transfusion Medicine and Immunohaematology**

The Salvation Army India South Western Territory

Evangeline Booth General Hospital, Ernakulam &

The Salvation Army Medical Centre, Kottayam  
The Salvation Army India Western Territory Hospital: Evangeline Booth Hospital, Ahmednagar and others.

The Salvation Army India South Eastern Territory

Catherine Booth Hospital, Nagercoil.

**Focus on The Poor and Marginalised****Isaiah 41: 17 - 20**

**Key Verse:** *“When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the LORD will answer them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them”*  
*Isaiah 41:17*

The Makunda Christian Leprosy and General Hospital in Assam was restarted in 1993, after 10 years of closure. The old leprosy hospital had about 60 leprosy patients but no general patients, money or electricity. It was surrounded by poor people who preferred to be managed by local traditional helpers rather than go to a hospital which was far away. Because of this many lost their lives in childbirth or saw their infants die of simple problems.

The two doctors, Dr. Vijay and Dr. Ann, who restarted the hospital, visited local communities and quickly found that the needy people were the poor who had no other options. Many innovative programs were started to ensure that they could access good quality healthcare at costs that the poor could afford. Those who were likely to sell ‘vital assets’ to finance their treatment were given charity. Since no external support was available, this meant that the staff lived very frugally. For many years, electricity could not be provided in their homes and they managed patients with simple equipment. Many hospitals have private rooms and offer expensive treatment so that they can grow quickly, but this was not an option for the Makunda Hospital because that would mean they are risking driving away their targeted population, namely, the poor people.

God gave strength and encouragement to manage the rapidly growing work. A school, a branch hospital in neighbouring (militant infested) Tripura and a nursing school were started in quick succession. Over the next 30 years, the services of the mission compound had a transformational impact to the surrounding communities. God gave wisdom to manage all the new activities and the many major challenges that came their way. When the work became too much, God sent his people to help

with the work. God is indeed resourceful! Yes, God is never late!

Missionaries all over the world set up institutions for the poor and marginalised. God has a special concern for these people and sends help to them. The Bible says, “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys, I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the dry ground into springs” (Isaiah 41: 17, 18).

What a great privilege for healthcare workers to be sent out into areas of greatest need and be “water” to parched communities.

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. How can we have this partnership with God in caring for the poor and marginalised as described in Isaiah 41: 17 - 20?
2. What do we learn from the works of the mission hospitals in remote parts of our country today?

*Pray for:*

**Community Health and Development (CHAD)**

National Council of Churches in India

North Bank Baptist Christian Association

Hospital: Baptist Christian Hospital, Tezpur.

**Brilliance or the ability to Care?**

**1 Corinthians 13: 1 - 13**

**Key Verse:** *“If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing”*  
 1 Corinthians 13:2

Sometimes, in the healthcare business, we discuss what takes precedence, namely, intelligence or the ability to care? In an institution and in the academic context, we look for intellectuals. We take pride in our rank, the amount of brain power we have, the state-of-the-art infrastructure, so on and so forth. Good! Do we need brilliant people or caring people? The answer to this question is a very variable opinion. Some feel the need for brilliance is very important to solve vexing problems. Brilliance is very desirable but not at the cost of other attributes. One of the most important, but less obvious, attributes in healthcare is the ability to care. There is a lot to learn from Ida Scudder’s life.

Dr. Ida Scudder was well known for the operation of repairing vesicovaginal fistula which is one of the most difficult operations. And this is the description from the book on Dr. Ida Scudder: “It was her infinite care and patience, not brilliance as a surgeon, that gave her such skill in this most delicate piece of surgery.” The underlined words in a few paragraphs written in a notebook, briefly outlining the procedure for her students, gave the secret of her success.

“...locate the fistula most carefully. Large ones are most easy. Outline it most carefully with a sharp knife. Remove the scar tissue most gently. Locate very carefully the bladder tissue.....”

Most carefully.....very carefully....most gently..... The words were used a dozen times, it was repeated several times, and it was always underlined.

Dr. Ida refused to give up until success was achieved. For her the operation began long before the patient reached the table, and ended

only when the patient was completely healed. So intense was her interest in her patients as people, so terrific her determination that they get well, that she was able to elicit their fullest cooperation.

A caring person will always find ways to be brilliant too. Because he or she will not stop till a good solution is found. And caring never stops. Can we aim to do the same in all aspects of our work? (MN)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Medical professional practice can move away from practising a compassionate art of healing to an authoritarian scientific endeavour, with its technological developments. How do we remain faithful in bringing a healing touch?

*Pray for:*



- Psychiatry**
- Radiation Therapy**
- Nuclear Medicine**
- Head & Neck Surgery**
- Palliative Care**

Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar Hospital: Fellowship Mission Hospital, Kumbanad

Mar Thoma Mission Hospital, Chungathara and others.

**Giving and Receiving: True Humanness****2 Corinthians 9: 6 - 12**

**Key Verse:** “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work” 2 Corinthians 9: 11

The parable of the prodigal son brought into focus his indulgent life which exhausted him of all that he received from his father. On the return of the younger son we find the grumbling attitude of his brother. The older brother was not happy about the party his father arranged for his brother. One can say that the younger son had a greedy attitude, while the older brother had a possessive attitude. They lived in the same home but got consumed by their selfishness.

In the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus brought forth the humane side of a person who took notice of a wounded person lying on the road side and treated him. He behaved very differently to the two earlier passers-by who ignored the wounded person.

We live in a season and time when these two contrasting features of human behaviour are present wherever people can be found. We may have memories of instances when we turned the other way when someone needed help and attention. Of course, we have our excuses!! To share or give is often misunderstood as if we are losing part of what belongs to us. We have to understand that it is not a loss, rather, when we give we move towards our true humanness, out of which great joy is born.

Flowers give nectar and honey bees receive it! The flower is rewarded for its honey by the bee pollinating the flower. This reciprocity is worth pondering upon! Giving and receiving are grateful acts. Giving and receiving bring nearness between people. When we withhold giving, we reduce the chance of experiencing the great joy that comes with it. Giving is a way of blessing others! Giving is a way of touching the life of others!

Giving is an act of gratitude. Jesus once visited the home of Zacheus and pronounced blessings upon him and his family. In response, Zacheus, who had wrongly amassed wealth, offered to give away his riches to the poor. From being a taker, he was transformed to become a giver!

A taker ends up hoarding and possessing while a giver opens ways to multiply the act of giving. The boy in the miracle narrative of the feeding of five thousand (John 6: 1-14) is a very good example. The boy gave all that belonged to him, the five loaves and two fish, without keeping anything for himself. Jesus recognized this selflessness and multiplied the gifts. Because he (the boy) gave all he had, Jesus blessed his gifts and everyone got fed! (MCM)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. When we receive a greeting with a smile, we feel revived. This small act reminds of what giving can result in. Discuss ways in which we may keep giving in order to be a blessing for others.
2. Are there instances when we turned the other way when someone needed help and attention? How do we handle situations like these to become a helper?

*Pray for:*

**Rural Unit for Health and  
Social Affairs  
(RUHSA)**

International Mission Board,  
Southern Baptist Convention

Hospital: Bangalore Baptist Hospital Society



## Tolerance

Romans 14:1 - 4

**Key Verse:** *“But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ” Romans 14:10*

Tolerance, depending on how we look at it, may have different implications. Tolerance is often understood as “putting up with” something we dislike or even hate. To tolerate can also mean “to endure.” The dictionary defines tolerance as the ability to tolerate or deal with or endure the existence of opinions or behaviours that one dislikes or disagrees with.

To practise tolerance does not necessarily mean to tolerate everything around us. We cannot simply accept and tolerate every belief and practice around us. For example, one cannot accept or tolerate the practice of child labour or abuse in our society. Tolerance cannot happen at the expense of injustice. As Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa reminds us, that in the face of injustice, being silent or showing tolerance is not an option. If we remain silent or tolerant in the face of injustice we are siding with the oppressors.

Often, we may tolerate someone who is different from us in culture and language, yet remain intolerant with their thoughts and beliefs. This too is not enough.

When we practise tolerance, we need to give respect to others and receive mutual respect. We live in a diverse society where people come from different backgrounds, beliefs, and life experiences. Tolerance between people should make it possible for us to accept conflicting beliefs, values and ideas of others and to coexist. Tolerance is an essential component in social unity and a remedy to intolerance and prejudice. As we often say, “Let us agree to disagree.”

Empathic people are sensitive to the thoughts, feelings and experiences of others. They are able to place themselves in someone else’s

shoes or understand how it would feel to be treated badly. Placing oneself in someone else’s shoes is the essence of tolerance.

The Bible speaks about two most relevant truths relating to the need for tolerance: 1) humanity being made in the image of God and 2) God’s grace and love being for all humankind.

Refer: Rivka Witenberg, “Tolerance is more than putting up of things: It’s a moral value” in *The Conversation*, Sept. 16,2014.

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. In CMC, we receive people from different cultures and languages. Diversity can lead to cultural insensitivity. Who do you consider as one different from you? What makes it difficult for you to accept them?
2. What principles from the Bible can help us overcome the division in the name of religion and origin?

*Pray for:*



**Nephrology and AK Lab**

Emmanuel Hospital Association

Hospital: The Duncan Hospital, Raxaul

Asha Kiran Hospital, Lamtaput

Makunda Christian Hospital

Herbertpur Christian Hospital

Prem Jyoti Community Hospital

Chinchpada Christian Hospital and others

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya

Pradesh

Hospital: Padhar Hospital, Betul and others.

**Fruit of the Spirit - Gentleness****John 8: 1 - 11**

**Key Verse:** “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition...” 2 Timothy 2: 24, 25

Many times, during our daily work in CMC, we are faced with deadlines and high patient numbers. It is not uncommon to feel helpless, sometimes even frustrated. During those stressful times, it is very easy to be unkind. We shout at colleagues and patients. We are rude and angry. Later we feel bad for our actions, but invariably it happens again. What is the way out of this?

Since the times of Dr. Ida Scudder, the pressure of having to finish seeing the patients and doing other tasks has always been there. It is impossible to treat and heal everyone who comes to CMC. Sometimes they come with an untreatable disease, some may be terminally ill, some may have financial constraints, and there may be more reasons. Whatever the reasons are, can we do it differently?

In the book on Dr. Ida Scudder, *Passing On the Torch of Life*, there is a good example for us to follow. There was one instance where an eye camp was conducted in one of the villages. A team of doctors, nurses, technicians along with all equipment went to the village and performed the needed operations in the village. Post operative care was provided in the village itself. There were a huge number of patients. However, there were some who were beyond treatment. How were they dealt with? Dr. Scudder said, “If there was no hope, they were sent away as gently as possible.”

Is it possible for us to do the same? There may come a time when we have to turn away patients from the ED or OPD, or billing

counter or Wards. In such times, is it possible to be apologetic and convey the news as gently as possible? If any help or information can be provided to the patient at all, that will be most helpful. There have been instances when staff have paid for meals for patients and given money for transport back home for patients.

“Cure sometimes, treat often, comfort always.”  
– Hippocrates. (MN)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. In John 8, instead of condemning the woman caught in adultery, Jesus responds with gentleness and forgiveness. What lessons do we learn from this story?
2. What principles can we follow to keep ourselves gentle in our answers to patients and relatives in CMC?

*Pray for:*

**Urology**

Southern Asia Division of  
Seventh day Adventists

Hospital: Aizawl Adventist Hospital  
Pune Adventist Hospital

Ruby Nelson Memorial Hospital, Punjab  
SDA Medical Centre, Bengaluru and others  
General Conference of Seventh Day Adventist,  
USA



## Rest for the Weary and Burdened

Matthew 11: 28 - 30

**Key Verse:** “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”

Matthew 11: 28

Jesus’ invitation to ‘come’ is inclusive. It is open to all, it does not discriminate, and it reaches to all people. We all know we have to be Christ-like, and that this is not an easy task. We are called to follow Christ by following and doing what he did, and this includes showing hospitality, inviting people, and offering help so that we can provide rest for the weary and the burdened. As followers of Christ, we need to be empowered to make ourselves available to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters without complaining or making excuses.

Yes, we all love working here at CMC and we do our best for this institution. However, we cannot have a good day every day. One may even ask, “How do you expect me to put a smile on my face every day?” We face problems and struggles of our own, and each of us have our own shares of burden.

Certain practical lessons that may help us cope with the burdensomeness of our work:

1. We work for God. Imagine God telling us the morning of the OPD, or our work place, “H my child, today can you please see 30 of my children who are suffering and give them hope, love, patience and attention today?” That should help put things in proper perspective and change our attitude towards patients.
2. One senior doctor said, “The patients go through so much trouble to be able to spend 10 minutes with me. During that time, I will be patient and will try to focus all my attention on them and bring comfort as much as possible.”
3. “A hungry person is an angry person.” The popular term used to describe this is “HANGRY!” (Hungry and angry combined). Hunger makes it difficult to be patient and to concentrate. When you are hungry, please find

a way to take a break and have something to eat. It will be good for colleagues to make sure everyone has had something to eat.

4. Others have found that, when work is pressing, taking a small break and doing something to break the monotony of work, re-energises them to come back and do work better.

5. Supervisors and colleagues can unburden the workload of those who are overloaded. (MN)

Our efforts will bear fruit. Jesus said, “Remain in me, as I also remain in you” (John 15: 4). Abiding in Christ takes away our ‘burden’.

### **For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. What makes our work burdensome in CMC?
2. How do the qualities of meekness (humbling ourselves to serve) and faith (experiencing God’s strength to give encouragement) help in coping with the daily ‘burden’ and ‘workload’?

*Pray for:*



**Laundry**

**Hospital Maintenance**

**College Maintenance**

**Security Services**

Baptist Church of Mizoram

Hospital: Christian Hospital, Serkawn & others



**The Fruit of the Spirit – Joy****Habakkuk 3: 17 - 19****Key Verse:** *“Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” Habakkuk 3: 18*

What is joy? Is it different from happiness? How do we find joy? Most dictionaries define joy as a state of utmost or overflowing happiness. Is joy just abundant happiness?

First let us look at what we know about happiness?

1. Happiness is an emotion or feeling.
2. Many things and situations bring us happiness. For example, passing an examination, getting into a course, weddings, birth of a child, a new mobile phone, and many more.
3. Happiness depends on a favourable outcome.
4. Happiness is transient.
5. Happiness happens when something good happens to us. It usually focuses on self.

Joy on the other hand is difficult to define and understand. In the New Testament there are 66 verses which mention the word joy. From the verses below, we learn that joy is the spiritual aspect of life.

1. It is associated with the Holy Spirit. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:52, Gal 5:22)
  2. Good news about the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ brought joy (Luke 2:10; 24: 52).
  3. When there was restoration and reconciliation, there was great joy (Luke 15: 7,10,27)
  4. Jesus promises that nobody can take away the joy (John 16:22).
  5. Jesus promises his Joy in full (John 15:11).
- From these, we understand that joy is not merely happiness. We get happiness from earthly things and from focusing on self. We

come to experience joy by focusing on what God is doing for the human kind. We achieve joy by helping, caring, and serving others selflessly. This requires sacrifice. Contentment and peace produce joy. Joy lasts long and it does not depend on external circumstances. We can have joy even in difficult and unfavourable circumstances. During such times joy is experienced as hope and comfort.

Joy cannot be achieved without being true to oneself. This means that our inner thoughts, motivations and our outer words and actions should be aligned fully. Joy cannot be achieved in the presence of anger, hatred, resentment, unforgiving attitude or pride. (MN)

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. We must ask God for joy. Reading his word and praying help us to experience joy. Being grateful to what God is doing through us can fill us with joy - Discuss
2. Discuss the theme of today’s Bible passage, Trust and Joy in the Midst of Trouble

*Pray for:***Choirs and their ministries**

United Church Board of World Ministries

## Caring for the “Stranger”

Matthew 25: 31 – 40

**Key Verse:** “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” Hebrews 13: 2

In the early days of Dr. Ida’s practice in Vellore, she received an emergency call. It was towards the end of the day on a very hot summer day. It was a maternity case patient on the threshold of death which commands attention above all else. Passing through a narrow and crowded street of Vellore, Dr. Ida felt as if the thermometer must be registering 55°C.

The room to which Dr. Ida was led was the darkest room in the house. The birth was considered to be an unclean thing. All the others in the family have deserted the patient except an old widow. The old widow was considered more or less a social outcast among the rest of her family and therefore the appropriate one to stay with the case.

Dr. Ida went swiftly, went to the woman lying on the mat motionless and knelt beside her. Was the patient already dead? She wondered. Bad obstetric practice of the barber’s wife was responsible for the plight of the patient.

Dr. Ida asked for water to be administered to the patient, presumably the patient was dehydrated. The superstition of those days forbade giving a sick person water. There were frowns from the family and as they refused to give water, Dr. Ida herself boiled the water. She also got the patient off the dirty floor and made her as comfortable as possible. The young woman’s and her baby’s lives were saved and the family was delighted! This trip of Dr. Ida transformed her relationship with the community. By attending to this patient Dr. Ida had let her love bring life, and crumble the class and religious barriers.

Caring for the helpless and needy has been given the top priority in the Bible. Jesus narrates in this parable what God’s expectation is about his people. The parable describes that

God would divide people into two groups—one group that has fulfilled his expectation and the other that has not.

To those whom God favours, God would say: ‘For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me’ (Matthew 25: 35-37). They would then reply: “When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothes? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?” (Matthew 25: 38-39).

Then he would say: ‘Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me’ (Matthew 25:40). Aunt Ida fulfilled this expectation and selflessly served the poor and the downtrodden. Today, God’s expectations from us are the same. May God help us fulfil this. (Reference: Pauline Jeffrey, *Ida S. Scudder*, 2014, CMC. Pp.161-167).

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. How can our acts of love and compassion towards others change any difficult situation?
2. In a world where selfishness takes more prominence, how can we become agents of this sacrificial love?

*Pray for:*



The Leprosy Mission Trust India  
Hospital: TLM Hospitals, Chandkhuri,  
Faizabad, Naini, Purulia, Kothara and others

**God of Second Chances****Psalm 145: 8 - 21****Key Verse:** “The Lord upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down” Psalm 145: 14

One preacher, while preaching on Luke 15:11-32 (known to us as the parable of the lost son or the prodigal son) opined that this parable should be called, “the parable of the loving father.” Another phrase, “The Unfairness of Grace,” encapsulates the loving nature of God. The Bible reveals not only the truth about God, but also about humanity. Throughout the Bible we see how human beings are imperfect, how we fail and fall many times, and how we are incapable of standing on our own feet. How fortunate we are to have a God who is merciful, gracious, and compassionate, a God who is willing to give us a second chance, third chance, fourth chance, even a hundredth chance.

There will come a time in our lives where we mess up and fail. In those moments we are faced with several choices: (1) We can simply act as if nothing happened and ignore them, or (2) We can try and justify our actions even though we know we did wrong, or (3) We can try and run away from our problems by distracting ourselves, or (4) We can constantly beat ourselves up for making mistakes, or (5) We can pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, learn from our mistake, and get ready for another day.

The good news is that even if we want to give up, God does not give up on us. God never expects us to do it on our own. He is offering us a helping hand, and all we have to do is stretch out and reach for him.

Yes, humanity is evil, ugly, and filled with wrongness. The fact is that we are not saints and we are not surrounded by saints. Yet, God in his mercy and grace works with and through such “imperfect” people. We find many examples from the Bible, such as, the

life of Jacob, Jonah, Peter, the woman at the well, Zacchaeus, and the list goes on and on. So, if we choose to be a channel of blessing, though we may not be perfect, God will use us. God does not look for “the best in the class”, rather, God uses those who are willing to give their best.

*Reference:* Thomas H. Troeger and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale (Eds.) *A Sermon Workbook: Exercises in the Art and Craft of Preaching.*

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Select one character from the Bible whose life is the opposite of a praise-worthy life, and discuss/ describe how God worked through him/ her.
2. What do we understand when we say, “God is willing to give us a second chance, third chance, fourth chance, even a hundredth chance”?

*Pray for:*

**Chittoor Campus**

United Society for the Propagation  
of the Gospel

Board of International Ministerial Ministries of  
the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society  
Christian Institute of Health Sciences and  
Research, Dimapur.

## Reality of Christmas

Isaiah 9: 6 - 7

**Key Verse:** “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord” Luke 2:11

It is not always silent and Calm!!!

Can you think back to the time you first set foot in CMC? Can you recall the rush outside the emergency, the sound of blazing sirens, and the desperate cries of relatives, meeting the nervous eyes of relatives outside the ICU and operating theatres? Storms. Storms. Storms.

Edmund Steimle, in his sermon entitled, “The eye of the storm,” compares the Christmas event (the first Christmas night) to the eye of the storm (the eye of the storm is at the centre of a cyclone; it is a period of quiet and calm, surrounded by destructive forces). He writes: “We think about Mary, resting, after the pain of contractions and childbirth, the child, sleeping peacefully. We think about this night and we sing, ‘Silent night, holy night... all is calm, all is bright...’

But make no mistake, the baby Jesus comes right at the centre of a storm; there is a storm both before and after the birth of Jesus. The storm before: the anger of God at Israel, the biblical flood, the exile, the Roman occupation, and the storm after: the massacre of innocent children, the rejection of Jesus by his own people, the crucifixion. We tend to forget on Christmas that these lovely stories of the birth, the manger, shepherds, singing angels, wise men, are not children’s stories. These are stories for adult Christians.

We are aware of the confusion and destruction around us. Moreover, we are aware of the precarious future which haunts all of us. People are suffering, they are in pain, and they are crying this Christmas, like they do every day. The point is, we don’t forget all this on Christmas Eve, or block it out. Like a person standing in the eye of a cyclone, we are aware of it all.

Christmas is not about forgetting the storm. We should not be limited to a romantic view of the Christ child that is disconnected from the conflict, pain, suffering, and violence involved in the life of Christ. There is a deeper truth of the nativity as God’s response to a world of conflict and confusion.

Christmas is about peace pronounced in the very midst of trouble, a peace that passes all understanding. Christmas is not a peace apart from conflict, pain, suffering, violence, and confusion, it is a peace like the peace in the eye of a storm, a peace right in the middle of it all, a peace which indeed passes all understanding. We rejoice in the hope born of the conviction that the storm, the destruction, the violence, the hopelessness, does not have the last word. But God – who gives us this “silent night” in the middle of the storm – he has the last word. (Excerpt from “The Eye of the storm,” by Edmond Steimle)

### **For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Name some contemporary storms. The Christmas story is not merely a nostalgic means for forgetting these storms. The Christmas story is not a sentimental peace but like a peace in the eye of the storm, a peace that transcends all understanding - Discuss.
2. The birth of Jesus announces joy, peace and hope. Discuss.

*Pray for:*



ELS Book Shop

Central Bank of India - Hospital Campus

State Bank of India - College Campus

Post Office

Karpagam Co-operative Store.

College Stores and

Canteens in various campuses

Methodist Church in India

Methodist Hospital, Buxar, Bihar

Nurmanzil Psychiatric Centre, Lucknow

ETCM Hospital, Kolar and others.

Methodist Church Overseas Division (UK).

## Lessons for Life

## Proverbs 16:1 - 4

**Key Verse:** *“Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain” Psalm 127:1*

Many who worked in CMC, on their retirement day, have reflected about their experiences of God’s grace in living and working in CMC. Retrospection can often reveal the experiences of God’s grace in our lives and has the power to teach us lessons for life.

Rev. A. C. Oommen worked in CMC between 1964 - 1981. His life and ministry were well acknowledged even after his retirement, until his death on December 5, 2015. His family and close associates speak about three important lessons they learnt from his life and lessons for their own lives. Three lessons are:

1. *Our lives are not our own; we belong to God:* Achen and his wife gave their lives to God as young people. There was no doubt in their minds that his will for their lives was all they sought. And they lived it as they saw it. Doors closed. They waited. Doors opened. They walked in. In taking up his work in CMC or elsewhere, the family stayed tuned to whatever God has shown them thus far, and rest fell in line. They never asked what the salary would be; or what we would get out of it. And their life turned out to be more of a blessing than they could expect.

2. *The aim of life is not necessarily Success;* it is obedience to God and his purposes for us: The big question is—how do I know what God’s will is for me? It can be said that one can never really come to know in advance. Achen and his wife did what they needed to do—the right thing as far as they could discern in each situation. Achen asked himself, in retrospect, whether he did the right thing at certain points in his life that would have resulted in a more successful life. Choosing the right things to achieve success is not in our control. We need

to discern what God would have us to do and obey completely. We are not really in control (Thank God). God has his own way of using us, whatever the outcome.

3. *God is faithful.* You can trust him completely and throw your life in His hands: What is it that we want in life? We think the way to happiness and satisfaction is through pursuit of the material. But the Bible says – Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven. When we are after God’s purposes, God is faithful. Achen’s family acknowledges that they are blessed beyond what their parents could not have dreamt for their children.

### **For Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Have you ever felt that you could have made better choices to become more successful? Do you feel that you are not successful?
2. How do we recognize God’s leading in your life? Can you trust him to make you a blessing, even when your life seems not a successful one?

*Pray for:*



### **Plastic Surgery**

Vellore Good Samaritan Canteen

MIQ, LIQ

Kolhapur Church Council

Miraj Medical Centre, Maharashtra

# MAITRI 2024 BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS



**Chaplaincy**  
**Christian Medical College Vellore**  
**Vellore 632004**