

Voice



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Voice

Voice is produced with the intention of inspiring, igniting and initiating thought, prayer and action. Your views and responses are crucial to this process. Please e-mail your responses, rejoinders and reflections on 'The Professional Life of the Christian Doctor' to

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Cover

The Christian Doctor's Professional life is characterised by a wholesome attitude, aptitude and ability

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The voice of one calling in the wilderness;
Prepare the way of the Lord; Make
straight in the desert a
highway for our God.
Isaiah 40:3.

Reflections on Mission Hospitals



Emmanuel Hospital Association

808/92 Deepali Building, Nehru Place, New Delhi 110 019.

Dear friends,
Greetings from EHA.

I am writing this personal letter, requesting you to consider the needs I am sharing and join us in praying to God, to move hearts of people.

As you may be aware, EHA has 20 hospitals, scattered across rural locations in North, Central and North Eastern States. Over the last ten years from about 120 Doctors, currently about 170 Doctors are working in these locations. But in the last couple of years, the context changes has led to some urgent challenges which we need to respond to.

1. The Clinical Establishment Act. This new act mandates that every hospital has minimal number of specialists if they are to run these institutions. These include all basic specialities along with others like Pathology, Radiology, and Anaesthesia etc. Smaller institutions which used to run with small teams especially in North East and Central India are finding it tough to fulfil these requirements. We need a large number of specialists to move into some of these locations either for 1 to 2 years as short term support or long term, while we explore sending more people for training and develop another cadre of specialists.

2. We have a few young families moving into smaller locations. Unlike the previous generation, the younger consultants are not trained as generalists and find it difficult to take responsibility of smaller locations without adequate support. So we need senior or even retired doctors who can come along-side these younger people in smaller locations and support and mentor them.

3. Of course, the other need is for short term consultants to relieve some of our seniors and leaders who long awaiting for a break!

Why am I sharing these issues? To request you to join us in praying for these needs. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send His labourers into His vineyard.

May be you could provide us some time to support some of these locations or people? Or you may know of others who can do this? I request you to prayerfully consider how you can join us, in responding to this challenge. You could write to me at santoshmathew@eha-health.org or call me on +919810298457

With regards


Santosh



Dr. Santosh Mathew, Executive Director, EHA

Musings on Life's Journey

George John



*Contemplation is to knowledge, what ingestion is to food - the way to get life out of it.
Thoroughly to teach another is the best way to learn for yourself.
Have something to say; say it; stop when you're done.
Never be so brief as to become obscure.*

A Dictionary of Thoughts by Rev. Tyron Edwards

On the eve of my retirement, I would like to reflect with you on the values which have sustained me through the years of my professional life. This message is a distillation of what I have read, seen and felt, transformed through the lens of personal experience.

I owe a debt of gratitude to all those who have thought deeply through many of these issues and written with insight about them. This message is not from a teacher but from a fellow traveller. I speak not as someone who has already achieved the fullness of the principles below but as one who believes that they are the anchors that give my life meaning and purpose.

Let me give you a brief narrative about myself to give you an introduction. I came to Christian Medical College (CMC) in 1971, the year in which the first kidney transplant in India was done in CMC. In those days, we went home after our interview to wait for our results. I went back by train and by the time we reached home the telegram (a medium of communication which has recently been laid to rest) had arrived, stating that I had been selected and I joined CMC in July 1971.

In those years, the Integrated MBBS Course lasted five and a half years and we had Physics, Chemistry, Biology and English in our first year. The years passed by - Internship in 1977, MD in General Medicine in 1978 and then a member of the faculty in 1981. It has now been 42 years in Vellore.

I would like to use the five fingers of the hand as a "mnemonic" for the five points I am speaking about.



- I. First, the middle finger, the longest stands for putting first things first.
- II. Next, the index finger: I turn it and point to myself - know myself.
- III. Third, the ring finger stands for relationship - take time to be with God.
- IV. The little finger, the weakest, stands for helping others, specially the weak and marginalised, to the best of our ability.
- V. The fifth, the thumb, is the one that can make a circle with any of the other fingers, an eyepiece / microscope / telescope, through which we take a look at the Mystery of Life.

1. Put First Things First

*Jesus said, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."
Mathew 6:33.NIV.*



C.S Lewis, the prolific author, who held academic positions at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities writes, "Put first things first and we get second things thrown in: put second things first and we lose both first and second things" It was Aunt Ida who said, "First ponder, then dare. Know your facts. Count the cost. Money is not the most important thing. What you are building is not a medical school. It is the kingdom of God.

Dr. Ida Scudder, the founder of Christian Medical College, Vellore.

All of us have multiple goals for many of our actions, some even hidden from our conscious selves, resulting in cross-purposive and confusing thoughts. We need a unifying goal as the vision for our lives to find our way through the maze. The core issue will not just be what we did, but - *who* we did it *for* and *why* we did it. In the long run, our attitudes will be more important than the things themselves. In our journey, it will not be the speed we have attained or the distance we have covered but the direction we have taken.

Keeping the glory of God as first priority, indeed our only priority, will enable us to see that what we have – our talents, education, skills, power and money are mere tools and not of value in themselves. This is not to say that such a perspective eliminates problems. It may sometimes, in fact, add to the complexity of a problem. A new dimension becomes visible in the form of moral hazards in the decisions we take.

Many moral hazards take time to germinate and become visible therein is the enigma. This is not to say that once we decide that God's glory is first we become morally incorruptible. We read, "The heart is deceitful above all things" *Jeremiah 17:9*. We can rationalise all our actions – the bad as well as the ugly.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn writes, "If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties - but right through every human heart and through all human hearts. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?"

Put First Things First

The Professor was waiting to take his class, standing behind his table in the lecture hall. He reached under the table and took out a large, clear glass jar and set the jar on the table and then reached under again and took out a box. From the box, he took out an orange sized stone and carefully set it at the bottom of the jar. Then he added more stones of the same size until he placed one last stone on the top. "Is this full?" he asked, the first words he had spoken. No one said anything. They seemed a little stunned. "Everyone must vote, "Is it full or not? Raise your hand if you say it's full." All the students raised their hands.

He took a cloth bag from under the table. He opened it and took pebbles from it and gently put them into the bottle. They settled into the spaces between the larger stones. "Now is it full?" he asked. There was silence. "You must vote", he reminded them. About half the students put up their hands.

Next he took out a pouch of sand and emptied the sand into the bottle - the grain found spaces between the pebbles and settled in. "How about now, is it full?" he asked. A few scattered hands went up.

He finally took a bottle of water and poured it in. The water filled it to the brim. "Okay, now it's full," he said as he pushed the jar forward. "Now tell me: what is the lesson here?" There was pin drop silence.

One student finally raised her hand. "That you can always get more stuff inside?" "A good guess, but that's not it." No one else wanted to interpret this.

Finally he said, "The lesson is," he spoke slowly, "You would never have got the **rocks** in unless you put them in **first**."

All of us fail to meet the standards set by Jesus. but as Christians we are forgiven sinners, we fail, repent, get up and walk again by the grace of God. It is more likely that having fallen, we will get up and walk in the right direction if our priorities are aligned to the Truth. Truth, in Biblical terms, is useless unless it is translated from my intellect to my will – from understanding to action.

Boasters are generally considered too full of themselves. Self-belittlers are the opposite - having a form of "humility". In reality, it is the same phenomenon in disguise. This is easy to test because the moment someone else articulates a negative opinion to them, there is a dramatic defense – the hidden ego pops out from its disguise. A Christian cannot be a boaster or a belittler as the goal has shifted from self to Christ. For such a person, decisions are not to be based on fear or a desire to please, services are not to be given just for financial considerations, religious acts are not to be performed for mere custom and love of publicity and desire for reputation are not to determine action. In this journey of transformation, with its ups and downs, whining about unfairness or resentment against another's actions should progressively find less baggage space.

Paul says, "What about me? Have I been faithful? Well, it matters little what you or anyone else thinks. I don't even trust my own judgment at this point. My conscience is clear, but that is not what matters. It is the Lord, Himself, who will examine me and decide." *1 Corinthians 4:3. NLT.*

Keeping the glory of God as first priority, indeed our only priority, will enable us to see that what we have are mere tools and not of value in themselves.

2. Know Myself as a Child of God, Dependent on Him

"..Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" Matthew 6:9b.

"...And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered". Matthew 10:30.

"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:18.



Rev. Theodore Williams said, "Little is much when God is in it". I need to change from an adult intellectual, "I believe" mode of religion to a childlike, "I know God will be there" type of faith. All of us have unique patterns of strengths, weaknesses, prejudices and sympathies. We should not allow the peak or trough moments of our life to define us.

Dr. Martin Luther King, the American Civil rights leader said, "Don't let one moment be the definition of who I am – let the sum total of my life speak for itself. When I die, I don't want you to remember me either for the mountaintop experiences or the dark valleys. I've done some great things, I've been a part of a major move in America, but I've also made mistakes".

All of us are more than a single episode in our lives. My best and my worst moments are all part of my curriculum vitae but that is not all of me or who I fully am. I should beware of getting entrapped in the highs and lows of my history or even in others' definitions of what I am or should be. I am a child of God, growing in spurts. Salvation means being set free of the shackles of all the chains that enslave me so that I am empowered to be my true self. I have to trust my Father enough to let Him do all the driving.

Every day is an uncharted and un-sailed sea. I have, for this journey, faith as my vehicle, hope for my steering wheel, love as my fuel and gratitude as my seat.

What is real faith? Real faith rests upon the character of God. Faith is not the denial of reality but is the awareness of a greater Reality.

A child who has been promised a bicycle for his birthday by his parents announces it to his friends well before the day arrives because he trusts his parents – not because of psychological wish fulfillment. I must trust God enough so that as I drive along on my journey, I go in the faith that He closes one road in order to open another. The problem is that I sometimes hand over control of the GPS and steering wheel to God while maintaining control of the clutch and brakes as it is not easy for me to relinquish control.

During the course of this voyage, we will be brought, sooner or later and sometimes more than once to a situation where we will have to depend only on God. It may be a seemingly insurmountable problem, similar to the Israelites with the sea in front and the Egyptian armed forces behind them, *Exodus 14*; King Hezekiah confronted by the army of the Assyrians, *2 Kings 18, 19*; Daniel in the lions' den, *Daniel 6*.

It could also be a call to change to a road less traveled as in God's call to Abraham *Genesis 12:1* or in God asking Jonah to preach in Nineveh *Jonah 1:1*. There will be a struggle to be in control but that will not be possible – at this time, when one is at one's most vulnerable moment, God's power will be made manifest.

The manifestation may be dramatic *Exodus 19: 16-19* or as gentle as a whisper *1 Kings 19:12b*. In either mode, it will be discernible, though at times, in retrospect, because it could not have happened with my own fretful striving. As the prophet says, "Not by force nor by strength but by my Spirit" *Zechariah 4:6b*.

God saves, in these situations, not always by preventing them but at times, by transforming them. God's truths and actions are self-authenticating and eternal. The book of Ecclesiastes starts by stating that everything is meaningless *Ecclesiastes 1:2* but soon has the following insight, "I know that everything God does will endure forever". *Ecclesiastes 3:14*.

When God calls, I am not to look around for someone else to see whom the call is for. We read in John's gospel that Jesus, after the resurrection, tells Peter "Follow me." Peter turns, sees John and asks Jesus "Lord, what about him"? Jesus reply was, "What is that to you? You must follow me". *John 21:19-22*.

When problems and difficulties surface, my focus determines my approach to the issue. If I focus only on the problem, I will gradually magnify it and see myself as a victim; if I focus only on my own abilities, I will find myself becoming arrogant or anxious. The way forward is to trust Him, as a child trusts the parent.

Know Myself as a Child of God, Dependent on Him

Once upon a time, in a city, there was a famous piano teacher whose reputation was that he could teach anyone to play the piano. In the same town was a youngster, considered difficult to teach. The teacher was called in to do what was apparently impossible. He talked to the boy and told the youngster's parents that there was a superb pianist hidden inside the young man who needed to be uncovered. He said he could show it and asked the young man to start playing what he could – the only rule was that he had to give time between any two notes he played.

The master pianist took his seat beside the young man. The youngster started playing on the piano – it seemed discordant initially. However, in the silence between two notes, the teacher played his notes and the final composition was Music. I have a Father who can take my puny efforts and transform them – if only I let Him have the space to work in.

Trust implies being aware that every situation is part of God's overall plan. Consider Peter who could walk on water when he looked to Jesus but started sinking when he looked at the power of the wind *Matthew 14: 25-31*. If He knows I cannot handle a situation, He will protect me; if He knows I need to handle it, he will be with me but I still have to go through with it. As Tozer says, "Ever since Adam, God has not failed a single man or woman who trusted him".

There can be some trip-wires in our concept of faith. First, we can rely on the magnitude of our faith itself rather than on the Person in whom we have faith. That puts the onus back on us – and we are then on the wrong track. Faith in faith is faith gone astray - faith as small as a mustard seed is adequate, if it is in the right Person. Second, faith is sometimes used as a substitute for action. James addresses this in his Epistle *James 2:14-26*.

True faith will make me a person from whom certain actions would follow. Cicero, the Roman orator, warned his audience that they were making their philosophy a substitute for action. This occurs when we are oblivious to the fact that faith is the motive for a particular type of conduct and not a substitute.

The tree is a means of producing fruit. Just as a choice between tree and its fruit is not a real choice, so is the choice between faith and works.

Faith in faith is faith gone astray - faith as small as a mustard seed is adequate, if it is in the right Person.

3. Spend Time with God and Maintain a Personal Relationship with Jesus

After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone. Matthew 14:23.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 2 Timothy 3:16.



As the shepherd in the story (box) found out, the sheep would know his voice only if He spent time with them. If I want to know God, His plan and purpose for me, I need to spend time in His presence. God always has time for us. It is we who are "busy". In the "lost" parables: the lost lamb, the lost coin and the prodigal son, Jesus gives us a picture of God who is ceaselessly searching for us, lost as we are. *Luke 15*. We may be lost in the worries of this world or in seeking after wealth, prestige or earthly pleasures but God is always looking for us. We need to make the time to spend in His presence.

The experience of the presence of God goes far beyond the beauty of a logical argument. The way to know Him is by reading His Word, reflecting, praying, listening to others who are further along in the journey of life and in silence.

Spend Time with God and Maintain a Personal Relationship with Jesus

A Christian author wrote that she had once asked a shepherd friend to narrate the relationship between a shepherd and his sheep. She was expecting an answer on the lines of what Jesus said, "The sheep listen to His voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out and his sheep follow him because they know His voice" *John 10:3-4 NIV*. She was disappointed because he told her that his sheep did not recognize his voice. He said, "I could go to the sheep pen and call my sheep till I am blue in the face - not one will respond. They don't know me because we have not spent enough time together".

We need to be refilled regularly because we are all leaky devices tending to become empty. Free refills are always (24x7) available from the fullness of Christ *Colossians 2: 6-10*. Bible reading is not for answering “quizzzy” Bible questions regarding facts but for a transforming understanding that nurtures my soul. The understanding comes from the Holy Spirit illuminating and revealing – verses which were just words then take on ‘meaning’.

Words are vehicles for carrying the ideas that transform us and understanding precedes transformation. The Christian life is definitely much more than having an intellectual understanding – but it is never less than that. When the Spirit illuminates the heart, we discern what was not understood - a discernment that is immediate and satisfying, knowing the truth in a deep and authoritative way. However, in the end, all teachers and books are merely signposts pointing in the right direction. They can be forgotten once the traveller has arrived safely. They are the means not the end of our search for the meaning and purpose of life.

There is a whole world of difference between knowing **about someone** and **knowing someone**. Jesus said, “God is spirit and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth” *John 4:24*. The apostle Paul has emphasised this, ‘He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.’ *2Corinthians 3:6*, and again, ‘knowledge puffs up but love builds up.’ *1 Corinthians 8:1b*. **Knowing about God** leads to pride, in contrast, **knowing Him** results in genuine humility. Job had this moment of grace when He saw God and humbled himself.

“My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes” *Job 42: 5*. That is a good touchstone for oneself.

Prayer is often considered a time to make requests for our needs and, in answer to prayer, we expect God to respond to our requests like an ATM machine. However, real prayer is so much more, as we see in the Lord’s prayer, which Jesus taught His disciples *Matthew 6:9-13*. Prayer is

- * the recognition of a relationship (our Father in heaven),
- * putting first things first (hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done) and
- * acknowledging my dependency (give us today our daily bread, forgive us our debts, lead us not into temptation, deliver us from the evil one).

Prayer is a mode of communication in which I ask for grace and strength to conform to His will. ‘...not my will but yours be done’ *Luke 22:42*. Prayer is anchored in a trusting surrender to a loving Father.

There is an interesting book called “The Screwtape Letters” by C S Lewis. It contains a collection of letters from a senior Devil to Wormwood, a junior devil giving advice on how to lead humans astray. In one of the letters this warning is given to Wormwood: “Do not be deceived, Wormwood, our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending to do our Enemy’s will, looks around at a Universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys”.

There is a whole world of difference between knowing **about someone** and **knowing someone**..... Knowing **about** God leads to pride, in contrast, **knowing Him** results in genuine humility.

Being a Christian is not just following a set of rules, regulations or rituals. It is a living relationship with a Person. Christian teaching is aimed at making Christians more Christ-like so that our actions reflect our new Life irrespective of our field of work – be it health, technology, economics, law or politics. Just being a Christian does not give me superior knowledge in any of these areas, but, it does imply that I have to give of my best and ensure that I am professionally competent and the work is based on Christian principles.

We are stewards of all that has been given. To quote C S Lewis again, “If, in your waking hours, you make excellence in work your aim, you will be one of the sound craftsmen and your clients and other sound craftsmen will know it. This group of craftsmen will **not** shape professional policy or obtain professional influence nor will it coincide with the inner ring of important people in the profession - but you will be busy doing those things which your profession exists to do and which in the long run is responsible for all the respect your profession enjoys and which all the speeches and hype cannot generate or maintain.

Once we spend time with Him, He will reveal His plans, over time, one step at a time. I don’t need to frantically search for His will, I trust that He will reveal His will within His time-frame as we read, ‘Be still and know that I am God’. *Psalm 46:10*. And again, ‘In repentance and rest is your salvation. In quietness and trust is your strength.’ *Isaiah 30:15*.

God does not author confusion. How will I know whether I am being guided by God or am doing what I really want to do and passing it off as God’s will? All I can say is that we will know, provided we are willing to obey and keep in touch. There will be times when confusion, anxiety and anger will occur due to uncontrollable events and unreasonable people.

However, through it all we will hear the gentle whisper of reassurance as Elijah heard it *1 Kings 19:12*.

As we stay faithful in little things, God will guide and sustain us – step by step. We will become aware of unplanned coincidences, events that click, doors firmly shut at the same time as new doors that are opened. At that point in time, the landscape may appear a bit “unfocussed” but, as we look back over the years, we will realise that a consistent, guiding Hand has been present.

4. Help Others on the Journey to the Best of Our Ability

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2



All of us need help to stay on track and we need to help each other to do so, not in self-righteous indignation but in humility. We are all saved to serve. It has been said, “You are the fifth Gospel”. I cannot be judgmental of others who are at different points of their journey - some further along than I am and some behind. The call to me is to help others so that, those on difficult terrains are encouraged. Jesus said, “First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother’s eye” *Matthew 7:5*.

This is not a call to become morbidly introspective but to become compassionate about others’ perceived failures. He needs to save me not only from failing to meet His standards but also from self-righteousness and being judgmental about others’ failures.

Mere awareness of this pitfall is inadequate because it is so very easy to be judgmental. The part of the world we perceive as ‘unlovable’ is the parched desert. The less ‘lovable’ the person, the more they need God’s love (*See box – A Raisin in the Sun*).

Real love implies being in the service of all – including those who don't see things our way. I truly need God's grace to accept others, especially those who are unlike myself. God's infinite resources will flow through us when we become instruments instead of containers. When we pass on God's love to others we become instruments of His love and grace instead of merely receiving and keeping it to ourselves.

Mother Theresa said, "We are **not** channels, we are instruments in God's hands. Channels give nothing of their own. They just let water run through them. I am like a little pencil in His hands and He writes beautifully. Not one of us will get through this life without the need to forgive or be forgiven."

When help is genuinely sought from us remember the words of Mordechai to Esther, "And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" *Esther 4:14.*

A Raisin in the Sun

In a play about an African-American family called "A Raisin in the Sun" by Lorraine Hansberry, the father dies leaving behind a certain sum of money. His daughter hopes she can use it for her college education. However, her brother, in the quest for a quick buck, gives it to a couple of con-men who promptly disappear with the cash. The sister is livid and disowns her brother.

At this juncture, her mother says she must love her brother. The following conversation ensues (abbreviated): **Sister:** Love him! There is nothing left to love.

Mother: There is always something left to love. And if you ain't learned that, you ain't learned nothing. Child, when do you think is the time to love somebody the most? When they done good and made things easy for everybody? Well then, you ain't through learning - because that ain't the time at all. It's when he's at his lowest and can't believe in hisself 'cause the world done whipped him so! When you starts measuring somebody, measure him right. Make sure you done taken into account what hills and valleys he comes through before he got wherever he is.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Raisin_in_the_Sun.

Help Others on the Journey to the Best of Our Ability

A philosopher died, went to eternity and met Peter at the gates of Heaven.

"Before I enter," he said to Peter, "I would like you to take me on a tour of hell; I want to decide where to go. Peter found a guide to take the person to hell. When they got there, the philosopher saw a great table piled high with every conceivable variety of tasty food he could imagine - anything one could possibly want to eat or drink. However, the people there were emaciated and starving.

"How could this be?" he asked the guide. "Are they not allowed to eat?" "Oh yes, they can eat, as much as they want" said the guide "but the rule is that they must use the chopsticks they are given. They are five feet long and they must hold them at the end. Just look at them. They miss their mouths every time!"

"Enough," said the philosopher, "This is hell, indeed! Please take me back to heaven." In heaven, to his surprise, he saw an identical room with a similar table loaded with similar food. But, the people were in radiant health, happy and well nourished. The philosopher was intrigued, turned to the guide and said, "I see - no chopsticks here!" The guide replied that, the same rules applied, the people were still issued chopsticks of the same length and still had to eat the food with chopsticks. The critical difference was that, in heaven, the people fed each other.

There are 'noise cancelling devices' being advertised at present. I don't mean mechanical earplugs but electronic devices that analyse the oncoming sound waves and create a negative wave which neutralises them. These have become so sophisticated that it can now block specific frequencies. I mention this, because, some of us inadvertently transmit 'gospel neutralising' messages in our non-verbal mode of communication while paying lip service to the Gospel. This discordance may not be visible to oneself but is obvious to others. Our goal should be to facilitate the spread of the Good News or at the very least not neutralise it. This starts with small interactions embedded in grace.

Quite often, the help we think others need may not be what they really need – often a silent accepting presence is all that is needed for them to find their way. It is more important to retain the right spirit towards others rather than work at bringing them over to my way of thinking because only God can truly change a person.

5. Life is a Mystery to be Experienced, not a Puzzle to be Solved

Yet you, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. Isaiah 64:8.

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. 1Corinthians 9:25a



Life is a journey for training, not an entertainment park. We do not know why some of us are apparently whole, others are cracked while still others are broken. We go on in the faith and hope that we are all part of a grand plan – a mystery to be embraced. We need not be scared of errors as God can use my mistakes in His overall plan. Jesus said, "He causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous". *Matthew 5: 45b.*

The flip side of this truth is that God's children are not exempt from the common woes of mankind. Injuries, diseases, wars and financial busts can affect anyone irrespective of their spiritual state. To pretend otherwise is to be in denial, ignoring Scripture. Jesus was crucified; Peter had his moment of denial; Thomas his doubts and Paul his thorn.

Life is a Mystery to be Experienced, not a Puzzle to be Solved

Once upon a time, there was a water bearer who hung two earthen pots at each end of a pole and carried his water for sale. One pot was perfect while the other had a small crack. During his daily round, the full pot kept all the water and gave the water carrier twice the amount of money as the cracked pot that leaked out half the water.

The perfect pot was proud of his accomplishments while the cracked pot was ashamed of his imperfection. After a year, the cracked pot could not bear it any longer and apologized to his master for being leaky. The master asked, "Why are you ashamed? On the next trip look at the side of the road as I walk".

During the journey the pots observed that there were flowers and plants on one side of the mud road but none on the other. At the end of the trip, the water carrier told the leaky pot, "I knew about your leak but I planted seeds on your side of the road. Your leakiness watered the seeds everyday and resulted in flowers on your side of the road. I pick the flowers regularly to grace the dining table of the people I sell water to. Without you being what you are, the flowers would not have survived".

Hope and Mystery

I am not sure how many of you watched the interview of Rick and Kay Warren (*Authors: Purpose driven life, Purpose driven Church, Choose Joy*) by Piers Morgan on CNN in September 2013.

They had three children;. Matthew committed suicide a few months ago using an illegal gun purchased on the internet. The parents knew there was a strong possibility of it happening as he had a significant mental health problem but when the event actually happened, they were devastated. He had the best therapists and medications available, they prayed for him – there was not much anyone else could have done. When it did happen, they did not have answers.

During the televised interview, Kay took out a box labeled “Hope” into which she had placed encouraging verses from the Bible but she also had a pot that she called the “Mystery pot” into which she put her difficult questions about Life. Life has both.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/leanings/2013/september/rick-warren-tells-story-son-matthew-suicide-cnn.html>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJRmll_s6sQ&list=SP6XRmcXkMaWRCASNcv_aCKMDjLf4sxnp&index=4

God does not promise sunshine without shadows. His promise is that “the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” *Philippians 4:7*, and that His grace is sufficient for my need. *2 Corinthians 12:9*.

Life is a process of transformation, of being sculpted. Sometimes the path that seems obvious to us to “serve God” may not be what He wants. He moulds us for specific purposes and he uses the chisel to cut away unwanted bits, the furnace to burn the chaff in us and the hammer to place us in the right spot.

The chisel, furnace and hammer experience will not be pleasant but we need to remember that diamonds are just bits of carbon which were subjected to great pressure. Looking back in hindsight I am able to see His guiding Hand and know that through it all there was a sense of His presence with me.

When God wants us to go forward, He energises us with faith, hope and love. Fear, confusion and befuddlement belong to the devil. As Aunt Ida’s favourite prayer states so succinctly,

“Father whose life is within me and whose love is ever about me, grant that this life may be maintained in my life today and every day, that with gladness of heart, without haste or confusion of thought, I may go about my daily tasks, conscious of my 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 we walk through the hours, breathing the atmosphere of love rather than anxious striving”.

I end with a quote from Macarius of Optino, who, when told his spiritual counsel was helpful, said, “That cannot be. The mistakes are mine. All good advice is the advice of the Spirit of God, His advice, that I happen to have heard rightly, and pass on without distortion”.

I close with gratitude to God for his faithfulness and for allowing me to experience Him, the CMC ambience, for my family, my parents, my teachers and my students who have all, in their own myriad ways, contributed to what I am now. I pray that God will continue to use CMC as an instrument in His plan so that all those who come in contact with the institution, in whatsoever capacity, may experience His love and grace.

Message given by Dr. George John during the chapel service prior to superannuation.

Real Research ... Real Results ... Real Change

Lois Armstrong



These words describe how we have felt in the research department at Duncan Hospital, Raxaul in the last three years. Actually we do stand on the shoulders of giants. You have heard of Burkitt's lymphoma but many of you may not know the story of Dennis Burkitt, a Christian doctor in the Colonial Medical Service in Africa. He carefully documented jaw tumours in children and sent samples back to UK for analysis and in doing so travelled a 10,000 mile safari. Today we have a lymphoma named after the excellent work of this man.

Other Christian health workers have been known for their excellent work in health research. In leprosy work, the names of Dr Stanley Browne in Africa and Dr Paul Brand here in India were both stand out as excellent researchers.

When Dr. Stanley Browne surveyed his area in Congo, he found they had the highest rate of leprosy anywhere in the world. Yet there was nothing they could do for these people except provide practical care and symptom relief until the day that dapsone arrived on their desk.

Dr. Denis Parsons Burkitt served in Kenya and Somaliland during World War II. After the war he moved to Uganda and stayed in Kampala. In 1957 he observed a couple of children with swelling of the jaw and began to investigate these jaw tumors'. Burkitt had an intensely enquiring mind. He took the details of these children to the records department and found out that jaw tumours were common in children in Uganda.



Denis Burkitt
1911 - 1993

Burkitt kept elaborate notes and 'concluded that these apparently different childhood cancers were all manifestations of a single, hitherto unrecognized tumour complex' and he published his findings in the paper, '*A sarcoma involving the jaws of African children*'. The newly identified cancer became known as 'Burkitt's lymphoma'. He went on to map the geographical distribution of the tumour and together with Dr Dennis Wright, published a book entitled '*Burkitt's Lymphoma*' in April 1970. Burkitt's second major contribution was his work on diet and lifestyle. He wrote a book '*Don't Forget Fibre in your Diet*' encouraging high fibre diet. Burkitt was a keen Christian and wrote on many themes. His famous quote on "Attitudes" is given below.

Attitudes are more important than abilities
Motives are more important than methods
Character is more important than cleverness,
And the Heart takes precedence over the head.

They were then part of what we would today call a clinical trial of dapsone. The notes that Dr Paul Brand made, in his attempt to understand the effect of leprosy on nerves, muscles, bones and skin, were meticulous. Today we know that it is predominantly nerves that are damaged by leprosy and not the skin and muscles as previously thought.

Research is not new to Duncan Hospital. In May 1977 the work done by Keith Sanders and his team on intra-theal anti-tetanus serum for the management of childhood tetanus was published in the Lancet in May 1977 (See box for abstract). This work was cited in the meta-analysis on the use of intra-theal versus intramuscular tetanus immune globulin in 2006 (See box for reference).

Dr. Paul Wilson Brand, was a pioneer in developing surgical tendon transfer techniques for use in the hands of those with leprosy. He was the first physician to note that leprosy did not cause the rotting away of tissues, but that it was the loss of the pain sensation which made patients susceptible to injury.



Paul Brand
1914 - 2003

He made significant contributions to the fields of rehabilitation, hand surgery and hand therapy through his publications and lectures, and he also wrote popular auto-biographical books such as 'Pain: The Gift Nobody Wants' (1993), republished in 1997 as 'The Gift of Pain' co-authored with Philip Yancey.

Intra-theal Anti-tetanus Serum (horse) in the Treatment of Tetanus

In a two-year study of 322 conservatively treated, consecutive cases of tetanus in a rural hospital (all over twelve months old), intra-theal administration of 200 units of anti-tetanus serum (A.T.S. horse) reduced the overall mortality to 4.5% (5/110) compared with 14.5% (16/111) in the control series. 200 units intrathecal A.T.S. gave better results than 1500 units A.T.S.

The results with lumbar and cisternal administration did not differ. It is suggested that tetanus is a polysystemic condition requiring poly-systemic therapy. A regimen in which intra-theal A.T.S. is given as an adjunct to low-dosage systemic A.T.S., high levels of systemic betamethasone and diazepam, and careful nursing gave results which compare favourably with those of centres with more elaborate equipment and specialised staff.

RKM Sanders, Balraj Martyn, Reginald Joseph, ML Peacock . Intra-theal Anti-tetanus Serum (horse) in the treatment of Tetanus. Lancet 309:8019. P74-977. May 1977.

This article was included in the meta-analysis done in 2006 - Kabana L, Ilibagiza D, Menten J, Van den Ende J. Intra-theal vs. intramuscular administration of human anti-tetanus immunoglobulin or equine tetanus antitoxin in the treatment of tetanus: a meta-analysis. Trop Med Int Health. 2006 Jul;11(7):1075-81.

Suicides

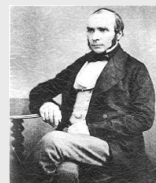
From the time of John Snow, the father of epidemiology, the value of counting numbers of cases to establish the scale of the problem has been recognised (Box). Noting the large number of patients admitted to our hospital with poisoning, we had been collecting data on these patients since February 2011. When the hospital team started seeing the actual numbers, they were shocked at the enormity of the problem. "Have we really had 51 poisoning cases this month?" We now had clear, hard evidence to show the magnitude of the problem we were facing.

Today we have even more information. The number of patients using poison to attempt suicide grew markedly between 2009 and 2012. In 2012 we worked out that almost 10% of our adult medical in-patient workload was due to poisonings, predominantly with pesticides. We also now know that the highest incidence is in the 16-20 year age group and there are equal numbers of men and women attempting suicide by poisoning. The most frequently used pesticide poisons are organophosphates but organochlorides and aluminium phosphide (a rat poison) both have higher mortality rates.

John Snow is considered the father of modern epidemiology, mainly because of his work in tracing the source of a cholera outbreak in Soho, London, in 1854. By talking to local residents (with the help of Reverend Henry Whitehead), he identified the source of the outbreak as the public water pump on Broad Street (now Broadwick Street). Although Snow's chemical and microscope examination of a water sample from the Broad Street pump did not conclusively prove its danger, his studies of the pattern of the disease were convincing enough to persuade the local council to disable the well pump by removing its handle.

Snow later used a dot map to illustrate the cluster of cholera cases around the pump. He also used statistics to illustrate the connection between the quality of the water source and cholera cases. He showed that the waterworks company supplying the area was taking water from sewage-polluted sections of the Thames and delivering the water to homes, leading to an increased incidence of cholera in that area.

Snow's study was a major event in the history of public health and geography. It is regarded as the founding event of the science of epidemiology.



John Snow
1833 - 1858



The water pump without a handle, the John Snow memorial and public house on Broadwick

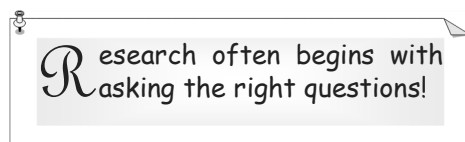
We also interviewed 158 suicide attempters and have gained insights into how big an issue family related conflict is in leading to attempted suicide. In recent months we have been developing a community mental health project for Raxaul block which integrates our hospital with the community health outreach.

This project will have a big component of its work in suicide prevention as well as education regarding domestic violence, alcoholism and regular mental health problems.

Snake bites

When I arrived in Raxaul, I was told that the snake-bites were due to cobras and kraits. In an attempt to find out about the local snakes, we started collecting the dead snakes that were brought in. The hospital community got involved and started bringing us snakes that they found on the hospital campus – some dead, some alive! I became known as the “Saap-walli” !!

Now we know there are a number of other species of snakes in the area – Common Wolf snakes, *Brahminy Worm snakes*, *Common Kukri snake*, *Checkered Keelback*, *Striped Keelback*, *Indian Rat snake*, *Common Cat snake* and a species we are waiting for the next herpetologist's (snake specialist) visit for confirmation of the species.



We wondered why our envenomation rates were so low and now we know there are two reasons.

- i. There are a number of non-poisonous snakes in the region
- ii. There are many people dying before they reach hospital.

Now with prospective data on 600 snake-bite patients being analysed we have clues to help people prevent snakebites, to encourage them to give correct first aid and come to hospital quickly. Key steps have also been taken to improve our management of envenomated patients.

Hypokalemic Periodic Paralysis

Hypokalemic Periodic paralysis (HPP) is a problem that is relatively common in our area. How big it is across India, is yet to be found out. We have been able to determine that there are more patients presenting with this condition in the hot April – June season. We have been able to enumerate the varieties of HPP, as well as provide an algorithm for diagnosis and relevant management.

Glucocorticoid Misuse

Glucocorticoid misuse due to over the counter buying is also a well-known problem in India. We now have community based evidence of the extent of its use in our community and will keep working on the problem. Our first involvement in a multi-centric study (with CMC Vellore) has given us a better picture of what our acute causes of fever are.

Research often begins with asking the right questions!

Dr Paul Brand asked Dr Robert Cochrane, "What are you doing about these leprosy patients' hands?" Dr Stanley Browne was asked by his church elders in Congo, "So what are you doing about leprosy?" Dr Philip Finny here at Raxaul asked, "What can we do for all these poisoning patients coming to Duncan Hospital?"

Another long queue in the out-patients department, another admission, another delivery. "How can we stretch the rupees to treat these patients who have no money?" Research is not high on the agenda of most mission hospitals.

From the work of the last three years we now have answers to some of our questions and have been able to implement new protocols that will continue to improve patient outcomes. We are in the process of education and prevention programs that will make a difference to many people. We have been involved in the multi centric study on the "Acute Undifferentiated Fevers" and this has upgraded our laboratory skills and provided us with laboratory evidence of what we thought we were seeing.

Training of junior medical staff in the practice of small but good research projects has been valuable. Mentoring them step by step through the process of designing a study, searching for literature, making decisions on inclusion/exclusion criteria, collecting accurate data and writing up a report have improved analytic skills, computer skills and even taught

lessons in character building. The same is becoming true for the nursing students and the community health staff as well. Maybe one day administration and maintenance/ engineering will catch on too!!

Presentation of projects and their findings in wards, clinical meetings, posters, conferences and finally publication has been a really educative process. Many people think research is a job of tertiary level hospitals and laboratories but there is a need for the research to happen at primary and secondary level health care where the bulk of cases are dealt with. Public health research in India is lacking in many areas – both in topics and geographical areas and many of our mission hospitals are ideally placed to carry some of this out. Some of the epidemiological research is not so expensive to do either.

I often feel like I am sitting on a gold mine in East Champaran, Bihar. I guess most people don't think of Bihar as a gold mine!!! 109 million people in Bihar and loads of health problems which have not been assessed in this region, it is a gold mine for someone with a love for asking questions about problems and finding ways to improve the outcomes of the people here.

Now our biggest need is for more staff to join the team; we need both skilled and lesser skilled but we need people who are willing to think and learn together.

The author acknowledges the help of Dr Philip Finny in preparing this article.

His Ways are Higher than Ours

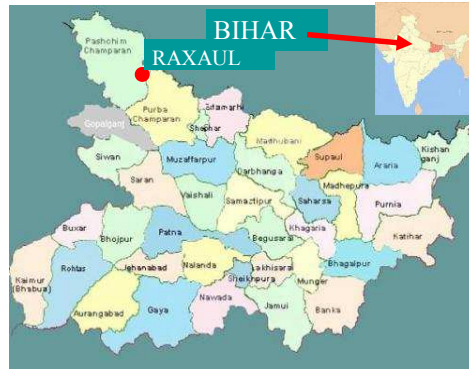
Philip Finny



His Ways are higher than ours and His thoughts much wiser than ours. *Isaiah 55:8*

The question on the lips of Dr. Joanna Peacock as she recollected the family circumstances that forced them to leave the Raxaul mission field, after only 10 years of service here, was, “Why did God take us away from Raxaul in 1975?”

She and Mathew Peacock were among the last few overseas medical doctors who served long term at Raxaul. They were both the only children to their ageing parents. When in 1975 their parents became seriously ill, one after the other, the Peacock couple were forced to return to Scotland to care for them. They could not return to serve in India after that, though they really wanted to.



Raxaul, is in the Champaran District of Bihar.

The Duncan hospital, a unit of the Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA) at Raxaul in North Bihar, had just celebrated the platinum jubilee of the hospital in 2005.

Located in Raxaul, the Duncan Hospital serves 11 million people in North Bihar and Southern Nepal. It was founded by Dr. H. Cecil Duncan in 1930 and shaped by Dr. Trevor Strong and his wife, Patricia. The Regions Beyond Missionary Union managed the hospital until 1974, when it was handed over to EHA. Duncan's service priorities now include obstetrics and gynecology, medicine, surgery, pediatrics, ophthalmology, radiology, and dentistry. They also provide nursing services and education.

Duncan's current goals include striving to establish and maintain Biblical principles as they look beyond their hospital walls to impact the town and surrounding communities. Working toward social and physical transformation, they desire to impact the community's holistic health, facilitate groups that worship the true God, and develop trust with the local community. The hospital runs community health and development programs focused on six areas: urban community development; rural community development; community based rehabilitation for children with disabilities; HIV and AIDS care; community eye services, and community dental services.

In 2011, Duncan Hospital opened its new Mother and Child Health Block, a brand new facility that houses up-to-date medical equipment and patient care areas. This building has 235 patient beds as well as operating rooms, labor rooms, an ICU, and wards for pediatric patients, obstetric and gynecological patients, and newborns.

Their mandate is from Scripture: 'He has shown you, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you. To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.' *Micah 6: 8*.



The Duncan Hospital, Raxaul.

The hospital management was concerned that the hospital buildings had become very old and were crumbling gradually. Sometimes the bricks would suddenly dislodge and fall off the ceiling in some wards. Fortunately there were no casualties.

In faith, the hospital management at that time prayed and began an ambitious re-building plan for the hospital. They did not have enough money in hand but they worked out a business plan and took a bank loan. However around two thirds of the way the bank froze further loans and the building work had to stop. There were a lot of prayers and appeals for help, but nothing seemed to be happening.



Work station in the new Intensive Care Unit (ICU)



The king's heart is in the Lord's hands, He directs it like a water course wherever He desires Proverbs 21:1.

The people around the hospital made sarcastic comments and made fun of the management. Nearly two years passed by and everyone had almost given up hope.

The Peacock family had visited Raxaul in 2009 and were distressed like others to see the new buildings lying incomplete. When they went back, they not only mobilized prayer support, but also spoke to their friends about the work at Raxaul.

One of them, Professor Gordon Mackay, an orthopaedic surgeon from Scotland, was moved by the story shared by Dr. Joanna Peacock in late 2009. He promised to contribute toward this cause at the end of the financial year.

In April 2010 we got the good news from Dr. Peacock that Dr. Mackay had personally contributed nearly Rs. 3.3 crores to rebuild the hospital.



A patient being nursed in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU)



The Duncan Hospital has a School of Nursing and runs a Laboratory Technician's course.

It sounded unbelievable. In six months the new hospital building, the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) block was complete. God answered our prayers in a remarkable manner. In fact the next year Dr. Mackay donated a similar amount again to help build the new staff quarters and he has continued to be a staunch supporter of Duncan hospital ever since.



Dr. Taka with a snake brought in by a patient who was bitten by the snake.



Our God is an awesome God !

He has formed a trust of the 'Friends of the Duncan' in Scotland to raise support for our rebuilding work. In total, his concern for the hospital has enabled him to donate more than eight crores over the last three years.

Our God is an awesome God! As it is written, 'The king's heart is in the Lord's hands, He directs it like a water course wherever He desires' *Proverbs 21:1.*

Later, when Dr. Joanna Peacock visited us in 2010, she shared that she was now able to see why God took her away from Raxaul in 1975. Soon after starting general practice in Scotland after her return, she once happened to care for a lady and soon became her friend. This lady was the mother of Gordon Mackay. Gordon came to know Joanna Peacock through his mother and became a good friend of the Peacocks. Little did she know then that one day, he would become the instrument for God's amazing work at Raxaul. Only recently could Dr. Joanna Peacock, reconcile with the fact that they had to leave Raxaul prematurely in the mid seventies.

Dr. Peacock is weak and frail now and unable to travel to India but she continues to regularly pray along with a faithful band of people in Scotland for the Duncan Hospital, Raxaul and its ministry in Bihar. Praise God !

God is Mindful of His Children

Philip Finny



A group of four of us doctors from Duncan Hospital, Raxaul were on our way to the EMFI National conference at Ranchi. We had a four hour stop over at Muzzafarpur (MFP) station, before we were to catch the next train to Ranchi around midday in October 2010. Quite “impulsively” we decided to visit one of the senior India Mission worker’s home at MFP. We arrived at the home of Mr. Aby Mathew and were resting there and listening to ministry updates.

Pastor Jacob and his wife with two girls were also visiting Mr Aby Mathew not knowing we will be there. Pastor Jacob Ainickal is in his early 40’s and is one of the longest serving missionaries of the organisation India Mission. Pastor Jacob has been serving at Mahannar in a remote part of Bihar, for over 19 years.

Pastor Jacob talked to us about his work and ministry. When I enquired about his family, he replied in a casual way that their younger daughter, Gracy, aged 8 years was not keeping well. “She only has some mild fever and stomach pain and is resting in the bedroom.” said Pastor Jacob.

Just before leaving for the station to catch our train, I thought I would say ‘hello’ to this little girl and perhaps prescribe some antipyretics for her fever. As I talked to little Gracy she seemed to be in pain. I asked her where the pain was and she surprisingly pointed at the McBurney’s point. As I palpated her abdomen at that region she had severe tenderness. The possibility of acute appendicitis was considered. My colleagues also examined her and we were convinced of the diagnosis. We quickly explained the seriousness of the condition and the likelihood that Gracy may need emergency surgery.

Pastor Jacob and the family were shocked but were willing to take her to a surgeon. As there were apprehensions expressed about the quality of surgical services in and around MFP, we decided to shift her to Raxaul, about 5 hours away, on the road. We quickly rang up our senior surgical colleagues at Raxaul, Dr. Sunil Gokavi and Dr. Mini Geogy. Less than half an hour later she was on her way to Raxaul in a van with her family, while we continued our journey to Ranchi.

Gracy reached Raxaul that evening and was taken for emergency laparotomy. She recovered fully after an uneventful post-operative period. The surgeon who performed the surgery, Dr. Mini, later mentioned to me that the appendix was severely inflamed and if Gracy had been further delayed, it may have possibly ruptured causing diffuse peritonitis.

Two things were brought home to us from this incident. It was quite un-expected, that we happened to be there at the home of Aby Mathew in MFP for a few hours. Pastor Jacob coming there with his family was also unplanned. God wonderfully orchestrated our going out and coming in to make this rendezvous possible because He was mindful of little Gracy and her faithful missionary parents, who had not realised the seriousness of the problem. He sent four doctors all the way, to care for Gracy at her point of need and then he made it possible for her to get to Raxaul and arranged excellent surgeons to operate on her at the right time.

What can we say when we see God’s hand at work. We can just stand amazed at His provisions for his children for all things work together for good for them that love the Lord. *Romans 8:28.*

A Shalom Story

Shalom, Home Based Care Programme, EHA, New Delhi



Twenty five year old Manu* and her younger brother were born and brought up in Delhi. Her father works in a factory and her mother is a housewife. She studied in a government school up to class 8. Due to the misbehaviour of her schoolmates she left school and worked as a janitor in an accounts office. During this time she began to have relationship with the transgender (TG) people. After two years she left her job and began work with the TG community. To meet her needs she did sex work as a profession. After one year she began to fall sick regularly, she was referred to various doctors with no respite. After a month she was counselled to go for an HIV test, which turned out to be positive. In 2004 she was introduced to the Sahara TG project. Manu came to the drop-in-centre (DIC) regularly, she was one of the active members of support group meetings, and she participated in DIC activities.

After a year through the Sahara TG Project she was referred to the Anti-retroviral Therapy (ART) centre and started her ART medication. In 2006 Manu started working as a peer educator at the Sahara TG project. She contributes in the awareness activities of the centre by participating in various ways in the outreach and group meetings at the centre. She is also involved in educating the members of the community about high risk behaviour. She loves helping others and visits them when they're sick.

After the Sahara project closed down, Manu was enrolled with Shalom in 2009. The team continues to visit her and provide supportive counselling too. Despite many struggles she had faced, she never lets a day go by without bringing smiles to people around her. Whenever she comes to Shalom for health check-up, she always ensures that she meets everyone. By God's grace, today, she's open to the Word of God and believes in prayer. She loves to sing and even dances very well. Since 2010, she has been supported with monthly nutritional food hampers from one of the churches in Delhi. She still goes begging in the trains. Please pray for her health and that God will open her heart to the love of Jesus.

**Name changed to preserve confidentiality.*

Readers Responses

Voice continues to set a high standard. The September issue maintains that standard. All the articles have value and each deserves some favourable comment. Perhaps two features stand out for me. The contributors have written from their own life experiences. They are not opinions nor are they abstract thoughts. They are real life. The articles by Kuruvilla George and M C Mathew provide food for thought. The 'stories' are memorable. The caption for the newspaper story is there'I'm not going to let him decide my response' and for 'the Cookie' it is 'You're never upset for the reason you think' The photos make a real difference. They bring the article to life. It's a lot of work. It is appreciated. God bless you all.

Dr. Frank Garlick, Brisbane, Australia.

I have been receiving the journal, Voice from the time it has been published. I find the contents including the notes in the boxes very good and very inspiring. I am a gynaecologist working in the Madras Medical Mission hospital, Mogappair, Chennai. I am really impressed with the extensive work the doctors do in remote areas. God bless the EMFI.

Dr. Indumathi Joy Dinakar, Chennai.

Voice magazine has come a long way and I like to read it more than before. I like the way real incidents in the life of doctors are shared. I also like that you have planned the themes for a year ahead. I will contribute as time permits and as the Lord leads but I will surely pray for Voice and the EMFI.

Dr. Iris Paul, Malkangiri, Orissa

Diligence at Work

B. John Jebaseelan



The Bible is not only a guide for our spiritual lives, it is also a light for our day to day living. There is advice for us about how we should go about our daily work and about having the right attitude to work. The Bible exhorts those who believe, to do their work diligently.

God does not want us to do the work He has given us to do in a haphazard way, whether at office or at home, but in a manner which will bring glory to God. Paul tells us, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" *1 Corinthians 10: 31*.

The Biblical Work Ethic

Christians sometimes do not pay adequate attention to their secular work and this may manifest as dereliction of duty. If we believe that God is the ruler of the whole universe, it follows that He is the one who has placed us in that particular home and family and in that particular place of work. Thus we can believe that the work given to us at home and at work is ordained by Him and is a sacred trust that we are called to perform as unto the Lord. Paul in his letter to the Colossians says, 'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters' *Colossians 3:23*.

If we are faithful in what we are called to do in the place He has placed us, we bring glory to God. The converse is also true that if we are not sincere and earnest, we do not bring honour to God. In fact we are His ambassadors, who carry His Name, *2 Corinthians 5:20* and how we work will authenticate what we profess.

The Bible proposes a clear, non-negotiable work ethic. There is no substitute for hard work. Even when the work situation is tough and unjust we are called to work sincerely.

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men. *Colossians 3:23*.

St. Paul says, 'We work hard with our hands. When we are cursed we bless, when we are persecuted, we endure it, when we are slandered we answer kindly.' *1 Corinthians 4:12, 13*.

Even if the wages we receive is less than what it should be, we are called to carry on doing diligent work without complaining, trusting God, for this is what the Lord says, 'Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded,' declares the Lord.' *Jeremiah 31:16*

There is no excuse for a Christian to shy away from hard work. The Bible also calls us to be submissive to the authorities whom God has placed over us. 'Make the Master proud of you by being good citizens. Respect the authorities, whatsoever their level; they are God's emissaries for keeping order'. *1 Peter 2:13. (Message)*

Many in the Bible stand out because of their faithful work. Let me cite two.

1. Joseph Served Faithfully

Joseph in the Old Testament is an example of a loyal servant who served his master with devotion. He was a slave in Egypt, who did not have any rights. But 'the Lord was with him' and Joseph did all he was asked to do faithfully and honestly. He gained favour in the sight of his master Potiphar, who saw that God was with him. Potiphar entrusted his whole household and all that he owned to Joseph. When the boss recognises a good administrator and shrewd strategist in a worker, he may give him/her a free hand in the work, provided there is profit.

However, in this case, Potiphar's trust went beyond the realm of business. We read, 'So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.' *Genesis 39: 6.*

This is a wonderful testimony to work done with God's enabling presence. It allowed the boss to sleep peacefully, after entrusting the key to his vault to a newly employed slave. This total trust came because Joseph was a person who was one hundred percent faithful in all he was called to do. How we work should not be based on the benefit we will get but because God has called us to do our work with care and attention as an offering to Him. So whatever work we do, let us do it diligently as unto the Lord, acknowledging His sustaining presence and enabling grace with us in the work we do.

2. Daniel's Spotless Work Ethic

The second person in the Bible I would like to mention is Daniel, who was a meticulous worker. He did things carefully, paying attention to detail. He survived the change of monarchy from King Belshazzar to King Darius without losing his honoured position in the government. It was a cataclysmic change! The Babylonian king was killed and the Medes and Persians took over the reigns of the kingdom under Darius the king. *Daniel 5: 30.*

Logically, a new ruler will do all in his power to consolidate his position. He will replace all the high officials of the old regime with his loyal and trusted people. However we read that Daniel was not removed from his position, rather he was made one of the three chief administrators under the king. Even among the administrators, Daniel so distinguished himself by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom, second only to himself. Thus he found favour in the sight of the new ruler. *Daniel 6: 3.*

There is no excuse for a Christian to shy away from hard work!

At this point Daniel began attracting jealous eyes. The other satraps and administrators became envious. They wanted to find fault with him and so prevent his promotion. The result of their scrutiny was the discovery that Daniel was incorruptible. 'They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent' *Daniel 6: 4.* Several eyes which looked into the affairs of Daniel could not find even a single reason based on which his promotion could be blocked. He did his work with great care and attentiveness.

Will we adapt this Work Ethic?

Both Joseph and Daniel lived in a hostile situation. Both were slaves: Joseph, a sold slave and Daniel, a captive from Jerusalem. They received favour from the authorities for their good work. They had to rely on their own resources and skills and applied themselves to master what God had called them to do, trusting in God for their promotion.

It was their sincere and good work which won the trust of their masters as we read in the book of Proverbs, 'Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men'. *Proverbs 22: 29*

Let us accept this Bible-based work ethic for ourselves. The world has seen many workers who do their job for money or fame. The need of the hour is for them to see honest, diligent workers who do their work without neglect because they honour God. Let us commit ourselves to do whatever work is entrusted to us with diligence as unto the Lord.

So whatever work we do, let us do it diligently as unto the Lord

Five Seasons in the Life of a Doctor

MC Mathew



One of the tips trainees in mountaineering receive is to periodically look back at the terrain covered, to draw inspiration to proceed further to the next height. So, looking back is a stimulating and rewarding experience to find energy and affirmation for the journey!

Let me look back over the last forty years in the medical profession, and present an overview of what most of us would encounter in our journey as medical professionals. Most doctors would have had to change jobs and locations of service during the course of their career. This also adds to the broadening of life experiences. A medical student recently asked me if I was tired of working for forty years! That made me ponder on, what inspires and sustains a doctor to be on this self-giving journey for many years of service! Let me reflect on the five seasons of a doctor's professional life

1. The Learning years
2. The Formative years
3. The Engaging years
4. The Consolidating years
5. The Retiring years

1. The Learning Years

Most of us spend up to fifteen years to complete our formal medical training from the time we begin our undergraduate studies. Many doctors aspire to specialise in some branch of medicine, surgery or paediatrics for which they need to compete for a post-graduate seat through the entrance tests. Life after graduation is therefore a season of waiting, preparing and competing for various examinations during the period of undergraduate, post-graduate and post-doctoral studies. It is a season of adapting to many changes.

Many leave home and have to adjust to a new language and culture alongside a hectic schedule of study. During this time many new relationships are made and also the important decision of marriage. Thus the learning years are demanding, with both fulfilling and stressful experiences.

During my conversations with both medical students and doctors, I found that most of them use this time to advance their knowledge, skills and clinical acumen and pursue one or more research interests. For many undergraduate students, it is only in the clinical years that the basic science learning makes sense and fits into the whole picture of learning clinical medicine.

For me, it was a challenge to find a balance between extra curricular activities and learning demands. I did enjoy taking part in sports, being part of the core groups that formed the local Evangelical Union and later the Evangelical Medical Fellowship of India and the Medico-Friend Circle. Each of these took a good deal of time, so that a well meaning professor, called me aside and advised me, to restrict my extra curricular activities to the weekend and devote the week to study. I took that advice seriously because it came from someone who showed considerable interest in my wellbeing. I began spending even more time during the weekdays in the wards and library, which freed the weekends for other activities.

The five seasons of a doctor's professional life

1. The Learning years
2. The Formative years
3. The Engaging years
4. The Consolidating years
5. The Retiring years

During the season of training, it is essential to give primacy to learning, because we are under obligation to be good stewards of the opportunities given to us. I feel that any neglect or lack of attention to learning during the training years would reduce the prospects of becoming a competent doctor.

We are under pressure to compete, as training opportunities are often less than the demand. For one postgraduate seat, there may be even 200 competitors. There are several criteria to be fulfilled to pass in an examination. Fortunately there are enough job opportunities!

During the postgraduate and postdoctoral study time, most of us encounter difficulties due to the indifferent or hostile attitudes of those who oversee us. This morning, a professor was talking to me about the intense difficulties her daughter is having to get her dissertation for her postgraduate course approved by her guide because of which she is not able to appear for the forth-coming examination! The explanation by the guide on enquiry was, 'It is good to face some difficulties to prepare for life'. This is unreasonable by any standards.

To inflict this form of suffering is most unfortunate. Some who have faced such incidents carry the hurt and anger built up during their training years into their work, so that even after many years they communicate bitterness and resentment in their relationships with their students.

It is desirable that students gain a sense of direction in the learning years. Even students who have been forced into studying medicine against their wish, because of parental pressure, can be enabled to come to terms with the situation and find meaning in learning.

There are only very few exceptions where learning medicine imposes such a burden and struggle that it becomes incompatible with healthy living and another course of study needs to be found.

The words of Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur, 'In acceptance lies peace' were often quoted by Dr. Frank Garlick, while counselling students to trust God even in the most trying circumstances. Every student can be helped to turn a disadvantage into an opportunity and move on with openness to all the vistas that lie ahead if this hurdle is crossed.

It is likely that some of us get jolts through failures in examination or not getting seats for post-graduate training. Such instances are not roadblocks or a cause for retreat, rather they are occasions to revise our direction and pursue our purpose sensibly and wisely. I have had set backs in the earlier period of my learning years and looking back I know that those very experiences brought lessons of significance and became formative in my life. These interruptions in the course of our formal learning are pauses given to us to reflect and renew our perspectives. I am moved by the record of the learning years of Jesus. We are told that 'Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man.' *Luke 2:52*.. Even at the age of twelve years, He had the scholarship and competence to engage in serious religious discourse with the religious leaders assembled in the temple. Yet, when His mother came searching for Him and desired Him to return home with them, He willingly went with them. This, in fact, highlights the affective domain of learning, where Jesus subjected Himself to the discipline laid on Him. He listened to those, under whose care he was.

Every student can be helped to turn a disadvantage into an opportunity and move on with openness to all the vistas that lie ahead.

The focus in modern educational technology is on the learner, the learning process and the student-teacher relationship. Each of these dimensions have a bearing on the outcome of learning. When the learning experience is integrated and holistic there will be sound content added to the domains of knowledge, skill and attitude enabling acceptable behaviour.

2. The Formative Years

Psychologists say the second and third decades of life are the formative years - the season, when we come to terms with ourselves and formulate an inner frame of reference for personal conduct and public life. The eminent psychologist, Howard Gardener, who introduced the theory of Multiple Intelligences three decades ago, elaborated these cognitive dimensions. These dimensions include inter-personal, intra-personal, musical (rhythmic), verbal (linguistic), visual (spatial), logical (mathematical), physical movement (kinaesthetic) and later, emotional intelligence was also added to these.

We are being formed through the inner and outer experiences that we face. The learning from these varied interactions converge to form the core of our character. Multiple intelligences influence how we behave. In the study of medicine, we are also influenced by the code of ethics, good practices, altruism and the call of service. For those, who have a personal allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth, there is a profound inner dimension to life and work as we listen prayerfully and discern what the Lord would have us do. The practice of regular Bible study and meditation on the mind and character of God revealed in the person of Jesus will guide us. The healing stories of Jesus, recorded in the gospel of Mark are a starting point to enter into the healing ministry of the Lord Jesus.

Jesus approached those who were sick with concern and compassion. He went beyond their physical ailment and initiated them into a journey for change. He instructed, corrected, encouraged, affirmed and explained. Most of those who had an encounter experience with Jesus were led to a transformation. I find there are several learning lessons in the healing stories for our personal growth, if we meditate on them habitually. The profound and mystical truths often require frequent reading and reflection for assimilation. The healing stories have the potential to touch us. They help us to see those who come seeking medical aid as people needing help and not just as patients. The doctor can become a pathfinder for them. This helps us to look beyond the salary we earn, the comforts we need, the positions we hold, etc. and be moved by the higher calling like St. Paul who, '... became all things to all people, that I may by all means save some'. *1 Corinthians 9:22*.

The different versions of the code of ethics in medical practice have been influenced by the Sermon on the Mount in some way or other. The two chapters of the gospel of St. Matthew (*Matthew 5 & 6*) outline a value system for personal and collective conduct. It is a charter for godly living among people of all traditions and practices. I have found it useful to have a weekly reading of the Sermon to allow the leavening process to operate within my soul. It is necessary to return to this message when we are faced with various challenges in our lives and carry the message upon our hearts for it to be internalised. That is how we can arrive at our personalised commentary of the Sermon on the Mount, which is a summary of all that Jesus taught.

The parables of Jesus are another rich resource for personal formation. They portray heavenly truths with the help of simple earthly stories.

We live in a post-modern society, where the culture of self-indulgence, personal prosperity, acquisitiveness, instant gratification, and the pursuit of success drive people to live disconnected and imbalanced lives. We too get unconsciously drawn into this way of thinking and living. It is not that we do not trust God enough, but we rationalise the call to, 'seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness' and interpret it contextually losing the eternal perspective. The parables were spoken by Jesus to reveal the mysteries of God in an understandable language to those whose minds and hearts are open to God's ways of living. The parables challenge us to live differently without giving in to the pressure to conform.

William Barclay and Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones are two New Testament expositors of the Sermon of the Mount, the healing stories and the parables of Jesus, whom I frequently refer to. These scholars captured the essence of the teachings of Jesus and wrote classics of a unique nature. There are equally moving reflections by Dr. John Stott and others. However, when I asked a group of health professionals, whether they had come across these and a few other authors, not many had heard about them. In fact, on asking about their reading habits, not even 25% present in the meeting confirmed a habitual pattern of reading books for Christian nurture. In the age of the visual media, we watch various programmes of entertainment, sports, politics, etc. and are likely to be influenced by the commonly portrayed declining standards of ethics, personal morality and value system. It is for this reason, that even greater attention needs to be given to formative education so the vision is clear and the light glows bright.

Jesus spoke of our light turning to darkness when he said, 'If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!' *Matthew 6:23.*

The declining habit of reading the Bible is equally disturbing. In another meeting of a few hundred people, I asked about the habit of reading the Scripture apart from the family prayer time or personal devotion. Only a handful said they had the practice of reading the Bible for instruction for personal formation and spiritual education. Scripture reading (*lectio divina*) is an essential nurturing resource for the 'mind of Christ' to be formed in us. *1 Corinthians 2:16.*

For our formative development, it is good to cultivate the habit of being in touch with mentors, or spiritual directors to help in interpreting the turns and turmoil of life. It is a good practice to set apart about two hours a week, half a day once a month and one day in three months for personal retreat. A retreat leader can be an immense resource in making these times restful, reflective and renewing. This formative practice will become a resource for us to live integrated lives with a sense of wholeness which will protect us from crisis and burn out that is so common in the lives of professionals.

3. Engaging years

Most professionals spend about thirty five years or more in actual clinical practice after the training years, usually beginning around the age of thirty years or so. During this time we are required to hold together our professional responsibilities, spirituality and vocation, family life, involvement in the lives of children, church and social life.

Scripture reading (*lectio divina*) is an essential nurturing source for the 'mind of Christ' to be formed in us.

I have been in touch with a family who have been struggling about whether to continue working overseas or return to India. Both husband and wife are very happy at work and the educational opportunities available for their children. The wife has a strong desire to return, but her husband is less inclined. As they engage in this process of discernment, I realize that they are experiencing the stress of decision-making. They do not feel confident to share their inner story with others for the fear of being exposed.

We all face similar situations in our personal life, professional work and family life. I have had opportunities to be involved with expatriate families who come to live in India from Australia, Europe and Canada on a missionary vocation. Most of them are in the third decade of their lives with young children when they come to India. One challenge they all face is the initiation and adaption to the new culture, language and social life. Some adapt well and choose to live in India for longer periods and some return after just one term of service. Those who adapted well usually had well meaning friends who 'pastored' them and provided the support during troubled times to pursue their vision.

One doctor, who returned after two years of service in a mission hospital, changed her earlier decision to work in a mission hospital because she felt lonely, misunderstood and used at work. When we hear such stories, we are reminded of the risks we face on account of the job, which unsettle us and even cause us to lose perspective. The challenges, disappointments, or trauma on account of situations at work, home, church, neighbourhood, etc. may take a heavy toll.

Jesus alluded to this when He said, 'These things I have spoken to you, in me, you may have peace; In the world, you have tribulation. But take courage, I have overcome the world.' *John. 16.33.*

Jesus lived fully and freely enabled by the resources He found in God, His Father. He was not preoccupied with the need to defend Himself when there was slander, malicious propaganda and accusation against Him. Peter gives us an insight when he says Jesus, '... committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth, and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously' *1 Peter 2:22-23.*

The way of 'abundant life' that Jesus advocates is the inner wellness that comes from walking with Him, even when we face difficult circumstances. The prophet Micah calls us to '... live justly. To love mercy and to walk humbly with your God' *Micah 3:6.* Even those who are keen to attack us would find nothing to talk about if we live lives centred in God.

A professor of Surgery, who did not consent to pass a candidate who performed poorly in a postgraduate examination, was not appointed again as an examiner for a decade. He endured this personal humiliation well because, he believed in his higher calling to entrust his circumstances to the God of his life. During this period of waiting he was able to innovate some new surgical procedures, for which he got considerable acclaim. He did not stay too long 'looking at the closed door' that Helen Keller spoke of from her life experience of living with deafness and blindness, but turned the waiting period into an opportunity to move on in his calling.

We need an outlook to life which is God-centric and not directed solely towards prosperity or success. This to me is the greatest of all challenges. In the highly competitive environment we live in, most decisions are taken under the influence of receiving and giving favours and not based on merit, so that it is likely that we may feel excluded or side-lined at times.

This is a reality that many will face, which is not a judgement of our ability or skill but a portrayal of the setting in which we live. I have come across many lamenting their loss and losing the joy of living and serving. Such people need support and protection lest they lose the mission to live godly lives. It is an opportunity to hold on to our faith, as Daniel did by refusing to respond to the enticement of the king Nebuchadnezzar but he ‘..made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king’s choice food or with the wine.’ *Daniel 1.8.*

Our calling in the places of our work, congregations of worship, social settings, home, etc. is to actualize what Jesus admonished His followers, ‘Let your light shine before men in such a way, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven’. *Matthew 5.16.*

It is now two weeks since my mother’s home call. She moved on after a brief illness. In one of the recent conversations with her, she said, ‘I have had a good life’. It was comforting to hear her say that though I was surprised as she had many trying times in her life. She held a full time job as a teacher and managed the home and farm with minimal farm hands to help. Since her retirement and my father’s demise, she continued to run the affairs of the home and property single-handedly. She chose to face life with composure and welcome her situation wholeheartedly, with the result that she became an efficient, hospitable and entrepreneurial person. She chose to overcome and found the grace to adapt to the situation with courage and fortitude.

We are called to be fully present in whatsoever situation we are placed. This enables us to welcome even hostile events and wait and see how God can surprise us with His abounding grace in due season. In a culture of instant gratification, we need to advocate the hope and mystery of waiting for God’s time.

4. The Consolidating Years

Five years before I retired from Christian Medical College, Anna and I went on a month long retreat at the invitation of a couple we knew for some years. One of the exercises we had to do during the retreat was to make a plan to close any particular phase in our lives. I was aware that I would have to face the challenges of retirement and so I chose to prepare for that transition. That exercise opened my eyes to several important things I needed to do so that the work would continue without any interruption. This prayerful preparation helped me to look at many details I was not aware of till then.

The last five years at work before retirement became a significant period of finding and training good leaders and enabling them to oversee the departmental affairs. I was enabled to start new facilities and training programmes that would sustain the quality of work and empower colleagues by enhancing their professional capacity and skill. As I see the work I left behind thriving now, I am grateful that I was made aware of the need of consolidating the work at the retreat.

The latter years in our medical career are distinctly different from the earlier years. The years of work, interactions and involvements would have made us wiser, incisive and skilful. This can become a big advantage for the younger people on the team. We are under the obligation to pass on these skills to the others in the team for enabling them to take over from us. It is good to have the vision that the colleagues we leave behind should do better than us in taking the work forward.

This would involve doing less by ourselves and enabling others to do more, while we are still around in the pre-retirement years. A senior friend spent over a year helping his colleague to learn the ropes so that he could effectively take charge after his retirement.

He took his colleague through all the nuances of budgeting, planning, mentoring, organizing, scheduling of the activities, conducting examinations, etc. so that the transition was smooth and easy with hardly any dislocations.

This is also the season in most homes, when the time is ripe to entrust more responsibilities to children and support their abilities to take responsibilities to plan for themselves. By this time, the children would either be married or in the marriageable age. To step back a little and to let children take a leading role in family matters is a valuable transition we ought to foster in the pre-retirement years. Building their self esteem, enhancing experience in decision making and fostering the leadership skills is a necessary aspect of healthy parenting.

Most of us would have been involved in leadership roles in professional bodies, non-government organisations, church congregations, etc. Having been in some governing boards during my earlier years, I realised that it is a good practice to hold positions for a while and then to leave the positions even before being asked to do so. It is a good practice to let others experience leadership roles, and support them in their efforts.

During this season we make an effort to plan for the continuity of the various activities in which we were earlier involved. Jesus of Nazareth practiced this in a most effective way by delegating and empowering his disciples. One such instance was the miracle of feeding the five thousand people, in which Jesus got his disciples involved. *John. 6. 1-14.*

Jesus first asked the disciples to find food and later to seat the people who were to be fed. He then blessed and multiplied the barley loaves and fish and asked them to distribute them to the people and then to collect the fragments left over. He involved His disciples at every step.

Those to whom we hope to bequeath our responsibilities need the exposure and experience while we are still there to give them the confidence to carry on the good work in our absence.

There is a wealth of insight we have by the time we come to our pre-retirement years, which needs communication. It is not common for health care professionals to write down their experiences in the form of articles or biographical sketches. Among the many outstanding Christian health care professionals in India, only a few have attempted to summarise their life experiences. This is a loss for young people. It is a good practice to prepare a readable or watchable presentation of one's life, while we are healthy and the memory is fresh.

It is also a time when mentoring of others can take a precedence. Our experiences bring maturity and qualify us to be mindful of others who are at stages in life's journey where there are more questions than answers. To let others reach out to us and learn by being with us is an authentic way of mentoring. There is much self-disclosure in an ambience of trust in this form of interaction. The pre-retirement period is also a time for wise financial planning for the retirement years.

5. The Retirement Years

Most of us retire from our regular work while we are well physically. Some will continue the earlier professional role and some others move on to something altogether new. Let me share the insights over the last five years since retirement.

It is a time of unsettlement. Every change is prone to produce stress and call for adjustment. There is a sense of loss when one leaves the place and job, which gave us identity and acclaim. We can turn to a trusted friend to accompany us during this time of transition.

A break of a few months will allow time for adjustment before we take up another assignment and give us time to deepen our ties with family and friends and do all that was postponed, during the busy pre-retirement years. We can then enter into the new responsibility with ease. Where we cannot depend on a monthly pension from our earlier job we may feel the pressure to take up jobs that meet our financial needs. This is a risky approach, if the demands of the job place added stress on us leading to health related challenges.

It is a time of celebration. Whatever might have been our experiences at work, we can be glad that we have lived well and run the professional race faithfully. This must gladden our hearts and bring joy and gratitude. It is a time that can push some into cynicism or purposelessness. The antidote for this is to recollect the memories and stay grateful. A retired person who is not pleasantly occupied can become a burden to the family and others. It is essential to view life ahead as productive and purposeful. Work after retirement is often a crown in one's life with even greater fulfilment.

It is a time of renewal. As we view life through the optic of faith, the anxiety of 'what we shall eat, or where we shall live or what we shall put on' recedes to the background. We find a new inner strength and affirmation that takes life to a higher plane of fulfilment. There is enough time to engage in hobbies and activities of leisure. Many use this time to catch up with what was not possible earlier. It is also a time to reconnect with children, grand-children and old friends.

It is a time of revising life-style. There are steps we can take to prevent some of the age-related health challenges such as an unhurried pace of life, daily exercise, healthy food habits and a quiet and meditative way of living. These steps can bring a healing and restorative touch.

It is a time to learn to live with a sense of presence and coherence. It is a season when others come to us to receive inspiration and guidance. For this to happen we need to be free of our own preoccupations.

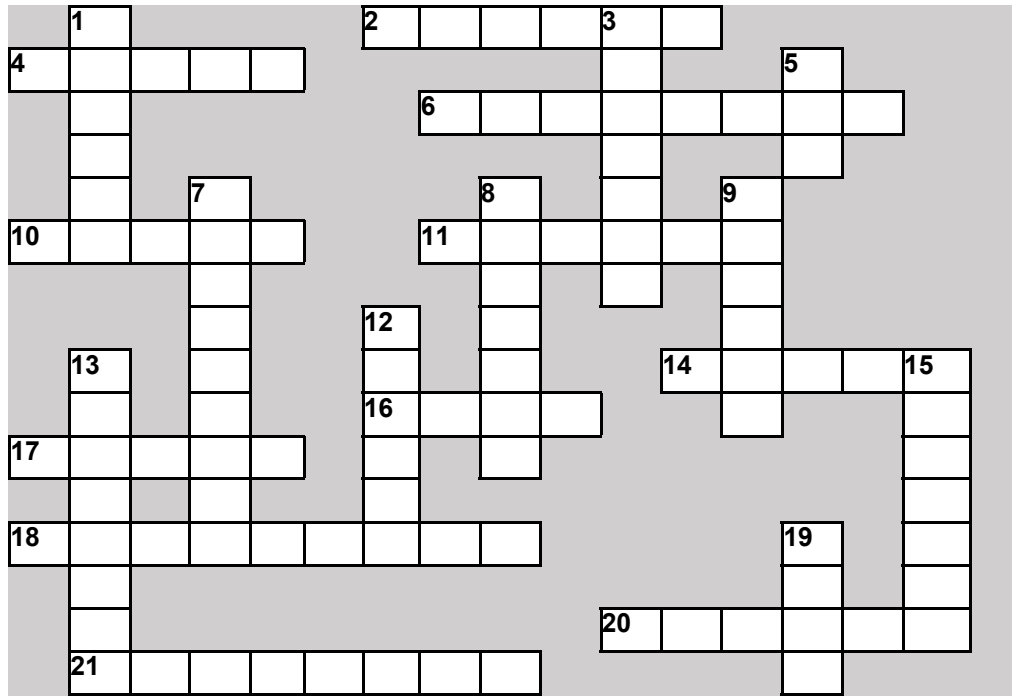
It is a time to 'let go'. We are habitually beholden to things, family, position, etc. We chose the way we walked in this journey of life, but when we are older, we are under obligation to let others lead us. Jesus reminded Peter of this reality. There are some retired people, whom others avoid visiting, because they like talking about themselves. On the contrary there are others who receive frequent visitors because they are effective listeners open to the stories of others. The blessings of listening are innumerable. One way to self-regulate how much to speak and how much to listen is to stay confined to the questions others might ask of us and avoid talking for more than three minutes at a stretch. Conversations with regular in between pauses and silences are more meaningful, with the prospect of bringing transformation. It is good to practice this way of conversing as a couple so that it becomes a pattern.

I have presented an overview of life as I experienced it thus far. I am grateful to have arrived in the sixth decade of life and I feel more expectant about the future. Some medical students, who came to visit took time to look at the photographs hanging on the wall. They wanted to know the context and stories behind the pictures. It was an hour long informal meeting, where they took the lead and directed the conversation. At the end of the conversation, one of them said, "We want to come back for more talks, because we are free to direct the content and direction of the discussion."

This is the call of life - to live freely and fully and to free others by being 'present', for God is then present in that encounter.

Attitudes of Professionals in the Bible

Bible Crossword 12:1



Contributed by Dr. Anna Mathew, Kolencherry. Clues below. Answers on page 36.

Clues Across

2	A Caring Seamstress When this good woman died, the widows spoke of all the good she had done. (6)	14	The Resolute Leader He chose to endure ill-treatment than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin. (5)
4	The Loyal Subject He had the opportunity to destroy his enemy but he would not raise his hand against the Lord's anointed. (5)	16	The Righteous Builder He completed the building project that God gave him and he saved his whole family. (4)
6	The Enthusiastic Workman Paul in Colossians calls us to work in this way, as for the Lord rather than for men. (8)	17	The Courageous Spy He was given entry into the promised land because he brought back an encouraging report from the land they went to spy. (6)
10	She Welcomed Strangers She saved her whole family because, by faith, she was hospitable to the Israelites. (5)	18	The Hospitable Tent-makers This woman and her husband were tent-makers and offered Paul hospitality. (9)
11	The Corrupt Worker He worked for a prophet but succumbed to the temptation of misappropriation. (6)	20	The Upright Manager He refused to compromise moral standards though he was in charge of everything. (6)
		21	The King who Prayed This king prayed for deliverance from the Assyrians and the Lord heard his prayer. (8)

Clues Down		9	The Reliant Warrior God reduced the men he took to battle to keep Israel reliant on God as they faced the enemy.(6).
1	The Distracted Homemaker Jesus told her she was worried about many things when only one thing was needed.(6)	12	The Trustworthy Official He distinguished himself by his exceptional qualities and those who sought to harm him could lay no charges against him because he was trustworthy, and neither corrupt or negligent. (6).
3	The Trusting Pilgrim When the call came, he trusted God and set out not knowing where He was going. (7)	13	The Uncompromising Administrators The first of the three administrators who defied the king's command to bow down and worship the image of gold because they believed in the one true God (8).
5	The Priest with a dysfunctional family He was judged by God for not restraining his sons from doing contemptible things (3)	15	The God-fearing Midwife One of the midwives who feared God and did the right thing and God was kind to them (7).
7	The Transformed Tax-collector After he met Jesus, he decided to pay back every person he had cheated four times what he had taken unlawfully. (9)	19	The Tithing Shepherd The Lord was pleased with this keeper of flocks, who brought his first-fruits to the Lord.(4).
8	The Discerning Prophetess This prophetess held court under a palm and guided her people to victory.(7)		

Caring from the Heart

Author Leo Buscaglia told about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child.

The winner was a four-year-old child whose elderly next-door neighbor had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there.

When his mother asked him what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing, I just helped him cry."

"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless."

Mother Teresa

Contributed by Dr. G. M. Jeyabalan

Humour - Caught on the Wrong Foot!

A young doctor had just opened office and felt really excited. His secretary told him a man was here to see him. The young doctor told her to send him in. Pretending to be a busy doctor, he picked up the phone just as the man came in. "Yes, that's right. You can come and see me, tomorrow. Yes, I'll expect you ten past two. Alright. No later. I'm a very busy man." He hung up and turned to the man waiting. "May I help you?" "No," said the man, "I just came in to install the phone."

Be an Encourager

William Cutting



The world famous professor of Tropical Child Health, in the University of London, Dr. David Morley, was a visionary whose care for sick children around the world inspired many. Dr. Morley used to visit health programmes in Africa and India each year with a group of his international trainees. In September 1969 he was in Hyderabad, South India. At that time I was working in a small hospital in an impoverished rural area 200 miles to the South. David had one day off from his duties and he chose to use it to visit us, an unknown team in a remote area. This required two overnight journeys on an uncomfortable local bus over some dangerous roads. In the intervening day he dispensed big doses of encouragement that are still remembered years later. He had an infectious enthusiasm which encouraged countless medical and nursing trainees to work in child health services in needy areas. Even in his eighties he was thinking of new ways of giving encouragement to health workers. He used to say – “Look out for what people are doing right and give them praise. You must give three words of encouragement for every one word of correction.”

People wonder at the sort of men Jesus chose to be his disciples. Simon, one of the first was unreliable, he could have been called “Simon the shaky”. He repeatedly blurted things out, he was brash and impulsive, he opened his mouth and put his foot in it. He was full of bravado, yet cowardly. Even when Jesus warned him that he would betray him, Peter said “Never”, but then disowned his Master three times! But he did have some brilliant insights, and recognised Jesus for who he was, when he said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” *Matthew 16:16*. Because of this Jesus saw the potential in him, encouraged him with generous praise and said - “I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.” *Matthew 16:18*. You are not just Peter the pebble, but you are “Petros”, Peter the Rock. You are so important that I give you this new name to remember who you are. His encouragement gave Peter the confidence and strength to live up to his potential.

Seniors sometimes look at the rising generations with scorn, and are ready with criticism. It is true that many young people now have new opportunities, but these bring different challenges and pressures, which previous generations did not have to face. They need confidence and direction. Seniors can help them by looking out for what they do right, admiring the skills they have, and giving them a word of praise and appreciation. So, look out for their potential and give a word of encouragement. This is what Jesus did for Peter and what David Morley did for many. Remember David’s dictum, “**Give three doses of praise for every one of correction.**”

David C. Morley (1923-2009) Cambridge and St. Thomas’ Hospital, London, Wesley Guild Hospital, Ilesha, Nigeria 1953-1961, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine 1961-1964, Institute of Child Health, London 1965-1989, Director of Teaching Aids at Low Cost (TALC) 1965-2009. See www.talcuk.org.uk .WAMC. File:-B05 EncouragementFromSeniors281109.

Lord God, make me an encourager not a grumbler.
Lord, when I meet someone,
Open my vision that I may see beyond their limitations to their potential,
Open my eyes to see in their efforts something well done,
Open my lips that I may speak a word of praise and encouragement.
Lord may they develop into the people that You would have them be.
Amen.



David C. Morley
(1923 –2009)



National Conference Christian Response to Mental Health

WHY

The prevalence of mental health needs in our country is growing and we, as the body of Christ, are called to bring healing to the communities in which we live.

WHAT

We are organizing an all India Conference on Christian Response to Mental Health.

FOR WHOM

An excellent opportunity for Pastors, Counsellors, Theologians, Psychiatrists, Psychologists and anyone interested in learning from each other to care for people with mental health needs.

SPEAKERS



Edward T. Welch
M.Div., Ph.D. (Neuropsychology)
Faculty member and Counsellor
at CCEF, USA



Michael R. Emlet
MD (Medicine), M.Div., Faculty member
and Counsellor at CCEF, USA



Samuel Pfeifer
MD (Psychiatry), formerly Medical Director,
Christian Clinic for Psychiatry &
Psychotherapy, Switzerland.

Date: 8th evening 5 pm to 10th evening 3 pm of May 2014

Venue: New Theological College, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India

Cost (For the whole conference)

Boarding: Rs.1,600/- per person which includes conference registration, stay (within NTC campus) and food.

Day attendees: Rs.700/- per person includes Conference registration and food (Lunch for two days)

- Delegates are also welcome to stay in hotels in Dehradun and attend the conference each day.
- There are limited seats and you are requested to register as soon as possible.
- Admission is on a 'first come first served' basis.
- For Registration and Queries, Contact Mr. Ebin Thankachan/ Kunal Vasisth
email: mentalhealthmay2014@gmail.com Mob: 08505933290



Please contact us for Mussoorie and near by hillstations tour planning!

Organizers:
BCTI and Christian Mental Health Forum

The Authors

Voice March 2014. Vol 12:1



Dr. George John Professor of Medicine has recently retired from Christian Medical College, Vellore. His wife, Renu is Professor of Dermatology.



Ms. Lois Armstrong is a Nurse Consultant with an MPH in Tropical Medicine who has been working at the Duncan Hospital, Raxaul, Bihar as the Research co-ordinator for the last three years.



Dr. Philip Finny is working at the Duncan Hospital, Raxaul, Bihar along with his wife Leejia. They have two sons, Vinay and Rohan.



Rev. John Jebaseelan is the pastor of Tamil Methodist Church, Malwani, Mumbai. John is married to Priya who is working among street children in Mumbai.



Dr. William Cutting writes a regular letter for senior citizens called 'Encouragement'. Drs. William and Margot Cutting earlier worked at the mission hospital at Jammalamadugu in Andhra Pradesh and now live in London.



Dr. M. C. Mathew, is Professor of Developmental Paediatrics and Child Neurology at MOSC Medical College, Kolenchery, Kochi. Kerala, where Anna also works as Professor in Pharmacology.

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD - Attitudes of Professionals in the Bible

Crossword 12:1. CLUES ACROSS

2	DORCAS	Acts 9:36-42
4	DAVID	1 Samuel 26:19-20.
6	HEARTILY	Colossians 3:22-24.
10	RAHAB	Hebrews 11: 31
11	GEHAZI	II Kings 5: 20-27.
14	MOSES	Hebrews 11: 25
16	NOAH	Genesis 6:13-22
17	CALEB	Numbers 15: 14:
18	PRISCILLA	Acts 18: 2-4
20	JOSEPH	Genesis 39:5-10
21	HEZEKIAH	1 Kings 19:20

Crossword 12:1. CLUES DOWN

1	MARTHA	Luke 10: 39-42
3	ABRAHAM	Hebrews 11:8.
5	ELI	I Samuel 3:13
7	ZACCHAEUS	Luke 19:8
8	DEBORAH	Judges 4:1-24
9	GIDEON	Judges 7:2
12	DANIEL	Daniel 6:3-4
13	SHADRACH	Daniel 3: 13-18
15	SHIPRAH	Exodus 1:15-21
19	ABEL	Genesis 4:4

Modern Day Version of the Ten Commandments



Do not worship any other god than the one true God.
All other gods are false gods.

Do not make idols or images in the form of God.
An idol can be anything (or anyone) you worship by giving it more importance than God. If something (or someone) has your time, attention and affections, it has your worship. It could be an idol in your life.

Do not treat God's name lightly or with disrespect. Because of God's importance, His name is always to be spoken of with honour.

Dedicate or set aside a regular day each week for Sabbath rest and worship of the Lord.

Give honour to your father and mother by treating them with respect and obedience.

Do not deliberately kill a fellow human being.

Do not have sexual relations with anyone other than your spouse.
God forbids sex outside of the bounds of marriage.

Do not steal or take anything that doesn't belong to you, unless you have been given permission to do so.

Do not tell a lie about someone or bring a false accusation against another person.

Do not desire anything or anyone that does not belong to you. Comparing yourself to others and longing to have what they have leads to jealousy, envy and other sins. Be content by focusing on the blessings God has given you and not what he has **not** given you.

Mary Fairchild

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My life, my work for the King!

Biennial National Conference 2014

Dates

- * 2nd to 5th October 2014

Venue

- * Christian Medical College,
Ludhiana, Punjab

Speakers

- * Dr. Ajith Fernando
- * Dr. Kuruvilla Varkey

Highlights

- * Bible studies
- * Devotional messages
- * Thought provoking seminars
- * Practical sessions
- * Inspiring stories - medical students
- * Exciting programme for children
- * Special program for teens



Ludhiana, the city with a rich heritage of followers of Christ like
Sadhu Sundar Singh, John (Praying) Hyde and Dame Edith Brown ...

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