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Editorial

"Seeing is believing, but feeling is truth" or so it was once pronounced. While this sentence can be subject to debate, the act of seeing is nonetheless considered to be a primal, instinctive one. We are, in turn, presented with an abundance of sights without even asking for them. If this is so, it is how we see that should probably be our focus. But yet again, and this too unapologetically, our world is inundated with a multiplicity of perspectives. The options on various important social, political, and moral issues seem endless. And, as if that were not enough, the trends shift as you read. What then? How do we as Christians even begin to address such a state of

affairs? How do we see? In John 14:6, Christ declared that He is "the way, the truth, and the life".

We propose, pro bono, that this is a decent place to start. The present calls for understanding the essence of our faith, an identification of the essentials, which will then hopefully lead to their application, 'in perspective'. This proposition also entails introspection and a thorough review of our optics. Although challenging, the motley crew discussed, deliberated, and finally decided to direct the issue toward this very proposition. It is our humble prayer that His name will be glorified through the generosity and sincerity of each contributor and that these pages will serve as reminders of the call to each of us to do our part.

Spiritually speaking



~Rev Dr. Noullezhalie Ricky Medom,
Pastor, Naga Christian Fellowship, Delhi

"Our greatest fear should not be of failure but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter."

-Francis Chan

The 2023 Nagaland election is over and done with. The Election Commission of India has declared the winners and the losers. In the bid to win by hook or by crook, even the most ardent church going Christian candidate is known to throw all caution and Biblical teachings and principles to the wind. The Church is largely ignored. The Call for Clean Election by Church based NGO's goes unheeded.

But after elections are over the church is wooed again and many Thanksgiving services are held and conducted by local church pastors/leaders. And this

time it was topped by the singing of the "Halleluya Chorus" by a local choir at the swearing in ceremony with the presence of no less than the Prime Minister himself.

So what do we make of all these? Should we be proud that as Christian legislators they give public display of giving thanks to God for their 'victory' in the election? Or should we cringe and be sad that during elections they do not hesitate to use any means necessary to win? This leads us to the larger question how should Christians respond to the question of Church and Politics. Are these two entities inseparable or should we maintain a strict separation between Church and Politics? This question goes back to antiquity where our Lord Jesus Himself had something to say about it. Let us look deeper into what Jesus said and draw some conclusions to the question at hand.

"Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" is a well-known saying of Jesus that appears in Matthew 22:21. Here Jesus clearly set out the ideal between the State and Church. The message here is simple and the logic profound. Give to Caesar what belongs to him and give to God what belongs to him. Caesar has his image on the coins. God has stamped his image on us. We are to give God ourselves. Submit to his kingship. Our bodies are God's temple, we belong to him. So, give Caesar what is temporary. But give God what is eternal.

The implications of such a saying is not to get so caught up in the temporary things of this world. Like elections where unfortunately, we jettison all Christian principles and Biblical teachings on what is right and what is wrong for some temporal gain. Instead focus on the eternal things God is doing and wants to do in and through you during elections and especially as a politician.

Jesus is drawing a distinction between the two kingdoms; God's and Caesar's. Caesar is the king of this world. But Jesus is the king of the eternal world.

Followers of Jesus exist in both of these kingdoms, at least temporarily, and we are to be aware to whom we ultimately belong.

Under Caesar there are certain obligations that involve material things, money, wealth, power. But these will all go away one day. Under Christ the obligations involve eternal things. What we do here in obedience to His words will follow us to our next life in eternity.

In Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus uses three picture words, Salt, Light and City, to explain the role of His followers while they are on this earth. The three pictures together are powerful, speaking of the effect of Jesus' disciples in the world:

-Salt is the opposite of corruption, and it prevents corruption from getting worse. We are to be salt.

-Light drives away darkness and gives the gift of guidance. We are to be like light so that those who have lost their way can be led back home.

-A City is the product of social order, planning and good governance. It stands against corruption and disorder.

These are the three pictures that are to represent followers of Jesus Christ who are called Christians.

When Jesus first declared this to His followers and what impact they are to make in the world, it must have seemed almost ridiculous at the time. How could these poor, humble Galileans salt the earth, or light the world? But they did!

Today, many feel the same way. How can ordinary Christians make an impact in the face of powerful forces of money and power wielded by those in electoral fights! It is like the story of small David facing the giant Goliath. But we all know how the story ended. If only we would dare to challenge the giant with courage and determination and trusting in the resurrected power of Jesus Christ. We can do it!

Parent's page



~Mr. Amit Singh

Should the church be actively involved in politics?

The answer to this complex question is yes and no. At the outset, it is pertinent to distinguish between individual Christians' involvement in politics with that of a Church (as an institution). As Christians, we are meant to be like Salt and

Light, scattered and immersed in all walks of life. To spread the gospel and exemplify our King Jesus. We are expected to stand for what is right and just and take a stand against injustice and atrocities. In a sense, we are expected to be vocal and active in letting people see Jesus in us. As Christians, we shouldn't expect the Church to accomplish what only individual believers can achieve! The role of the Church in politics is vexing. The church is not expected to be aligning itself with party politics. It is not to be seen as endorsing a particular party or speaking against another party.

Romans 13:1-2

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

The scripture commands us to obey the governing authorities. Obeying, to my mind, is not a blind

surrender to the whims and fancies of the government. The church is expected to stay out of politicking. However, on socio-economic and religious issues, it cannot be expected to be a mute spectator. The Church must discuss the relevant issues and make people understand them from the biblical point of view. For example, what does the bible teach about marriage? What does the Bible teach about corruption?

1 Timothy 3:14-16

Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. Beyond all questions, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great.

The Church in Timothy symbolises the pillar of truth. It has a duty to inform the government of what is right and what is wrong. To speak the Gospel and nothing else. The role of the church is not to transform society by taking matters into its hand but to pray for a change of heart and demonstrate the love of Christ.

How can we live a prayerful life? How do we cultivate the discipline of prayer without reducing prayer to a force of habit?

Prayer is an essential part of the Christian life. It is a conversation with God that allows us to express our thanks, seek forgiveness, and ask for guidance. It is essential for believers to cultivate the discipline of prayer in their daily lives. The Bible describes prayer as a means of communicating with God, expressing our thoughts and feelings to Him, and seeking His guidance and provision. Prayer is also seen as a way to deepen our relationship with God and grow in faith. However, for many Christians, prayer can become a habit, done out of obligation rather than genuine desire.

The first step to living a prayerful life is to understand the importance of prayer. Prayer is not just a ritual or a religious duty; it is a way of communing with God. The Bible tells us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17), which means that we should be in constant communication with God throughout our day. Prayer is an essential way to stay connected to God and to seek His will for our lives. Living a prayerful life requires intentional effort and discipline. It is not enough to simply pray when we feel like it or when we are in need. Instead, we must make prayer a priority in our daily lives and seek to cultivate the habit of prayer.

One way to cultivate the discipline of prayer is to set aside a specific time and place for prayer each day. This could be in the morning before starting the day, during a lunch break, or in the evening before going to bed. It is important to choose a time when we are least likely to be distracted or interrupted. Jesus himself set an example of this when he withdrew to a solitary place to pray (Luke 5:16). We should set aside time each day for prayer, just as we set aside time for

other important things in our lives. We can also pray throughout the day, whether we are driving, working, or doing other activities. We can pray silently or out loud, but the important thing is to make prayer a regular part of our lives. In addition to setting aside a specific time for prayer, we can also create a prayerful environment. This could involve lighting a candle, playing soft music, or using other sensory cues that help us focus our minds and hearts on God.

Another way to cultivate the discipline of prayer is to use a prayer journal. Writing down our prayers can help us to focus our thoughts and express ourselves more clearly. When I started a prayer journal it gave me clear, specific, and detailed subjects to pray about. It also allowed me to look back and see how God has answered my prayers. In the Bible, we see examples of people like David and Daniel who recorded their prayers in writing.

We can also use the Bible as a guide for our prayers. The Psalms, for example, are full of prayers that we can use as models for our own prayers. We can also use the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) as a framework for our prayers. Jesus gave us this prayer as an example of how to pray, and it covers all the important aspects of prayer, including praise, confession, petition, and thanksgiving.

Finally, we must remember that prayer is not just about asking for things but also about listening to God. We should take time to be still and quiet before God, listening for His voice. The Bible tells us that God speaks in a still, small voice (1 Kings 19:12), so we must be attentive to hear His voice. We should also be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, who can guide us in our prayers and reveal things to us that we might not have thought of on our own. It is important to approach prayer with the right attitude. Prayer should not be reduced to a mere force of habit or ritual. Instead, we should approach prayer with reverence and humility,

recognizing that we are approaching the God of the universe. We should also approach prayer with faith, believing that God hears our prayers and is able to answer them according to His will.

In conclusion, living a prayerful life is essential for believers who desire to stay connected to God and seek His will for their lives. To cultivate the discipline of prayer, we must make it a priority, use a prayer journal, use the Bible as a guide, and be open to listening to God. We should not reduce prayer to a force of habit but instead approach it with a genuine desire to communicate with our heavenly Father. As we do so, we will find that prayer becomes a joy rather than a duty, and we will experience the peace and power that come from being in constant communication with God.



~Mrs. Angela Narjinary



~Mrs. K Enatoli Sema

On being a 'good' Christian

Growing up in a Naga Christian community, I was accustomed to calling a fellow Naga a 'good Christian' that not once was it seen as contradictory to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The term only appeared paradoxical when a fellow believer, not born into a Christian family, pointed it out. Such a labeling lies on the foundational faulty understanding of being a Christian by birth feeding an intangible superiority complex having no basis in the Word. Every human being, a Naga or otherwise, is born areligious. Becoming a believer is not automatic with birth, more so for those who believe that free will is a God-intended gift.

The liberty, which was first given to Eve and Adam, however, brought undesirable consequences leading to disobedience, sin, and separation from God. The good news is that our story does not conclude with expulsion from the garden of Eden, it begins with sin but ends with redemption. The irony today, however, is that the idea of sin makes churchgoers uncomfortable when it is because of sinners, the need for a Saviour arose. And all churchgoers are ex-sinners who continue to be redeemed sinners.

The danger of assimilating religion into a culture is that it reduces what is sacred to a socially tailored acceptable norm of life. Turning every church-related activity into a criterion for being defined as a 'good Christian'. Any faith system hinges on a conviction involving emotions. If there is no experience, there is no faith, faith is dead and dead faith is no faith at all. For the Christian faith, which is predicated on love, the mother of all emotions, the need to 'feel' cannot be overemphasized. Unless one feels the agape love of God, how does one believe, be convinced, or even be convicted of a faith system? Especially when it propagates exactly the opposite of what all other world religions preach.

However, the understanding that a believer's life must be always on an 'emotional high' is one of the worst half-truths and the most dangerous lie that can be fed to a new believer and a tragedy if seasoned ones continue to feed on them. Timothy Keller once preached on Psalm 91 titled 'satanic exposition' in which he urged Pastors not to read the promises in that Psalm in the way satan would expound it by throwing open the idea that life on earth for believers was meant to be without any disaster, harm, or suffering. Taking anything out of context is unwise but when the Word of God is taken out of context, it is devastating not only to the mind but to the soul because it gives fertile ground for the enemy of the Word to twist the promises making them obstacles for spiritual growth. To use struggle, disease, and hardship as parameters to judge Christian faith is not only hostile to the Gospel but reflects a warped, lopsided, and complete lack of understanding of who Christ is and the very reason why He came to earth. It not only questions Christmas but our celebration of Easter.

The Truth is meant to be wholesome; it is meant to set us free. To know the Truth is to be liberated from the father of all lies. But when the truth fed is not whole and predates Christ, it has the potential to put believers in chains of generational curses, guilt, darkness, superstition, ignorance, and fear. If we are bound by chains of generational curses proclaimed in the Torah, it means we are yet to grasp the wholesome Truth that Jesus became that curse and crucified them to the Cross and therefore we are no longer cursed but redeemed. If we jump to judgment every time a believer is attacked with a deadly disease it means that we are yet to come across the Gospel where Jesus made it clear that sometimes sickness happens to people without fault and for His Glory. If we put ourselves on the judgment seat, it reflects our unbelief that God's ways are higher than ours, just as the heaven is above the earth. If the amount of contribution that churchgoers give is put on public display, maybe we are missing the point on giving by short-circuiting our grand eternal prize and crown in heaven by receiving temporary accolades here on earth.

The Bible does not propound blind faith. Though faith involves emotions it is also based on the solid God of Word, which has withstood centuries of scrutiny by scholars and cynics. Neil Postman in his seminal work, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, while examining the influence of media in 20th-century American political discourse, recognizes the significance of the Word. For our God to be in the Word according to Postman was an unprecedented conception requiring the highest order of abstract thinking. Postman, an unbeliever, recognized the profoundness of the importance given to the Word because he was

bringing forth the argument that the shift from word-center to media centric public discourse in 20th century America has made the content dangerous nonsense as opposed to when print, in the 18th and 19th centuries, put forward a definition of intelligence that gave priority to the objective rational use of the mind encouraging forms of public discourse with serious, logically ordered content. Postman foresaw the danger of television and media as a carrier of important cultural conversations as they trivialized something serious into pure entertainment.

The Naga spiritual experience existed before Christianity arrived in the land. Long before the Holy Spirit, the Nagas were familiar with the world of spirits, appeasing them in various ways for our benefit. The spirit world and the early Naga life were closely intertwined and formed our ancestors' way of life. At the end of her celebrated book, *Sky is My Father*, Easterine Kire re-produces oral narratives from Merhü Clan, where an entire village died off because they had angered the Creator. This was before the village of Khonoma came to be, which shows that such references to the Creator existed much before the arrival of the American Baptist Mission. With their advent in the mid to late 19th century, the power and the Word of God moved mightily in the hearts of our forefathers emboldening them to face grave consequences for exercising their free will.

Today the ferocity of media and image-based content is raging against a faith that has its foundation cemented in the Word. The Naga Christian faith and identity is in the process of moving from milk to solid food and therefore this trend of image-centric and media-fed propagation of a faith that is based on the Word poses a danger where the thin line between deep spiritual and meaningful experiences and seeking 'emotional highs' blurs. Emotional experiences are part of the Christian faith, but it is minuscule and cannot take the center stage by shoving the Word aside.

Perhaps there is a need to re-assess where the collective focus of the 100-year-old Naga Christian faith lies today. Whether the trajectory of our Christian faith can be seen in transformed lives and societies. To see and taste whether we are shining as light and seasoning as salt. As Nagas, who bow down to the One and only, creator of heaven and earth, the sea and everything in it, the One who holds all things together, who knows everything, who never makes mistakes for He is the great 'I am', We have a privilege and a responsibility. May we hold on to the faith, may we bloom where we are planted, and may the aroma of Christ spread from Nagaland to the rest of the country and to the rest of the world.

"WE SHOULD NOT ASK, 'WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD?' FOR THAT DIAGNOSIS HAS ALREADY BEEN GIVEN. RATHER WE SHOULD ASK, 'WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO SALT AND LIGHT?' "

~ JOHN STOTT

"WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD IS THAT WE DO NOT ASK WHAT IS RIGHT"

~ G.K. CHESTERTON



~Mrs. Unsah-na Dzeyie

How can we demonstrate neighbourly love in a city setting like Delhi?

"As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Col. 3:12-13

Years ago, I was with my colleagues at my workplace when one of them showed me a picture of her young daughter. I saw a young girl smiling into the camera. I told the mother that her daughter was very cute and looked very healthy. I thought she would be happy with my compliment. Surprise, surprise. She was not. She pinched me in the arm and made a face at me, telling me off for saying what I told her. I was taken aback by the reaction but chose to hold my peace. Several years down the line I came to understand the reason behind her reaction. If you are new to Delhi,

you also will be confused. If you are an old timer, well-versed with the ways of the people here (mostly of different faiths), you will know that what I experienced in the above incident was an episode of cultural difference! Apparently, it was taboo to praise other's children for fear of them falling prey to the evil eye (nazar lagna). This incident is just one of the many experiences I have had in my stay here in this city so far. Call it culture shock, religious, or cultural differences. Because of these differences, one may find oneself in the midst of conflict with regard to beliefs, values, traditions, work ethics etc. In such a context, how do we draw the line as to what is acceptable and what is not when it comes to matters of our faith and practice? How do we respond to our call to share our faith with others?

I am sure we all remember the story of the Good Samaritan from our Sunday school days. We have also memorized the bible verse *"Love the Lord with all your heart, mind, and soul....and "Love your neighbour as yourself"* [Mat. 22:37-39]. So then how do we even begin to determine who is our neighbour? In a city setting like Delhi, we are bound to have differences in many aspects of life. So, our neighbour may include people of other faiths, values, cultures, and temperance too. For example, your neighbour is your colleague that you share your joys and sorrows with, or your landlord's wife who sometimes makes extra parathas and sends them over to your room to enjoy. It could also be the sabji-wala or shopkeeper at the corner of the colony road.

Faith, hope, and love are at the heart of a Christian's life. Our love for God can be measured by how well we treat others. Not only will love keep believers strong and united, it will also bring the unbeliever to Christ. This kind of loving is not easy. But that is why Christian love stands out. When we love the unlovable, people will know that it is only possible with the help of God's strength. Loving our neighbour implies a lifestyle of loving

devotion and action. Sincere love requires concentration and effort. Since it means helping others become better people, it demands our time, money, and personal involvement. When the Israelites passed through the land of the Edomites, God specifically instructed them on how they were to treat their neighbours. Such an example also teaches us that by behaving wisely and justly, we may be able to establish or restore a relationship. Scripture says in no uncertain terms that we cannot claim to love God, yet neglect our brothers and sisters -or in this case, our neighbour- who has also been made in the likeness of the Creator.

We are called to maintain a lifestyle that shows our faith even if it differs from society's norms. Rather, we are to influence them. Obeying God takes precedence over our neighbour's way of life. So, in what practical ways can we show our Christian love? We are to help even when it is inconvenient; give even when it hurts; devote our energy to the welfare of others, silently bear wrongs done against us without complaining or fighting back; lend a listening ear; be supportive and encouraging; act justly; recognize the rights of others; respect their territory; act in their best interest; spend time together; dwell on their positive qualities; confront in love rather than gossip, and most importantly- pray for the difficult neighbour and treat them well.

Difficult as it seems to love one's neighbour due to our human frailness, our limitations or even fear should not deter us from striving to be more like Christ. We are to emulate Christ in our lives. Christ the perfect man, the Son of God is to be our role model. He sets the highest standard. We are also sealed by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. God's protection hedges us around. He has promised that not a hair would fall from our head without his knowledge. No power can overcome us. May we take heart and trust the Holy Spirit to help us as we journey through life, knowing that one day we will be perfect, even as Christ is perfect.

Youth page



~Mr Shelmi Sankhil

The Christian response to Persecution

Christian persecution is a major theme in the New Testament. From the Beatitudes of Christ in

Matthew to the prophecy concerning the End Times in Revelation, Christians are recorded as being persecuted by the powers that be in the world. God has allowed the world to be under the spell and power of Satan for a given length of time. And Satan's sole mission during this period is to separate us from the love of God. He uses his powers to influence the world to question, contradict, and reject the claims of Christ. Paradoxically, Christian persecution is essentially a demonstration of Satan failing in his mission. Understanding this fundamental theological truth is important for adopting a proper Christian response to persecution.

The Biblical principle for Christian conduct in times of persecution is essentially contained in the Beatitudes of Christ, and in several other places in the NT. But we will consider only the verse in Matthew due to space constraints. It is very telling that this teaching on persecution came very early in Christ's ministry.

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute

you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake." (Matthew 5:11)

The key phrase in this verse is "for My sake". The blessedness assured to the persecuted in the verse is "conditional", in that there has to be consistency between our belief, action, and persecution. In other words, if we are persecuted, our action and belief in Christ must be genuine for the blessing to be effective. This may sound like an odd thing to say, but it has become necessary because the historical context of Jesus' audience is different from our own today. In the time of Jesus and the Apostles, religious ideas were popular and widely held. Persecution was mainly due to theological and doctrinal disagreements. The early believers were a minuscule minority and had to forego the relative security, comfort and advantages afforded by the majority culture under Judaism. In fact, they had to risk everything to follow Christ. Fast forward to today. Christianity is the most popular religion in the world. It occupies a majority

position similar to Judaism during Jesus' time. But it is plagued with nominalism, and/or cultural Christianity: having the form of faith but no real conviction. In addition, there is an increasing tendency to reduce Christianity to the status of a mere cultural heritage unsuitable for the scientific temper and secular agendas of our times.

Consequently, Christian persecution today is happening in a context in which aggressive hostilities from the secular world and other competing religions from without are compounded by the problem of widespread nominalism from within. So how do we respond to persecution today? I would suggest a two-fold approach: political and spiritual. One is collective, and the

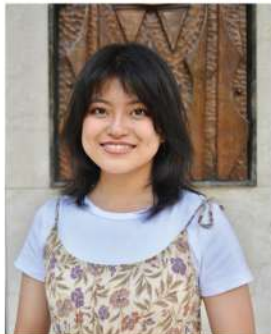
other individual. The political will be determined by the laws of the land in which the persecution occurs, and so the form of response will vary from place to place and case to case.

However, the spiritual approach, drawing from Matthew 5:11, is envisaged as something to be done individually and in private. It simply means this: to ask/introspect if our acts of faith like attending church, camps, Bible-study, donation, worship, etc., are true to the best of our ability and knowledge. The conscious act of asking oneself this question from time to time is itself a sign of authentic faith, I'd argue. And authentic faith is a requisite of the conditional "for My sake" in the verse quoted above. Without that, our persecution,

in the context of nominalism, is most likely in vain.

Christian persecution is inevitable, as an irreconcilable polarity exists between the truth of God and the lies and deception of the world (Satan). But even if we cannot control persecution from outside, we can definitely ensure that our persecution is not in vain by being true and consistent to our faith. And when we hear reports of persecution, or we experience one ourselves, we should tell our soul and one another that the Evil One is anxious, losing foothold, and overworking himself. They are tell-tale signs of our Lord's imminent return.

If Truth and Love are in conflict, which should we prioritize?



~Telewe

It is a tricky thing to be navigating between truth and love. I think the right decision is based on that which we have been commanded to do. There is a passage that has helped me make my decision on this question. It is taken from the book of Matthew: Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your

heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

If truth and love were to come into conflict, I would choose love. But this quoted text alone is not enough. There are many questions we could raise in our attempt to understand why. When I received the request to write on this question, a couple of scenarios where this would be relevant were given to me. They were models to help me frame my thoughts. One of the many stood out to me: "If you had a friend who was very close to you and they committed a murder, what would you choose? Would you choose the truth and report them? Or would you choose love?" I thought about this question for a long time. What would I choose? What would be the right thing to do?

After a lot of thinking, the realization hit me. I was asking the wrong question. It was not about choosing love or truth. I had to ask an entirely

different question: Is there even such a thing as choosing between truth and love? Do they not exist in cahoots with one another? Does making the truth known mean you do not love the person?

The pursuit of truth does not have to imply the absence of love. They can exist simultaneously. If I were to report my friend for what they did, it did not mean I did not love them. Because love does not imply the absence of judgement. Of checks on right and wrong. And if we were to claim such a thing, what would we have to say about God's love? Does he not give us a set of restrictions for us to live by? And that in following these commands we grow closer to him and his love? Does the 'do not murder' command imply an absence of love? Do any of his commands imply a restraint on freedom and the absence of love? Or do they hint at more love? More love because it makes us better. More love because it brings us closer. There are many ways to go about answering these questions. But they all point towards one answer, and that is love.

Truth and love are both noble virtues one must inculcate in their journey. Their importance is evident from the multiple mentions in the Bible. One must keep in mind the love mentioned is "agape", which is unconditional love. In 1 Corinthians 16, Paul speaks of love as the greatest gift and also declares that he is nothing without it. In studying the chapter, observe that verse 6 speaks of how "love rejoices in truth". This shows that love cannot exist without truth, love without truth would be insincere and shallow.

I believe that love and truth are not mutually exclusive. You cannot say that you love someone without being true to them. At the same time, truth without love would be self-serving and be out of contempt. So, when the question of which of the two must be prioritized, one might find themselves in a predicament. In a discussion on this, a friend asked, "If you were in a situation where a loved one had committed a crime; would you prioritize love



~Akumdong

and not report them, or truth and turn them in?". I was left unable to answer him. I already have the knowledge of what I must do, yet I fail to put it into action.

I believe our journey as believers is to align

not compromise on the truth. He called out sin for what it is. I think it would not be wrong to say that Jesus' desire to let the woman know the truth stemmed from His love for her.

In the Bible, we learn that the greatest commandment centers on love. The biblical picture of love differs wildly from how the world defines it; hence it is not surprising that the word 'love' has

our "love" with our "truth". As Jesus had declared that He is the truth (John 14:6) we must strive for the truth and in turn love as He had loved us (John 13:34). I believe there will come a day when I will be able to confidently answer the question my friend had put forward to me. What would your answer be? Are you also met with a conflict of interest? I hope that my article has at least brought some insight into your journeys, as it has to mine.



~Nippy

In a world where everyone has different perspectives on what truth is, for a Christian if there is one truth that never wavers it is the Word of God, the Bible. Thousands of years have passed since the Bible was written but the natural condition of the human heart and mind remains the same, thus making it all the more reliable. The story of the woman caught in adultery shows how Jesus did

many definitions. Love is also one of the many attributes of Father God. From the parable of the prodigal son, we see the father's love for his son despite the truth. I do not think that the father's love in any way disregarded the truth of what his

son did. Rather, the father, who still loved and accepted his son as he is, wanted to make him realize that his unconditional love far outweighed the truth. In conclusion, Truth and Love are like the two sides of the same coin because of how both

complement each other. But if I were to prioritize one, I would choose love because a person can be true without love while for a person who has love, the truth will subsequently follow.

Children's page

What kind of fashion is appropriate or inappropriate in church? Does fashion affect worship and does God care about how we dress when we worship? Read on and see what the Sunday school children have to say on these 'trending' questions.

Q. Why do we wear clothes?

A. -To cover ourselves from mosquitoes.

A. -When we feel cold.

A. -To cover ourselves from people.

Q. Why do we not wear to church the same clothes we wear at home?

A. -Because there are different clothes to wear for different occasions.

A. -Because it gets stinky and we need to wash them.



~Beginners

Q. Do you think God wants us to wear clean, smart and pretty clothes to church?

A. -No, He doesn't care what we wear to church. He wants us to be happy!

Q. Do you think people who come to NCF are stylish?

A. -Yes.

A. - some are not THAT stylish.

A. -The people in front of me in church were wearing so many clothing.

Q. Is it okay to dress stylishly in church?

Aiyana: depends on the fashion you have. As long as it's modest it's okay. Like jeans, simple jeans are better rather than ripped jeans

Theja: It doesn't matter. It's your choice. we are all big enough to make our own choice. Don't be dependent.

Q. Do you think there are certain types of clothes that we should not wear to church?

Aiyana: Really short skirts and tops. And off-shoulders, I don't really like them. Personal preference.

Theja: Yes, there are. Like design clothes- torn jeans, crop tops. Because we come to worship not to show our fashion.



~Aiyana & Theja

Q. Do you see any difference in the way people dress in NCF and other places? Eg school, markets, shopping malls, etc.

Aiyana: very different. In church, a nicely elegant, very pretty sense of style. In the veg market they look like they just woke up. In the mall- I saw some very colorful clothes.

Theja: different clothing formal in church and casual outside, some wear casual, torn jeans, many designs. In the market all I hear is 'doso doso'.

Q. Do you think God wants you to wear clean and pretty/smart clothes to Sunday school?

Aiyana: It's 50/50. God doesn't care about what we wear but we should also be careful to dress modestly.

Theja: God doesn't see what you wear, he sees your heart

Q. Is it okay to dress fashionably/stylishly in church?

Serie: yes, it's ok to dress fashionably stylish in church as with setting trends we all like to update our wardrobe and look trendy. As for some, clothes reflect one's personality.

Q. Do you think God cares about what you wear to church?

Serie: I strongly believe that God doesn't care about what we dress nor wants us to make any extra effort on how we appear to church; rather he wants us to carry ourselves as we are in our journey with Christ Jesus.

Q. Do you think God wants you to wear clean and pretty/smart clothes to Sunday school?

Serie: I feel that God cares about our clean heart and a pretty core. He would want us to be clothed with strength, grace, faith and trust in him



~Serie & Zaza

Q. Do you think there are certain types of clothes that we should not wear to church? Why/why not?

Zaza: I do think that there are certain types of clothes that we should not wear to church like clothes which are too revealing. We come to church to worship the living and loving God not to showcase our body and clothes

Q. Do you think God wants you to wear clean and pretty/smart clothes to Sunday school?

Zaza : God does want me to wear clean and pretty clothes to Sunday school, he doesn't want me to look clean and pretty only from the outside but also from the inside.

In retrospect



~Ketoravi Sakhrrie

Warmest Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for giving me this opportunity and space to share some personal and valuable experiences I have gained from my association with NCF Delhi. As I introspect, I remain grateful, realising how fundamental these experiences have been in preparing me to attain spiritual maturity to take on bigger roles and responsibilities in life as a mother, a wife, and an educator. My years of fellowship at NCF Delhi were the defining years of my life as an adult. NCF Delhi was family, a safe space, and a community nourished by love, care, and rich communion. Here, I found a church that provided guardianship in my spiritual journey and a community of good friends that helped me become better and wiser in life.

As a college student stepping out of the comfort and safety of home, my father often reminded us that our company defined who we are and that we must choose our friends wisely. This is particularly true when it comes to our faith because good friends are essential to help us weather the many trials, challenges, and temptations in our walk with the Lord. For that matter, I am sure we can all testify with our own lived experience that 'A truly good life is a shared life'; and perhaps that is why food tastes better when shared, good

company makes a cup of coffee more enjoyable, shopping is more fun with friends, exploring new places is more adventurous when in good company.

Friendship forged in faith is not just coming together and worshiping on Sundays. That is all good, but it must go beyond the gathering and worshiping to build deeper and richer connections. It has to manifest into a communion that enriches each other's life. A relationship that allows one to speak truth, honesty, and love into each other's lives to help build each other up. I came, I experienced, and I survived Delhi because of the community of friends I found in the church.

My friends from church kept me grounded and rooted. These were friends with whom I attended Sunday services, and weekly bible studies and sang together in the choir; friends with whom I celebrated birthdays after birthdays; friends with whom I shared honest and in-depth conversations; friends who were honest with each other's flaws and failings but also celebrated and lauded the good and the strength in each other; friends who accepted my flaws and were gracious no matter how many times I wronged them; friends with whom I trusted my deepest of thoughts, fears, and insecurities; friends with whom I cried and laughed ever so often; friends who taught me how to pray; friends who prayed together and for each other.

With all the glitz and glamour the city life offers, it's so easy to lose focus of the purpose of our stay and easier to neglect our scholarly responsibilities. It lures you to live life to the fullest, makes you lazy, and makes you want to seek fun and enjoyment over everything else. And in all of these, good friends help keep a check on you and accountable in your walk with the Lord.

These friends shaped me to be a better human in every way. And if not for these friends, I would have been a lost soul (spiritually). It is among these incredible humans that I also found the one I loved, and even through dating and courting, our friends helped us nurture this beautiful relationship which eventually ended up in a lifelong commit-

ment of love and friendship in obedience to God.

NCF Delhi and its community of believers, under the leadership of Pastor Ricky and Auntie Viring, were a source of encouragement, correction, learning, and security being away from home. To me, they were friends, guardians, and parents constantly on the lookout for me, guiding and leading me in the right direction, and enabling me to take wise and worthwhile decisions in life. The opportunities they help facilitate- bible studies, camps, Friday bible studies, women's bible study, food fest, music, choir, and worship; all of these events and routines contributed significantly to my socio-emotional and spiritual maturity.

And so, to the young adults in this community, I say, KEEP AT IT. Cause one day, when you look back, you'll find that it was in these moments you allowed God to work in you and prepare you for the greater challenges and responsibilities ahead in life. What you gain from this will keep your feet planted on solid ground, your heart true to His calling, and your mind focused on the principles of Jesus's teachings. The learning from these experiences will enable you to live a life of integrity in the public domain as it did for me.

I encourage you to find friends who are consistent in their faith, honest and upright, friends who can hold you accountable in your faith. Make sure you are that friend too. I encourage you to connect more often and more deeply with your friends and community of believers in the church. It is the need of the hour in this digital age, where we are more engaged and connected with our phones. In conclusion, let me share a thought from Pastor Drew Hunter, "Cultivate deeper friendship.....Plunge your conversations below the shallows and into the deeper waters of life. Oxygenate your friendships with affirmation and encouragement." May God's favour be upon this community. ALWAYS!

Faith & Justice

James writes in his epistles that faith without work is dead and we would all agree today that faith must be followed by action or it is not real faith. But what kind of action? It is one thing to say that Christianity stands for truth and justice but quite another to ask how we can ensure truth and justice. It is far easier to say that we should care for the downtrodden and the oppressed than to fight for their rights. It is simpler to judge and show how the world has gone astray than to fight for what the world should be like. If we are called to be ambassadors for Christ, how can we care for and intervene in the world around us?

Venturing into some of these questions, the SPARK team framed and circulated a questionnaire around the question of 'justice' and the role that Christians should play. A total of 70 responses were received and many respondents also provided additional remarks that directed us toward issues and questions that the questionnaire could not touch upon.

Among other comments, a respondent pointed to creative ways of communing with God through worship songs and by reflecting on their lyrics. Another respondent challenged us to consider that the call to fight for justice is not an exclusively 'Christian' prerogative but an expression of being human. Many respondents also raised concerns about what 'fighting for justice' entails and the danger of falling into the trap of propaganda. These insightful comments have enriched our understanding of the issues in question while also pointing to the limitations of the questionnaire in arriving at definitive conclusions. We, therefore, present this brief report only as a humble attempt to spark a conversation on some issues that are felt to be pertinent to us as Christians in the present times.

One question asked if Christianity should influence matters of public policy and governance. 56.1% of the respondents believe that Christians should actively involve in ordering society according to God's will while 41.4% maintained that Christianity is strictly a personal relationship between an individual and God. However, when

the question was framed to ask if Christians should only pray for justice or also fight for justice, 84.2% submitted that Christians should pray and also fight for justice. But there was lesser consensus on the understanding of 'justice'. Only 57.2% are of the view that Christians should fight for social and political justice.

There is clearly a certain level of discomfort with the idea of Christians fighting for social and political justice which indicates a tendency to separate the religious and the secular issues with regard to justice. Some respondents cited the potential of violence in the idea of 'fighting' which negates the Biblical injunction to love our enemies. Others pointed to the incongruity of placing faith in God but taking judgment into our own hands.

These responses raise some interesting questions that are worth pondering: are certain forms of injustice beyond the purview of Christians? Is being godly the same as being a law-abiding citizen? How can we care for the world without being attached to worldly things? On the other hand, if the majority of the respondents believe that Christians should fight for social and

political justice, how should the church respond to social and political issues? 54.3% agreed that there is sometimes a conflict between the Christian call for forgiveness and the need for ensuring justice under the law. How can Christians meaningfully and practically engage with justice and forgiveness in the fallen world that we live in?

Complicating the line between seeking justice and granting forgiveness, 61.4% maintained that Christians should seek legal punishment against those who commit crimes. Crimes, of course, come in different forms as some respondents rightfully pointed out that the nature of crime must be taken into consideration. 77.1% opined that Christians should seek government action against the persecution of Christians but only 48.6% believe that Christians should also fight for other religious communities when they are

persecuted for their beliefs. The same commitment to justice is not maintained when it comes to other religious beliefs while the number of respondents who are conflicted about taking a position with regard to persecution increased from 12.9% to 27.1%. A respondent succinctly justified this change of attitude by arguing that Christians should not fight for something which is 'not true'. How then do we love our neighbors without compromising the truth that we believe?

The last question on the relevance of the Bible in the present times offers some fascinating insights. 70% responded that the Bible has the answer to all the issues of our time. At the same time, 80% of the respondents do not think the church, in general, is providing an adequate response to the questions raised by the LGBTQ+ community. This would mean that most respon-

dents believe that the churches have failed and not the Bible. But perhaps the indictment cannot rest solely on the church because only 34.3% read the Bible every day and only 25.7% meditate and reflect on bible passages daily. Evidently, faith in the Bible as the word of God is not translating into lived practice for the great majority.

This short report on the questionnaire generates more questions than answers but perhaps there are no simple answers. The right way to respond to social and political issues, as believers and as a church, may not be found in pre-given formulaic answers but we are strongly convinced that silence and denial are not the way forward. We may or may not find answers but we must continually engage our faith with the issues of our time.

Camp report

-Nonika K Zhimo
Asst. Camp Director

The NCF Annual Camp 2022 was held from October 30th to November 3rd at the Sattal Christian Ashram in Uttarakhand, on the theme 'Priceless Pursuit' taken from Philippians 3:12-14. We left from Delhi on the 30th of October around 10 pm from Dussehra ground and reached Sattal in the early morning hours of 31st October. There were 39 campers in total, including 7 resource persons, namely: Pastor Ricky, Auntie Viring, Dr Todd, his wife Lisa, Mr. David, Mrs. Cindy and Atsen Murry. After unpacking and taking a much-needed rest, we began with a brief orientation where campers were divided into 4 different groups: perseverance, patience, passionate and purposeful.

With some ice-breaker activities and a round of introduction, the campers carried about the day's schedule with much energy, enthusiasm, and oneness in spirit. This led to the first gospel service in the evening of 31st October where the message was shared by Pastor Ricky on 'pursuing what God wants for us and our walk with Christ.'



Each day at the camp would start with early morning devotions where Pastor Ricky would share the passage for the day and all campers would then quietly meditate on it and write down reflections on their devotional notebooks. On the second day, after quiet time and breakfast, Dr Todd led session 1 and on what it means to be a striver and the striver's progress. In his following sessions, he also shared on the role of willpower and its role in our priceless pursuit, and the roads in the brain where our spirit represents the high road and the flesh represents the low road. We had meaningful and spiritual praise and worship during the gospel services on all 4 days, which was led by Atsen



Murry. Session 2 was led by Lisa where she shared on the life and time period of Moses taken from the book of Exodus.

In the third gospel service, Mr. David shared briefly on the parables of Jesus, the bible characters: Mary and Martha, the significance of the alabaster jar, the death of Lazarus, and finally touched upon why following Jesus is priceless. The last session was taken over by Mrs. Cindy where she shared about 'being partakers of God's divine nature'. Through a small activity during her session, the campers learned various ways on how we can pray and improve our prayer life. Pastor Ricky led the closing service on the night of

3rd November where he recapitulated all the lessons we learnt from the camp, drawing focus to our dependence on Christ through the passage taken from Romans 8:1-11. Aside from all the meaningful sessions, we had opportunities for counseling sessions with our resource persons and a time of question and answer where the resource persons answered our doubts and questions on faith and the challenges we encounter on our walk in this life as Christians.

We also had various group dynamics and recreation activities which allowed the campers to bring out their playful yet competitive spirits. There was a group competition on the last day of our



camp where every group presented the theme verse, the theme song and a creative skit which were judged by our resource persons.

On the 2nd of November, we went for an outing to Naukuchiatal by bus. It was a beautiful place with many activities and recreation. Upon returning to the campsite, we had the 'faith drop' which has been a tradition of NCF camps over the years. As the evening set in on the 3rd of November, all the campers with heavy hearts began packing up to leave for Delhi. The last night at Sattal was highlighted by a campfire where all campers took turns to share their experience in the camp and bonded over songs and a warm cup of tea before boarding the bus

for our return. We all had a lovely time in the camp where we renewed our spiritual life, found answers to our questions, and connected more with His Word and our faith. It was also a wonderful opportunity to get to know one another better, enabling us to forge new friendships and made treasured memories. It was truly a blessed experience.

In closure, our hearts are filled with joy and thanksgiving towards God for this camp and our resource persons. We also extend our gratitude to each one of you for your constant prayers, support and contribution that enabled this camp to be a success.



Photo gallery



MUSIC FEST



CHRISTMAS CAROLS



CHRISTMAS



CULTURAL SUNDAY



FRESHERS' DAY



FETE DAY





Prayer focus

Bear the fruit of the spirit...

Love

Lord, help me to fix my eyes on the love you share with me every day. And, may I be reminded of the grace and mercy you extended through your son as I go through life. Lord, may I look to your love as a guide to love others. And not just those who are easy to love. But God give me your eyes so that I may see all your children the way you do.
1 John 4:16 – *And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.*

Joy

Lord, help me to find my joy in you. God, you are the source of all good things and a life that draws its strength from you is a life of true and deep joy. Even in the tough times help me to rejoice in your goodness and your plan for my life. And, help me to seek you, as the well that never runs dry so that my joy can overflow into the lives of everyone I meet.

Romans 15:13 – *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Peace

Father, please help me find peace. I have placed my life in your hands. May I find peace in your steadiness, your faithfulness, your strength and you desire not to harm me. May I fix my eyes on you in the storms of life to find the peace that passes all understanding, a peace found only in you.

John 14:27 – *Peace I leave with you, my peace I*

give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Patience

Help me Lord to find patience. As the tests and trials of life come at me day by day help me to find strength in you to make it through. Lord help me to learn to wait for your timing and your plan instead of rushing forward with my own. Help me to be present in the season you have placed me in instead of hurrying life away.

Romans 12:12 – *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

Kindness

Lord, help me to be kind. Help my words to uplift and show your love. May my actions build others up so that they too will know the love of Jesus. May I be generous with the things you have blessed me with. Let me be kind in all things just as Jesus was kind, even to those who persecuted Him.

Ephesians 4:32 – *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

Goodness

Lord, help me to find true goodness. May I do the right thing, not just because I should but because I can glorify you through it. May my thoughts be good, wholesome and righteous. Help me God to do the right thing so that I can show others your way through obedience and a pure heart. Lord, you are good. In all things, in all times even when we don't understand God you are good. Remind me father that though I am called to be good, it is your goodness that has saved my soul.

Psalms 27:13 – *I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!*

Faithfulness

Help me Father, to be faithful to you in all I do. May I faithfully give you control of every matter in my life. May I focus on your will for my life and follow you even when you call me to things I may not understand. May I be as faithful to others as you are to me, Lord. Make me steady and dependable a pillar of strength for those around me as you are for me. So, my faithfulness inspires others to put their trust in you.

Psalms 145:13 – *The Lord is faithful to all His promises and loving toward all He has made.*

Gentleness

Remind me Father God of all the times you have been gentle in your responses to me and my sin and foolishness. May I show your strength through my meekness. If I am to raise my voice Lord, may it be only in prayer and praise to you. And, may my gentleness turn away anger. Help me, Father, to be gentle as your son Jesus Christ was gentle.

Philippians 4:5 – *Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.*

Self-control

Father God, give me the strength to have self-control. Help me to have the self-control to fight my temptations and remain steady on the path you have set before me. I know that if I give in my feet will fail me and I will stumble. If that happens, Lord, convict my spirit to not continue in my temptations. I pray that in my self-control I will hear you more clearly so that you can change me to be more like you.

2 Timothy 1:7 – *For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. In Jesus name, Amen*

Congratulations & thanksgiving

- David & Cindy Peace for 35 blissful years of married life
- Seketounyii and Lily for starting a new life together
- Kekhrilevar Leo Medom who celebrated his first birthday
- Thank you Ning for putting the prayer focus together
- Sincere thanks to Payia & all the people who shared their photograph

Ministry opportunities & activities

Prayer Focus Meeting

Wednesday, 8:00pm

i/c Mr. Nouné Miachio (8731971952)

Friday Bible Study (Co-ed)

Friday, 5:30pm (suspended for now)

i/c Mr. Rangding Meru (8119023993)

Ladies Bible Study

Friday, 7:00pm,

i/c Miss Visieno Kiso (7838251028)

Saturday, 3:00pm,

i/c Mrs. Viring Medom (9818849539)

Sunday Bible Study

Sunday, 10:00am

i/c Miss Palvit Kaur (6001202442)

SPARK EDITORIAL TEAM :

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Kevingu Khate, Jessica Yanlem,
Yozo Nüvocho, Kukucho Cukhamu,
Kezhasivo Zashumo