

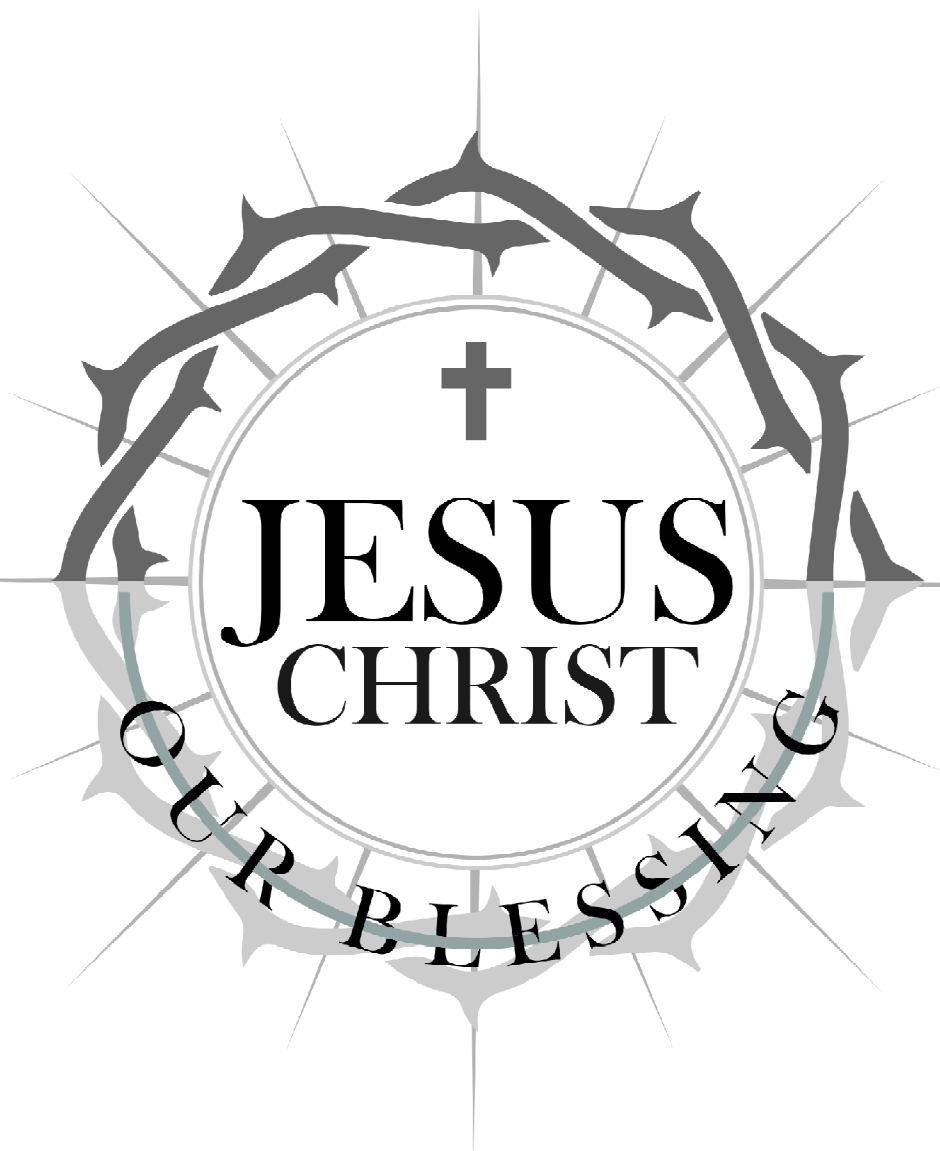
The Ecumenical Family

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Cover design : Abel Lalmanpuia Gaikwad

Editorial.....



Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad

Jesus Christ our Blessing

Jesus Christ is not a benefactor who blesses us with things. Jesus Christ is a person who brings us in relationship with God and God's purposes, and in that process becomes a blessing.

Common mistaken notion of Blessing

The word "blessing" is usually understood as "a thing conducive to happiness or welfare." And therefore we as individuals and families and communities seek blessings, such as having the basic amenities of life, namely food, clothing and a house, long life, healthy life, opportunity for good education and completing our studies with top grades, having loving parents and siblings, enjoying the fellowship of relatives and friends, having the comforts of life (such as TV, fridge, air-conditioning, cell phones, two-wheelers or four-wheelers), protection from accidents, getting a good job/career, earning a good salary, enjoying perks related to our work, getting a good spouse, having the joy of children, owning property, protection of life and property, travelling within the country and abroad related to work and vacation, possessing status and power in society, becoming famous, . . . indeed the list could be unending!

However if you note such understandings of blessing, these are largely related to things, possessions and accomplishments. Such blessings are commonly associated with God. In fact many religious leaders propagate what is known as the prosperity gospel. It is a religious belief that financial blessing and physical well-being is always the will of God for them, and that faith, positive speech, and donations to religious causes will increase one's material wealth. This kind of prosperity gospel views the Bible as a contract between God and humans: if humans have faith in God, then God will provide security and prosperity. The theology which undergirds the prosperity gospel emphasizes the importance of personal empowerment, proposing that it is God's will for His people to be happy. The atonement (reconciliation with God) is interpreted to include the alleviation of sickness and poverty, which are viewed as curses to be broken by faith.

One example of such a popular perspective is seen in the story of Job. At the beginning of the story it is said, "There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. He had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and very many servants." (Job 1:2-3). Then tragedy strikes him. He loses his oxen, sheep, camels and servants. He even loses all his children. However Job does not feel any sorrow and pain at the loss of property and dear ones. He says, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return; the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21). When Job was afflicted with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, Job bore the suffering with fortitude in the beginning, but then he opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth (Job 3:1) and went on to argue with his three counselors and complain against God. Eventually at the end of the story he repents and turns to God. Then the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. His blessings

were doubled! Even his seven sons and three daughters were restored to him. He went on to live an additional 140 years, and saw his sons and his sons' sons, four generations!

Blessing as a relationship with Jesus

Let's not get carried away with the blessings that Job received double fold. A greater blessing that Job received was the restoration of his fellowship with God after he went through that harrowing experience of physical suffering and public shame and his questioning of God's autocratic rule over creation. David recognizes the importance of the primary blessing of fellowship with God. Hence his penitential prayer, "Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit." (Ps. 51:11-12).

Hence the blessed significance of the name given to Jesus in Matthew 1:23, "Emmanuel" meaning "God with us." Jesus, having experienced the joys and struggles of human life, is able to have compassion on us when we go through the struggles of life. Moreover, living in fellowship with Jesus is living in fellowship with God. Jesus assures us, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14: 9). As David asserts, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." (Ps. 23 :4). Indeed Jesus comforts all disciples (Christians) saying, "Lo I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matt. 28:20).

This Jesus is our Emancipator, who removes the curse of sin from our lives and offers forgiveness. Jesus tells the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." (Mk. 2:5) Jesus tells the victimized woman, "Neither do I condemn you; go and do not sin again." (Jn. 8:11). Jesus is our Empowerer who facilitates our becoming credited as children of God. The outcast lepers are healed so that they can live a life of dignity in society (cf. Mk. 1: 42-44). The woman who was bent over with a spirit of infirmity is given her due status as a daughter of Abraham (cf. Lk.13: 16). All those who receive Jesus, who believe in His name, are given power to become children of God (Jn.1:12). Jesus is our Example, our model of selfless Christian living. He says, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you." (Jn. 13:14-15). Jesus is our End. He assures, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." (Jn.14:23) As Paul declares, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20).

Paul lucidly presents Jesus as our blessing: "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:38, 39). ■

[Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad is presently the General Secretary of National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) and is stationed at Nagpur along with his family. He was also the first Pastor of the English Congregation.]

FOCUSING ON CHRIST PUTS EVERYTHING ELSE IN PERSPECTIVE.

Jesus Christ Our Blessing OUR EMMANUEL : IN SOLIDARITY WITH US



Emily McJones

Several years ago the Lord laid it on my heart to meditate on the name Emmanuel. Before that time, I usually only thought of the name Emmanuel during the advent season. Though I knew that Emmanuel means *God with us*, and I appreciated this meaning and truth, I had never taken the time to dwell on what it meant for Jesus to be our Emmanuel.

Here is the driving force of the story of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, and the heart of the gospel: *our God wants to be with us*.

From the very beginning, God created us to be with Him and like Him. Though we sinned, and our sin marred His image in us and separated us from Him, He did not give up. He gave the Israelites laws to follow, and He put His presence in the midst of them, in the Holy of Holies. But the Israelites were unable to keep the commandments – the commandments only served to show how far away from God they really were. We could not approach God, so He approached us.

Jesus, who was and is God, left His throne and clothed Himself in humanity, with all its frailty. He became Emmanuel – God with us. He did not put Himself in the place of power and authority He deserved; rather, He was born into poverty and raised in a town that was a joke to the rest of Israel. This was no accident; He chose the exact circumstances of His birth. He allowed Himself to experience poverty, pain, hunger, sorrow, temptation, and so much more, in part so that He could truly experience humanity. Not only this, but on the cross He bore the full weight of our sin and (can you imagine this?) felt our very separation from His Father as He cried out, “My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me?”

He knows, in every way, what it is to be human. Today Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father in Heaven, but we have not been left without an Emmanuel. Our Lord poured out His Holy Spirit upon us. Emmanuel no longer walks around in a body of flesh, but has taken up residence in our hearts and in the midst of the Church. He knows our hearts, and we are told that even when we don’t know how to pray, He prays for us with groans we cannot understand. What is more, He pleads for us to the Father as our Advocate.

As wonderful as it is to have the Holy Spirit, our current arrangement is by no means perfect. This is no secret to God! He dwells in perfect community within Himself and has clear understanding of what we are missing out on. We feel the dull ache of desire to be with Him, but He feels it ever so fully. Because of His kindness to humanity, He is allowing the world to continue as it is, so that more people may be saved. Someday, though, Christ *will* return. We will have a new Heaven and a new Earth. We will dwell with Him, and He with us.

In the meantime, let’s not give up hope. Our Emmanuel has never left us, and He will never give up on us. We are His desire, and He has pursued us relentlessly. He knows us, He stands in solidarity with us, He advocates for us. Every hope, every blessing, every bit of encouragement, is found in Him. **He was, is, and will be, God With Us. ■**

(Miss Emily is from Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, has an MA in Counseling Psychology from Moody Theological Seminary and currently teaches Counseling Skills in Aizawl Theological College.)

MAKE THE MOST OF THE BLESSING OF GOD’S PRESENCE.

Jesus Christ Our Blessing OUR EMANCIPATOR : REMOVES THE CURSE OF SIN AND OFFERS FORGIVENESS



Grace Skariah

The word 'curse' first appears in the Bible in Genesis 3:14. It entered into the world due to the disobedience of Adam and Eve. God pronounced a curse on them. They were separated from God. Cain and Abel were born to Adam and Eve. Cain became the murderer of his brother. God put him under a curse. The curse which was on Adam and Eve passed on from one generation to another, to all the families and individuals of the earth. Many a time God pronounced a curse on individuals or even on nations. His purpose is to get people's attention, and warn them of the terrible consequences of disobedience, but His desire is always for the people to repent and turn back to Him (Ezekiel 18: 30-32; 33:11; 33:14-16).

God called Abraham and blessed him (Genesis 12:3). It is written "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you...". The blessings and curses that God originally pronounced on Abraham were also extended to his descendants. In Deuteronomy 27 God pronounced the curses that would fall upon the Israelites, if they disobeyed God, when they entered the promised land. Breaking the Ten Commandments can bring a curse that extends as far as the fourth generation. Another kind of curse is mentioned in Jeremiah 17:5-6, "cursed is the man who trusts in man." In Zechariah 5:1-4, the prophet saw a flying scroll in which a curse was pronounced on every thief and everyone who swears falsely on the name of the Lord. When a crime is committed justice requires that we pay for what we did. We see from the book of Leviticus that God taught the Israelites the terrible danger of sin. God had given laws and ordinances to perform sacrifices and offerings for the forgiveness of sins. This deals with the way in which the Israelites had to approach God. The sacrifices God had instituted point to the fact that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22). The way to God is by sacrifice. This is God's law. Hebrews 10:11 mentions that the Old Testament sacrifices had to be performed daily. The same sacrifices had to be repeated which can never take away sins. If it had made the worshiper perfect, the sacrifices would have ceased to be offered, and the worshiper would no longer be conscious of sin. But there was a reminder of sins, which shows that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Now God has provided a way for the forgiveness of our sins. There is only one way. It is through the sacrificial death of JESUS CHRIST on the cross. When the fullness of time had come God sent His Son. Hebrews 10:5-9 is a quotation from Psalm 40:6-8. It says "...I have come to do your will O God." This prophetic Psalm was fulfilled when Christ came into the world. John the Baptist introduced Jesus saying, "Behold the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." One of the key verses dealing with atonement is Leviticus 17:11 which says, "...for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." The death of Christ on the cross was a perfect sacrifice securing for us eternal redemption. God was pleased with this sacrifice because it was one of perfect obedience (Philippians 2:8). He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24). This was also a curse bearing death (Galatians 3:13). The blood that Christ shed on the cross is precious, without blemish, spotless and it is the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. Instead of many sacrifices, Christ made only one, Himself, thus gaining free and complete forgiveness for us. Hebrews 10:11-12 makes special mention that priests in the Old Testament times did their work, standing, as a symbol that it was never finished. But having finished the work of the High Priest, once for all, Christ "sat down" at the right hand of God. **The day of His death on the cross is the day of emancipation for every person, who believes in Him. ■**

(Dr. Mrs. Grace is a Lecturer of Chemistry in Pachhunga College, Aizawl, and teaches in the E.C. Sunday School. She is also actively involved in E.C. Women's ministry.)

Jesus Christ Our Blessing OUR EMPOWERER : ENABLES US TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD



Felix M. John

We are saved by grace. But for living a victorious life we need the power of God. We need His power everyday of our life. And the good news is that God has made His power available for us. We only need to appropriate it in our life. The power of God is the essential property of His nature by which He can do all that He pleases. There is nothing too hard for Him to do. We can clearly see God's power in the creation of the world. God's eternal power and His Godhead is seen in this creation. The power of God is an attribute of His very nature. The same is true for God's children. Nothing is impossible for a child of God who depends on God truly and absolutely. That is why we can see that St. Paul says that he can do all things through Christ who strengthens him. It is through Christ we can appropriate this power that is available for us for our life here on earth and for our afterlife.

God's power completes us. Christ not only gives us the power to endure troubles, but also to grow in maturity through the troubles. Paul wrote the above words when he was facing one of the most difficult trials in his life. It is in some of the worst trials of our lives that we can see the power of God in our lives. But for that, we must live a surrendered life. Jesus gives us the strength and power to grow through our trials and difficulties. The thing that truly sets us apart as disciples of Jesus is that we can find victory in the most difficult trials. Whenever we are faced with trials of many kinds, we are encouraged to consider it as pure joy, because eventually, it makes us mature and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4).

Christ gives us the power to live a life of contentment. People are struggling to find satisfaction in life. They seek satisfaction in various worldly things. Worldly pleasures and joys will never give us contentment. It can only leave us high and dry. People seek contentment in the materialistic comforts and possessions of this world. But it always leaves us with discontentment. The more we seek worldly things for satisfaction, the more unhappy we will find ourselves. But in Christ, we take our focus off the things we don't have, our frustrations that bother us and we put our focus where it ought to be - turning our attention from what we think we need, to the only thing that truly matters. Jesus alone can give us the power to look beyond our present discouraging circumstances and trust Him to provide everything we truly need. St. Paul had learnt this secret of contentment. God's power alone can give us contentment in a highly discontented world. (Philippians 4:12).

Christ gives us the power to live a holy life. We cannot live the godly life in our natural self or through our flesh. No matter how much we try, we cannot live a victorious life over sin in our own strength. We need to die to our self everyday and allow Christ to live in and through us. When we allow Jesus to live in and through us, we need not fret and struggle to live the holy life. Christ alone will live through us. Allowing Christ to live in us is to allow the Word of God to live in us. The Psalmist says that he has hidden God's Word in his heart so that he may not sin against God. The power to live a holy life is possible only when we allow God's Word to richly dwell in us. St. Paul says, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly' (Col. 3:16). **Let us live in the power of the resurrected Christ. ■**

[Mr. Felix John is a missionary with the Indian Evangelical Mission (IEM) at Nagpur, along with his wife, and is the first missionary the E.C. started supporting with prayer and finance.]

Jesus Christ Our Blessing OUR EXAMPLE : MODEL FOR SELFLESS CHRISTIAN LIVING



Lalnunzawmi
(Manuni)

I Pet. 2:21 *“To this, you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.”*

This meditation theme shows that Jesus is our role model for selfless Christian living. It is very true that selfless living was perfected and fulfilled in the life of Jesus. We can see the selfless life of Jesus right from His birth until His death. His disciple Peter saw clearly and said, *“To this, you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”* (I Pet. 2:21).

Jesus was the Man for others. He kept nothing for Himself. His thoughts, movements, prayers and concern were all for others. He stretched His hands so that others might be healed. He opened His mouth so that others would be comforted and blessed. He opened His eyes to see the needy. He took every step to reach the unreached. He opened His ears to hear the cry of the depressed. His heart was pierced to redeem the world.

In all these circumstances, we must know that like everyone of us, Christ shares the exact nature of human beings. In living for others, Jesus prayed what can be considered as the most moving prayer ever uttered in the garden of Gethsemane. In it, our Lord pleaded that the cup of crucifixion, which was to be given to Him might be taken away. But then, in the very next breath, He said, *“Not as I will, but as you will.”* Our Lord could not take a short cut from the cross to redeem and to save the world.

He then calls us to take His example to do the same. He sets the perfect example for us to lead a selfless life. We are therefore called not to take a short cut from the cross. But Jesus never forces anyone to follow Him. He waits and accepts one’s own willingness to be His disciple. In His calling, He makes it clear that whoever follows Him must deny himself and take up his cross daily. (Luke 9:23-24). He also emphasizes the need to practice selfless lifestyle by saying *“Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”* (Luke 9:58).

When we respond to His calling, we must know that we are to exercise a selfless life, i.e. to live for others, carry our cross, lose everything or deny our loved ones. There is no point in asking the reason except to live according to the demands of Jesus, because His demand is still the same as it was two thousand years ago. In the midst of modern complicated society, almost everyone seeks for pleasure and enjoyment. Easy lifestyles rob our family and self-centeredness becomes commonly featured in the society. We have to go back to the Bible and see what really is our Master’s calling and expectation. There is no short cut in the life of a true Christian even today.

Taking the selfless lifestyle of our Lord as our example, let us examine ourselves in the light of His life. Do our thoughts and actions focus on others? Are we really taking up our cross daily and following Him in our daily life? But it seems our physical and spiritual perspectives have become more and more selfish. Not to talk about others, our personal world has become too busy to have passion even for our spiritual life. Our satisfaction of being the disciple of Jesus has become shallow and because of this we are not helpful enough for others. **Therefore it is high time to remind ourselves and see the example that Jesus sets for us in living a selfless life.** ■

(Mrs. Manuni is the wife of former E.C. Pastor, Rev. Dr. Lalrinkima. A homemaker, with a passion for God, she is always ready to serve Him in any way she can.)

Jesus Christ Our Blessing OUR END : JESUS THE PIONEER AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH



Sam N. Jacob

Faith is not, as some people assume, a positive energy generated by our pumped up confidence that makes happen what we want to see happening. But, it is the inner assurance we have of things we hope for even before experiencing them with our physical senses, according to the author of the book of Hebrews. Biblical faith has always been trust in the person of God who fulfils His promises by His own power and strength. We may not have any idea of how He is going to do it. But we know for sure that He will do it because He always keeps His promises.

We know that our sins are forgiven and we are justified in the presence of God, because God has promised that whoever believes in Christ and His finished work on Calvary are reckoned justified. We cannot make ourselves feel that by the strength of our faith. It is the Holy Spirit who dwells in us according to God's promise who gives us the assurance of that.

From the beginning to the end, salvation is the work of God. We did not earn our salvation by our works. It was made possible only according to God's own plan which He Himself executed at Calvary. Every detail of that plan was worked out by God.

The language used by Apostle Paul regarding the state of those who have trusted in Christ is very interesting. To begin with the believers are placed in Christ. And it is His eternal plan that those who are in Christ 'would be holy and without blame before Him' [Eph. 1:4]. He goes on to say that "in Him we have obtained an inheritance" [Eph. 1:11]; and also, "In whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the guarantee of our inheritance ..." [Eph. 1:13-14]. Referring to the inheritance Paul says that we have already obtained it though we will be enjoying it fully at a future date. The present perfect tense shows an action that has already been completed. We can see this kind of language used in Romans also: "whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" [Rom. 8:30 ASV]. Those who are justified have also been referred to as glorified. In the sight of God the justified people have also been glorified. This is an act of God.

How does it happen? Don't we have any responsibility in this? Hebrews 12 tells us that we believers are in a race that started when we put our trust in Christ. While in the race we are to 'lay aside every weight and the sin'. But as we run we will realize that we stumble because we do not have the strength or ability for that sustained run. But, do not despair. We are in able and caring hands. Christ is our High Priest who is constantly interceding for us. He can sympathise with our weakness as He was "in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" [Heb. 4:15]. About this Jude says that Christ "is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" [Jude 1:24].

We are looking forward to that day when we will meet our Lord. Apostle John tells us that we shall be like the resurrected Jesus when He comes [1Jn. 3:2]. That is the end we are all looking forward to. That is when the redemption work Christ started in us will be complete; our spirit, soul and body will be saved.

We see Christ at the beginning of our faith, during our race of faith and also at the end of our race when we stand before the throne of glory. **He is the initiator, and consummator of our faith. He is the one who sustains us on the way as well.** Praised be His Name! ■

(Mr. Sam Jacob is a former E.C. Committee member. After entering Christian ministry, he is serving the Lord in various capacities, and currently resides in Bangalore along with his wife.)

O FOR A THOUSAND TONGUES TO SING



1. O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace!



Christina Priya

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honours of Thy name. 3. Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace. 4. He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. He speaks, and listening to his voice,
New life the dead receive;
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe. 6. Hear him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come,
And leap, ye lame, for joy. 7. In Christ, your head, you then shall know,
Shall feel your sins forgiven;
Anticipate your heaven below,
And own that love is heaven. |
|--|---|



(The United Methodist Hymnal www.hymnsite.com)



“If I had a thousand tongues, I would praise Christ with them all.”

Thus was inspired Charles Wesley, by his mentor Peter Bohler, to write this majestic hymn “O for a thousand tongues to sing, my great Redeemer's praise.”

This declaration of Christ's power and victory in Charles Wesley's own life, rich in biblical imagery of the kingdom of God, becomes our own hymn of praise. We stand with the angels before the throne of God, lifting our voices, as one church to glorify the One who “bids our sorrows cease.”

And yet, we also sing in the knowledge that the kingdom of God is not yet fully realised. We proclaim Christ's victory as a declaration of hope, that we will see Christ reign over all.

We stand with the voiceless, the lame, the prisoner and the sorrowing, and lift our song of expectation. (Hymnary.org)

This powerful hymn contrasts the darkness of sin with the light of the atoning blood that heals and humbles our hearts, and replaces our fears with the rejoicing for a new life. (www.umcdiscipleship.org) ■

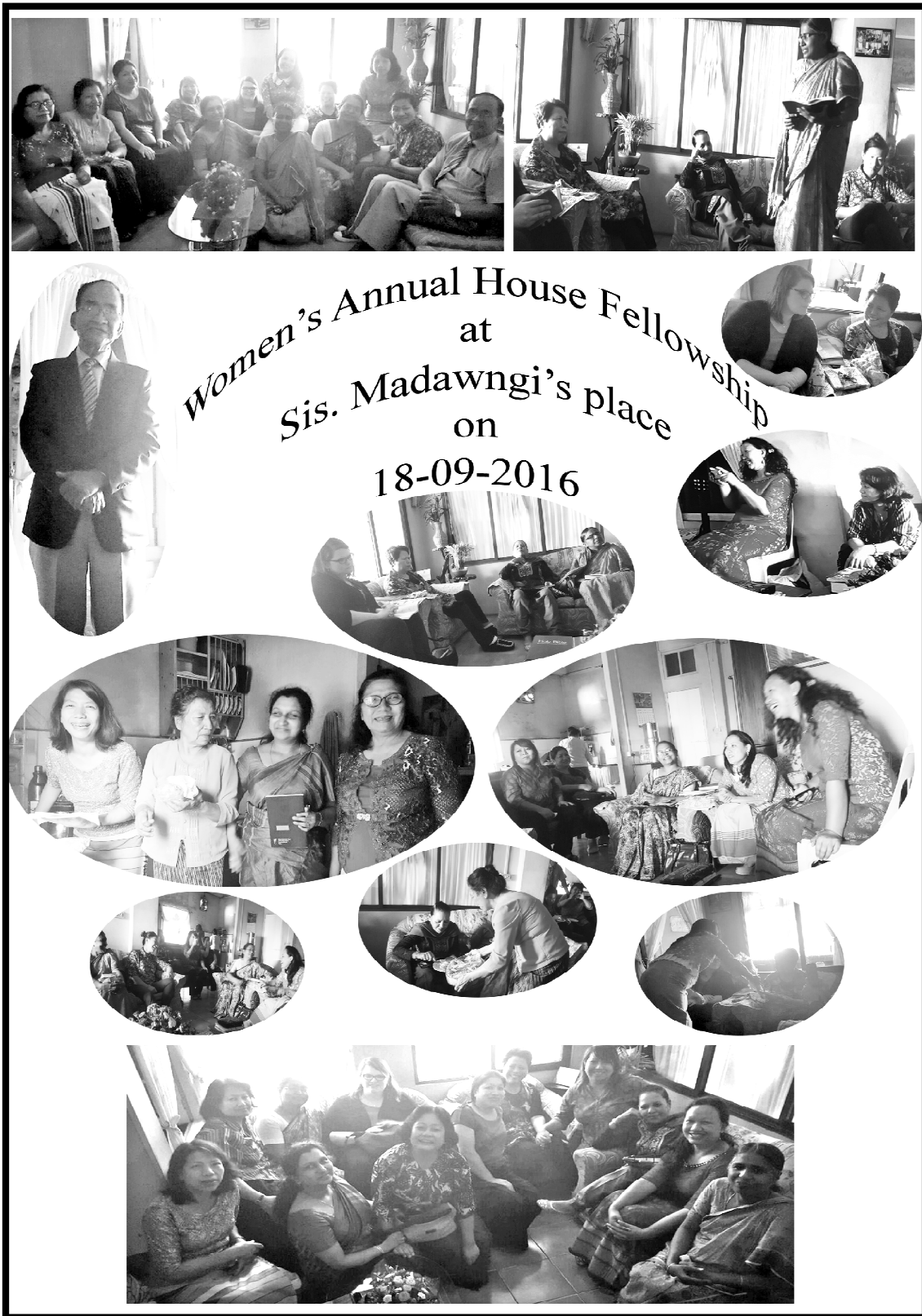
*(Mrs. Christina Priya is a former E. C. member and lives in Chennai.
She is a music lover and gives piano lessons at home.)*

SINGING GOD'S PRAISES WILL NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE.

E.C. NEWS

- I. THANKS** to our prayer-answering God and **Congratulations** to our final year students from RIPANS, who have all passed their final year exams. **Miss Lalhminghlui** was among the top ten and secured the **2nd position**.
- II. NEW MEMBERS** : The Congregation was happy to welcome the following persons as new members of the E.C., on 16/10/16, during the Sunday Worship Service :
1. Miss Lalthazuali
 2. Miss Lalkhawngaihazuali
- III. WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP (W.F.)** : The ladies are grateful to God that they could once again conduct their annual house fellowship at Sis. Madawngi's house on 18/9/16. It was a blessed and joyful fellowship filled with loads of fun, games and laughter and a very meaningful message shared by Ms. Emily McJones. The worship time was enjoyable and was led by Ms. Silme. Sis. Madawngi too shared what was on her heart. The ladies handed over a small gift, left her with a promise from God's Word and offered a special prayer for her. The family was as hospitable as ever and served delicious, home-made refreshments and thanked us for our visit.
- IV. VISITORS TO E.C.** : (a) On 11/9/16 – A group of Garo Pastors from Tura participated in our Sunday Worship Service and presented a special number in the Garo language. (b) A team from Youth With A Mission (YWAM) also attended our Worship Service and presented a special number in English. (c) On 25/9/16 – A Pastorate committee from a C.S.I. church in Chennai attended our Sunday Worship Service and presented a special number in Tamil.
- V. HAPPY** to see Miss Hephshibah Badding, Miss. Chimik AB Marak and Miss. Chirimbai Sangma at E.C. when they were in Aizawl on a brief visit.
- VI. SPECIAL PRAYER POINTS** :
1. *Our Pastor, his family and ministry.*
 2. *Rev. Kim Sang Soo, his family and ministry.*
 3. *Missionaries/Organizations supported by E.C. :*
 - a) **Mr. Felix John** and family (IEM), and their ministry in Nagpur.
 - b) **Mr. Jacob Rasaily** and family (ICCC), and their ministry in Gangtok.
 - c) **Mr. Ajitkumar Singh** and family (ICCC), and their ministry in Imphal.
 - d) **Rev. S. Nengzakhup** (Executive Director, NECTAR), and his family and ministry in Shillong.
 - e) **Mr. L.H. Kayina** and family (ELIC), and their ministry in China.
 - f) **Mr. Dheeraj Rai** (ICCC), and his ministry in Gangtok. ■

THE NAME OF JESUS IS AT THE HEART OF OUR FAITH AND OUR HOPE.





Cottage Meeting
on
03-09-2016



at the
residence
of
Mr. Bajaj



Tea Fellowship (11-09-2016), celebrating
Pastor's Wife's (Mrs. Nutei) Birthday



Pastor & Wife with Garo
group that visited E.C.
(11-09-2016)



Special Number by Pastorate Committee of CSI Church from Chennai
(25-09-2016)

Admission of
new E.C. members
by Pastor



on
16-10-2016

Life at E.C. Recent Happenings...



Cottage Meeting
on
20-08-2016



at the
residence
of
Mr. Puia



Cleaning



Fellowships



WHY I LOVE JESUS

Why I love Jesus?

Because He loves me!

How does Jesus love me?

He helps me in all the things I do!

What are the ways in which Jesus helps me?

He helps me in my exams!

He helps me in all the competitions I participate in!

He cares for me when I am sick!

He protects me the whole day from dangers!

Even when I travelled alone from Kolkata to Nagpur by air Jesus was there!

He provides me my family, my friends, and my teachers!

Is Jesus also my Savior?

Yes, Jesus is my Savior!

How is he my Savior?

Though I am a naughty girl, Jesus still loves me!

Jesus died on the cross for my sins!

How do I love Jesus?

When I try my best to learn about Him and do what He tells me to do.

Do I always do what Jesus tells me to do?

No. When I don't do so, I feel sorry for what I have done and I ask Jesus to forgive me. Jesus also tells me to forgive others from my heart. ■

(Miss Abigail studies in Class V in St. Joseph's Convent Senior Secondary School, Nagpur, and is the daughter of Mr. Abel Gaikwad.)



Abigail Lalawmpuii



THE BOY JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

Every year Joseph and Mary, the parents of Jesus, went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. So when Jesus was 12 years old, they went up to Jerusalem for the Feast as usual.

After the feast was over, His parents left to go back home. The boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But they were not aware of it. They thought He was somewhere in their group. So they began to look for Him in their group. They travelled on for a day. Then they began to look for Him among their relatives and friends. They did not find Him. So they went back to Jerusalem to look for Him. After three days they found Him in the temple courtyard. He was sitting with the teachers. He was listening to them and asking questions. Everyone who heard Him was amazed at His understanding. They were amazed at His answers.

When His parents saw Him, they were amazed. His mother said to Him, "Your father and I have been looking for you everywhere."

Jesus asked, "Why were you looking for me, didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what He meant by that.



Jesus went back home with His parents, and He obeyed them. He became wiser and stronger. He also became more and more pleasing to God and to people around Him.

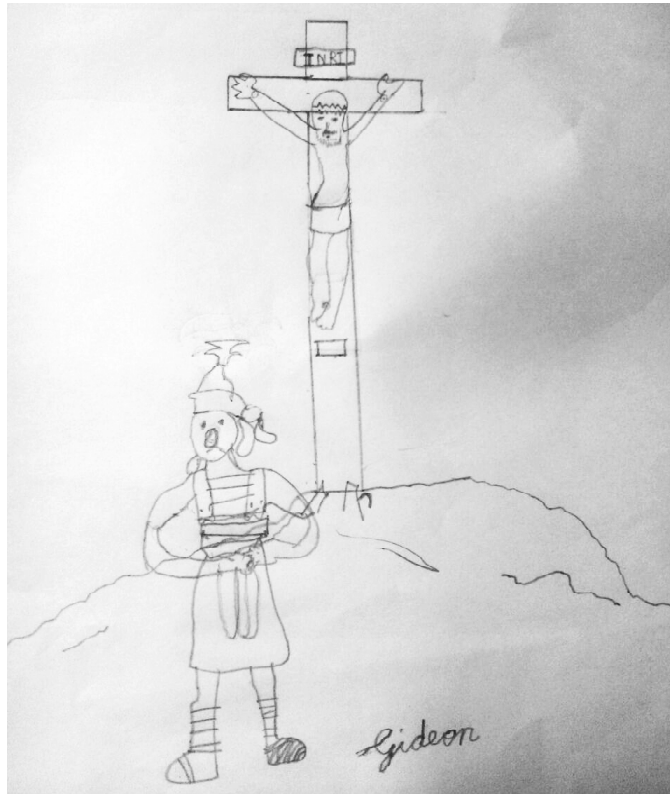
From this story I learned that I should be more obedient to my parents, love God and know His Word. ■

(Master Jed is son of former E.C. member, Mr. Tlanthianghlina and is presently being home schooled for Class V, in New Delhi.)



Jed Lawma

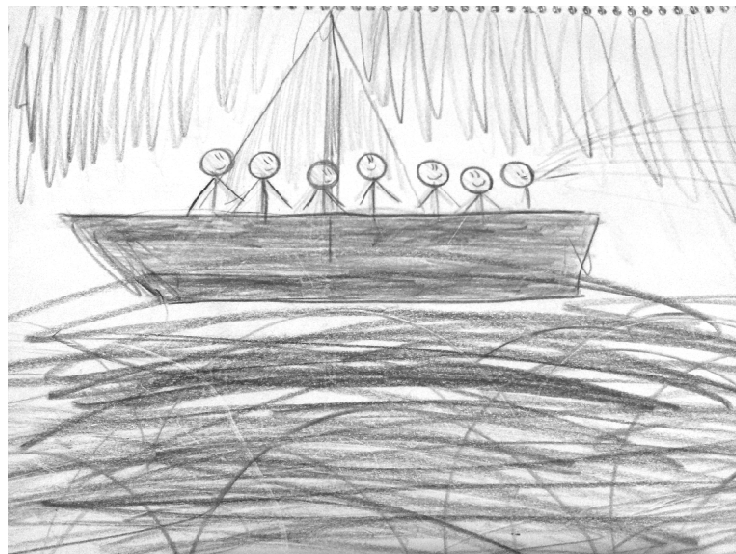
JESUS ON THE CROSS



Gideon Lalmuanawma

(Master Gideon is a KG-2 student of English Congregation School and is the son of former E.C. Pastor, Rev. Dr. K. Lalrinkima.)

JESUS CALMS THE SEA



Bryan Enga

(Master Bryan is son of former E.C. member, Mr. Tlanthianghlina and is presently being homeschooled for pre-school and is in New Delhi.)

WHAT JESUS MEANS TO ME!



Hephisibah Badding

Jesus is everything to me. My Saviour, my Friend, my all in all. He is to me more than what words can express. He is my strong pillar on whom I can lean. He is my strong fort where I can hide myself in times of trouble. There's never been a time when I was left alone, even in times of despair and loneliness. My Jesus was the One who comforted me, who led me through.

When I joined college, I never thought I would be able to adjust so easily, staying away from my family. But I was not alone, I had Someone greater than my family - my Lord, my Jesus. He was with me and helped me in every way, be it in my studies or during my clinical postings. He is the One who knows and provides all my needs even before I ask of Him. There were times when I was tempted in many ways, when I was weak, but even during such times the Lord comforted me with His words, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9). In my weakness, He carries me, He covers me with His grace and loves me.

I was baptized on 20th June, 2010, at the age of 14 years, in the English Congregation Church, Aizawl, Mizoram. I believed that Jesus came into this sinful world to cleanse me from my sins, to fill the gap which was laid between me and my Father and the only way to be saved was "to believe and be baptized" (Mark 16:16). When I was baptized, I completely surrendered myself into His Hands. I let my Jesus take hold of me, take control of each second of my life and now He is leading me, teaching me to be more patient, more humble, teaching me to love others as He has loved me. With Jesus all things are possible and He has changed my life. He has made all things new - from the old person in sinful rags to a new person clothed in a robe of righteousness.

No matter how dark, how narrow the path is, if we allow Jesus to take the lead, even if there are obstacles in the way, it will not stop us from moving forward because Jesus is the Light. He is my Light. He is the One who makes my every crooked path straight. He is my Leader, my Guide, my Comforter. He is the One who gives me peace and more than all He is the One who has given me a new life. And today He is willing to bless everyone who lets Him in. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20). Praise the Lord! ■

(Miss Hephisibah is a former E.C. Sunday School student and is presently doing her B.Sc. Nursing, 3rd year, in Assam Oil College of Nursing, Digboi, Assam.)

WHEN WE COME TO CHRIST IN OUR BROKENNESS, HE WILL MAKE US WHOLE.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY



Dheeraj Rai

“I will enjoy until I die.” I am a person who loves to have fun in all that I do. I came to know about Jesus Christ in my early age from my parents. I enjoyed listening to His stories in the church. His stories fascinated me as a young lad as well as a teenager. However, Jesus was a hero only in my dreams and not in my real life because I did not understand who He really was. So as I grew up, I began to search for answers about my existence and purpose in life, apart from Jesus. To my disappointment I did not enjoy my life as I intended to.

Time gradually passed by and curiosity grew within me. Since I was groomed in a Christian family, I had a good moral life. However, every Sunday I would hear that all mankind are sinners and all needed Jesus for their salvation because the wages of sin is death. But what I really did not understand was the concept of original sin. On 8th October 2006, during Worship service the sermon was on Psalm 51:5. I had been searching for an answer and God answered me in a way that changed my life for eternity. “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” I understood that I was not a sinner because of my sins but because I was born in sin. The need for a Savior was clear and only Jesus qualified to be the perfect One because of His miraculous virgin birth, the life He lived, the miracles He performed, His death and resurrection. At that moment I was convinced of my sin and the reason for the cross. On that very day by the end of the sermon I prayed to receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.

Knowing and receiving Christ is the most wonderful thing that has ever happened to me until now. The greatest thing that will ever happen to me is when I meet my Savior face to face. With that hope I have been living my life one day at a time. I have been growing in my faith since I accepted Christ in my life. Personal relationship and fellowship with God has helped me grow and mature in my Christian walk. However, God also used godly brothers to build me up into the kind of person He wanted me to be. God used Staff of Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) to help me understand God’s will for my life through prayers, Bible Study, constant fellowship and godly counsel.

I began the great adventure for which God created me when I received Christ as my Savior and Lord. As I grew in my relationship with Christ, I sensed that He wanted me to be His witness amongst my friends and my neighbours. I was zealous in doing all the church activities, going for mission trips from church but I never practiced personal evangelism. The greatest change in my walk with Christ came when I, as a first year student of St. Anthony’s college attended a three day training on Evangelism and Discipleship organised by Campus Crusade for Christ, (CCC). After the training I was clear that God has called us all to “go and make disciples of all nations” not only the pastors, preachers, missionaries and evangelists. A deep sense of obedience to God led me to begin my personal ministry of Evangelism and Discipleship as a college student within my campus, with the constant guidance from the staff of CCC.

Following Christ has been an exciting experience. I cannot imagine my life without Christ. I believed in enjoying life and Christ has completed my joy. Each day I now live according to God’s will as a missionary under the power of the Holy Spirit. Sharing Jesus Christ is full of adventure and excitement. I cannot explain it but I can assure you that you can also have a life full of adventure and excitement, if you find your life in Christ Jesus. ■

(Mr. Dheeraj, Staff of India Campus Crusade for Christ, Gangtok, Sikkim, is the most recent missionary to be supported by the E.C. with prayer and finance.)



JENNIFER BRICKER



Jen Bricker

Jennifer (Jen) was born into this world without legs on 1st October 1987 and was immediately put up for adoption by her biological father. A wonderful American couple, Gerald and Sharon Bricker, who had 3 sons of their own, chose to adopt her as they wanted a daughter, and a baby without legs seemed just the one for them to love and look after. Jen's new family loved her. With her parents' positive attitude and loving encouragement, Jen grew up believing she could achieve anything she put her mind to – the word “can't” was not allowed to enter her vocabulary. When she wanted to roller skate, her parents devised skates that she could attach to her hands. Alongside her older brothers, she climbed trees, jumped from high places, did handstands and flips. Her hands were strong and she played softball, basketball and volleyball. At age 7, she wanted to become a gymnast.

Jen's inspiration was Dominique Moceanu whom she watched on television. At the age of 13, Dominique was the youngest gymnast to win the senior all-round title at the U.S. National Championships in 1995 and at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996, 14 year old Dominique won a gold medal with the other members of the “Magnificent Seven” the U.S. gymnastics team. Jen's parents enrolled her in a gymnastics class and then a tumbling class (tumbling is also a kind of gymnastics). She won several tumbling competitions and at age 12, Jen became the Illinois State Champion in tumbling. She also competed in three national meets and one Junior Olympic Meet.

During her childhood, whenever a child stared or asked where her legs were, Jen answered matter-of-factly, “This is the way God made me.” Once a classmate referred to her as “handicapped.” Astonished, Jen replied, “I'm not handicapped.” “But you use a wheelchair,” the boy declared, to prove his point. A very annoyed Jen countered, “That's just to keep me from getting dirty.” Jen always knew she was adopted and was originally from Romania, and never bothered to find out more. Then just before her 16th birthday, her best friend who was also adopted found out her biological last name. Suddenly Jen wondered if her parents would know anything more about her adoption than she herself knew. Jen says this thought was only from God as there was nothing secret about her adoption and there was no reason for such a thought to cross her mind. She asked her mother, only to discover that her parents did know something they had not revealed to her. That evening her mother laid all the adoption papers before her and told her that her biological last name was Moceanu. Jen was stunned when she realized that her childhood idol, Dominique Moceanu, was actually her biological sister! An uncle managed to contact her biological father but there was no further interaction with her biological family till 4 years later when Jen sent a package to Dominique, containing copies of all the relevant documents, photos of herself and a long, heartfelt letter. Dominique and Christina Moceanu had never known about their other sister who had been given up for adoption. Furious with her parents for not telling her about Jen's birth, Dominique confronted them and learned that a baby girl had been born to them a day after her 6th birthday. Her father told her that the little baby had been born without legs and that they could not afford to take care of her medical needs as well as support Dominique, the budding gymnast.

After hearing from Jen about her loving and supportive adoptive family, Dominique realized that giving Jen up for adoption was the best decision her parents had taken. Her childhood, unlike Jen's, had not been a happy one. She describes her father in these words in her book: “As a father and husband, he ruled our house with an iron fist. Decisions were made by him, obeyed by us, and explained by nobody... My home life throughout my childhood was turbulent, at best. Tata's rage and temper tantrums took a toll on my family... We were always walking on eggshells.” (Off Balance: A Memoir, page 21).

Jen lives in Los Angeles and is also a successful motivational speaker, adding to her list of accomplishments. She continues to perform in aerial arts and hopes to inspire and motivate others to believe that anything in life is truly possible. According to Jen, life will constantly surprise you if you are open to it and ready to unfold it. She also plans to help out at a sports camp for kids without limbs. Jen may also be using her role-model status to empower children with disabilities by providing an animated character they can relate to. Artists behind the popular “My Little Pony” cartoon, created “Smilez” in Jen's likeness. She said, “It's really cool seeing yourself as a pony.” In addition to all this, she is also an advocate for the Adoption Network, which was instrumental in helping Jen reconnect with her biological siblings with whom she now shares mutually fulfilling relationships. Jen and her sister, Dominique Moceanu, were Keynote Speakers for the Adoption Network Conference in Cleveland, Ohio. Jen says “I believe God wants to use me as an example to move people in a profound way” and states that she is happy to be just the way she is, as only then can God use her in the way she is being used to reach out to millions of people.

I got to know of Jen Bricker when I saw her on a program called Life Today on Daystar television last month. I thank God for the opportunity to write about her.

Source: <http://www.aish.com/sp/so/Who-Got-the-Better-Deal.html>;
<http://achhikhabre.com/jennifer-bricker-gymnast-legless-motivational/>



Lavi Joseph

(Miss Lavi is always willing and available to use her talents to glorify God and be a blessing to others.)

