

The Ecumenical Family

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Church as Salt and Light:



**Towards
India's
TRANSFORMATION**

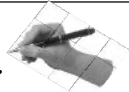
CHECK IT OUT...

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Cover design : Abel Lalmuangpuia Gaikwad

Editorial.....



THE CHURCH AND INDIA'S TRANSFORMATION



Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad

As we celebrate the birthday of the Church on Pentecost Day, the theme for our periodic bulletin is entitled, "Church as Salt and Light: Towards India's Transformation"

Such a theme raises a question – What is that transformation which we are talking about? To answer that question, we need to scan the state of the country today.

A report, published in 2016, graphically highlights certain concerns about our country's situation:

Today our society is witness to increasing religious polarization and fear; and attacks on women, Dalits, Adivasis, religious minorities and working people; the criminal neglect of agriculture leading to an epidemic of farmer suicides; the theft of natural resources; and attacks on livelihoods and workers' rights; gender violence; the neglect of persons with disabilities; discrimination against Dalit students in schools and universities across the country; and the persecution of people marginalised on the basis of their gender identity and sexual orientation. Worst of all . . . (some forces) are bent upon curbing our freedoms. They tell people what to wear, write and speak; whom to love and what to eat.

What has the Church been doing in such a situation? One response has been in the form of a struggle for survival. In the context of cancellation of FCRA registrations, imposition of anti-conversion laws and regulations, bringing in laws which control medical institutions and denigrate charitable service (e.g. orphanages), physical attacks on Christians and their properties, and reconverting Christians to Hinduism (*ghar vapasi*), the Church has been seeking ways and means to survive. The Church has also engaged in publishing statements highlighting the injustices inflicted on it, writing letters to the Prime Minister, organizing protest demonstrations, rallies, holding special observances such as Black Day on 10th August, and moving the law courts for justice.

However, these have been reactionary defensive strategies. These methods are akin to preserving salt in containers so that it does not deteriorate. Salt is hygroscopic, meaning it attracts and holds water molecules from the surrounding environment. In humidity, it will clump. In a kitchen, salt will absorb steam and odours, which can affect its taste. The above defensive methods are akin to placing our outdoor electric bulbs in cage-like boxes which are locked so that it becomes difficult for anyone to steal them.

If the Church has to make its contribution to the country's transformation, then it will have to be proactive: as light, it should show liberative and constructive ways out of the darkness in which the country is engulfed, and as salt it will have to give taste to transformative endeavours. The Nazareth Manifesto of Jesus should inspire us:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. ■

(Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad is presently the Director, Theological Education, Mission and Evangelism, Diocese of North East India, Church of North India and resides in Guwahati along with his wife. He was also the first Pastor of the English Congregation.)

REFLECTION ON MATTHEW 5:14-16

Matthew 5:14-16 is part of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus addressed His disciples. He used the concept of light to refer to the role of His followers in the world, and He demanded nothing less than that they should be like Himself.

When Jesus said, “you are the light of the world,” He meant that the presence of light in darkness is something that is unmistakable. Light not only exposes what is hidden in the darkness, but light shows the way out. Light is an often used analogy for the nature of God and the nature of a Christian. (1 John 1:5-7; Luke 1:79; Isaiah 9; John 8:12).



Rev. Dr. H. Vanlalruata
Pastor, E.C.

Disciples of Jesus are the light of the world because God shines His light through those that have received it through Jesus. Christ is the true light, we are only reflections of Him. As the moon reflects the sun, we reflect God’s Son, Jesus Christ, by what we say and do. The light that shines from Christians shows people not only their shortcomings and their sins, but it shows them the way out, the way to Jesus Christ.

According to William Barclay, there are three things that the light of the world means.

(1) A light is first and foremost something which is meant to be seen. So then, Christianity is something which is meant to be seen. A man’s Christianity should be perfectly visible to all people. Christianity should not be visible only within the church. The Christianity whose effects stop within the church door is not much use to anyone. It should be even more visible in the ordinary activities of the world.

(2) A light is a guide. A light is something to make clear the way. So then a Christian must make the way clear to others. That is to say, a Christian must be an example for others.

(3) A light can often be a warning light. A light is often the warning which tells us to halt when there is danger ahead. It is sometimes the Christian’s duty to bring to his fellowmen the necessary warning. (William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible, The Gospel According to Matthew, Vol. I*. Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1981, pp.123-124)

Jesus’ last statement in this section is a command, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” Jesus is telling His followers that as light, they need to let their light shine in such a way that people see it and give glory to God. Now usually if we are “letting our light shine” what we might expect is that people give us glory. They see our good works and they praise us because we did them. The presence of Christians in the world must be like a light in the darkness, not only in the sense that the truth of God’s Word brings light to the darkened hearts of sinful man (John 1:1-10), but also in the sense that our good deeds must be evident for all to see.

As “light” we are to illuminate or make visible. Our lives are to be an on-going witness to the reality of Christ’s presence in our lives. When we worship God with pure hearts, when we love others as ourselves, and when we do good without growing weary, we are lights shining. It is important however, to know that it is not our light, but the reflection of the Light of the world, Jesus Christ Himself, that people will see in us.

We are also the light of the world because we have the light of God’s Word to share. David called the scriptures a lamp to his feet and a light to his path in Psalm 119:105. The Bible tells us how to live godly lives and bring glory to His name. We are light in a very positive sense because we guide people by that light to God. Light lets us see the truth. Now let us shine for Jesus. AMEN. ■

(Pastor Vanlalruata is also Assistant Professor, Christian Counselling in the Aizawl Theological College, Durtlang.)

Music Page

HYMN : A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD



Salome Philip

1. A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
our helper he, amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
does seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.
2. Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing,
were not the right Man on our side,
the Man of God's own choosing.
You ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord Sabaoth his name,
from age to age the same;
and he must win the battle.
3. And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God has willed
his truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure,
for lo! his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.
4. That Word above all earthly powers
no thanks to them abideth;
the Spirit and the gifts are ours
through him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
the body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still;
his kingdom is forever.

The Story Behind the Hymn

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the Cathedral of Wittenberg, Germany; the beginning of the Protestant Reformation Movement. One of the most powerful hymns of that time was by Luther himself, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" based on Psalm 46. Written sometime between 1527 and 1529, this hymn became the battle cry of the people, a great source of strength and inspiration even for those who were martyred for their convictions.

The hymn is a celebration of the sovereign power of God over all earthly and spiritual forces, and of the sure hope we have in Christ. The song embodies with strength and gusto the very spirit of the Reformation, breaking free from the flaccidity and poverty of medieval theology with rich God-confidence. God not only protects but leads us forward into victory. He helps us get free from every misery. He brought out God's extreme fullness and power, but also our extreme emptiness and powerlessness. Satan is utterly unsuccessful in his efforts against us, because Christ is with us according to God's sovereign plan. Luther aims to conquer fear, and feed faith, in the present by asserting that even if our plight was much worse, we would still be utterly secure in Christ. How much more should we now rest secure in His unshakable sovereignty! There is no other God than Christ Jesus, whose Kingdom remains for us forever. In Christ, we

not only catch a glimpse of God's spectacular Kingdom, but we're invited in. We become part of the reign from the inside. Our "ancient foe," Satan, is the defeated being. So we can endure Satan's short-term rage against us, because his eventual doom is certain while Jesus as the Lord of hosts remains forever King!

Are we in the clutch of "mortal ills" today? Be it sicknesses, hard times, failures or any circumstances. Are we discouraged by the injustice, the hatred and all sorts of evil prevailing? Are we confused and scared? The devil is skilled and clever, and is still trying hard to harm us, discourage us. God is our Helper in the midst of all these challenges. Let us not despair, for the battle is the Lord's; Christ has already conquered. Your present suffering and your situation may be overwhelming, but the consolation is that God is sovereign and so He is in control. Our soul is secure in His hands and we are going to reign with Christ in glory! If we fight against the enemy in our own strength, we would lose terribly. But let the Lord fight for us; we are more than conquerors! Things may look grim now; but the brightest promise of life with God is for us both now and for eternity. May this hymn be the battle cry for us today, a great source of strength and inspiration in our battle against the power of darkness as followers of Christ. Against the devil and all its power, "A Mighty Fortress is our God," who defends us and fights with and for us. Amen! ■

Sources : <https://www.godtube.com/popular-hymns/a-mighty-fortress-is-our-god/>
<https://www.challies.com/articles/hymn-stories-a-mighty-fortress-is-our-god/>
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(Mrs. Salome has recently joined the E.C. along with her family and is the Staff Worker of UESI for Mizoram.)



BEING A SPIRIT EMPOWERED CHURCH : TOWARDS INDIA'S TRANSFORMATION



Sam N. Jacob

Church is a community of people called out from the World, transformed and empowered by the Holy Spirit and sent back to the World as Christ's witnesses. The first century believers had 'turned the world upside down'. Though ordinary people, they were world changers. They were truly transformed people, not afraid to throw away their lives for the cause of Christ. They did not love their lives, professions or family affinities more than Christ. They were willing to be burnt out for their Master. Though considered the scum of the society for Christ's sake, they were effective revolutionaries.

But, we have not been able to make any significant impact on the Indian social, political or ethical scene. Why? There has to be some fundamental problem with us. Have we been half-hearted keepers of the gospel? We have surely contributed immensely to healthcare, education, and language development of India. But our countrymen are not impressed. They are persuaded that we do all these out of ulterior motives and not true love.

India appreciates Jesus Christ and His teachings. But they do not see Christ in His followers. We claim we are transformed people. But people see only cosmetic changes in our lives. We have even copied the Hindu social hierarchical system. As they have the original, why should they follow an imitation!! India is a land of yogis who have sacrificed everything in search of truth. But have we been more concerned about increasing our power base and finances? Prophet Hosea would have called us 'half-baked bread'. Indians are asking the question the evil spirit asked the sons of Sceva, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?"

Societies are transformed by those who practice the truth, not by mere preachers. Abraham gave up all his rights over the Promised Land and his promised son and he became a blessing for the whole world. Lot sought prosperity and he became the father of two cursed races. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. He who loves his life shall lose it. And he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal." [Jn. 12:24-25].

India is not going to be transformed by our programs and what we do in our hallowed churches and seminar halls. Jesus identified Himself with the people, lived with them, understood and experienced their pains and problems. He touched their lives and they became transformed transformers. Even today, those who walk the mud-strewn paths and sit with those who labour and are heavy laden do find societies transformed. More such people who are willing to follow Christ to the uttermost, are needed.

The message of Christ is relevant for India even today. But only when more Indians move out of their cozy corners in the church, and pay the price of discipleship, will we see transformation in our country. Will you be one of them? ■

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

A life yielded to the Holy Spirit's control, impacts others for Christ.

ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE INDIAN POLITICAL SITUATION



Hepuni Kayina

What does the Indian political situation look like today, especially if the 2019 election is an indication of the state of Indian politics? Nikhil Kumar of CNN, writing on it on May 20, concludes *'India's election has left the country more divided than ever'*. The divide he refers to relates to the fracture of cohesion of the people as a country evidenced by the countless parties purporting to represent the diverse voices of opposing agendas. But from long experience, it is common knowledge now that politics and its ideological degeneration extends to the definition of what is good and what is right even at grass root level today. What is right is right, is now replaced by what is good for me is right. And this is being exemplified by the country's 'role models'! In 2014, economic reformation was the election promise, whereas it is now to become the nation's Chowkidars. Make new promises to cover up lies and unkept promises is the name of the game. What is of extreme concern is that such behaviour is being touted as normal behaviour.

This is the situation wherein the church is called to be salt and light. Can it be the Hercules to clean the Aegean stables of at least its immediate environs, not as penance which it was for Hercules, but as the reason why it exists?

It could, because it was commissioned to do just that.

Unless it has succumbed to the seductions of having it all here and now, and thus, has lost its flavour and has hidden its light under a bushel, leaving the world around it stumbling in darkness. Tragically there are rampant evidences of the church having become so, for isn't its integrity reflected in the integrity of its communicants during election?

Except for a miniscule minority, the Christian electorate in India cannot be distinguished from the rest in its amoral and unprincipled behaviour. If this is any indication, this means the church has become dysfunctional at best and apostate at worst.

Does this mean the age of the church and therefore its impact on the world is past? By no means! Does not God say He is not the God of the dead but of the living? In other words, the church can be regenerated to life through the power of the Eternal Spirit to be His witness. He also means that His perfect standards ever bring life because they are eternal.

The church, more than ever, must walk the Christian talk if we are to bring light (direction) and salt (flavour) to this country. Being only about 4% of the population makes it appear it is not worth the effort, but remember it took just one boy's offering to feed everybody! Anything is possible if we do not exchange the Truth for a lie. ■

(Mr. Hepuni was an E.C. Committee Member and has contributed greatly to the spiritual growth of E.C. He along with his wife are with ELIC in China and are supported by the E.C. with prayer and finance.)

The gift of God's love in us can bring light to any darkness.

THE VALUES OF THE CHURCH IN A CORPORATE WORLD



Isak L. Tochhawng

Romans 14:17 *ESV* ¹⁷*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Mark 1:15 *NIV* ¹⁵*"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"*

His Kingdom isn't within the confines of a building but within us and encompasses the entire world. To establish His Kingdom that is already in our midst, the Body of Christ (the Church) must go out into the world and influence it.

1 Corinthians 12:27 *ESV* ²⁷*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*

Acts 17:24 *NIV* ²⁴*"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands."*

How can we say "Your kingdom come" when our Christian fervor is often put aside at our places of work? Why separate the secular from the sacred when He made everything sacred?

2 Corinthians 5:20 *ESV* ²⁰*Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

As ambassadors we must be the ones to bring reconciliation in the corporations and institutions. From the love of money and self, to the love of righteousness and Christ. With our unique God-given personalities and talents, we can bring Church values into our places of work and governance.

Luke 17:20-21 *NIV* ²⁰*Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, ²¹nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."*

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus clearly says He will build His Church and as the Body of Christ we are not to look elsewhere or expect another way. We do this, not by our own might ¹³*for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.* – Philippians 2:13 *NIV*. We need only seek His presence in every instance of our lives to guide us.

Hebrews 12:28 *NIV*. ²⁸*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,*

As king David did when seeking God's presence, we do what we were created for – worship, in spirit and truth so His Kingdom may be established all around us.

Revelation 11:15 *ESV* ¹⁵*Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."*

Let not our inadequacies hold us back for victory is already ours. We may fall but we will rise again stronger than before – we are the salt and light of this world. ■

[Mr. Isak is an Associate member of E.C. and was in full time ministry from 2006. He is presently Entrepreneur, I.T & Christian Counselling, and COO (Chief Operations Officer), King Industries.]

Youth Page

CHRISTIAN YOUTH IN CIVIL SERVICES



Jomy Jacob

- The Civil Services of India is rated by historians as among the most important legacies of British rule in India. The Civil Services refer to the career bureaucrats who are the permanent executive branch of the Republic of India and are the backbone of the administrative machinery of this country. There is this arduous marathon every year, to which many bright and ambitious young aspirants devote several of the best years of their youth to appear for the Civil Services examination. What is tested is not high academic merit, but academic stamina and perseverance. The high distinction of this selection process, unmatched by any other in the public sector, is its integrity and fairness.
- As per the Minority Affairs Ministry Report, 131 out of the total successful 990 candidates in the Civil Services Examination of 2017 were from the religious minority communities. A study done on the social background of Administrative Services shows that out of 4000 plus officers, Christians represent a meagre 2%. As per the Census report, the Christian population growth in Indian demographics has almost remained stagnant from 2.34% in 2001 to 2.30% in 2011. Comparing the two, it is seen that Christians are fairly represented in the bureaucracy, as per their population, i.e. mere 2%. But is it enough?
- Why do we need to encourage our youth for Civil Services? In a sermon to His disciples, Jesus in Matthew 5:14-16 says, *“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”* Light is most useful when it is positioned in the right place, thereby leading and showing direction. The Christian youth in Civil Services can act as God’s vessels to reach out to the perishing world.
- Civil Servants are expected to be transformational leaders and change managers. Some of the greatest examples of profound leadership can be found within the Old Testament. Moses, Daniel, and David were all leaders in their own way and all of them found favour with God who helped them to lead His flock.
- The values of integrity, impartiality, and merit are the guiding principles of the Civil Services. Grace, Hope, Justice and Service are the fundamental social values one should exhibit in delivery of public service. These are the values which are distinctive of Christian faith. The youth inheriting such values can influence behaviour and action in bureaucracy.
- Civil service is a noble profession like any other (teacher, medical doctor, lawyer, engineer, publisher, etc.). The government service is one of the most important services where one can directly serve the society. Decisions taken by them have a long term impact on the lives of people. The Church should encourage parents and youth and make them more aware that government service provides one of the best opportunities to serve the society. Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12: *“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example.”* Let our Christian youth be encouraged to be leaders of tomorrow and let them lead by example. ■

(Mr. Jomy is an officer from the 2009 batch of Indian Revenue Service. He is presently working as Joint Director, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, under Ministry of Finance. He grew up in the E.C. Sunday School.)

Sunday School Page



*Neha R.S.
Junior Class, E.C. S.S.*

(Miss Neha is studying in Class 6, Sainik School, Chhingchhip, Mizoram.)

WHAT I WANT TO BE WHEN I GROW UP

I have been asked by many elders and friends of mine, what my life's goal is or what I want to achieve in life. I usually responded telling them "yes! I want to be beautiful when I grow up" or "I want to have lots of money, a car, a house and many more".

But no one has ever asked me, what I want to be when I grow up. This question has confused me a little bit, so I have to ask myself again and again. Finally I understood this question as, "how I want to be when I grow up or how do I want to see myself when I grow up?"

Let me tell you! I love the way how I am today, and even want to be the same who I am when I grow up. What I'm trying to say is, I am a blessed child of God and I want to remain blessed even when I grow up. I don't want to leave God and I don't want God to leave me.

From the time I was born and until now I have been growing as a fresh flower full of sweet fragrance. And just like a flower that needs water, food, light and care to grow, in the same way my parents have given me love, care, joy, happiness, kindness, education and also many sacrifices and just because of them until now I have grown as a fresh flower or else I would have dried up.

So, when I grow up I do not want to make God sad, rather I want to make Him smile throughout my entire life. Second, I want carry on the sweet fragrance of God that He has blessed me with to bless others as well. Third, I want to make my loving parents and siblings proud. And I am sure that other things will come along the way. ■



Avarnaniya Rasaily

(Miss Avarnaniya is the daughter of former E.C. members, Mrs. & Mr. Jacob Rasaily and is studying in Class VII, Auxilium Higher Secondary School in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.)

Welcoming of New Members



Mr. Felipe Rodriguez
&
Family
(17/2/19)

Mr. P.M. Philip
&
Family
(12/5/19)

Mr. Sajith John
Abraham & Family
(17/2/19)



Cottage Meetings



Residence of
Lt. General
Mukherjee
←
4/5/19

Residence of
Dr. Joshy →
Peter
20/4/19



Easter Service

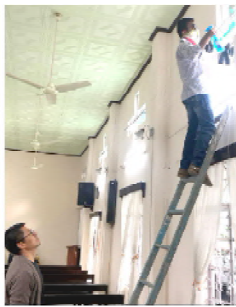


(21/4/19)

Special number by E.C. Sunday School



Enjoying the Easter Lunch



Cleaning Fellowship (25/5/19)



Pushpak Fellowship (12/5/19)



Monthly Ministry at Central Jail (26/5/19)



Farewell to Mr. Asosii Loli (26/5/19)

God be with you till we meet again...

E.C. HAPPENINGS!

- I. **NEW MEMBERS:** The following persons were formally welcomed as members of E.C. –
On 17/2/19 – a) **Mr. Sajith John Abraham**
 b) **Mr. Felipe Rodriguez & Mrs. Zomawii Khiangte Rodriguez**
On 12/5/19 – **Mr. P.M. Philip & Mrs. Salome Philip**
- II. **FAREWELL:**
- a) On 26/5/19 the Congregation bid farewell to **Mr. Asosii Loli** who had been with us for just two years. Due to his frequent official trips, he was not able to involve himself in the various E.C. activities as much as he would have liked to. A Bible as farewell gift was presented to him by Pastor and he gave a farewell speech. He has since reached his new place of posting in Bihar. Let’s continue to pray for him, his family and work.
 - b) On 2/6/19 the Congregation said goodbye to longtime member, **Mr. Jaison Joshy** (s/o Dr. Joshy Peter & Mrs. Susan Joshy), who left Aizawl for Chennai in connection with his job. Jaison had been a part of the E.C. Sunday school and later became the Youth Representative in the E.C. Committee. He served the Congregation in multiple ways and has been a great asset to the E.C. A Bible was presented to him by Pastor and he gave a farewell speech. He will be greatly missed. However, he will continue to be on the Editorial Team. We wish him all God’s best and continue in prayer for him.
- III. **The following members/former members attended E.C. Worship Service over the past few months and the Congregation was privileged to catch up with -**
- a) Dr. Anna Skariah
 - b) Mr. Alan Sabu
 - c) Ms. Merilyne
 - d) Ms. Silme Ch. Momin
 - e) Rev. S. Nengzakhup & wife, Mrs. Ching.
- IV. **GUEST SPEAKERS :**
- a) Dr. W. Sam David (CMCH, Vellore) on 20/1/19
 - b) Rev. S. Nengzakhup (NECTAR) on 14/4/19
 - c) Mr. K.T. Paul (EMFI) on 18/4/19.
- V. **SPECIAL SERVICES/DAYS CELEBRATED IN E.C. :**
- a) Christmas Carol Service & Sunday School Final Day Programme on 2/12/18
 - b) Maundy Thursday Service on 18/4/19
 - c) Good Friday Service on 19/4/19
 - d) Easter Service on 21/4/19
 - e) Mother’s Day on 12/5/19
- VI. **SUNDAY SCHOOL :** It is wonderful to see God’s working in building up the Sunday School again through new teachers/volunteers and students. It is being revived as more children join and as the new volunteers and teachers labour together in love.
- VII. **SPECIAL PRAYER REQUESTS :** Sick – a) Dr. Joshy Peter on treatment for stroke.
b) Lt. General John Ranjan Mukherjee on treatment for cancer. ■
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FANNY CROSBY



Fanny Crosby
(1820 - 1915)



Lavi Joseph

Frances Jane Crosby, widely known as Fanny Crosby was born to Mercy and John Crosby on March 24, 1820. The Crosbys were devout Christians. When she was about a month old, there seemed to be an infection in her eyes, and a self-proclaimed physician put a hot poultice on her eyes to draw out the infection, as a result of which her corneas were damaged and scar tissues were formed. She could see some light and colour but little else. Fanny's father died in November 1820 while she was still a baby. So Mercy worked as a maidservant in the house of a wealthy family nearby. Grandma Eunice was determined that blindness would not make Fanny a helpless invalid, dependent on others. She trained and taught her well and Fanny developed the capacity for detailed description and had a phenomenal memory. She could recite the Pentateuch, the four Gospels, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Solomon and several Psalms. Fanny's faith stemmed from the godly influences at home. She loved singing, was musically talented, had a sweet voice and played the guitar well. She was an excellent horsewoman and good storyteller too.

In March 1835, Fanny joined the New York Institution for the Blind, which she considered God's answer to her prayer for education. She made friends quickly, was a bright student, played the piano and organ skillfully and was one of the finest harpists in America. She was also mischievous and loved writing poetry. She contributed regularly to newspaper columns, wrote four books of poetry and became famous. In the meantime her mother remarried and had two daughters. Fanny dearly loved her two sisters who in turn adored her and looked after her in her old age. She had many friends, including presidents and prominent people of America, as well as common people.

On 20.11.1850, Fanny was baptized with the Holy Spirit, which deepened her relationship with God. On 5.3.1858, Fanny married musician Alexander Van Alstyne, the finest organ virtuoso of New York, who was also blind. They had a child who died in infancy, much to Fanny's sorrow. In 1864, she was introduced to musician William B. Bradbury and started working in his firm, writing hymns. Her hymns were published in hymnals. In 1876, she was introduced to D. L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey, wrote hymns for them, and through them, her hymns spread to big audiences.

When writing a hymn, Fanny prayed that God would use it and that she should win a million men to Christ. God answered her prayers – there were amazing testimonies of those who came to Christ by hearing these hymns in their different situations. She wrote about 9000 hymns in all. Fanny lived an active life, involved in various things and people, spoke and preached in different places, and travelled a lot. Although she later became an effective preacher and lecturer, she was always known as the "hymn writer" and "the queen of gospel song". She was a national celebrity in her old age, at the peak of her fame – there was hardly a religious service in the United States where at least one of her hymns was not sung. To honour her in her 85th year, churches across the USA and elsewhere observed a Fanny Crosby Sunday.

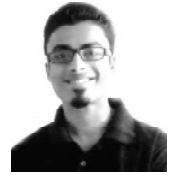
Fanny's autobiography, *Memories of Eighty Years*, was published in 1906. Though very frail in her old age, she had an inner beauty that shone through. In her later years, she hardly slept and spent the hours praying. Fanny considered her blindness to be a special gift from God, without which, she felt she would not have been able to accomplish what she did or know God so closely. She felt that because of the physical darkness, she was more able to perceive things about the spiritual world. The Bible was the ultimate authority in her life and she was very sure that she would be in heaven with Christ. By the time she was in her early eighties she was known as the 'Methodist Saint'. She died of massive cerebral hemorrhage in the early hours of February 12, 1915. But she still lives on through her works. ■

Source : Heroes of the faith series – Fanny Crosby The Hymn Writer by Bernard Ruffin

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

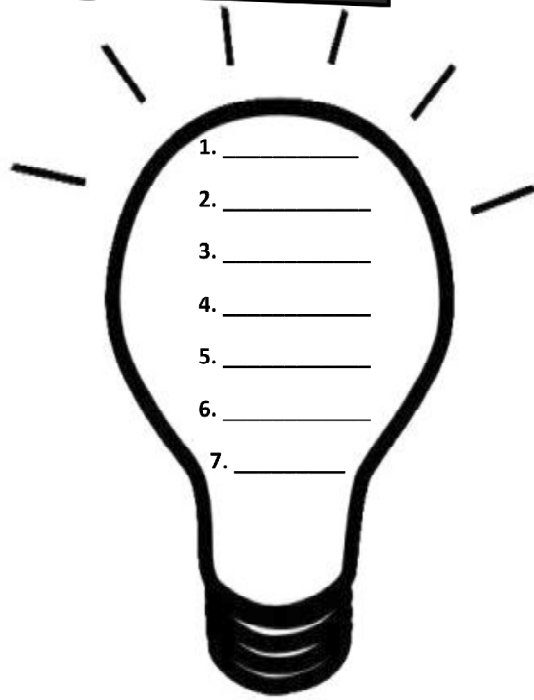
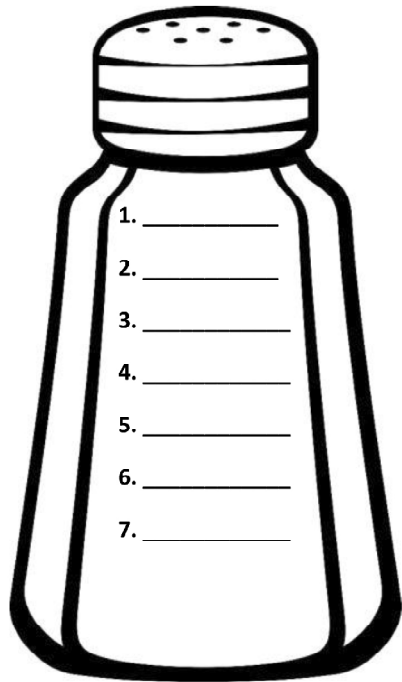
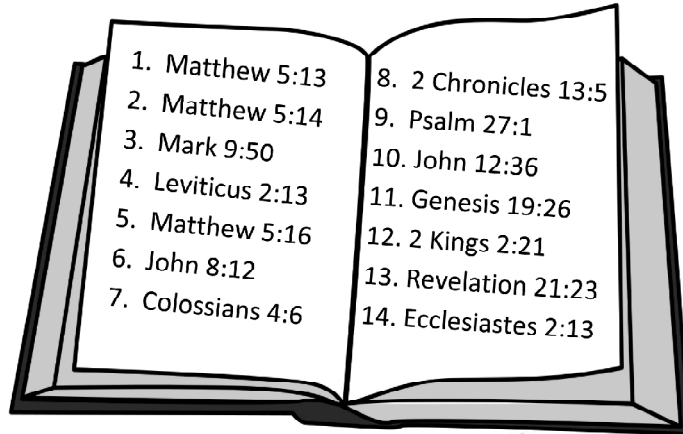
BIBLE VERSE "SALT AND LIGHT" SEARCH GAME

(Version Used: NKJV)



Jaison Joshy

Check the verse references given below and place the references that talk about "salt" into the salt bottle and place the references that talk about "light" into the light bulb:



(Mr. Jaison has been part of E.C. for a long time and has been the Youth Representative in the E.C. Committee. He has recently left for Chennai in connection with his job.)

ATTENTION!
The English Congregation meets every Sunday for Worship at 10 a.m. in the English Congregation Church building, within the Synod Office compound, at Mission Veng.
ALL ARE WELCOME!

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