



chalk AND chai

Oct - Dec 2021 | Vol: 44 | No:4



Kingdom Education and the TEACHER



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FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S DESK

Dear friends,

Greetings to you all in the matchless name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. By the time this issue of Chalk and Chai 44:4 (Oct to Dec 2021) reaches you, we will be stepping into the last quarter of the year 2021 anticipating the Christmas season.

People give gifts as a way of showing thoughtfulness, love, and affection. Gift-giving at Christmas is a Christian tradition that is widely practiced around the world. The gifts given at Christmas are symbolic of the tributes made to the baby Jesus by the three wise men after his birth during the story of the Nativity narrated in the gospel of St. Matthew. Interestingly the name Matthew stems originally from the Hebrew name "Mattith-yahu", which means "Gift of Yahweh," or "Gift of God." or even "Gift from God." We find the best coincidence that the same Gospel of Matthew records many of Jesus' preaching about the Kingdom of Heaven (Kingdom of God).

In this issue, we focus on Kingdom and Education. We all know that Education is to pass information,

knowledge, etc. to other people. In the light of this theme, I would like to place two thoughts:

1. The Kingdom of God is a Gift
2. The Kingdom of God is a Task

What type of Gift is the Kingdom of God?

Gift from God – Christmas Gift

Christmas itself is really about a big Gift that God gave the world about 2000 years ago - Jesus! - God's manifestation in the world of men. 'God loved the world so much, that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost but have eternal life. (John 3:16).

Gift of Grace – Expensive Gift

It is given to us as a gift but it did not come cheap as someone (Jesus) sacrificed His life for us to be able to receive it. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8)

Gift of Good Life - Changed Life

The good news of God or the gospel message involves repentance which is a

complete change of attitude and action; a complete change of mindset and method of living and entry into the Kingdom of God. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come" (2 Cor.5:17).

Gift of Good News – Continued life (Eternal Life)

Upon accepting, believing Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Saviour confessing all of our sins to Jesus, we are given free access to belonging to the Kingdom of God. Our life here on earth is just a tiny bit of what we have to endure compared to the Gift of eternal life promised to us by God. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn.14:6)

The Kingdom of God is a Gift as well as a Task..."

The Task to seek and receive it

When someone is offering a gift, there is always a receiver to own it. At **Christmas**, children and adults, young and old all eagerly await to receive the gifts, unpack the gifts and own the gifts.

During this year in all the issues of Chalk and Chai, we are called to remember that the Kingdom of God is bigger and wider, and deeper than any human comprehension even in this pandemic situation. We are called to move forward in our faith journey in this prevailing uncertain situation because our God continues to remind us that the Kingdom of God is both a gift and something we must strive after. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you (Mt.6:33). The Kingdom of God is a supernatural

gift and it involves a genuine, deep friendship with God whatever the situation around. It is a relationship in which listening to what Jesus tells us is the highest priority.

The Task to pass on to the younger generation

There was a paradigm shift in the lifestyle of those who wanted to pass on this Gift - the Kingdom of God. They left what they were doing before to become this new kind of person - to become fishers of men. When we are seeking and striving to impart **Kingdom Education**, let us engage our efforts and talents to help the younger generation make this gift a reality in their own lives. Let us make our living God himself as our educator. In the task of educating, Dr. Swain in his article, "Holding unto the roots", and Dr. Suka Joshua in her article, "Visual, Virtual and Valuable" share experiences on how to be responsible to lead the younger generation to seek the kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God may start small in a person's life and be barely noticeable, but it grows and grows until it becomes quite noticeable like the largest tree in the garden - a tree that is a blessing to others. Prof. Abraham shares in his testimony, "Fatherly Teachers for Kingdom Education" about how this is possible in day-to-day life while Mrs. Angel Ravindran in her article, "Run and Win children and Youth for His Kingdom" emphasizes the urgency of the need for Kingdom Education. Mrs. Roma Robinson in her article, "Jesus the Greatest Teacher" reminds us Kingdom Education involves Jesus' teaching model and Ms. Sharon Cunningham ... "for such a time as this... a time to tear down and a time to build..." shares her testimony how important is allowing God to use a teacher in Kingdom Education.

Seen in this light, Kingdom education is not just a tiresome task, although it may at times have its difficulties it leads us to experience the joy of entrusting the gift from one generation to the next. As students, teachers, janitors, secretaries, catering, or support staff, we have to be grateful for this wonderful opportunity to serve as the agents of the Lord's Kingdom. When we give gifts, it brings not only joy or pleasure to the receiver but it also usually makes us (the giver) feels good. Recalling some words from J. Heinrich Arnold's Discipleship: It's a mighty thing to live for God's kingdom! Let us not shrink back. Let us live for it, look for it and we will find it is so powerful and it will completely

overwhelm us. It will solve every problem on earth. Everything will become new and each person will love the other in Christ. All separation brought about by death will be overcome and love will rule.

It is like a Relay Race in Olympics - Running and Passing on the gift and focussing on the Prize of eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. ... And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer, and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:1).

"The Gift goes on"

The Father gave the Son - The Son gave the Spirit - The Spirit gives us life
So we can give the Gift of love - And the Gift goes on (4)

Don't you love to get a present wrapped up in a Christmas bow
God gave each of us a present on that night so long ago
It's a Gift that keeps on giving if our spirits can receive
It's the secret joy of living if our hearts can just believe

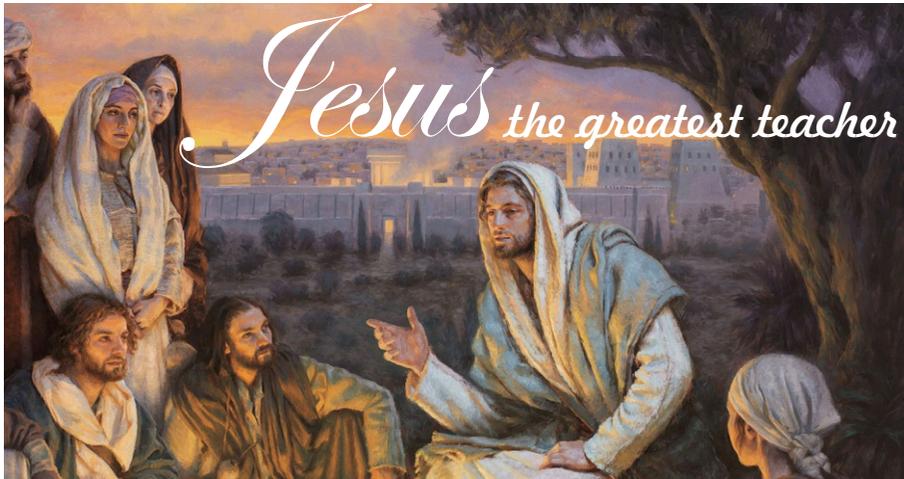
When your life is full of Christmas then your life is full of love
You can give away the present that began with God above
Just like ripples in the water the circles of our love extend
What was started with the Father is a Gift that has no end

Every good and perfect gift is from the father of lights
You'r the gift and the giver the giver of life

May the unchanging God change the pandemic situation and restore the younger generation to enjoy learning together, playing together and growing together in the campus environment.



Caroline Michael
General Secretary, ETF



'Teacher' is an oft-used word. Let us examine what it means and understand it in its entirety in a nutshell.

A Teacher means a person who instructs or trains others. The job of a teacher is to improve the taught. A teacher must appear as a role model.

If a teacher tries to convince others to do something and not self-practice it, would it be convincing enough for the others to follow?

Therefore, a teacher has to serve as a role model, a coach, and a mentor.

A Teacher is a person who helps people to learn, so a teacher must have a shared definition of skills, values, and knowledge.

To impart formal education or learning, a teacher needs to be well-equipped to help students acquire knowledge, competence, and virtue.

In today's world, a teacher is a paid professional.

In the beginning, teaching was not a paid profession. It was a chosen way of

life rewarded generously by the taught and their family.

It is quite often said that there has never been a greater or a better teacher than Jesus Christ. A deep and insightful study on Jesus as a teacher and His teachings showed me why He is the Greatest Teacher.

Jesus, The Saviour, taught His followers through scriptural examples how to overcome evil. Teaching people to resist evil & temptation, He added value & virtue to His teachings not just in words but in practice too.

He captured the people's attention by engaging them. He helped people with all kinds of problems. He healed many afflicted people.

No rabbi or teacher can win the attention of the audience unless he can prove that his words are based on past wisdom. Jesus showed he had authority. He was the master of his craft. He is known as the greatest teacher, master, or rabbi, not for nothing.

To understand Jesus, the teacher, is to understand his methods and

approach. To my mind, the following points will illustrate Jesus, The Greatest Teacher Ever

1. He reached out to people moving from place; taught people to communicate sincerely with God

He taught by example that we should pray to God, our Heavenly Father often. God loves you. Stands ready to help you. Communicate to God in prayer, express gratitude, and ask for things you need. He prayed to God the Father, too.

2. Jesus told stories and parables to make teaching more memorable.
Eg: About the prodigal son.

3. Jesus often shocked people by using outrageous words or examples. Exaggerated or shocking statements to make a point or to grab attention to communicate the point made.
Eg: First remove the beam from your own eyes!
How can one have a beam in one's eye!

4. He often played with words or made catchy statements.
Like: Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not and you will not be condemned; forgive and ye shall be forgiven.

5. Jesus asked questions that stimulate critical thinking. Good questions make audiences devise good answers.
Eg: " Whose image is this and whose inscription? (Matthew 16: 26.)
Or "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" (Matthew 22:20-21.)

6. Repetition: Jesus used frequent repetitions, as sometimes you need to hear something, many times before you get it.

Eg: Jesus repeated over and over again about his death & resurrection.

Repetition builds emphasis and brings memory.

7. Jesus created experiences. He didn't just teach disciples, He sent them out to do it and then report back when they were done.
Eg: The rich man who was asked to sell all to enter the kingdom of heaven.

8. The principle of "Practice what you preach"
Jesus doesn't just teach to pray but withdrew often to pray.

Didn't preach to love those who have sinned but himself had dinner with them.

Jesus lived what he said. Greatest lessons we teach come from lives, not our mouths! So, model yourself on Jesus. Preach the word; tell stories; be shocking; use crafty sticky statements; use practical lessons; repeat yourself; create examples; and above all, practice what you preach!

This is the model of Kingdom Education that God's Word has documented for us to follow with well-defined guidelines and instructions that we need to take to heart and adopt in our teaching. Who better to emulate than our Lord Jesus, The Greatest Teacher of all.

Happy Teachers Day.



Fatherly Teachers for



Kingdom Education

Teaching is one of the most important tasks in the Kingdom of Christ. Jesus operated with more than one gifts simultaneously. For example, He would give a teaching and soon after that, would also heal or cast out evil spirits to demonstrate that He is the Messiah. But teaching ministry was one primary way His life has been recorded in the gospels. His disciples often addressed Him as Rabbi, which meant Teacher. Jesus taught deep truths about the kingdom, but His teachings accompanied works of mercy from a fatherly heart. He was a teacher with the heart of a father. However, the greatest challenge in our present-day education system is that, we have many good teachers but not many fathers or mothers.

I was born and grew up as Gajanan Nial in a religious Hindu family in

Kalahandi district of Odisha. My father was a school teacher. Many people attribute success in their lives recalling how my father had been a good teacher to them. For me, my father was an excellent father, as he showered me with so much love, especially since I am the youngest between two brothers and no sisters. My father had great dreams for me to be a military officer but I failed the Sainik School Entrance, which must have been a shock and disappointment for him. As for me, he was an excellent father, but his teachings did not enter my brain at all, because he often would lose his patience and start beating me when I had difficulty understanding concepts. So, a good teacher does not necessarily mean a good father or mother and a good father does not necessarily make one a good teacher.

Mathematics was my most dreaded subject. In class 8th, I had a math teacher who was very similar to my father and would start beating without trying to help us at where we were. But in class 9th, I met Mr. Chaudhury as my teacher. He was so gentle, so kind, so patient, so down to earth that finally, math began to make sense. I must say that before I enjoyed solving math, I started liking Mr. Chaudhury so much. He was very fatherly in that sense, and no doubt he was a good teacher of math too. Some teachers are gifted with teaching as well as the fatherly or motherly love that opens up students' minds putting them at ease, making learning effective. Mr. Chaudhury is still my hero. I never forget to mention him whenever there is a chance to talk about good teachers.

I finished my schooling and college, moving on to Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi to pursue Master in Computer Application (MCA). During those days while I was sitting in the hostel room of one of my friends (who was also from Odisha and was a Christian), I was introduced to a senior Mr. Peter from Manipur who had come to teach the Bible to my Christian friend. He introduced himself as a Bible teacher associated with a Christian ministry by name, University Bible Fellowship (UBF). Immediately, I was invited to their Sunday worship service. I went to the Sunday worship service to see if there was a possibility to find a girlfriend from there, since, in my mind, I had this idea that Christians are more open to such romantic relationships. I understood not a single word of the hymns that were

sang, the sermon that was given and all other things that happened as I had never been to a Christian meeting before.

However, Mr. Peter, who had earlier introduced himself as a Bible teacher, made plans to teach me the Bible although I never felt I needed it. To me, Jesus was a foreign god and Christianity was a western religion trying to destroy our ancient Indian traditions and belief systems. I did not like that he kept telling me I was a sinner in need of Jesus to forgive my sins. I had some vague idea that my good deeds would somehow take care of some pretty bad deeds I had done in my life. As a Bible teacher, Mr. Peter was very persistent about keeping his appointment and visiting my hostel room in JNU. But I too was smart. Just when it was time for our Bible study appointment, I would ask my neighbour to put a lock outside my door so he would return without meeting me!

In this manner, I played hide and seek with my Bible teacher for nearly three years. But when I was about to complete my course and move ahead in life, I found myself unhappy and sad with the kind of life I had been living, especially my immoral relationship with a woman. Guilt and fear that something bad would happen to me was haunting me. At this low point of my life, I remembered my Bible teacher and contacted him. He was happy to help. We sat in the hostel room where he opened the scriptures and taught me from John 2, the Wedding at Cana where Jesus performed His first miracle by changing water into wine. In a moment of realization I began to see

Jesus differently, as someone real, as someone who indeed had the power to change my life just as He transformed ordinary feet washing water into the choicest wine. Soon my spiritual hunger wanted to know everything about Jesus and my Bible teacher was always there to help me. He became my best friend. We studied the Bible for hours every day. In 1998, I was born again by the living words of God and also got baptized. I also repented of my past idol worshiping and immoral living when I personally heard Jesus' declaration from the cross "It is finished." (John 19:30) Soon after, I decided to become a Bible teacher myself to help fellow students in my campus. I invited many of them and taught them whatever I was learning. I shared my material things with them. As software professional, I had opportunity to go abroad and make a lot of money working for MNCs, but I decided to pursue PhD in order to become a professor, so that I could be a Bible teacher for young people for the rest of my life.

God also planted a vision in me to become an Abraham of faith and changed my name from Gajanan to Abraham. God changed a 75 year old man Abram which meant 'a noble father' into Abraham which means 'father of many nations'. I have been teaching the Bible to young people and making disciples ever since I got saved for last 22 years. By my training, I am an Assistant Professor of Computer Science taking BCA/MCA/MSc IT classes. By God's gifting and anointing, I am a Bible teacher and disciple maker. I am married

to Ms. Yunhee Bu from South Korea for last 17 years and we have two teenage sons, Isaac and Paul.

My deepest desire is that I may be a father like Abraham while teaching the Bible as well as other subjects. In schools and colleges we have many good teachers. However, teaching alone cannot influence people's lives. Teaching must be combined with a Spirit filled fatherly or motherly behaviour, leading by example, works of mercy, and prayers for the weak so that the Kingdom of Christ can expand. My prayer is that God would raise up many Bible teachers among school and college teachers who also have a father's or mother's heart to accomplish God's purposes.



Dr. Abraham Nial
Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science
Parvatibai Chowgule College of Arts and Sciences, Margao, Goa.

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Dear Friends,

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THANKS

... "FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS..."



A TIME TO TEAR DOWN AND A TIME TO BUILD..."

Mordecai's words to Esther in Esther 4:14 - *...And who knows but that you have come to this royal position for such a time as this?*" AND the wise words found in Ecclesiastes 3:3 *...time to tear down and a time to build...*

My teaching career began back in the late 1960s! The state of Maryland (on the East Coast of the United States) at that time, for all classes Kg – XII, divided the students into sections according to their IQ. My classes were VII and VIII. I had four classes of Medium to Very Low IQ and four classes of Medium to Very High IQ.

During my first year of teaching, a very high-profile trial was moved to our little town. This was a 'highly' publicized, political...VERY RACIALLY involved case. The man, who was BLACK, was being tried for inciting riots AND had committed multiple murders and all of his victims were WHITE!

Our school's enrollment had several thousand students amongst whom many were black. The number of black students was quite high in my lower IQ classes. One day in the middle of teaching one of my very low VIII, IQ classes, a young man, by the name of 'Clyde' somehow got behind me (he was tall, as was I) and put a knife to the back of my neck! **God truly took charge – and 'for such a time as this' and guided my words and in EVERYTHING I DID AND SAID!** My FIRST CONCERN was for my students who were scared and appeared ready to run from the room. I knew they had to be quiet, remain still – and our GOD ON HIGH gave me the words to talk (and believe me every word, was

thought through and prayed through before I said them...) FINALLY, I got Clyde to give me the knife. It was not time for the class to end – but I dismissed class – and then I went IMMEDIATELY TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE – the Vice-Principal met me!

One of my very good friends at the school was a black teacher and the Vice-Principal brought me out in the hallway of the school. This teacher friend had Clyde in the boy's washroom talking very strong, loudly and telling him that Ms. Cunningham was one of the most non-prejudiced, fairest teachers in the school.

Every day after that Clyde met me at my car in the morning and helped me carry my briefcase to my classroom and thereafter, he was at school to help clean the blackboard and help me in any way he could!

After this incident, I talked to all of Clyde's other teachers and found out from his Art Teacher – he was very interested in Art – and had some natural ability!

I had started having auditions for a drama that we were going to stage in the spring, toward the end of the year. **God gave me a real heart for Clyde that I wanted to help him 'do something that he could succeed at'...** so I asked him to design the Program for the Drama. This drama program was to be a big thing for the school as parents were invited, other schools as well. Clyde did a wonderful job! **AND BY HELPING HIM FOCUS ON SOMETHING OTHER THAN THE RACIAL DRAMA GOING ON AROUND HIM – we got him to focus on something HE COULD DO AND SUCCEED IN DOING!**

I don't know where Clyde is today – but I do know we changed the direction of his life – and his VIII Class year was successful – not HIGH SCORES – but he succeeded in doing something 'constructive' ...he succeeded in thinking he was a 'winner' NOT a 'loser'!

For such a time as this – I don't believe God planned for Clyde to put that knife to my neck – but he did – AND BECAUSE I ALLOWED GOD TO USE ME AT THIS TIME – we saved this young man!

Educators, we need to remember it is **NOT ALWAYS ABOUT ACADEMICS ...HIGH MARKS** – but allowing God to use us in HIS TIMING and WITHIN HIS WILL!

Thinking about my example of 'Clyde'...What can we do NOW, as Educators in 2021-2022?

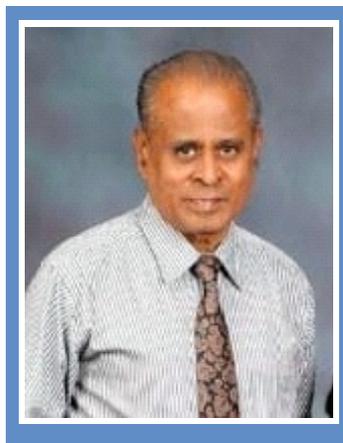
ONE - all of our classes are mixed in IQ – we probably have no idea of their IQ SO – when we do have weak students- 'make a seating chart' and mix up the students – 'high and low mark students ...MIXED

TWO - be creative, be inventive, USE methods outside (YOUTUBE ideas) that will appeal, be exciting, and USEFUL to all levels of students!

THREE - LET GO and LET GOD in HIS TIMING use you – and allow HIM to create ideas in your head **...and most of all your heart! AND...A TIME TO BUILD!!**



Sharon A. Cunningham
Manager, Kulpahar Christian School (CBSE-Inter-College)
(A unit of the Kulpahar Church of Christ Mission) Kulpahar, Mahoba Dist. UP



A Tribute to Mr. Prince Edward

Mr. Prince Edward lived in Bangalore, Karnataka as a senior graduate of UESI giving leadership to the state but his presence was felt in other places too. Students were there in his heart and teachers stood by his side as companions. He loved them all and worked as a friend for their spiritual upliftment.

He was like a pillar carrying the weight of Evangelical Teachers' Fellowship of India during the early Years of the Fellowship. He was the Vice President for many years, and also as committee member. Almost from the beginning when Dr. Devapaul founded ETF until he could not travel, he was there for every committee meeting.

He would be there always, whenever it was needed. We praise God for His life, his leadership and above all for being a 'friend' to so many of us. At God's appointed time he took leave of us forever, but he ran his race well.

We stand with sister Vasantha and all the family members at this time of grief.

For ETF,
Dr.S.K.Swain



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Praise God. ETF is grateful to Mr. J.S.A. Julius for introducing Dr. Caroline Michael General Secretary ,ETF and Mrs.Vinni Thomas , ETF EC member from Bangalore Karnataka to MICEU & EGF at Mysore, Karnataka. Praise God for the pioneering work of Mr. Julious P.D. an active EGF member at Mysore for encouraging the ETF ministry and introducing Chalk and Chai magazine to EGF teachers at Mysore.



A fellowship meeting was organised under the leadership of Mr.Amit Jacob on 5th September (Teachers' Day) evening at Mission Bungalow, Mysore. About 23 participants were present physically and 10 through Zoom. Dr. Caroline Michael shared the word of God on the theme, "Importance of Teachers in every Students life". Indeed it was a great opportunity for ETF to minister to MICEU & EGF at Mysore, on teacher's day.

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For **Praise and Prayer Diary**, use the same points from the previous issue.



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When I was a student in the university, one day a few of my friends came to my hostel and knocked on the door fiercely. I opened the door and asked, "What's the matter? Why are you banging on the door?"

They had no time to answer me. They just pulled me out of the room, gave me a hockey stick and shouted, "Come quickly to the university playground. We're going to play a match with the senior batch students within a few minutes from now. And we're falling short of one player. You play."

"I've never played hockey before. I only know how to hold the hockey stick", I replied. "That's enough," they said and almost dragged me to the field. I played forcibly and obviously, my performance was pathetic. I was not meant to play the hockey match; a square peg in the round whole. I knew I did not 'belong' to that environment.

It is possible to play hockey without being a hockey player!

It is possible to teach in a school or college without belonging to Christ. But when you belong, you really make a difference.

The Status: A Christian teacher operates in two different worlds simultaneously: one, his own personal world and the other, the world around him comprising mostly of his students, colleagues and many others. But one thing is certain: his job starts with God. He has been transformed in his heart by His grace and is set apart for Him. He belongs to the living God who directs his movements and strengthens him from the inside to be effective in his vocation. He knows why he is there as a teacher and is very clear about his goals. He is not there by accident.

In the recently concluded Tokyo Olympics, Sydney Mc Laughlin, 21, from the U.S.A. set a new world record and

received the gold medal. In fact, she is the only woman in history to have run under 52 seconds in the women's 400 meters hurdles. Her words reflect her faith as she boldly said, "Records come and go, but the glory of God is eternal." She further said, "I no longer run for self-recognition, but to reflect His perfect Will...I don't deserve anything. But by grace, through faith, Jesus has given me everything."

A Christian teacher knows his God and also knows why he is there as a teacher.

The Walk: Daniel was a young man when he was taken to Babylon as a captive (Daniel 1:4). He knew his God, the God of Israel, so well that he did not want to defile himself even in his food. Ordinarily, we do not like to consider food as something that can defile a person. But Daniel did (1:28). We also know how he was saved from the lions when he was thrown into their den. A teacher, like Daniel, is likely to face difficult situations in the workplace if he takes a stand for Him without compromising. What helps him in these situations is a life lived in constant fellowship with Him. Daniel did not stop spending time in the presence of God in prayer (6:10). He worked honestly and faithfully (6:4). We can emulate Daniel, be honest and faithful in our job, so that God will enable us to come out victorious in every critical situation.

A Christian teacher constantly lives in the presence of the Lord.

The performance: Sometimes we think it is performance that matters and so, we try to be well-equipped to keep ourselves ahead of others. While it is necessary to try to be excellent, it should

not be the primary objective of our life as a teacher. In today's world, it is seen that quantity gains prominence over quality and a hidden desire for self-glory drives the inner self rather than a self-less and humble dependence on the enabling spirit of God. If we want to cook a good meal and procure the choicest ingredients available in the market, it does not get ready as long as we do not light the fire and get down to cooking meticulously. With all the preparations and abilities, we cannot deliver proper 'food' to our students unless our faculties are fired by a God-centered imagination and zeal. Then, and only then, shall we be able to sincerely appreciate the achievements of our colleagues, allow the precocious learners of our class to grow at their natural speed and instill in our students, the benign desire to excel and live for others. Only then, will students see in us a difference – impartial, committed, punctual; devoid of hypocrisy or dichotomy in life; not seeking constant attention of others, but living a life of truth instead of merely talking about it. Only then, can we be a living witness for God in the school or college.

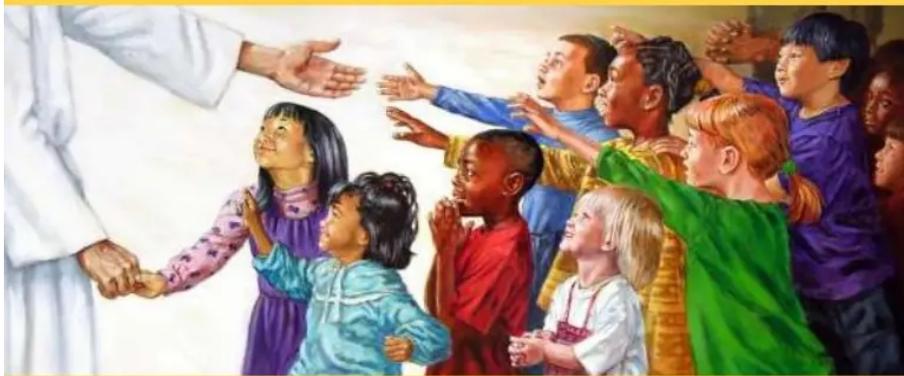
A Christian teacher lives a God-Centered life.

The ETF was born out of God's Plan and it will continue to grow and nourish countless Christian teachers, as long as God directs and controls its movements.



Dr. Shishir Kumar Swain
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Former Treasurer, ETFI

How to run and win children and the youth for His kingdom



There's no better time than now to lead children and the youth into a new identity in Christ by means of a Bible-based, child-centered education. From my experience working with the youth for 28+ years, I've realized that an education with strong Biblical principles helps them to lead a life characterized by kindness, love, trust and an unwavering loyalty to Christ.

Bible Study Group in the 90's

Taught by Word loving and committed teachers post classes, Bible study groups provided a structured and engaging experience for students in my college during the 90's. These sessions challenged the young girls in our college to discover the Scripture in the light of Christ and to apply it in their day to day lives. We found that the study groups helped them to discuss Bible passages and have spiritual conversations outside of the classroom. This opened up ways for teachers such as myself to pray and encourage the students we taught. It is heartening to know that the initiative we started more than 20 years ago, is still

continued in our college premises. This reminds me of the quote that says when we take care of the sowing, God will take care of the growing.

One-on-one mentoring is Christ like love

One-on-one mentoring looked like a brief greeting with a word of encouragement on some days, while on other days, it rolled up to hour long conversations or phone calls to students and their parents. As cumbersome as it was in a class of 60, I realized over the years that one-on-one mentoring is the closest one can get to Christ like service. Jesus Himself spent three years of His time on earth, sharing life with twelve men, showing them practically how to live in union with Father God. As overwhelming as it might seem, a teacher ought to connect with his/her students whenever possible, sometimes you might be the only one who lends a listening ear to them.

I vividly remember the day a student of mine looked pale and worried in the classroom, I asked her if she wanted to

tell me what's going on. She opened up about how her father got cheated by a close friend in a money scam and ended up with lakhs of debt. It was a very difficult situation for the entire family. Nevertheless, I encouraged her that God will take care of them (I myself was doubtful but I had the urge to encourage her whenever possible). In what I would call as a supernatural breakthrough, the girl got a proposal for marriage, where the guy said he would help them close their debt. He not only promised her, but actually fulfilled the promise. In the physical realm, I never thought there was a solution but God's ways are miraculous. I can recount many such incidences where my students were helped by the Almighty, all I had to do was to be His hands and feet and sometimes His mouthpiece and just speak positive words over my students. The challenge I faced in this area was that there were always people who wondered and questioned why I should have a relationship with the students beyond the classroom. "Is that really necessary?", they asked. Sometimes we must learn to turn deaf ears to voices around if we really want to attend to God's call.

Working with Orphanages

Being a teacher opens up avenues to work with children in many ways. One of the God given opportunity is getting connected to our local orphanage. Under staffed and under resourced, our local orphanage was in need of funds but more than that, it required the support of volunteers to interact, teach and sometimes just listen to the children. Working with children from diverse backgrounds such as those affected by poverty, social discrimination, family issues helped me get a glimpse into their

world. Being open to work with diverse groups helps you to widen your outlook. The stories I had heard from the underprivileged students helped me to extend the same grace to my students in the classroom. I'm reminded of the term **means of grace**. It means your actions and words are a channel for His grace. As a teacher, means of grace are the things, we do for others that in turn brings us closer to God and opens up ways for Him to work through us.

Staying connected with students and teachers post retirement

The noble job of a teacher does not end within the walls of a classroom. It extends to your neighbourhood, your society and sometimes even your own home. When I retired a decade back, the thought that I had the whole day to myself did cross my mind, one too many times. Given that my own children were adults and were out of the home to pursue their careers, I now had more time to personally connect with my students and ex-colleagues on a deeper level. We continued our fellowship on a weekly basis (we do it on zoom these days!) and God helped me to help my past pupils, who now had families themselves, in various ways, such as counselling the family, giving parenting advice and guiding them to pursue a Christ centered family life. I underwent family counseling and discipleship programs to be more equipped in this area.

Adapting to the times: Website for Youth, a lockdown initiative

During the lockdown, I realized that a huge gap was formed between the students and the teachers as classes moved from physical to online. It was also a stressful time for the teachers to

just complete the lessons, leave alone connect with them. In just a few months, I received calls from my teacher circle that the school was seeing an all time high in student drop out rate. Students were demotivated, lacked enthusiasm in attending classes and their mental health had gone for a toss. And this was happening everywhere! God spoke to me and instilled a passion within me to meet them where they were. They were confined within the walls of their home, away from any forms of social interaction (which is so required for their stage of development) and many did not have a supportive family structure and this is exactly where we had to attend to their needs. Given the lockdown scenario, online was the only way to reach out to them. With the help of my teacher and fellowship friends, I started a website www.weforyouth.com, a one stop shop to offer kingdom values to the youth. We conduct monthly webinars with experts to motivate youth to pursue

their goals, connect them with counselors to take care of their emotional wellbeing, help them be part of youth forums and offer inspiring content through our blog to help them remain productive, value-based and be ambassadors of Christ.

Sometimes, we as teachers must adapt to the times to offer support to our students. Breaking the barriers within the classrooms, teachers must go the extra mile to meet the youth where they are at. As Hebrews 13:21 says “may He equip you with all you need for doing his will. May He produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to Him”.



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Visual, Virtual and Valuable

When Jesus, our model teacher walked the earth, He conquered the hearts of the heaving crowd by His awe-inspiring presence. His teaching was captivating. He knew people would understand faster and assimilate quicker with visual aids. He took examples from the world of nature to teach them Kingdom values. He grabbed the attention of people by pointing to the birds of the air, to the sower and the seeds, the plentiful harvest and things that are available. They were all literally visual and concrete. No wonder His listeners were glued to their seats for days on forgetting to eat or drink.

But Jesus knew the inevitability of transitioning from the visual to the virtual once He would be taken to His Father. He started training and preparing His disciples for a different and diverse mode of teaching. Yes, the disciples as well as the people were going to miss the physical, visual presence of Jesus. He had already told them, “I am with you for only a short time” (John 7:33). Jesus also assured His disciples and said, “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16). It was not hard for Jesus to tell them that they would do greater things than Jesus Himself did – with the aid of the Unseen Holy Spirit. What an amazing teacher-trainer and what an astounding foresight!

The consequence of Jesus' training is seen in the Gospels' sequel, the Book of Acts. Everything narrated in this book happened in the absence of the physical presence of Jesus! The virtual scenario was thoroughly spiritual, emanating eternal Kingdom values, and emancipating those enslaved by ignorance. Fisher folks became fishers of folks. Even Peter, the scarecrow could engage his listeners like never before. What is the reason for the amazing result we see in

the Book of Acts? Did the apostles SlideShare? Did they play a video clip? Did they turn on the web camera? Yes. They shared the Word of God with care and compassion which would not slip or slide away from the listeners. As eyewitnesses of Jesus and demonstrators of the Word, their role was more captivating than a video clip. Their web camera was the web of love that was turned towards their Master Teacher. Through the Apostles' words, people saw a live visual of Jesus' deeds.

When the Covid virus caught us unawares, when the pandemic opened the Pandora's box of evils, the whole world was left aghast. The teaching fraternity was not spared the terror. I was one among the few who resisted change. I struggled and wrestled with God. The change was very challenging and the online demand quite daunting. I thought I could never make it. But I slogged and studied ways and means to reach my students diligently and digitally. Thanks to the foresighted administrators of my college who had foreseen such digital days and equipped us for the change. But for that, a novice like me would have been lost in the 'cloud'! I further sharpened my digital skills with the help of my colleagues. But more than from my peers, it was from my techno savvy students, that I learnt the nuances of technology. What joy it gives them to teach their teacher, to educate their educator! I gave them space to laugh at my computer-illiteracy. And wow - it turned out to be a wonderful way of bonding with my students!

It was at such a time that I started to ponder over the timely and timeless values and teaching models Jesus left for His disciples and for us to follow. The Spirit of God who indwells me as Counselor, Comforter and Confidant started to play their respective roles. I

Themes

for the 4 issues of **chalk AND chai** for the year **2022**

<p>Teacher and SPORTS</p> <p>Jan-Mar</p> 	<p>Teacher and VISUAL ARTS</p> <p>Apr-Jun</p> 
<p>Teacher and LITERARY ARTS</p> <p>Jul-Sep</p> 	<p>Teacher and PERFORMING ARTS</p> <p>Oct-Dec</p> 

decided to turn adversities into opportunities. Whatever I turned down as 'not my forte' turned out to be my fortress of teaching and reaching methods.

I realised that I needed to have that invisible efficacy to effect changes in my students. They had been affected alarmingly by the unprecedented change forced upon them. I needed spiritual strength blended with intellectual prowess and technological ability in order to reach them. In the process, I had to shuffle my priorities. To listen to their woes and worries became the major concern. To be a comforting counsellor is equally important as to be a proficient professor. Engaging students in class is possible only when I lend a listening ear to them before class. I have learnt not to be irritated with the constant phone calls from students and their parents. I am fully aware that I can't get the result I expect unless I give them the respect they deserve.

Once again Peter is the best person to learn from. He began his teaching /preaching career with these words: "Men of Judea ... give heed to my words" (Acts 2:14). There is a sense of 'I know better than thou' attitude. Acts 10:9-16 is a powerful 'video clipping' presented before Peter. Peter was so hard-headed that the virtual Jesus had to replay the visual aid thrice!! Yes, it was played until Peter could really see and listen. Thus, the Spirit of God helped him change his tone later when he had to go to the Gentiles. As a teacher, how often I have used the words, "Listen to me please"! Now I ask myself, "How much do I listen to my students?"

During these lockdown days, I have learnt to listen to my students and to the voice that tells me, "Your students are looking for you. So, get up and go ... Don't hesitate." I have learnt to step down from the teacher's throne, to go down and to tell my students, "I'm the one you are looking for. Why have you come?" (Read Acts 10:19-21). The end result of Peter

listening to God and teaching the Cornelius' household touched me all the more. As a teacher what more do I need than for my listeners/ students to tell me, "... it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us" (Acts 10:33). By bonding with my students outside class time, I am able to bring in to my virtual class the priceless presence of God, turning my class in to a sanctuary of love and laudable values.

Peter quotes with ease from the book of Psalms, referring to the prophecies of David and Joel, which speaks with such conviction and courage that the people "gladly received his word" (KJV Acts 2:41). It was evident that he was following the footprints of his Master Teacher, mastering the Old Testament. Teaching online does not exempt me from being prepared and proficient. For my students to gladly receive what I teach I have to have mastery over what I teach and how I reach. I dare not take my students for granted nor do I cut a sorry figure by confessing an appalling ignorance about innovative teaching.

The outcome – the ease with which my students' bond with me and are bound by the content - is far beyond my anticipation, and is more valuable, more precious than the precision I give for preparation. Jesus' question to Peter, "Do you love me?" rings in my ears. The responsibility Jesus gave Peter spurs me to "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15) with valuable lessons be it through visual or virtual means.



WANTED

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WE wish you all a happy **CHRISTMAS**
AND A BLESSED **New Year 2022**