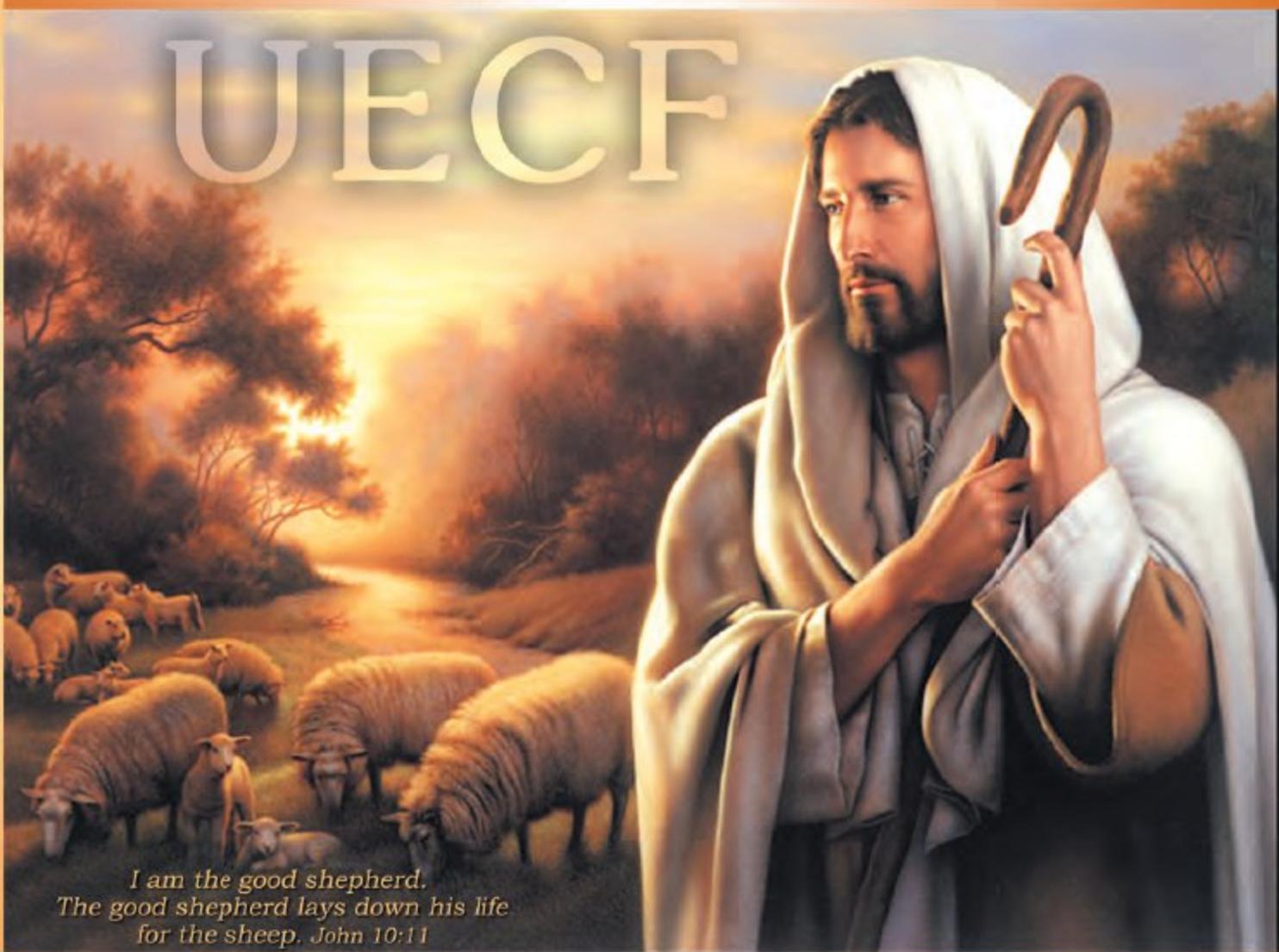


Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15



UECF



*I am the good shepherd.
The good shepherd lays down his life
for the sheep. John 10:11*

United Evangelical Christian Fellowship

Celebrating 15th Anniversary for His Glory

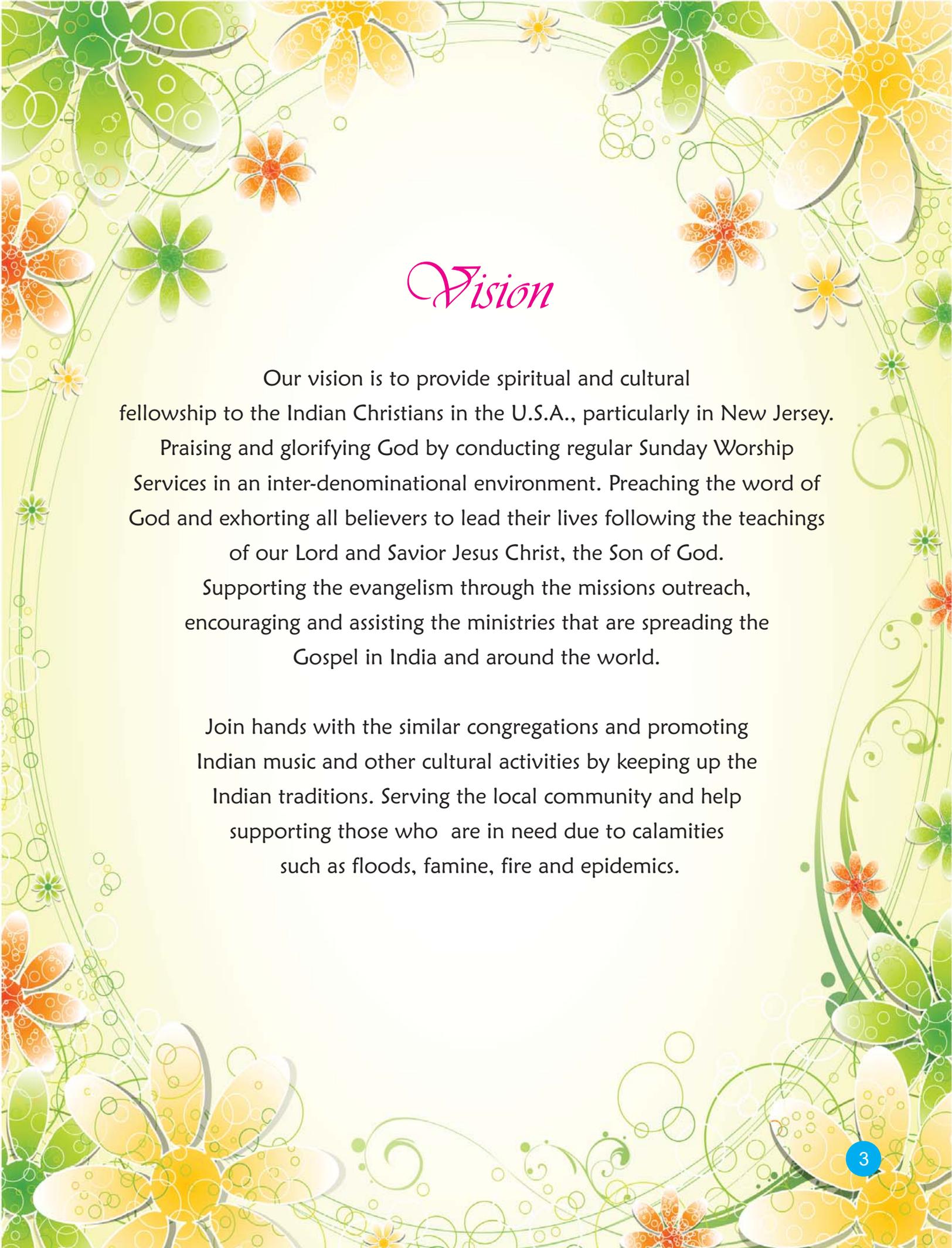


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Vision

Our vision is to provide spiritual and cultural fellowship to the Indian Christians in the U.S.A., particularly in New Jersey.

Praising and glorifying God by conducting regular Sunday Worship Services in an inter-denominational environment. Preaching the word of God and exhorting all believers to lead their lives following the teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Supporting the evangelism through the missions outreach, encouraging and assisting the ministries that are spreading the Gospel in India and around the world.

Join hands with the similar congregations and promoting Indian music and other cultural activities by keeping up the Indian traditions. Serving the local community and help supporting those who are in need due to calamities such as floods, famine, fire and epidemics.



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and Peace to you all in the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

As we come together to celebrate UECF's 15 years of ministry in central New Jersey and beyond, my heart is full of gratitude and thanksgiving to God for the bounty of His heavenly grace and mercy upon us. What began as a small gathering of about five or six families in 1997 has grown tremendously over the past 15 years. It is difficult to estimate and fathom the reach of this ministry since we not only minister in person to individuals and families through weekly Worship services, Bible Studies, cottage prayer meetings, but also via the internet and TV media.

I receive many calls and e-mails from people around the globe as to how much they have been blessed by the messages, songs, testimonies that are available at our website, www.uecf.net. Many of our songs sung by the choir, children's programs and sermons are also featured on YouTube. Some of the special services such as Christmas, New Year, Easter have also been broadcast over TV in India. Recently, the Smithsonian Institution, expressed an interest in featuring a few images from our outreach ministries in their upcoming exhibition 'Beyond Bollywood.' Imagine the reach of that! God has really enabled us to do a wonderful work for His Kingdom here in the State of NJ and USA as well as in India and other parts of the world.

I want to also highlight the powerful and successful ministry to our UECF children via the Christian Education programs of the Sunday School, VBS (Vacation Bible School) and JBQ (Junior Bible Quiz). VBS was offered for the first time this year and it ignited a vital spark of faith initiative for our children. JBQ fostered a great interest in Bible learning and our children have excelled both at the local and the state level. Thanks to the tireless efforts of ALL who have labored hard in these ministries.

Over the past recent years we have had a steady flow of guest preachers, evangelists, missionaries who have enriched us spiritually and challenges us to examine our discipleship to 'take up the cross and follow our Lord'. To be a disciple of Jesus means to be witness of His grace, mercy and love in all of our relationships in the world. We have communicated this in various ways such as tract distribution, India's Independence Day Parade, services at the Home for the Aged, and mass media. We have striven to deepen our spiritual roots during the Lenten seasons by in-depth studies/reflection from the video series created by Ray Vanderlaan.

I want to take a moment to express my deep-felt thanks and appreciation to the current leadership team and the board of trustees led by Joshua, the pastorate committee, the music and worship team, the Sunday school ministry team, the outreach team and ALL who worship with us regularly and support the ministry in various ways.

As we move forward, let us make a renewed effort and make a fresh commitment to serve God in and through our personal lives as well as through UECF. May God bless you and our Fellowship in the years ahead. Shalom!

Rev. Dr. David Ravinder
Hon. Sr. Pastor, UECF



Dear UECF Families and Friends,

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

It's a joy to greet you and welcome you as we celebrate the 15th Anniversary of United Evangelical Christian Fellowship (UECF)! Indeed it is a significant milestone in the history of UECF. God's faithfulness has been evident in the work of UECF all these years. I am sure this Fellowship has been a real blessing to each other and also has touched many lives in different parts of the world.

I thank and praise God for His wonderful mercies in bringing us this far and I invite you to join in praising God as the psalmist said in the 117th Psalm - "O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD".

My thanks are also due to our honorary pastors, guest preachers, lay leaders and each one of you for your cooperation and support in what UECF is standing for - being United in promoting Evangelistic work while professing our of faith in Christ Jesus and continuing the Fellowship with God and with one another.

As part of UECF's 15th Anniversary celebrations, and further to emphasize UECF's commitment to evangelism, an evangelistic outreach program is being arranged at Mirage Banquet hall. Dr. Ramesh Richard, a well known inspirational speaker and a spiritual philosopher will be addressing the gathering.

To mark this important milestone, a Souvenir is compiled with best wishes from eminent servants of God and distinguished elected leaders. Many articles are also included along with photos depicting our cherished memories. Hope all of you will enjoy!

As we celebrate 15 years of fruitful service, let us look forward to future by re-dedicating ourselves to the Lord with much more commitment.

May you all be blessed with His choicest blessings!

In His Service,

Joshua (Phani) Pilli
President, UECF



REACH

Ramesh Richard Evangelism and Church Health



October 2, 2012

United Evangelical Christian Fellowship
150 Lake Avenue,
Metuchen,
NJ-08840.

Congratulations, UECF, on 15 years of ministry in the influential region of the greater New York-New Jersey area, and among the influential immigrants from our birth land who serve our adoptive land and beyond.

Planting and nurturing a congregation, followed by equipping and unleashing them for ministry in unfamiliar environments is nearly impossible to explain except by the guiding hand of the Great Shepherd.

Our thanks go to those who birthed the vision and then translated into a mission; to those who yet run with the vision and mission today.

My prayer for you is found in the Apostle Paul's encouragement to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 1:11-12) of whom you remind me:

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

RAMESH REACHARD PhD, ThD

Professor, Global Engagement and Pastoral Ministries, Dallas Theological Seminary
President, Ramesh Richard Evangelism and Church Health [RREACH]

Metuchen Reformed Church

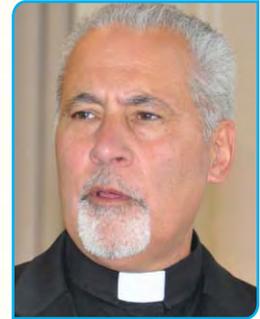
150 Lake Avenue ~ Metuchen, NJ 08840 ~ 732-548-2463

A Welcoming and Affirming Congregation

Rev. Peter Sanfilippo, Pastor

November 7, 2012

Mr. PhaniRajaKumar (Joshua) Pilli, President
United Evangelical Christian Fellowship
150 Lake Avenue, Metuchen, NJ 08840



Dear Joshua,

On behalf of the consistory, and the entire congregation of the Reformed Church of Metuchen, I wish to congratulate you, the board members, Rev. Dr. David Ravinder, and the congregation of United Evangelical Christian Fellowship on the momentous milestone of celebrating fifteen years of serving the Lord Jesus, tilling the vineyard, spreading the good news of the gospel, and demonstrating the love of Christ.

CONRATULATIONS TO UECF ON YOUR FIFTEEN-YEAR ANNIVERSARY!

It is with a sense of joy, and deep admiration, that I have had the privilege to observe UECF not only gathering to worship the Lord, but also to enrich one another's lives through time spent in fellowship. It has not gone unnoticed, that UECF's love for the Bible – the word of God, is central in life and worship, and that great effort has been put forth to keep the lamp burning – the light shining on God's word. Likewise, UECF's love for Jesus Christ, and the gospel of Jesus Christ, is something that is being passed down with great care to the children and youth of UECF: Praise God!

While I have only touched upon those things which I can see – those things which I have casually observed, I have no doubt that it is only the tip of the iceberg, and that great work; evangelizing and pastoral care – loving and nurturing those in the greater community, is fast at work in the name of the Lord Jesus.

No doubt, all of the above is the work of the Holy Spirit, empowering, and endowing the church – the body of Christ, with an abundance of gifts to accomplish the task that God has set forth for UECF to do. However, such gifts are fruitful only at the hands of hard work – hard labor in the vineyard: For this too, you are to be congratulated.

May the peace of God that surpasses all understanding be upon you and United Evangelical Christian Fellowship.

In Christ,
Rev. Peter Sanfilippo



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
P.O. BOX 001
TRENTON
08625
(609) 292-6000



CHRIS CHRISITE
GOVERNOR

December 1, 2012

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to congratulate the community of United Evangelical Christian Fellowship (UECF) on the celebration of its 15th anniversary.

The leadership provided by our churches is an important part of our State. The work of UECF is an outstanding example of the positive impact of spiritual outreach in Metuchen. With programs that champion the causes crucial to its members and to the well-being of the community, the success and longevity of this church are testimony to its tireless efforts to minister to those in need. I salute the congregation, the church officials and all those involved in its ministries for 15 years of excellent service and applaud those who will carry and expand these endeavors into the future.

Once again, congratulations on this wonderful achievement and best wishes for an enjoyable and successful event.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Chrisite".

Chris Chrisite
Governor

FRANK R. LAUTENBERG
NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

ENVIRONMENT AND
PUBLIC WORKS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510



November 11, 2012

Dear Friends,

I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to United Evangelical Christian Fellowship on the occasion of its 15th Anniversary. I am honored to join with you in acknowledging the positive impact you have had on the lives of so many in Metuchen and the surrounding area.

Since its inception in 1997, United Evangelical Christian Fellowship has proven to be a cornerstone of its community, providing immeasurable support and guidance to its congregation. United Evangelical Christian Fellowship continues to provide an environment that supports its members through adult Bible studies, programs for Sunday school children and supportive services for senior citizens. By continuously providing the gifts of faith, love and hope the church has improved the quality of life for many in their congregation and the world at large. I applaud the dedication of the congregation for its hard work and steadfast commitment to the community.

Once again, please accept my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank R. Lautenberg". The signature is written in a cursive style.



SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ
UNITED STATES SENATE
NEW JERSEY

United Evangelical Christian Fellowship
150 Lake Avenue
Metuchen, New Jersey 08840

Dear Friends,

Please accept my warmest wishes as you gather to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the United Evangelical Christian Fellowship (UECF).

UECF ministers to the spiritual needs within the congregation, the community and the world at large. They meet every Sunday evening at 5:30 PM for an inspiring Praise and Worship Service and sermons based on solid biblical teachings with Holy Communion. UECF host numerous programs including adult bible studies, and Sunday school for children and youth. Along with Sunday meetings and the programs offered at UECF they complete outreach work including monthly old age home visits, gospel tract distribution and supporting various missions in India and other countries.

As your United States Senator, I wish you continued blessings, happiness, and success in the many years to come. Best wishes for a successful and memorable event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Menendez".

ROBERT MENENDEZ.
United States Senator



NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UPENDRA J. CHIVUKULA

Assemblyman, 17th District

888 Easton Avenue Somerset, NJ 08873;

Phone: 732-247-3999; Fax: 732-247-4383



United Evangelical Christian Fellowship
150 Lake Avenue,
Metuchen, NJ 08840

October 1, 2012

Dear Friends,

I would like to extend my sincerest congratulations to the United Evangelical Christian Fellowship on its fifteenth anniversary celebration. This tremendous milestone is a testament to the hard work and dedication put forth by the founders of the church. Achieving such a feat is an inspiration to the Indian-American community as we pursue our spiritual values here in the United States.

As an Indian-American Assemblyman, I am extremely excited about the growth of a church that is acceptable to all denominations and is welcoming to all people. I am glad that throughout its several years the United Evangelical Christian Fellowship has been able to preach religious values as well as maintain its cultural heritage, incorporating several different elements of Indian language and music into its prayers and devotions.

Please continue the outstanding work you have done for our community and know that your dedication is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Upendra Chivukula".

UPENDRA CHIVUKULA

NJ Assemblyman, D-17

RUSH HOLT

Twelfth District, New Jersey

1214 Longworth Building
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<http://holt.house.gov>



Congress of the United States

Chair
Select Intelligence Oversight Panel
Committee on Appropriations

Committee on Education
and Labor

Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence

Committee on Natural Resources



December 1, 2012

Dear Friends:

I want to take this opportunity to send my greetings and very best wishes to all who are gathered to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the United Evangelical Christian Fellowship. Since its founding the United Evangelical Christian Fellowship has served its congregation in and around the Middlesex County area as a spiritual home and neighborhood resource. Central New Jersey is home to people from many corners of the globe who have come to this country from many different cultures and religions. This diversity enriches our communities and strengthens our democracy.

Congratulations to all those who have made this day possible. It is a tribute to the faith and devotion of the congregation and the strong leadership of its pastors. Thank you for the good work you are doing, and my best wishes for your continued success.

Sincerely,

RUSH HOLT
Member of Congress



ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE
HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE
RANKING MEMBER
ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY
SUBCOMMITTEE
COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY
SUBCOMMITTEE
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE:
FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, OCEANS AND
INSULAR AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE
DEMOCRATIC POLICY COMMITTEE:
COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR
<http://www.house.gov/pallone>

FRANK PALLONE, JR.
6TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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United Evangelical Christian Fellowship
150 Lake Avenue
Metuchen, NJ 08840

October 2, 2012

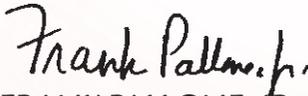
Dear Friends:

It is with great pleasure that I write to you today in celebration of the 15th Anniversary of United Evangelical Christian Fellowship. This is truly a significant milestone for the church.

For 15 years, United Evangelical Christian Fellowship has been a place of worship and solace for all members of the community. As an Inter-Denominational Asian Indian Christian Church, there is a rich history to celebrate and a service to the community to honor. Not only do you serve the spiritual needs of your congregation, your outreach extends into the local community with home visits to the elderly and internationally with missions in India and other countries. Your commitment to sharing your faith and culture has helped your church grow and I commend you for your continued dedication.

Once again, I congratulate you on the 15th Anniversary of United Evangelical Christian Fellowship and wish you continued success. Your efforts to provide outstanding spiritual guidance to the community here and abroad are to be celebrated.

Sincerely,


FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



THOMAS VAHALLA
MAYOR

BOROUGH OF METUCHEN
500 MAIN STREET
METUCHEN, NJ 08840
TEL: 732-632-8540
Email: mayor@metuchen.com

October 9, 2012

Joshua Pilli
President UECE,
150 Lake Avenue
Metuchen,
NJ - 08840



Dear Mr. Pilli and the Congregation of the United Evangelical Fellowship Church,

On behalf of all the residents and Borough officials of the Borough of Metuchen, I would like to congratulate and offer many blessings to the congregation of the United Evangelical Christian Fellowship on your 15 year anniversary. Your dedication and service to our community is greatly appreciated.

With best wishes,

Thomas Vahalla,
Mayor

G.V. HARSHA KUMAR
MEMBER OF PARLLAMENT
LOK SABHA
AMALAPURAM, A.P.



Member : Standing Committee on
Social Justice and Empowerment
Member : Consultative Committee
Petroleum & Natural Gas



11th October, 2012

MESSAGE

I am happy to know that the United Evangelical Christian Fellowship (UECF)'s fruitful existence has reached its 15th year of service. I am also pleased to know that a Souvenir is being brought out on this happy occasion to mark the memorable anniversary.

I fondly remember my visit to UECF during July, 2008 and the warm hospitality with which you people had received me. It was so kind of you for making my visit comfortable and pleasant.

I sincerely appreciate the efforts of UECF for doing an immense service to the humanity by giving not only spiritual message but also managing monthly old age home visits, gospel tract distribution and supporting various missions in India and other countries.

I take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you involved with the work UECF, a great success in all your future endeavours. I hope you will continue to work and spread the message of love and peace across the globe keeping in mind the goals and objectives with which this fellowship was founded.

(G. V. Harsha Kumar)

Sri. Joshua (Phani) Pilli
President,
UECF, 150 Lake Avenue, Metuchen,
NJ-08840



New Life Associates

A Christian Spiritual and Social Service Organization



Ph : 040-23340252 Fax : 040-23347057

Website : www.niaindia.org

E-mail : hyd2_neulife@sancharnet.in

152-3 RT, Vijayanagar Colony,
Hyderabad -500 057, A.P., India

Rev. Dr.A.B. Joseph Kishore

B.Sc., M.Div., M.Th., D.Min.

Dear Friends at UECF:

It gives me immense pleasure to greet and congratulate you on the occasion of your 15th anniversary. While there are so many Indian Christian Fellowships, yours is the one that is run with full dedication bearing much fruit in the ministry. I always admired how theologically and professionally you execute the ministry entrusted to you.

I praise God for giving me many opportunities to minister in your fellowship over the years. I truly experienced the presence of God and rich fellowship with the believers. Your praise and worship is simply heart touching and soul lifting. The love and care you give to you members is highly commendable. Your website is the best that ministers to countless people around the globe. I appreciate you for taking time and effort to update your website almost every week.

The Lord has indeed chosen you for this strategic ministry and you have been faithful through the years. On this occasion of your 15 years of glorious ministry, I congratulate all of you for making UECF a beacon of God's light and guidance to Indian Christians in your part of the world.

I send you my warmest greetings and best wishes as you celebrate and proceed into the future to attempt greater things for Lord Jesus Christ.

Regards,

Rev. Dr. Joseph Kishore
New Life Associates
Hyderabad, India



“For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!” Romans 5:10

The Calvary Love of Jesus Ministries

The Hope of Christ in this suffering world

Bro. Dr. Joe Madhu
Sis. Dr. Jessie Veena
Founders & Directors



To,
Mr. Phani Rajakumar Pilli
President
UECF

Accolades to a Humble Trumpet of God

Over the years a small tool gathered with a vision with Christ at its heart. Today, it has truly grown up to be a wonderful pulpit for the Lord's word. It has become the podium for scores of messengers of Christ from across the globe.

A constantly evolving UECF website in your untiring hands has catered to the needs of countless many across the globe. You have taken the gospel of Christ into the homes of many a distraught soul.

UECF is truly a humble trumpet in the nail pierced hands of our Lord.

The seeds sown will never go for waste. The time of the harvest is at hand. Well done UECF!

However, there is so much more ground to cover. May the Lord continue to use the UECF.

Always upholding you in our prayers,

Your brother and sister in Christ

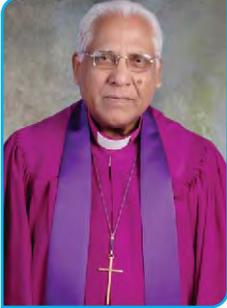
Bro Joe Madhu & Sis Jessie



“The house that is to be built for the Lord must be exceedingly magnificent of fame and of glory throughout all Countries” -1 Chronicles 22:5

TELUGU CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION - KUWAIT NATIONAL EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Post Box - 80, Safat, 13001, Safat Kuwait, Tel / Fax : (+965) 25668216, www.tcckuwait.com



Date : 14-10-2012

Dear Joshua Pilli,

I am glad to know that UECF is going to release a Souvenir on the occasion of your 15th Anniversary. ‘Hearty congratulations’ to all the members of UECF. May you be filled with Heavenly joy and refresh with nearness of the Spirit to run the race that is set before you looking unto Jesus.

Paul says, Philippians 3:12-14 “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”.

I am happy for your activities to care for the total spiritual and physical needs of the body of christ. It is my prayer that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Once again Hearty Congratulation to you all.

God Bless you !

Yours in His Service

(Livingston Gadde)



HARRY GOMES MINISTRIES

Carmel Prayer Tower 235, Jayasree Nagar, Behind Singanallur Housing Unit,
Singanallur, Coimbatore 641005, Tamil Nadu, India. Tel : +91-0422-2571911
EMAIL : carmelprayer tower@yahoo.com



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ ,

Love and greetings to you in the mighty name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ !

We are glad to know that UECF has completed 15 years in serving God 's kingdom. Many saints are refreshed and supported through your mission.

Your ministry has become the beacon of the light to perishing humanity both in USA & India. Through your support many Pastors and ministries are encouraged through which God's kingdom is expanding in the mother land of India.

I myself am personally blessed through your fellowship. We thank God for the wonderful unbroken relationship with President Joshua and member's in our fellowship.

In the years ahead, May God use your mission as per Proverbs 25 : 25, & Mark 1 : 15.

Our family extends warm greetings to you and your great mission.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND PROSPER YOU!

with best regards,

Bro. HARRY GOMES



Dr. Devasahayam Dandala

Savior's Heartbeat Ministries

51-4-12, ESI HOSPITAL RD, GUNADALA, VIJAYAWADA 520004 INDIA
Email : devadandala@gmail.com web : www.saviorsheartbeat.com
Ph : +91 866 2456547 (Land line) +91 994 833 5222



Dearly Beloved Brother Joshua and the family of UECF,

Greetings to you in the most precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with Romans 8:28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose".

I am so thankful to the Lord for all his grace, mercy and faithfulness towards UECF, for the last 15 years. The Lord has blessed your ministry abundantly and especially the web site ministry is a great blessing to the Telugu community around the Globe. I enjoy listening to the Christian songs from this web site especially while editing our monthly magazine "Spandana".

As you celebrate 15 years of God's goodness, I was pondering the prominence of 15 and quickly came across the following interesting phenomenon:

1. Fifteen being a multiple of five, partakes of the importance of that number, also of the number three with which it is combined, 3x5.
2. Five is, as we have seen, the number of grace, and three is the number of divine perfection. Fifteen, therefore, specially refers to acts wrought by the energy of Divine grace.

May the Lord add his richest blessings as you enter in to 16th year! May He crown the year with His bounty and your carts overflow with abundance! (Psalms 65:11). Just as the prophet Habakkuk prayed, it is our prayer for you - O LORD, REVIVE THY WORK IN THE MIDST OF THE YEARS (Habakkuk 3:2).

I take this opportunity to thank the President and the leadership for the love and concern you have for me and for our work of the Lord in India and for giving me an opportunity to share the Word of God. I am also thankful to all the families that invite me to their homes for prayers and fellowship.

We always remember those precious moments during our visit to UECF along with our spiritual mentor Acharya RRK Murthy in the year of 2008. All the Glory, Honor and Praise to His holy name! God Bless!

Yours in His service,
Devasahayam Dandala

దేవుడు తన ఐశ్వర్యము చొప్పున క్రీస్తు యేసునందు మహిమలో మీ ప్రతి అవసరమును తీర్చును. ఫిలిప్పీ 4:19
భయపడకుము, పేరుపెట్టి నిన్ను పిలిచియున్నాను నీవు నా సొత్తు, యెషయా 43:1

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

(Regd. on April 21, 1932 under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860)

CENTRAL GUNTUR SYNOD



ROAD NO. 1, KPHB COLONY,
KUKATPALLY, HYDERABAD - 72.

Rev. Joseph N. Varakumar Lam
Pastor / Chairman



Dear brother Joshua (Phani) and the UECF Congregation,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

It gives me great joy to know that United Evangelical Christian Fellowship (UECF) has reached an important milestone of 15 glorious years of service to the Lord.

On behalf of Trinity Lutheran Church in Hyderabad and on my own behalf, I would like to congratulate United Evangelical Christian Fellowship (UECF) for the faithful service!

UECF has been a great source of encouragement to many. Many servants of God from Andhra Pradesh and other states in India have shared the Word and were richly blessed. We praise the Lord for the unique style of UECF in spreading the gospel all over the world.

We had a blessed opportunity to be part of the worship service at UECF and to personally meet and greet the congregation during the thanksgiving season. We always remember the warm welcome extended to us at UECF during our visit to USA in the year 2010.

I take this opportunity to commend the UECF leadership, pastors and the congregation for their commitment and unity in continuing Lord's mission.

May His grace and guidance be with you both for now as you celebrate the 15th Anniversary and strengthen you as you continue to do His will in the years to come!

Blessings,

Rev. Joseph N. Varakumar Lam

POWER OF GOD MINISTRIES

38-31-86, Green Gardens, Marripalem, Visakhapatnam - 18



సర్వాధికారియు, సర్వసృష్టి కర్త అయిన “యేసుక్రీస్తు” ప్రభువు నామములో “అమెరికా” దేశంలో న్యూజెర్సీలో ఉన్న యు. ఈ.సి.ఎఫ్ సహవాసమునకు, ఆ సహవాసమును దేవుని సహాయముతో నడిపిస్తున్న సహవాసనాయకులైన బ్రదర్ జాషువ పిల్లి గార్కి మరియు ఆయనకు తోడుగా సహకారులుగా నిలిచి ఆ గొప్ప యు. ఈ.సి.ఎఫ్ సహవాసమును నడిపిస్తున్న మిగిలిన సహవాస నాయకులకు దేవుని సహాయముతో జయ ఉత్సాహముతో 15వ వార్షికోత్సవము జరుపుకొనుచున్న సందర్భముగా భారతదేశంలో విశాఖపట్నంలో ఉన్న “పవర్ ఆఫ్ గాడ్ మినిస్ట్రీస్” వారి అన్ని సంఘములవారూ అన్ని ప్రాంతాలలో ఉన్న దేవుని శక్తి ప్రార్థనా సంఘాల విశ్వాసుల కాపరులూ ముఖ్యముగా బ్రదర్ భోగి శాంతారావు గారు మన ప్రభువైన యేసుక్రీస్తు నామములో హృదయపూర్వక శుభాకాంక్షలు తెలుపుతూ శుభములు తెల్పుటకు సంతోషిస్తున్నాము.

ముఖ్యముగా యు. ఈ.సి.ఎఫ్ పరిచర్య ద్వారా దేశవిదేశాలలో మన ప్రభువు సువార్త ప్రకటించడానికి వాడుకోవాలని ప్రభువు యొక్క అనేకమైన అద్భుత కార్యాలు తన నిజసాక్షులద్వారా యు. ఈ.సి.ఎఫ్ పరిచర్య ద్వారా ప్రపంచదేశాలలో సువార్త ప్రకటించాలని, ప్రభువు హస్తం ఎల్లప్పుడూ యు. ఈ.సి.ఎఫ్ కు తోడుగా ఉండాలని ప్రార్థిస్తున్నాము.

బ్రదర్. భోగి శాంతారావు

పవర్ ఆఫ్ గాడ్ మినిస్ట్రీస్

38-31-86, గ్రీన్ గార్డెన్స్, మర్రిపాలెం,

విశాఖపట్నం - 18. ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్, ఇండియా.

ఫోన్ : +91 9849331923

+91 9866441781



DAVID NIRIKSHANA RAO KURAKULA
Fmr.HOD (Chem), A.C.College,GUNTUR
Camp: Canton, OH

October 4, 2012

To

Mr. Joshua (Phani) Pilli,
President, UECF,
Edison, NJ

Dear Joshua,

Greetings to you in the mighty and matchless name of our Lord and Savior JESUS CHRIST!

I am very happy to know that the United Evangelical Christian Fellowship (UECF) is celebrating its 'Crystal Anniversary' soon. Even though, I visited your Fellowship just once, in 2007, I follow all your programs regularly for almost a decade now, thanks to your wonderful Website: www.uecf.net. I praise God for all the efforts you make in bringing together the Telugu Christians of all denominations in eastern USA to the praise and glory of God! I specially appreciate your zeal to edify the Fellowship through the teachings of well known preachers, by inviting them from time to time, in addition to the teachings of your regular pastors of good repute. I congratulate every member of your Fellowship for actively participating in every aspect of its development. May you all grow in His grace more and more in the years to come!

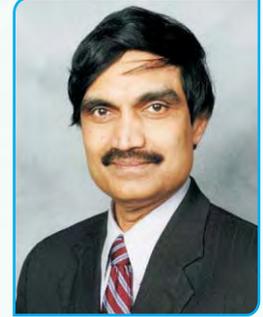
A word of appreciation about your website: www.uecf.net. It is such a wonderful blessing, specially to the Telugu Christians in USA and other countries to be able to both read and listen to wonderful Christian literature, testimonies, music and songs from yesteryears to the present day, FREE OF ANY CHARGE! This ever expanding & innovative website is a boon to the believers of all age groups, any where in the world! I marvel at the energy and patience that go into the planning, preparation and implementation of the various segments of this great website. I would also like to place on record my appreciation for your dear wife Mrs. Preethi Kezia for all her unstinting support! I praise God at every remembrance of you!

“So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.” 1 Cor 15:58 (NLT).

FEDERATION OF INDO AMERICAN CHRISTIANS OF GREATER CHICAGO

P.O.Box 60393, Chicago, IL 60660. E-mail : keerthi7@gmail.com

Keerthi Kumar Ravoori
Director Federation of Indo - American
Christians of Greater Chicago
Executive Vice President, FIA Chicago
Managing Editor, NRI Christian News



Mr. Joshua (Phani) Pilli
President,
United Evangelical Christian Fellowship
Metuchen, New Jersey

Dear President Mr. Joshua garu:

It gives me an immense pleasure in conveying my heartfelt congratulations to United Evangelical Christian Fellowship on crossing an important milestone in its journey of faith serving the Telugu Christian community for the last 15 years in the Jersey state.

United Evangelical Christian Fellowship today serves as a torch-bearer to the Telugu Christian community with its wide-ranging church programs and family-centric events that helped enrich spiritual growth, nurture spiritual values, foster close family fellowship and more importantly, providing an outstanding worshipping opportunity to glorify our God Almighty in the best Telugu traditions.

I am joined by the key associates of Chicago Telugu Christian community in expressing their best wishes and high appreciation to the pastors and lay leaders of UECF for their consecration to inspiring faith and fellowship.

The devotion and the commitment of UECF in ministering to the spiritual needs deserve our community's heartfelt appreciation.

Be blessed,
Keerthi Kumar Ravoori
Director



Read

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www.nrichristiannews.com

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Chicago, Illinois 60660

A monthly Indo-American Christian e-journal from
Chicago expressly dedicated to connecting the growing
constituency of Indian Christians in the U.S.A.

Email : nrichristian@gmail.com

5th October, 2012

To
Bro. Joshua (Phani) Pilli,
President, UECF,
New Jersey, USA.



Dear Beloved in Christ,

Ever since our mass media activity through Aradana TV started, many of the N.R.I, communities from around the world began to respond to our programs positively. As much as we enjoy presenting the programs to our viewers, it is heartening to know that our NRI viewers from far distant countries like USA enjoy just as much.

We take this opportunity to profusely thank you for your great contribution of promoting Aradana TV through your website. Thanks for your prayers, promotion and participation, Aradana TV is now the most viewed Telugu Christian TV Channel.

It is our fervent prayer that the unrelenting crescendo of Aradana TV would echo through every continent of this world.

On this very special occasion of UECF celebrating 15th Anniversary and the release of the souvenir, though being in Hyderabad, we stand united with UECF members in New Jersey, to share your joy and to partner with you as we look into the future.

We must congratulate every constituent of UECF for being an excellent cultural link in the Garden State and for being resolute to further the heavenly kingdom principles across the land of life and liberty.

Here's wishing you all the very best of Life and Liberty.

PAUL DEVAPRIYAM PULLA
Chairman & Managing Director

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Gospel Music Ministries

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Email: aradhanamusic@gmail.com Website: www.aradhanagospel.net



John Charles Pilli Mahitha Charles

Greetings!

It gives us immense pleasure to learn that our beloved organization,
United Evangelical Christian Fellowship, New Jersey
is celebrating its 15th Anniversary! Hearty congratulations!
It is indeed a time of festivity and great rejoicing!

We deem it a privilege to have been associated with UECF for over a decade.
We place on record, our appreciation to all those responsible for the up-bringing and
maintenance of UECF. And also UECF's website is just a Gospel World!

It is bubbling with all varieties of worship, praise, music, lyrics, pictures, videos, movies
– all exclusively for the glory of the Lord! No wonder, it is the most popular Gospel
website for Indians, but maintained from the USA!

We will be failing in our duty if we do not mention here, the pioneers of UECF,
Bro. Syam Pilli & Bro. Joshua Pilli and their families for the consistent good work.

May God bless UECF & all its associates to reap greater harvests in His Service!

Go ye into all the world, and preach the
gospel to every creature.

(Mark 16 : 15)



www.tcfnj.com

Elders :

Bro. Krupa Rao Mattegunta

Dr. Yesudas Thadepalli

Dr. David Chigurupati

Dear UECF family: Greetings in the most exalted Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Congratulations upon reaching an important milestone in the ministry that God has entrusted to your care. To God be the glory great things He has done. Lamentations:3:23 sums it up all “Great is God's faithfulness”.

Fifteen years of faithful service to God and mankind. It is praise worthy but never be content with what had been accomplished so far. To quote from Joshua “there is yet much land to be conquered”. Yes indeed. There is so much more to be done for the cause of Christ specially because of the existing times that we are living in. Just look at the events of the world today. Nations are crumbling financially, governments are overthrown, possibility of war in the middle east, famines, pestilences, natural calamities etc. The stage is being clearly set for the second coming of Christ. We can't evangelize once He comes back. So you have your work cut out in this area. So be like Paul “forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those which are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”. God speed to you as you go about doing this. We share your joy on this special occasion. Your exploits for the Lord makes us particularly happy because the founding fathers of UECF were originally members of TCF NJ. So we enjoy a very special relationship with you. May God bless you even more in the years ahead.

Co-laborers in the Lord's vineyard.

TCF NJ

Contact @
167 Sherman Avenue, Glen Ridge, NJ 07028 USA
(973) 743-8142, (201) 532-6082, (973) 743-5852 fax
www.tcfnj.com, www.cfcusa.net
Email : dchigurupati@gmail.com



UNITED TELUGU CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP OF VIRGINIA

8922 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax, Virginia - 22031
Phone: 703-343-5310 www.UTCFVA.org



Dear UECF Family,

With thanksgiving in my heart, I praise the Lord for United Evangelical Christian Fellowship (UECF) upon reaching a significant milestone of 15 years of Service to the Lord!

A seed sown fifteen years ago by the founders of this fellowship has grown in the Spirit and has become a big tree whose branches serve as a source of inspiration not only in the USA but also in India and many corners of the globe.

Ever since the first service in 1997, UECF has been a place of worship for many families in New Jersey and the neighboring states. With a strong desire to serve the Lord and commitment to share the faith and culture, thus far, UECF left a positive impact on the lives of many.

I am grateful to God for using me as an instrument to serve Him as the president of UECF from 2002 to 2007. During this crucial period, I have witnessed God's tremendous grace and mercy in sustaining and shaping me and the UECF as well.

At this juncture, I commend the succeeding leadership for the dedication in taking up the mantle and expanding horizons and further reaching the greater heights. Organizing an Evangelistic outreach program with Dr. Ramesh Richard as part of 15 year celebration is much appreciated and shows UECF's commitment to evangelism.

United Telugu Christian Fellowship of Virginia (UTCFVA) congratulates UECF on the auspicious occasion of 15th Anniversary celebration. We are thankful to the UECF choir for their active participation in the Annual Christian Family Conferences in Virginia. We pray that UECF will continue to serve as a vibrant spiritual home and be a blessing to many more in the years to come. May the spirit of the Lord enrich and lead UECF as you continue the cause of Great Commission given to us by our Savior Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15)!

Have a blessed and Spirit-filled celebration!

Syam Pilli
October 18, 2012

United Telugu Christian Fellowship (Inc)., NY

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” Psalms 133:1
Celebrating 20 Years in His Service

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Chakravarthy

Vice Presidents:

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Amruth Buman
David Saladi
Moses Korani
Ravi Penubothula
Purushotham
Maisappa

October 1, 2012

To
United Evangelical Christian Fellowship
Metuchen, New Jersey 08859

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

It is our great honor and pleasure to congratulate you on the 15th Anniversary of United Evangelical Christian Fellowship. God has richly blessed your ministry, planting its seed in the beginning, nurturing the vision and blessing it abundantly as He heard your earnest prayers and honored your efforts. We are witnesses to the many blessings that God has bestowed upon your ministry, and to the many blessings received by those benefitting from your work through weekly services, in yearly participation in the Indian Independence Day Parade, and in inviting anointed preachers from India and around the world.

In particular, we congratulate and honor you for the wonderful resource found in uecf.net, which is the premier Indian Christian Fellowship site where sermons, testimonies, and songs can be heard and enjoyed freely in numerous languages and dialects. It has helped capture Indian Christian culture and provided a means to share Christ through a universal medium. It has brought many to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His loving power to transform lives, and we hope and pray that it will continue to do so.

We at United Telugu Christian Fellowship praise God for the work UECF has done over the past 15 years and we hope and pray that God would continue to use your ministry mightily for His glory. We look forward to working with you for many years to come by God's Grace and for His glory alone.

In His Service,

Devanivas Gandham
Executive General Secretary

110-18, 63rd Road, Forest Hills, New York-11375, USA
718-463-UTCF - ✉ info@utcfny.org www.utcfny.org

United Telugu Christian Fellowship (Inc)., NY is a legally registered non profit organization in the United States of America.

HARTFORD TELUGU CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

POST OFFICE BOX - 414, WINDSOR, CT 06095
www.hartfordchristianfellowship.nethcf@hartfordchristianfellowship.com

October 2nd, 2012

Dear United Evangelical Christian Fellowship,

We bring greetings to you in the precious name of Jesus Christ. We are delighted to know that UECF is celebrating its fifteen years of successful ministry. We thank and praise God for your active role in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We will continue to pray for you all and the ministries of UECF. Your ministry and services to all of us in the Indian Christian community are commendable. We will pray that God will continue to bless and use UECF for the expansion of HIS Kingdom.

Hearty Congratulations!

[The Hartford Telugu Christian Fellowship](#)

Hartford Telugu Christian Fellowship is an independent and non-denominational fellowship. We exist to praise and worship God. Scripture teaches that God is enthroned on the praises of His people. Psalms 22:3

Established: November 2007

44 Somerset Drive, Windsor, CT 06095, 860-688-4285; 860-751-2641; 860-432-4262



Telugu Christian Church - New York

43-12,46th Street, Sunnyside, New York, 11104

Dear UECF Congregation,

Telugu Christian Church –New York congratulates United Evangelical Christian Fellowship (UECF) as you celebrate 15 years of God's immense grace.

God's promise for UECF is found in Philippians 1:6 - "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ". Our prayer for UECF is that you will impart all the good qualities of seven churches that were mentioned in the Book of Revelation.

We have been delighted in working with you and look forward to be part of great commission given by our Savior Jesus Christ.

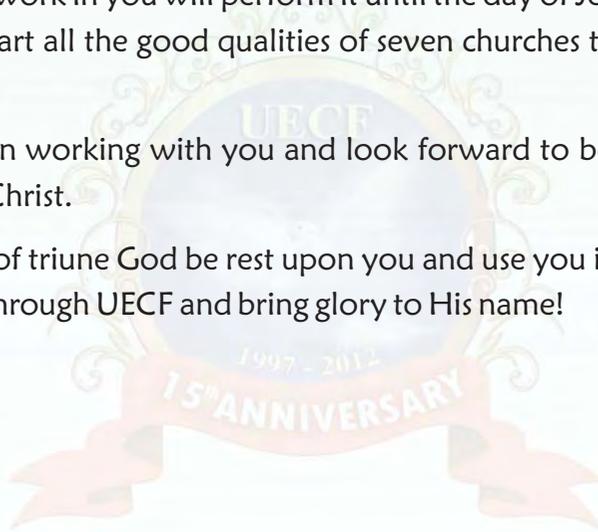
May the peace and grace of triune God be rest upon you and use you in the years to come so that many souls will be saved through UECF and bring glory to His name!

Maranatha!

Pastor Vijayarao Edla,

Pastor Prabhudas Enumula &

Members of the congregation





Andhra Christian Theological College

Affiliated to Senate of Serampore College (University), Serampore, West Bengal
An Ecumenical Vision of the Churches in Andhra Pradesh

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Off : 040 - 27628751 Ext : 202
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Hyderabad - 500 080, A.P., INDIA,
Website : Wiki - ACTC, www.actchyd.com
Email : actc.hydgmail.com

Rev. Dr. Chilkuri Vasantha Rao

B.Com., B.D., M.Th., Dr. Theol. (Hamburg)

PRINCIPAL

Dear UECF Family,

Greetings to you in the name of our savior Jesus Christ. I praise God for giving me an opportunity to worship and bring God's word at the UECF worship service. I thank God for your partnership with and support for Andhra Christian Theological College, Hyderabad, India.

On behalf of the Chairperson, Members of the Governing Board, Faculty, Staff and Students I congratulate UECF and praise God for your successful ministry for the Telugu Christians and by the Telugu Christians for the past fifteen years. Our prayers are for your ministry in the future. Your website is a comprehensive one and a ready resource for spiritual edification of all Telugu Christians and others. Your archiving of the Andhra Christian Hymnal and other songs is a great achievement, God's blessings on you as you continue to do it. Introducing and upholding various committed God's servants and their ministry is much appreciated. Training Sunday school children in the Bible is noteworthy at UECF and efforts to propagate the same in other Sunday schools could be taken up as mission. We praise God for your versatile ministries.

Wishing God's blessings on UECF as you continue to witness to the saving knowledge of our savior Jesus Christ

(Rev. Dr. Chilkuri Vasantna Rao)

Principal

Andhra Christian Theological College,
Hyderabad, India.



Memorial First India United Methodist Church

9226 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 2091

Telephone: 301-585-8015 Fax 301-585-4922



October 23, 2012

Mr. Joshua Pilli
President, UECF
150 Lake Avenue
Metuchen, NJ 08840

Dear Mr. Joshua Pilli and Memebers:

I am glad to send my congratulations as you celebrate 15th Anniversary of fruitful ministry of United Evangelical Christian Fellowship Church. We rejoice and celebrate with you in the accomplishments that you have made over these years.

United Evangelical Christian Fellowship has been a place of prayer, fellowship and proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Your faithful service to Inter-Denominational and Multi-linguistic groups has been the hallmark of Kingdom of God, where everyone is welcomed and everyone is served.

Thanking God for the faithful spiritual ministry, I wish you and all the members my best wishes and prayers for a blessed ministry for years to come!

May God bless you all!

Rev. Samuel Honnappa
Pastor

History of **UNITED EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (UECF)**

By
Mr. Syam Pilli (*Former President of UECF*)



“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.” - Ephesians 2:19-20

Introduction:

Praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works (Psalm 107:8). A seed that was prayerfully sown fifteen years ago, thus far has yielded much fruit during the journey of faith! Established as an inter-denominational Asian-Indian church in central New Jersey, United Evangelical Christian Fellowship (UECF) has grown into a well-known Christian organization across the globe. It was a blessed opportunity for me to serve Him through this wonderful fellowship as a President for five years, and I thank God for this great privilege. I deem it an honor to present the history of UECF as it completes 15 fruitful years of Lord’s service.

1. Motivation:

In January 1997, a small group of people felt the need for an inter-denominational fellowship that would fulfill the spiritual needs of the lay Christians in the Central New Jersey region. This fellowship would conduct the Sunday worship services without language barriers and maintain the traditions of Indian sub-continent. The intention was to serve the local community and also to bring all the people closer to help the outreach ministries serving the South Asian region.

2. Initiation:

Initially, a group of five families put their burden in prayer for few months. They believed that it was God’s will to start a fellowship and they sought the support of Rev. Dr. David Ravinder to serve as an honorary senior pastor and provide the spiritual leadership. With the help of Pastor David Ravinder, the place for Sunday worship service was obtained.

Thus, UECF started its first Sunday service on the sixth day of the forth month of the year nineteen hundred and ninety seven at the sanctuary of the Community United Methodist Church, located at 301, Chestnut Street, Roselle Park, New Jersey.

3. Incorporation:

An application was submitted in April 1997 to the Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for Employer status. The IRS sanctioned the application in August 1997 and approved the name United Evangelical Christian Fellowship.

After getting the EIN, an application was filed in September 1997 for New Jersey state recognition and certification of Incorporation as a Nonprofit Organization under federal IRS Code Section 501 (c) (3).

4. Church Location:

In the past fifteen years, UECF has conducted Sunday worship services in four different church locations. For the first three years, the worship services were conducted at Community United Methodist Church, Roselle Park. During its fourth year, UECF relocated to the New Beginnings Church of the Nazarene located at 80 Jefferson Blvd, Edison.

By the end of the year 2002, there was a need to look out for a new location. Upon considering few churches, it was prayerfully decided that New Dover United Methodist Church (NDUMC) in



Edison would be a strategic location for the growth of UECF congregation. UECF leadership along with Pastor David Ravinder held discussions with the NDUMC Board of Trustees and their pastor. As a result, UECF started worshipping at New Dover United Methodist Church in Edison on the first Sunday of March 2003. After 5 years, UECF moved again in 2008 and has been worshipping at the Reformed Church located at 150 Lake Avenue, Metuchen, NJ. However, due to the fact that this facility is being shared by other congregations, and also to accommodate larger gatherings, it has been practice in recent years that UECF celebrated Christmas at First Baptist Church, Metuchen.

5. Honorary Pastors:

UECF does not have a regular pastor; however, it has a unique arrangement with a team of honorary pastors who brought the word of God on the scheduled Sundays. Rev. Dr. David Ravinder has been serving faithfully as the Senior Honorary Pastor ever since the inception. He takes charge of the fourth Sunday, which is designated as Communion Sunday. Rev. Praveen Bunyan served as the first UECF Associate Pastor preaching regularly on three Sundays a week.



Honorary Pastors - 2002

Later, Rev. Sunil Balasundaram succeeded Rev. Praveen Bunyan and has ministered to UECF as an honorary pastor for four and a half years. During the fourth year, Rev. Stephen Nash joined as one of the honorary pastors and served for almost 5 years. Rev. David Davis came on board as a guest preacher in June 2003 and later served as an honorary Pastor through the mid-2011.

At one point of time, UECF felt the need for a dedicated regular pastor who would nurture and help in the growth of the congregation. A search Committee was formed to examine the alternatives and ultimately opined that this may not be feasible, considering the UECF's financial situation.

6. General Body Meetings and Elections:

The first General Body meeting was held on June 4, 1997 for which all the local Christians were invited. In this meeting, a draft Constitution and by-laws prepared by Mr. Alfred Bhaskar were

presented and approved. The first team of leaders who were elected in this General Body meeting included: President: Mr. Alfred Bhaskar, Secretary: Mr. Rajani Kantha Rao, Treasurer: Mr. Ebenezer Mallepalle, Board of Trustees Members: Mr. Ajit Lakra, Mr. Michael Rose, Mrs. Udaya Pulipati and Mr. Joel Dadepogu. Rev. Dr. David Ravinder was nominated by the general body to be the Honorary Sr. Pastor & Spiritual Advisor.

In the second annual General Body meeting held in August 1999, the vacant positions were filled in. The third General Body meeting was held in September 2000, and new office bearers were elected.

In the General Body meeting held in September 2001, Mr. Ajay Damarapu was elected as President and Mr. Syam Pilli was elected as the Vice President. However, during the General Body meeting held on 23rd June 2002, Mr. Ajay Damarapu announced his resignation. Consequently, Mr. Syam Pilli resumed the responsibilities of the President.

In the year 2003, the Constitution By-Laws were amended and approved to include Pastorate Committee in addition to the Board of Trustees. At the end of the tenure of previous leadership, new leaders were elected for a 3-year term in the General Body meeting held on 22nd February 2004. Later, in 2007 a new body was elected with Joshua(Phani) Pilli as the President. The present team of leaders was elected in the General Body meeting held on 25th February 2010.

Apr 1997 – Sep 2000	Mr. Alfred Bhaskar
Sep 2000 – Sep 2001	Mr. Ebenezer Mallepalle
Sep 2001 – Oct 2002	Mr. Ajay Damarapu
Oct 2002 – Feb 2004	Mr. Syam Pilli(Acting President)
Feb 2004 – Feb 2007	Mr. Syam Pilli
Feb 2007 – Present	Mr. Joshua(Phani) Pilli

Presidents and tenures

7. Guest Preachers:

In addition to the honorary pastors, many servants of God have graced UECF with the powerful messages. Itinerant Preachers like Acharya R R K Murthy, Heads of Christian organizations such as Mr. Joshua Daniel, Dr. Sunil Bhanu Busi, Rev. Samuel Schmitthenner; and Theological College Professors including Dr. B. C. Paul, Dr. Augustine Pagolu, Rev. Dr. Daniel Jeyaraj, Dr. Victor Luther Paul Nakka and Dr. Vasantharao Chilkuri have spiritually enriched the UECF congregation.

Renowned TV evangelists from India such as Dr. M. S. Santhavardhan, Dr. A. B. Joseph Kishore, Dr. P. Joshi, Dr. John Wesly, Dr. P. J. Stephen Paul, Dr. T. D. Prasanna Kumar, Dr. Devasahayam Dandala, Rev. K. Kurian, Rev. Solomon Raju Kunchanapalli, Bro. Vincent Gurralla, and Bro. Harry Gomes have inspired with the powerful messages time and again. God's servants like Dr. Akbar Haqq, Bro. Anil Kumar and Rev. Naveen Balakrishnan have encouraged and challenged the attendees with the word of God through Revival meetings.

The Bishops who have shared the word of God included Bishop Stanley Downs, Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, Bishop Spurgeon Raju Pachigalla and Bishop Daniel Kalyanapu. The guest preachers list also contains the well-known servants of God such as Rev. Azariah Korabandi, Dr. Livingston Gadde, Dr. Joe Madhu Pyarda & Dr. Jessie Veena Pyarda, Dr. Yesupadam Bandela, Bro. Edward William Kuntam, Dr. Samuel Mohanraj and Bro. Herford Urlica. Many God's servants such as

Bro. Santha Rao Bhogi, Bro. Michael Vijaya Kumar and Bro. Deevanaiah have visited and inspired by sharing their strong testimonies.

Host church Pastors that include Rev. Tom Sanders, Rev. Bob Costello Rev. Darryl Duer, Rev. Dr. Richard Ruch and Rev. Peter Sanfilippo also ministered to UECF occasionally. For a specific period, Rev. Anna Bhujbal ministered to UECF mainly on fifth Sundays and also on all possible occasions.

Rev. Richard Bailey, a Missionary from Pakistan; Rev. Rafael Flores & Pastor John Carricks, Missionaries from Paraguay; Mr. Billy & Mrs. Joanna Coppedge, Missionaries to Uganda have shared the Word.

Popular Gospel Singers and Evangelists have visited and worshipped God many a time with special music and shared the word. The noted Gospel singers include Dr. John Bilmoria Rapaka, Dr. Bhanu Murthy Nainala, Bro. William Carey, Mrs. Mahitha Charles Pilli, Dr. Jacob Prabhu, Bro. Daniel Akumarthi and Vijay Benedict.

There were many servants of God who visited, preached and encouraged UECF during the past fifteen years, but it will take a lot more room here to list all the names.

8. Sunday Worship Services:

UECF worship services start at 5:30 PM every Sunday. The order of Service is in English. The typical Sunday service includes Praise & Worship, sharing the joys and concerns, intercessory prayers, special music and a Message.

Singing in regional languages:

Praising the Lord with songs and hymns has always been the important part of UECF Sunday Worship Service. Praise songs have been sung in English and also in different regional languages such as Telugu and Hindi. In addition to the standard instruments like Organ, Piano and guitar, many Indian musical instruments such

as Harmonium, Tabla and Congo drums have been used to bring out special music.

Many musicians have offered their talents and supported the music ministry. The list of

musicians include Mr. Sushil Bhujbal, Mr. Samuel Sudhakar Chilaka, Mr. Josiah Srigiri, Mr. Nishanth Dwaram, Mrs. Suneela Ponnappalli, Mr. Simon Bushi, Dr. Gurunadham Moodey, Mr. Carol Daniel Jokmels, Mr. Junia Moses, Mr. Sunil Robert, Mr. Spurgeon Perikala, James & Jacob brothers, Mr. Peter Kollory, Mr. Thomas Kalyanapu, Mrs. Sinai Dadepogu, Mrs. Emily Sensen Gopal and Ms. Yuko.



Intercessory Prayers:

The intercessory prayer time has been a great opportunity for the congregation to instantaneously share their joys, concerns and other needs of the family and friends and to offer prayers.

Communion Sunday:

Holy Communion has been administered on the fourth Sunday of every month.

9. Sunday School & Youth Ministry:

Sunday school has played a vital role in the growth of UECF. Families have firmly believed in Proverbs 22:6 which states “Train up the child in the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it”, while inculcating children with the word of God from the very beginning.

Sunday School has been conducted regularly during the Service to both beginners and other age groups (up to 12 years). Sunday School teachers have been following a yearly curriculum in nurturing children with the Word of God. VBS courses also started in the recent past and children have enthusiastically participated. Kids of different age groups exhibited their talents on all possible special occasions. Children have been excited to take part in the activities such as Sunday school retreats, Junior Bible Quiz (JBQ) tournaments, dramas, skits and group dances. Sunday School children also had the opportunity to visit the orphanages and share their love.

Over a period of time, as the children have grown along with UECF, youth ministry has emerged prominently to help equip the youth with the necessary tools from God’s Word and to lay the right foundation for the rest of life.



10. Bible Study:

Group Bible study has been conducted on the second Friday of every month from 8:00 to 9:30 PM. Initially, members used to gather at their homes for group Bible Studies. Later, they started gathering at Church premises, as the location is more convenient. Laypersons had a wonderful opportunity to lead the study on all the Books of Old Testament and New Testament. The Bible studies were also based on the pre-selected topics.

11. Home Prayer meetings:

Lenten Cottage Prayer meetings: Lenten Cottage prayer meetings have been held on Fridays for six weeks during the Lent season. Congregation members always volunteered to open their homes to have Lenten cottage prayer meetings. Honorary pastors, guest preachers and laypeople have lead the lent meditations. Some of the members fast during the lent meditation time and generally these meetings end with fellowship meal. During this season, members express their love by contributing the canned food to the community food banks.

Praying for the sick: UECF congregation, as one body shared not only the joys and but also sorrows of the other members. Families fast and pray whenever someone in the congregation is sick.

12. Christmas Caroling:

Christmas caroling has been a wonderful opportunity both for the adults and kids to actively participate and enjoy the Christmas season. UECF has been following the door to door Christmas



caroling tradition during this season. A special initiative was undertaken in 2002 by visiting 36 homes. This number has been increasing year after year. Generally, caroling starts in the first week of December. Carolers sing in different languages and share the joy through music and dance. Families show their hospitality by welcoming the carolers and offer cheerfully. God has been faithful in guiding the carolers in the snowy season and

protecting them from the chilly winter winds.

13. Special Festivals & Celebrations:

Christmas: UECF has been celebrating Christmas every year on 25th December with gladness and joy. The Christmas gatherings have been increasing progressively. Many families and friends not only from USA but also from Canada and India joined the UECF Worship Services. Christmas celebrations included spirit filled messages, Holy Communion, special music, children's special programs and conclude with Christmas



banquets. Recently, UECF Christmas celebrations have been covered by Indian TV news channels.



Watch Night Service: The first UECF watch night service started in the year 2002. Seventy seven people including children gathered at United Methodist Church, Union on 31st night of 2002 to welcome the New Year in God's presence. The following year, a combined watch night service was celebrated along with the multi ethnic congregation from International Family Church of New Jersey (IFCNI) congregation lead by Rev. Ashish Bhatnagar.

This practice continued and it has been a blessing to start every New Year with prayer and Holy Communion. Watch Night service includes testimony time, candle lighting, special music and a New Year message. God's Promise Cards, Bible reading Planners and New Year calendars have been distributed during Watch Night service every year.

Good Friday Service:

In the past, UECF joined the similar congregations and participated in Good Friday Meditation services. As per the growing needs, UECF started the Good Friday meditation Service in the year 2007. Along with the pastors, lay Christians also lead the meditation on each of the seven words spoken by Jesus on the cross.

Easter Sunrise Service:

It has been a practice for the UECF to join Pastor Ravinder's United Methodist church congregation every year for Easter Sunrise service. This facilitated UECF an opportunity to participate and rejoice in the combined Easter Sunrise Service at the United Methodist Church at Berkeley Heights and also at Community United Methodist Church, Roselle. However, this practice was discontinued in 2009 and UECF started celebrating Easter sunrise service in the local church.



Thanksgiving:

UECF celebrates Thanksgiving on the Sundays just before the fourth Thursday of November every year. In the year 2002, many local groups were invited for Thanksgiving service. Apart from UECF choir, other groups also presented special music. This trend continued as the years progressed.

Families donate items for auction. The proceedings of the thanksgiving auctions are generally designated for a specific cause every year.



Children's Christmas:

Children enjoy the special opportunity to celebrate Children Christmas in which they show their talents. Usually, children perform the Nativity play or Christmas pageants during this time.



Mother's Day:

In the year 2003, Mother's day celebration got boosted by specially honoring the 19 mothers by their sons and daughters in a grand manner. This trend continued with much enthusiasm in the following years. Generally, the UECF men folk prepare a delicious meal in honor of the mothers.



Father's Day:

Complementing Mother's day, Father's Day also has been celebrated by honoring the Dads on the third Sunday of June.



Apart from the regular activities, UECF joins the similar congregations and participates in the church anniversaries and other special events. Every year, UECF choir joins UTCFVA for singing at Christian Family Conference in Virginia. Many a time, UECF choir sang at the churches in the neighboring states including New York, Connecticut and Delaware.

14. Special meetings:

Revival meetings:

A two-day Revival meeting was held in the year 1998 marking the first Anniversary of UECF. Dr. Akbar Haqq, a distinguished evangelist was the guest speaker for these revival meetings. The local churches and UTCFNY participated in the meetings.

During the year 2002, UECF supported and participated in the Revival meetings hosted by the Church of the Nazarene. Rev. Dr. Joshua Daniel was the speaker.



3-Day Revival meetings were held from 28th - 30th October 2005. Rev. Naveen Balakrishnan, a faithful servant of God, delivered a series of powerful messages. This series included the inspiring topics such as Salvation, Supplication, Sanctification, Scripture and Sharing. Many of the fellow Christians from neighboring areas attended the meetings and were spiritually uplifted by the messages. The Revival meetings left such an impact on those who attended that some of them started reading the Bible regularly 4 chapters-a-day as suggested by Rev. Naveen Balakrishnan.

Thereafter, revival meetings have been organized once in a while for spiritual refreshing and edification.

Gospel meetings:

3-day special gospel meetings with Bro. Anil Kumar were conducted in the first week of June 2006. During these meetings, the sanctuary was packed with a large gathering of over 250 people. Crowds were drawn from not only New Jersey but also from the neighboring states. These meetings left enduring impressions in the minds of those who attended.



As part of the 15 year celebrations, plans are being made to have an evangelistic outreach program with people of Hindu and other faiths. Dr. Ramesh Richard, a renowned spiritual philosopher will be the key note speaker of this event which is scheduled for the first week of December 2012.

10th Anniversary Celebration

UECF's 10th Anniversary was celebrated in a grand manner from 26th to 28th of October 2007. Various churches and fellowships around the region have participated in these 3-day programs in which Rev. Naveen Balakrishnan and Rev. Solomon Raju Kunchanapalli delivered powerful God's messages. A group of singers from Maryland presented special music apart from local groups. Children performed special choreography. All the previous executive leaders and their families were honored with special recognition for their services.

To mark the 10 year milestone, a Souvenir was released by Rev. Samuel Schmitthenner, former President of AELC. The Souvenir contains congratulatory letters from various dignitaries including the local Senators, Congressmen, Mayor and eminent Servants of God.



15. Married Couples meetings:

The Married Couples meetings are usually held on the 4th Saturday of every month in various homes that are pre-decided. Couples discuss and debate on various topics that are very practical and use the Bible as a guiding tool. Rev. Dr. David Ravinder & Mrs. Sarita Ravinder have been actively leading this ministry. A coordinator takes care of these meetings by inviting and making potluck dinner arrangements. This group enjoys the beach picnics once in a while.



16. Missions & Outreach:

Missions and outreach has played a noble part in UECF's work. In keeping with the greatest commission given by our Savior Jesus Christ - Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15), UECF has started actively distributing gospel tracts and Jesus DVDs on regular basis in the recent past. As part of local community support, UECF families visit old age homes on monthly basis and express their love towards the older adults.

As an evangelical Christian fellowship, UECF is committed to evangelism. Over the years, UECF has supported the gospel work and also helped and supported the poor and needy through numerous ministries in India and other countries. Whenever natural calamities occurred, UECF rose to the situation and contributed towards the relief efforts and helped the victims through the associated ministries.

17. Social & Cultural Events:

UECF families actively participate in the following social and cultural events:

India Independence Day Parade: In the year 2005, India Independence Day parade was organized for the first time in New Jersey. UECF families took part in this secular event, which was held on 14th August 2005. It was a great experience to hold the UECF banner along with Tricolor flags and

marching on Oak Tree Road. This certainly helped UECF in developing awareness in the neighborhood.

Subsequently, UECF has been actively participating in the India Independence day parades and leverage the occasion for distributing gospel tracts and Jesus DVDs. Some of the UECF's parade pictures were selected to be exhibited in the 'Beyond Bollywood' section of Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History located in Washington DC.





UECF Family Picnics: UECF annual family picnics are filled with lots of fun and plenty of food along with the spiritual food. Families and friends get together and enjoy the picnics organized in famous Parks of New Jersey such as Colonial Park, Johnson Park, Roosevelt Park and Cheese Quake Park.

All age groups right from children to seniors take part in number of activities and play a variety of games such as Bible quizzes, Bibliola (a popular UECF activity), Tug of war, Strawberry catching, Egg throwing, musical

chairs, water balloons for children, dumb charades, Guess picture drawing, Cricket, Tennis and boat riding.

18. Fellowship Hour:

The fellowship time has been very helpful in bringing cohesion among the congregation. UECF families have always enjoyed hosting Fellowship Coffee hour after each Sunday service with delicious Indian style home made food while celebrating their birthdays and anniversaries. Members volunteered to sign-up Fellowship Coffee hour roaster, generally placed on the notice board or on internet.



All the special occasions like Baby showers, Bridal showers, wedding receptions and thanksgiving service were always followed by fellowship meals.

19. Web site:

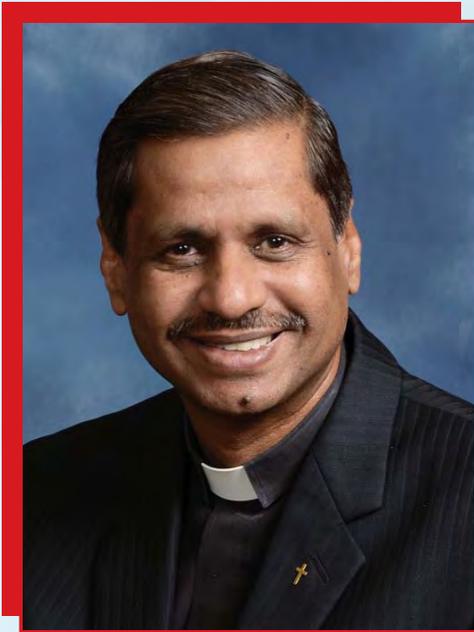
In the year 2001, Joshua(Phani) Pilli took the initiative to develop a web site for UECF and registered this as www.uecf.net. God has richly blessed this web ministry and UECF is well known all over the world through the web site. Members and others get periodic updates on the fellowship activities through the regular web postings. The video messages and songs are posted on regular basis. The pictorial account of the past events were also archived and made available on the web. The website is rich with messages, audio video songs, testimonies, children's programs and many useful resources; and serves globally as a one-stop resource center. Web site has been instrumental for the growth of UECF. It is wonderful to know many visitors have attended the UECF Sunday worship services and testified that they came to know about UECF through the Web site. Some such visitors started attending regularly. Praise the Lord for this wonderful site and for Joshua Pilli's never tiring efforts.

20. Conclusion:

During the UECF's 15 years of faith journey, many families have joined; some have left as a result of relocation or other reasons and some have come back. In this walk of faith in Jesus, UECF also experienced its part of difficult times. However, having Christ as chief cornerstone, UECF is continuing in faith, moving steadfastly in catering to spiritual needs and standing as a testimony to the Lord.

Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen (Revelation 7:12)

UECF HONORARY PASTORS



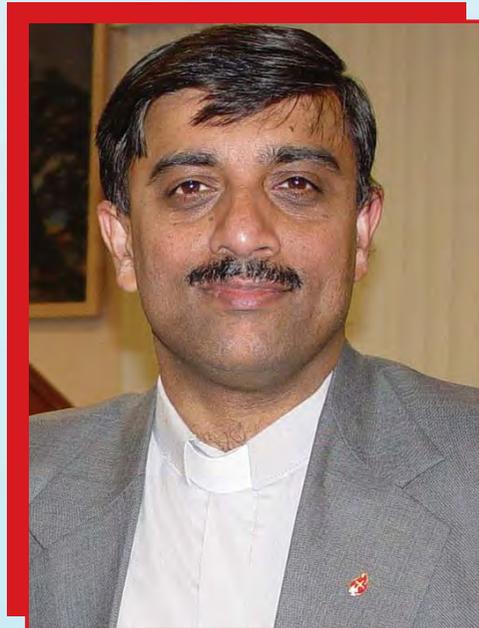
Rev. Dr. David Ravinder
Sr. Hon. Pastor



Rev. David Davis
Former Hon. Pastor



Rev. Steve Nash
Former Hon. Pastor



Rev. Sunil Balasundaram
Former Hon. Pastor

Current Leadership and Former Executive Committee



Mr. Joshua(Phani) Pilli
President



Mr. Samuel S. Chilaka
Vice President & Music Coordinator



Mr. Anand Devi
Treasurer



Mr. Nishanth Dwaram
Secretary



Mrs. Shanthi Bhaskar
Board of Trustees



Dr. Beaula Koduri
Board of Trustees



Mr. Manohar Pitta
Board of Trustees



Mr. Rajiv Muthyala
Board of Trustees



Mr. Rajanikanth Punuru
Board of Trustees



Mrs. Satya Srigiri
Pastorate Committee Member



Mr. Hemanth Borugadda
Pastorate Committee Member



Mr. David Merigala
Pastorate Committee Member



Mr. Josiah Srigiri
Bible Study Coordinator



Mr. P. Rakshankumar
Missions Coordinator



Mrs. Emily Myla
Sunday School Coordinator



Mr. Joshua Shaik
Stewardship Coordinator



Mr. Paul Gummadi
Youth Coordinator



Mr. Syam Pilli
Former President



Mr. Ajay Damarapu
Former President



Rev. Ebenezer Mallepalle
Former President & Treasurer



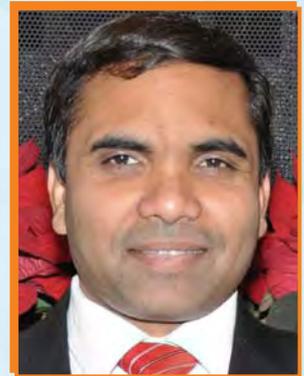
Mr. Bhaskar Damarapu
Former President



Mr. Clement Myla
Former Vice President



Mr. Moses Peram
Former Vice President



Mr. Ravi Rapaka
Former Treasurer



Mr. Chittaranjan Lam
Former Treasurer



Mr. Ravindra Saripalli
Former Treasurer



Mr. Simon Bushi
Former Secretary & Treasurer



Mr. Vinod Nakka
Former Secretary



Mr. Vijay Pulipati
Former Secretary



Mr. Kanthi Paul Rapaka
Former Secretary



Mr. Reggie Rao
Former Secretary



GUEST PREACHERS



**Late Acharya
R. R. K. Murthy**



Mr. Joshua Daniel



**Late Rev. Dr.
M.S. Santha Vardhan**



**Rev. Dr. A.B. Joseph
Kishore**



Bro. Anil Kumar



Bro. Harry Gomes



Rev. Dr. P. Joshi



**Rev. Dr. Livingston
Gadde**



Dr. Joe Madhu Payarda



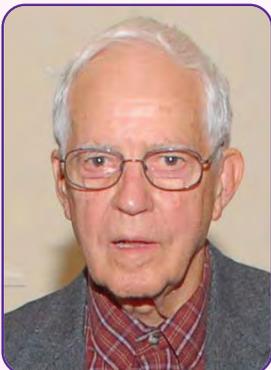
**Dr. Jessie Veena
Payarda**



**Rev. Naveen
Balakrishnan**



**Rev. Dr. Solomon Raju
Kunchanapalli**



**Rev. Samuel
Schmitthener**



**Rev. Dr. Suneel Bhanu
Busi**



**Rev. Dr. Victor Luther
Paul Nakka**



**Rev. Dr. Vasantha Rao
Chilkuri**



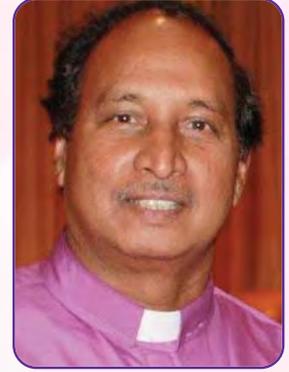
Rev. Dr. P. J. Stephen Paul



Dr. John Wesly



Rev. Dr. T. Prasanna Kumar



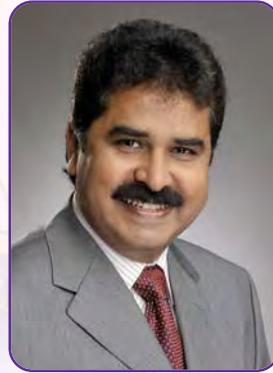
Bishop Spurgeon Raju Pachigalla



Bishop Daniel Kalyanapu



Rev. Herford Urlica



Dr. Devasahayam Dandala



Rev. Dr. Samuel Mohanraj



Rev. Vincent Gurralla



Rev. K. Kurian



Rev. Dr. Yesupadam Bandela



Bro. Rajan Mathews



Dr. Augustine Pagolu



Dr. Jaya Prakash Joshi



Rev. Edward William Kuntam



Late Rev. Dr. Azariah Korabandi



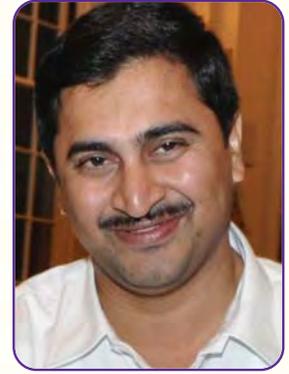
Dr. Vijay Benedict



Bro. Michael Vijay Kumar



Bro. Santha Rao Bhogi



Bro. Deevanaiah



Rev. Dr. B. C. Paul



Rev. Dr. Joshua Jude



Rev. Prasanna Kumar Devarapalli



Dr. Jacob Prabhu



Rev. Dr. John Moses Dussi



Rev. Ravi Prakash Runjala



Rev. Moses Katuri



Bro. Krish Samudrala



Rev. Manoj Bhat



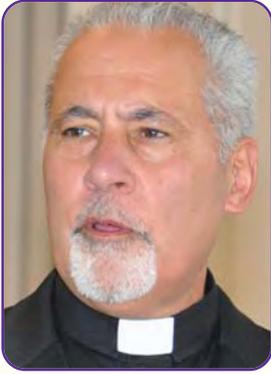
Rev. John Francis



Rev. Dr. Kishore Daroga



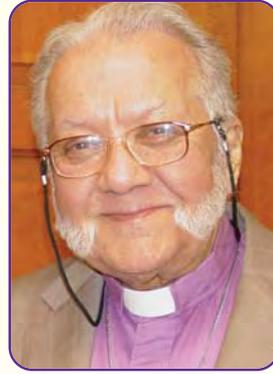
Late Bro. Suresh Gundala



Rev. Peter Sanfilippo



Rev. Dr. Richard Ruch



Bishop Stanley Downs



Rev. Gene Donahue



**Bishop Sudarshana
Devadhar**



Rev. Bob Costello



Rev. Anna Thomas



Rev. Darryl Duer



Rev. Dr. Vijaya Kumar



Rev. Dr. Isaac Simon



Rev. Joseph Theophilus



Rev. Tom Sanders



Rev. Israel Suppogu



Rev. Dr. Thomas Nalla



Dr. Jacob Puli



Dr. T. M. John



Rev. Dr. Nelson Vantabathina



Rev. T. Jeevaratnam Reddy



Rev. Joseph Varakumar Lam



Rev. Dr. Timothy Kollabathula



Dr. John Bilmoria Rapaka



Late Dr. Samraj



Rev. Dr. Stephen Samraj



Rev. Ashish Bhatnagar



Sis. Krupa Michael



Sis. T. Mary Rajeswari



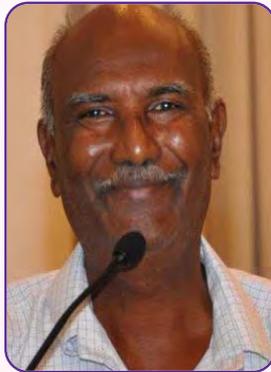
Rev. Dr. Lilly Daniel



Dr. Devaraju Patta



Dr. Gurunadham Moodey



Rev. Daniel Pasumarthi



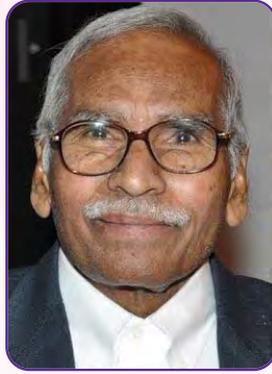
Rev. Sam Saripalli



Rev. Dr. Luther Benny Janumala



Rev. Praveen Bhaskar



Rev. Arjuna Rao Rapaka



Rev. Dr. N. Bhanumurthy



Rev. Santhosh Tadigiri



Rev. Milind Sojwal



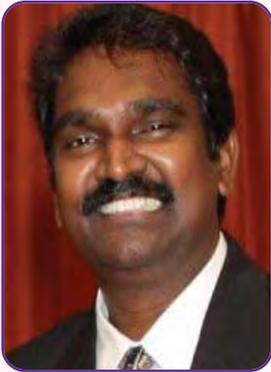
Dr. David Willis



**Rev. Chandrakanth
Bhujbal**



Rev. Moses Jangam



**Rev. Dr. Daniel
Akumarthi**



Rev. Ananth Kumar



Bro. Ratna Raju Rapaka



Late Rev. Vasanth Peter



Rev. Philip Gundala



Rev. D.G.M. Vinod



Rev. Amoon Sharon



**Rev. Dr. G.R.
Purushotham**

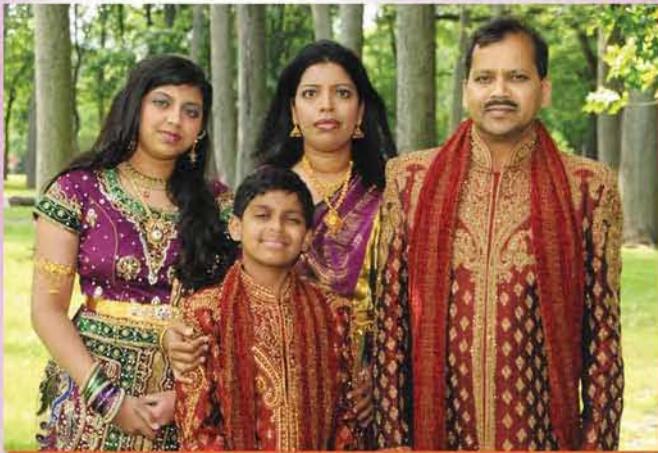




















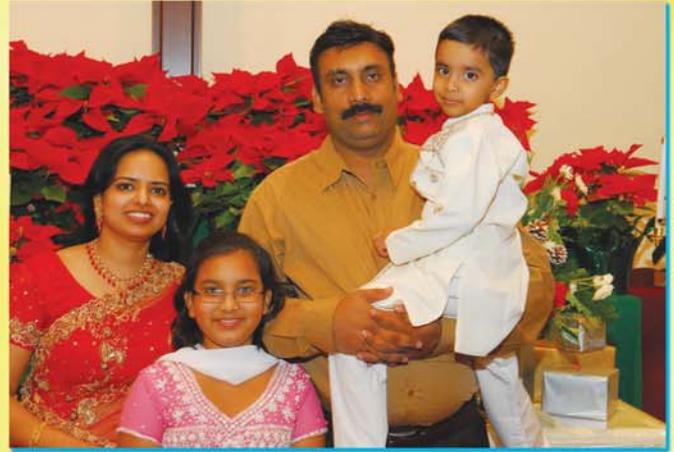


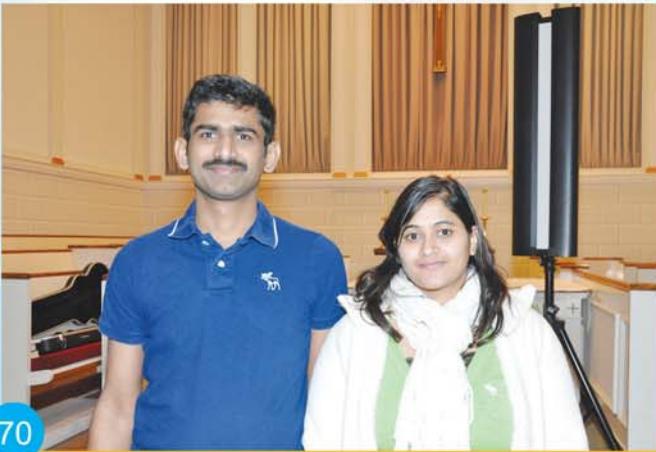
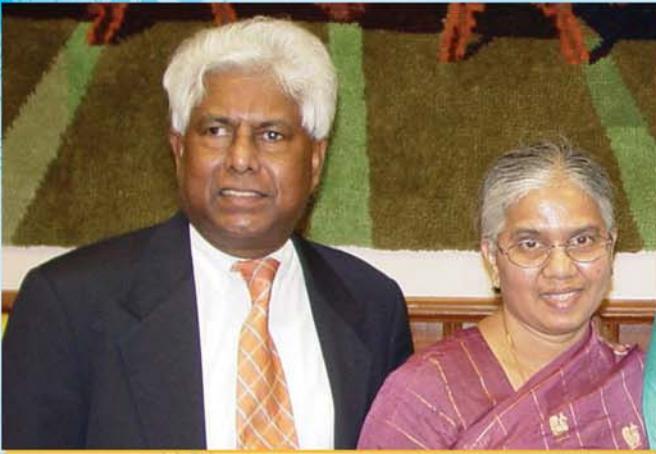
































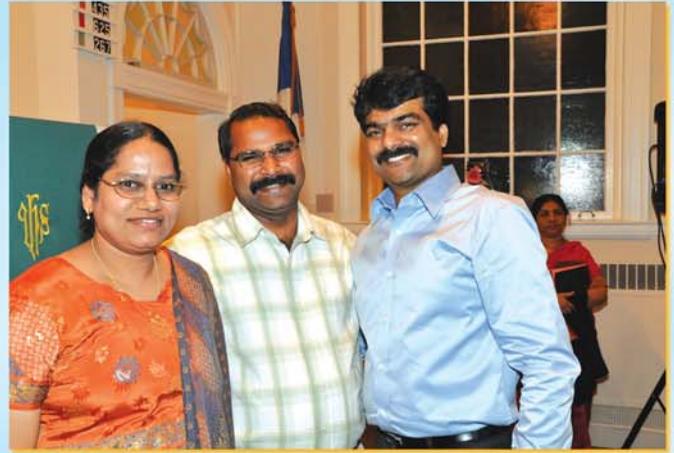




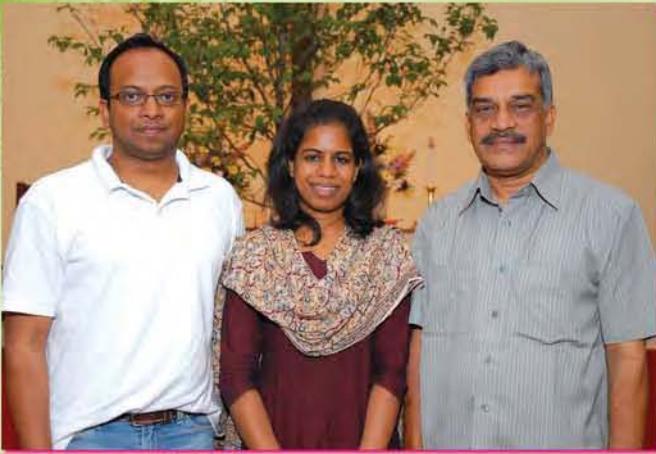




















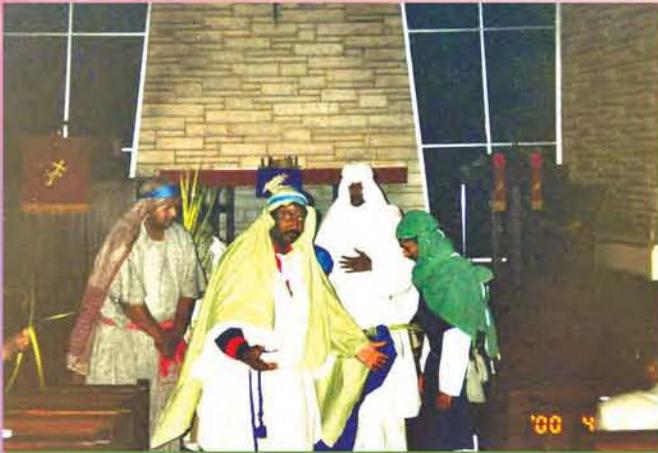






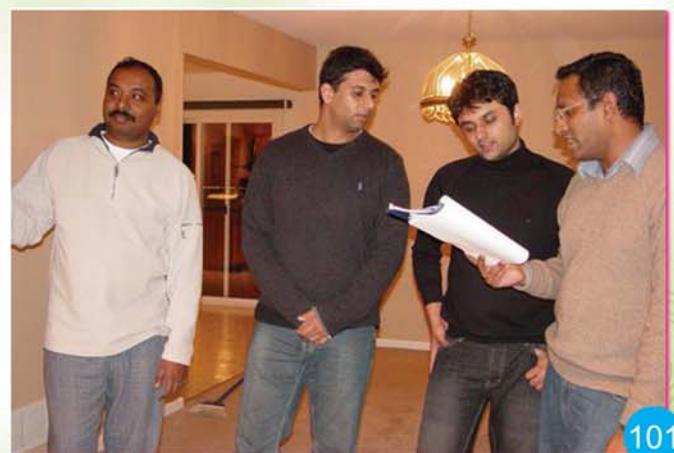


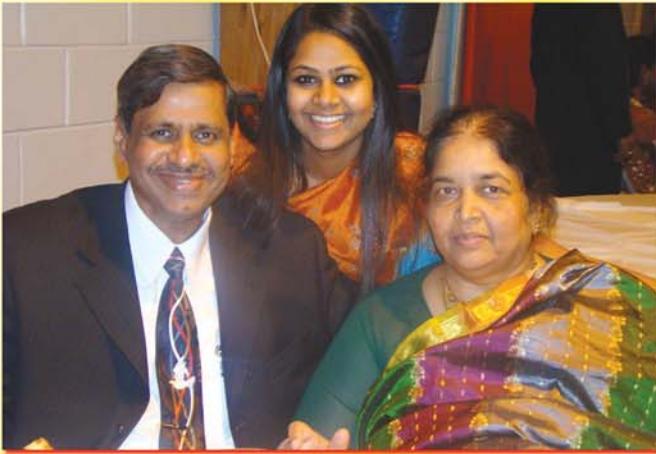












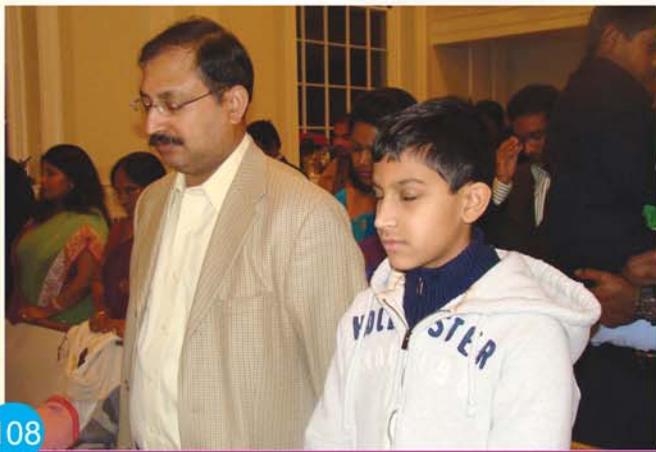


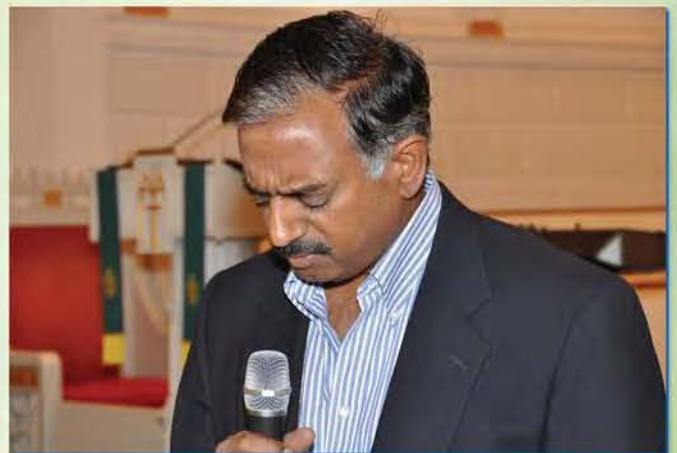


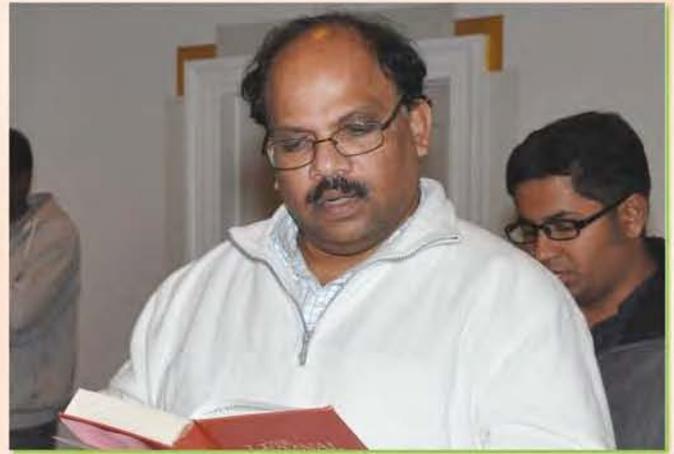
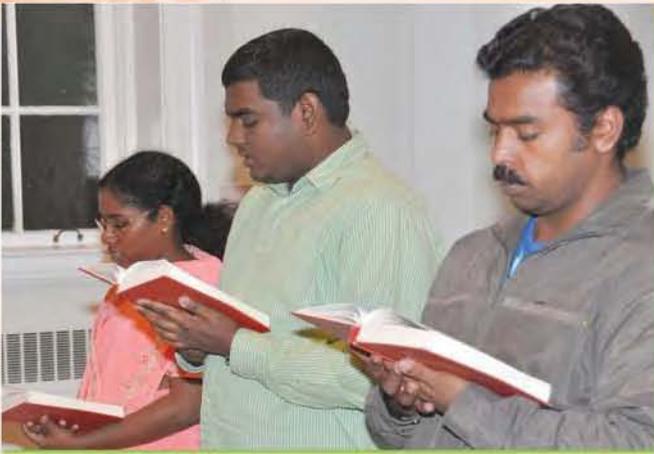


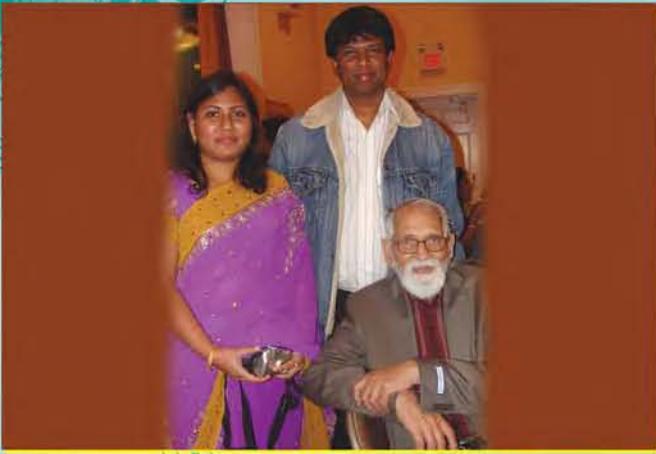






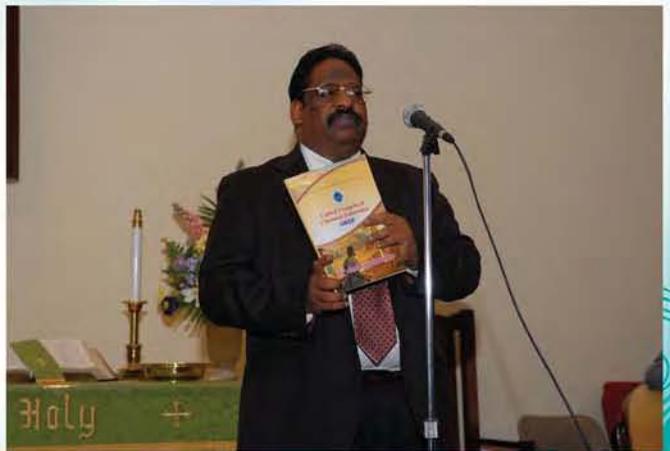
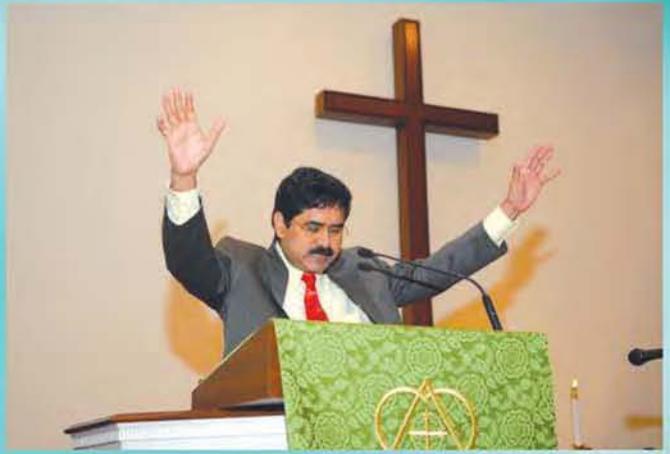






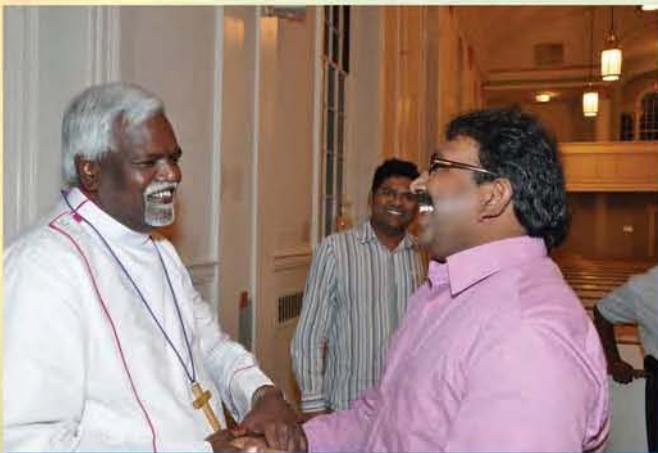


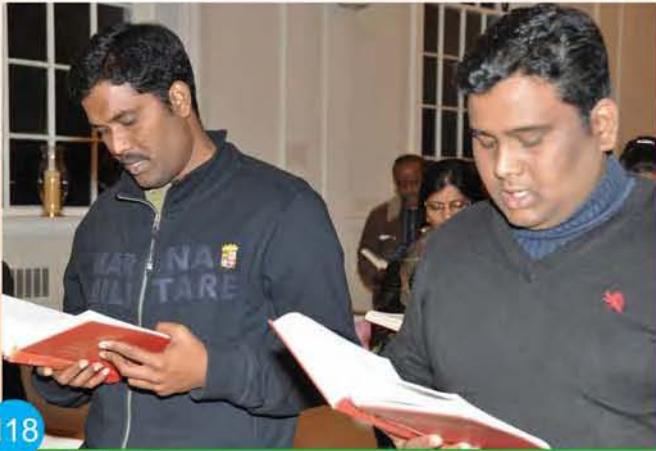
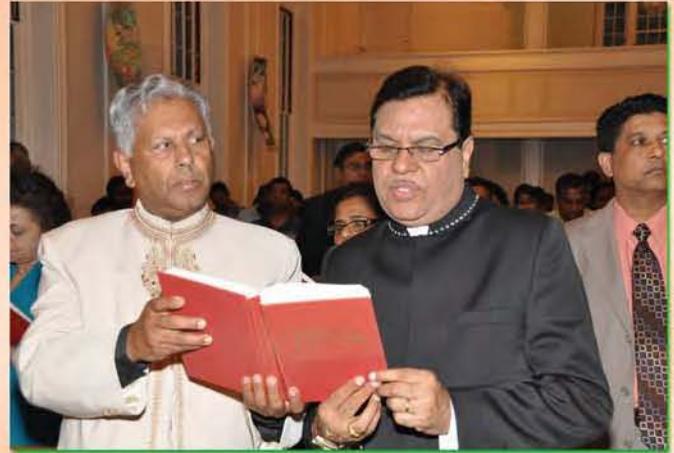


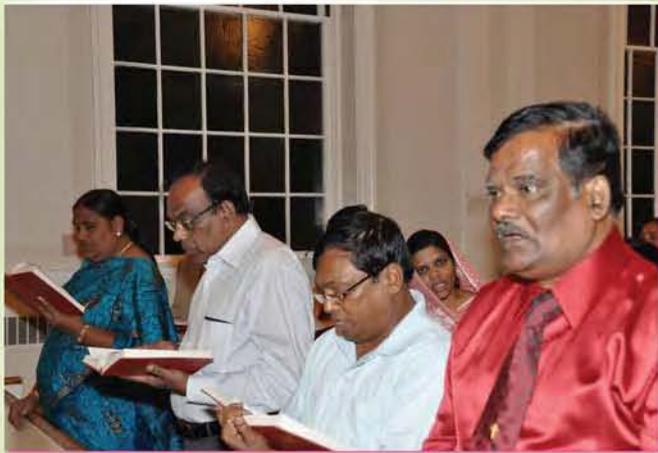
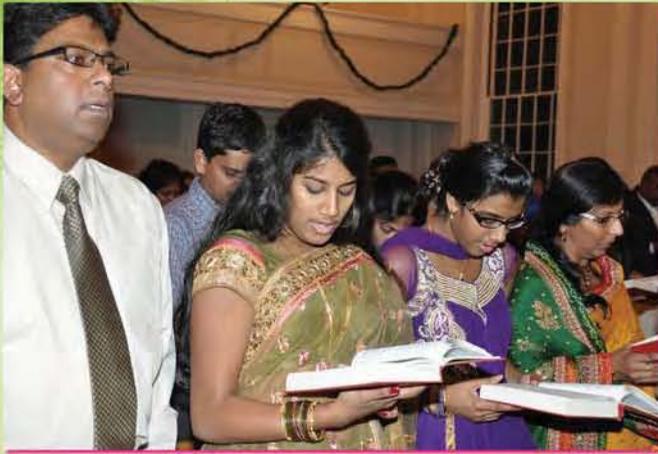


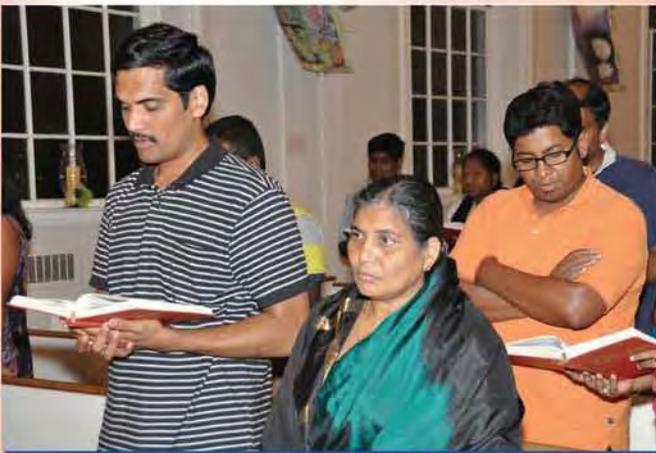


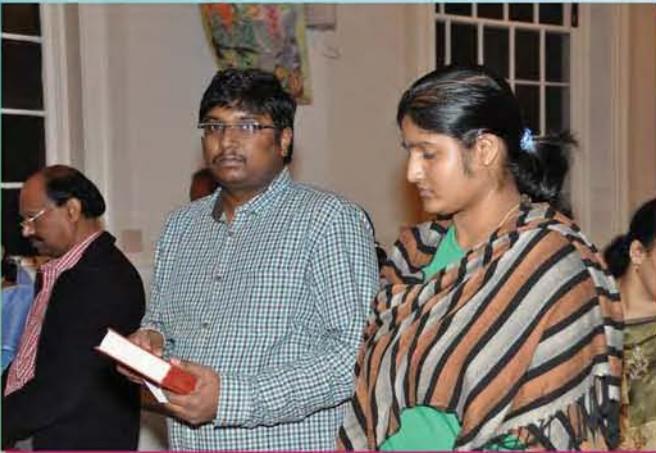












































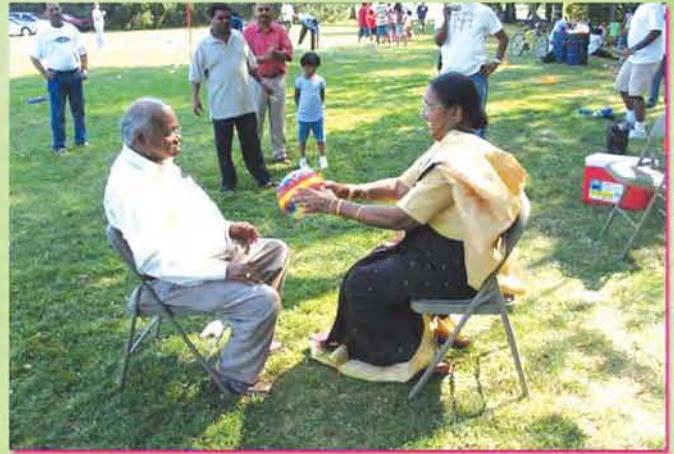




















THE CHURCH AND THE TRAINING OF LAITY FOR MINISTRY

Rev. Dr. David Ravinder

The call of God has been extended to every person on two levels:

1. The call to salvation - relationship

2. The call to purpose - ministry

God has a purpose (Ephesians 1:9-11) and we have been called to play a vital role in that purpose. In its essence, this is what ministry is all about - playing your part in helping God's plan and purpose to be outworked in our own lives and other people's lives.

Writing to Timothy, Paul says, "...But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace" 2 Timothy 1:8-9.

FOUR KEY CONCEPTS FOR OUR CONSIDERATION

There are basically FOUR fundamental concepts we must consider.

I. CHURCH

What do we mean by the term 'Church'?

The essential use of the term 'Church' is the understanding that the Church is a 'Body of Faithful Disciples of Jesus Christ'. Such a 'Body' might exist and manifest itself in various forms and expressions based on history, tradition, language, region and doctrine. The understanding of the Church as essentially a 'Body' is Biblical in general and Pauline in particular.

I do believe that there is a great need to recover this biblical sense of Church for an effective ministry to take place today. Post modern World is not really interested in the nuances of theological distinctives of particular denominations while those might be deemed quite significant to many people inside it

Today, in the post Christendom/ post Modern world people are no longer concerned about staying loyal to a name brand.

We need to recover the NT understanding of Church as a "Body of Faithful Disciples" fulfilling the mandate of making new disciples for Jesus Christ. Too often the focus is 'inward' and not toward the world. A Membership oriented, Privilege based understanding of Church must make way to a Discipleship oriented, Service based approach. The only qualifications in the NT were that one needed to profess faith in Christ as one's Savior and obey his Call and serve him as Lord. Quite simple and effective. We do well on the 'Savior' part but fail in the 'Lordship' part of our walk with Christ.

Definition of the Church

An important element in any definition of church must be the purpose of its gathering: to do the work of the gospel or to be "in mission."

The New Testament word for "church" is ekklesia, which means "the called out ones." We need to note three things here. First, predominantly ekklesia (both in the singular and plural) applies to a local assembly of those who profess faith in and allegiance to Christ. Second, ekklesia designates the universal church (Acts 8:3; 9:31; 1 Cor 12:28; 15:9; especially in the later Pauline letters, Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18). Third, the ekklesia is God's congregation (1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; etc.).

The Nature of the Church

The true church of God is not an organization on earth consisting of people and buildings, but is really a supernatural entity comprised of those who are saved by Jesus. It spans the entire time of man's existence on earth as well as all people who are called into it. We become members of the church (body of Christ) by faith (Acts 2:41). We are edified by the Word (Eph. 4:15-16), disciplined by God (Matt. 18:15-17), unified in Christ (Gal. 3:28), and sanctified by the Spirit (Eph. 5:26-27).” I think that is a pretty accurate and succinct understanding of CHURCH.

II. MINISTRY.

What really constitutes Ministry? In its essence, ministry is about - playing your part in helping God's plan and purpose to be outworked in other people's lives.

The first call (to salvation) is extended to every person (the "many"), but only those who respond to God's call (the "few") are actually chosen (note the parable in Matthew 24:1-14). In the same way, the second call (to God's purposes) is extended to every person who has already responded to the first call, but God will only use those who personally respond to that call.

What is Ministry?

To answer this question we need to turn to II Corinthians

Here we discover that ministry is the activity and process by which The Church of Christ is enabled and empowered to bring about the RECONCILIATION of all creation.

Three Levels of Calling

In introducing himself to the Roman Church, the Apostle Paul describes the three levels of his call and ministry. These three levels of calling also apply to every Christian's ministry.

The General Calling

Paul introduced himself first of all as a servant of Christ Jesus. The Greek word Paul uses for servant is *doulos*, which actually has the deeper meaning of "bond servant", (see Exodus 21:5-6; Deuteronomy 15:16-17; Psalm 40:6-8). This is the general calling of every believer - the starting point and foundation of all ministry.

The Special Calling

Paul then identified his special calling - "called to be an apostle". God's grace is given to each believer for a particular kind of function, and here we begin to see the wonderful variety in the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27-30).

The Particular Calling

Finally Paul specifies the bounds of his ministry - "set apart for the gospel of God". Paul was an apostle, like Peter and John were apostles, but the particular calling upon his life outworked differently to each of the other apostles. Peter was an apostle to the Jews, while Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7-9).

"Now there are distinctive varieties and distributions of endowments [extraordinary powers distinguishing certain Christians, due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit] and they vary, but the (Holy) Spirit remains the same. And there are distinctive varieties of service and ministrations, but it is the same Lord [Who is served]. And there are distinctive varieties of operation - of working to accomplish things - but it is the same God Who inspires and energizes them all in all" 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (Amp).

Four Dimensions of Ministry

There are at least FOUR dimensions of the believer's ministry:

1. Ministry to the Lord

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" 1 Peter 2:9 (see also Matthew 22:37-40; Psalm 150; Hebrews 13:15). Prior to any expression of ministry we need to realize that we owe it all to the LORD.

2. Ministry to Ourselves

We build our outreach ministry on the foundation of our commitment to the LORD. This must be followed by a conscious inreach to care for our own self. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another. (with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God") Colossians 3:16 (see also Jude 20-21; Psalm 42:1-2,11). As ministers of Christ, we are to take good care of God's resources entrusted to us which includes our body, heart, mind and soul. "How is it with your soul"? "Are you taking care of your health"? "How is your Sabbath practice"?

3. Ministry to the Church

"I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong - that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith" Romans 1:11-12 (see also 12:13; 14:19; 15:1-7; Ephesians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 5:19; 6:18-19).

4. Ministry to the World

"You are to go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere" Mark 16:15 (Living Bible) (see also verses 17-18; Luke 10:2; Acts 1:8).

Attitude in Ministry

Writing to the Philippian Church, Paul delineates what our attitude ought to be in Ministry. He writes: "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose" Philippians 2:1-2.

To be an effective instrument of Christ's ministry, three things are needed:

- ◆ Being like-minded (to Christ)
- ◆ Having the same love (as Christ)
- ◆ Being one in spirit and purpose (with Christ and together)

Ministry is not competitive. We measure the success of our ministry not against each other, but against the ministry of the Lord Himself (Ephesians 4:13; 3:19). He is the yardstick of all

III. LAITY

The term laity is a word derived from laos, a Greek word meaning people. In the biblical sense, it includes all people who believe in and are committed to Jesus as Savior and Lord. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is the church's fundamental belief. This belief presents a paradox to all thinking leaders in the Church of God: we acknowledge the "priesthood" of ALL, but still it is a sacred few who actually do the work of ministry. The doctrine of the laity is so important, that if adequately understood and properly expressed in the life of God's people, it could bring about a spiritual awakening that would revolutionize the life and ministry of the church.

Here are some practical ways to be a Lay Minister in the secular arena.

Excellence and Honesty. The primary ministry of laity in the workplace that Bill Diehl noted in his book, *The Monday Connection*, (1991) is doing the job with excellence.

Service and Hospitality. One needs to make a conscious decision at some point in work to be among people as one who were there to serve. Try to respond positively and cheerfully to the routine duties and to the special requests that come to you. Know that your attitude makes a difference for you. Create an open and welcoming atmosphere where your coworkers and visitors know they would be received kindly. The Bible calls for hospitality to all even in the workplace and among one's colleagues.

Caring and Sharing. Closely related to serving one's co-workers is caring about them as persons and sharing some of your own life and experiences with them. Listening without offering advice or judgment is a way of valuing people and of offering them a measure of God's unconditional acceptance.

Witnessing. As God provides the opportunity, talk to people about what it means to you that you are a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ. As you pray ask God for leading and guidance. Your life itself bears a witness, more than your words. St. Francis of Assisi once said, "Preach by all means, and if necessary, use words" Mere words, without a life (behavior and character) are ineffective.

Offer to pray for someone who has illness in the family or has expressed some other concern. Very few people if any will refuse such an offer. This way you send a signal that you are a person of faith and that the door is open for further conversation should they wish to pursue it. Express how your faith has helped you in particular situations. These may seem like "baby steps", however, they will lead you to become more open to this type of ministry on a larger scale.

IV. TRAINING

Training is essentially a task of equipping the people of God for the work of ministry. Historically Theological Education was exclusively designed and offered to professional clergy in the making, although this has changed over the years. Additionally, such a model catered to 'Parish Ministry' and not to the world.

Theological Training and Education must be geared to prepare an individual to reach and relate to the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and not simply lead to one's Ordination as a Clergyperson. On a recent visit to India, I had the privilege to visit with a small Bible College in Hyderabad, where a small band of young persons is being trained for rural as well as urban ministry. The curriculum not only has Bible, Theology, Doctrine, but Computers, Time Management, English, etc. Such a bold approach is necessary today for effective Lay Ministry.

Training and discipling are needed in the ministry of both clergy and laity. Training is needed in several areas of Nurture, Outreach and evangelism, Worship and Witness, so that lay people can be fruitful in ministry. Somehow the standard of excellence for lay leaders should be benchmarked to that of the clergy. Standards need to be put in place that would measure the quality of lay training on par with training programs for clergy.

Conclusion

The future awaits us, a future which will not tolerate yesterday's Church in today's world, let alone the world of tomorrow. The future is in the hands of the leaders in the Church. This is an hour of challenge as well of promise. The choice before the church as we face the future is either continue with our present pattern and style of ministry or to allow for a "second reformation" -- a reformation of the released power of the laity-God's people-in the world today. May the Lord truly bless us with Holy Boldness to achieve this in our time.

Tributes to Mr. Alfred Bhaskar, the First President of UECF

(By Mr. Syam Pilli, Former President of UECF)



(This is a republished version of eulogy delivered at Mr. Alfred Bhaskar's funeral in 2007)

In my 8 years of association with uncle Alfred Bhaskar, I have observed quite a few virtuous qualities in him. He became my mentor as I was serving at UECF and he guided me whole heartedly and supported me morally. He continued to encourage me even after we moved to Virginia. He was a man of principles. He was honest and called a spade a spade. He demanded the best and strived to stand first and finest. We were told of some stories in the past about his achievement of success in studies, singing competitions and career, and later have closely observed his vision for the ministry.

As we deeply miss him, I would like to share some of the instances where he stood first.

First President of UECF:

As you know, he was the first president of UECF. With a passion for Christ and a vision for our community, he did his best for the growth of this fellowship. Today, UECF has grown this far by following his ideals.

First funeral in UECF:

As you are aware, uncle Bhaskar was the architect of the UECF's Constitution. While referring the constitution, I was marking the checklist of ongoing UECF activities against the ones listed in Goals and Objectives section of constitution which states - "Conduct other services on special occasions such as religious festivals, marriages, birthdays, baptisms, anniversaries and funerals". While reading, I paused at the word 'funerals', but little did I know at that time that uncle Bhaskar's would be the first funeral service in the UECF.

First to be with the Lord:

Some of you would have read his article which was published in in the Souvenir that was released on UECF's 10th Anniversary. He told me that it took him 30 minutes to write that article titled "We are in the final innings of the game ". He raised a couple of questions in the article - "Are you getting ready to face your creator? What are your plans? ". After challenging us with those questions, he was the first one to go to be with the Lord.

Aunty drove him for dialysis for the first time:

When I was consoling Shanthi aunty, she was lamenting by saying – "all these years, I never drove him for dialysis". Last Monday was the first time she drove him to the hospital for dialysis. Sadly, that was the last and final in the life time.

First Christian Family Conference in Virginia:

Last September, we had a Christian Family Conference in Virginia for the first time. When I informed him of the Conference, he readily accepted my invitation, pre-scheduled his dialysis and traveled all the way to Virginia just to give me encouragement. In spite of his impediment, he presented a special solo song at the first conference in Virginia for the glory of God.

A story to share:

After we heard the news of his demise, my little daughter asked me to tell her a bed time story. I started like this: Once upon a time, there was a lion. He calls rabbits, giraffes and all the other animals for rehearsals. He gets angry, if someone is not singing properly. He asks them to sing again and again till they do it right. And the story went on ... at last the lion died.

"He went to heaven?" my little daughter asked.

"Yes mamma"

“He is singing in heaven?” she asked again.
“I think so”
“So... all of them have to sing all by themselves now?” another question.

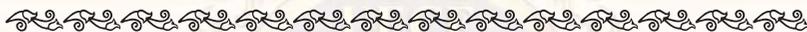
Yes... though he is not with us physically, the vision he set forth for UECF and the path he showed us will definitely help continuing the singing. We often sing a well-known Telugu song “Paadedda Halleluya, maranatha Halleluya”. He sang this song till his last day. It was a privilege for me to sing along with him for the last time during UECF's 10th year celebrations.

I remember - when my mother-in-law went to be with the Lord in December 2000, we were comforted by the UECF families. At that time Uncle Bhaskar said this to me – Any other American Church would have simply sent you a bouquet of flowers and sympathies during this time, but here is UECF which really cares for the families and makes a difference.

Uncle Bhaskar loved this fellowship so much; however, there was an occasion when he asked me “Am I considered a member of this Fellowship?”

At that time, I said to him “As a founding President, you are a lifetime member of UECF”.
Today, I say ... even after his death, he remains in our hearts and in the history of UECF forever.

I would like to conclude by saying this: his name “Bhaskar” in Telugu means Sun. This sun has set, but the light rays reflected on him will continue to shine in UECF.



Profile :

Mr. Alfred Bhaskar son of Late Mr. D. Naraiah and Late Mrs. Kanthamma also known as D.A. Bhaskar, Israel. He was born and raised in Madras (Chennai, India). He completed his formal education at Kellet High School, Madras; did his BE (1955) in Telecommunication Engineering, Guindy, Madras; ME (1981), Microwave/Wireless Engineering, Osmania University, Hyderabad; and MS (1984), Computer Engineering, Boston University, USA, 1984. He started his career at Andhra Electricity Board (Madras, 1955), and moved on to Overseas Communications Service (Bombay, 1956-1961). He was married to Shanthi in 1961 in Madras and worked in several places in India as his job led him – at Neyveli Lignite Corporation (Neyveli, 1961-1962), and Indian Railways (1962-1983). He took voluntary retirement as a Chief Signal Telecommunication Engineer in the South Central Railway at Secunderabad and moved with his family to Boston, USA in 1983 where he got his MS degree from Boston University. He worked at Computer Vision in Boston for a year. He then moved to AT&T in Lincroft, New Jersey in 1985 where he worked for 16 years as Member of Technical Staff at AT&T, Lucent, and Avaya Corp. During his tenure he received many outstanding achievement awards for his expertise in the field of wireless and digital communications.

He took an active part in the Indian Christian Ministry and was closely associated with the Asian Indian Christian Church almost from its inception until 1996. He was one of the original founders of the United Evangelical Christian Fellowship based in Edison and was actively involved in its ministry from 1997 until the day he died. He was fond of singing and used his musical talent extensively to support Christian ministry especially in his native Telugu language. He liked composing gospel songs in Telugu. He was closely associated with the Telugu Christian Fellowship of New Jersey and the United Telugu Christian Fellowship in New York. He was a very loving family man and a devout Christian who instilled Biblical values in his children and grandson. He had great leadership qualities and touched many people with his love, kindness, generosity, humor, and singing talent. He was a father figure to many and was loved and respected by his family, relatives, and friends. He leaves behind his beloved wife Shanthi, sons Samuel, Ravinder and his wife Vatsala and grandson Joseph, Ajay and his wife Suneela, and Sanjay and his wife Madhuri. He is also survived by a brother, Karunakar in Chennai, a sister Parimala in Coimbatore, India, beloved nephew Suresh, and other nephews, friends, and well-wishers in India and in the US.

PROFESSOR MUTHYALA THEOPHILUS, B.D.

(1897-1946)



In an age where the spectacular growth of science and technology has ushered in materialistic outlook in life, the study of the life and ministry of Prof. M Theophilus, deeply rooted in the traditional Christian values, provides refreshing contrast and is spiritually uplifting, ennobling and enriching. His upbringing in a devout Christian family during the early decades of the 20 century in the coastal areas of Cocanada (Kaldnada) in Andhra Desa (Andhra Pradesh) had greatly influenced his personality and as observed by the Rev. Dr. John B. McLaurin, General secretary of the Canadian Baptist Foreign Mission Board, "we are profoundly grateful for this great man, and for his Christian character, and prophetic vision at a

critical time in the history of the Christian churches in die Andhra Desa. He was a man richly gifted of God. As a scholar, he stood high, and his students love and honoured him; he was a statesman and recognized as such throughout India." As his biographer Mr. G.R-Lome states, there are three aspects which are characteristic of him: "his Christ-like life and character; his self-spending services; and his message replete with prophetic vision."

After completing his theological studies at the Theological college, Serampore, Calcutta, in July 1924 Theophilus joined as lecturer at the faculty of the union Theological Seminary, then a joint enterprise of the Canadian and American Baptist Missions. He served the institution for two years until June 1926.

In July 1926 he became professor in the Canadian Baptist Mission Theological Seminary. In theological studies he always advocated a high standard of learning and it is observed: "No one in the long line of students who had passed through these twenty-three years to different pastoral positions in different stations of the mission can. ever forget the influence of the lite and character of Theophilus on his own."

As the Seminarians enter the ministry, his concern for them and their ministry followed mem. This resulted in him bringing up measures for the security of service of a pastor in his profession by Theophilus firmly advocating the appointment of a 'Pastoral Settlement Committee' with powers to appoint, transfer and discharge pastors. He was also instrumental in starting a "Provident Fund* Scheme for pastors and other permanent workers of me Convention to secure the old age of the pastors.

In the year 1927 Theophilus was entrusted with the important service of superintending the evangelistic work on the South Cocanada (Kaldnada) Field, a work in which he put his heart and soul. Through his ministry of prayer and building up of families and in helping people and evangelists, in earning the love and respect of Christians as well as Hindus, in organizing" spiritual retreats Theophilus was unique and he had contributed immensely to the work in the mission field in Andhra Pradesh.

His boldness and courage of conviction is seen in his passionate belief and advocacy for bringing about unity among believers in Christ. The division in the universal Church into Catholicism and Protestantism; which had its origin in Europe during the 15th century is a feature of western Christianity and it naturally found its place in this country as introduced by those who planted the churches here. This difference is against the natural ethos of the native Christians in the country and Theophilus is no exception to this.

There have been many valuable traditions in the ecumenical movement in this country and within the framework of the ecumenical movement, Theophilus made distinct contributions through his creative initiatives in strengthening the movement by advocating inter-denominational fraternity. According to him the "Church should afford universal fellowship of believers. The two-fold nature of the Church is fellowship with God and fellowship among men. In affording universal brotherhood of believers, the Church helps to establish the Kingdom of God. For establishing such universal brotherhood church-union is imperative."

However, in this, Theophilus was too far ahead of his time and he found it difficult to swing the Baptist churches and its believers substantially and decisively on the issue.

The lives and ministries of persons like Theophilus will be a witness for God to people who care to study it as well as to those who know Theophilus personally well. He was a great influence on those in the church and community of his time. He was a man of deep Christian conviction and commitment. He was a dedicated servant of God, who humbly, yet proudly, would call himself, along with others like him "labourers together with God."

Rev. A.B. Masilamani an internationally known Bible Preacher who was student of Prof. Theophilus at Kakinada Bible Seminary testified that next to the Lord Jesus Christ, Prof. Theophilus who was his spiritual father highly influenced him in the transformation of his life. He further declared that he learnt many sermon skills by sitting by his feet. His discipline, national way of dressing (Lalchi and Dhoti) and his beautiful handwriting immensely influenced him.

Rajiv Theophilus Muthyala the Elder of UECF is the proud grandson of Prof. Muthyala Theophilus.

WISDOM SPEAKS

Mrs. Mary Jayakar

Wisdom Speaks----Proverbs chapters 1--4 selected verses

Chapter 1: 5,7,8,10 :-----" A wise man will hear and increase learning and a man of understanding will attain to wise counsels. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge but fools despise wisdom and instruction.----My son hear the instruction of your father and forsake not the law of your mother.

My son if sinners entice you, consent not."

Chapter 2: 1, 2,4-8,20,21:-----" My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding and seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and preserving the way of his saints."

Chapter 3:1 thru 8 ,11 - 13,16- 17:----"-My son , do not forget my teaching but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare will they give you. Let not loyalty and faithfulness forsake you bind them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.--so you will find favor and good repute in the sight of god and man.--Trust in the lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight.--In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.-- Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from the evil.--It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.--My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.--Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gets understanding.----- Long life is in her (wisdom) right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.--Her ways are of pleasantness; and all her paths are peace."

Chapter 4: 25 - 27 :-----"(My son)" Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Take heed to path of your feet, then all your ways be sure. Do not swerve to the right or left; turn your foot away from evil."

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."--
Proverbs 22:6

"A good wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her"pro.31:10,11

NOAH'S GENEALOGY

Dr. SUNDARA RAO TSAPPIDI M.A., D. Lit.,

Melchezidec wrote the book, "The Roots of Mount Ararat". He was the great grandson of Noah who described the history of Mount Ararat and the genealogy of Noah's family. It is in the form of conversation between Melchezidec and a servant boy "Ali" in his house in Salem, which later became Jerusalem. Noah was the only righteous man in his generation.

The land around Mount Ararat was called "Adlandia" or "Atlandis" which means the land of Adam. God noticed that the people of this land became wicked and wanted to destroy them except the family of Noah. God asked Noah to build an Ark for his family to save themselves and for some spices because he wanted to kill everything on the earth with flood. Noah took about 100 years to build the Ark with the help of his brother Jaseth and his father Lamech, who lived for about 777 years. People laughed at their work of building the Ark as they did not know what was going to happen to them.

God found a perfect righteous man in Noah in his generation. He walked with God also. So God wanted to save him and his family (Genesis 6:9)

The measurements of the Ark were given in cubits. A cubit is about 17 to 22 inches. The length of the Ark was 300 cubits, means about 450 feet, width 50 cubits means about 75 feet, Height 30 cubits means about 45 feet.

The height of the rain water after 40 days and 40 nights was 15 cubits means about 23 feet. The water remained on the earth for about 150 days.

After the floods, Noah's family occupied a village called

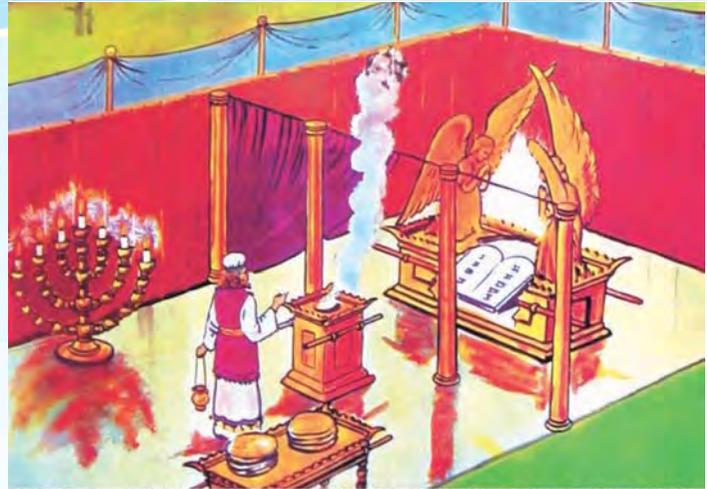
"Heston, which means the village of eight survivors. All the members of the family led their lives as heathens except Noah who believed in Yahweh" (God). He had three sons.

About Noah: He was the only God fearing man in his family. He was a great writer also. What all he wrote in his early days, he maintained a record of everything in the form of scrolls, books and Journals and kept them in clay jars and covered them with salt bags, so that they would not be spoiled.

The Roots of Mount Ararat Noah's wife Naamah			
First Son is Shem and wife – Sindra	Second son is Ham and his Wife Carise. He had four sons and one daughter.		Third son Japheth and his wife Elsbeth
Are called Shemites or Shemitites	Canaan, wife Shelah	Cush (means black)	Japhethites
Terah, wife- Amedia	Sidon	Nimrod	
Abram, wife – sarah .His descendants were Hebrews, Arabs, Persians, Assyrans, Jewish Nation	Melchezidec – was called the king of salem, king of north, king of righteousness. His descendants were called Canaanites, sea people, Phoenicians	He was called king of Shenar, king of south. His descendants were Hamites, Babylonians, Egyptians, Africans, Samaritans.	Europeans, Asians, Japanese, Chinese, Native Americans and Eskimos.



NOAH ARK



THE ALTAR OF KING MELCHEZIDEC

MELCHEZIDEC, KING OF SALEM

'King of Salem' (Genesis 14:18)

Melchizedec king of Righteousness. He was from the family of Sidon and grandson to Canaan. He was a shepherd boy. He knew only feeding the sheep and nothing else. God was with him and liked his innocence. He won the wars with Nimrod. God had chosen Melchizedec from all generations of men as God chose Mary among all women for the purpose of the birth of Christ. He chose Melchizedec and anointed him to be the High Priest of the Almighty. Then God asked him to go to a distant place which he would show and build a city in His name. As per the Word of God, Melchizedec left his duty of a shepherd boy and traveled a long distance. He laid a foundation for a new town which he called Salem, that later became Jerusalem. He became the king also to that city.

He remained there permanently and served bread and wine at the Altar of high God. He found the surrounding place as a place of milk and honey and called it Canaan the name of his grandfather Canaan. And this place was given to Abraham later, as a promised land to his seed Israel. Melchizedec was called the King of Salem. The King of North and the King of Righteousness.

Once, Abraham met Melchizedec while he was returning from the battle with other kings who took Lot his brother's son. Melchizedec was happy to see Abraham. He blessed him and served him bread and wine. He also gave Abraham the shepherd stick of his young age as a presentation.

Abraham in return gave 10th part of his property to Melchizedec which he got from the Kings. So, giving tithes to God started from Abraham... Since then Melchizedec remained in Salem permanently serving bread and wine on the altar. It was he, who laid the foundation for the present Jerusalem. It was he who gave the name Canaan to the land of milk and honey. As a narrator he told the whole story about the genealogy of Noah's family to his servant boy "Ali" and Jerusalem was in existence even at the time of Abraham who lived in about 2200 B.C.

DISCIPLE AS A TESTED ONE

Mr. Arun Kumar and Mrs. Chandra Kala Vuchula

It was so wonderful to see our children to participate in the Christmas Pageant, Shreya as mother Mary, and Samira as Angel and Sujay as baby Jesus. Our Hearts were filled with the joy for God's love to see our children growing up as God's children.

Shreya and Samira fight for the same toys they both want at the same time. They also want to be first when it comes to prayer time.

Samira was suffering from fever quite often during December 2003. Doctors did thorough checkup and thought it might be due to change in the weather, as it was the winter season. But Samira was ok for few days and had fever again and again in January 2004. She had high fever in February 2004 and when we took her to the pediatrician, she thought it might be viral fever and need to wait for few days to see if it comes down. Samira was having high fever in the midnight with body chills and headache and severe body pains. She sweats a lot after the body chills come down. She would be too tired after fighting with uncontrollable body chills. The fever medicine Tylenol only gave her ample relief. She used to ask us to sing bible songs during bedtime and play children's bible songs while going to sleep. We also used to sing children's bible songs to encourage her when she is fighting with high fever and body chills.

On the night of February 15th, Samira was very sick with high fever and we took her again to see the pediatrician. This time Samira's doctor was concerned about her and referred her to St. Joseph's hospital for blood tests and X-RAY. Chandrakala and I took Samira to St. Joseph's hospital and we had to carry her in our arms, as she was unable to stand. The blood tests results were negative and the X-Ray didn't show of any illness. Samira was unable to stand on her feet as she was going through unbearable pain. It was so painful for us as parents to see the child suffering with so much pain and unable to stand on her own feet. We continued to pray and held her close to our heart as she was going through so much pain and fever and experiencing scary dreams. We had to take her again to the pediatrician again on Feb. 16th as she had high fever during the night and gets scared and asks daddy to hold her and sing bible songs and play the children's bible songs. As parents we could hold her so dearly and do whatever the best we could but she continued to suffer from the pain and fever.

We knelt by her bed and prayed. We took her again to the pediatrician on February 17th morning and the pediatrician referred Samira to a Hematologist. We took her to the Emergency room at SINAI hospital on February 17th evening. Doctors did a thorough checkup, did blood tests, Scanning and diagnosed with the Sinus infection. She was able to walk little bit on her feet after taking the medicine Motrin for fever and pain relief. But that was only a temporary relief for few hours. She had high fever with lot of pain at midnight on February 17th, sweated a lot and tired after fighting with uncontrollable body chills. We prayed and prayed and asked for God's healing. Sometimes it gives a feeling that God doesn't answer our prayers so quickly as we expect. But the good Lord still loves us and He is not too early not too late.

When we took Samira to the pediatrician again on February 18th, her Pediatrician knew that Samira is not OK. She suspected something, which she couldn't share with us but wished that what she is suspecting would be wrong. She referred to the SINAI hospital Hematology and took appointment for February 19th and 10:00am. To accommodate my office work, I went to work at 6:00am and came home at 9:00am and then I and my wife Chandrakala took Samira to the Sinai hospital. It was little scary to see the place that we were in. But our hearts continued to seek God's strength. Every moment passed like a day.

The doctors and Nurses at the SINAI hospital were so kind and wonderful. We could see God's love in

their service. They did a physical exam and did a blood test on Samira. The blood test results were negative. It was a little hope but was so painful to go through to see what would be the next results. Then the Doctors did a bone marrow test. It was around 4:00pm on February 19th, Chandrakala and I were near Samira's bed as she was still in the sleep from the sedation after her bone marrow test. We were praying in our hearts and waiting and waiting to know the results of the bone marrow test. Then the Doctor came back after a while and as eager parents, we stood up to hear from the doctor. He asked if we would like to sit down. Thinking that everything would be all right, we said we are ok. Then the doctor said ' She has Leukemia'. Our hearts are broken down with sorrow and sadness. We felt like we reached the dead end of the life's road. I couldn't stand anymore. I sat down as my body dropped down into the chair behind me and Chandrakala continued to ask the doctor several question. Like any father who love their children so dearly, I cried out to the Lord, 'Lord don't take her way as I can't live without her'. I cried out, 'Samira, don't leave me, I can't live without you'. It was so much temptation and loneliness. Our hearts were filled with unbearable sorrow. The fear took control of our hearts in our weakness. The next immediate question that came into the mind was, if the Lord wants Samira in heaven, she will be surely in heaven for her faithfulness to the God at the age of three and half years, but where am I heading to. Will I get there to see Samira when my life's journey is finished on this earth.

The words Samira used to read during the family prayer time pierced through my heart – “Even though I walk through the valley of shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me” – Ps 23:5. We continued to seek God's help and prayed every moment. The Doctor explained about the illness and consequences and chances of survival. It was a long wait to hear from the doctors to know what kind of Leukemia Samira has. The doctor came back with the further test results and conveyed that Samira has ALL (Acute Lymphocytes Leukemia) in her bone marrow and it can be curable with the chemotherapy. We struggled within our hearts as we had very little knowledge of the disease. Chandrakala came back home that night to take care of our four months old son Sujay. I knelt by Samira's bed and prayed the whole night. We had to wake her up in the middle of the night for X-Ray and blood tests. On the 20th of February morning, Dr. Joseph Wiley walked into Samira's room. Perhaps he came in early to see Samira. I couldn't control myself when I saw him and broke down and cried out ' I want Samira back, please save her'. He knows how much pain any parent may go through when their child is sick like Samira. He offered me a chair to sit and he squat next to my chair and tried to console. He said, “ I will treat Samira like my own child'. At that time I could see him not only as a Doctor, but I could experience God's love through him.

Rev & Mrs. David Ravinder came from New Jersey on Feb. 20th early morning to stay with us during the treatment as they love our children so dearly and they stayed with us for two days and gave us lot of courage and they prayed for Samira. We informed Rev. Bill Brown and Epworth United Methodist Church family in Cockeyville, who gave us so much strength by their prayers and words of encouragement. Rev. Bill Brown and Epworth church family always stood by our side. The doctors came on Friday morning and explained about the treatment and consequences of not curing the disease and the side effects of the treatment. But not sure of how Samira will respond to the treatment, it was so painful for us to go through. There was no time to think and decide what to do. God is not too early nor too late. We continued to pray for Samira as a family. We called Rev. Arun Andrews on Feb. 21st and informed of Samira's Condition, who moved in tears and prayed for Samira. We also informed our church in Cockeyville - Epworth church family, friends and family in India and asked to pray for Samira.

Sometimes we feel so hopeless of the things and situation, but God still gives us hope – 'Praise be to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! He has given us a LIVING HOPE through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:3'

Samira always sings the bible song 'Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so..'. We as a family gathered in Samira's room and sang her favorite song 'Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so'. The words penetrated through our hearts to know how much God loves us and how much Samira is experiencing of God's love. When we gather for the family prayer in the evenings, Samira wants to read the bible and she reads Psalm 23.

When the fever reduced and when she is able to speak and knowing that she is feeling better, she said 'Jesus healed me, Jesus is in my heart, Jesus made me strong'. Samira's faith gave us so much strength. Psalm 103:3 clearly tell us that God heals all our diseases. Jesus raised the girl who was dead; Jesus healed the blind – John chapter 9 tells of Jesus healing the blind man. It makes me guilty some times that we seek God's help when we are in deep trouble. We go through many painful situations in the life. But the Bible tells us, 'Be joyful, always; Pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus' 1Ths 5:16-18. "My Son, do not make light of the Lord's disciplines, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those He loves and He punishes everyone he accepts as a son" – Hebrew 12:5-6. Luke Chapter 9 reminds that we need to follow Jesus as his Disciples. It also comes to a realization how important it is to support one another in prayer as followers of Jesus.

We as a family were really touched by God's love when we saw that we are surrounded by God's children. It's a true experience of God's love to know that God's children far and near are praying endlessly for Samira. We thank God for all who are praying for Samira. Several friends keep enquiring about Samira's health and treatment and encourage us through their prayers. Several Church families keep constantly praying for Samira. We are thankful to God for all of them and we keep all of them in our daily prayers. As Samira continues with her treatment for another two years, it's a long journey, but surely God will lead us through.

"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and he will do this" Psalm 37:5
" Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him" Psalm 37:7

In these very difficult times of trials, personally and as family these words are my source of inspiration, source for holding on to the Lord, asking for His mercy, asking for His guidance, asking Him to make us strong...

I never questioned Him why this happened to my little angel, rather I asked Him to stand beside us and help us to get through this and ask Him to bring back Samira as a living witness to the altar.

Samira has been a source of inspiration to all of us the way she fights back, the way she believes in Jesus. Sometimes she prays saying "Thank you Jesus for staying in my heart and making me strong". God gave us the strength we needed as parents not to cry in front of kids. As far as I am concerned I am still clinging on to the promise " Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him" Psalm 37:7

All these days Lord has been wonderful and thought me to give thanks to God for each and every little thing that we take it for granted, He thought me to appreciate life more.

It is amazing to see how God gives strength to these tiny little kids the strength to fight back, the optimism in life and best of all is the struggle for existence ... I learn a lot from Samira.

I believe that what we are experiencing today is His Grace and His Love.

Zacharias – The Lord Remembers

Mr. Sunil & Mrs. Prafulla Vuppula

Over the past fourteen years, as a couple, we lived in three countries, moved five cities, changed seven homes and as a family went through many roller - coaster experiences. Some of those experiences shook us, and some shaped us but one experience that defined us, was the journey of having of our second child, Sahil Zacharias. There were a few times when the gift almost came but, we lost it after some hope. We were racked with sadness, depression, despair, anger, as we slowly began to cope with each loss. We mourned like the Psalmist David in Psalm 13:1, “How long O God? Will you forget me? How long will you hide your face from me?”

We could not pray for the same blessing because of the cloud of despondency that hung in our home. While it was difficult for us to grapple with repeated miscarriages, it was getting impossible for us to explain to our son who was growing in curiosity. After going through a battery of tests with a bevy of specialist doctors, they gave us the inevitable but unhelpful conclusion. “Medically, there is nothing wrong with you. We cannot explain the repeated mishaps” We were perplexed and devastated but put on a brave facade, for Aman's sake.

The biggest challenge was to ensure that we continue to model and train our son in the faith to demonstrate to him, that what we believe, actually works as a practical lifestyle. We shared with him an illustration that God always answers prayers in three words, 1) Yes, 2) No and 3) Wait. Like all restless children, he would pester us “Why is God only answering in “Wait”, why won't he change it to Yes”? By the time 2011 ended, we became distraught and hit rock-bottom. We sat in the sanctuary during the watch-night service at an Indian church in Virginia, and asked the Lord to speak to us. We yearned for him to remind us that he had not forgotten us as we came to a breaking point. That night we felt that we heard God clearly speak through the sermon titled “The year of Harvest”. We decided to “Be still” and surrender our lives afresh.

Shortly after New Year, we discovered that we were on the journey again. Each day, each week, each appointment with the doctor was like walking on eggshells. As we laid aside our keen desire to have a kid and whole-heartedly invested in JBQ kids who filled our home with laughter, God stepped in. By second trimester, the doctor who was a hopeless cynic was beginning to get optimistic. We drew strength from his word. During the Lent prayer meetings through Rev. Van Der Lain's DVD teaching, we learnt that “God does not expect us to solve tomorrow's problems with today's grace”. Like fresh Manna, we had to depend each day on his strength to cope, to wait and keep moving forward. Shortly after entering the third trimester, in series of quick events, God decided to send home a fragile premature baby, six weeks ahead of schedule. On July 26th Aman was asked by a dear friend while driving him to the hospital “Aman, how do you feel about the news? He said” This is an answer to my prayer after 8 years, I am happy” The name Zacharias means – “The Lord remembers”.

Three lessons learnt

God is not a bellboy - He is the Sovereign Lord - We learnt how to pray. Even our tears and anguish filled cries did not change his will towards our life. We had to by faith walk in His way.

God is not in a hurry- He is a Timekeeper of the Universe - We learnt how to wait. As we waited we learned to serve him, be still and continue to keep praising His name at all times.

God is not an avenger - He is love personified - We learnt to live in grace. We had to consciously seek forgiveness and live in peace. God visits his people with good gifts, and life is not the same after he remembers us.

The Spark of Gospel In The Land of Darkness

Mrs. Mary Udayalakshmi Pulipati

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned” was Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 9:2) which extends to the whole world. It is good news to all the people of all the nations. Although Isaiah lived 750 years before the birth of the world's Savior, he foretold people of His birth, life, death and resurrection. The incarnation of Christ is a central Christian doctrine. Christians believe that God became flesh, assumed human nature and became a man in the form of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is the Second Person of the Trinity. This foundational Christian doctrine holds that Jesus is truly God and truly man. God chose one man, and one nation from the center of the world to shine His light upon all nations. Jesus was born in the lineage of Abraham, the patriarch of the Israelites.

He is the Light of the world. He lived a sinless life and paid the penalty for sin for all people of all times by receiving the sinners' punishment on the cross. Sins are forgiven only through His blood. Whoever believes in Him and confesses His name receives eternal life. Jesus said in John 14:6 “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Ignorance is darkness and that darkness must be dispelled. Ignorance cannot be condoned. It is every Christian's duty to share this good news with people who never heard of it before. It is very encouraging to know that sinner and saint are the same in the eyes of God when the sinner accepts the gift of salvation.

We are from India and we know that our Hindu brothers and sisters as well as others from other religions strictly adhere to the traditions and rituals of their respective religions. They always feel happy and satisfied with their own practices and sincerely believe that they will attain moksha by following all the traditions

like the Jewish people. They believe in good works and not in grace. They are self-righteously complacent about their religiosity. Most of them recite this sloka on a daily basis for illumination: “ asathoma sadgamaya, thamasoma jyothirgamaya, mruthyoma amruthangamaya, om shanthi shanthi shantihi.” Which means “lead me from untruth to truth; lead me from darkness to light; lead me from death to immortality. Let your peace abide with me.” This prayer has three important things: untruth, darkness and death. Did any of their deities ever proclaim like Jesus did as in John 14:6 (cited above)? None of them had the history of rising from the dead as Jesus did. The resurrection of Christ is the Christian's hope for eternal life. What joy would it be to live in heaven forever! This is what Jesus wants us to tell people who have no hope of having a place in heaven.

Jesus rose from the dead (resurrected) after being buried for three days. He appeared to His disciples several times before ascending into heaven. On the first occasion when He appeared to them behind closed doors, one of the twelve by name Thomas doubted Jesus' resurrection and demanded to feel Jesus wounds before being convinced (John 20:24-29). The Lord allowed him to touch his wounds. Then Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” Was Thomas ashamed of his unbelief? Was he repentant? I always wonder how he reacted. “My Lord and my God” conveys feelings of remorse to me. Remorse cuts through the core of a repentant sinner.

Before His ascension the Lord said to his disciples “All authority in heaven and on earth

has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Also in Acts 1:8 the Lord said to them “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The Great Commission is the instruction of the resurrected Jesus Christ to his disciples that they spread his teachings to all the nations of the world. It has become a tenet in Christian theology emphasizing ministry, missionary work, evangelism, and baptism. “On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.” Acts 1:4. To spread the teachings of the Lord, people need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Rev. Charles Stanley explained this concept in “The Power Within” that “we cannot harness the power of the Holy Spirit. This power is not just for preachers, evangelists, or people who work in special ministry; rather it is available to every believer who willingly surrenders moment by moment in submission and obedience to the Holy Spirit.”

The significance of Christ's choice of the word nations is that the goal of the Great Commission is not limited to the Jews in Israel only but to all the nations. The disciples' task was to witness to Jesus starting from Jerusalem “to the ends of the earth” which includes India, China and Japan too. The church's task is not completed until institutions, cultures and governments submit to the King of kings and the Lord of lords. It is an international program of salvation. Peter and John were committed to Jerusalem, while Paul and others went into the Roman world. Perhaps the only two of the

eleven who went outside the Roman world to preach the Gospel was Thomas and Bartholomew. According to Eusebius, the Roman historian, Thomas and Bartholomew went to Parthia (present Iran and many other near eastern countries) and India. According to the third century New Testament apocrypha text called “The Acts of Thomas” the disciples drew lots to decide where each one of them needed to go according to the will of the Lord, and India fell to Thomas.

It is said that Thomas went to North West India first along with a merchant and ministered unto them as in that part of India Koine Greek was spoken. This was a result of the hellenization of the region by Alexander the great. Thomas spoke the language and had a fruitful ministry and many conversions took place which included the king Gundaphorus, the founder of Indo-Pakistan kingdom and also his brother. His second missionary trip was in 52 AD to a kingdom in the south west of India ruled by King Mahadwa in Kerala.

Thomas evangelized to this area and then crossed to the Coromandel Coast of south east India where he suffered martyrdom near Madras about 72 AD. He was buried near the site of his death in Chennai. He is the pioneer who carried the torch of the gospel to the people in darkness in a far off land which may come under “the ends of the world. The “doubting Thomas“ became the “believing Thomas” because he had obeyed the command of the Lord. This was the result of the unction of the Holy Spirit. As evangelizing started at Jerusalem, so it must go from the inner most part to the outer most parts of our territories starting from family members and ending with utmost strangers.

Praying in 'WORD' for our Children

For past few years, I have used this list that my friend shared with me and added scripture to pray through the month for my children. There is power of praying in God's WORD in our children's lives.

May the Lord help us raise a generation that is set apart for HIM!

Mrs. Susan Bushi

1. SALVATION:

May our children know you as their personal Savior and Lord. Help our children to submit to your Lordship in all areas of their lives.

Acts 4;12 (KJV)

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

2. HOLY DISCONTENT:

Help our children not to be content or complacent when it comes to the things of God. Let them hunger and thirst for you and desire to know you at a deeper level. Let their walk with you be filled with exciting life changing encounters.

Math 5;6

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

3. DAILY QUIET TIME:

Help our children to find joy in studying your word and not think of it as a chore. Give them fresh insights from your word and reveal yourself to them on a daily basis.

Joshua 1;8

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful

4. VIBRANT PRAYER LIFE:

Help our children to have the right perspective on prayer. Let them not reduce you to a cosmic bell-boy. Teach them to trust your wisdom and timing. Let their prayers not be selfish and self-centered. Let them realize the importance and value of intercessory prayer as well as corporate prayer.

Luke 11;1

Lord, teach us to pray;

5. GOOD CHOICES:

Help our children to consciously make good choices that will honor you and make you proud.

Deut 30;19

I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life

6. SELF ESTEEM:

Help our children see themselves as you see them.

Give them a deep sense of self confidence that is rooted in God confidence.

Prov 3;26

For the LORD shall be thy confidence

7. Thankfulness:

Let our children always have an attitude of gratitude. Help them Lord never to get so busy enjoying your blessings that they forget to thank you, the giver of all good gifts.

Col 3;15

.. and be ye thankful.

8. INTEGRITY:

Help our children grow up to be men and women of integrity in all areas of their lives. Let their conversation, conduct and character be pleasing to you.

Psalms 25;21

Let integrity and uprightness preserve me;

9. TIME:

Help our children use their time wisely. Let them invest their time on things of lasting value. Help them to get their priorities right.

Psalm 89;47

Remember how short my time is;

10. PERSPECTIVE:

Help our children live life here on earth with an eternal perspective. Let them always see the Big Picture. Help them to trust you even when they do not understand you.

Rom 8;28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

11. WISDOM:

Help our children to excel academically .. not just head knowledge but a heart of discernment.

Prov 3;21, 22

Keep sound wisdom and discretion; So they will be life to your soul And grace to your neck.

12. JOY:

Fill the lives of our children with outward joy and inward peace - The kind this world cannot give; the kind this world cannot take away.

Psalms 16;11

You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

13. HEALTH/BALANCE:

As our children grow up to be adults, help them to be well adjusted mature individuals with a healthy balance, physically and emotionally.

Luke 2;52

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

14. VALUES:

Help our children have the right values and put you first in their lives. Help them not to get caught up in the worldly trap of making work and worldly success their gods.

1 John 2;17

The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

15. GRACE:

Let your unmerited favor be upon our children. Let them strive to “Live by Your grace and Live for Your glory!”. Also help them to show grace to others when needed, not being critical or condemning.

1 Cor 15;10

But by the grace of God I am what I am

16. TRIALS:

Help our children not to buy into the lie that because we are Your children we will not have any difficulties in life. Help them realize that we all must go through our share of trials because we live in a fallen world. When they face trials help them to turn to You for strength and face them with courage and fortitude.

1 Pet 1;6,7

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith...may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

17. MARRIAGE:

In your time, help our children build strong happy marriages that are rooted and grounded in You. Let them truly love and respect their spouses and find total love, happiness, companionship and fulfillment in their marriages.

Heb 13;4

Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled:

18. PURITY:

Help our children keep themselves pure until

marriage. Once married help them never to cause their spouses even a moment's sorrow by any careless thoughtless action.

1 Tim 4;12

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

19. BELIEFS:

Help our children as they form their own personal statement of belief. Help them to sift the various world views through Your word before formulating their own personal world view.

Acts 17;11,12

They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed.

20. ACHIEVEMENT:

Help our children dream big dreams. Give them a vision to do great and awesome things. Let them never be afraid to try. Help them to remember that when you call them to do something you will equip them, enable them and empower them.

Prov 29;18

Where there is no vision, the people perish:

21. LOVE FOR SIBLINGS:

Help our children have a lifelong love for their siblings and truly enjoy each other's company. Help them to always be there for each other, watch out for each other, pray for each other, support each other and help each other out.

Psalms 133;1

How wonderful it is, how pleasant, when brothers live together in harmony!

22. LOVE FOR PARENTS:

Though we want our children to outgrow their need for us, help them never to outgrow their love for us. To this end, help us to realize that they are responsible young adults and refrain from the fatal habit of giving unsolicited advice and trying to “fix” all their mistakes.

Mark 10;19

Honour thy father and mother

23. FAMILY LIFE:

Help our children (when they have children of their own) find great joy and fulfillment in their children and help them to be good role models to their kids. Let their home be a haven of happiness and a refuge of peace.

Psalms 127;3

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

24. LEADERSHIP:

Help our children to be leaders and not followers. Help them to have a godly positive influence on those around them in their church, at work and among their friends. Let their vision be clearer than their doubts and their convictions stronger than their fears.

Exo 32;34

Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee:

25. FORGIVENESS:

Help our children to be ready to forgive. Help them to be quick to ask for forgiveness when they are at fault and ready to grant forgiveness when it is asked of them even if it is hard.

Eph 4;32

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

26. SERVICE:

Help our children have a strong desire to serve you wherever you have placed them. Help them to be tent makers - like Paul - let them continue their professions and yet serve you. If there is a call on their life to leave their profession, help them to be clear in understanding and ready to obey. Let them experience the joy of bringing others to you.

Exo36;1

Bezalel, Oholiab, and the other craftsmen whom the LORD has gifted with wisdom, skill, and intelligence will construct and furnish the Tabernacle, just as the LORD has commanded.

27. OUTLOOK:

Give our children the ability to bring out the best in other people. Grant them the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talent in unexpected people.

Gen 45;4,5

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt!_And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.

28. FRIENDS:

Friends are one of life's biggest blessings. Give our children wisdom to choose their friends well. Give them friends whom they will have fun hanging out with; friends who will genuinely rejoice with them

when they are successful; friends who will be honest enough to point out their mistakes but will love them unconditionally anyway; friends who will stand by them when they have made a fool of themselves; friends who will stand up for them when they are being criticized unfairly; friends who will give them godly advice.

Prov 17;17

A friend loveth at all times

29. CARE:

Help our children truly care for others and be willing to step out of their comfort zone to help others.

John 13;35

Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples

30. FINANCES:

Bless the finances of our children. Prosper them and help them never to be in want. At the same time let them not have so much that they cease to stay dependent on you. Help our children to be faithful stewards in tithes and offerings.

Prov 3-;8,9

Give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?" And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God's holy name.

31. LEGACY:

Help our children leave behind a lasting legacy in this world. Let them be remembered with love and respect and let their contributions to society have lasting value.

Psalms 45;17

I will bring honor to your name in every generation. Therefore, the nations will praise you forever and ever.

Pledge: "As for me, I will certainly not sin against the LORD by ending my prayers for you. And I will continue to teach you what is good and right. I Sam 12;23

పాటలతో ప్రభువుని స్తుతించండి

శ్రీ డేవిడ్ నిలిక్షణరావు కారాకుల

“అత్తపూర్ణులై యుండుడి, ఒకని నొకడు కీర్తనలతోనూ, సంగీతములతోనూ, అత్తసంబంధమైన పాటలతోనూ హెచ్చరించుచు, మీ హృదయములలో ప్రభువును గూర్చి పాడుచు, కీర్తించుచు.... (making melody) ఎఫెసి 5:18 - 19

1. ప్రస్తావన : క్రైస్తవ విశ్వాసము సంగీతయుక్తమైన విశ్వాసము. పరిశుద్ధ గ్రంథముంతా - మొదటినుండి చివరకు-అనేక పాటలతో నిండి వుంది. వ్యక్తులుగా, కుటుంబాలుగా, సమాజంగా, దేవుని ప్రజలు ఆయన పట్ల తమ ప్రేమను, కృతజ్ఞతను, పాటలద్వారా వెల్లడి చేసిన సందర్భాలు అసంఖ్యాకంగా వున్నాయి. అయితే రానురాను ఈ పాటలను మనం కేవలం ఆదివారపు ఆరాధనలకే పరిమితం చేసేశాము. గత తరంలో నైతే తెల్లవారుఝామున మరియు రాత్రి చీకటిపడే సమయాన క్రైస్తవ గృహాలన్న వీధిలో నడిచి వెళ్తుంటే, కుటుంబ ప్రార్థనలలో పాడే పాటలు దారి పొడవునా వినిపిస్తూ వుండేవి. నేడు అవి దాదాపుగా ఆగిపోయాయి. కారణాలు వేరుగా వివరించాల్సిన పని లేదు.

ఎఫెసి పత్రిక 5వ అధ్యాయంలో దేవాలయంను గూర్చిన ప్రస్తావన లేదు. అయినా అక్కడ పరిశుద్ధాత్ముడు ఇచ్చే అనేక హెచ్చరికలలో “అత్తపూర్ణులై యుండుడి, అత్త సంబంధమైన పాటలతో ప్రభువుని స్తుతించండి” అని తెలియజేస్తున్నాడు. చూశారా! పాటలు ఆదివారానికే పరిమితం కాదు. అత్త పూర్ణులైన క్రైస్తవులు అత్తసంబంధమైన పాటలు వీలుచిక్కినప్పుడల్లా పాడుతూ వుండాలి. ఆందరం మధురంగా పాడలేక పోవచ్చుగాని, పెదవులతో పలికే ఆ పదాలలోని మాధుర్యాన్ని హృదయంలో అనుభవించవచ్చు. ప్రక్కనున్న వారికి అలాంటి మధురమైన అనుభూతి కలిగినా, కలుగక పోయినా ప్రభువు మాత్రం తప్పక ఆనందిస్తాడు.

2. పాటలంటే ప్రభువుకు ఇష్టం : కీర్తన 22:3లో ప్రభువు “ఇశ్రాయేలు స్తోత్రములపై ఆసీనుడై” ఉంటాడు అని వ్రాయబడింది. ఎక్కడ స్తుతి గానాలుంటే అక్కడ ఆయన వచ్చి ఆసీనుడౌతాడు. ఆయన ఎక్కడ ఉంటే అక్కడ అభయం, ఆశ్రయం, ఆశీర్వాదాలుంటాయి. యెషయా 6:1-4లో అత్యున్నత సింహాసనముపై ఆసీనుడైన ప్రభువు సెరాపులనబడే మహాదులచే “సైన్యములకధిపతియగు యెహూవా పరిశుద్ధుడు పరిశుద్ధుడు పరిశుద్ధుడు, సర్వలోకము ఆయన మహిమతో నిండియున్నది.” అని ప్రస్తుతించబడుచున్నట్లుగా చూస్తాము. అలాగే ప్రకటన 5:9-14లో పరలోకంలో దేవుని సింహాసనం చుట్టూవున్న నాలుగు జీవులు, ఇరువది నలుగురు పెద్దలుకూడా క్రొత్తపాట పాడినట్లుగా చదువుతాం.

అన్నట్లు, ఈ లోకంలోనూ, పరలోకంలోనూ కూడా ఉండే పరిచర్య కేవలం పాటలు పాడే పరిచర్య మాత్రమే! ఎందుచేతనంటే, పరలోకంలో ఇంకెంత మాత్రం పరిశుద్ధ గ్రంథంతోగాని, ప్రార్థనతోగాని, ప్రసంగంతోగాని అవసరం ఉండదు. ఎందుకంటే మనం అక్కడ ప్రభువు సన్నిధిలోనే సదా కాలం ఉంటాం కాబట్టి! అక్కడ ఆయనను స్తుతిస్తూ దేవదూతలతో కలిసి పాటలు పాడడమే మన పరమావధి. మరి ఇప్పటినుండియే ఈ స్తుతి గానాలు చేయగలడం ఎంత గొప్పభాగ్యం!

3. పాటలద్వారా వాక్యం కంఠస్థం : మనకు కలిగే మరియొక ప్రయోజనాన్ని పరిశుద్ధాత్ముడు కొలస్సి పత్రిక 3:16లో తెలియజేశాడు. పాటలద్వారా మనం ఒకరికొకరం బోధించు కొనవచ్చు, బుద్ధిచేప్పకొనవచ్చుకుడా. అంత మాత్రమే కాకుండా - మన హృదయాలలో దేవుని గూర్చి గానంచేయుట ద్వారా క్రీస్తువాక్యం మనలో సమ్మర్థిగా నివసిస్తుంది. “దేవుడే నా కాశ్రయంబు దివ్యమైన దుర్గము” పాడుట ద్వారా 47వ కీర్తన, “దేవ సంస్తుతి చేయవే మనసా” పాడుట ద్వారా 103 వ కీర్తన, “దేవునికి స్తోత్రము గానము చేయుటయే మంచిది”. పాడుట ద్వారా 147వ కీర్తన “దేవుని స్తుతియించుడి ఎల్లప్పుడూ”... పాడుట ద్వారా 150వ కీర్తన, ఇలా ఎన్నెన్నో వాక్యభాగాలు పాటలద్వారా మన మనసులో చెరగని రీతిలో ముద్రించబడతాయి.

4. పాటలమాధుర్యాన్ని పొందడానికి/పెంపొందించుకోవడానికి సూత్రం : ఇష్టమైన పాటలను ముందుగా ఒక నోట్‌బుక్‌లో వ్రాసుకోండి. ఆ పాట సాహిత్యం (లిరిక్) తెలియకపోతే ఆ పాట ఉన్న క్యాసెట్‌ను మధ్యమధ్యలో పాజ్ చేస్తూ మనం వ్రాసుకోవచ్చు. అన్నట్లు, ప్రతి క్రైస్తవ గృహంలో C.D. ప్లేయర్ / MP3 ప్లేయర్ / iPod తప్పని సరిగా ఉండాలి. మీ ఇంట్లో కంప్యూటర్, దానికి ఇంటర్నెట్ కనెక్షన్ వుంటే ఏ ప్లేయర్ లేకుండానే www.uecf.net లో వేలాది పాటలు ఉచితంగా వినవచ్చు, నేర్చుకోవచ్చు - వాటిలో మీకిష్టమైన పాటలను ప్లే చేస్తూ మీరుకూడా గొంతుకలిపి పాడండి. “అనగ ననగ రాగమతి శయిల్లుచునుండు” అనే సామెత అక్షరాలా మన విషయంలో కుడా అనుభవ సత్యమౌతుంది. అలా పాడే సమయంలో, పాటలలోని మాటలపై ధ్యానముంచండి. స్వరంలో భావంపలికించడానికి ప్రయత్నించండి. స్నేహితులతో, కుటుంబసభ్యులతో కలిసి స్తుతి గీతాలు ప్రాక్టీస్ చేయండి. సంగీతం సంతోషాన్ని, సమాధానాన్ని ఇస్తుంది. అంతేకాదు, సంతోషాన్ని పెంపొందిస్తుంది. సంతోషం కలిగితే పాటలు అవే వస్తాయి. వచ్చి తీరుతాయి (యాకోబు 5:13బి).

మీరు అద్భుతంగా పాడగలిగారా లేదా అనే ప్రశ్న లేదు. ఎందుకంటే మీరు ఏ ఆడిషన్ టెస్ట్ కోసం పాడలేదు కదా. హృదయపూర్తిగా పాడిన పాటలలోని మాధుర్యాన్ని దేవుడు గ్రహిస్తాడు! పైగా పాట పాడడం ముగిసిన తర్వాత మీరు జాగ్రత్తగా ఆలకిస్తే, పరలోకపు అభినందన వినవచ్చు! కనీసం పాట ఆపినందుకు ఆనందంతో పక్కంటివారైనా అభినందించవచ్చు!!

దేవుడు ఎవరికి మేళ్లు చేస్తాడు?

-బ్రదర్ ఏనన్న

'మునుపటికంటే అధికమైన మేలు మీకు కలుగజేసెదను'.
(యోహా3:6:11)

కృతజ్ఞత కలిగిఉన్న యెడల:

దేవుడు ఇశ్రాయేలీయులను వారి పగవారైన ఐగుప్తీయులచేతిలో నుండి రక్షించెను. వారి మార్గమునకు అడ్డువచ్చిన ఎజిప్టు సముద్రములో మార్గము సరాళము చేసెను. వారి శత్రువులలో ఒక్కడైనను మిగులకుండా ఎజిప్టు సముద్రములో ముంచి వేసెను. అప్పుడువారు దేవునినమ్మి, నాట్యముచేయుచూ, ఆయనకు స్తుతికీర్తన పాడిరి అని 10వ కీర్తన 10,11,12 లో చదువుచున్నాము. మరి 13వ పదనములో వెంటనే ఆయన కార్యములను మరచిపోయిరి అనికూడా చదువుచున్నాము. ఆయన చేసినమేళ్లు తలంచి, తలంచి, తలంచి ఎల్లప్పుడు కృతజ్ఞతాస్తుతి చెలించ వలసినవారు, వెంటనే మరచిపోవుట వలన, వారి ఎదుటవున్న మంచినీరు చేదుగా మార్చబడినవి. గనుక వారి ప్రాణములు క్షీణించి సొమ్మునీలినవి. ఆ తరువాత దేవుని మాట వినినందువలన, 'మారా' మధురమైనట్లు చదువుచున్నాము. కృతజ్ఞత లేనివారి హృదయాలు అంధకారమయమగునని రోమా 1:22 లో చదువుచున్నాము. కృతజ్ఞత కలిగినవారే చేసిన మేలును మరువక స్తుతి చెల్లించెదరు.

మాటవినిన యెడల:

'అయ్యో! నా ప్రజలు నా మాట వినిన యెడల, నా మార్గమును అనుసరించిన యెడలఎంత మేలు!' (కీర్తన81:13).

ఇశ్రాయేలీయులు దేవుని మాట వినకపోయినందున, వారి హృదయాలు కఠినమైనట్లు, మాటవినిన యెడలఎంతో మేలు కలుగునట్లు కీర్తన 81:11,12 లో చదువుచున్నాము. ఆయన మాటవినిన యెడల(1) శత్రువులను అణగద్రొక్కును. (2) శ్రేష్టమైన గోధుమలతో పోషించును. (3) కొండతేనెతో తృప్తి పరచును. ఇప్పున్న దేవునిమాట విని అనుసరించేవారికి కలిగే మేళ్లని కీర్తన 81:14,15,16 వాక్యాలలో చదువుచున్నాము.

సమూయేలు ప్రవక్త, గాడిదలవెంట తిరుగుచున్న సౌలును అభిషేకించి, దేవుని స్వాస్థ్యముమీద అధిపతిగా నియమించాడు. నా కంటే ముందుగా నీవు గిల్లాలనుకు వెళ్ళు, నేను నీ యెద్దకువచ్చి దహన బలులను, సమాధాన బలులను అర్పించి నీవు చేయవలసిన దానిని నీకు తెలియజేసెదనని చెప్పాడు. (1సమూయేలు 10:8). ఆ ప్రకారమే సౌలు గిల్లాలకు వెళ్ళాడు. కాని సమూయేలు రావడము కొంత ఆలస్యమైనందున, సౌలు సాహసించి దహనబలి, సమాధానబలి, అర్పించేస్తాడు. (1సమూయేలు 13:8-13). అంతలోనే సమూయేలు వచ్చి సౌలుతో 'నీ దేవుడైన యెహోవా నీకిచ్చిన ఆజ్ఞను గ్రహించక నీవు అవివేకపు పని చేసెతివి; నీ రాజ్యమును ఇశ్రాయేలీయులమీద సదాకాలము స్థిరపచుటకు యోహోవా తలంచి యుండెను; అయితే నీ రాజ్యము నిలవదని' అంటున్నాడు. సౌలు తన రాజరికాన్ని కోల్పోవుటకుగలకారణము ఏమైవుంటుంది?

యాజకులే అర్పించవలసిన బలులు, సౌలు సాహసించి అర్పించెను. సమూయేలు సౌలుతో మాట్లాడినప్పుడు దేవుడు నీకిచ్చిన ఆజ్ఞను గ్రహించక అని అంటున్నాడు. వాస్తవానికి సౌలుతో అన్నది సమూయేలే కాని అది దేవుని ఆజ్ఞ అంటున్నాడు. దేవుని సేవకులద్వారా చెప్పబడిన మాట అది దేవుని మాటగా గుర్తించాలి. అలా గుర్తించక సాహసించి అవివేకపు పనులుచేసి, తమ ఆత్మీయ జీవితమును అనేకులు నాశనము చేసుకున్నారు. దైవ సేవకులమాట దేవుని మాటగా

అంగీకరించనందువలన, శత్రువుచేతిలో అనేకులు నలిగిపోతున్నారు. దేవుని మాట విన్నవారికి జరిగే గొప్ప మేలు ఏదనగా, శత్రువుని క్షణాలలో దేవుడు అణగద్రొక్కుతాడని తెలుసుకోవాలి.

దేవుని మందిరమునకు వచ్చిన యెడల:

కీర్తన 65:4 లో మందిరములోని మేలుతో తృప్తిపొందెదము అని వ్రాయబడియున్నది. దేవుని మందిరములో ఏ ఏ విధములమేళ్లు ఉన్నాయో తప్పనిసరిగా తెలుసుకోవాలి. ఆ మేళ్లు తెలిపినవారు దేవుని మందిరానికి వెళ్లకుండా ఉండలేరు. ఒక్క అదివారపు ఆరాధనకు వెళ్లనివారు 1000 దినములఆశీర్వాదాన్ని పోగొట్టుకుంటారు.

(1) దేవుని మందిరములో దేవునితో నడిచే అనేకమంది సొమ్మాలిని క్షేమాభివృద్ధి పొందవచ్చు.

(2) దేవుని మార్గాలు బోధింపబడగా నేర్చుకొని ఆయన మార్గాలలో నడవవచ్చు (యోషయ2:3)

(3) దేవుడు మనకిచ్చే సమస్త విధములైన రాబడిలో దేవుని సొమ్ము దేవునికి ఇచ్చి, శాపవిమోచన దేవుని మందిరములో పొందవచ్చు, మరికొన్ని అదృశ్యమైనవి, ఈ మేళ్లన్నీ పొందాలనుకుంటే దైవ ఆరాధన నిర్లక్ష్యపరచకూడదు. కొందరు సంవత్సరానికి ఒకటి రెండుసార్లు, పండుగ రోజుల్లోనే దేవుని మందిరములో కనిపిస్తారు. ఇలాంటివారు దేవునిద్వారా పొందవలసిన మేళ్లకు దూరమైపోతున్నారు. మునుపటికంటే మరెక్కువగా దేవుని మందిరాన్ని ఆశ్రయించి అధిక మేళ్లు పొందుటకు మీరు పాత్రులు కావాలి.

యధార్థముగా ప్రవర్తించిన యెడల:

యధార్థముగా ప్రవర్తించువారికి ఆయన ఏ మేలును చేయక మానడు. (కీర్తన 84:11)

హిజ్కయా రాజు మరణకరమైన రోగముతో ఉన్నప్పుడు అతడు గోడవైపు తిరిగి దేవునికి ప్రార్థన చేసాడు. ఆ ప్రార్థనలో 'యాధార్థ హృదయుడవై నీ సన్నిధిని నేనెట్లు నడుచుకొంటినో జ్ఞాపకము చేసికొనుమని' దేవునితో అంటున్నాడు. ఇలా దేవునితోనే తిన్నగా అనడమంటే సామాన్యమా? యధార్థవంతుడు గనుకనే, దేవునితో తన యధార్థతను గూర్చి అనగలిగాడు. ఇలా ప్రార్థన చేసిన వెంటనే అతని యధార్థతను జ్ఞాపకము చేసుకొన్న దేవుడు, హిజ్కయాను నవ్వన వరచి దేవుని మందిరానికి వెళ్ళేటట్లు చేశాడు. మరణములోనుండి జీవములోనికి దాటించి మరో 15 సంవత్సరాలఆయుష్షు పొడిగించాడు. (11 రాజులు 20:2-6).

దేవుడు తన యెడలయధార్థహృదయము గలవారిని బలపరచునని యధార్థవంతులకొరకే ఆయన వెదకుచున్నాడని, (11దిన 16:9) లో చదువు చున్నాము. నీ వ్యాపారములోనైనా, దేవుడు నీ కిచ్చిన పిల్లలనుపెంచే విషయములోనైనా, చేయుచున్న ఉద్యోగములోనైనా, దేవుడిచ్చిన రాబడి విషయములోనైనా, పొలము, పంటలోనైనా, భార్య భర్తలపవిత్రబంధము విషయములోనైనా, పిల్లలవివాహవిషయాలలో, దశమభాగములో, దేవునితోచేసిన నిబంధనలో, మ్రొక్కుబడులలో, నీ యధార్థతను బట్టి నీవు అత్యధికమైన మేళ్లను పొందెదవని వాక్యము హెచ్చరించుచున్నది.

నా ప్రియమైన దేవుని ప్రజలారా! మనము దేవుడు చేసిన మేళ్లు మరువక ఎల్లప్పుడు కృతజ్ఞతాస్తుతులు చెల్లించుచూ, దేవుని మాట వింటూ, దేవుని మందిరానికి వెళ్లుచూ, అన్ని విషయములలో యధార్థవంతులమై, దేవుని మేళ్లకు పాత్రులమవుదాము. ఆమెన్ !!

ఫిలదెల్ఫియ సంఘము

- ఆచార్య ఆరార్యమూర్తి

ఫిలదెల్ఫియలో ఉన్న సంఘపు దూతకు ఈలాగు వ్రాయి. దావీదు తాళపు చెవి కలిగి ఎవడును వేయ వీలు లేకుండా తీసేవాడును, ఎవడు తీయలేకుండా వేసేవాడు అయిన సత్యస్వరూపియైన పరిశుద్ధుడు చెప్పే సంగతులు ఎవనగా నీ క్రియలను నేనెరుగుదును, నీకున్న శక్తి కొంచెమై వుండినా నీవు నా వాక్యమును గైకొని నా నామమును ఎరుగను అనలేదు. ఇదిగో తలుపు నీ యెదట తీసి ఉంచాను. దానిని ఎవరును వేయనేరడు. యూదులు కాకుండానే తాము యూదులమని అబద్ధమాడే సైతాను సమాజపు వారిని రప్పిస్తాను. వారు వచ్చి నీ పాదములయెదుటపడి నమస్కారము చేసి, ఇదిగో నేను నిన్ను ప్రేమించానని తెలుసుకునేటట్లు చేస్తాను. నీవు నా ఓర్పు విషయమైన వాక్యమును గైకొన్నావు గనుక భూనివాసులను శోభించడానికి లోకమంతటి మీదికి రాబోయ్యే శోధన కాలంలో నేను నిన్ను కాపాడతాను. నేను త్వరలో వస్తున్నాను. ఎవడు నీ కిరీటం అవహరించకుండునట్లు నీకు కలిగిన దానిని గట్టిగా పట్టుకో, జయించే వానిని నా దేవుని ఆలయంలో ఒక స్తంభముగా చేస్తాను. అందులోనుండి వాడు ఇక మీదట ఎన్నటికిని వెలపలికి పోడు. మరియు నా దేవుని పేరును పరలోకములో నా దేవుని వద్దనుండి దిగివస్తున్న నూతనమైన యెరుషలేము అనే దేవుని పట్టణపు పేరును నా క్రొత్తపేరును దాని మీద రాస్తాను. సంఘములతో ఆత్మ చెబుతున్న మాట చెవిగలవాడు వినునుగాక!

యోహాను 14:21 లో ప్రభువన్నాడు, నా ఆజ్ఞలను అంగీకరించి వాటిని గైకొనేవాడే నన్ను ప్రేమించేవాడు. ఫిలదెల్ఫియ సంఘ జీవితంలో ఇదే సత్యం రుజువైంది. సార్లెస్, లవోదికయ సంఘాలమధ్య ఫిలదెల్ఫియ ఉన్నది అంటే రెండు ముళ్ళ మధ్య గులాబి పువ్వులాగ ఉన్నది అని అర్థం. సార్లెస్ సగం చచ్చి, ఆ రెండో సగం చావడానికి సిద్ధంగా ఉంది. లవోదికయ సంఘమేమో ఎందుకు కొరగాని సంఘం. ఈ రెండింటి మధ్యలో ఫిలదెల్ఫియ ఎంతో మంచి సాక్ష్యమున్న సంఘం. ప్రధానకాపరి ఫిలదెల్ఫియ మీద తప్పేమి మోపలేదు. యేసుప్రభువుకు సంపూర్ణ విధేయత చూపిన సంఘం ఫిలదెల్ఫియ. ఫిలదెల్ఫియ అంటే సహోదర ప్రేమ. ఏడు సంఘాలలో ఇది సార్లెస్కు యాభై కిలోమీటర్ల దూరంలో ఉంది. 19వ శతాబ్దం మొదలుకొని సంఘం ఎత్తబడేవరకు ఉండే సంఘచరిత్ర యిది. నమ్మకమైన సంఘం. ఈ రోజున ప్రతిశాఖనుండి దేవుని వాక్యం విని వాక్యప్రమాణాలకు తన జీవితం సరిదిద్దుకునేవారందరు కలిసి ఫిలదెల్ఫియ అని చెప్పవచ్చు. ఇప్పటిది టర్కీలో ఉన్న పట్టణం. కోగామిస్ నది ఈ పట్టణం గుండా ప్రవహిస్తుంది. ఐదుకొండలపై నిర్మించబడిన పట్టణమిది. ఇక్కడ భూకంపాలు ఎక్కువగా వస్తుంటాయి. ఫిలదెల్ఫియ గ్రీసు దేశానికి వలస కేంద్రం. దీనిని చిన్న ఏథెన్సు అనేవారు, మంచి సారవంతమైన భూమి. అట్టాలస్ అనే రాజుకు యూమెనస్ అనే పెర్లము రాజు సోదరుడు. వీరిద్దరి మధ్య ఎంతో ఘాఢమైన సహోదర ప్రేమ ఉండేది. దాన్నిబట్టి ఫిలదెల్ఫియ అనే పేరు వచ్చింది. స్వర్ణ సంఘం మీద ఏ నేరము ప్రభువు మోపలేదు. అలాగే ఫిలదెల్ఫియలో కూడా ఏ తప్పిదము ప్రభువుకు కనబడలేదు. క్రైస్తవ సహోదర ప్రేమకు ఫిలదెల్ఫియ ప్రతీక. 13 శతాబ్దం వరకు ఈ సంఘం ఉంది. ఇప్పుడు ఆ పట్టణం ఉంది కాని సంఘం లేదు. ఫిలదెల్ఫియ వాక్యాన్ని ప్రేమించింది, బోధించింది.

ప్రభువు సంఘదూతకు ఈ ఉత్తరం రాస్తూ, తనను తాను పరిచయం చేసుకుంటూ అన్నాడు. నేను సత్యస్వరూపిని పరిశుద్ధుడను దావీదు తాళపు చెవి నా చేతిలో ఉంది. నేను తీసిన తలుపు ఎవరువేయలేరు. నేను వేసిన తలుపు ఎవరు తీయలేరు. యోహాను 6:69 పేతురిచ్చిన సాక్ష్యం. నీవే దేవుని పరిశుద్ధుడవని మేము విశ్వసించి ఎరిగి ఉన్నాము. మార్కు 1:24 లో దయ్యం కేకలు వేస్తూ సాక్ష్యం ఇచ్చింది, అన్నది - నీవు ఎవరివో నాకు తెలుసు నీవు దేవుని పరిశుద్ధుడవు. ఆయన మహిమలో ఉన్న క్రీస్తు, ఆయన మహా యాజకుడు, ప్రధానయాజకుడు అంటూ ప్రభువు తనను తాను ప్రకటన 11వ అధ్యాయంలో ప్రత్యక్షపరచుకున్నాడు. నేను పరిశుద్ధుడను అంటూ ఫిలదెల్ఫియ సంఘంతో చెప్పున్నాడు. ఆయన పుట్టుక పరిశుద్ధం, ఆయన మరణం పరిశుద్ధం, ఆయన ఈ రోజున పరిశుద్ధ ప్రధాన యాజకుడు. లూకా 1:35 మరియు దూత అన్నాడు, నీకు పుట్టుబోయే శిశువు పరిశుద్ధుడు ఆయన దేవుని కుమారుడు. అపొ. 2:27 నీవు నా ఆత్మను పాతాళములో విడిచిపెట్టవు. నీ పరిశుద్ధుని కుళ్ళుపట్టనియ్యవు. ఇది యేసును గురించిన ప్రవచనం. యేసు తన మరణ పునరుత్థానములలో కూడా పరిశుద్ధుడు. హెబ్రీ 7:26 పవిత్రుడు, నిర్దోషి, నిష్కల్మషుడు, పాపులలో చేరక ప్రత్యేకముగా ఉన్నవాడు, ఆకాశమండలముకంటే మిక్కిలి హెచ్చు అయిన వాడు అయిన ఇట్టి ప్రధానయాజకుడు మనకు సరిపోయినవాడు. యోహాను 14:6 ప్రభువు తోమాతో అన్నాడు. నేనే మార్గమును సత్యమును జీవమును. సత్యము అంటే పరిపూర్ణత, సంపూర్ణత. యోహాను 6:32-35 వరకు యేసు అన్నాడు. పరలోకమునుండి వచ్చే ఆహారము మోషే మీకియ్యలేదు. నా తండ్రి పరలోకనుండి వచ్చే నిజమైన ఆహారమును మీకు అనుగ్రహిస్తున్నాడు. పరలోకనుండి దిగివచ్చి, లోకానికి జీవమిచ్చేది దేవుడనుగ్రహించే ఆహారమై ఉన్నది. జీవాహారము నేనే! నా వద్దకు వచ్చేవాడు ఏమాత్రము ఆకలిగొనడు. నా యందు విశ్వాసముంచేవాడు ఎప్పుడు దప్పిగొనడు. ప్రభువు ఇంకా ఇలా అన్నాడు. నా వద్ద దావీదు తాళపు చెవులున్నాయి. ప్రకటనగ్రంథం 1:18 మరణము యొక్క పాతాళము యొక్క తాళపు చెవులు తనకున్నట్లు ప్రత్యక్షపరచబడింది. ఈ సమస్త విశ్వాసికి తాను పరిపాలకుడు. ఆయనకు అధికారమున్నది అనడానికి దావీదు తాళపు చెవులు నాకున్నాయి అన్నాడు. లూకా 1:32,33 ఆయన గొప్పవాడై సర్వోన్నతుని కుమారుడు అనబడతాడు. ప్రభువైన దేవుడు ఆయన తండ్రియైన దావీదు సింహాసనమును ఆయనకిస్తాడు. ఆయన యాకోబు వంశస్థులను యుగయుగములు ఏలుతాడు. ఆయన రాజ్యం అంతము లేనిదై ఉంటుంది. వెయ్యేండ్ల పాలనలో ఆయన దావీదు సింహాసనం మీద కూర్చుంటాడు. ఇప్పుడైతే ఆయన పరలోకమందు తన తండ్రి సింహాసనముపై కూర్చున్నాడు. శత్రువులందరూ ఆయనకు పాదాక్రాంతులయ్యేవరకు ఆయన తండ్రి పార్శ్వమందు కూర్చుని ఉంటాడు. ఆయన తలుపు తెరిచాడు అంటే ఎవ్వడూ మూయలేదు, మూశాడు అంటే ఎవ్వడూ తెరువలేదు. ఆయన మూయడానికి కాని, తెరవడానికి కాని సమర్థుడు. మత్తయి 28:18-20 వరకు ఆయనకు పరలోకమందు, భూమిమీద సర్వాధికారము ఇయ్యబడిఉంది. యుగసమాప్తివరకు ఆయన సదాకాలము మనతో ఉన్నాడు. నీ క్రియలను నేనెరుగుదును. నీ ముందు తలుపు తెరిచి ఉంచాను. దీనిని ఎవరూ మూయలేరు. నీకున్న బలము కొంచెమే అయినా నా వాక్యాన్ని గైకొన్నావు. నా నామమును ఎరుగను అనలేదు. దేవుడు తలుపులు తెరిచినప్పుడే ప్రవేశించాలి. తలుపులు దేవుడు మూశాడు అంటే ఎవడు అందులో ప్రవేశించలేడు. ఫిలదెల్ఫియ సంఘం దేవుని వాక్యాన్ని అంటిపెట్టుకొని ఉంది. ఈ రోజువరకు దేవుని వాక్యానికి నమ్మకంగా ఉన్న

సంఘాలున్నాయి. ఏ శాఖ అయినా వాక్యాన్ని నమ్మకంగా బోధించే సంఘాలకు ఫిలడెల్ఫియ గొప్పమాదిరి. ఫిలడెల్ఫియ సంఘాన్ని ఏడు విషయాల్లో ప్రభువు ఎంతో మెచ్చుకున్నాడు.

1. నేను నీ క్రియలను ఎరుగుదును. ప్రభువు తన సంఘమందు ఫలవంతమైన క్రియలను చూడగోరుచున్నాడు. విశ్వాసి జీవితము సత్క్రియలతో నిండినదై క్రియాత్మకమైన విశ్వాసము గలిగి ప్రభువు దృష్టికి అందంగా కనబడుతుంది. మరచిపోకండి. రక్షణ క్రియల ద్వారా రాదు. కృపచేత విశ్వాసము ద్వారా రక్షణ కలుగుతుంది. రక్షించబడిన ప్రతివ్యక్తి సత్కార్యాలు చేయ బద్ధుడై ఉన్నాడు. విశ్వాసము సత్క్రియలను ఉత్పత్తి చేయకపోతే నీ విశ్వాసములో ఏదో లోపము ఉన్నది అని అర్థం. యాకోబు భక్తుడు అందుకే సవాలు చేస్తూ ప్రశ్నించాడు. క్రియలు లేకుండా విశ్వాసాన్ని రుజువుచేసుకోగలవా? విశ్వాసం రక్షిస్తుంది గాని, విశ్వాసం ఒంటరిగా ఉండదు. అది సత్క్రియలతో జతచేయబడి ఉంటుంది.

2. నేను నీ యెదుట తలుపు తెరిచాను. దానిని ఎవరూ మూయలేరు. ఆనందానికి ద్వారం తెరిచాను, సువార్త ప్రకటనకు ద్వారం తెరిచాను. వాక్కు ప్రత్యక్షానికి ద్వారం తెరిచాను, తలుపులు బార్లాగా తెరిచాడు ప్రభువు. అవకాశ ద్వారాలు దేవుడు తెరిచిఉంచాడంటే ప్రభువు ఫిలడెల్ఫియ సంఘాన్ని ప్రశంసిస్తున్నాడని అర్థం. దేవుడు తెరిచిన తలుపులు, ప్రవేశ ద్వారాలు తెరువబడిఉన్నాయి. సంఘమా వెంటనే ప్రవేశించు.

3. నీకున్న బలం కొంచెమే. మనం స్వశక్తితో ఎంతచేసినా అందులో అతిశయపడడగింది ఏదీ లేదు. అది ప్రభువు దృష్టిలో అతి స్వల్పం. మనం మన గొప్పతనాన్ని అంచనా వేసుకోవడం అవినేకం. మనం ఆయన జతపనివారం. పాలు ఏమున్నాడు, నన్నునేను విమర్శించుకొనను నా తప్పలేదో, ఒప్పులేదో నిర్ణయించాల్సింది ప్రభువు. ఆయన సన్నిధిలో నిలిచే వరకు నా పని నాణ్యత నాకెలా తెలుస్తుంది. అయినా నా శక్తి సామర్థ్యాలు ఏపాటివి? నేనాయన జతపనివాణ్ణి అంటే అదీ ఆయన కృపే.

4. నీవు నా వాక్యమును గైకొన్నావు. దేవుని వాక్యము దైవప్రేరితమని అధికారపూర్వకమైందని ఆ సంఘం నమ్మింది. దేవుని వాక్యమంతా నమ్మడగింది అందులో ఒకభాగాని వృధా పోదు, నిర్ధారకం కాదు. సంఘం వాక్యమీద పూర్తిగా ఆధారపడి వుంది.

5. నా నామమును కాదనక ఒప్పుకున్నావు. ఫిలడెల్ఫియ సంఘం యేసు యొక్క దేవత్వాన్ని నమ్మింది. ఆయన పాపులకొరకై ప్రాయశ్చిత్తార్థ బలియైన దేవుడు. యేసు నామం శక్తిభరితమైన నామం అని నమ్మింది ఫిలడెల్ఫియ. సువార్తప్రకటించే సంఘమిది. సేవాసంఘం, సజీవసంఘం, అది ఉజ్జీవ సంఘం. బైబిలును పూర్తిగా నమ్మిన సంఘం. వాక్య ప్రమాణానికి అనుగుణంగా జీవించే సంఘం, అది బైబిలు సంఘం అనవచ్చు. పదమూడో శతాబ్దం వరకు ఫిలడెల్ఫియ సంఘం ఉంది. తరువాత శత్రువులు వచ్చి దాన్ని ద్వంసం చేశారు. విశ్వాసులను హతమార్చారు. ఫిలడెల్ఫియ ఎందరో సువార్తకలను విదేశాలకు పంపింది. ప్రేషిత ఉద్యమానికి ఫిలడెల్ఫియ గొప్ప కేంద్రం. మన దేశానికి సువార్త వచ్చిందంటే ఫిలడెల్ఫియ యొక్క ఉద్యమ స్ఫూర్తి కారణమని చెప్పక తప్పదు. తాము యూదులు కాకపోయిన మేము యూదులమే అంటూ అబద్ధాలు చెప్పేవారున్నారు. వీరు సైతాను సమాజానికి చెందినవారు నేను నిన్ను ప్రేమించానని వారు తెలుసుకునేటట్లు చేస్తాను. వారిని తెచ్చి నీ పాదాలముందు పడేస్తాను అంటున్నాడు ప్రభువు. యూదులలో శేషిత ప్రజలు సమాజమందిరాన్ని విడిచిపెట్టారు. ధర్మశాస్త్రాన్ని వినబెట్టారు. పరిశుద్ధత నియమాలను పూర్తిగా త్రోసిపుచ్చారు. వీరిని గురించే పౌలు రోమా 9:6 లో అన్నాడు. ఇశ్రాయేలు సంబంధులందరూ ఇశ్రాయేలీయులు కారు. ప్రభువు వైపునకు మరలినవారే నిజమైన ఇశ్రాయేలీయులు. ఈ కపట ఇశ్రాయేలీయులు సైతాను సమాజకులు రోమా ప్రభుత్వంలో ఇశ్రాయేలీయులు పలు స్థలాలలో చెదరిపోయి వున్నారు. వారందరూ సమాజాలుగా ఏర్పడ్డారు.

6. నేను నిన్ను ప్రేమిస్తున్నాను. అని సైతాను సమాజపువారు తెలుసుకుంటారు. వారు నీ పాదాలముందు పడతారు. తీర్పు విషయమైన వాక్యమును గైకొన్నావు. రాబోయే శోధనకాలంలో నిన్ను కాపాడతాను. భూనివాసులందరికీ గొప్ప శోధన రాబోతుంది.

7. సహనశీలం గలిగి వాక్యమును గైకొన్నందుకు ప్రభువు ఫిలడెల్ఫియ సంఘమును ప్రశంసిస్తున్నాడు. 2 థెస్స 3:5 దేవునియందలి ప్రేమ క్రీస్తు చూపిన ఓర్పు మీకు కలుగునట్లు ప్రభువు మీ హృదయములను ప్రేరేపించును గాక! ఈ రోజున దేవుని వాక్యం ఎక్కడచూసిన కనబడుతుంది, వినబడుతుంది. ప్రభువు రాకడను గురించి అందరూ మాట్లాడుతున్నారు. హెబ్రీ 6:12 మీరు మాంద్యులు కాక విశ్వాసముచేత, ఓర్పుచేత వాగ్దానములను స్వతంత్రించుకొని మీలో ప్రతివాడు మీ నిరీక్షణపరిపూర్ణమగు నిమిత్తము మీరిదివరకు కనపరచిన ఆసక్తిని తుదమట్టుకు కనపరచండి. మహా శ్రమలు వచ్చినప్పుడు సంఘం ఇక్కడ ఉండదు, ఎత్తబడి ఉంటుంది. దేవునికి స్తోత్రం. 1 థెస్స 4:13 నుండి 18 వరకు, తీతు 2:13 ఇదియే సత్యాన్ని పునరుద్ధరిస్తున్నాయి. అప్పుడు సంఘం సదాకాలం ప్రభువుతో కూడా ఉంటుంది. ఇది మనకు గొప్ప ఆదరణ ఆయన మహిమ యొక్క ప్రత్యక్షత మన శుభప్రద నిరీక్షణ. ఫిలడెల్ఫియ సంఘయుగం సంఘం ఎత్తబడేవరకు కొనసాగుతుందని మనం గ్రహించాలి. అయితే లవోదికయ సంఘం నిజమైన సంఘం ఎత్తబడిన తరువాత ఇక్కడే ఉంటుంది. అది భ్రష్టమైన సంఘవ్యవస్థ. అయితే అందులోనుండి కొందరు రక్షించబడి సంఘవధువులో భాగమై ఎత్తబడతారు అందుకే ప్రభువు లవోదికయకు పిలుపునిస్తున్నాడు. నేను త్వరగా వస్తాను నీ కిరీటాన్ని అపహరించే దొంగలున్నారు జాగ్రత్త. అని ఫిలడెల్ఫియకు ప్రభువు హెచ్చరిక చేస్తున్నాడు. నీకు కలిగిందేదో దానిని జాగ్రత్తగా పట్టుకో, ఆయన అకస్మాత్తుగా వస్తాడు. అనుకొనని ఘడియలో వస్తాడు. సంఘం నిద్రిపడేది శ్రమలదినం కోసం కాదు. తాను ఎత్తబడే దినం కోసం. అదే సంఘమునకున్న శుభప్రద నిరీక్షణ. ఫిలడెల్ఫియాలాంటి స్థానిక సంఘాలే ఎత్తబడతాయి. ఎత్తబడిందే అసలైన, నిజమైన సంఘం. జయించే విశ్వాసి, జయించే సంఘం ఒక స్తంభం. దేవుని ఆలయ స్తంభం. చరిత్రలో ఆయా సంఘాలు ఇక్కడ లేకపోవచ్చు. అసలైన సంఘంలో పరలోకంలో ఒక స్తంభమై స్థిరస్థాయిగా ఉంటుంది. దేవుని పేరు, నూతనయెరూషలేము పేరు, దేవుని పట్టణపు పేరు, ప్రభువుయొక్క క్రొత్తపేరు ఫిలడెల్ఫియా మీద వ్రాయబడుతుంది. పరలోకపు పాస్పోర్టు. వీనా సంఘానికి ఇవ్వబడతాయి. యేసు క్రొత్తపేరు మనమీద వ్రాయబడుతుంది. ఆ పేరేమిటో అప్పుడే మనకు తెలుస్తుంది. ఫిలడెల్ఫియ సంఘమా నీకు అభినందనలు.

ప్రభువైన యేసు క్రీస్తువారి కృప, తండ్రయైన దేవుని ప్రేమ, పరిశుద్ధాత్మ యొక్క అన్యోన్య సహవాసము మనకందరికీ నిత్యత్వము పర్యంతము తోడైయుండును గాక! ఆమెన్!

పరిశుద్ధత

డా॥ దేవసహాయం దండల

“నా సన్నిధిలో నడుస్తూ నిందారహితుడవై వుండు” అని దేవుడు అబ్రహామును ఆజ్ఞాపించాడు. అది 17.1. ఇశ్రాయేలు జాతి దేవునికి పరిశుద్ధ జనం. వారి ఆహారం, విహారం అన్ని పవిత్రమై ఉండాలి. యాజకుడి మీద “యెహోవా పరిశుద్ధుడు” అని చెక్కబడి వుంది. ఆయన పరిశుద్ధుడు కాబట్టి ఆయన ప్రజలు కూడా పరిశుద్ధులుగా జీవించాలి.

భక్తి అంటే యెహోవా పరిశుద్ధ పర్యటానికి ఎక్కడం! కీర్తనలు 97.10 యెహోవాను ప్రేమించే వారలారా! చెడుతనాన్ని అసహ్యించుకోండి. క్రైస్తవం రాజమార్గం. అది పరిశుద్ధ మార్గం. అపవిత్రులు పోగూడని మార్గం. ఇదే సిలువ మార్గం. పరిశుద్ధతకే క్రైస్తవ నీతి అని మరో పేరు. హృదయశుద్ధి గలవారే దేవుడిని చూడగలరు. మత్తయి 5.48లో ప్రభువు చెప్పినట్లు మన పరలోకపు తండ్రి పరిపూర్ణుడు గనుక మనమూ పరిపూర్ణులమై వుండాలి. కపటం లేని ప్రవర్తనే పరిశుద్ధత.

సంస్కృతి, సభ్యత.

పరిశుద్ధత విశ్వాసుల ఆధ్యాత్మిక సంస్కృతి, సభ్యత. పాపము విషయమై మృతులకు మృతుడవై దేవుని విషయంలో బ్రతకడమే పరిశుద్ధత. నిత్య జీవం నాణ్యతగలపరిశుద్ధ జీవితం. ఇది అత్తాను సారమైన జీవితం. ఈ లోక మర్యాదను అనుసరించక మనసు మారి నూతనమై రూపాంతరం చెందాలి. విశ్వాసి పరిశుద్ధాత్మకు ఆలయం! ఈ ఆలయాన్ని పాడుచేసిన వాణ్ణి దేవుడు పాడు చేస్తాడు. విశ్వాసి పవిత్రురాలైన కన్యకగా యేసయ్యకు సమర్పించబడి ప్రధానం చేయబడి వున్నాడు. విశ్వాసిలో పరిశుద్ధాత్మ పండించే ఫలం ప్రేమ. యిందులో నుంచి పరిశుద్ధ ఫలాలు పుట్టుకొస్తాయి. సంతోషం, సమాధానం, దీర్ఘకాలం, దయాళుత్వం, మంచితనం, సాత్వీకం, ఆశానిగ్రహం, యివన్నీ పరిశుద్ధతకు చిహ్నాలు. సంతుష్టి సహితమైన దైవభక్తి పరిశుద్ధ జీవితానికి రుజువు, అని మనం తెలుసుకోవాలి!

తొలగిపోవాలి

ప్రభువు నామాన్ని ఒప్పుకునే ప్రతివాడు దుర్మితనుండి తొలగిపోవాలి. లోక స్నేహం దేవునితో విరోధం. ప్రత్యేకించ బడి, దేవునికి ప్రతిష్ఠించబడిందే పరిశుద్ధం! అపో! కార్య 2.27 లో యేసు ప్రభువు “దేవుని పరిశుద్ధుడు” అని పిలువబడ్డాడు. ఈ పరిశుద్ధతను విశ్వాసం ద్వారా పొందిన వారే పరిశుద్ధులు. పరిశుద్ధ జీవితం కలిగినవారు! దేవుని గుణగణాలన్ని కిరణాలలాగా వచ్చి నీతి సూర్యుడైన క్రీస్తునందు కేంద్రీకరించినప్పుడు అదే పరిశుద్ధత! తండ్రి, కుమార, పరిశుద్ధాత్మలలో ప్రతి ఒక్కరూ పరిశుద్ధులు. అయితే ఈ ముగ్గురిలో దేవుని పరిశుద్ధతను ప్రత్యేకంగా విశ్వాసులకు అన్వయం చేసేవారు పరిశుద్ధాత్మ!

దేవుడు తన ప్రజలలో పరిశుద్ధతను చూడగోరుతున్నాడు. యేసయ్య పరిశుద్ధతే విశ్వాసి సాశీల్యానికి హమి కూడా ! హెబ్రీ 2.11 దేవుడు పరిశుద్ధుడు. అది ఆయన ముఖ్య లక్షణం! పవిత్రత

అంటే పాపాన్ని విడిచి దేవునికి మనల్ను మనం ప్రతిష్ఠించుకోవటం! దేవుని మహా పవిత్రతను మనం గ్రహించలేము. శిష్యుడైన యోహాను ప్రభువుకు ఎంతో సన్నిహితంగా వున్నవాడు. అయినా ప్రభువును తన మహిమలో చూచినప్పుడు చచ్చిన వానిలాగా పడిపోయాడు. 1 పేతురు 1.16లో “నేను పరిశుద్ధుణ్ణి గనుక మీరును పరిశుద్ధులై ఉండుడి” అని చెప్పబడింది. అలాంటి స్థితిలో వుండటం ఎంత ధన్యత! దేవుని వాక్యం వెలుగులో సంచరిస్తూ, అత్మతో నింపబడినట్లయితే, మనం పాపరహిత జీవితం జీవించగలం.

సంఘర్షణ

అనేకసార్లు మనం ఆధ్యాత్మిక జీవితంలో సంఘర్షణలకు లోనవుతూ వుంటాము. అత్మ, శరీరాలకు ఎడతెగని పోరాటం ప్రవర్తిల్లుతూ వుంటుంది. ఈ పోరాటంలో ఎటూతేల్చుకోలేక చిక్కున పడుతూ వుంటాము. “మనం పాపము విషయంలో చనిపోయిన వాళ్ళుగా ఎంచుకోవాలి. (రోమా 6.11) కాని, మన విషయంలో పాపము యింకా చావలేదు. చాలాసార్లు ప్రార్థనలో కనిపెట్టడం మానివేసి లోకాశలవైపు మరులు కొల్పబడతాం! ప్రభువుకు నమ్మకంగా వుండలేక పాత స్వభావాన్ని అనుసరిస్తుంటాం.

మనం దేవునికి ఎంత సన్నిహితంగా జీవిస్తామో, అంతగా దైనందిన జీవితంలోని విషయాలలో విజయం సాధిస్తాం. మనం జయ జీవితం జీవించటానికి కావలసినవన్నీ దేవుడు సమకూర్చాడు. అనుక్షణము ఆయన కృప అందుబాటులో వుంది. అయినా మనం తప్పిపోతున్నామంటే దానికారణం దేవుడు అనుగ్రహించిన వనరులు వివియోగించుకోక పోవడమే.

పవిత్రత

మనల్ను మనం నిజాయితీగా ఇలా ప్రశ్నించు కుందాం. “పాపానికి శిక్ష ఏమిలేదని గట్టిగా తెలిస్తే, అలాంటప్పుడు మనం చేసే పాపాలకు మితి వుంటుందా?” కేవలం మాటలలోనే పవిత్రతను గురించి చర్చిస్తున్నామా? పవిత్రత అంటే దేవుని పోలి వుండటమే. అలా కాదని ఏవరైనా బోధిస్తే అది చెడుగు, సైతాను సంబంధించిన మాట. మరి, మన జీవితాలు మాటేమిటి? మన ప్రార్థనలకు జవాబు రాకుండా ఏదైనా పాపం అడ్డు వస్తుందా? దేవుని ముఖాన్ని మరుగు చేసే పాపం ఏదైనా మన జీవితంలో పొడసూపిందా? దేవుని వాక్యం వెలుగులో పరిశీలించుకొని ఆయన రక్తంలో కడుగుకొని పవిత్రులం కావాలి! ఏదో కొన్ని పనులు చెయ్యనంత మాత్రాన పవిత్రులం కాము. ఉదాహరణకు మద్యపానాలు సేవించడం, పొగ త్రాగడం, వ్యభిచారం చెయ్యకపోవచ్చు, కాని దేవుని స్తుతించక పోతే ఆయనకు సాక్షిగా జీవించక పోతే, నశించుచున్నవారి కోసం భారంతో విజ్ఞాపన చేయకపోతే అలాంటి వ్యక్తి పరిశుద్ధుడందామా? దేవుడు అపవిత్రమైన పాత్రలను తన సత్యంతో నింపేవాడు కాడు. పవిత్రమైన పాత్రలనే ఆయన తన మహిమకోసం వాడు కుంటాడు. కనుక నశించుచున్నవారికి దేవుని సత్యనువార్తను ప్రకటించడానికి పవిత్రమై పాత్రలుగా వుండాలని మనందరి ఆశ, ప్రార్థన కావాలి!

పక్షిరాజు వలె ఎగురుట, పరుగెత్తుట, నడచుట

శ్రీమతి T.S. గ్రేస్ విజయ

యెషయా 40:31 “యెహోవా కొరకు ఎదురుచూచు వారు నూతన బలము పొందుదురు, వారు పక్షిరాజుల వలె రెక్కలు చాపి పైకి ఎగురుదురు, అలయక పరుగెత్తుదురు సాముసిల్లక నడిచిపోవుదురు.”

ఒక పల్లెటూరిలో రైతు కోడి పిల్లలను, బాతు పిల్లలను కలిపి పెంచేవాడు. పొలంలో ఒక గ్రుడ్డు దొరికింది. అది పక్షిరాజు గ్రుడ్డు. అన్నిటితోపాటు దాన్నికూడా పొదగనిచ్చాడు. పక్షిరాజుపిల్ల కోడి పిల్లలతోపాటు గింజలు ఏరుకొని తినసాగింది. దాని ఆకారం వేరుగా ఉంది. అలవాట్లు మామూలుగా ఉన్నాయి. ఒక రోజు ప్రముఖ శాస్త్రవేత్త పక్షుల ఉనికి, వాటి ఆలవాట్లను పరిశోధించే కాలంలో పక్షిరాజు పిల్లను చూచాడు. రైతుతో వాదించాడు. “దీని స్థానం యిక్కడ కాదు రెక్కలు చాచి ఎగరాలి. దూర దృష్టితో పై వాటిని మనస్కరించాలి” అని, ఆ పక్షిరాజును ఎత్తైన స్థలాలకు కొనిపోయాడు. ఎగరడం నేర్పాడు. కొంతకాలము నిరుత్సాహం కల్గినాసరే పట్టు విడువక రెక్కలు వాడుకొనే పద్ధతిని ఎత్తైన స్థలంలో నేర్పాడు. సహజ శక్తి గలపక్షిరాజు తన రెక్కలలోని శక్తిని నమ్మింది.

ఇక ఆ పక్షి నెమ్మదిగా పైకి ఎగరటం నేర్చుకుంటుంది. ఉన్నత స్థలాల్లో సూక్ష్మదృష్టితో ఎత్తైన స్థలాలలో గూడు నిర్మించుకొనే పక్షిరాజు దేవుని గొప్ప స్వాస్థ్యముతో పోల్చబడింది. దేవుడు వాక్యాన్ని నోటితో పోషిస్తున్నాడు. మనుష్యుడు రొట్టె వలన మాత్రమేకాదు దేవుని నోటి నుండి వచ్చు ప్రతిమాట వలన జీవిస్తాడు. పక్షి తన పసికందుల్ని నోటితో పోషిస్తుంది. దేవుని ప్రవక్తలు పక్షిరాజులే. వారు ఆయా తరాలలో దేవుని మాటలప్రసంగాలద్వారా ఆత్మీయ చైతన్యాన్ని కల్గించేవారు. పక్షిరెక్కలు రెండు పాత, క్రొత్త నిబంధనలుగా భావించగలము. మరొక అర్థంలో ప్రార్థన మరియు వాక్యము రెక్కలు అయితే పరిశుద్ధాత్మ అనేగాలిలో ఎగురుతాము. గగనంలో పైకి ఎగిరే పక్షిరాజు జీవితం ప్రతి విశ్వాసికీ కావాలి. పక్షిరాజు చిన్న పక్షులకు ఎగరడం నేర్పడం వింతగా ఉంటుంది.

ద్వితీయో 32:11

పక్షిరాజు రెక్కలు చాపి ఉంచగా గాలి వీచినప్పుడు వాటిని లేపును. సంఘం కూడా విశ్వాసపు రెక్కలపై వాగ్దానములందు నమ్మిక ఉంచాలి. అప్పుడు పరిశుద్ధాత్మ పైకి తీసికొని వెళ్తుంది. అవినీతి, భక్తిహీనత, స్వార్థము నిండిన ఈ లోకంలో విడుదల దయచేసి పాపమునకు అతీతముగా పైన నివసించుటకు, ఆశీర్వాదంపొందిన వాతావరణమందు జీవించునట్లు పైకి కొని పోవును. భూలోక సంబంధాలు కోడివలె ఎగరలేని స్థితికి అతీతముగా పక్షిరాజులా ఎగిరే స్థితికి రావాలి.

నిర్గమ 19:4

దేవుడు రెక్కలు మీద మోయుట మాత్రమే కాదు ఆదరిస్తున్నానని వివరిస్తున్నారు, చాలా సార్లు కోడి వలె క్రిందికి చూస్తూ మకిలిలో గింజలు కెలుకుతూ ఉంటాము. యిహలోక బాధలతో సతమతమవుతాము. పక్షి రెక్కలలో విశ్వాసముంది, తప్పించుకొనే యుక్తి ఉంది. దావీదు కీర్తన 55:6 లో చూచినట్లు శ్రమలో తప్పించుకొనే గువ్వగా ఉండడం దేవునికి యిష్టం లేదు. గువ్వ రెక్కలు గలవారు శ్రమలు తప్పించుకొనేవారుగా ఉంటారు. పక్షిరాజు రెక్కలు గలవారు విజేతలు.

విస్తారమైన శ్రమలద్వారా దేవుడు విశ్వాసిని పరీక్షించే సమయంలో దేవుని చేతిలో తీవ్రతను సరిచూచే పరికరాలుంటాయి. గ్రహించకల్గిన పరిస్థితిని తగిన రీతిగా నేర్పిస్తారు. అసలైన పక్షిరాజు విశాలమైన రెక్కలతో తాపీగా ఎగరడం అలవాటు. యిహలోక బంధాలకు అతీతంగా దూరంగా నివసించడం విశ్వాసి కర్తవ్యము. కొన్నిసార్లు విశ్వాసిగా ఉంటూ ఆత్మీయతలో ఎగరవలసిన నీవు, నేను, కోడివలె రెక్కలయితే ఉన్నాయిగాని ఎగుర లేని స్థితిలో గింజలకై క్రింద వెదకులాడుచు ఐహికావసరములకై జీవితమంతా శ్రమించి సమయాన్ని తలాంతులను వ్యయం చేస్తున్నామేమో ఆలోచించాలి.

క్రైస్తవ విశ్వాసి కూడా ఉన్నత ఆశయాలు కలవాడై, పైనున్న పరలోక ధ్యానంతో విలువైన రక్తముకార్చి రక్షించిన క్రీస్తుతోనడిచి భూలోకంలో వెంబడించాలి. ఉన్నత పిలుపుకై విశ్వాస వీరులుగా పందెంలో ఓపిగ్గా పరిగెత్తాలి. హానోకు దేవునిలో నడిచిన విశ్వాసపు నడక నడవాలి. ఆడపక్షి గ్రుడ్డు పెట్టి, పొదిగే సమయంలో మగపక్షి మాంసము, మంచి ఆహారము తెచ్చి భార్యను పోషిస్తూండటం, పొదగడానికి స్థలాన్ని ఎన్నుకొని గూడు

నిర్మాణములో ఎత్తైన స్థలములో ఆరు అడుగులగూడు నిర్మిస్తుంది. విభిన్న చెట్లు కొమ్మలు, రెమ్మలు, పీచు పదార్థాలు సేకరించి శ్రమతో ఆ వెలుపలి భాగాన్ని బలమైన ముక్కగలకొమ్మలలోను, లోపలమెత్తని పదార్థాన్ని అమర్చి, మరింత సుతిమెత్తని పాన్పులా తయారు చేయాలని ఆకాంక్షలో ఈ కలను తన గోటితో పీకి పసికూనలక్ష్యమార్గం అన్ని సవ్యంగా అమర్చి పెట్టుండటం.

గ్రుడ్లు పొడగగానే పసిపిల్లలు తల్లి వెచ్చని కౌగిలిలో జీవితమెంత హాయిగా ఉందో అని ఎగిరే సరికి కాళ్ళలో సత్తువ వచ్చి మెత్తని ఈకలు చెదరి ముక్క భాగంలో యిరుక్కొని గ్రుచ్చిన ముక్క బాధలో మూల్గుతూ ఎన్ని కష్టాలొచ్చాయో అని అటూ ఇటూ ఒరిగి చూస్తూ నొచ్చుకొంటుంది. పిల్లలకాళ్ళకు సత్తువ వచ్చిందని తల్లి గ్రహించి ఆ పిల్లలకు ఎగిరే వయస్సు వచ్చిందని ఎగురుట నేర్పాలనే మిషలో ఆ గూడు చెదర గొట్టే పక్షి పిల్లలను క్రిందకు పడే సమయంలో రెక్కలు చాచి అవి వేగంతో ఆ రెక్కలభారంపై పక్షిపిల్లలు పడేలాగా ఆ రెక్కలకదలికలను బట్టి ఎగురురుట నేర్పుతుంది. ఇక క్రమేపీ రెక్కలలో సత్తువతో తల్లిని అనుకరిస్తూ గగనం పై సంచరించడం ఆరంభించి సుదీర్ఘ ప్రయాణం కొనసాగిస్తుంది. మనము కూడా దేవుని వైపు చూస్తూ పైకి ఎగిరి సొమ్మసిల్లక నడిచి మోక్షానికై ఎదురుచూచే విశ్వాసిగా నిలవాలి మారుమనసు పొందిన రోజుల్లో అంతా ఆనందమే ఆ తర్వాత శ్రమలనే పారాలద్వారా ఆత్మీయ బలాన్ని పొందుతాము.

పక్షిరాజు జీవన గమనము విశ్వాసి విశ్వాసయాత్రకు నిదర్శనము, చిన్నపక్షి పిల్లలు ఆ తల్లి రెక్కలపై తమ కాళ్ళను ఎలా ఉంచాలో ఎరిగి ఉంటాయి. ముక్కుతో గట్టిగా తల్లి ఈకలుపట్టుకోని ఉంటాయి. అంతా సిద్ధం అయినట్లు గొప్ప ఈలవేస్తుండటం తల్లి, పిల్లలకు అభయం అదే. ఇక మధ్యాహ్నములో రెక్కలు చాచి ఎగురగలడు. పక్షిరాజు తాజా ఆహారము తీసుకున్నట్లు, విశ్వాసి అనుదిన ఆహారము తాజాగా తీసుకోవాలి. పిల్లలు ఎన్నడూ తమ స్వంత బలముపై ఆధారపడక తల్లిపై ఆధారపడతారు. హాని కలుగకుండా దేవుని వాక్యాన్ని ఎలా పట్టుకొనాలో గొప్ప కదలిక ఏర్పడినప్పుడు ప్రతి పరిశుద్ధ వాగ్దానము గట్టిగా పట్టుకోవాలి.

తల్లి పక్షి నిజమైన ప్రేమతో గొప్పగా కనిపెట్టి బిడ్డలను కాచును. పిల్లలు తల్లిపై ఆధారపడతాయి. విశ్వాసి దేవుని స్వరాన్ని వినును, గొర్రె తన కాపరి స్వరాన్ని వింటుంది. పక్షిరాజు ముక్కు ఆహారాన్ని సేకరించడానికి సహకరిస్తుంది. దూరదృష్టితో ఆహారాన్ని గుర్తించి పొందుకొని అనంతదూరాలకు పైకి ఎగసిపోతుంది. యౌవనంబు పక్షిరాజు యవ్వనంబు వలెనే క్రొత్త యౌవనంబై వెలయునట్లుగా మేలుతో నీ హృదయమును తృప్తి పరచుచున్నాడు. పక్షిరాజు వృద్ధాప్యం వచ్చినప్పుడు బండ సందులోకి వెళ్ళి దాగుకొని ఈకలన్నీ తన ముక్కుతో పెరికి వేసికొని ముక్కుకూడా బండపై బాదుకొని రక్తము కారుతున్నప్పటికి సహిస్తూ తిరిగి ఈకలు ముక్కువచ్చు వరకు అదేచోట నిలిచి ఉంటుంది. అదే యవ్వనం తిరగివచ్చి బలముతో శక్తితో నిలిచి ఉంటుంది.

విశ్వాసి ప్రాచీన స్వభావము వదిలి నూతన శక్తికై కనిపెట్టి ప్రార్థించి దేవునిలో ఎదగాలి. వెనక ఉన్నవి వదిలి ముందు వాటివైపు చూస్తూ మన ముందు ఉంచబడిన పందెములో ఓపిగ్గా పరుగెత్తాలి. వడిగలగుణ్ణాలవలె పని కలిగి దేవుని సేవకై పరుగెత్తాలి. హానోకువలె నడిచి సాగాలి. విశ్వాసపు నడక విదేయ నడక, ప్రేమనడక కావాలి. దేవుని అభిషత్యంలో నిత్య రాజ్యానికి నిత్య జీవానికి, గువ్వలా జీవించడం కాదు గాని పక్షిరాజులుగా జీవించడం నేర్చుకొనాలి.

చివరిగా హృదయంలో నిండైన నిరీక్షణతో ప్రతి విశ్వాసి పాట పాడగల్గాలి “వాగ్దానములనిచ్చి నెరవేర్చు వాడవు నీవే నమ్మకమైన దేవా, నన్ను కాపాడవాడవు నీవే, ప్రభువా నిన్ను నేకొనియాడెదనీ. అన్నివేళలయందున నిన్ను పూజించి కీర్తింతును.” మనమంతా పక్షిరాజు వలె రెక్కలుచాపి ఎగరావి. అలయక పరుగెత్తాలి. సొమ్మసిల్లక నడిచిపోవాలి. ఆ నడక చివరకు మనలందర్ని నిత్యత్వములో స్తుతించి ఆరాధించుటకు పరలోకానికి చేర్చాలని ప్రార్థన.

ఆమెన్, హాలెలూయ..

క్రైస్తవ జీవితము - ప్రార్థన

శ్రీమతి భవానీ ప్రభాకర్ రాయ

పరిశుద్ధ గ్రంథమైన బైబిలులో ప్రార్థన యొక్క అవశ్యకతను మనకు ఎంతో వివరంగా వివరించి పరిశుద్ధాత్మ దేవుడు మనకు బోధించారు. విసుగక, ఎడతెగక, నిత్యము ప్రార్థించండి. మెలకువగా ఉండి ప్రార్థించండి. శోధనలో ప్రవేశించకుండునట్లు ప్రార్థించండి. ఒకరికొరకు ఒకరు ప్రార్థించండి. ఆ విధంగా చెప్పవలసివస్తే నూతన నిబంధనలో ప్రార్థనకు సంబంధించిన ఎన్నో అంశాలున్నాయి. ఏ వ్యక్తి ప్రార్థనలో అంటుగట్టబడ్డాడో ఆ వ్యక్తి బహుగా ఫలిస్తాడు. యోహాను 15.8లో “మీరు బహుగా ఫలించుటవలన నా తండ్రి మహిమ పరచబడును. ఇందువలన మీరు నా శిష్యులగుదురు”. ఏ కుటుంబములో కుటుంబ ప్రార్థన క్రమము తప్పకుండా ఆచరిస్తారో లేక జరుపుకొంటారో ఆ కుటుంబము దేవునికి బహువిప్లవమైన కుటుంబము. ఏ సంఘము ప్రార్థించే సంఘముగా ఉంటాదో ఆ సంఘము దేవుని కొరకు బలమైన సంఘముగా వాడబడును. ప్రార్థన యొక్క ఉద్దేశము మనకు కావలసినది పొందడము కాదు కాని, దేవుడు కోరిన విధముగా మనము మారడమే. ప్రార్థనకు సమయమని స్థలమని నిర్దేశింపబడలేదు. క్రీస్తుద్వారా ఆయన సన్నిధికి ఏ సమయములోనైనా ప్రవేశించగలము. అది ఎంత అధికృతకృష్ట దేవునితో మన మనస్సు విప్పి మాట్లాడుకోవటమే ప్రార్థన. ప్రార్థన మనకు శ్వాసగా ఉండాలి. అంటే ఊపిరిగా ఉండాలి. దావీదు 30వ కీర్తనలో 8,9 వచనాలను మనము చూచినపుడు “నేను గోతిలోనికి దిగినయెడలమన్ను నిన్ను స్తుతించునా! నీ సత్యమును గూర్చి అది వివరించునా” అని వ్రాయుట మనము చూస్తాము. అవును ఈ శ్వాస ఆగిపోయిన తరువాత మనము ఆయనను స్తుతించగలమా! దేవుడిచ్చిన యీ ఆయుష్షు కాలములో మనము ప్రార్థనను శ్వాసగా చేసుకోవాలి. దీనిని బట్టి మొదటిగా ప్రార్థనను మన ఊపిరిగా చేసుకోవాలి. అంటే ప్రార్థన మన breath. శ్వాసలేకపోతే మనము జీవించనట్లు ప్రార్థన లేకుండా క్రైస్తవుడు ఉండరాదు.

రెండవదిగా చూసినప్పుడు ప్రార్థన ఒక ఆయుధము. It is a weapon. ప్రతీదినము మనము న్యూస్ పేపర్లలో ఎన్నో ఘాతుకాలు చూస్తున్నాము. దొంగలు, దోపిడీదారులు ఎన్నో అకృత్యాలను పాల్పడుతున్నారు. ఇటువంటివారు మన మీద పడినప్పుడు మనచేతిలో ఒక ఆయుధము ఉందనుకొండి, సులభముగా వారిని ఎదుర్కొగలము ఉదాహరణకు మన చేతిలో ఇసుప రాడ్ ఉంటే వారిని ప్రతిఘటించగలము. అందుకు ప్రభువు మత్తయి 26:41లో “మీరు శోధనలో ప్రవేశించకుంటునట్లు ప్రార్థన చేయుడి” అని చెప్పాడు. ఎఫెసీ 6:10-18 వరకు చెప్పబడిన సర్వాంగ కవచాన్ని ధరించినపుడు అపవదియనే శత్రువును మనము ఎదుర్కొనగలము. శరీరలితిగ బలహీనుడై విశ్వాసి మోకాళ్ళపై ప్రార్థించగనే శుభ్రువు దానంతట అదే మటుమాయమవుతాది. శోధనలనే కెరటాలతాకిడిని అడ్డుకోవాలంటే ప్రార్థన అనే ఆయుధము క్రైస్తవ జీవితములో ఉండవలసిందే.

ప్రార్థన ఒక ఆజ్ఞ. ఇది మూడవది. It is a commandment మన అధికారులు మనకు ఆజ్ఞలను యిస్తే పాటిస్తాము కదా! డ్రైవింగ్ నేర్చుకొన్న ప్రతి ఒక్కరికి రూల్స్ కొన్ని ఎర్నాటు చేస్తారు. దానిని అతిక్రమిస్తే ప్రమాదము తప్పదు. ఫిలిప్పీ 4:6 “దేనిని గూర్చియు చింతపడకుడి, కాని ప్రతి విషయములోను ప్రార్థన విజ్ఞాపనమలచేత కృతజ్ఞతాపూర్వకముగ మీ విన్నపములు దేవునికి తేలియజేయండి”. మత్తయి 5:44 “నేను మీతో చెప్పనదేమనగా “మీరు పరలోకమందున్న మీ తండ్రికి కుమారులై యుండునట్లు మీ శత్రువులను ప్రేమించుడి. మిమ్మును హింసించువారి కొరకు ప్రార్థన చేయుడి. ప్రభువు తానే ఆ పనిచేసి మనకు మాదిరి అయ్యాడు. తనను హింసించి మరణానికి అప్పగించిన వారికొరకు ప్రార్థించాడు. “తండ్రి వీరెమి చేయుచున్నారో వీరెరుగరు. వీరిని క్షమించమని ప్రార్థించాడు”. లూకా 23:34 దేవుని ఆజ్ఞలను పాటిస్తూ ఆయన చిత్తానుసారముగా ప్రార్థన చేయాలి. పరిసయ్యుడు దేవుని ఆజ్ఞలను పాటించలేదు. లూకా 18:11 పరిసయ్యుడు నిలువబడి గుండెలు బాదుకొని ఎంతో జగ్గరగా తన్ను తాను హెచ్చించుకొని ప్రార్థన చేసాడు. సుంకరి చిన్న ప్రార్థన ప్రభువు ఎందుకు అంగీకరించాడంటే ఆయన ఆజ్ఞలను సుంకరి మీరలేదు. దావీదు అనేక పర్యామములు తన కీర్తనలతో “నా హృదయము ఆయన యందు నమ్మికయించెను. కనుకనే దేవుడు నా ప్రార్థనను ఆలకించెనంటాడు”. ఇతరులలోపాలను ఎంచి వారిని నొప్పించే విధముగా మన ప్రార్థన ఉండకూడదు. కనుకనే మన దేవుడు “నీ హృదయములో పాపాన్ని లక్ష్యము చేస్తే నీ మనవి వినను” అంటాడు.

నాల్గవదిగా ప్రార్థన ఒక అభ్యాసము. Is is a practice. ఆచరించాలి, చేసి చూపాలి. మన ప్రభువే మనకు దీనిలో మార్గదర్శకుడు. ప్రజలను చూచి కనికరపడి జాలిపడి, వారి దుస్థితిని చలించి కదిలిపోయెను. అట్టివారిని అక్కణ చేర్చుకొని ప్రార్థించేవాడు. పేదవారి దుస్థితి కొరకు ప్రార్థించి ఇతరులఅక్కరలకొరకు ప్రార్థించి వారికి మనము చేయి విదల్చకపోతే మన ప్రార్థనను ఆచరణలో పెట్టనట్లే. కొన్ని సార్లు ప్రార్థన మొదలు పెట్టగానే ఇతరులఅక్కరలు కనుమరుగై మన స్వార్థమే జయిస్తుంది. ఒక భక్తుడు యిలా అన్నాడు. We can preach a better sermon with our lives than with our lips, కొరింథీ 3:9 “మనుష్యులందరు తెలిసికొనుచు చదువుకొనుచున్న మా పత్రిక మీరేకారా” మన

బడ్డలకు ప్రార్థన ఉగ్గుపాలతో అభ్యసించజేయాలి. సామెతలు 22:6లో “బాలుడు నడవలసిన మార్గము వానికి నేర్పుము. వాడు పెద్ద వాడైనపుడు దానినుండి తొలగిపోడు”. మత్తయి 23:3 లో శిష్యులతో శాస్త్రులు పఠనయులను గురించి ప్రభువు ఈ విధముగా చెప్పట మనము చూస్తాము. “అయినను వారి క్రియలు చొప్పున చేయకుడి, వారు చెప్పుదురేగాని చేయరు”.

బదవదిగా ప్రార్థనను ఒక అలవాటుగా చేసుకోవాలి. It is a habit. మేము ఒకసారి మా బంధువులింట్లో జరిగే వివాహానికి చెన్నై వెళ్ళాము. వెళ్ళిన బంధువులకు విడిది యిచ్చారు. పెండ్లి ఇల్లు చాలాదూరంలో ఉంది. కాఫీ, ఫలహారాలు మాకు అందడానికి చాలా సమయం పడుతుంది. మాలో కొందరికి ఉదయాన్నే టీ, కాఫీలు అలవాటు. కాఫీ, టీలు పడకపోతే యీ మానవ శరీరము ముందరికి నడవవు. లేవగానే యీ అలవాటు మనలో చాలామందికి ఉంటుంది. క్రైస్తవులముగా మనకుండవలసిన ముఖ్య అలవాటు ఏమై ఉండాలి. ప్రభువు సన్నిధిలో మోకరించి సమయము గడిపే అలవాటు. ప్రభువు తన సేవకార్యక్రమాన్ని ప్రార్థనతో మొదలుపెట్టాడు. (లూకా 3: 21, 22) లూకా 6:12లో మనము చూచినట్లైతే శిష్యులను ఏర్పరచుకొనకముందు ప్రార్థనలో గడిపాడు. మార్కు 1:35లో “ఆయన పెందలకడనే లేచి ఇంకను చాలా బీకటి యుండగనే బయలుదేరి అరణ్య ప్రదేశమునకు వెళ్ళి అక్కడ ప్రార్థన చేయుచుండెను. శాసనము సంతకము చేయబడెనని దానియేలు తెలిసికొనినను అతడు తన యింటికి వెళ్ళి యధాప్రకారముగా అనుదినము ముమ్మారు మోకాళ్ళూని తన యింటిపై గది కిటికీలు యెరూషలెము తట్టనకు తెరవబడి యుండగా తన దేవునికి ప్రార్థన చేయుచు ఆయన్ను స్తుతించుచువచ్చెను. (దానియేలు 6:10) విలాప వాక్యములు 2:19లో యింకొక ఆజ్ఞ వ్రాయబడెను. “నీవు లేచి రేయి మొదటి జామున మొఱపెట్టుము” కీర్తనాకారునివలె మేల్కొనపుడు ఆయన స్వరూప దర్శనములో మన ఆశను తీర్చుకోవాలి. ఇది మనకు ముఖ్యమైన అలవాటుగ మారాలి.

చివరిగా ప్రార్థనలో గడపాలి అనే ఆశ కల్గియుండాలి. క్రైస్తవులముఖ్య డిజైర్గా ప్రార్థన మొదటిస్థానంలో ఉండాలి. వాక్యము చదవడమంటే దేవుడు మనతో మాట్లాడడము. ప్రార్థన అంటే దేవునితో మనము మాట్లాడాలి. ప్రార్థనపొరుడు, ప్రపంచ ప్రఖ్యాతి గాంచి గొప్ప దైవజనుడైన బల్లీగ్రహామ్ గారు తన 90+ సం॥లన్నిటిలో అమెరికా సంయక్త రాష్ట్రములో ప్రెసిడెంట్లు ఐన ప్రతి ఒక్కరిని కలవగల్గారు ఈ విషమయము విలేకర్లు ఆయనను ఇంటర్వ్యూలో అడిగినపుడు అదెంత గొప్ప విషయమన్నట్లు చెప్పి ఒకే మాటన్నారు. ఆయన “That is nothing Today I talked with God” బైబిలులో గొప్ప భక్తులైన యెషయా, యెహెజ్కేలు, యోహానులు దేవుని దర్శనాన్ని చూచినవారు. దావీదు 63:5 కీర్తనలో “రాత్రి జాములయందు నిన్ను ధ్యానించునపుడు క్రొవ్వు మెదడు నాకు దొరికినట్లుగా నా ప్రాణము తృప్తిపొందుచున్నది. అంటాడు. ప్రార్థన అనే ఆశ కల్గిన లూథియ అనే స్త్రీని మనము అ.కా 16:13లో చూస్తాము. ఆశ కల్గిన మన ప్రాణాలను దేవుడు తప్పక తృప్తిపరుస్తాడు. ప్రార్థన చేయుట మన విధి. It is our duty. ప్రతీ ఒక్కరము సేవలో పాల్గొనలేము. కానీ వారికొరకు ప్రార్థించాలి.

There is Holy High Vocation
Needing Workers every where
It is the Highest form of Service
It is the Ministry of Prayer

అవును ప్రార్థించుట సేవలన్నింటిలో ఉత్కృష్టమైనది. శ్రేష్టమైనది.

యభ్యేజా ప్రార్థన

శ్రీమతి లావణ్య దేవి

యభ్యేజా అనగా వేదన అని అర్థం. ఇతను తన సహోదరులందరిలో ఘనత పొంది ఉండెను. వేదన పడి ఇతని కంటినని ఇతని తల్లి యభ్యేజా అని పేరు పెట్టెను. ఇతను ఇశ్రాయేలీయుల దేవుడిని ఇలా మొర్ర పెట్టెను. 1. దిన 4-10, “నీవు నన్ను నిశ్చయముగా ఆశీర్వదించి నా సరిహద్దును విశాలపరచి, నీ చెయ్యి నాకు తోడుగా ఉండ దయచేసి, నాకు కీడు రాకుండా దానీలో నుండి నన్ను తప్పించుము అని ప్రార్థన చేయగా దేవుడు అతడు మనవి చేసిన దానిని అతనికి దయచేసెను”. అనగా మనం దేవుని సన్నిధిలో విశ్వాసముతో ఏది అడిగిన మన దేవుడు తన చిత్తములో దానిని ఇచ్చేవాడుగ ఉన్నాడు. ఇక్కడ సహోదరులకంటే ఘనముగా ఉన్న వ్యక్తి, కుటుంబములో అన్ని విధాలుగా స్థిరపడిన యభ్యేజా ఇశ్రాయేలీయుల దేవుడిపై ఆధారపడవలసిన అవసరం వచ్చింది. మనం కూడా మన జీవితంలో ఎన్నోసార్లు దేవుడిని ఆశ్రయిస్తూ ఉంటాము. ఎలాంటి అనుమానాలు లేకుండా, విశ్వాసముతో దేవుని సన్నిధిలో అడిగితే మన తండ్రి అయిన దేవుడు, సర్వసృష్టి కర్త, మాట మన నోటికి రాక ముందే మన తలంపులను ఆలోచనలను తెలిసికొనే దేవుడు మనం చేసి ప్రార్థనను అంగీకరిస్తాడు. యభ్యేజా గురించి పరిశుద్ధ గ్రంథంలో చాలా క్లుప్తంగా ఉంది కాని ఇతని ప్రార్థన మాత్రం చాలశక్తికలదిగ కనిపిస్తుంది.

1. నిశ్చయమైన ఆశీర్వాదము : అబ్రహాము ఇస్సాకు యాకోబు దేవుడు, మాట తప్పని మహాదేవుడు తనకు ఖచ్చితముగా ఆశీర్వాదము ఇవ్వాలని యభ్యేజా ప్రార్థన చేసెను. యెహోవా ఆశీర్వాదము నొందినవారు భూమిని స్వతంత్రించుకొందురు. అదికాండము 12, 2,3, అబ్రహామును దేవుడైన యెహోవా ఈ విధముగా ఆశీర్వదించెను. “నిన్ను గొప్ప జనముగా చేసి నిన్ను ఆశీర్వదించి నీ నామమును గొప్ప చేయుదును, నీవు ఆశీర్వాదముగా ఉండువు. ఆ తర్వాత యెహోవా చెప్పిన ప్రకారము అబ్రహాము వెళ్ళెను. యెహోవా మాటకు లోబడి వెళ్ళిన అబ్రహాము బహు ధనవంతుడిగా, జనములకు తండ్రిగా ఆశీర్వాదం పొందెను.

2. సరిహద్దులను విశాలపరచడం : యభ్యేజా తన ఆత్మీయ, అనుదిన జీవితంలో వచ్చే శోధనలను, ప్రతికూలపరిస్థితులను ఎదుర్కోవడానికి తండ్రి అయిన దేవుడి జ్యోక్యాన్ని అడిగినట్లు చూడవచ్చు. అవును నిజమే, మన లైఫ్లో ఉన్న సమస్యలసరిహద్దులను చెరపివేయగలకత్తి ప్రార్థనకి ఉంది. కీర్తనలు 138:3, “నేను మొర్ర పెట్టిన దినమున నీవు నాకు ఉత్తరమిచ్చితివి, నాప్రాణములో త్రాణ పుట్టించి నన్ను ధైర్యపరచితివి”. కీర్తనలు 74:17 “భూమికి సరిహద్దులను నియమించినవాడవు నీవే” ఇలాంటి గొప్ప సృష్టికర్తను దేవుడిగా, తండ్రిగా కలిగిన మనము ధన్యులము.

3. దేవుని హస్తము తోడు, కాపుదల : మనం దేవుని కాపుదలలో ఉంటే ఎలాంటి పరిస్థితులలో అయిన జయం పొందగలము. ఉదాహరణ : మోషే, అబ్రహాము, యెహోషువా 1:5,6 నీవు బ్రదుకు దినములన్నిటను తను ఏ మనుష్యుడును నీ ఎదుట నిలువ లేక యుండును. నేను మోషేకు తోడై ఉండినట్లు నీకును తోడై యుండును. నిన్ను విడువను, ఎడబాయను.. అనెను, అలాగే మోషే ని గురుంచి సంఖ్యా కాండము 12: 3,6 “నా యిల్లు అంతటిలో నమ్మకమైన వాడు, భూమి మీద ఉన్న వారందరిలో మిక్కిలి సాత్వికుడు” అని దేవుడైన యెహోవా చెప్పెను. ఇలాంటి ధన్యత మన జీవితాలలో ఉండాలని దేవుడు ఆశిస్తున్నాడు. ప్రియులారా! మరి మనము ఆయన దృష్టికి నిండా రహితులముగా, నిత్య రాజ్యానికి నమ్మకమైన వారనులముగా ఉంటున్నామా ? ఒక్కసారి ఆలోచించాలి.

4. సమస్త కీడు (పాపము) నుండి విడుదల : దేవుడికి అవమానకరంగా మన జీవితం ఉందా? దైవ సన్నిధి నుండి మనలను ఎలాంటి కీడు దూరపరుస్తున్నది? దేవునికి విరోధముగా మన క్రియలు, ఆలోచనలు, ఉంటే అది కూడా కీడు కలిగించే అంశమే. ఏనుక్రీస్తు రక్తము ప్రతి కీడు నుండి మనలను పవిత్రపరుచును. సామెతలు 20:22 “కీడుకు ప్రతికీడు చెసెదను అనుకోవద్దు”, మనం యెంత పాపులముగా ఉన్ననూ మన ప్రభువు మన యెడలకనికరము కలిగిన వాడై ఉన్నాడు. నిండు మనసుతో మన పాపాలను ఒప్పుకొని, ఆయన దృష్టికి అంగీకారమైన ప్రవర్తన కలిగి ఉంటే, అబ్రహామును, మోషేను, యభ్యేజాను ఆశీర్వదించిన ప్రభువు నేడు మనలను కూడా అదే రీతిగా ఆశీర్వదించడానికి సంసిద్ధతతో ఉన్నాడు. మనం చేసే ప్రతి పని దేవుడి చిత్తనుసారంగా, ప్రార్థనా పూర్వకంగా చేయునట్లు దేవుడు కృప చూపును గాక!

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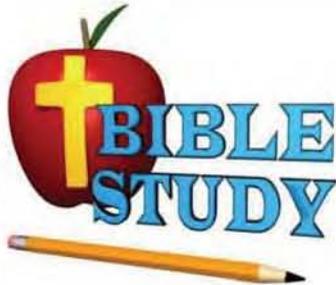
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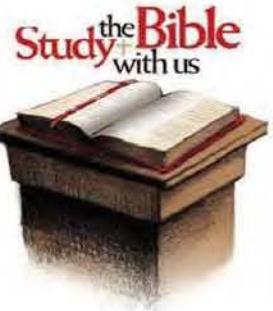
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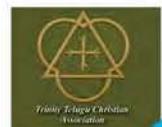
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*Congratulations and Best wishes on Celebrating
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BEAULA KODURI, M.D., received her medical degree from Osmania Medical College in Hyderabad, India and completed INTERNAL MEDICINE residency at Morristown Memorial Hospital in New Jersey.

Dr. Koduri also completed a FELLOWSHIP IN HEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY at LANKENAU/ JEFFERSON Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she also conducted research on whether the absence of BIN-1 protein can be used as a prognostic indicator for metastatic breast cancer.

Dr. Koduri is BOARD CERTIFIED in Internal Medicine, Hematology and Oncology and is a member of the American Medical Association, the American Society of Hematology, the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

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Sunday worship, Children, Youth & Woman fellowship

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*"Come! Let's put an end to all your
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*"Brethren, warn those who are gently,
 comfort the fainthearted, uphold the
 weak, be patient with all. See that no one
 renders evil for evil to anyone, but always
 pursue what is good both for yourselves
 and for all." (1 Thessalonians 5: 14,15)*

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*"Am I a God near at hand," says the
 Lord, 'And not a God afar off'"
 (Jeremiah 23:23)*

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*Congratulations to
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