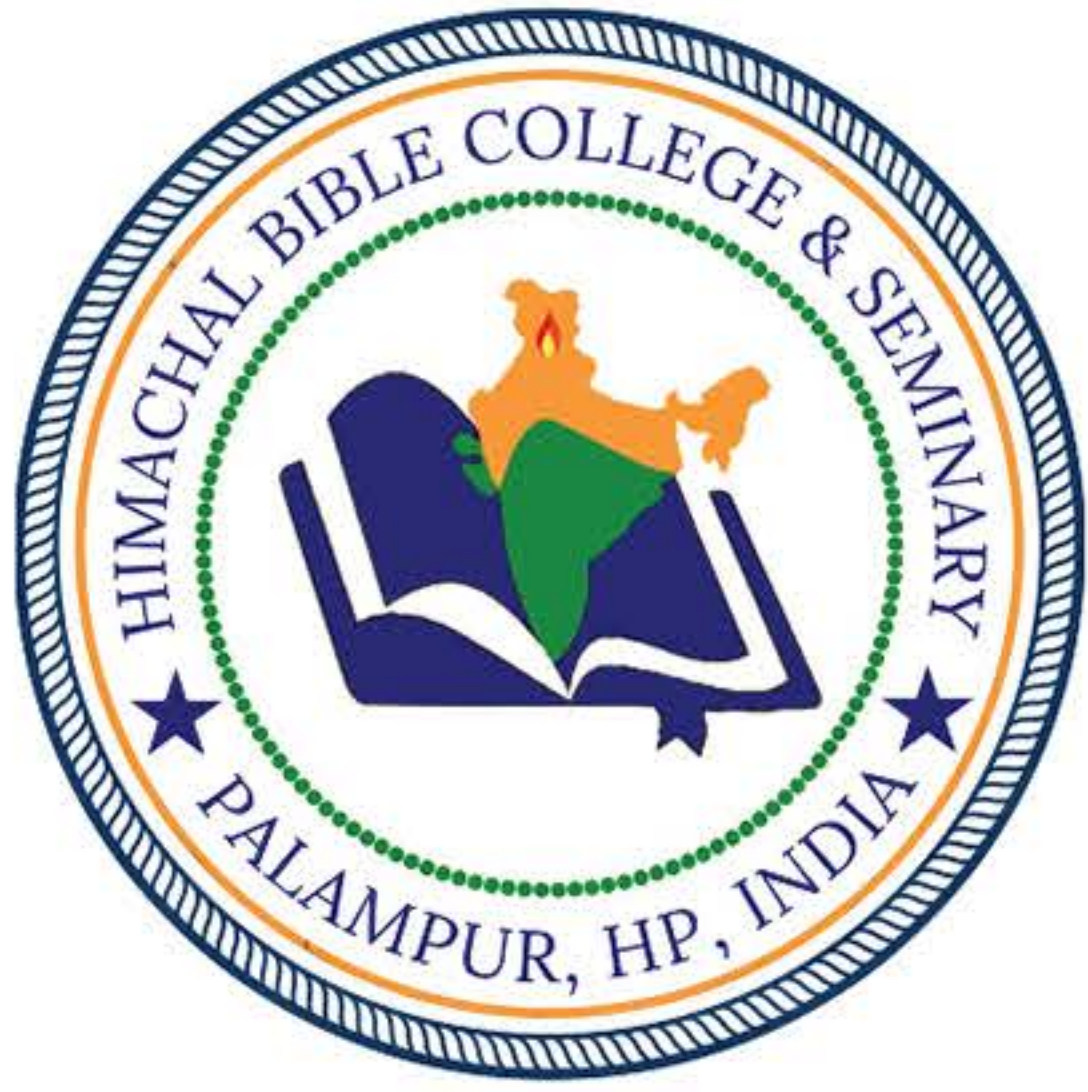


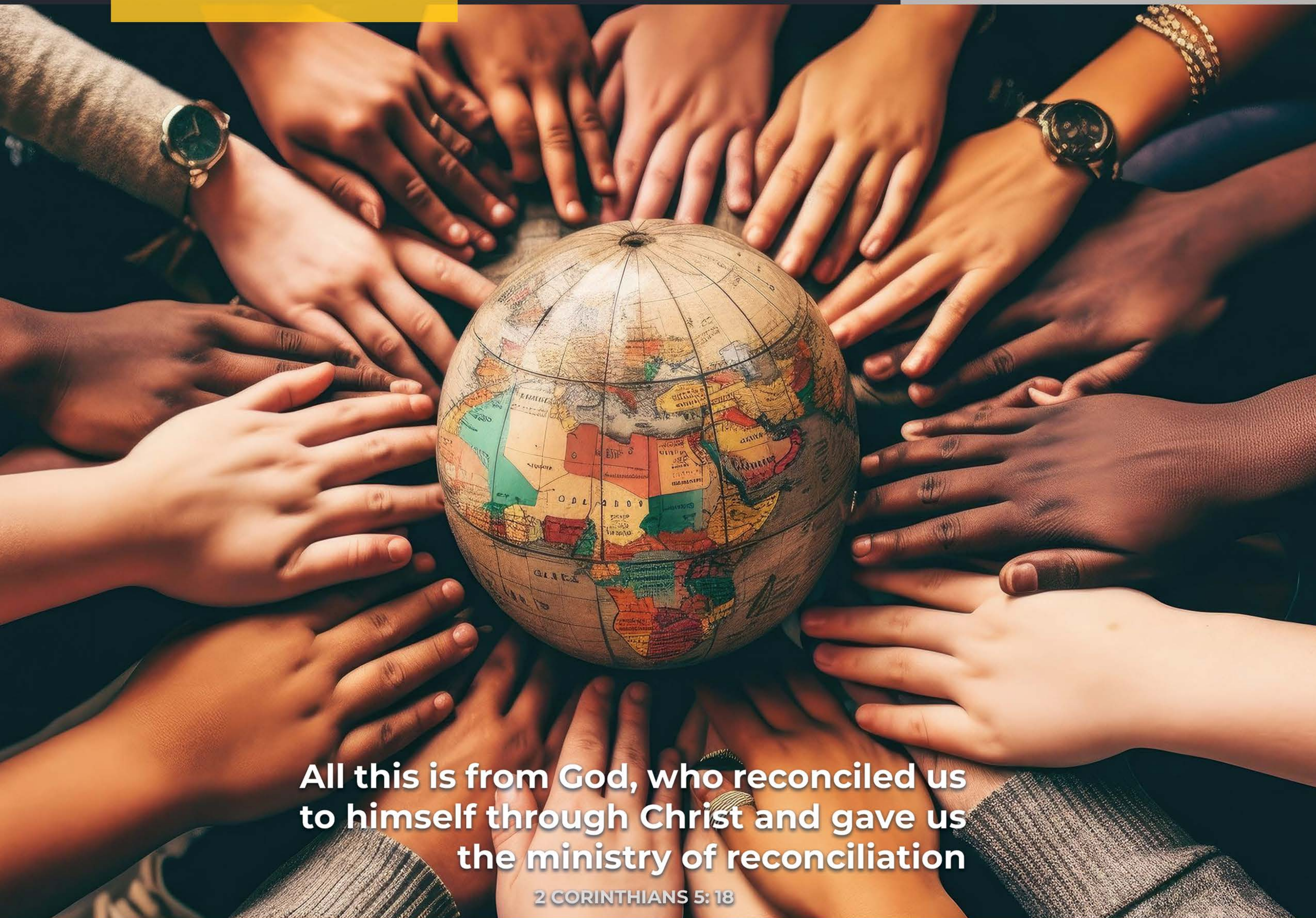


HIMACHAL BIBLE COLLEGE & SEMINARY

SHEAVES
MARCH 2024

KATALLAGE

RECONCILIATION



**All this is from God, who reconciled us
to himself through Christ and gave us
the ministry of reconciliation**

2 CORINTHIANS 5: 18

Chief Editor



Lect. Emmanuel Basumatary

Editorial Board



Dr. Sam Abraham



Lect. Janet Mol Johnson

Design & Layout



Rev. Philip K Mathew



NAME CHANGE FOR OUR INSTITUTION

Dear Esteemed Well-Wishers and Prayer Partners,
We extend our warm greetings to you in the name of our Lord. It is with great joy and enthusiasm that we, the Governing Board of Himachal Bible College & Seminary, bring to your attention a significant development in our institution.

Commencing in the year 2024, we are delighted to announce that our esteemed institution will undergo a name transformation. Henceforth, we shall be known as **"BERACHAH INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION & RESEARCH."**

This change reflects our commitment to continuous growth and excellence in providing quality education and research opportunities. We believe that the new name encapsulates our vision for fostering a dynamic environment of learning and inquiry.

We express our sincere gratitude for your unwavering support and prayers throughout our journey. Your partnership has been instrumental in shaping the future of our institution, and we are excited to embark on this new chapter with your continued blessings.

We look forward to your continued support as we strive for greater heights in education and research under our new identity, the Berachah Institute of Higher Education & Research.

May the grace of the Almighty be with you always.
Warm regards,

Governing Board,
Berachah Institute of Higher Education & Research

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Editorial

Lect. Emmanuel Basumatary

Dear Sheaves Reader,

It's thrilled to announce this year magazine theme as "Katallage." The New Testament Greek word katallage is translated in English Bible as reconciliation. The word is used mainly in the context of reconciliation with God (2 Corn. 5:18 -19) however, the concept is extended to as a result of reconciliation with God i.e. reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:14-16), reconciliation with others (Matt. 5: 23-24; Col. 3:13), reconciliation with the creation (Rom. 8:19 - 21), and finally, the ministry of reconciliation is given to believers (2 Corn. 5:20).

Christ came to fix the messy world and make everything all right. This started when Christ took cup and said, "my blood in the new covenant" and eventually this symbolism was fulfilled on the cross of Calvary (Matt. 26:28) at the very next day. The processes of reconciliation have begun by the death (atonement and forgiveness) and resurrection of Jesus Christ and those who trust and confess their sins will be forgiven and reconciled to God. However, the ultimate reconciliation of the broken world will be when Christ will return on earth. He will sort out the messy world and the righteous will dwell on it which New Testament writers called it

New Heaven and New Earth (Rom. 8:19-21; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1-2). Upon these theoretical and practical concepts, believers are called to participate to spread the message of reconciliation and actualize it daily in the church and society, creating peace and harmony.

What a pleasure for me to collect various articles, poems, life testimony that revolves around the single idea of reconciliation. The faculty and students of Himachal Bible College and Seminary and other members have contributed valuable resources that talks about reconciliation with God from Old and New Testament perspectives, Reconciliation of broken families and disputed society (as in the case of Manipur), healing the wounded soul, balancing church disciple and reconciliation and many more.

I invite you dear reader to read every article, poem, life testimony with good motive because reconciliation is not mere word rather it is powerful word which will keep the church and society stay united and peace and harmony will prevail.

May God bless you as you read word by word, pages after pages.



Message from the President

Dear Esteemed Members and Supporters,

I extend warm greetings to each one of you in the matchless name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I would like to express my sincere commendation to the entire team involved in the production of the 2024 edition of our esteemed publication, "Sheaves" magazine, here at Himachal Bible College & Seminary.

At Himachal Bible College, we annually dedicate ourselves to a chosen theme that becomes the cornerstone of our academic, spiritual, and community endeavours throughout the year. I am pleased to announce that the theme for the current academic year is "Reconciliation." We approach this theme with a sense of purpose, guided by prayer, and strive to integrate it into every aspect of our educational, spiritual, and communal activities. It is our earnest desire that the theme of "Reconciliation" will inspire growth, understanding, and unity within our college community.

Reconciliation has much to do with transformation; it's moving from a place of separation, hurt, and brokenness to a place of healing, wholeness, forgiveness, and reunion. The Greek word for reconciliation is "katallage," which translates to "adjustment of a difference" or "restoration to favour," while the Hebrew word is "kaphar" or "kaphar," which translates to "cover over" or "atone." It's taking the wrong and covering it with the cleansing power of God, restoring it to a new state of transformative unity with the Lord and all

creation. Reconciliation is merging two separate, closed-off pieces into one unit. It's bringing that lost sheep back into the proverbial fold.

The alienation of divided peoples and the suffering of the afflicted cries out from our world's brokenness, from both open, destructive conflicts and the more hidden conflicts. These conditions call the church to listen to the pain and to God, to lament the divisions, to repent and forgive where necessary, and to be transformed as agents of healing, Christian witness, and positive change. Thus as we engage in proclaiming the message of reconciliation to a dying Word, let us ponder how we can be an agent of reconciliation to the World.

I am confident that, with the dedication of our faculty, staff, and students, this academic year will be marked by transformative experiences and meaningful contributions to the ethos of reconciliation. Thank you for your ongoing support, and may this year be filled with grace, wisdom, and the blessings of unity in our shared journey of faith and learning. Blessings to all.

Dr. Sam Abraham

President,
Himachal Bible College & Seminary





Beyond Reconciliation

Dr. Valson Abraham

Reconciliation does not necessarily equal intimacy. Two enemies may reconcile but never become true friends. They no longer fight, but they have little contact with one another.

How many Christians secretly live lives like this? They know Jesus has ended their enmity with God and reconciled them to Him, but in heaven, they believe, they will dwell on the outskirts because they fail so miserably. God accepts them, they feel, but only grudgingly.

Is this a common Christian experience? Is this why many Christians judge others for their sins as they try to deal with their own uncertainties and insecurities with God? Is this why so many Christians feel no joy, become over-involved in "church work," or hang around the "fringes of faith?"

Many people are convinced that only certain special individuals can achieve true godliness. Catholics have their "saints," but in different ways, Protestants do, too. These misled brothers and sisters are reconciled to God, but do not believe intimacy with Him is possible for them because they know their many flaws and failures.

How foreign to the Good News! In Romans 5, Paul tells us that we who are of Christ belong to a new kingdom, a new human race - now! We no longer belong to the kingdom of the first Adam, the

kingdom of sin and death. Through Jesus' life, death and resurrection, we are "in" the Second Adam, Jesus Christ.

That means whatever is true about Jesus Christ is true of us. We have a radically new standing with God. Christ is forever, once and for all, dead to sin and death, so are we. Though Christ died, death did not have the last word. So it is with us.

Christ enjoys eternal and intimate fellowship with the Father. We have that same prospect. In Ephesians 2:18, Paul tells us that we have "access to the Father." The Greek indicates the highest possible intimacy with God the Father, like Jesus has with Him. It doesn't depend upon what we do or how we feel, it depends upon Him and what He has already done on the cross on our behalf.

All this requires us to dramatically rearrange our thinking. The Welsh preacher, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, compares our new position in Christ to that of a newly freed American slave right after the Civil War ended in 1865. Older slaves had served their masters for decades. When the laws changed, many of these former slaves had difficulty adjusting their new freedom. They didn't know how to relate to their old masters. They continued to act and think like slaves even though they no longer were. Only when they gradually learned new habits of thinking that come with freedom did they live in the freedom the law said they already had.

How easy it is for us to also fall into old habits of thinking that enslave us! The enemy of our souls constantly tries to make us think like slaves even when we aren't. He constantly tries to make us think that God doesn't fully welcome us when He has sacrificed His Son for our sake to give us full access to Him as members of His royal family.

Like Abraham, we must believe this because God said it, not when we feel good about ourselves. Satan will always remind us of our faults, which are many, but Christ has already born all our sins and paid all our debt.

In one of the most remarkable passages of scripture, Paul tells us to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:11). In other words, regard it as accomplished fact.

Whatever our continuing problems with old sinful habits, God regards these things as temporary. Paul tells us to become transformed by the renewing of our minds - by changing our habits of thinking - so we recognize that God already loves us and welcomes our company as He welcomes the company of His Son.

When we see Him face to face, we can expect to enter God's presence with joy and gladness, not fear and trepidation. When we see Him, we will be like Him, and our present limitations will pass away. We will not live on the fringes of heaven, but become part of His inner circle. When we learn to see ourselves the way God already sees us, we will live in the freedom that is already ours. This is Good News for everybody who will hear it! Let's make sure they do!

LOOK AROUND!!!! WHAT YOU SEE...?

Look Around! What do you see?
Couples who are separating the path,
Without any fact, feels like match.

Look Around! What do you see?

Countries are on war,
Peace is so far; it is a scar.

Look Around! What do you see?

Broken relationship in family,
Parents are wailing,
Children are failing.

Look Around! What do you see?

Human lost in cruelty,
Abuse is their variety.

Look Around! What do you see?

Dramas of spirituality,
Without any originality.

Look Around to see the solution,
Who can give them the best potion?

Compassion has suffered erosion,
Reconciliation is an illusion,

The hour has come, where man need solution,
Only solution is reconciliation with Living God.



Lect. Janet Mol Johnson

GRADUATION CEREMONY 2023



President's Speech



Academic Dean's Speech



Presentation of Graduating Class



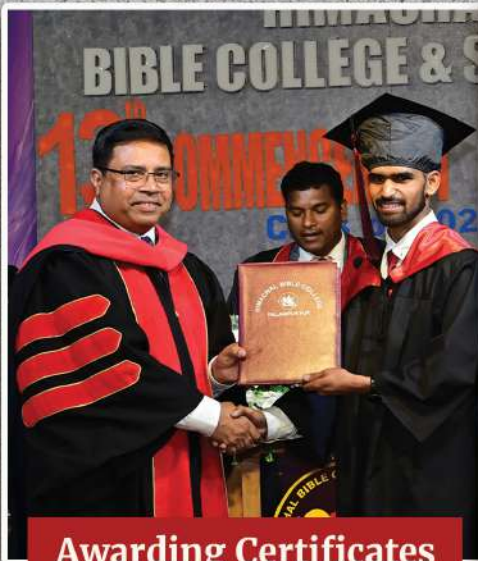
Graduate's Speech



Felicitation



Graduates with HBCS faculty



Awarding Certificates



Commissioning Service



Graduates with Guest



Graduates with Faculty



Releasing Magazine



Honouring D.Min



Restoring Harmony: The Power of Atonement in Leviticus 16

Dr. Sanjay Kumar



Leviticus chapter 16 is a pivotal chapter that highlights the utmost importance of a specific ritual within the book of Leviticus. Chapter 16 holds a significant place within the biblical text, providing profound insights into the concepts of Atonement and reconciliation. These themes form the core of Leviticus 16 as it outlines the rituals and practices that were prescribed to restore harmony between humanity and the divine. Atonement in its essence, refers to the act of making amends for wrongdoing on sin, while reconciliation involves the restoration of broken relationship and the establishment of peace. This article will examine the theme of atonement in Leviticus 16 and its relevance for contemporary contexts, drawing parallels with the New Testament Passages.

1. Meaning of Atonement

The word "atonement" has its origins in Middle Age English, derived from the phrase "at one," meaning to bring into harmony or reconciling. The concept of Atonement, whether expressed as a noun or a verb 'atone', is frequently mentioned throughout the Old Testament, particularly in the Pentateuch. Its origin can be traced back to the Hebrew root כָּפַר (kaphar), however, in the New Testament the term atonement appears only once, specifically in Romans 5:11, where it is translated as the word καταλλαγή as reconciliation. The Hebrew word כָּפַר which means atonement has been used sixteen times in Leviticus 16; and it basically means "to ransom, to remove by paying a price."

2. The Day of Atonement: A Divine Appointment

יּוֹם כִּיּוּפּוּר (Yom Kippur) or day of Atonement is the most important day of the year for the Jews in the Old Testament. This is the time when God graciously atones for all the sins of all the people and gives them a new beginning. The Hebrew Bible uses the word יּוֹם הַכִּיּוּפּוּרִים (yom Hakippurim) which literally means 'the day of covering or atonements'. Today Jews utilize the term Yom Kippur.

The Day of Atonement is considered a divine appointment, a solemn and holy day when the Israelites were called together and seek atonement for their sins. There are specific instructions given for observing the Day of Atonement. It was to be held once a year, on the tenth day of the seventh month and was marked by a series of rituals performed by the high priest in the tabernacle. On the day, the entire community participated in a collective act of repentance, seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with God.

This is time seen as a time of spiritual renewal and restoration, so this is an opportunity for the people to cleanse themselves from their impurities and to restore their relationship with the divine. The rituals and practices prescribed for this occasion were aimed at purifying the sanctuary, the priesthood and the people, symbolically removing the stains of sin and guilt.

2.1. The Rituals and Symbolism of the Day of Atonement

Leviticus 16 provides detailed instructions on how the Day of Atonement was to be observed. On the Day of Atonement, the most important person was the high priest. He brings a bull and a ram into the sanctuary and made his own offerings. Then, he changes into special clothes made of linen, which were different from his usual high priest garments and showed his importance. He removes his special clothes, washes himself, and then put on the simple linen clothes worn by an ordinary priest. He places his unique garments in the holy place, intending to retrieve and wear them again later. Removing his magnificent attire symbolizes an act of humility, while cleansing himself at the laver signified an act of purification. The high priest, as the mediator between God and the people, played a crucial role in the ceremonies. He would first make sin offerings for himself and his household to cleanse any impurities, acknowledging his own need for atonement. He would consecrate himself to fulfill his duties to God and the community on this significant occasion.

The rule also talks about the serious risk that the high priest faced when entering the holiest place. If he looks at God's throne and was not pure, the powerful glory of God would destroy him, like it did to Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-3). To protect himself, the high priest would enter the holiest place with a censer, burning incense to create a cloud that would shield him from seeing God. The word Tabernacle or dwelling place of God is very significant in Leviticus 16:16, the Hebrew word מִשְׁכָּן (mishkan) is used for the word tabernacle which underscores the importance of the tabernacle in the atonement process, particularly in the context of the Holy of Holies. Additionally, the tabernacle serves as a symbol of God's presence among His people and the means through which atonement and reconciliation are sought.

2.1.1. The Ritual of the Live Goat

Another important ritual on the Day of Atonement was the scapegoat which carries away the sins of the people into the wilderness. The Hebrew word

שְׂעִירִית (she'erit) which refers to the scapegoat or "remnant". This ritual of transferring the sins of the people onto the scapegoat symbolizes the removal and atonement of sin (Leviticus 16:21-22). The symbolism inherent in the scapegoat ritual is a focal point of this section, which analyzes of sin and impurity from the community. Three terms for sins are employed in Leviticus 21, עֲוֹנוֹת (ăwōnōt) this word is the plural form of עֲוֹן (ăwōn), which translates to "iniquity," "sin," or "guilt." It is often used in religious or moral contexts to refer to wrongdoing or transgression. Another word for sin is פְּשָׁעִים (pěšā'im) is the plural word of פֶּשַׁע (pesa) which translates to "rebellion". At last, the word sins which is in Hebrew חַטּוֹתָם (hattōtām) the plural form of the word חַטּוֹת (hattōt) "sin", so חַטּוֹתָם (hattōtām) means "their sins." These three terms cover the full range of human wrongdoing, from mistakes to planned offenses. Carrying all the congregation's transgressions from the previous year, this goat was set free in the wilderness, which was seen by the ancients as a foreboding sign. The goat took away the people's sins to the realm of demonic power, stopping these sins from causing problems in the community.

3. Implications for Jesus' Death on the cross

The sacrifice and offering in Leviticus demonstrate humanity's requirement for substitution and atonement. Since God's initial warning with regards to disobedience, it has been evident that the consequence for sin is death (Genesis 2:16-17). Therefore, something must be sacrificed i.e., blood must be shed in order to make amends for the wrongdoing that has taken place.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is revealed as the ultimate high priest who fulfills and surpasses the role of the Leviticus priesthood. The book of Hebrews extensively compares and contrasts the priestly ministry in Leviticus with Jesus' atoning work (Heb. 9:1 – 10:14; 12:2). Jesus was sinless, therefore, he functioned as the perfect high priest. His sacrifice transcends the temporary nature of the Leviticus sacrifices, providing eternal redemption and reconciliation with God. Furthermore, the high priest in Leviticus 16 needed to make atonement for his own sins before interceding for the people, highlighting the inherent imperfection of

the Leviticus priesthood, in contrast, Jesus as the sinless high priest, intercedes for humanity without the need for personal atonement, making him the perfect mediator between God and humanity. In the New Testament, Jesus fulfils the rituals of the "Day of Atonement". Firstly, he serves as the high priest, mediating and atoning for the sins of the people. Secondly, he embodies the sacrificial goat, offering himself as a sacrifice to atone for the sins of others. Finally, Jesus represents the ultimate fulfillment of the scapegoat, bearing the sins of the people and removing their burden. John the Baptist testified Jesus, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John1:29). Another biblical account depicts Jesus being led by the Spirit into the wilderness to face temptation by the devil (Matthew 4:1). This parallels the ritual described in Leviticus 16, where a scapegoat symbolically bears the sins of the people and is sent into the wilderness. In this context, the Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, indicating that he is the ultimate sacrifice in the tradition of Leviticus 16.

4. The Ministry of Reconciliation Today

Apostle Paul expounded the ministry of reconciliation, employing the Greek word καταλλαγή (Katalage) denotes the restoration of a broken relationship, emphasizing the act of bringing about peace and harmony between estranged parties through the redemptive work of Christ. Leviticus 16 portrays the ceremonial rituals performed by the high priest, symbolizing the temporary covering of sin.

In contrast, 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 emphasizes the permanent and transformative nature of reconciliation through Christ, with believers being entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation as ambassadors for Christ.

The use of καταλλαγή (Katallage) in 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 and the concept of כיפור (kippur) in Leviticus 16 demonstrates a continuity in the biblical narrative of reconciliation. While כיפור emphasizes the provisional covering of sin, καταλλαγή conveys the complete restoration of the broken relationship between God and humanity through the redemptive work of Christ.

Conclusion

In Leviticus 16, the concept of atonement is depicted as a crucial ritual for the Israelites, means to cleanse them of their sins and restore their relationship with God. The passage emphasizes the need for repentance, sacrifice, and purification as essential elements of atonement. It highlights the seriousness of sin and necessity of seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with God. In the New Testament Jesus Christ is depicted as the fulfillment of the rituals of the Day of Atonement as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of humanity. At last, apostle Paul emphasizes on the complete restoration between God and humanity through the redemptive work of Christ. He describes that the redemptive power of Christ's atonement and calls believers to be ambassadors of this message of reconciliation.



Practical Ministry 2023





The Strength of Reconciliation: Christian Values and Principles

Dr. Abey Thomas
Principal
Himachal Bible College & Seminary

'Reconciliation' stands as a foundational message within the Gospel of God. As elucidated in 2 Corinthians 5:19, the essence lies in the act where God, through Christ seeks to restore the broken relationship between humanity and himself. The unparalleled sacrifice of Jesus – His life, crucifixion, and resurrection, God unveils a pathway for humanity to restore its relationship with Him. This highlights the reconciliation as not merely a theological concept but as a lived experience, urging believers to represent this transformative message in their faith journey. Essentially, reconciliation embodies the deep love, grace, and mercy of God. It calls believers to follow Christ's example, serving as Christ's example, serving as ambassadors of peace and unity in a world longing for healing and restoration.

The power of reconciliation is truly remarkable, as it has the ability to unite individuals and create a harmonious community. It goes beyond mere coexistence, encompassing the core values and principles that are rooted in Christian teachings. Love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, and redemption are not just abstract concepts; they become tangible expressions of God's love when we embrace the path of reconciliation. By embodying these virtues, we bring about transformation and healing in our relationships. Reconciliation is not merely a one-time act, rather a continuous journey towards spiritual growth. It challenges us to deepen our understanding of Christ's example and teachings, encouraging us to live out these principles in our daily lives. Through reconciliation, we become

agents of change, spreading the message of love and compassion to others. It is through this process that we experience true discipleship and fulfill our mission to bring light into a world that desperately needs it.

This article explores into the insightful strength of reconciliation, emphasizing the importance of integrating Christian values and principles into our daily lives, empowering us to address life's challenges and conflicts.

Exploring the Strength of Reconciliation through Christian Values

Christian values find their deepest origins and inspirations in the life, teachings, and actions of Jesus Christ, who is revered as the central figure in Christianity. His life serves as a guiding beacon for believers, setting forth a moral and ethical framework that shapes the essence of Christian values. The strength of reconciliation indeed finds its foundation and potency in Christian values. These values boost the process of reconciliation.

1. Unconditional Love stands as a paramount strength in the realm of reconciliation, deeply rooted in Christian values.
2. Unconditional love in Christian teachings is linked with Forgiveness and Grace.
3. Faith and Hope: Faith serves as the bedrock upon which reconciliation stands.
4. Compassion and Empathy is an active commitment.

Unveiling the Strength of Reconciliation through Christian Principles

Christian principles refer to the fundamental truths, foundational beliefs, or ethical guidelines derived from the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as presented in the New Testament in Holy Bible. Christian principles act as both a moral and spiritual compass for believers, directing their beliefs, actions, relationships, and interactions with others. When examined closely, these principles illuminate the profound strength inherent in the process of reconciliation.

1. **Redemption:** At the heart of Christian principles lies the promise of redemption, a divine act that liberates individuals from sin and brokenness.
2. **Prayer and Spiritual Disciplines:** Christian principles emphasize the importance of prayer, worship, and spiritual disciplines in nurturing one's relationship with God.
3. **Stewardship and Generosity:** Christian principles emphasize the importance of stewardship, recognizing the all resources, talents, and gifts are entrusted to believers by God.

In conclusion, the healthy foundation of reconciliation, as articulated within Christian teachings, is composed of a harmonious amalgamation of values and principles deeply rooted in the core teachings of Christ Jesus. The Central theme foundation is Christ's boundless love, a love shown by His sacrifice, grace, and encompassing the redemptive mission. Embracing these foundational pillars, namely unconditional love, forgiveness, compassion, redemption, faith, hope, prayer, stewardship, and generosity we, as believers, symbolize and reflect Christ's transformative teachings. Through our loyalty to these values and principles, we actively cultivate environments conducive to healing, unity, mutual understanding, and the restoration of broken relationships. It is through the embodiment of these values and principles that the transformative and divine essence of reconciliation comes to completion. Reconciliation, thus, emerges not merely as a human endeavor but as a powerful, transformative, and divine process. It serves as a radiant reflection of God's boundless love, mercy, and His unwavering desire for unity, peace, and harmony among all His creation. As ambassadors of Christ's love and grace, we are called to champion reconciliation, reflecting His redemptive love and advancing His Kingdom on earth.



Reconciliation as Solution for Eternity

Dr. Amruta Bag
Academic Dean, HBCS



Dearly beloved people, carrying out the message of reconciliation appears to be a great need as our HBCS' graduates launch into the ministry to fulfil the entrusted task of Christ. The proclamation of reconciliation on the auspicious occasion of graduation appeals for ever-echoing moments in life.

Reconciliation means bringing two individuals, parties or nations to a meeting point. This cannot be done without settling the ongoing problems or issues; otherwise, reconciliation becomes a mere meeting of both parties for the sake of coming together. To regain the earlier state or newness of the well-desired situation, reconciliation is only one solution. A grant of forgiveness, either from both individuals or parties, needs to precede the act of reconciliation. The need for reconciliation among humankind has become essential in the sight of God. Therefore, God reconciled mankind through Jesus Christ by forgiveness. However, without understanding it in depth, mere human beings are unable to do so, and we need the spirit of God to properly sense God's initiation of reconciliation.

The love of the higher party covers the failure of the related party. It is love that only compels to show reunification or reconciliation between both parties if they get disturbed within. Jesus' act of reconciliation to both God and human beings is explicitly clear. One of the great examples of the ministry of reconciliation we see in Paul's mission i.e.- when he was in Roman imprisonment, he reconciled Onesimus with Philemon (Phi.1:9-10).

When we consider the ongoing situation of the world, we may notice division, discrimination, kill-

ing, war, conflict, violence, oppression, injustice, hatred, deception, misunderstanding, suicide, and various problems in different fields. The recent rivalry between the Kukis and Meiteis, the war between Russia and Ukraine, the misunderstanding between Canada and India, or any sort of dissension appeals us to have mutual understanding and be in the state of reconciliation. Christological reconciliation needs to prevail in the home, society, and nations.

Whatever it takes to solve them, it seemingly requires reconciliation. Christian believers are called to practise the true, exemplary act of reconciliation that has already been demonstrated by Jesus. So, the study of God's word is for reconciling people with God. This accomplishment has been eschatologically highlighted in the scripture. It appeals to practise reconciliation for the sake of God's kingdom building and valuing individuals, communities, and society. God's perspective is required to be practiced, as highlighted in the act of reconciliation. The whole creation needs to return to God's standard with an act of reconciliation. For us "stand for reconciliation" is an appealing message in today's situation.

So, it can be done through the practise of forgiveness, seeking peace, unity, and love in one's life rather than expecting it from others. The Church of Jesus Christ needs to bring awareness to the practise of reconciliation in the world. The theology of reconciliation must not be limited to theoretical teaching, with fewer attempts at practise within

Christian homes, churches, or within Christian circles. But the greater attempt has to be made for the practise of reconciliation outside for the participation of many in the perfect reconciliation of Christ, ultimately leading to the reconciliation for eternity.

When we consider the effect of reconciliation, a great example of such is the Canadian missionary teacher Don Richardson. It was 1962 when he en-

tered the Sawai tribe village of West Popua in Indonesia along with his wife Carol and six-month-old son Steve (Peace Child, Don Richardson). He could reconcile the tribal village conflict by introducing Christ, the Peace Child. It was a great risk. Jesus, the prince of peace, brings change into the lives of the people. God's message of reconciliation is ever-transforming the lives of people. Hence, as agents in our place and others, let us make a greater attempt to reflect the same. God bless you.



Media Workshop





Graduating Class with teachers 2024



Reconciliation: The Art of Restoring Broken Relationships

Rev. Robin Varughese
Registrar, HBCS



In a world often marred by conflicts and fractured connections, the concept of Christian reconciliation stands as a beacon of hope, offering a transformative journey towards healing broken relationships. At its core, reconciliation is based on the deep biblical concept of forgiveness. It encourages people to show mercy and care in their search for healing.

Recognising that people are broken and that we are all prone to making mistakes is at the heart of Christian healing. From this point of view, the first thing that needs to happen to mend broken relationships is for each person to be honest about their mistakes and sincerely ask for forgiveness. It is a form of communication that goes beyond ego, asking people to let go of their pride and accept their weakness as a way to heal relationships that may have been broken.

One important part of the Christian process of healing is realising that forgiveness is more than just ignoring wrongdoings. It's a choice to let go of the weight of anger. People can move on with their lives now that they have been deeply freed from the chains of anger that may have held them back. From a Christian point of view, the instruction to love each other is emphasised, which creates an atmosphere where peace can be seen as an expression of God's boundless kindness.

When people are trying to restore broken relationships, empathy becomes a powerful tool. Christian healing asks people to put themselves in the other

person's place and understand the pain and struggle that may have led to the breakup. This kind of understanding and empathy acts as a bridge, joining hearts and making it possible for meaningful healing to begin.

The power of faith to save lives is at the heart of Christian healing. It is a concept that grace can change things and that people can be made new through God's help. People who believe in the saving work of Christ find comfort and strength to go through the often-difficult process of rebuilding relationships, which is based on the principles of love, forgiveness, and healing.

In the Christian story of forgiveness, the healing process is seen as a group effort, since restoring relationships is not something that can be done by one person alone. It asks for the help of a group that supports each other and creates an environment of understanding, support, and responsibility. People in the community become active players in the healing process when they work together. This supports the idea that reconciliation is a road towards healing for everyone.

Christian healing is not just about resolving problems between people; it's also about restoring problems in society and around the world. It asks people to commit to fairness, justice, and the desire of peace, recognising that a peaceful world starts with hearts that are at peace with each other. When people answer the call to be champi-

ons of reconciliation, they start good changes that lead to a world where people get along and broken things are fixed.

In conclusion, the art of healing broken relationships through Christian healing is a powerful example of how love, forgiveness, and faith can

change things. It is a trip that goes beyond personal problems and encourages people to live by the ideals of kindness and forgiveness. In the complex network of relationships between people, the threads of reconciliation tell a story of mending, redemption, and the endless possibilities that open up when hearts are willing to a solution.



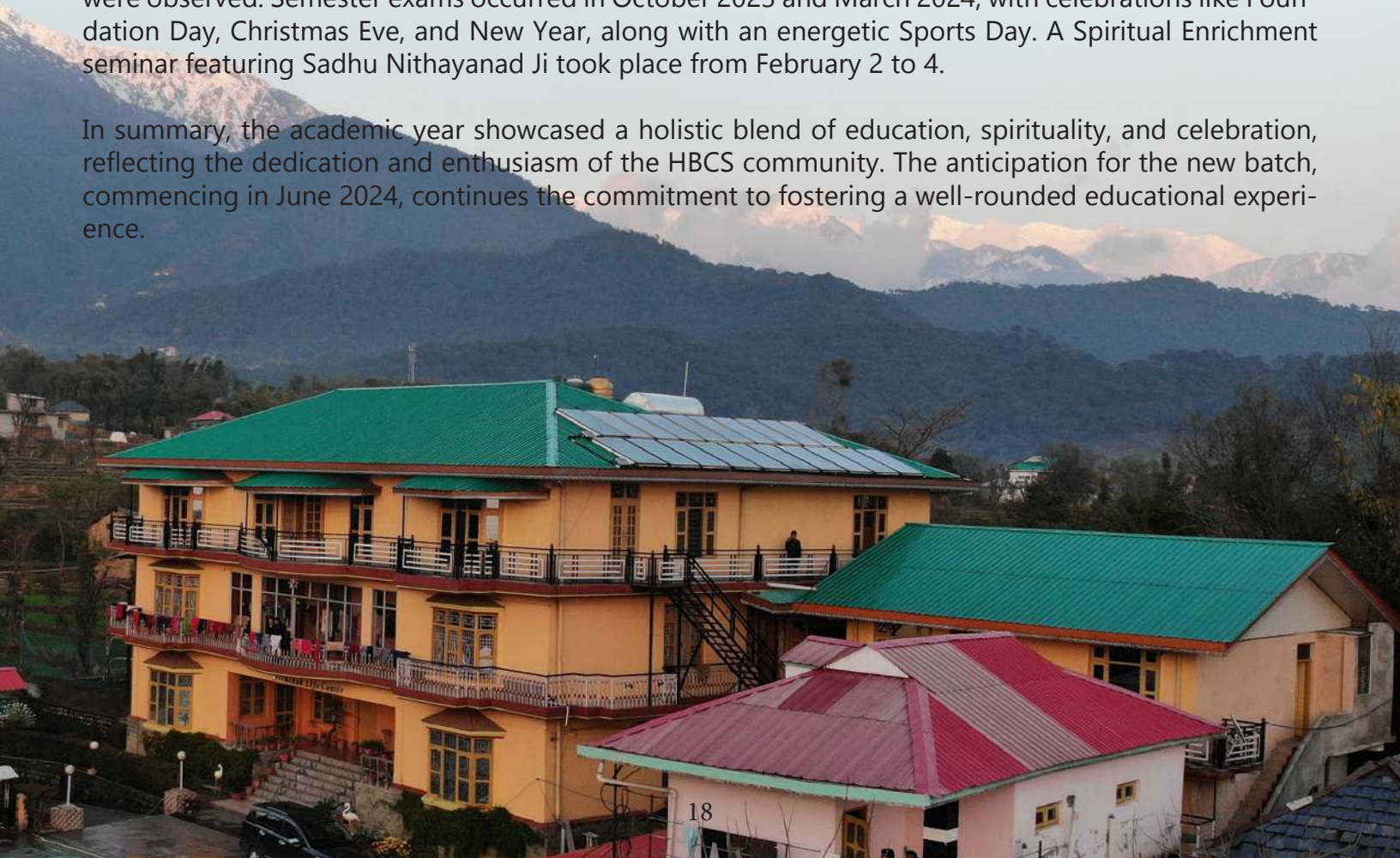
Glance of HBCS

Himachal Bible College & Seminary (HBCS) is dedicated to equipping individuals to fulfill the Great Command and the Great Commission. Embracing co-education, HBCS strategically incorporates programs to empower women. The training program aims for a harmonious blend of academic excellence and spiritual maturity, adopting a holistic approach.

The Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in Christian Studies programs are associated with Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong, Meghalaya. The Diploma in Theology, Bachelor of Theology and Master of Divinity hold accreditation from the Asia Theological Association. HBCS also offers Certificate in Theology and Master of Divinity programs, with English as the medium of instruction.

The academic year 2023-2024 commenced on June 12, 2023, with the theme 'Reconciliation'. Preparatory classes, Spiritual Emphasis Day, and General Orientation preceded the start of first-semester classes on July 3rd. Independence Day, Fasting and Prayer, monthly faculty meetings, and Teacher's Day were observed. Semester exams occurred in October 2023 and March 2024, with celebrations like Foundation Day, Christmas Eve, and New Year, along with an energetic Sports Day. A Spiritual Enrichment seminar featuring Sadhu Nithayanad Ji took place from February 2 to 4.

In summary, the academic year showcased a holistic blend of education, spirituality, and celebration, reflecting the dedication and enthusiasm of the HBCS community. The anticipation for the new batch, commencing in June 2024, continues the commitment to fostering a well-rounded educational experience.





Cross: The Epitome of “Reconciliation” A Paradigm to the Conflicting World

Lect. Godwin K Johnson
Dean of Students (Boys)



The word “Reconciliation” is mostly understood more cognitively than experientially. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines the word as “an end to a disagreement or conflict with somebody and the start of a good relationship again.” But from a theological perspective, the depth of it transcends our understanding. It is important to understand it in its actual depth. The frequent outbreak of wars and political conspiracy between nations is stirring the hearts of the people and spreading panic all around the world. In a religious context, conflicts are worsening day by day, especially in the Asian context. In a sociological context, the self-centeredness of the people causes disaster in society, and families are falling apart. So, the spirit of conflict crept into all dimensions of life leading the world to destruction. In such a scenario, where should the world look for guidance? What could be the paradigm from which we could extract a few lessons? Where does the world find the answers to the commotions all around? In light of this crisis, this article attempts to discuss the relevance of the cross as a paradigm to the conflicting world which is the epitome of reconciliation

The world has witnessed two horrific world wars (first and second world war) between nations in history, where millions suffered brutal deaths and yet not the further generations got redeemed from its legacy. In the current scenario, the nations are in a hurry to accumulate destructive weapons to bring forth another terror in the world, which resembles the war between Russia and Ukraine and Israel and Gaza. All those kingdoms are un-

der conflict and none attempt to bring back peace, but to fight further to showcase their power to the world. Thinking further, the other major trouble the world encounters is religious conflicts. Front-line religions are pursuing dominance over the other so that they will be able to tread over the other and establish their kingdom. Then it leads to physical oppression and suppression. Religious terrorism is a great example of that. How much loss religious terrorism brought to the world in the last couple of years, especially the recent conflict between Gaza and Israel will be an appropriate example of that. Religious terrorists had devoted themselves to overpowering other religions by any means even by inhuman activities. Racism is another toxic practice that prevails all around the world. India also was too intense in racial discrimination, but in this era, it is not so explicitly practiced yet visibly existing. Justice is denied everywhere, and it is sold for money. Downtrodden in society are always the victims of the extravagance of the affluent and they are denied justice. Their voice is always suppressed by the powerful, and the justice remains blind to their helplessness.

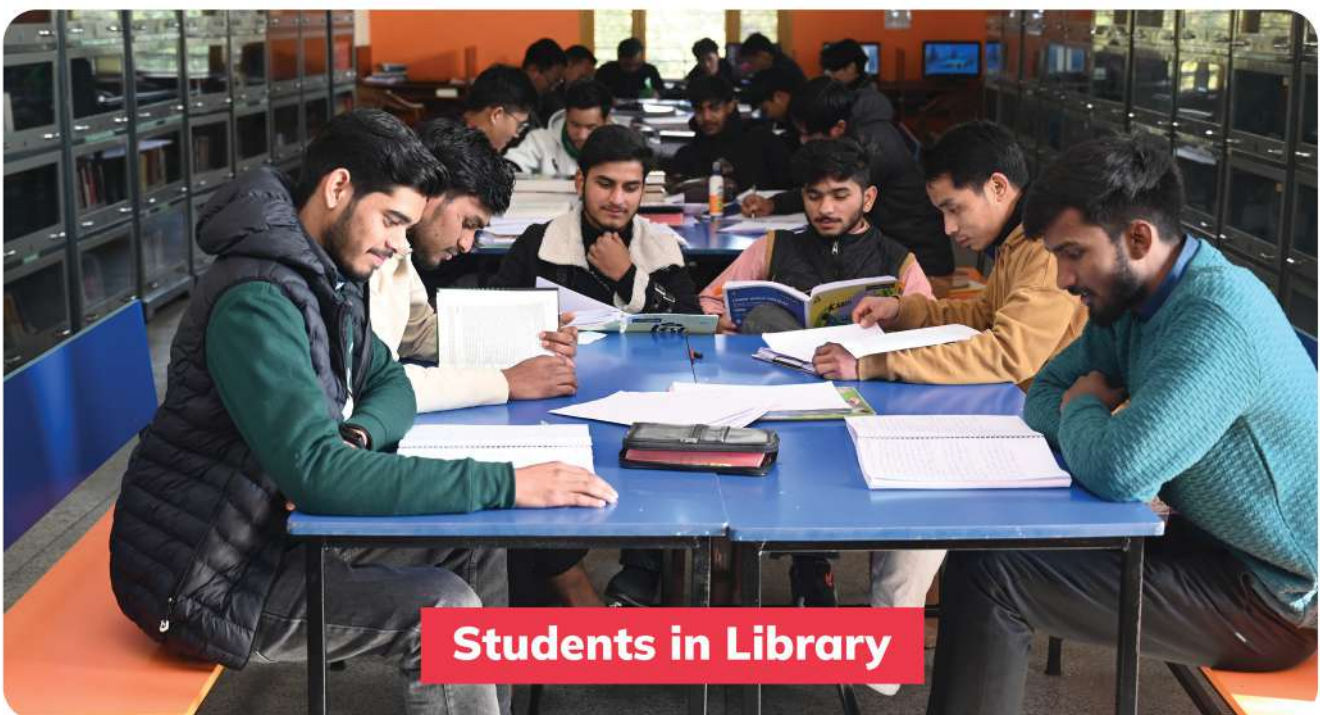
So, the world is running in chaos due to different sorts of conflicts, and undercurrent waves of political and economic grudges between nations await to rise up for another terror in the world, which may sweep away everything. The culmination of all will be the destruction of everything on a large scale. Even when we are too aware of it and understand that everything is out of our reach, we can still contribute something as we hope for the

best. Here comes the significance of the cross to function as a paradigm to the conflicting world to bring back peace to the world through the message of reconciliation. And also, the message of Cross becomes too relevant to the World in this present scenario.

In Romans: 5: 9-11 Paul spectacularly portrays reconciliation, which exclaims the profoundness of it, by using the term propitiation (atonement), the death of Jesus Christ as the example. Paul says "While we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son" This particular statement makes the cross the epitome of reconciliation. Why it is so profound? Because we were the enemies of God, caused by our sins. We had no part in God's business, and we were separated far away. The chasm was so wide that something significant had to happen to bring God and Men together. Always the initiation for a reconciliation must come from the one who had caused the trouble. That will be the most justified manner which goes in line with human morality. But we had witnessed something spectacular, something too unusual, a divine initiation in history which was brought forth as the greatest paradigm of reconciliation accompanied by the unbeatable portrayal of love, compassion and forgiveness on the cross. The Lord gave himself to become a sacrifice to initiate reconciliation between God and Men.

Therefore, the cross exclaims "the initiation for a reconciliation is not determined by nothing but love." You might be right or wrong, blameless or condemned or whatever, your initiation for a reconciliation determines the Christ-likeness in you. This attitude that we see on the cross makes it the epitome. Because nowhere in the world we do see such a manner of reconciliation ever taken place. This is the greatest paradigm that the world can look unto. The driving force for reconciliation must not be the rightness of mine or the wrongness of the other but love. let this attitude prevail among us so that the world may look better. All the wars, political struggles and religious atrocities will be never-ending. But the cross will always stand as a paradigm to the world, exclaiming the message of reconciliation, love and forgiveness

In conclusion, the cross is an enduring symbol of reconciliation, offering a paradigm that transcends religious boundaries and addresses the complexities of human conflicts. Its profound message encourages individuals and communities to embrace forgiveness, self-sacrifice, and justice, providing a transformative framework for building a more harmonious and reconciled world. Cross is the only framework in which the world can find its peace and harmony. Therefore, Cross is the greatest paradigm that the world can ever look to embrace a reconciled world.



Students in Library

The Question of Reconciliation

Rev. Mark Strickland



It is part of the human condition, part of our brokenness caused by our sin that brings about the ever-present human conflict in our world. It is our misplaced need to be our own God, control our circumstances, and attempt to mold life as we choose and see fit. Through this self-deification, we create and foster an ongoing enmity with the living God and those who exist beside us. It is in this false reality that we live much of our lives, demanding that God and others yield to our will, our vision of what life should be. The innate demand of others to submit to our desires is what creates friction and upset between God and man, husband and wife, parent and child. For ages long past this story has been told from Cain and Abel forward. The question has always been, what can be done? How do we find peace with all of mankind vying for control? Who or what can change the reality of our sick world?

It seems obvious that for peace to be found someone needs to yield and someone must take the blame for the conflict and so bring peace to the upheaval, to form friendship out of enmity. In a word, reconciliation is required. Yet, the fact remains, that God is not wrong, we are. God is not upset, we are. God is not in conflict, we are. It is our constant self-focused desire to be right, to be in control, to be our own god that has caused the rift between us and our Creator.

Paul writes to the Romans, “While 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!” (Rom. 5:10)[i] He makes it clear to the Romans that God took the first step, he did what we could not do to bring about a mending of relationship. Even though we were the ones in the wrong, we were the ones who created the conflict, it has always been God who sought us, who made things right, and who chose to initiate this powerful reality of reconciliation. Simply, He created this reconciliation through the sacrifice and death of His Son. The exchange of his life for our life. Paul confirms this in 2 Cor. 5:18, “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through

Christ... that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them”[ii]

At its core meaning in the original language the word “reconciliation” is the concept of an exchange of one thing for another, an alteration, a transformation. Paul makes it clear that if we respond to the action of God in Christ, we become something new and will never be the same. We become something transformed, exchanged, altered. That’s what reconciliation does. It exchanges the old for new, the wrong for right, and conflict for peace. It is an alteration from the present reality, an exchange of a mindset and belief, and a transformation of relationships between persons. This is how Paul can so boldly proclaim in verse 17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”[iii]

God not only creates in us this transforming experience, but he also invites us to become an agent of reconciliation in our world. God invites us to be Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us”[iv] Once we experience the transformation of reconciliation, we are commissioned by God himself to extend the message of transformation that is reconciliation. This message is expressed in verse 19, with a literal understanding that “the word of reconciliation has been put in us by God himself.” When we are transformed by reconciliation then God places in us the ability to be part of the proclamation of transformation in our world. It becomes clear that this action with us by way of reconciliation does not end with us, but it becomes an ongoing, ever-flowing wave of the work of God wherever He places us.

The always constant question of reconciliation is not, “Is there a solution to the brokenness and conflict of my world?” The question of reconciliation is, “Am I willing to be transformed by the power of the cross of Christ and allow Christ to proclaim his reconciliation through me?”

Balancing Church Discipline & Reconciliation in the Indian Context

Ishan Sherya
B.Th. 3rd year



Introduction

In the diverse and culturally rich landscape of India, where spirituality is deeply woven into the fabric of society, the dynamics of church life play a significant role. Balancing church discipline and reconciliation becomes Supreme for promoting a growing community that reflects the essence of both order and compassion.

1. Understanding Church Discipline

Church discipline is the framework that provides structure to the religious community. It involves maintaining order, upholding doctrinal principles, and ensuring that members follow established guidelines. In the Indian context, this may include adhering to traditional rituals, ethical standards, and the teachings of the church. In simple terms, church discipline is similar to the rules that govern a family.

It establishes a sense of order, creating an environment where individuals can grow spiritually within a structured framework. For instance, attending religious services regularly, following moral codes, and participating in community activities may be part of the discipline.

2. The Importance of Church Discipline

Church discipline serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it preserves the integrity of religious teachings, preventing the dilution or misinterpretation of core beliefs. Secondly, it creates a sense of unity among the congregation, as everyone follows

common guidelines. Lastly, it provides a foundation for spiritual growth, offering a structured path for individuals to deepen their faith. However, the challenge arises when the enforcement of discipline becomes hard and unwavering, potentially leading to conflicts within the church community. Striking the right balance is crucial to prevent the stifling of individual expression and the alienation of members who may not conform entirely to every rule. Navigating Reconciliation, on the other hand, is the compassionate aspect of church life. It involves resolving conflicts, encourage understanding, and promoting unity among members. In India, with its cultural diversity and varying interpretations of religious practices, reconciliation becomes a crucial tool for maintaining harmony within the church. Think of reconciliation as the healing process within a family when disagreements arise.

It emphasizes communication, empathy, and understanding to mend relationships and restore a sense of unity. In the context of the church, reconciliation ensures that conflicts do not go up, creating an environment where forgiveness and mutual respect win. India, known for its religious pluralism, is a mosaic of diverse beliefs and practices. In this complex hanging, churches become microcosms of this diversity, incorporating a wide range of traditions, customs, and cultural variation. Balancing discipline and reconciliation become especially challenging, given the multitude of perspectives within the congregation. Churches in India often serve as not just places of worship but also community centers where social, cultural,

and familial bonds are nurtured. The challenge lies in maintaining the holiness of religious teachings while embracing the rich hanging of cultural diversity.

3. Balancing discipline and reconciliation

The key to balancing church discipline and reconciliation lies in recognizing the complementarity of these two aspects. Discipline provides the necessary structure and guidance, while reconciliation ensures that this structure does not become hard and exclusive. Both are essential for the church to fulfill its role as a spiritual guide and a supportive community.

1. **Open Communication Channels:** Encourage open dialogue within the church community. Create spaces where members feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and concerns without fear of judgment. This encourages an atmosphere of understanding and prevents conflicts from festering.
2. **Educational Initiatives:** Implement educational programs that promote a deeper understanding of the church's teachings and the reasons behind certain disciplinary measures. This helps members appreciate the significance of discipline, reducing resistance and encouraging a sense of unity.

3. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Acknowledge and respect the cultural diversity within the congregation. Recognize that interpretations of religious practices may vary, and there can be different ways of expressing faith. Embrace this diversity as strength rather than a source of division.
4. **Pastoral Guidance:** Provide pastoral guidance that combines firmness with compassion. Pastors and leaders play a crucial role in maintaining discipline while also being approachable figures that facilitate reconciliation. A pastoral approach that combines wisdom with empathy goes a long way in resolving conflicts.
5. **Community Building Activities:** Organize community-building activities that bring members together in non-religious settings. This helps build strong interpersonal relationships, creating a foundation of trust that facilitates reconciliation when conflicts arise.

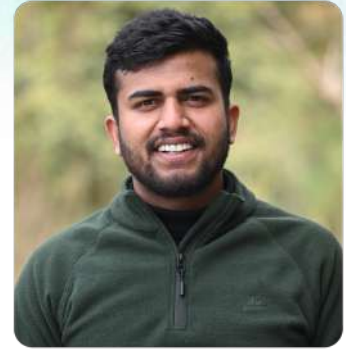
Conclusion

Balancing church discipline and reconciliation in the Indian context is a delicate yet essential task. It involves weaving together the threads of order and compassion to create a tapestry that reflects the unity in diversity inherent in India. By recognizing the value of both discipline and reconciliation, churches can nurture vibrant communities where individuals can grow spiritually while embracing the richness of their cultural and religious diversity.



Challenges of Reconciliation in Indian Context

Joy Gill
B.Th. 3rd year



Introduction

Reconciliation has to do with transformation; it is moving from a place of separation, hurt, and brokenness to a place of healing, wholeness, forgiveness. 2 Corinthians 5:18, say "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." So, God has appointed to his followers the ministry of reconciliation. However, Reconciliation in the Indian context is a complex and multifaceted process, given the country's rich tapestry of cultures, languages, religions, and historical conflicts. While India has made significant development in its journey towards unity in diversity, there are still several challenges that hinder the full realization of reconciliation. In this article, I will explore some of these challenges in detail.

1. Historical Conflicts

One of the primary challenges to reconciliation in India is the deep-rooted historical conflicts that have left lasting mark. The country has witnessed numerous communal and ethnic clashes over the centuries. The wounds of these conflicts, such as the partition of 1947 and subsequent communal violence, continue to fester in the collective memory of the nation. Reconciliation requires addressing the historical complaint and finding a way to heal these deep-seated wounds.

2. Religious and Cultural Diversity

India is a land of incredible religious and cultural diversity. While this diversity is a source of strength and pride, it can also be a challenge when it comes

to reconciliation. Tensions often arise between different religious and cultural groups, leading to mistrust and division. Achieving reconciliation necessitates not just tolerance, but genuine acceptance and understanding of the various belief systems and traditions that coexist in the country.

3. Socioeconomic Disparities

Another significant obstacle to reconciliation in India is the stark socioeconomic disparities that exist. The country is home to extreme wealth alongside pervasive poverty. These disparities are often along caste, class, and regional lines. The marginalized communities that have historically been disadvantaged continue to face discrimination and exclusion. Achieving reconciliation requires addressing these inequalities and ensuring that all citizens have equal access to opportunities and resources.

4. Political Polarization

Political polarization is a growing challenge in India, where divisive rhetoric and identity politics often take center stage. This polarization can exacerbate existing fault lines and hinder efforts at reconciliation. Building a more inclusive and equitable political discourse is crucial for fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose among the diverse population.

5. Education and Awareness

A lack of education and awareness about the importance of reconciliation is also a hurdle. Many individuals and communities may not fully grasp

the significance of coming together to resolve conflicts and build a harmonious society. Educational initiatives that promote empathy, intercultural understanding, and conflict resolution skills are essential to overcoming this challenge.

Conclusion

Reconciliation in the Indian context is a noble but challenging endeavor. It requires addressing historical conflicts, embracing diversity, reducing socioeconomic disparities, mitigating political polarization, and promoting education and awareness. The Bible teaches that God is reconciling all things together through Christ, and Christians are called

to live at peace with everyone, actively engaging in conversations that lead towards true restoration. The Bible also emphasizes the importance of forgiveness, encouraging individuals to forgive others as God forgave them. Some essential Bible verses about reconciliation include Colossians 1:20, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Romans 5:10-11, and Matthew 5:23-26. These verses emphasize the importance of forgiveness, making amends, and restoring relationships to a state of harmony. By following these teachings, individuals can work towards true unity in love and find a shared identity in Christ, promoting reconciliation with others.



The Healing Road

“On the healing road we travel
with broken hearts and wounded pride
But in our quest for reconciliation
We cast aside old pain to reside...!

Hand in hand, we walk together
Through field of empathy and peace
Embracing the power of forgiveness
Let boundless love find its release

No longer burdened by resentment
we plant the seeds of harmony
Reconciliation, a sacred dance
bring unity, joy and serenity.”



Khaowang Konyak
B.Th. 2nd year

Christmas 2023



The Message of Reconciliation

N. Shaopa
M.Div. 3rd year



Reconciliation is the act of restoring, repairing, or re-establishing of the harmonious and peaceful relationship between individuals, groups or nations. All is from God; He reconciles us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. God was reconciling the world to himself through Christ, not counting people's sins against them. Let's see, where the reconciliation was done by God.

1. Reconciliation with God: Repentance and Forgiveness

Repentance is a foundational of reconciliation with God. It is the acknowledgement of one's sins, a heartfelt remorse for wrongdoing and a genuine turning away from sinful behaviors. Repentance is not merely acknowledging mistakes but a profound change of heart and direction. In Luke 15: 7, Jesus teaches, I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous person who do not need to repent. Accompanying repentance is the divine forgiveness. The Bible reassures believers that God is gracious and merciful, ready to forgive. Repentance is seen as a crucial step towards reconciliation with God. Forgiveness is divine or spiritual act of pardoning or absolving a person of their sins or wrongdoings. It signifies God's willingness to grant mercy and offer a fresh started to individual who have sincerely repented. Seeking forgiveness for one's transgression and striving to live a mere virtuous and spiritually aligned life.

2. Reconciliation Among Believers: Love and Unity

Reconciliation among believers to process of restoring and healing broken relationship within the community of those who share a common faith. The acknowledgment of past conflicts, hurts, or misunderstandings, and a genuine commitment to

resolve them through love, forgiveness, and unity. Love plays a central role in reconciliation among believers. The Bible teaches that love is the greatest commandment and the foundation for all relationships. Believers are called to love one another unconditionally, showing kindness, compassion, and selflessness towards others, even in the midst of disagreement or conflicts. Love enables believers to overcome personal difference and seek unity and harmony within the community. Unity is another essential aspect of reconciliation among believers.

The Bible emphasizes the importance of unity among believers, as it creates a powerful witness to the world. Unity does not mean uniformity or the absence of diversity, but rather a shared commitment to the care beliefs and values of the faith. It involves working together, supporting one another, and striving for common goals despite individual differences. Unity is achieved through humility, mutual respect, and a willingness to prioritize the greater good of the community over personal preferences. The teaching of Jesus on forgiveness and reconciliation is found in Matthew 5:23-24, and Apostle Paul's exhortation of unity and restoration in peace in Ephesians 4:1-3 echoed. The prayer of Jesus for unity among believers in John 17:20-23, and love, humility, forgiveness, and unity within the body of believers is vital for believers. God's love for his people and a witness to the world, and practicing reconciliation requires a genuine commitment to love one another and willingness to accept one another.

3. The Ministry of Reconciliation: Ambassador of Reconciliation

The ministry of reconciliation, it signifies the process of restoring and healing broken relationships among believers. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, the apostle Paul refers to believers as ambassa-

dors of reconciliation. This means that Christians are called to be representative of God's love and grace, actively working towards resolving conflicts and promoting unity among one another. Reconciliation is acknowledging and addressing personal and relational sins through repentance and forgiveness. It entails seeking forgiveness from God and extending broken bonds and fostering a spirit of love and unity. The ministry of reconciliation extends beyond individual relationships. It encompasses bridging divides between different groups of believers, promoting reconciliation between diverse cultures races, and body of Christ, pursuit of unity and reconciliation is means to mirror the like and unity that Christ demonstrated and serves as a testimony of God's transforming power and grace. The ministry of reconciliation and being an ambassador of reconciliation underscores the significance of love, forgiveness and unity in the Christian faith.

4. Reconciliation with Enemies: Love Your Enemies

Reconciliation with enemies and the concept of loving your enemies are significant teachings

found in the Bible. Jesus Christ in His sermon on the mount, instructed His followers to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them (Matthew 5: 44). Reconciliation with enemies the process of seeking peace and restoration in relationship that have been marred by conflict, hostility, or division. The command to love your enemies is rooted in the very nature of God. In Romans 5:8, it states, But God demonstrates his own love for us in this while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Just as God in His great love and mercy, reconciled humanity to Himself through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, believers are called to emulate love towards their enemies. Reconciliation with enemies is not an easy task, but it is possible through the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit. Reconciliation with enemies recognizes the potential for transformation and redemption. It recognizes that loving our enemies has the power to break cycles of hatred, bitterness, and retaliation, leading to healing and restoration. The command to love your enemies and seek reconciliation to character of God and His desire for restored relationships and unity among all people.



The Ambassador of reconciliation

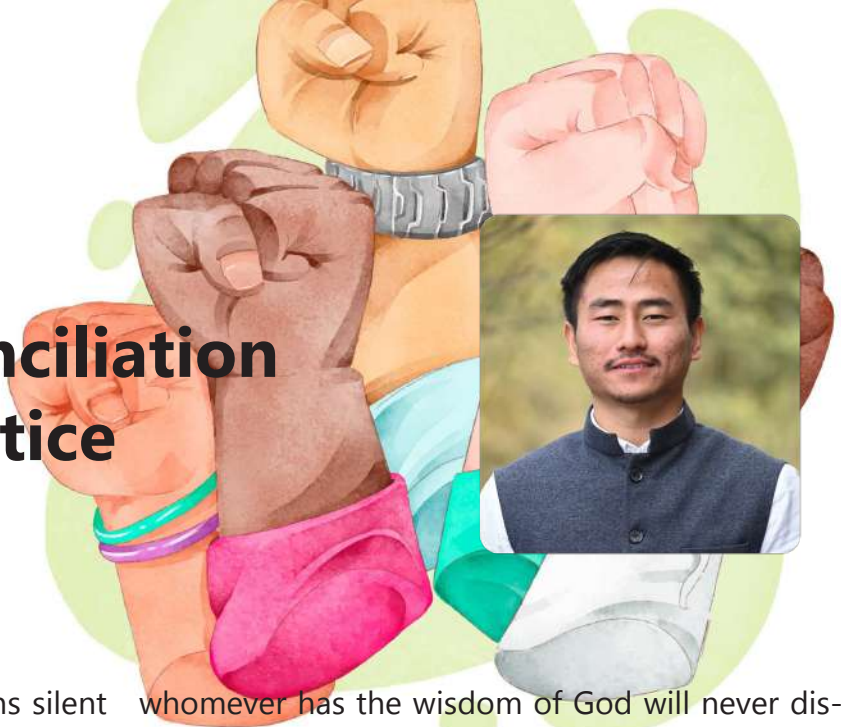
In Christ's name, we are called to serve,
As ambassadors, our purpose we observe.
We bear the message of God's great love,
Pointing to grace from heaven above.
In Christ's name, we are called to share,
As ambassadors of reconciliation, we deeply care.
In a world divided, our mission is clear,
As ambassadors of unity, we draw near.
In our actions and words, we will brightly shine,
As ambassadors of God's love, His design.
In the darkest of times, our light will glow,
As ambassadors of faith, God's grace we will show.
In every encounter, His love we will declare,
As ambassadors of compassion, we will always care
No longer bound by our past mistakes,
As ambassadors of redemption, His mercy takes
So the old is gone, behold the new,
In Christ's image, we are remade and true.
Reconciliation's call, we boldly proclaim,
As ambassadors of love, we will never be the same.



Joy Gill
B.Th. 3rd year

The Church: An Agent of Reconciliation towards Social Justice

Meribemo Y Murry
B.Th. 3rd year



We live in a world where the truth remains silent when money speaks, and when the truth speaks, the entire system fails to function efficiently. Many innocent lives have been lost due to the selfish ambitions of leaders, and women and children have been mistreated worldwide. Every year, millions of people die due to obesity, and millions more suffer from hunger. Additionally, many individuals face discrimination based on their appearance, color, race, gender, beliefs, and customs, etc. Therefore, who is responsible for addressing these issues? Is it solely the government or the Church as well? Undoubtedly, The Church, as the community of God's people, has a greater responsibility in addressing these issues because the ultimate purpose of the Church's existence is to bridge the gap between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of this world.

The Church, having been reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus Christ, is given the responsibility to reconcile lost individuals to God through Jesus Christ and His teachings (II Cor. 5: 18-19; Luke 19:10). Reconciliation means bringing together two parties that are alienated or in dispute. The sinful nature of human beings has alienated themselves from the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). People have been divided into castes, tribes, nations, statuses, genders, religions, races, etc., and these divisions have been mastered by corrupted minds, used against innocent people, and utterly corrupted society. These People have no fear of God, for the Bible says, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Prov. 9:10) and

whomever has the wisdom of God will never discriminate, oppress, or mistreat another fellow being. However, it is true that the world is under the power of evil ones, but the Church is born of God, and God has protected it from the evil ones and given an understanding of truth (1 John 5:18-20). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Church to boldly denounce the evil practices in society, like the Prophets in the Old Testament. Most importantly, the church must spread the love of Christ to Everyone, regardless of their deeds, because Christ loved us while we were still sinners (Rom 5:8), and Love will eventually triumph over evil.

The church is not of this world (Jn. 15:19), yet lives in this world. Therefore, as long as the church lives in the world, it should not be silent towards the injustice done in society. In fact, the church should be a perfect example of love, peace, justice, unity, equality, and goodwill. Any church that does not address social, political, religious, and economic injustices does not belong to God, because God is concerned for justice in all areas of life. Therefore, the church and the government must work closely to resolve the moral issues in societies (Rom 13:1-7). However, they should not amalgamate as one institution.

The church must also take initiative in raising up political leaders, entrepreneurs, lawyers, officers, doctors, engineers, and farmers so that they can serve society in a different way and bring about change in society by eradicating social injustice. They can be a transforming agent in society by

speaking up for the underprivileged, oppressed, and minority communities and by executing judgment on wrongdoers and protecting orphans and widows in their locality (Prov. 31:8-9; Jer. 22:3-5; Isa 1:17). This will be a valuable service to the Kingdom of God.

However, the sad reality is that the world is weighing down on the Church. Corruption has crept inside the Church and money and authority have enslaved many leaders. So, how can society live in harmony when many churches are swimming in the pools of corruption? Can a blind man lead another blind man? No! That is why Jesus said, 'First remove the plank in your eye, then you will see clearly to remove the speck in your brother's eye' (Lk. 6:39, 42). Likewise, the Church needs to revive in order to become a transforming agent in society. The church must be more than a praying

church. It must be pragmatic and must establish peace and harmony in society because 'peace is not merely the absence of war and violence. The concept of peace also implies the concept of justice, freedom, and development', (V. A. Lalrinawma, Missiological Issues Facing the Contemporary Church in India, 93) as stated by Wolfgang Huber. Moreover, everybody wants peace in their life, but only a few live accordingly. In this case, the church can play a greater role in transforming society into the likeness of God's Kingdom. The justice of God must prevail over all nations through the mission of the Church.

"The world needs the church, and the church needs Jesus Christ. If these two Needs are met, the world will become a better place to dwell in."

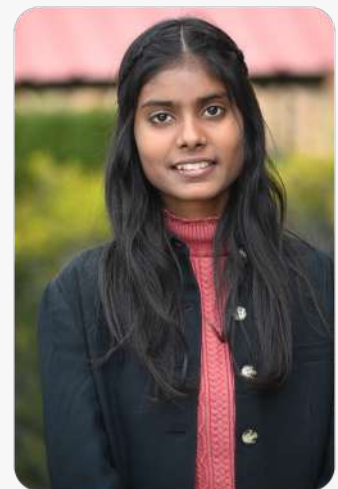


From Old to New

From old to new, a fresh start we pursue,
It means making up and saying sorry too.
When we've had a fight, or felt hurt and blue,
Reconciliation helps us make friendships true.

It's like fixing a broken toy, good as new,
Mending what's wrong, like glue that'll do.
Instead of holding grudges, we choose to undo,
Reconciliation is when we build, not argue.

So, let's be kind and forgiving, me and you,
From old to new, in harmony we'll accrue.
In this world, where love is our breakthrough,
Reconciliation makes friendships renew.



Sanu Devi
B. Th Second Year

Healing and Restoring Sexual Abused Victim

Neha
B.Th 2nd Year



Where was God when it was happening with me? Why God allowed it to happen in my life? These are the questions of a sexual abused teenage girls. You might be thinking maybe she is an atheist or she does not know much about God. However, may I tell you- it does happen to a very devote Christian. The pain that she is going through is 'Sexual Abuse'.

1. What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse could be any inappropriate suggestion or actual sexual exposing or touching between adult. The imbalance of power between victim and perpetrator is critical in the determination of abuse (Graceamma David, Sexual Abuse & counseling of victims with post-traumatic stress disorder, 17). We may think sexual abuse involves only having sex however sexual abused is visuals, psychotically, verbal, physical contact. Mostly children, elderly and handicapped becomes prey of perpetrators.

2. Why abusers do it?

We cannot recognize who is abuser. There will be some reasons for abuser, which lead him/her to commit it. Abuser can be a drug addictive or any addiction addictive person. Abuser himself can be abused in his childhood, which pushes him forward to abuse others. Abuser can be low self-esteem person and can be suffering from some kind of mentally disorder. These are the factors that are encourages an abuser to commit sin of sexual abuse.

3. Effects of sexual abuse on victims

The effect of sexual abuse depends on the age, environment, including nature of the act (Fact

Sheet No. 19, National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse). Sexual abuse can be physical harm such as cuts, pregnancy, and suicide. It can be mentally, emotionally and psychological such as panic attacks, sleep disorders, flashbacks, isolation etc. The pain that victim goes through stays forever in some phases of her life. Most of the abused struggles in their sex-married life. In one way or another, they make themselves dependent on their trusted one. Abusers become like an introvert person.

4. Effects on faith and spirituality

Sexual abuse impact largely on the faith and spirituality of an abuser. The trust and faith that abuser having on God destroys. Asking questions to God and even blaming God for the incident that happened in their life lead them to the path of destruction. The wounds on their soul affected their spiritual life badly. They do not want to pray, do not want to read or even listen from the scripture. All blames and allegations are put on God. Survivors may find themselves prone to self-hate and destructiveness. Since they do not love themselves, they cannot believe that anyone else, including God can love them (Carolyn Holderread Heggen, Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches, 31).

5. Need of survivors of sexual abuse

Survivors of sexual abuse need a comfort and understanding. They have heavy heads, full of questions. Why did the evil act happen in my life? Why I am suffering, I did not do anything. We need to make them understand that God gives free will to

human and human is in charge of his choice either to do good or to do bad. We are living in a sinful world, where we are suffering because of our sins. Nevertheless, even in the hardest circumstances of our life Jesus gives His peace (John 14:27). In Mark chapter 5, we see how Jesus healed the daughter of Jairus when she was on bed of death and he not only healed her but also provided her needs as well by giving a bread to eat. Jesus is our comforter. He comforts everyone even in his or her dead situations.

Victims need to know that their inner wounds of the heart can also be healed by giving everything to God, including bitterness, self-pit and desire for revenge. An intimate relationship with Jesus can heal any wound of the human heart (John White, *Sexual Healing*, 172). Jesus lives within us and gives peace (2 Cor. 5:17). Trust in God for your future (Eph.3:20). Cling on to these promises and Jesus will take care of you.

6. Healing: Repentance, Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Survivors of sexual abuse need healing. However, we cannot neglect the abusers. It does not mean that we should ignore the damage that they did. However, there is need of healing for victim and for abuser. According to scripture, Jesus dies for all of us. To this concept, we need to think in our mind and act accordingly. We cannot leave the abusers but we have to take their hands and walk in the light of Jesus.

A repented heart brings the mercy and forgiveness from God. Abusers as well as victims need to repent. In their heart and confess their deeds which are not up to the mark in the sight of the God. A genuine repentance removes the wrath and judgment of God. Abusers should regret about their deeds; they must feel guilty and ashamed then only they can be able to repent.

One of the most complicated issues for victims of sexual abuse is forgiveness and reconciliation with their abusers. They carry the heavy burden and dark horror flashes in their heart. They want to be free from this burden and wished to have good and healthy relationships with their parents, families like others. They may think by forgiving

their abusers they will find rest. As Christians, we need to forgive others and that thing they know very well. So, in brief the responsibility of reconciliation between abuser and victim of sexual abuse has been placed on the victim. It may be very hard for a victim to forgive the abuser but as Jesus forgives human sins, victim should do. There is a misconception about forgiveness. Forgiveness is not that victim can trust again or having an inter-active relation with abuser. Forgiveness is not a force process. Forgiveness is a way to heal the self and a damaged relationship. Forgiveness is taking you out of the judgment seat because it only belongs to God. As Christ accepted our prayer for forgiveness and forgiven us so victims also do not have any right to hold back the act of forgiveness for their abusers.

The Greek word for reconciliation is 'katallage'. Reconciliation is the ideal work when forgiveness has been extended. It is possible only when the offender's destructive behaviors and intentions have changed. When there is true repentance and forgiveness, then reconciliation may occur. Congregations must work with victims and offenders to bring them to the place where reconciliation is possible. This is important kingdom business. It is also rewarding work (Matthew 5:9). Reconciliation requires both that the offender confess and change his behavior and that the offended extend forgiveness, it is possible unilaterally to let go of the pain and pain caused by abuse (Carolyn, *Sexual Abuse ...* 134).

7. Our supporting hands to break the walls of shame, depression, and pain.

As a Christian community, we need to raise our voices against sexual abuse. We need to understand they need us, and we need to listen their stories of pain, endurance and courage. We should provide an environment where men, women, and children discuss their ideas and make plans. We should educate the youngest and children to recognize and report abuse. Open talks on this kind of matters are needed. Leaders, Pastors should build up a strong bond with their church believers where they can share their struggles without any hesitation. Counseling should be in church. There is a need to empower women to become emotionally strong and self-respecting. Church must involve

women in their committee board and members need to be faithful to God and stand for truth and justice.

8. Development of healthy sexuality

Church should give education of a biblical understanding of the body. Education given to women that their beauty is not only physical appearances but to live in the image of God and reflect His nature and for men also not to attract by looking physical appearances of women but find out the beauty of God's likeness in them. Today churches are feeling ashamed to talk about what is the real intention of God to made sexuality. It is responsi-

bility of the body of Christ to teach the community so there will be no disorder or misconception regarding sexuality.

Conclusion

Sexual abuse is a very sensitive topic and churches are not open up to talk about it. However, it needs to be addressed with understanding, compassion, and justice. I hope Church will extend their understanding and look up this issue with the lens of protection and care. Working together and trusting in the Spirit's wisdom and guidance, we can confront the evil of sexual abuse, break the darkness, and walk in the light.

“God has Redeemed me”

“What a beautiful world, with a beautiful Nature
See the sky is blue, the birds are singing
See the sea, the fishers are playing
In this moment, I was born as sinner
From the moment, my mother conceived me...!

Here, I am Almighty God, rulers of the Skies
Your name is spread, through the wide earth
Here you Servant prayers, He is crying
Purify me and clean me, from the bondage of Sin
Declare me as innocent Sheep...!

Thank you, God, for sending us yours Son
He has been redeemed me, from every iniquity
For once, I was lost, but now I am found
Once fallen, now brought to a higher ground
No more slaved to sin, His blood owns me...!

Glory and honor to the Highest God
who redeems me, and the whole people around the world
He died on the cross, to call me back home
For by your saving grace, we're forgiven
Through your son, you make us your Children's...!

Glory to you, for offering us Salvation
How good are you, Father of Creator?
Now, as I am like an Eagle, I am free to fly
I will lift up my hands, and worship Him
Now, I am pure, I am free by the Holy blood of Jesus.”



Naowang
B.Th 3rd year



A Reconciled life Testimony

Susanto Narzary
B.Th. 2nd year

My name is Susanto Narzary, I am 21-year-old, from Assam, Dist. Chirang, Bongaigaon. I was born into a devout christian family, during my childhood time I embodied the essence of obedience and reverence towards my family teaching.

However, as I grew up older, my life took an unexpected turn towards wordily. I drifted away from my christian faith and become entangled in worldly desires. I began to smoke, drink, and use ganja, drugs, and addicted to mobile games, these habits gradually transformed into strong addictions that held me into captive. Regrettably, I also engaged in immoral behavior, distancing myself from my family and society. This created a huge gap between family and I felt isolated to the points where I contemplated ending my own life, convinced that I had no value in my life.

During this challenging period, I did not attend church gatherings. Instead, I often participated in Hindu festivals. Then on my birthday- 17/03/2021, something really happened, I had a terrible car accident. I should have been serious hurt, but God saved me. However, I did not learn from mistake and continued with my bad habits. A few months later, again I had another car accident, and this time I realized that God was trying to get my life attention, and protecting me for a purpose beyond my understanding.

Through Proverbs 4:20-22 and Jeremiah 29:11-13, God spoke to me. From that day forward, I made a strong firm commitment to surrender my life entirely to God. From that I left behind the wordily temptations that had ensnared me and embarked on a transformative journey of faith. Through this journey I began to grasp the depth of God's love and finally I join in the Bible college on 6 June 2022. In my darkest life, God gave me life and protected me and reminded me that every life is valuable, no matter how lost we may feel. Even as I distanced myself from my family, God love remained steadfast.

Today, my life stands as a testimony to God's boundless grace and the power of faith and reconciliation. That even in the darkest times God's love and protection are unwavering, guiding us towards a life filled with purpose and spiritual blessings. And I have found meaning in studying God's word and experiencing his profound love in my life.

The Role of Counselor ...

Kampha Konyak

B.Th. 2nd year



The term 'Marriage' stems from the ancient Latin word, **maritus**, which means Husband. The word 'Matrimony' also has Latin origin, **matrimonium** meaning 'Mother' (married woman). Family is the most important and precious institution of which God is the author and founder. The essence of marriage is two persons seeking to form a more perfect life through their giving of themselves totally to each other. Marriage is more than an agreement between a man and woman to live together, more than a mutual exchange of promises of support and comfort, more than an agreement to observe the civil and ecclesiastical laws of marriage, more than a promise to help each achieve union with God. Moreover, when we look today context most of the Families are surely living in a very crucial condition, misunderstanding, and broken family. Upon this crucial condition counselor plays vital role to help reconciled between couples.

1. Causes of family problems

1. The first consequence is that, on the psychological level, the wedding day does not bring any new dimension to their relationship. By premarital sex, many have blurred the psychological boundary that should exist between the unmarried and married state.
2. The second consequence is the couple might marry under pressure because of that lack of acceptance from both the families if they were the ones caught in immorality.

3. Another reason is that, the dissatisfaction in the family life and extremely busy schedule in the city life and no time for family entertainments creates vacuum where the extra marital affairs fill in. The separation of spouse due to the search of job and opportunities creates a lot of room for extra marital affairs.
4. Family problem in India today is the alcohol and drug abuse in families. Alcoholism and Drug addiction is a complex problem, and it affects the whole walks of life, the extension of the issues is still in dispute.

2. Role of counselor

A counselor plays a crucial role as an agent of reconciliation in broken marital status. The primary goal of counselor is to help couples identify and resolve conflicts that are causing problems in their relationship. By providing a safe and non-judgmental space for couples to communicate and express their feelings a counselor can facilitate effective communication and help both partners understand each other's perspective. In cases where a marriage has been due to infidelity or other serious issues, the counselor can help the couple work through the pain and betrayed and find a way to build trust. The counselor can also provide guidance on how to improve communication, manage emotions, and develop healthy coping strategies.

The role of a counselor as an agent of reconciliation in broken marital status is to help couples find common ground, resolve conflicts, and rebuild their relationship in a healthy and positive way. The counselor can also help patterns of behavior that may be contributing to their marital problems. The importance of seeking guidance and counsel from wise and experienced individuals in order to avoid falling into destructive patterns or situations. In the context of broken marital relationships, seeking the guidance of a counselor can provide safety and support for couples as they work towards reconciliation.

Conclusion

Reconciliation between two couples can be a challenging and painful process, but it is essential to work through the issues and seek healing. However, when we see in Gen1:27 Adam was alone and God gave him woman (Eve) to help him and our Lord Jesus also reminded us in Matt 19: 4-6 that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. So, here we can see that God has joined man and women together to be one. Therefore, marriage is a covenant relationship indented to be permanent and unbreakable. Marriage is not indented to be eternal beyond this life, but it is a life time commitment toward one another.

Seminary Life



Reconciling Backslider Christian

Neha & Sarawn
B.Th. & Dip.Th 2nd year



Christianity is not comfortable religion. It demands extreme and unrealistic moral standards. I never feel like I am free person, always the fear of judgment hovering over me. The peace that I am expecting in my life never came to me. These are the statements of backslider Christian about Christianity.

1. What is backsliding?

Backsliding simply means turning back from the Lord and from the Word of the Lord. Backsliding comes when disobedience comes and capacity or possibility of committing sin rapidly increases. It is equitant to betrayal to our loved one. A covenant of God in which human participated with his/her own will, but now he/she want to be free from the responsibility and chose to betray God. Backsliding is a season of increasing sin and decreasing obedience in those who profess to be Christians (Joel R. Beeke, Getting back in the race: The cure for the backsliding, 17).

2. Bible speaks about backsliding

Backsliding from faith and walking in the flesh is not a new thing for people of God. In Old Testament, people of Israel backslide from God. They saw the mighty works of God in their lives from generation to generation. Yet they transgressed and rebelled against God. In New Testament we find the same thing. One of the disciples of Jesus, Peter backslides from his faith and denied Jesus thrice yet return back with realization and repentance. In present Context, many Christians are sailing in the same boat as in Old and New Testament. They feel

'It is my choice of chose', 'my freewill', 'Who knows future or who care', such kind of statements can be reflecting of fleeing from their faith and promoting themselves as victims and denying faith.

3. Causes of backsliding from faith

A Christian who backslid from his/her faith may have several reasons. However, all the reasons are silly and just an excuse to run away. A responsible Christian will stand by faith even in the terrific and confused state of life. A husband who having good and loyal relation with his wife, will never come to a conclusion as divorce in the midst of conflicts. But if he comes across lacking in relationship and fixes it by keeping in mind that she is his wife and he is having her responsibility.

There can be few reasons of backsliding from faith as follows:

1. A person who did not received the Gospel in such a way it should be.
2. A person may involve in mind-washed arguments, false doctrines and some rituals that he found in church are not good according to him. He may not receive clarifications of his doubts.
3. A person may be felt burden or tired of things not do to as a Christians.
4. He/she may be felt ashamed to introduce himself in this dark bright modern world.
5. Person may go through such a pain or suffering where he/she expected help from his people and miracle from God but it did not happen.

6. A backslider may have certain reasons which are valid according to his point of view, but it never appreciated or accepted as a solid reason. However, a person achieves knowledge of truth and comes to salvation through Jesus Christ by believing in Him (1 Tim. 2:4).

4. Consequences of backsliding from faith

Newton's third law says, 'for every action there is a reaction.' What we sow today, we will harvest it tomorrow. Christians who chose to backslide from their faith, surely will see the consequences. Although most of the Christians have this misconception that God is merciful, therefore even in our wrong doing, He will show his mercy. Although, God shows mercy, Christians need to be educated themselves in the doctrine of mercy and justice. We need to remember, God is merciful, at the same time God is Just. He will not go unpunished of wrong doing if we don't turn unto him and receive forgiveness.

The backslider has to pay back from his own ways (Pro. 14:14). Backsliding results in divine displeasure. A backslider opens an invitation to all kinds of evil from the world by denouncing God. They will lose the protection from God because they crossed the boundaries which God created for Christians. They lose their identity in Christ because Christians are called by God and separated by God from the world. Again, they go back to their death state and find struggles to live which leads them to face the dark reality of the world without God.

5. Effects on Christianity

1. Backslider impacts greatly on whole Christianity. They become a loop for Christianity in which new converted Christian faces challenges in their faith.
2. People in the world are desperate to hear from the ex-Christians about Christianity instead from Christians and their statement plays a vital role to corrupt the minds and thoughts of other religion people.
3. They bring shame and questioning to the whole Christian community. They influence others immature or growing Christians to do the same (1 Corn. 15:33).
4. It brings disunity and corruption in Christianity. They set another picture of Christianity to the world.

5. Backsliding from Christ is thus a serious matter. It dishonors God, disregards Christ as Savior, grieves the Spirit, tramples God's law underfoot, and abuses the gospel (Joel R. Beeke, Getting back in the race ... 18).

6. Hope of come back:

There is a hope for a backslide Christian to come back to his/her faith. As Jesus open an invitation to back home through the parable of prodigal son in the gospel of Luke 15:11-32. We can see the love of Father for his lost son. As a Christian we are privileged people to call God as Father and the love of Father calls all the lost in the world not only non-believers but also calls to backsliders.



7. How can we help the backsliders to come back?

1. First, think that we need to keep in our minds is that it is not a one-day process. It may consume a lot of time.
2. We need to become a good listener. Most of the time, Christians rebukes them and rejects them but instead of doing such a thing, we should give our ears to hear them. By hearing their sides, it gives full freedom to backslider to present their views or opinions.
3. We cannot bring a solution without knowing the problem.
4. They may accuse us but we need to be wise and polite in our talk.

8. Remembrance of their past obedience

Backslide Christian need to be reminded of his past obedience with God. As we see in Old Testament, the Lord reminds the people of Israel again and again through Prophets, Judges and how they turned back to the Lord. Reminder brings passion,

love, obedience and joy in life. We can remind them by asking questions. Questions which make them desperate to thing their past life in Christ. They may state that, "Christianity is good but I am not good enough to follow it", " I saw miraculous works of God in my life but I am not fully satisfied", " I experience His love in my life but I am lacking to love Him back". We need to replace their but to you can, you will. This we can do by reminding them their past obedience.

9. Realization of their sinful condition

Backslider Christian need realization of their present condition. They need prayers so that Holy Spirit will convict them from their sins (John 16:8). Christians should not lose hope and give up on them. Sometimes, we stuck this idea in our mind that it is impossible to get this person back in Christ. Yes, for humans it may seem impossible but for God everything is possible (Matt. 19:26). Realization happens when a person gets to know where he is standing. Realization came in the life of prodigal son when he remembered his previous life with father. Realization came in the life of demon possessed man when he found his actual state (Luke 8:35). Likewise, backslider Christian needs realization of their present sinful condition.

10. Confession of sin leads to true repentance

True sorrow must pour out from the backslider's heart to God, owning its own transgressions. "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord. ... Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hidden from thee" (Psalm 32:5, 38:9). True confession brings to the Lord the things he himself brought to your attention. The Lord sets the sins of believers in order before them, and they, in return, set their sins in order before God, unreservedly acknowledging the sinfulness of them (Joel R. Beeke, Getting back in the race ... 48-49).

Repentance means turning from sin back to the covenant relationship with God, deny the will of the flesh and love Him with full heart. In Hosea 14:1, "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity", the Lord says to his backslidden people. Returning to home is a joy. We can see in the life of Peter, he cried and

repented with whole his heart. True repentance cannot let a person to continue in sin. Restoration occurs when true repentance comes.

11. Backslider's Reconciliation to God

Reconciliation comes when a backslider remembers his past obedience, able to recognize his sinful state, confess his sin to the Lord and truly repent from his sinful ways. Reconciliation means when two people or more than two come back again in a healthy relationship after the argument or deceives of one. Prodigal son came back to father in a healthy relationship. In a worldly perspective the picture might seems different but when it comes with God and His people, there is a beautiful portrait of Father's love for lost children. God is able to heal from bondages (Jer. 3:22).

12. Role of Christians to reconcile backsliders

Christians play a vital role. We need to know backsliders are our family members in Christ. We should not neglect them but consider as a good runner who lost his path and it is our responsibility to direct them to a right path which leads to Jesus. Backsliders may find difficulty to go back to God even after remembering their past obedience, recognizing sinful condition, confession of sin with genuine repentance. Our one effort can help them to go back to God. Jesus also says in Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God". Let us take an initiative to reconcile the lost sons of God.

Conclusion

There is no more noble and rewarding race than that of following Christ. For Christian runners, there is no place of laziness. Do not become self-centeredness and only love your life in this world, but love Christ in your life and others. The leaders in Bible were not high qualified people but they were Spirit qualified people. They too stumbled. But by faith, they ran the race. By faith, they received strength and the Spirit's available grace, they got back up when they fell down, and pressed on. By faith, you can do the same. Christian runner, run the race to the end! And as a leader go one more step ahead to restore back the backslider Christian with the family of God and Christ. Grace and peace be to you. Amen



Annual Sports Day





Annual Sports Day

Misconception of North East community in India: A reconciliation Mindset

Naowang
B.Th. 3rd Year



Stop. Before you turned over page. Thank you, Mistresses and Misses, just look around, see the beauty of India with different kinds of people and Culture but unfortunately some group of people discriminate and don't consider as fellow Indian by own native Indian. So, my question is do we need reconciliation over them...? Yes, in order to live with Justice, Truth, Peace, and harmony with every individual and community, we need reconciliation.

Here we go, the people of Northeast are found in Northeast Region India, they are known as Seven (7) sisters and One (1) Brother. The Northeast region of India is culturally and linguistic diverse with various ethnic groups such as Assamese, Nagas, Mizos, Manipuri, Tripuris, Arunachalese and Meghalayans. These communities have distinct languages, traditions, and customs. The region's uniqueness stems from its rich cultural heritage, traditional art forms, and a close connection to nature and they have unique characteristics and aspects that contribute to their region's diversity and cultural richness. Northeast India is a region culturally distinct from the rest of India, and unfortunately, prejudice and discrimination against people from this region are uncommon.

However, Northeast India is the land of gripping Scenic beauty form of high hills cascading waterfall and undulating stream and Exotic wildlife. It comprises eight states: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. The main issue is that people are facing racism in their own Country. In most of the places

especially in Cities, they are not treated fairly.

1. The Beauty of North East Region

The North East consistently remains one of the most beautiful, vibrant, exciting and thriving places to live and work. It also comprises of enchanting places like Kaziranga National Park, Living Root Bridges, Tawang Monastery, Gurudongmar Lake, Unakoti Hills, Vantawng Falls, Dzuku Valley, Loktak Lake etc. Meanwhile, the media always find bad news about this beautiful place like a bomb blast, kidnapping and terroristic attacked etc, but they never talk about the beauty and the hospitality of these people.

2. The Issue of Racism

The main issue is that people are facing racism in their own country Moreover, I too experience as well. In most of the places, North- East people are not treated well. Let's talk about some cases happened with these people as well to me.

On January 29, 2014, a young guy named Nido Tanim was beaten to death in the Lajpat Nagar area of Delhi, because of his looks. In 2016 two young guys from Mizoram were beaten in Bangalore for not speaking their local language.

Two students from Nagaland were brutally tortured for hours by local men in Gurgaon to teach them a lesson that you don't belong here. They said, "if you Northeast people come here, we will kill you."

During my vacation I was working at small shop which is Ama cha point at McLeod Ganj as a helper and owner told me to used washroom near our shop. One day unfortunately while I was in washroom, one of the gentlemen came and scolded me in Hindi saying that I am not even flashing water and using washroom (actually he was thinking that I don't know Hindi and I am from foreign country). Then, I replied him, Uncle I flashed, but he did not listen to me and he was saying- why you are replying to elder, I am police, came for office. I said OK and went to his office. He asked me to show passport. I replied him I am an Indian and I don't need passport to live here but I have Aadhar card, voter card, and pan card. After showing checking my documents he felt sorry and told me sorry brother.

However, this is not the first time, many people consider me as foreigner or I am from outside of the country due to outer appearance. Whenever I go for shopping, the shopkeepers asked me where are you from? Regularly, I reply- I am from Nagaland. Out of their ignorance they often ask whether or not it is in India and I have to reply yes, it is part of our country, located in North-Eastern Region of India. Sometime, people from North Indian don't believe me that I am pure Indian. Furthermore, some hotels denied giving rooms just because Eastern do not look like Indian. There are too many cases where people from Northeast are treated harshly just because they do not look Indian enough. They are told to prove their nationality. These people are not given jobs, and houses due to their ethnicity or race.

Last but not the least Prejudice towards Northeast Indians is not only limited to the social life but also extends to issues like employment, education, and social integration. Many face challenges when seeking employment opportunities outside their region due to biases against them, leading to a limited job market and economic disparities. The problem is that we never talked about their culture, their stories and is not explored with rest of India.

3. The Solution on Discrimination

The Government should take responsibility for teaching the country about history, culture and politics of this Nation. However, to address this issue, efforts are being made to promote inclu-

sivity and bridge the knowledge gap. Educational institutions, government bodies, and civil society organizations are initiating programs to raise awareness about the Northeast and its diverse cultural heritage. Steps are being taken to incorporate curricula that highlight the contributions of Northeast India to the nation's history, art, and culture. Furthermore, increasing social interaction between people from different regions is crucial to dispelling prejudice. Encouraging cultural exchanges, festivals, and sports events that involve Northeast Indians can create spaces for dialogue, understanding, and appreciation of each other's cultures. In the end, I would like to say – Who is an Indian? Who are called an Indian?

It is crucial for individuals, communities, educational institutions, and policymakers to address these issues collectively. Promoting cultural exchange programs, raising awareness, enhancing education about the Northeast region, and fostering inclusivity can help combat prejudice and discrimination. Emphasizing the shared values and common heritage among all Indians can also contribute to building a more harmonious and inclusive society.

Conclusion

As we all know that, from the moment our mother conceives us, we all were born as sinner due to disobedience to God and we all were enemy to God and there is no hope for us to reach God and to Reconcile back with Him but God Himself came down in the form of Man to redeem us from the bondage of Sin and to offer a Salvation. Therefore, even in our life as God has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, we also need to reconcile with each other, no longer counting our offenses against one another. let's us spread the love, compassion, kindness, and respect toward one another culture and people group. Moreover, May I tell you only the strongest person can forgive other when they commit mistake on you and as being a human being sometime is very hard to apply and examine all the teaching of our Lord Master Jesus but, through this Article I challenge you that we can do and practice to love one another as fellow Indian brother and sisters.

Reconciliation in the Context of Church

Pooja & Priya

M.Div & B.Th Final Year



Introduction

This article deals the meaning of reconciliation which means changes or exchange and the need of reconciliation in the Church. The problems in the church are often seen fighting, jealous among friends, not coming to the church, fighting between spouses etc. Reconciliation helps to solve the problems in the church. Bible tells us reconciliation is started by God. Therefore, we will write compact articles on reconciliation in the context of church.

1. Meaning of reconciliation

The Greek word for reconciliation is katallage it means "Change" or "exchange" and Latin reconciliatio which means renewal or restoration. Reconciliation involves a change in the relationship between God and man or man and man.

2. Need of reconciliation in the church

"The term reconciliation simply means agreeing to be partners in all undertaking. It is also a matter of acceptance. Reconciliation is processes through a pure heart and open heart" (Shimreingam L. Shimray, Negotiating Peace, 74). Reconciliation is also benefit for the well-being of all people together. "It is a process of learning and beginning of new way of living. Reconciliation is not needed when there is no conflict but it is needed for those who are in conflict. It helps to restore back relationship with others" (Shimreingam, Negotiating Peace, 75-76). It helps to solve the problems, removes misunderstanding, gives a chance to correct mistakes. It unites us together in our relationship, teaches the lesson of forgiveness, brings peace in turbulent life. It also helps to mend a broken relationship. Therefore, reconciliation is needed for the restoration among community for co-existence and God and men. The problems of the church are multiples. They are- jealousy, gossips, not having proper un-

derstanding towards each other's. Not having love with one another, not able to forgive others.

3. What does bible speak about reconciliation?

Before knowing Christ, we were in the bondage of sin and all were enemy to God. Through Jesus Christ reconciled us to God, the Father (2 Cor. 5:17-21). In our sinful nature, we might find difficult to forgive others but in Christ we can forgive others. Therefore, forgiveness brings reconciliation in the church among brethren (Matt 6:14-15). The Bible teaches us that we need to bear one other's burden and forgive each other's as Christ forgives us.

4. Biblical principles of reconciliation in the church

The ways of bringing reconciliation in the church are:

1. Prayer
2. Reading the Word of God by asking God's help or advice
3. Taking initiative step
4. Understanding each other
5. Solve out the miss understanding with love
6. Listen to the people
7. Accept our mistakes, not blaming to others.

Conclusion

Reconciliation is necessary in the Church. It teaches of coexistence, peace and dwell in harmony. It helps us to restore back relationship with God as well as with others. It is very much important to have reconciliation especially in our Christian life. If there is no reconciliation among Christian- coexistence, peace and harmony is not possible. As God loves us, forgives us, same way, we also need to be like Him. Being a member of church, this is our responsibility to reconcile with one another if any disputes happen. As a result, we will be able to love each other and reflect Christ character in our lives.

Restoration

Susanto Narzary
B.Th 2nd year



What comes in your mind when you hear the term reconciliation? What does bible teach us about reconciliation? Do we need reconciliation in our life? Do you have any experience or do you felt any disconnect between you and God in your life journey, having no more relationship like going far from God? If you think come let us talk about this topic why reconciliation is important or necessary in our day-to-day life and why God wants us to be reconciled with him. Sometimes, we may feel disconnect with God in our christian life journey. Therefore, I am going to write about the reconciliation with God. What reconciliation is all about and how we should be reconciled with God and with others. So, Reconciliation is the key to building a connection and it is the process of healing and restoring a relationship after a disagreement or conflict. It involves coming back together, often through mutual understanding, Willingness and forgiveness. Reconciliation, in biblical sense refer to the act of reestablishing a harmonious relationship with God. It is a process of making agreement and coming back together. The Bible provides us with profound insight into this transformative journey. Let's explore it-

UNDERSTANDING SIN AND SEPARATION

The Bible teaches us that sin separates us from God. Sin is missing the mark of goodness set by God. It involves actions that go against God's teachings. And when we engage in sinful action, it can create a sense of separation from God. It's not

that God has moved away, but rather, our actions create a distance from God. In Romans 3:23 it's written, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. This separation causes a big problem in our believer lives, leaving us spiritually empty. We cannot ignore our mistakes; we must acknowledge them to begin the reconciliation process by understanding sin and separation in our christian life journey.

THE ROLE OF REPENTANCE

To restore our connection with God, repentance is importance (crucial) step. We understand repentance means turning away from sin and turning towards God. It's about recognizing the need for change and being genuinely asking forgiveness for our actions and deciding to do better and taking step to make things positive and rights. By looking the life of prodigal son, teaches us that reconciliation is possible even after going far distance from God. In short story, a younger son leaves and sold his inheritance and went far country, but after long days, the son realized his mistakes and willingly to return back to his father. When son returned back to his home, father did not deny him but he hugs with love and warmly welcome to his son at home). With joyful father said, "For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (Luke 15:24). This is how we should repent and reconciled. It encourages us today also to embrace forgiveness and reconciliation with open hearts with God and also with others.

GOD GRACE AND FORGIVENESS

God's grace is a gift of love we don't earn. God is really kind to us even when we do mistakes, giving us good things even when we don't deserve in our life. The good news is that God is full of grace and forgiving heart. In the Bible, God's grace and forgiveness are beautifully showed through the life story of David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11-12). Even David's sin against God (committing adultery with Bathsheba), when David sincerely asked forgiveness to God, God forgave him. God's grace and forgiveness in David's life is seen and his life was changed. This example teaches us, God is always ready to help and forgive us when we are willing to repent from our sin. In 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God love is unwavering and he eagerly wait us to return to him.

RECONCILIATION WITH OTHERS

Reconciliation is not only about our relationship with God but also with our fellow humans. In Matthew 5:23-24 Jesus teaches us that "therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar first go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift." From the Bible we can see the life of Esau and Jacob, both had big argument however later days both of them forgave each other, reconciled and eventually became very closed to each other. In Genesis 33:4, Esau hugged

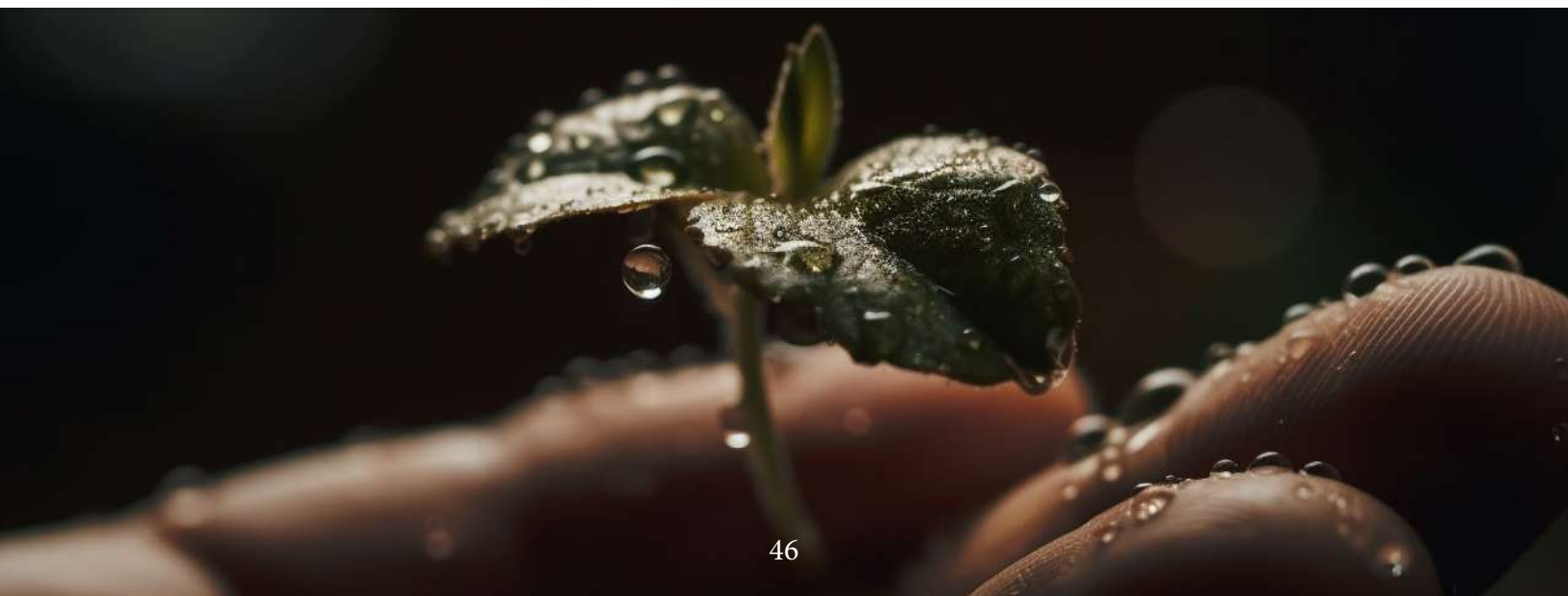
Jacob showing that they fixed their relationship and became friends again. In the New Testament, in Christ we can reconcile with other.

WALKING IN NEWNESS OF LIFE

If you are a Christian, we have repented and found forgiveness in God, now we are invited to walk in newness of life, your old is gone and now you are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Romans 6:4 says, we were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father, we too might walk in newness of life. Paul asked in Romans 6:1, shall we continue in sin that the grace of God may increase, Paul said, certainly not. We as new community in Christ must be faithful to obey Christ commandment so that we can glorify Him.

CONCLUSION

The process of reconciliation is a powerful journey that brings connection between us and God. When we acknowledge our mistakes and sin and repent from the sinful activities, he is always ready to forgive us and to reconcile us. God's grace and forgiveness leads us to connect with him and to reconcile with him. This transformative path brings closer to God and help us to walk in new life. Come my dear beloved friends in Christ; let us repent from sin and be reconciled with God if you are far away from him and also with others if you are having issues and walk with him in a right way of life. If you are in right relationship with God and others-stay continually for God loves those who love him and others.



Reconciliation of Youth in the Church

A.S Shangreichan
B.Th. 3rd Year



When we see the condition of this generation, people are in need of reconciliation- mainly among the youth who are going astray from the church, following the principles of this world and don't have interest anymore in the word of God. The church leaders and elders need to consider this issue very important and serious.

As we are living in post-modern era, most of the people, mainly the youth are so much attach with the world and so much influence by the worldly things. The youth are addicted with the social media and with internet games. They are not coming to the church, only few youths come in the church. Moreover, they have been neglected by the church. So, the youth doesn't feel any interest and they feel boring to come to the church.

As we look around and see most of the youth are addicted in many ways such as drugs, alcohol, watching pornography, playing mobile games, spending time on watching serial and sexual immorality etc. So, in these various ways the youth are corrupted in their mind and spoiling their life.

As a youth, even I was addicted to some of the things such as playing online games and watching pornography. So, I had always pleasure and desire to do something which is unpleasant and unacceptable in the church and in the society.

Due to this reason, I never attend church function and involve in the society. I always stayed at home alone and fulfilled all the lustful desire which stuck

in my mind. Likewise, many youths are isolated at home fill with lustful desire and thoughts in their mind.

According to research around 1% of Indian women aged 15 drink alcohol, compared to 19% of men in the same age group. The North-eastern Arunachal Pradesh state ranks first nationwide, with 53% of men and 24% of women in the state consuming alcohol (Internet source).

The Responsibility of the Church

It is a great challenge and task for the church to bring the youth to the church. The church must take initiative to make the youth interest to come to the church. The church must take the step to reconcile youth, before it is too late because youth are the leaders of tomorrow.

The youth are the leader and future of tomorrow, they must be train and well-equip before it is too late. The church must take the initiative to organize some programmed such as VBS, youth camp, sports etc.

Even Jesus Christ came to this earth to reconcile back the people to God so as a church we need to reconcile back the youth.

Therefore, it will help every youth to overcome and leave all the lustful desire and worldly things. Eventually, it will help the youth to build up their foundation for the future Church and the society.



Cultural Night



Reconciliation: Christianity's Secret Weapon

Dr. R. C. Wilson

Reconciliation: when enemies become friends
This is what we who work with people know very well:

- Sinners are sure to sin against one other
- This sin causes pain
- People get run from pain
- People get angry at those who cause pain
- People want revenge on those who cause pain
- Pain, anger and revenge destroy relationship

How can humans ever truly grow in a relationship?
How can we Christians love, remain in love and deepen love?

Statistics now show that in major cities across the world, at least 50% of all marriage relationships end in divorce - either legally or emotionally. And this is a minimum number. The cultures in the world (often mired deeply in destructive shame and honor dynamics) will often not respond honestly to survey type questions about relationships and especially not questions about the quality of their marriage relationship.

We all crave deep relationships that nurture us, fill us with purpose and bring joy to our soul. Yet we who minister to the lives of others know we face a world filled with people who are frustrated, sad, and lonely. Many feel trapped in constantly painful relationships they secretly want to escape, but are unwilling because of social pressure or desperate feelings of self-survival. If only people could forgive one another, they might find healing for their relationships.

We in ministry also know this: the pain and scars all people are unknowingly or knowingly causing in others must be effectively treated if a relationship is to continue and to have positive meaning for the people involved.

Yet one foundational issue of human experience prevents people from truly dealing with their strained and breaking relationships.

"You cannot give what you do not have."

All religions of the world (and secular psychology) have at least some discussion and teaching on the need for reconciling damaged or broken relationships. Yet sadly, often all a follower can find is empty word exercises and manipulative, transactional interpersonal strategies that have no ability to help people let go of their feelings of anger and revenge in a way that can restore a relationship. Such followers ultimately do not find true healing for their deeply damaged souls.

The desperation and frustration that results in people's lives can lead to a wide variety of extreme and eventually destructive reactions. These include the breaking of every one of the 10 Commandments and more. Even among those who somehow find the strength to move on in their pain, counselors discover most people live lives of quiet desperation. The joy and hope of youth is drained from them.

"Most people lead lives of quiet desperation."

As we read of spiritual warfare that has the goal of human destruction. We realize much of the strategy is focused on breaking the soul through encouraging destructive relationship habits.

"Broken relationships are Spiritual Warfare."

All this talk of gloom and doom leads me to this truth of Christianity:

We Alone Have the Transforming Source of Power for Healthy, God-honoring Relationships.

We alone have the have access to true healing. What is this power we Christians possess that no others have? What is this power that can produce healthy, growing relationships; relationships characterized by joy and hope?

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13

Christ's death on the Cross provides us a gracious, perfect payment for the sins of our lives. This applied to our life produces a new soul condition in us... When we sin, we confess, repent and return day by day to the Lord Jesus for a re-application of this healing balm to our damaged soul. This process is biblical reconciliation lived out in a daily way. This is the quality of life which is the normal life with God we are all created to experience.

The purpose of my writing is not to teach on Biblical reconciliation process; you all know how to coach others from bad relationships to reconciled ones continuing to grow; if you do not know how, you had better learn fast or you will never have a successful ministry.

And know this: you will never plant a church that is God's standard of success characterized by 'fruit that remains' if the elders you raise up cannot teach and coach the Biblical reconciliation process. This uniquely Christian experience must become a life-giving joy preserving part of the normal Christian life.

Absence of this uniquely Christian and greatly needed human relationship process will make any ministry look, smell and taste exactly like those of the non-believing world around it. Yet many church cultures show this topic of reconciliation to still be their greatest challenge. My eighteen years as a missionary to the Thai culture taught me this lesson in a powerful way. The culture had extremely fragile relationship that once broken had no way of restoration. The

Thai church should have been revolutionarily different, but it was not. I personally saw so many sad experiences of needlessly broken relationships among believers. The result: after more than 200 years of sustained Christian ministry in Thailand, still less than 1% of the population are real followers of Jesus. Instead of seeing in us a 'new life' from God, the average local who is a follower of Buddha would typically tell us, "Christianity and Buddhism are basically the same." Those Buddhist locals were correct: relationship dynamics inside the church looked almost the same as those outside the church. There really was no practical daily life difference.

As people called to ministry, we must accept that successful ministry means are often called to live in a way that is counter to the flow of the non-believing culture around us.

As you are set to leave the relative safety of your institution decide to commit a focus of your ministry on the teaching and experience of reconciliation. This reconciliation is in two directions:

Firstly, from Jesus to us. This is a foundational truth of evangelism. Secondly, reconciliation must be applied between the brothers and sisters of my local body of believers who know and follow Jesus. This is a foundational truth of the abundant life Christ has prepared for all real believers.

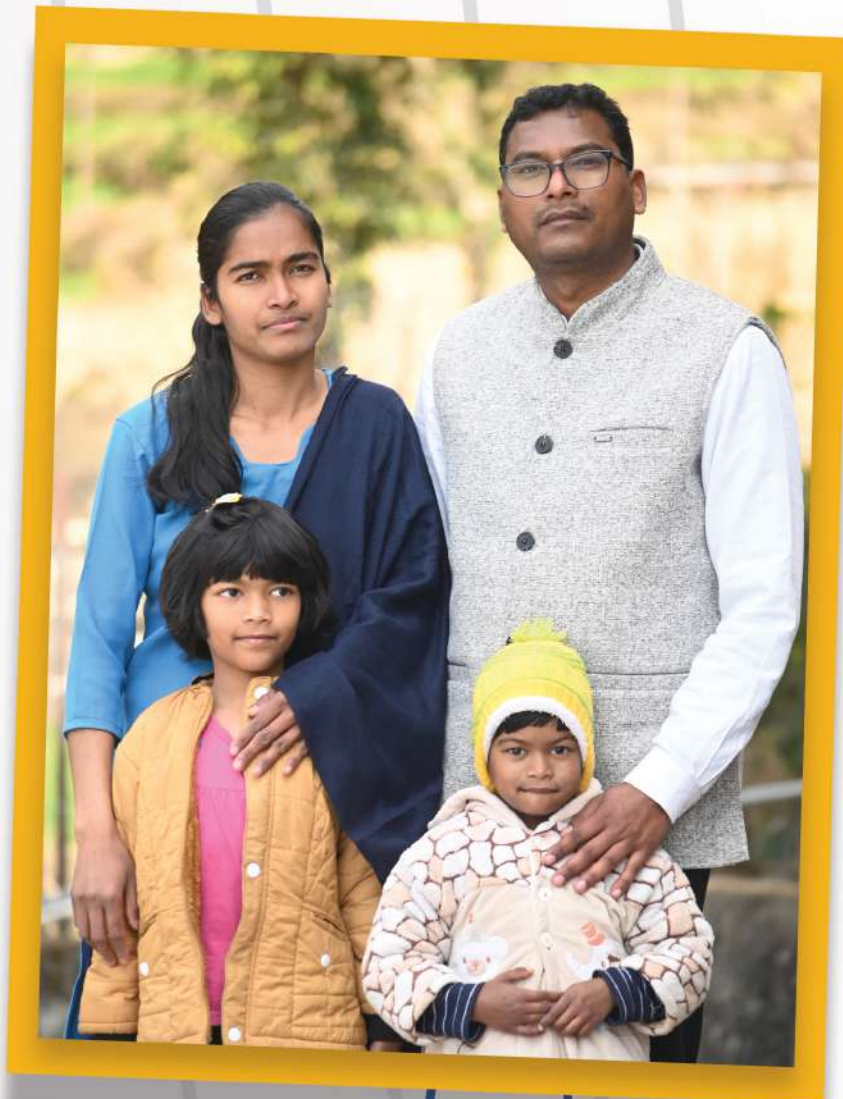
Remember: Reconciliation is Christianity's Secret Weapon

Congratulations

Congratulations to **Rev. Dr. Amruta Bag** on the remarkable achievement of completing a **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D)** in Theological Studies with a specialization in Mission from Ebenezer Theological Seminary, accredited by the Asia Theological Association (ATA).

As the Academic Dean at HBCS, Dr. Bag's 11 years of dedicated service have contributed to the academic excellence and growth of the institution. This milestone not only recognizes Dr. Bag's personal achievement but also adds to the prestige of HBCS as an institution committed to the pursuit of knowledge and the development of its faculty.

Wishing Dr. Amruta Bag continued success in his academic and professional journey, and may his expertise and insights continue to inspire and shape the academic community at **HBCS**.



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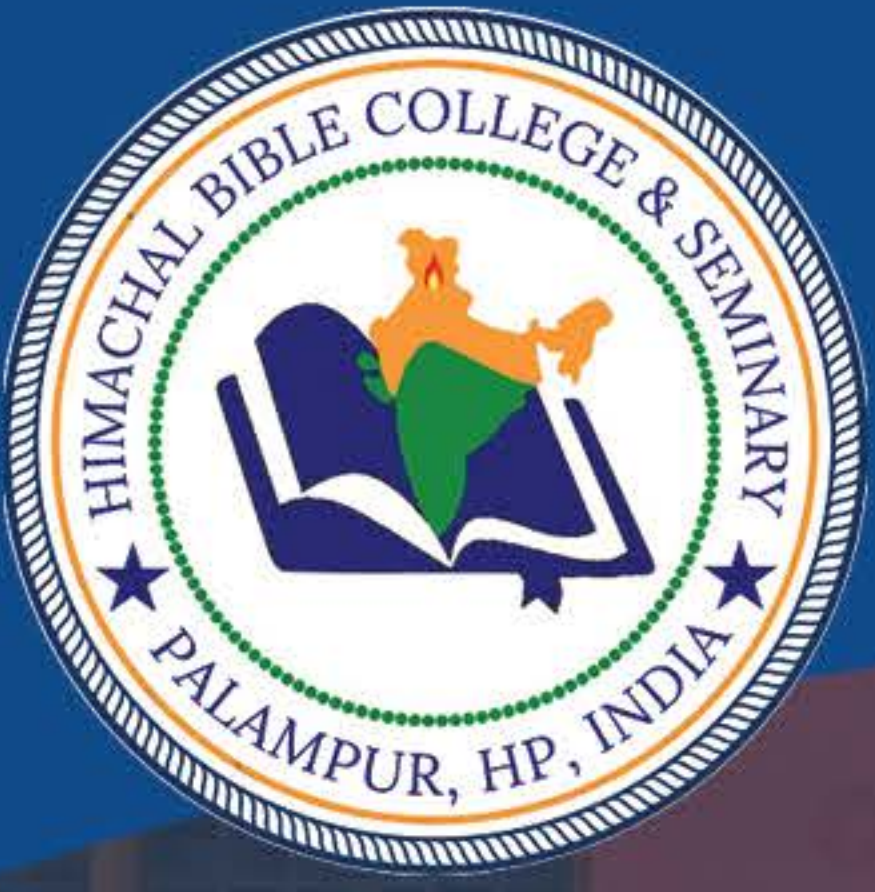
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**May you achieve all your wishes,
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