

THE SCOPE

Quarterly newsletter published by FOCUS

For
circulation
among
Graduates
and Students
of
FOCUS
Only

Advent 2010

Looking back at what the different fellowships have been engaging with over this past year and what we as FOCUS staff have been trying to emphasise, it seems that we have spent a lot of our time learning how to study the scriptures! We have had many new students on all campuses and almost all of them in some way have been introduced to the idea that scriptures are indeed God's word to us and that we are to study His word diligently & with an attitude of joyous discovery and a willingness to surrender ourselves to His teaching.

With this issue of SCOPE, let me express my longing that all of us, as we begin a new year in the Christian Calendar (with the first Sunday in Advent on 28th November) will look forward to a year of bearing witness to our Lord Jesus Christ in all situations and with our unique personalities!

Reflecting on the meaning of Advent (meaning "coming" or "arrival") and the set readings in the lectionary for the first Sunday in Advent,...

Jeremiah 33:14-16;

1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2; and

Luke 21:25-28,34-36

It seems to suggest that we as Christians are to live our lives in the expectation that God is "coming"!

The first reading from Jeremiah expresses a yearning for the time when God's

deliverance will break into history in order that the world may experience righteousness and deliverance from the many faces of a fallen world & cosmos. Many of us can also, with Jeremiah, so easily identify with this deep sense of longing for God's righteousness and wholeness to be seen, felt and experienced, as we have seen and suffered from injustice and pain, illnesses and loss over this last year.

The Gospel passage for this first Sunday in Advent also prepares us for the second coming – which we know not when – but that which will in a sense bring to completion the work that was begun with the birth of Jesus the Christ. We shall experience anew the coming of Christ again but this time "see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory".

However, I would like to suggest that there is another coming that these passages expect us to experience in our lives even as we acknowledge that the first coming of Jesus happened in Bethlehem and that the second will happen at some unknown future date. This is the "coming" of Jesus into our everyday lives in the here and the now; in the choices that we make with regard to our eating and our studying; in our travelling and our work and in the way we conduct our relationships and express our

discipleship in what we do and who we are!

And so I urge you to read the contents of this issue of SCOPE and reflect on what has been written - how to live with an attitude of thankfulness in times of great personal & political stress (Lamentations); how to be obedient even when everything within us revolts at God's demands of us (Jonah); and making our work, from praying to parenting and prophesying to persevering, an expression of our worship of God – as an attempt at being obedient to the second reading taken from Paul's letter to the assembly of Thessalonians...

12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you.

13 And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

4 Finally, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that, as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God (as, in fact, you are doing), you should do so more and more.

2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

With faith and in prayer, committing the ministry of FOCUS in the coming year to raising a new generation of students who will live their lives with the objective of pleasing the Lord...

Savithri Sumanthiran



Preaching to ourselves

Recently I was thinking of how one can be evangelistic (preaching the good news) without being evangelical (bible believing), and whether one can be evangelical without being evangelistic. So in condensing my thoughts into something readable lets first look as what I am thinking of when I say 'can one be evangelistic without being evangelical?'

"Being evangelistic without being evangelical" is basically about telling some sort of or any good news. An example would be when in university we had "Microsoft evangelists" whose sole purpose was to tell everyone about the Microsoft product. By the same definition we can be 'Christians' evangelizing without having any "Christian-ness" in what we do or preach. Therefore we can be spokespersons for concepts and ideas which have no biblical foundation. This

can be dangerous when we label ourselves as being 'Christians', while conveying a message of living in a manner contrary to the Bible.

Evangelizing without being evangelical comes from a sloppy and careless attitude to what God has said, and/or the failure to re-new our mind in Christ likeness. Or we could be just running with the pack in the rat race, differentiated only by the Christian label on our back. For instance such occasion would be social 'projects' done in university. Everyone does a project, so we do one with a Christian label. This does not mean the project is bad, but that while most projects focus on a group in need and help them in a one off manner and then neglect them for the rest of the year (which is not good news), the proper Christian way to do it might be for us to instead befriend this group and work with them and care for them in a lifetime of service. The difference from the standard project being, the lifetime service, which is the Christian message. Another example is where we could be living the same way as the majority, with the same biases, same opinions and views of other people or situations. The much talked of example being in regard to the country (if your don't know what I am referring to please ask a FOCUS staff worker what this example is), earlier it was about how we view our brothers and sisters across the 'ethnic' divide, and now it should be more or less how we look at 'development' taking place. If the Christian Gospel is gossiping about Christ and the new Kingdom, then how would gossiping about everything else which is contrary to the Gospel be a witness?

'Being evangelical without being evangelistic': many of us pride on being evangelical. Pride being the keyword, we know a lot of 'stuff' which is from the Bible and go to churches which have very 'Bible based' teaching. So we have the 'good news'. But do we really?

In the early days of the Church, we find in Paul's correspondence (1 Thessalonians 3:6) "*But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to*

see us, as we long to see you". Here Paul is overjoyed by a report of how a group of Christians were living. Overjoyed by good news, which literally translated means the gospel. The way the Christians were **living in community** is the gospel.

So let us examine ourselves today if the way we (not I. And this idea of community is important) live is Good news. Ask ourselves, would another group of Christians physically, geologically separated from us be happy about the gospel of our living? In a national context, would a church group in Jaffna be overjoyed to hear about what a group in Colombo is doing (assuming there is communication present in the first place)? Or in the university context would a fellowship in Peradeniya be overjoyed to hear the **good news** of what happens in Colombo, or would the NSE/Council/GCF/other fellowships be gladdened by the report of what any of us in the far flung campuses or in hot-beds of political or social activity are doing (again assuming there is some form of communication going on – which should be)?

Truly if we are being evangelical, believing, reading and living (or eating, breathing and sleeping) in everything we do, that would be the gospel. The good news traveling around between the groups would spur us on more and more. When being evangelical should be evangelistic, what we do when seen or heard will be good news (of course if you are standing against evil and saying no to wrong it will be bad news for those who plot evil, but read the song of good news Mary sang when Jesus' birth was announced).

But then this requires work: the work of being evangelical requires work. Knowing the Bible by heart means nothing if we can't preach it... well, preach it to ourselves. If we really believe in Christ's work that literally means accepting that something is fundamentally not-normal (or wrong) in this world. So we could be living in good neighborhoods where the problem is not visible, or we could be in places where it's starkly visible. But where ever you are, 'badness' will be there. Without the presence of 'badness' there would be no need for good news. If you (you in plural) are happy with the status quo, you don't need the gospel.

Playing the Game



Each and every individual member is accountable for any mistakes made, when playing a team sport. Co-ordination and team spirit are the prime terms which govern a sport, and hockey is not an exception. I started playing hockey for UOC in January, and found that I was the odd one out of the lot. I somehow managed to mix with the team ever since; using my very own Sinhala language. During some matches I could not convey my wants to the others and also couldn't get hold of the instructions from my mates. But as time passed both the parties managed to understand each other. This was a call, that we Christians who work in a multi cultural, multi linguistic society should overcome these barriers and should take the gospel forward amidst challenges. I do wonder that if I can convey my needs via signs and gestures, whether will not be a mammoth task to convey the word of God to non Christians, but I rarely put this thought into practice.

Once, during a match against BRC, I struck a goal in an unconvincing manner, and the opposition claimed that it was not a goal. But referee blew his whistle in favor of me, and after the match, my mates inquired me whether I was correct and I said "I struck the ball" and told them that I would have disclaimed it if I didn't. Then all my team mates unanimously warned me not to be honest during matches since

This is where community helps. If you are in fellowship with someone different from you, that person's perspective will be valuable in finding out what is wrong. What they feel as bad should not be swept under the rug, but brought out into the light, and others like him or her would find what you are doing good news (and you can relate it to Christ's new Kingdom).

So question yourselves if there is 'badness' which requires the good news of what God has done and is doing. If your university has something bad happening, you should know that it's not the end of it. God will have something to say about it. If it's ragging, there will be good news for the raggers: the time when all people can live regardless of where they come from or who they are is at hand, and this is not the way it will be heralded. If it is those who are being ragged: Jesus also suffered at the hands of those who had power, but He forgave those who did it as they did it without understanding, and He understood their fears. But this good news might be bad for those who are in power. And as Jesus suffered while bringing the good news, so might we.

So if we are leading a care-free life its possible something about the gospel has eluded us. The good news is still good news because it is still happening. If it is old news... its just old news. So we will have to struggle with what holds you back and blinds you to the badness, and you will be challenged to step out of your comfort zone. And only in that cutting edge moment when

it will twist the pattern of the game. My faith & honesty were challenged and I was puzzled as to how I should be reacting in similar kinds of situations. It helped me to realize that being a Christian is not only about reading the Bible and attending Sunday sermons, but that it's all about fulfilling God's purpose for us on earth and testifying to God through our simple day to day activities.

you struggle with what is bad will the gospel be truly good news. If it was that personal moment where Jesus' salvation work washed away the condemnation, which was the Good news in your life, it will continue to be Good news as you find out more and more about what Jesus did in a world full of bad news. The Good news should keep getting bigger everyday.

In both instances, it either comforts the disturbed, or disturbs the comfortable. You might argue that what I say is an extreme generalization of the Christian gospel or the Gospel. But still if you read your word in context you will find that God has something to say in everything.

In the end the most abstract and basic way of thinking about the Gospel is to see it as the good news about the Kingdom of God coming soon (Mark 1:14,15). So if you are satisfied with the situation around you, that means you are either in the Kingdom of God, or you haven't focused on the good news of what the Kingdom of God will be like. In times of trouble it gives hope to the hopeless, and in times of 'peace' it will show the falseness of the peace by showing the True Peace.

Preach the Gospel to yourself, it will change the way you see the world around you. The way you live in relation to the world around you will be Gospel to others around you, and others who are away from you.

Anushke Guneratne



Playing a team sport is always challenging because you will have to sacrifice your individuality and personal policies on behalf of others. But it enhances the ability to work as a team. As a result I got positive and negative impacts on my faith and how I stand as a Christian in front of others. And I always ask God to help me to act according to his plan.

Jeshuran - UCCF



சுவிசேஷம்

சுவிசேஷம் என்பது அனைவருக்கும் அறிவிக்கப்பட வேண்டிய ஒரு நல்ல செய்தியாகும். அந் நல்லசெய்தியானது யாதெனில் "உங்களுடைய ஆத்துமாவுக்கு மீட்பளிக்கும் ஒருவர் இருக்கிறார். அவர்தான் உலக இரட்சகராகிய இயேசுக்கிறிஸ்து. அவர் உங்களுக்காக இப் புவியில் மான்டிராய் பிறந்தார் பல பாடுகள் மட்டு மறித்தார் 3ம் நாள் உயிர்த்தெழுந்து இன்றும் ஜீவிக்கிறார் மீண்டும் வரப்போகிறார்." நீங்கள் அவரை ஏற்றுக் கொண்டு விசுவாசித்தால் உங்கள் ஆத்துமா மீட்பு பெறும்.

இந் நல்லசெய்தியை உலகமெங்கும் அறிவிக்கும்படியாக கடவுளாகிய தேவன் நம்மை தெரிந்து கொண்டார். (அப் 1:8 பூமியின் கடைசி பரியந்தம் எனக்குச் சாட்சிகளாயிருப்பீர்கள்) இதுவே தேவனுடைய சித்தமாகும். இந் நற்பணியை நம் எல்லோருக்கும் முன்மாதிரியாகிய(சமுடந அமுனநட) இயேசுக்கிறிஸ்து தன்னுடைய வாழ்வு மூலம் வாழ்ந்து காட்டினார். அவர் எப்போதும் பிதாவினுடைய (தேவன்) சித்தத்தை செய்தார். அவருடைய வாழ்க்கையில் ஓர் சம்பவமாகிய சமாரியப் பெண்ணுடனான உரையாடல் (யோவான் 4: 4 -42) சுவிசேஷம் சொல்வதற்கான முக்கியத்துவத்தை எமக்கு உணர்த்துகிறது. இங்கு சமாரியப் பெண்ணுக்கு சுவிசேஷம் சொல்வதற்கு கையாண்ட அணுகுமுறையானது வித்தியாசமானது. இதன் மூலம் இயேசு எமக்கு சில காரியங்களைக் கற்றுத் தருகிறார்.

“ இந் நல்லசெய்தியை உலகமெங்கும் அறிவிக்கும்படியாக கடவுளாகிய தேவன் நம்மை தெரிந்து கொண்டார். (அப் 1:8 பூமியின் கடைசி பரியந்தம் எனக்குச் சாட்சிகளாயிருப்பீர்கள்) இதுவே தேவனுடைய சித்தமாகும். ”

சுவிசேஷம் சொல்வதற்கான நேரம் வரையறுக்கப்படவில்லை. இயேசு சமாரியப் பெண்ணுடன் ஆராம் மணி வேளையில் உரையாடினார். இதன் மூலம் நாமும் சுவிசேஷம் சொல்லும் போது நேரத்தை ஓர் தடைக் காரணியாக கூறமுடியாது. எப்பொழுது நேரம் கிடைத்தாலும் அதனைச் சரியாகப் பயன்படுத்த வேண்டும்.

சுவிசேஷம் சொல்வதற்கான இடம் மட்டுப்படுத்தப்படவில்லை. இயேசு சமாரியப் பெண்ணுடன் கிணற்றடியில் வேளையில் உரையாடினார். இதன் மூலம் நாமும் சுவிசேஷம் சொல்லும் போது இடத்தை ஓர் தடைக் காரணியாக கூறமுடியாது. எந்த இடத்திலாவது சந்தர்ப்பம் கிடைத்தால் அதனைச் சரியாகப் பயன்படுத்த வேண்டும்.

இனம் சாதிக்கட்டுப்பாடுகள் சுவிசேஷத்திற்கு தடையாக இருக்க முடியாது. இயேசு ஓர் யூதனாக இருந்தும் சமாரியப் பெண்ணுடன் உரையாடினார். இதன் மூலம் நாமும் சுவிசேஷம் சொல்லும் போது எமது இனம் சாதி அந்தஸ்த்து என்பவற்றை தடைக் காரணிகளாக கூறமுடியாது. இனம் சாதி கட்டுப்பாடுகளை கடந்து சுவிசேஷம் சொல்லவேண்டும்.

ஆண் பெண் என்ற வேறுபாடு சுவிசேஷத்திற்கு தடையாக இருக்க

முடியாது. இயேசு ஓர் ஆணாக இருந்தும் சமாரியப் பெண்ணுடன் உரையாடினார். இதன் மூலம் நாமும் சுவிசேஷம் சொல்லும் போது ஆண் பெண் என்ற வேறுபாட்டை ஓர் தடைக் காரணியாக கூறமுடியாது. ஆண் பெண் என்ற வேறுபாட்டைக் கடந்து சுவிசேஷம் சொல்லவேண்டும்.

உரையாடலை ஆரம்பிக்கும் போது அக்குறித்த நபருடைய தேவையை அடிப்படையாகக் கொண்டு ஆரம்பிப்பது சிறப்பானது. இயேசு சமாரியப் பெண்ணுடன் உரையாடும் போது அவளுடைய தேவையாகிய தண்ணீரை அடிப்படையாகக் கொண்டு உரையாடலை ஆரம்பித்தார். இதன் மூலம் நாமும் சுவிசேஷம் சொல்லும் போது மற்றவருடைய தேவையை அடிப்படையாகக் கொண்டு ஆரம்பிப்பது சிறப்பானதாகும்.

ஒரு நபருக்கு சுவிசேஷம் சொல்லும் போது சரியான நேரத்தில் அவர் பாவி என்பதை அவருக்கு உணர்த்த வேண்டும். இயேசு சமாரியப் பெண்ணுடன் உரையாடும் போது அவளுடைய பாவவாழ்வை அவளுக்கு உணர்த்தினார். இதன் மூலம் நாமும் சுவிசேஷம் சொல்லும் போது மற்றவருடைய பாவவாழ்வை அவருக்கு உணர்த்த வேண்டும்.

தேவன் உலகில் இருக்கும் எல்லோருக்கும் ஆண்டவர் அவரை எல்லோரும் தொழுதுகொள்ள வேண்டும். இயேசு சமாரியப் பெண்ணுடன் உரையாடும் போது தேவன் ஒரு சாதிக்கு மட்டும்(யூதர்) தேவனல்ல எல்லோருக்கும் அவரே தேவன் என்பதை நினைவுபடுத்தினார். இதன் மூலம் நாமும் சுவிசேஷம் சொல்லும் போது இதனை மற்றையவர்களுக்கு நினைவுபடுத்த வேண்டும்.

சமாரியப் பெண்ணின் சாட்சி முக்கியமானது. அவள் தான் கிறிஸ்துவைக் கண்டதை அடக்கி வைக்காமல் ஊருக்குள்ளே போய் தன் நிலையை மறந்து பகிரங்கமாக அறிவித்தாள். இதே போன்று நாமும் கிறிஸ்துவை மற்றவர்கள் முன்பாக வெட்கப்படாமல் பகிரங்கமாக அறிவிக்க வேண்டும்.

இறுதியாக இயேசு தம் சீடர்களுக்கு அறுவடைக்கு ஆயத்தமான வயல் நிலங்கள் பற்றி கூறியது போல் எமக்கும் அறுவடைக்கு ஆயத்தமாய் இருக்கும் ஆத்துமாக்களைப்பற்றி ஓர் மிகப் பெரிய அழைப்பைக் கொடுக்கிறார்.

எங்களுடைய வாழ்விலும் எமக்கு கிடைக்கின்ற ஒவ்வொரு சந்தர்ப்பத்தையும் சுவிசேஷம் சொல்வதற்கு நாம் ஞானமாக பயன்படுத்தலாம். பிரியமான நண்பனே/நண்பியே அவருடைய சீடனாக/சீடியாக இந்த அழைப்பை ஏற்க நீ தயாரா?

“தேவன் தாமே உங்களை நிறைவாய் ஆசீர்வதிப்பாராக”

P. Kajanthan
JUSCF



The challenge of being a Christian among non Christian students during our university life

First of all I thank and praise God for this opportunity to write my experience. University life is not easily experienced by everyone because only a few students get this chance. Most of us get this chance by the grace of God. When we are undergraduates we don't know how to live differently from those who are around us. Sometimes we forget "who we are!"

Being Christian students we have to challenge ourselves in these areas:

- Among friends (specially to keep friendship with non-believers)
- In the lecture hall
- At the hostel
- Relationship with girls

- Religious festivals such as sarasvathi poojai

So how can we be different in those areas?

I would like to mention an incident which helped me to grow in God's love. One day I had been invited to a friend's birthday party. During the party time one of my friends asked me to have some beer. I refused. Then he said to me "if you refuse such things in your life specially during the university period you will be called 'pons' (it means 'girl') After the birthday party I went to my room and thought about my friend's comment. At that time God reminded me of Daniel chapter 1 verse 8 "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies nor with the wine which he drank therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" after that I prayed to God and started to study for my mid semester exam.

In this manner we have to question ourselves in some other areas such as relationship with girls, religious festivals and the lecture hall activities. How can we overcome the difficulties?

- We must keep our relationship with God
- We must give time to God such as to pray and read the bible
- We should go to the fellowship meetings regularly
- We have to share our problems with a believable person (that person may be staff or whoever)
- We must avoid foolish talk

If we want to develop these things in our life we need wisdom. So who can give this wisdom? God only can give the wisdom "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind" (James 1:5,6)

May the lord help each of us to glorify Him by doing his will during our university period

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Just another Movie?

Amir Khan's character in 3 Idiots is portrayed as a symbol of success in many ways. His achievements add colour to his altruistic behavior. He can also be noted as the hero of the movie who ultimately gets the girl as well. Unconsciously, we try to identify ourselves with this character and someday would want to be an extraordinary person. The question is whether it is the kind acts, or the popularity achieved in the end that were admired.

Significant importance is given to fate/destiny in both movies. The question posed to the viewer in the beginning is answered in the end to drive the nail through. This is probably the way the director/writer understands the world. Blindly absorbing it, will unconsciously align our thoughts to the director's worldview. Do we need to worry our minds about this? It is true that God created mankind as creative beings

The movie 'Slumdog Millionaire', created hype for various reasons. Some were challenged to think about the 'forgotten', living among us. Some were surprised by the uniqueness of the plot brought out by Bollywood cinema. Others were enthralled by the love expressed by a 'Chai wallah'. Yet another successful Bollywood masterpiece this year, was none other than '3 Idiots'. The flaws of the education system and the many perils undergone by students due to rigid rules and cruel governance were among the important themes portrayed in the movie. A simple comedy was used, to bring out hard truths. The End.

Or is it?

The character of the Slumdog portrays the image of an ideal lover who overcomes all barriers and makes great sacrifices to find his true love. This might lead us to think that this is the norm. The female viewers might unconsciously brew expectation of their male companions to be like this.



giving us the free will to enjoy music, art and literature. However, we have also been gifted with a spirit of discernment to comprehend the environment we live in through his word, which includes the elements of the entertainment industry as well.

Jesus, through his sacrifice, reconciled all

things to him; it is part and parcel of being a disciple of Christ to question or challenge the things we see and hear. This could be a song on the radio, a paper article, a poster on the street or in this context, a movie that we watch. We can analyze the above through a biblical framework to verify what is aligned with

God's Word and what contradicts.

A few questions to ponder on after any movie;

1. In what context was the movie set?
2. Who were the main characters and what were they portraying?
3. What was the main message/s brought out?

4. What are the underlying beliefs seen in the movie?
5. Can we agree/ disagree with the message?
6. Can we draw parallels from the Bible?

Some questions might seem similar to how an average critic would go about it but he/she would use his/her own speculation and expertise. A Christian would base it on a framework which will last for eternity. I hope many of us will take up the challenge, which in turn will give us more reasons to read the Bible and help us develop a biblical worldview, resulting in a more mature relationship with God.

by
Movie Lounge



யோனாவின் ஜெபம்

யோனா என்ற பெயரைக்கேட்டதும் பலருக்கு பல எண்ணங்கள் தோன்றும். அவன் ஆண்டவரின் திட்டத்தை அறியாமல் சுயநலமாய்செயற்பட்டவன் என்று சிலர் கூறுவதுமுண்டு. எவ்வாறாயினும் யோனாவின் கதை நமக்கு யாது கற்பிக்கின்றதென்பதை அறிந்துகொள்ளுவதற்கு இரு ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்பாக focus staff ஆல் நமக்கு ஒருநாள்வேதப்படிப்பு நடத்தப்பட்டது. அதில் முக்கிய ஒரு பகுதியான யோனாவின் ஜெபம் பற்றிய சிலகருத்துக்களை உங்களுடன் பகிர்ந்துகொள்ள விரும்புகின்றேன்.

நினைவேக்கு எதிராக பிரசங்கிக்குமாறு கர்த்தர் விடுத்த கட்டளையை விலகி தர்ஷிசுக்கு புறப்பட்ட யோனாவிற்கு நிகழ்ந்த நெருக்கடியான சூழ்நிலை எளிய வடிவில் முதலிரு அதிகாரங்களில் விளக்கப்படுகின்றது. பிரச்சனைகளை நேர்கொள்ள விரும்பாத யோனா குழப்பம் சூழ்ந்த நிலையிலும் கூட கப்பலின் கீழ்த்தட்டிற்கு சென்று அயர்ந்த நித்திரையடைந்து காணப்பட்டான் என வாசிக்கின்றோம். பின்னர் கடலில் தாக்கிப் போடப்பட்ட யோனா, இனிமேல் தன்னால் எதுவும் செய்ய முடியாது என்பதை அறிந்தவனாக தேவனிடம் சரணடைந்தான் கப்பலில் இருந்தபொழுது மற்றவர்கள் ஜெபிக்கச் சொல்லியும் பேசாமல் இருந்த அவன் இப்பொழுது நெருக்கடியான சூழ்நிலையில் தேவனிடம் மன்றாடுகிறான்.

"1. அந்த மீனின் வயிற்றிலிருந்து யோனா தன் தேவனாகிய கர்த்தரை நோக்கி விண்ணப்பம் பண்ணி 2. என் நெருக்கத்தில் நான் கர்த்தரை

நோக்கிக் கூப்பிட்டேன். அவர் எனக்கு உத்தரவு அருளினார். நான் பாதாளத்தின் வயிற்றிலிருந்து கூக்குரலிட்டேன். நீர் என் சத்தத்தைக் கேட்டீர். 3 சமுத்திரத்தின் நடுமையமாகிய ஆழத்திலே நீர் என்னைத் தள்ளிவிட்டீர். நீரோட்டம் என்னைச் சூழ்ந்து கொண்டது. உம்முடைய வெள்ளங்களும் அலைகளும் எல்லாம் என்மேல் புரண்டது. 4. நான் உமது கண்களுக்கு எதிரே இராதபடிக்குத் தள்ளப்பட்டேன். ஆகிலும் இன்னமும் உம்முடைய பரிசுத்த ஆலயத்தை நோக்குவேன் என்றேன். 5. தண்ணீர்கள் பிராணபரியந்தம் என்னை நெருக்கினது. ஆழி என்னைச் சூழ்ந்தது. கடற்பாசி என் தலையைச் சுற்றிக் கொண்டது. 6. பர்வதங்களின் அடிவாரங்கள் பரியந்தமும் இறங்கினேன். பூமியின் தாழ்ப்பாள்கள் என்றென்றைக்கும் என்னை அடைக்கிறதாயிருந்தது

ஆனாலும் என் தேவனாகிய கர்த்தாவே நீர் என் பிராணனை அழிவுக்குத் தப்புவீத்தீர். 7. என் ஆத்துமா என்னில் தொய்ந்து போகையில் கர்த்தரை நினைத்தேன், அப்பொழுது என் விண்ணப்பம் உமது பரிசுத்த ஆலயத்திலே உம்மிடத்தில் வந்து சேர்ந்தது. 8. பொய்யான மாயையைப் பற்றிக் கொள்ளுகிறவர்கள் தங்களுக்கு வரும்

கிருபையைப் போக்கடிக்கிறார்கள். 9. நானோவெனில் துதியின் சத்தத்தோடே உமக்குப் பலியிடுவேன் நான் பண்ணின பொருத்தனையைச் செலுத்துவேன். இரட்சிப்பு கர்த்தருடையது என்றான்." (யோனா 2: 1-9)

என யோனாவின் ஜெபத்தில் இருந்து எடுக்கப்பட்ட வரிகளை பார்க்கும்போது மேலுமேலுமாய் பிரச்சனைக்குள் தத்தளிக்கும் ஒருமனிதனின் கூக்குரலை அவதானிக்க கூடியதாய் இருக்கின்றது.

ஆயினும் அவனுடைய ஜெபத்திலிருந்து புலப்படும் பின்வரும் காரியங்களிலிருந்து தனது பயங்கரமான அனுபவத்தின் மத்தியிலும் யோனா தன் ஆண்டவரை எவ்வாறு அறிந்திருந்தார் என்பதை நாம்



- 1: 18 පීඩා විඳීම හා මනස්ථාපනය කෙසේ සම්බන්ධ වේද?
- 1: 19 පෙම්වතුන් (1: 2 හා සහඳුන්න), පුජකයන් ඉදිරියේ දෙවියන්වහන්සේ ට දියයුතු ස්ථානය කෙබඳුවේද?
- 1: 20 බේදවාවකයකදී දරුවන්ගේ මරණය අත්දකින දෙමාපියන් ගැන මෙනෙහි කරන්න.
- 1: 21 ඊශ්‍රායෙල් ජනතාව මෙන්ම අන් ජනතාවෝ ද විනිශ්චයට ලක්වෙති. ඒ බවට මෙම පදය කෙසේ තොරතුරු සපයයිද?
- 1: 22 තමන් විනිශ්චයට ලක්වුවා සේම (පාපය නිසා), අන් අය ද විනිශ්චය කරනා ලෙස ඉල්ලීම කෙතරම් දුරට යුක්ති සහගතද?

සටහන

මෙම පරිච්ඡේදය තුළ ඊශ්‍රායෙල් ජනතාවගේ පුද්ගලික හා සාමූහික වේදනාව පෙන්වා දෙයි. එය පිටුපස ඇත්තේ දේව විනිශ්චයයි. පුරාණ ගිවිසුම තුළ දේව විනිශ්චයේ භාජන ලෙස විවිධ ජාතින් දෙවියන්වහන්සේ උපයෝගී කර ගනියි. තවද දේව විනිශ්චයට ලක්වන ජනතාව තුළ ඇතිවන හැඟීම්, ආකල්ප හා වේදනාව මෙම පරිච්ඡේදය පෙන්වා දෙයි. එය මුද්‍රා ගර්භයටම බලපාන බවත්, ඉන් අප පිවිතයේ කිසිම අංගයක් ආවරණය නොවන බවත්, මෙම පරිච්ඡේදයෙන් කියැවේ.



දෙවන කොටස ලබන කලාපයේ....

Please send in your articles or response letters to be published on SCOPE to:

diyan@focus.lk

encouragements and suggestions are also welcome.

SCOPE team

"O! Lord, If only I could talk to him...Will YOU help me Lord? Please... Because this kind of sorrow, pain, helplessness, hopelessness is not YOUR wish for the human, my Lord... So please let me talk to him about YOU. Give me YOUR power, YOUR wisdom and YOUR revelation through the HOLY SPIRIT. YOUR name shall be glorified. In the mighty name of JESUS, I pray. Amen."

I was on my way to Peradeniya from home by bus. I got a seat in the bus and there were two young boys standing. One was telling his story to the other with pain and hurt. Almost everyone sitting nearby could hear his story. He had been deceived by an agent. He had wanted to go abroad for higher studies. As he is poor, their house had been mortgaged for necessary money. But the agent had fled after collecting money from him. Now this person was travelling to find at least a clue about that agent. He didn't have even the bus fee with him.

I felt sympathy and my Lord gave me burden about it. Then I prayed that small prayer in silence.

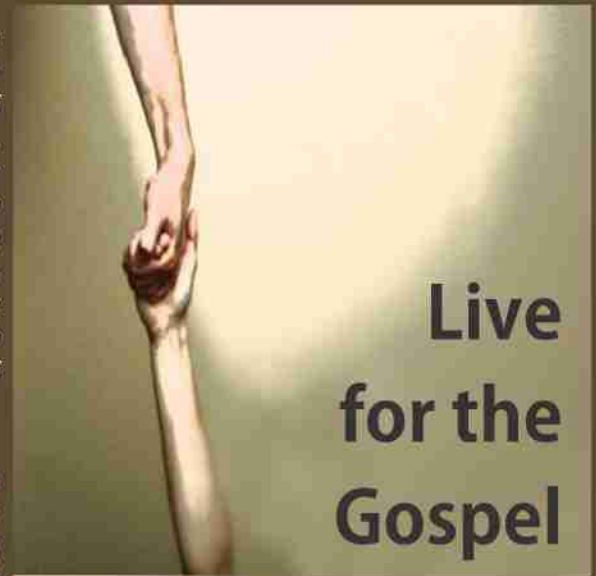
Very soon, the person sitting next to me stood and got down from the bus. Then I could share the Gospel with that suffering boy who sat next to me.

This is only one occasion and there are more experiences in my new life of 1 1/2 years with the Lord.

"Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: For I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them" (Acts 18:9-11)

Soul winners are the most important and valuable children of God in the Lords' eyes. The Lord guides them and protects their ways against the evil one. As a child of my beloved Jesus in Heaven, I respect his last Word on earth.

" And He said unto them. Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15)



Live for the Gospel

And I want to keep Him happy by doing according to His will. Because He is my most Beloved.

I want to love Him more. I want to care about Him more. Such a great sacrifice would not have been given to me by anyone else. My Lord gave His own life just because of me. So I should do something for Him according to His wish.

So how can I live without sharing the Gospel with others? How can I live without telling people about this enormous love? I have no existence without His love. Once I dived into His love in my prayers I thought, ' Why do I keep silent?' Such a love should not be hidden. There are so many around me who need His love even more than I do. Suffering, sorrow, and pain in mankind hurts my Lord. And I don't want Him to be hurt further. So in my dawn prayers, 'asking for an opportunity to share the Gospel at least with one person a day' is always there.

Early in the morning the Lord Jesus Christ climbed up the mountain and prayed about those burning feelings of the Father towards mankind. And He came down to the people and did what the Father asked Him to do. That same thing remains for us also to do for Him.

"Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (John 20:21)

So I ask in my prayer for that loving heart of Jesus, full of mercy and compassion towards others, to dwell in me throughout.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God,

and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
(Matthew 6:33)

So all things we do shall be for the spread of the kingdom. Dedicate to share the Gospel wherever you are and whoever you are with. God assures our success and our protection. Because the Gospel is the power of God.

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"
(Romans 1:16)

God needs us. He needs to get to people

through us. So ask Him for the guidance through the Holy Spirit every day.

At the day of Judgment, when the Lord asks, "I died for you. What did you do for me?" I can't be answerless. Our mission and the calling on the earth to build up the kingdom of God should be accomplished, not only because we are Christians, but because we are the children of God. (John 1:12)

Lord shall give you all that burden and guide you throughout. Amen.

Shalani Balasooriya
University of Peradeniya

If you are not getting SCOPE and FOCUS mails to your correct address or you know of any GCFer who is not getting mail from FOCUS, please notify office on:

office@focus.lk or
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FOCUS,
25A, Waidya Road,
Dehiwala.



Name: Suresh de Mel
Location: University of Peradeniya
Ministry: Teaching, Economics, Music

Suresh grew up in a Catholic/Anglican background, and was a 'religious' kid, to say the least. At 12 years old, he'd wake up on time and be at the 6:00am daily mass, whether his family went or not! Even during school he was an 'active' Christian, regularly taking part in the Royal College SCM events.

It was during the 1980's, while studying Engineering at the University of Moratuwa that Suresh joined FOCUS and began to think about "why we believe what we believe." It was there he came to understand that believing that God does not exist and that the whole universe was a mere accident requires a much *bigger* step of faith than actually believing in Him and having a purpose to our lives. At first

he and his batch mates regretted the JVP riots which turned their degree into a seven instead of a four-year engagement. But Suresh now believes that the extension made sure he had seven years "heavy doses" of FOCUS meetings, and thus made him what he is today.

FOCUS forced Suresh to "step out of [his] comfort zones" and make new friends of people he would otherwise never have associated with. It helped build "meaningful relationships" which last "to this day." His recollections of university life include "huge all-night arguments" on various topics which drew the attention of students from nearby rooms as well. 20 years after these arguments, an acquaintance from his university days called Suresh during a crisis, wanting to know more about what made him speak so passionately for Christ during those arguments. These events in his life prompt a very important question: **what will people remember YOU for, twenty years from now?**

Suresh is not your flawless superhero though, and has had his share of tough times. He was writing his PhD at Washington; his wife Dileni had just returned to Sri Lanka, they had spent their scholarship money and were eating into their savings and the PhD was dying on him. He likens the experience of thinking about his work to walking over and over again into a brick wall. "I would feel envious of some

Meet real people **PROFILE**

gardeners I could see from my study window" he admits, "it seemed like their life was so much more interesting and meaningful." He was forced to return to Sri Lanka and accepted work at the IMF. It was only a year after he returned that he was able to complete his PhD. "It was a pain" he admits, adding that he did it "for the sake of getting it done with." His only thoughts after handing it in were to have a huge bonfire and burn the thing up. He remembers Vinoth's encouragement during this period, as one thing that kept him going: the thesis itself was not the important thing – the "kind of Suresh" that emerged from the process was.

And the "kind of Suresh" that emerged from that PhD process believes it worth his while to have given up the prospects of well-paying jobs and the luxuries of a cushy life in the US for what he calls a "decent" job teaching economics and in the process, life-attitudes, to undergraduates in backward little Sri Lanka. **Our 'success' in God's eyes does not depend on our 'success' in the eyes of the world.** Suresh's once-dream was to be engaged in full-time music ministry, but he now finds that his teaching and research are the best ministry tools he has got. "Everything is important in God's eyes" he smiles.



Out of the 19 delegates from India, I was one of those who attended the first IFES South Asia Region Staff Training Conference held in Sri Lanka from 7 to 13 November.

The Sri Lankan student movement, FOCUS, playing host to the conference, was highly professional in conducting the entire proceedings of the program. A small group of staff in their 'unity and oneness' coordinated participants from countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal and India with much effort and ease. We were put in a beautiful hotel with a stunning beach right outside the hotel which made for a breathtaking scenic beauty. Each morning started with a beautiful time of worship lead by the various participating countries.

In that beautiful place, we were challenged to think out of the box regarding the current issues faced by the students on campus. The conference had two main topics, Mentoring and Culture.

With the main emphasis of the conference being on mentoring, Ravi David reminded each participant of who we are in Christ, our uniqueness and how each person has a unique place in the sight of God.

In our life journey, each of us has a unique story which can enrich others. However, in our daily and mundane lives we tend to forget the high call the Lord has over our lives; relationships that we share are day by day becoming virtual and artificial. Also, as leaders, most of us don't have mentors in our life because we find it difficult and embarrassing to let others know of what we are going through. The temptation is to

pretend everything is ok when it really is not.

In mentoring it takes time to build a person with the wisdom and grace which the Lord grants us. The power of mentoring is in shaping people who will shape the world. So we need to remind ourselves that "the main thing is to keep the main thing as the main thing".

Secondly, there was an emphasis on 'what is Culture?'

One of the things which I really liked was the re-looking at our teaching methods in use, which was passive teaching and passive learning. We do not give students space/opportunity to voice out opinions. Similarly when we take Bible studies we tend to teach or enforce what we have learnt and understood and not give the space and time for others to think and debate - which is a cultural thing. But in the Bible, Jesus challenged the existing culture by counter questioning it and gave people that space to express and debate with him. We learnt that Culture is a choice and not biological given.

To respond to an issue you need to develop an opinion but to respond to a culture you need to show people how to live! We make half disciples by telling half the truth. To make true disciples we need to tell the full truth and to do that we need to expand our knowledge and dig deep into the scriptures to develop a Christian worldview.

We have been taught with materials from the West which is emotional and suited to

Western culture and emotion, with great emphasis on relationships. But the issues of our culture differ from those of the West and hence we need to present the Gospel in a manner relevant to our culture.

Also, we discussed media and how it influences culture. We often see movies as a mode of entertainment but most of the times we tend to overlook the trends they set in our culture. What impact do they have? We don't discuss movies with students and help them to see these things, nor do we provide them with the space where they can articulate their thinking patterns and decide what is good and bad for them.

With the advancement of the Internet in the world, friends are becoming more "virtual" and less real. And with this rapidly growing virtual generation, we are faced with a huge challenge where we need to enlighten our students about the importance of being in touch with the real world and real relationships. People are comfortable in the Internet/virtual world because no one is in front of them and they have a space to speak their mind. This is something that we too need to learn and provide students with – a space where they can be what they want and say what they want.

Are we ready to bring changes into our lives and let the Lord help us to be creative in the methods we use?

Mettisila Corrie Susan - UESI

Fellowship News

Colombo

UCCF has been fairly active in the past quarter. Many first years joined UCCF. We organized a couple of discussions to help these students adjust to the campus lifestyle. We thank God for these first years because they truly have a passion to serve Him on campus.

Fellowship meetings were held regularly every week. As a result members of the fellowship are now getting to know one another and are beginning to feel more comfortable within the fellowship as well. We have planned to start meetings at a faculty level in the coming weeks. This is because we have identified that we can reach out to more students on campus in this manner. Furthermore it also ensures that fellowship members meet more than once a week which we feel is insufficient.

UCCF hopes to work together with the Catholic Union to organize a carol service this Christmas season. This was novel to us as it is not something that we have done before at university. The carol service is to take place on the 16th of December.

We also hope to conduct a programme to recognize the efforts of the support staff on campus. This event is scheduled to be held on the 17th of December.

PeraDC

Thank God the University is functioning without interruption after several weeks of crisis.

We had our regional camp in the last weekend of October. It was a very useful weekend & the whole weekend we spent talking about Bible study methods. Two brothers from Uva Wellassa also participated. Pray for us to be good students of the Word of God & practice what we learnt during the weekend in our personal & group Bible studies.

After long time we able to organize a prayer vigil & we decided to continue it quarterly.

These days we are preparing to have our annual carol service on December 13th. Pray for the preparations, practices & that God will use this opportunity to glorify His Name.

- Pray for new ones (Sudarshan, Nishan, Saranga, Deric, Helani, Ashen, Mayomi, Ayanthi) who joint the fellowship recently
- Pray for our leadership team.

Moratuwa

SCFUM continues to meet regularly on Thursdays during the Union Hour. We conducted an introductory presentation in early July for the new batch which entered the Engineering Faculty, during their Orientation Program. We made use of this opportunity to briefly introduce what SCFUM was, its overall purpose and past activities organized. The program was conducted in all 3 languages as we wanted to reach every student. We are indeed thankful to God that through this we were able to make a number of new contacts with the freshers, some of whom are now among the regulars at the Thursday Fellowship Meetings. It was very encouraging to see several of them participating in the Poya Day Program in September on "Christians and Media" which was quite a learning experience for them.

The joint "Academic Staff-Student Discussion Program" is now a regular part of our monthly events with 3 more sessions being held with the participation of our lecturers. We are grateful to Mr. Nilhan Niles, Prof. Amal Kumarage and Dr. Shantha Fernando for the sessions they conducted on "Success", "Peer Pressure" and the "Character of Nehemiah." These have helped us as undergraduates in shaping our Biblical worldview as part of our joint witness for Christ in the university. Students from SCFUM also participated in the program on "Double Degrees" held in November. This too was a growing experience for us as we discovered the importance of applying Biblical principles in decision making.

In spite of our busy academic schedules, we meet together for lunch on Wednesdays at the university canteen, as we work to bond together more as a Fellowship. Students too now take Bible studies and we also have times of praise & worship and drift times. We also recently met together to discuss our plans for Christmas and the upcoming AGM.

Please pray for:

- The new students, namely Thivanka, Lakshitha, Shamara, Sumedha, Tharmaja & Shemil who have joined SCFUM, as they begin to adjust to university life and that each of them will grow in intimacy with their relationship with God during their spell as an undergraduate
- The programs/project that SCFUM seeks to organize during and after Christmas
- The upcoming AGM, that God will strengthen the new committee as they work towards meeting SCFUM's objectives in the university during 2011

Jaffna

"... Not by might nor by power, but my spirit, says the Lord Almighty" Zech 02:06

We thank God for His wonderful leading and providing the needs of our fellowship till this time. Recently five more new students including three medical students joined with us. Now there are more than thirty students on their wheels to build up his kingdom in the university. As usual we gather thrice a week regularly (Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays). In our bible study we are still studying the book of Hebrews. Four or five students attend this bible study regularly. As usual we had a half day program in September. Nineteen students came for this program. This is the first time we had our half a day program in university. Normally we used to hold our half a day program out of campus. Shathy Anna and Rushira Akka who came from Colombo were invited as speakers for this program.

We had a camp from 19th to 21st in Jaffna. Camp theme was "Living Testimony" Twenty students and two graduates participated in this camp. Only one student participated from Batti. Sathi Anna and Rushira Acca & Caroline Acca were invited as speakers for this camp. God made this camp a very successful one so we thank God for that.

We thank God for....

- His leading & providing the needs of our fellowship throughout this quarter.
- Bringing more students for the last two months.
- The people who came from Colombo & ministered to us.
- The camp which we held in November.
- One student from Batti who came for the camp.
- Bringing some new students for our camp.
- The speakers who conducted the sessions in our Camp.

Pray for...

- Pray for our freshers who have just joined our fellowship. They are regular for the meetings and much involved in our ministry. Their names are K.Samuel Rajeen, Thabitha Hoole, Paul Bright Benedict, Y.Suhaniya, A.Daniyel, Jesintha,Yaso & Kopika.

Pray for these new students.

- Commitment & regular attendance of the students.
- The new students those who have joined recently to be the future leaders.

Jayawardanapura

Firstly we would like to thank God for been with our fellowship in the past few months and the for improvements. We had vacation after the end exams and started the new academic year end of August.

During the vacation we were able to organize a program for some special children in Korellawella. It was a touching experience for most of us where we were able to share time and our happiness with these special children of God.

Also for the first time two of our members Sanka and Nuwani were able to conduct an orientation program at the Medical faculty. Gizzelle one of our fellowship members got that opportunity for us. We have found two new contacts from the medical faculty and we thank God for giving that opportunity.

Also this year has been a blessed year for us because for the first time we were able to find a contact from the Arts faculty. We have been praying about this for more than two years and now God has answered our prayers! We also found 3 new contacts from the Science faculty also.

With Achini akki leaving we had to do bible studies alone. So as a start two members got together and did a combined study. Yohan aiya continues to visit us whenever possible to help with the bible studies.

Please pray for:

- Pray for the new students who joined hands with us to learn God's word, that they may be a light to our fellowship and to the university.
- Pray for each member to be given the wisdom and guidance to conduct bible studies.
- Pray for the Christmas programme we are hoping to do with the street children
- Pray for the end semester exams that would be held beginning of next year.

If undelivered please return to:



Fellowship Of Christian University Students
25A, Waidya Road, Dehiwala.