

**I tell you the truth,
you will weep and
mourn while the world
rejoices. You will
grieve, but your grief
will turn to joy.**

John 16:20

TURN YOUR SORROW

Author

DR. P.P. JOB

Editor

Kripa Elizabeth Kuruvilla

Contact:

Dr. P.P. Job

P.O. Box - 15769, Long Beach

California - 90815, U.S.A.

E-mail: drjobsmission@aol.com

jjob@pobox.com

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by **Dr. P.P. Job**

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PROLOGUE

Rev. Richard Wurmbrand, my mentor, who suffered for 14 years in a Romanian prison for his faith, once shared with me the secret of his ability to hold millions of people spellbound at his meetings. He told me that whenever I preach, it should be with two things in mind. The first should be that my message would be the last message I would give and that it would be the last sermon that the listener would listen to. The second thing to keep in mind should be that by hearing the message, both I and the listener should be sure of reaching Heaven. He assured me that if every sermon of mine is spoken with these guidelines, then they will be the most powerful sermons.

The former Metropolitan of Mar Thoma church, Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom, fondly known as the bishop with the golden tongue and a terrific sense of humor, once said at a Church Council meeting that even though a member of the Committee is always limited by a topic, a structure and time, in actuality he will always say everything that he wants to say when he gets the floor.

The lessons I learnt about preaching from these two great men of God are that structure, philosophy, homiletics or bibliography are not the most important aspects of a sermon. The vital ingredient is sharing your experiences and your interpretation of the Word of God to the people. I have preached to millions of people all over the world and have always been guided by these invaluable lessons. And they have borne fruit in turning the minds of many to God.

In this book I follow the same method. I follow no specific structure or philosophy. I have no bibliography to support my opinions. I advocate no system of theology. I simply share with you my experiences as a believer who has been put into the fire of faith time and again and has risen as a phoenix from the ashes due to the infinite grace of God. I write this book with only one simple aim in mind: that you are able to turn your sorrow into joy as I have done.

Dr. P.P. Job

INTRODUCTION

It is with a sense of *déjà vu* that I begin writing this book. My last book, *Why God Why?* was written barely a year after my younger son Michael's martyrdom. The book was a celebration of Michael's life and a testimony of my life following his death. Today, 17 January 2008, as I begin to write this book, my heart is brimming with sorrow and my eyes are awash with tears. For it was on this very day last year that tragedy befell my family yet again and we lost our elder son, John Job. The past year has been yet another difficult year. With the overflowing grace of the Almighty and the support of friends and well-wishers all over the world I have managed to overcome this tremendous blow. Soon after John's death, several people asked me how I managed to overcome these tragedies. Some suggested that I should retire from active Christian work to prevent more tragedies in my life. Others wrote that my life was an inspiration because I was continuing my work for the Lord despite all the tragedies in my life. I do not know what your opinion is, but I wish to quote from a letter that I received a few days ago.

"I wish you and the 'Tortured for Christ' team a

blessed, fruitful and miraculous year 2008. Though you have been shattered by the death of both your sons, I believe the Almighty God will raise thousands and millions of sons through your ministry, for the advancement of the gospel, for which you are striving day and night with personal losses and tragedies.

I am really encouraged to know about the risky ministry you are doing in 'Iron Curtain' countries and also the care that you render for the missionary orphans. It is humanly impossible to face such a huge challenge and I strongly believe that you have been endowed with strength, knowledge, wisdom and courage from above to serve the Lord with such commitment and untiring efforts."

Pauline Deborah
14.01.08

A decade earlier, on 19 December 1997, when John and I were in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, with our underground Christian leaders, someone suggested that we watch the film *Titanic*. It had just been released on that day all over the world. In the movie, one scene moved me so much that it is imprinted in my memory. As the unsinkable ship was sinking after hitting an iceberg, people were running helter-skelter to save their lives. Some jumped into the sea. Others were fighting to find a place in the rescue boats. But there was a group of people on the deck, the music group that had been hired to entertain the guests, who

continued their duty of singing and entertaining right through the tragedy. Even while the water was lapping at their feet and they knew that it was just a matter of minutes before they would drown, they were singing hymns and lending strength and support to the people around them. The last hymn that they played was 'Nearer my God to thee'. What commitment towards their calling!

Whenever my wife and I look around our home, we only find memories of our children. Both our children are with the Lord. Both met with violent and untimely deaths. As I sit and reminiscence about them, the unshed tears flow from my eyes like water gushing from a dam.

My younger son, Michael, gained precedence in reaching his heavenly abode when his life was cut short by the cruel hands of Hindu fanatics. He was merely 21 years old and was in his third year of Medicine at the Himalayan Institute of Medical Sciences, Dehradun, India. Michael was an endearing boy to his family and all his friends. A handsome boy, he was brilliant and talented. His passion for singing enveloped both Gospel and secular music, while his oratory powers made him an emphatic and inspiring preacher. A sensitive boy, always with a listening ear for anyone who needed help, he touched the hearts of many during his short life.

Michael was my teacher. As a child he was a keen observer and would state his views with great conviction. Being the son of an evangelist, he was interested in accompanying me wherever I preached. When he was six years old, on the morning of Good Friday I had two preaching assignments. The first was in a CSI (Church of South India) church at Lady Hardinge Hospital, New Delhi. Soon after, I was to preach in my parish, Jerusalem Mar Thoma Church, in Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi. The two places were 10 kilometers apart, and as I was travelling to give my first sermon, I looked down at my son and realized that he was one common face I saw at all my sermons. I wondered how boring it would be for a six-year-old to hear nearly the same things over and over again, since my preaching generally revolved around sharing my testimony and my experiences in the Lord. So that day I decided to give a different sermon for the benefit of my son. My message therefore revolved around the fact that anyone who believes in the blood of Jesus Christ shed on Good Friday on Calvary will receive redemption, justification and sanctification.

After this message, as I was driving to my church to give my second sermon, Michael was sitting quietly with a thoughtful expression on his face. Soon he broke his silence and with the directness of a six-year-old said, *“Dad, you preached a very theological message today. I didn’t understand it at all.”* I was

rather taken aback since I had changed my message so that it would be more interesting for him and told him so. He replied, *“Don’t preach that sermon in our church.”* I then asked him, *“I always give my testimony in my messages. Is it not a repetition?”* I was amazed at his reply. He said, *“I have heard your sermons and your testimony many times, and every time you speak you bring a new **dimension** to it. I have seen people crying and repenting with tears rolling down their cheeks when they hear your testimony.”* I wondered at his perception of the effect of my sermon on other people. I did not even know from where he learnt the word *dimension*. He realized that this explained the power of God more than any theological message.

Michael was a bundle of restless energy, and when he was nine years old I bought him a bicycle. He was thrilled. He would go everywhere on it and took good care of it. However, one day in his hurry he left the cycle in front of the gate and went up to his room on the first floor. When he went back to get his bicycle it had disappeared; someone had stolen it from the front of our house. He was heartbroken, and I was angry with him for his carelessness. As a punishment, I told him I would not buy him another bicycle. He was very sad and began to pray about it. One morning he told me that he dreamt that Jesus came down from Heaven and gave him a bicycle. He began to pray even harder after that.

A month after he told me about his dream, Rev. Tom White came to India with his daughter Dorothy and stayed in our home. She was a young girl who distributed newspapers using her bicycle in her locality in America. At the end of her stay, she wanted to give Michael some gift with the \$100 she had, since they had become good friends. She told me about her intention to buy him a bicycle, and I was amazed at the ways of the Lord. When Michael saw his shiny new bicycle, he thanked the Lord and said, *“God always does what he promises.”*

Michael was always firm about his convictions because he believed in what he stood for. He placed his trust entirely on Jesus Christ. When he joined medical college, he was the only Christian among five hundred students. He was also a practicing Christian who told others my testimony, taught them choruses praising God, distributed Bibles and gave sermons. Most of his classmates came to know Jesus through him. He was unashamed to tell others about the poor background his father came from and the love and power of Jesus Christ that transformed him. Michael’s death was a big blow not only to all of us but to all his friends, and 26 June 1999, the day he died will remain one of the darkest days of our lives.

Gaurav was one of Michael’s best friends. He looked up to him with reverence. He would even wash Michael’s clothes. I often scolded him for doing this,

but Gaurav would tell me that Michael was like an angel for him. And as Providence would have it, at the time of Michael's death, no one was there at his side except Gaurav and his father. After Michael's death, Gaurav was heartbroken. He did not understand God's doing. Soon he finished his medical studies and became a doctor. He would visit our home often. Then he left for his higher studies to Manipal, a place near Bangalore in South India. One day, he was travelling by train from Bangalore to Delhi. On the train was a believer whom God had sent to touch Gaurav's heart and before reaching Delhi, Gaurav converted to Christianity. In 2005, Gaurav attended the International Conference of Friends of Persecuted Christians, held annually at the Michael Job Centre during the last weekend of June, and gave his testimony. His testimony was so powerful that it moved the entire audience. Since then he has been coming to the Conference every year. At present he is contemplating joining the Michael Job Centre so he can contribute to the little lives here that are alive today because of his friend Michael.

My elder son, John, or Jojo as he was fondly called, was given to us by the Lord on 5 April 1973. Thirty-four years later, he was taken away from us in a road accident in Dubai. John was a computer wizard from his college days. Having specialized in computer studies at NIIT, he decided to set up his own business in computers. However, he also wanted to win hearts

for Jesus because he was greatly inspired by Dr. Richard Wurmbrand and my testimonies. When John was 12 years old, the renowned evangelist Sam Kamalesan came to stay in our house for a few days. One day he asked John what he was planning to do once he grew up. Without a moment's hesitation, John replied, "*I will be a missionary and follow in my father's footsteps.*" Once he grew up, John found himself in a dilemma on how to follow both his passions, but the Lord led him and showed him a path where he could do both.

In 1993, on one of his visits to India, Richard Wurmbrand was relaxing in my home. We were discussing the state of the Communist world, where we had fought long and hard for the freedom of persecuted Christians from the shackles of the Communist leaders of Eastern Europe. We then discussed how the Muslim World had become a great center of religious persecution. Richard Wurmbrand shared with me the incidents of persecution of our Christian brothers in the Arabic World. I agreed with him that we needed to start our work in these countries but also cautioned him that the risk was higher than working in the Iron Curtain nations. I told him that Communist leaders only imprison and torture believers but Muslim leaders immediately execute Christian workers. John, who was eating nearby, was listening to our conversation intently. While Richard Wurmbrand

was pondering on how to get workers to begin work in the Muslim World, John interrupted us by saying, “*Uncle Wurmbrand, don’t worry; if you don’t have any workers, I will go.*”

Barely three years later, in 1996, Rev. Jan Bor, director of the Netherlands Mission, who had come to Coimbatore to attend our Gospel Campaign, took John to Kuwait. I also followed them. There we secretly opened a small printing press. John began his work secretly. We met with underground church leaders to discuss how to operate in supplying necessary literature and assistance to underground churches. John’s computer skills came in handy as we set up a computer firm, Green Field Electronics (GFE). This was a good cover, as GFE actually stood for Gospel For Emirates. Through this company, John was able to print and distribute Bibles, songbooks, and biographies of Wurmbrand and myself in Arabic to Muslims. John printed and distributed Christian Bibles in Jeddah, Dammam and Riyadh while basing himself in Dubai. The literature ministry was very effective, and many became underground Christians while continuing with their Muslim name and religion. Many Iranian, Egyptian, Jordanian and Pakistani Christians helped him in his underground work, and he was very successful in bringing many into the Christian fold.

With time, as technology advanced and computer

technology allowed the publishing and uploading of books on the Internet (e-books), John shared with me the necessity of a new approach to the literature ministry. He told me that by using computer technology, we could break every bastion of the Iron Curtain nations and penetrate every home. We planned to type all our books into the computer and upload them on the Internet so that they would be accessible to everyone. With this end in mind, he was planning to wind up his operations in Dubai and come back to Delhi in March 2007. But two months earlier, God called him. I am able to share with you this story because John is no more and nor is the company (GFE).

My entry into full-time Christian work, on 1 May 1963, was fraught with tragedy. That was the year I lost my father. But I consider it my first step in learning to deal with the tragedy of death in the Christian way. It was my mother, who was also my inspiration, who taught me this way. At my father's funeral, she stood up and exalted the Lord for his abounding grace and mercy. I was so inspired by her strength that I also stood up and witnessed for the Lord. This encouraged many people who had gathered for the funeral to accept Christ. On 26 June 1999, when my younger son, Michael, was killed by Hindu fanatics, and again on 17 January 2007, when my elder son John died, I did not break down. Instead, I used both occasions to witness for the Lord because

I realized that there is great strength in the testimony given amidst sorrow and tragedy. I still continue my preaching with renewed vigor, and I will do it till my last breath. This is my commitment to my calling—my calling to preach the Word of God despite all the thunderstorms in my life.

The world we live in is a very competitive one. People live very high-pressure lives in their personal or professional spheres. Look around and you will find some kind of anguish in everyone's life. Be it the next promotion, office politics, divorce, break-ups, children going awry, fights with parents, drugs, alcoholism, fatal illnesses, crippling accidents or bereavement, especially untimely death, everyone is dealing with some crisis or another. And it is in times of crisis that we are most vulnerable. These are the times when our faith is shaken and we become weak and break down.

As Christians, we should never break down. Why? God has chosen us to be His children: He has put His stamp of ownership on us, and no parent will allow his children to fall. But then the question arises, why are there more and more breakdowns in these times? I believe it is due to the misunderstanding of faith and God's role in our lives.

First, let us understand what true faith is. Most people are educated, yet illiterate when it comes to theology.

They think that they believe. When it comes to God, they need to put their belief in something that they can see or touch. The desire to *see* their God is what induces them to indulge in idol worship, rituals and sacraments. They need to focus their faith on something tangible. An educated but theologically illiterate person is akin to a child who is happy when he gets a chocolate but will cry if he does not get what he wants.

On the other extreme are people who are unbelievers. In their dictionary, there is no God. They argue that if there is a God, He should not let tragedies happen? If God is the Creator, aren't all things under His control? How can He let natural disasters occur? How can He let the innocent die? How can He be cruel and give sorrow to His children? Why can He not give only happiness?

Both kinds of people have a misunderstanding about God. The first group belongs to what I would refer to as **popular religion**. The second group is the atheists. They are the faithless. But there is also a third group that does not believe in any symbolism and yet believes in God. Whatever God does is unquestionable. They strive to lead their lives according to His will. This is what I call **classical religion**—a faith that goes beyond seeing and hearing and is based on total acceptance and surrender. This is faith of a higher realm. Both types of faith are

demonstrated in the Bible.

In one illustration, Jesus healed a blind man by following a procedure. He spat on the mud, mixed it and made a paste, took the paste and spread it on the man's eyes, then told him to walk to the water and take a dip in the water and he would be healed. He followed this procedure so that the illiterate man would have faith in his healing. This is an example of popular religion.

You might wonder why I have named it popular religion. It is because of its appeal to the masses. Evangelization can happen through various methods. One such method is through advocating the Gospel of Prosperity. A sizeable number of evangelists, especially in India, portray God as a bestower of blessings and good fortune. They encourage people to pray as a way of asking God for help so that the more you pray, the more blessings you will receive. This kind of evangelization is especially apt to reach non-Christians because they do not want to know about a religion that exemplifies suffering. Life is already so full of problems and sufferings that they do not want to add to their suffering by adopting the cross of Christ. They would rather hear about a God who provides them with happiness, contentment and prosperity. However, people who are converted through hearing the Gospel of Prosperity have only heard half the message of God. At this level, a

believer is like a child. A child will always expect and ask for something. If he gets it, he will be happy and develop a connection or intimacy with the giver. But if he does not get it, he will be disappointed. As soon as something unfortunate happens in these believers' lives, their faith crumbles. They will pray harder, and when they see that things are not going the way they want them to, they lose hope and become depressed. They feel that God is not listening to them.

People who put their faith in the **Gospel of Prosperity** are on the first rung of faith, where God talks to them through symbols and they interpret God's actions through the prosperity they receive in each situation in life. In developed nations like Europe and America, the concept of the Gospel of Prosperity did not last long. This was because most of the people were educated and therefore enlightened enough to understand that true faith meant a lot more than expecting God to bless one with good things all the time. But now the tide is turning. The Gospel of Prosperity is again gaining popularity because the level of education in the West is coming down. People are now turning to symbolism instead of understanding the real essence of faith.

It is indeed true that even though the Gospel of Prosperity is a lower kind of faith, it is the most popular form of Christianity. Let me share with you

an excerpt from a conversation between Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel. This conversation took place when Nehru was the Prime Minister of India. Sardar Patel was addressing the issue of banning British missionaries from India. He felt that the spread of Christianity in India was resulting in several sociocultural problems. But Nehru replied, “*Sardar, there is no need to worry about British missionaries. They always talk about a God who is not seen. The Indian people will never accept or understand such a God. In fact, it is the Roman Catholics who need to be feared because they propagate Christ in the way that is appealing to the Indian masses, by using idols and rituals.*” Nehru was right. Today the Roman Catholic population in India is 18 million, while the other denominations have not grown much in number.

The second illustration is when Jesus healed a centurion’s servant. The centurion came to where Jesus was sitting and requested Him to heal his servant. Jesus told him that He could go to the centurion’s home to heal his servant. But the centurion said, “*No. I am just a Gentile and you are a Jew. I am unworthy. I believe in you. You just have to command and God will hear you.*” Jesus was moved and said, “*Go. Your servant is healed.*” When the centurion returned home, he found that his servant had been healed at the moment Jesus uttered these words. When the centurion had left, Jesus turned to

his 12 disciples and said, “*Even in Israel I have not seen such faith.*” Here is faith of a higher dimension. It does not believe in reason or logic or methods. It is pure belief. There is a song in Malayalam that describes the classical faith. Its lines read, “*Not by my will but by Your will lead me everyday.*”

What kind of faith do you believe in? Are you part of the popular religion or are you a propagator of classical religion? Or are you somewhere in between, striving to follow the true essence of faith?

It is important to reach the next level or dimension of faith and to understand that prayer is not simply a vehicle by which to get something from God. I have understood the true essence of faith only with time. My second book, *Why God Why?* was about the **Gospel of Suffering** and illustrated the higher level of faith—what I call classical religion. It dwelt on the reasons why God lets suffering happen. In the Bible, the Gospel of Suffering is written about especially in the letters of Paul and in Philippians 3:10, which reads, “*We are not called only to receive the power of resurrection but to participate in the fellowship of suffering of Jesus Christ.*” It is important to remember that Christianity is centered on the Cross and suffering. It is only through suffering that one reaches a higher level of faith. It is by suffering that one learns to surrender to the Lord.

Therefore, suffering is a means of coming closer to God. If you understand this, you will not break down when faced with difficulties and tragedies. This is how I withstood suffering. In the New Testament, several instances are recounted in which true believers waited for suffering. St. Peter, who denied Christ three times, reached such a high level of maturity in faith by the end of his life that he felt no fear. When Peter was taken to be crucified, he humbly told the soldiers that he was not worthy of being crucified like Jesus. So he requested them to crucify him upside down. In another instance, Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, was also sentenced to be killed. The soldiers who were guarding Polycarp felt sorry for him since he was a frail 80-year-old man. They told him, *“You are such an old man. Why do you want to meet your death like this? Just say that you do not believe in Jesus Christ, and you will be free.”* But Polycarp replied, *“How can I deny Him who has led me for 80 years?”* This is the courage that comes with faith. These servants of God were ready to accept suffering easily because they felt that it was a privilege to suffer for God. They did not pray for safety. They did not want anything *from* God. Instead, they always considered what they could do *for* God.

How can one suffer *gladly* when suffering and sorrow seem almost synonymous? The secret is the gift from above—**Gospel of Grace.**

Through this book, I want to share with you my journey in faith. I feel compelled to tell you how I have reached the stage where I can turn my sorrow into joy. I wish this book to be an instrument of strength and hope for people around the world who are facing sorrow, bereavement, tragedy and catastrophe in their lives. I believe that the unique message I wish to share is not a result of my theological studies or the 45 years I have spent working for the persecuted church. Of course, these are important factors and form the backdrop of my message. But the strength of my message is how my understanding has been shaped by experiences in my life and how I have applied theological concepts during these trying times.

The first step in turning your sorrow into joy is to become eyewitnesses of His Glory. Jesus is a God that makes the impossible possible. He is a God who creates wine out of water. He is a God who feeds His flock with five loaves of bread and a few fish. He is the one who makes the blind see and the dumb speak. It is not enough to know about His glory: every believer in Christ needs to experience it first hand. Only when you behold His glory will you be able to reach the second step.

The second step will force you to wander through disliked destinations. It will take you through several trials and temptations and will test you several times.

It is necessary to accept that sorrow, like happiness, is universal. One question on every human being's mind is, why does God let suffering happen? What is the need for it? Look inside yourselves and you will find the answer. Haven't your prayers been more fervent when faced with problems? A difficult situation in life makes one stronger because it makes one turn to God. That is why Christians in persecuted nations are stronger in faith. They have gone through fire for their faith. They have stood for Christ despite facing loss. Once you have experienced disliked destinations in your life you will learn to deal with them in the Christian way.

The Christian way to overcome suffering is to be demonstrators of faith. This is the third rung. Life gives us problems. Faith teaches us how to deal with them. If you believe that Jesus is watching you and holding your hand, how will you react to your problem? Will you be depressed and feel helpless or will you wage war with your problems? We should have the strength to profess our unwavering faith in the Lord in times of crisis because those are the times when we are the weakest. Each time we are weak we give God an opportunity to act. And when God acts for us, we become mighty. Giving Jesus the opportunity to act in our lives and announcing our loyalty to Him even through suffering is the uniqueness of being Christians and of being demonstrators of faith.

When we demonstrate our faith in our times of sorrow, we become eligible for the invaluable gift of God—His grace from above. His abundant and abounding grace will provide you the strength to overcome your sorrows. Think how wonderful it would be never to feel sorrowful and to ‘rejoice in the Lord always.’ It seems almost superhuman. But that is not so for a Christian. When we confess to the Lord, He will respond by forgiving us and blessing us with His abundant grace. His spontaneous grace will wash away our tears and cleanse our souls.

To be true Christians we need commitment of the highest level. Only then can we attain the discipleship for which Jesus has chosen us. This is possible only through a complete surrender to God. And as disciples we have a two-fold duty. The first is to believe and practice your faith unconditionally. The second duty that we all have as disciples of Christ is to train our children and the coming generation to be committed Christians. This ability to transmit your faith to the children will be possible only if you are an example of the faith you want your children to have. And the most invaluable gift you can give to them will be the strength to turn their sorrow into joy through the faith you instill in them from childhood.

I have spent 45 long years in the ministry of the persecuted church. I have witnessed suffering of the

highest degree, and I have personally undergone tremendous suffering. In all these years, I have grown in faith. Each incident in my life has only strengthened my faith in Jesus Christ our Savior.

My biggest sorrow was transformed into my biggest joy through the grace of God. When Michael died, I was devastated, as any father would be on losing his precious son. But one year later, God gave me an opportunity to be a father again. This time He put the children of His faithful flock in my arms. The decision to open a home for a few orphan children was a spontaneous response to the opportunity God had provided me. He showed me the way, and I followed in the direction He showed me. On 29th January 2000, the Michael Job Centre was started with 31 little orphan children from different states of India and various countries of the Indian subcontinent. Today, the Centre houses 356 children and is a thriving example of how sorrow can be turned into joy. The following pages will give you a description of the wonderful work of God.

Chapter 1

I BEHELD HIS GLORY

A friend of mine from the United States of America was feeling stressed with the daily rigors of life. One day he confided his problems to me. He told me that he was losing his zest for living and that he needed something motivational in his life. I suggested that he take a break from his hectic schedule and travel to India, where I would take him to a special place. Reluctantly, he agreed. We travelled to India together, and I took him to the Michael Job Centre in Coimbatore. This is a written testimony of his visit to the Centre. I find it befitting to introduce to you God's great work—the **Michael Job Centre**—in this manner in the hope that you will realize the enormity of God's Glory and His great plan in turning my sorrow...

It was a clear day in Coimbatore. As my flight descended towards Coimbatore Airport, I peered down in great anticipation to catch the first glimpse of the Michael Job Group of Educational Institutions. Dr. P.P. Job, the Founder-Chairman of the institutions, was sitting next to me. As the campus came into view, my heart filled with amazement as I gazed at the pristine white buildings, each with a

cross on top. Soon I lost sight of the campus as the plane banked sharply to the left. Half an hour later, we were at a beautiful tall, white, arch-shaped gate—the entrance to the Michael Job Centre. At my insistence, Dr. Job stopped the car outside the gate and we walked into the campus. My first impression, as I looked around, was of wonder. I had been here in 2000, when the foundation stone of the Centre was laid. This place had been just scrub—a sprawling wasteland that was of no use to anyone. Now it seemed as if someone had waved a magic wand over it.

The first thing I noticed as I looked towards the right was a huge (approximately 30,000 sq.ft.) cross-shaped platform with a beautiful garden surrounding it. Right at the center of it was a flagpole. I saw something engraved on the sides of the square granite structure on which the flagpole was erected and moved closer for a clearer view. On each side was inscribed one Bible verse, which read: “...unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains as it is, but if it dies, then it produces many grains,” John 12:24; “...what has happened to me has happened for the furtherance of the Gospel,” Philippians 1:12; and “...your sorrow will be turned into joy,” John 16:20. Dr. Job informed me that these three verses were the cornerstones of the Michael Job Centre.

I was struck by the design of the cross-shaped platform: the cross, a symbol of pain and suffering, with the flowers of the garden around it acting as a balm to the pain. My curiosity sufficiently aroused, I looked at brother Job for an explanation. He explained that every morning at 9:00 a.m. an assembly was held where all the students stood within the four arms of the cross and looked towards the dais where a select group of girls conducted the assembly. Ushering me on, he promised me that I could attend the assembly the next morning.

*Turning my eyes away, I looked to the left towards a white four-storey rectangular building with blue borders. On the top, in huge capital letters, the building identified itself as the **Michael Job Matriculation Higher Secondary School**. I entered the portals of the school with childlike enthusiasm even as two smartly uniformed children scurried past. At the reception area, I was greeted by huge posters and photographs of Michael and various people who had influenced brother Job's life deeply. Prominent among them were the photographs of Dr. Job's spiritual parents, Richard and Sabina Wurmbbrand. Since school was in progress, we simply took a quick tour of it. I peeked into one of the classes as we wound our way through the school. Again, I was surprised at the quality of the classrooms—large, airy rooms with long blackboards and neatly arranged table-chairs on which immaculately dressed little girls were*

seated listening with rapt attention to their teacher. I was impressed. After visiting the library, the labs and the principal's office in quick succession, we left the school as Dr. Job reminded me that we had a lot more to see.

*The building right behind the School was the **Michael Job Hostel**, the first building that was constructed at the Centre. It had housed the first children who came to the orphanage and the faculty who cared for them and taught them. Now it housed older children who attended the two colleges on campus and part of the faculty. The hostel was surrounded by patches of coconut trees on both sides that swayed in the strong breeze that swept the area, lending a natural air-conditioning. I thought to myself, "What a beautiful place to stay in."*

*A hundred paces from the hostel was another white, long building—the **Michael Job Memorial Chapel**. The beauty of the chapel was its stark simplicity. A rectangular, single-storey structure with an arched roof and huge glass windows along both sides gave it an open and welcoming feel. A solemnity pervaded us as we stepped into the empty chapel. I felt a quiet sense of peace. It was strange because there were no idols or paintings or candles or even a cross that identified the place as a chapel. There was an organ standing at the extreme left corner, identifying the place of the choir. A stage at the opposite end with a*

long, royal blue velvet curtain covered the entire width of the chapel. As we sat on one of the chairs, I shared my feeling of peace with brother Job. He smiled and nodded in understanding. He told me that every morning at 5.45 a.m. all the children living at the Michael Job Centre, along with the resident staff, gathered for a worship service. I looked at him in disbelief and asked, "Five forty-five in the morning! All the children?" He confirmed by saying that from the youngest to the oldest child, all are present in the morning for the service. And he added, "You should see them come running to the chapel with so much enthusiasm and joy. You will be surprised. Why don't you attend tomorrow's service?" I regretfully told him that I would love to but I just could not wake up so early in the morning. He smiled enigmatically. We sat quietly for a few minutes absorbing the peace and the Spirit of the Lord that engulfed us. Suddenly, a loud and long siren cut through the silence. I looked up in alarm. Was that a fire alarm? Brother Job patted my arm reassuringly. He pointed to his watch and said, "Its twelve thirty. You must be hungry. Come. It's time for lunch." I replied, "Oh! Yes. I had forgotten about food."

We walked out of the chapel and were immediately surrounded by a group of chattering children. They bestowed me with curious glances while they hung onto brother Job's hands. One child was reciting the day's events, the other was cracking a joke and

another was trying to get his attention by pulling him—all this while he was smiling indulgently at them. Without even realizing we reached the **John Job Auditorium**, which was situated right behind the chapel. The auditorium, designed in the style of the chapel, was colossal. “It has a seating capacity of 5,000 people” Brother Job informed me, “and at present is the biggest hall in the entire state of Tamil Nadu.” As I entered, I was greeted by two 10-foot-long photographs of Michael and John at the opposite end of the hall. My heart twitched as their smiling faces beckoned me, but in a split second I was brought back into the present at the rising crescendo of 356 voices laughing and chattering. I looked around to see 14 rows of tables and chairs arranged along the entire auditorium. The front section was occupied by children of the school. Everyone had an allotted space, which they scampered into as a voice on the microphone commanded them into silence. We too occupied our seats and waited for lunch. Or so I presumed!

A voice on the microphone called all the children to attention. On the stage stood a confident young girl to lead the afternoon prayer. The assembled children sang three choruses in joyful enthusiasm, after which a prayer was said. Then they said a special prayer for the people who had sponsored their meal. Dr. Job explained that some meals at the Centre were sponsored by a family or a person for whom that

day was significant in some way. The money they give for the meal was thanksgiving to God, while the prayers that the children said for them were a blessing they got in return. What a novel way to celebrate! After this celebratory program and prayer, the children sat down to lunch. As we sat down to a sumptuous meal, I was amazed to learn that the children themselves cooked the meals and served them.

Dr. Job informed me that great care was taken about the food for the children. They are given the best quality of rice, called golden rice. Every day at lunch, the children have one cup of yoghurt, since it is a proven fact that the bacteria in yoghurt aids digestion and kills harmful bacteria that could cause many diseases. To give the children fresh yoghurt and milk, the Centre has 32 cows that provide sufficient dairy products. So, with one vegetable dish, one preparation of pulses, the best quality rice, a cup of yoghurt and a papad (a fried snack), the children indeed have a balanced diet. The children also have eggs twice a week, and during weekends they have non-vegetarian fare comprising either fish or meat. Wow! Dr. Job said, "It is through proper food and filtered water (top quality filter machines are set up in all the buildings in the campus) that we ensure that the children do not fall sick."

It took us half an hour to finish our lunch. There was

a loud scraping of chairs as the children finished their meals, rushed to wash their hands and their plates, and put back the chairs in order. Even though I had finished my meal, I remained sitting to observe the cleaning process. In another 15 minutes, the children who had served us ate their lunch while another handful cleaned and wiped the tables and the floor. The dining hall was sparkling clean and ready for dinner. I was impressed.

*By 2 p.m. school had begun again, and I retired to rest in my room. In the evening, Dr. Job and I completed the rest of the tour of the Michael Job Centre. This included three massive four-storey buildings constructed in a single row. The first one was the **Michael Job Memorial College of Education for Women B.Ed & M.Ed**, where girls got a professional degree in teaching. The most interesting part of the college was the Seminar Hall on the third floor, which was again colossal in size.*

*The second building was the **Sabina Wurmbrand Memorial Hostel for Girls**. This was certainly a noisy building because 356 children stayed in it. I walked into the hostel rather tentatively as I was wary of the children's response. But it took them all of five minutes to overcome their shyness. Like a swarm of bees they engulfed us and welcomed us to their rooms. They asked me umpteenth questions and showered so much love on me that I was*

overwhelmed. I spent one hour at their hostel, and that seemed too little to meet all the children.

The last building was the Michael Job Arts and Science College, built on similar lines as the others. Dr. Job explained that this is the place where the children will get their graduation, post-graduation and doctorate degrees. I could see his eyes gleaming with hope at the vision of seeing his little daughters grown into young women who are spiritually strong, academically sound and are frontrunners in society. He put it very simply: “I want each one of these orphan children to be a leader—to lead in society, in politics, and wherever they go.” What a vision! And seeing these children, I surely felt that his vision would soon become a reality.

After an early dinner at 6 p.m. (the timing is fixed for mealtimes), I spent the next two hours walking and talking with the children. Some shared their torturous histories with me, while others told me how their lives had changed after coming to the Centre. The younger ones tried to get my attention by pulling at my clothes or playing around me. It was an amazing experience, a mixture of a plethora of emotions—joy, sorrow, laughter, mischief. But the dominant feelings were that of bonhomie and camaraderie.

As I was walking round the campus, one thing

aroused my curiosity. There were three boundary walls: one that encircled the Michael Job Centre, the second that looked like part of a boundary wall next to the Chapel, and the third that seemed to run along the campus. On my way back to the room, I met Dr. Job on his evening walk. I immediately asked him about the walls.

In reply he told me a long and interesting story.

*The Michael Job Centre began with just two acres of land on which he built the orphanage building currently called the Michael Job Hostel. Since it was a girls' hostel and the surrounding areas were uninhabited, he built a high wall with barbed wire around it. But the main problem was that there was no access to the road. By God's grace, in some time, he was able to buy land surrounding the hostel and a piece of land with access to the road. He built a second boundary wall right along the chapel to the road and named the first wall: **the wall of limitation.***

He was satisfied. But apparently God was not. His plan was bigger. The orphanage was growing in leaps and bounds. The number of children had increased. They needed a bigger hostel. The children were growing up. They needed a college for higher studies. And God provided. Soon, they were able to buy 60 acres of surrounding land, where they built the Sabina Wurmbrand Hostel for Girls, the Michael

*Job Memorial College of Education for Women and the Michael Job Arts and Science College for Women. Job had to demolish the second wall next to the chapel but kept part of it as a reminder of God's Glory. He named that wall **the wall of unbelief**. Now he has acquired 10 acres of land across the road. He has not built another wall around it. He has named the two thousand meter-long wall surrounding the campus **the wall beyond** because he doesn't know the extent of God's plan for the Michael Job Centre.*

This story humbled me into realizing that when we surrender ourselves to God, He will lift us to heights that we cannot imagine.

That night as I retired to bed, I had a sense of peaceful happiness. I had been part of such a beautiful experience that I felt rejuvenated.

The next morning, I woke up to a loud siren. It was dark outside and I looked at my watch. It was 5.00 a.m. I suddenly remembered about Morning Worship Service and sprang out of bed. After freshening up, I headed for the chapel from where I could already hear melodious strains of music. It was five forty-five. The chapel was full of children, bustling with activity. Morning prayer began with all 356 children singing a chorus. I closed my eyes so that the purity of their beautiful voices cleansed my soul. The leader of the day announced the name of the child who

would read the Bible passage. Giving a brief introduction of the child and the place where she came from, the leader handed over the mike to her for responsive reading. Loud and clear, the young voice read out verse by verse while the congregation of children responded likewise. After that the leader announced the name of the child who would deliver the message. I was taken aback that the message would also be given by a child. After a brief introduction, a confident young child walked onto the dais and spoke for seven minutes on honesty. Hearing her speak, I felt humbled. I, as an adult, did not know as much about the Bible as she did. The examples she took, the parables she quoted were amazing. After the message was the time for General Announcements, which were made by the warden of the hostel. Finally the fellowship ended with the Doxology and a song. I had never attended a service conducted by children. It was an awesome experience. I felt one with God, united in the Spirit, after the soul-stirring service.

I was walking to my room from the church when a few children came running behind me. They asked me to go with them. On enquiring from them, I found that it was their exercise time and they wanted me to join them. Oops! Gamely I went along and was in for another surprise. I saw a hoarding with the words **The Jordan Foundation Stadium** directing us to their place of play. One of the children proudly told

me that it was an eight-track oval and round stadium, the only stadium of the kind in Coimbatore. Some children were already practicing soccer, while the younger children were following an exercise drill. Still others were jogging along the racing track. Wow! This was something I had not imagined. The children eagerly told me that they loved sports. Track and field was by far the favorite sport. The half-hour exercise program was energizing for me too. I felt refreshed. Chattering and laughing, the children and I left the stadium, they to their hostel and I to my room.

We met again for breakfast at 8.00 a.m., and this time the children were dressed in their school uniforms. A 15-minute devotional program preceded breakfast, in which the children sang four choruses and a short prayer was said. After that, the children whose birthday it was that day were called onto the stage and everybody sang the Birthday Song for them. Their friends rushed to give them little bouquets of flowers handpicked from the gardens of the Centre. A special prayer of blessing was said for them. We then sat down to a hearty breakfast of idli and sambhar (a popular South Indian vegetarian meal).

Breakfast over, I packed my bags to catch my flight. But before I left I had one thing on my agenda—the morning assembly. I rushed to the venue where students of Michael Job Matriculation Higher

Secondary School, Michael Job Memorial College of Education for Women and Michael Job Arts and Science College had gathered for their daily assembly. Apparently, this was the most important time of collective worship, since the orphans of the Centre are joined by day scholars and members of the faculty. A small group of children had gathered with drums, trumpets and four flags of different colors representing four groups. At the stroke of nine, the band began playing "Sare Jahaan Se Acha" (a popular patriotic song in India), and marching to the beat of the song, they wound their way to the cross platform. On the way, as they crossed their school, they were joined by the rest of the school and faculty, who fell into four lines behind them. When they reached the platform, the band stopped. A loud whistle was blown by one of the faculty and all fell silent. The assembly began with a prayer composed by one of the students and a hymn sung by all the children. After that the 'Thought for the Day' was read out. Next came another child to read out the news of the day. I was told that the allotted student read out the headlines and snippets that were compiled by her from three newspapers. This was done to ensure awareness among the children of current events and to encourage a reading habit among them. This was followed by an action song by the junior section, i.e., the kindergarten students. The final item was a quiz in which four General Knowledge questions were asked and their answers

given. All the students had to repeat the question and answer thrice so that they memorized it. Then the students and faculty recited the pledge (All Indians are my brothers and sisters) and sang the National Anthem. What a great way to begin school—with spiritual thoughts and music in their hearts, news and knowledge in their heads and a prayer to guide them through the day!

Dr. Job came to my side to inform me that he had arranged for a car to drop me off at the airport. He asked me how I felt spending a day at the Michael Job Centre. I replied that in 24 hours the place, the children and the spirit of the Centre had captured my heart.

As I walked to the car at the entrance, my heart was filled with inexplicable joy at seeing the enormity of God's plan. Twenty-four hours spent at Michael Job Centre felt like two hours. Time flew so quickly. Leaving these beautiful children whom God has especially chosen was like leaving my own children. As I reached the main gate and looked up to the heavens to say a small prayer, I saw the words, I BEHELD HIS GLORY engraved on the inside of the arch of the gate. Yes, this was the explanation. What I had seen was what no person could have done. I certainly Beheld His Glory when I saw the great work God had done in building and expanding this Centre and in saving the lives of the little children. I

bowed my head in thanks as I crossed the gate to the outside world. A verse from the Bible flashed across my mind:

“We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” **2 Peter 1:16**

How many of us have the privilege to be eyewitnesses of His majesty? To whom does God grant this privilege? Is it available to everyone or only to a chosen few? These are probably some of the questions in your mind.

Lovis is one of my daughters at the Michael Job Centre. She is a shy and diligent child, always willing to lend a helping hand to everybody. Eight years ago, when she was brought to the Center by a missionary friend, she was a grief-stricken and terrified child. She was only four years old, but she had been witness to a horrifying tragedy. One morning when she woke up from her sleep, she found both her parents lying on either side of her, slaughtered mercilessly. Her parents had been Christian workers who were murdered by a group of anti-Christian miscreants. Lovis was struck dumb by the vision of horror that greeted her. Overcome with grief and pain, she retreated into a shell. She stopped smiling.

After she came into the orphanage, people around her and other children tried their best to bring a smile to Lovis's face, but in vain. At the time, Elena, a lady from Norway, came to visit the children at the orphanage. Elena asked me what she could do for the children. Remembering the sad face of Lovis, I requested Elena to spend time with Lovis and get her to smile again. Elena spent three months in the orphanage and was constantly with Lovis. One day, Elena was showing Lovis her beautiful Children's Illustrated Bible, when suddenly Lovis stopped her. She excitedly pointed to Jesus's face and told Elena, *"This man came to my house the day my parents were killed. He told me not to cry and that everything will be OK."* When Elena told her that it was Jesus who had come to see her in her sorrow, Lovis broke down and cried. After that day, it was as if a burden had been lifted from Lovis's heart. And Lovis began to smile again. Lovis had beheld His Glory.

Jesus Christ our Savior has an inner circle. Matthew chapter 17 describes the transfiguration of Jesus on the Mount. Jesus took all 12 of His disciples to the Mount. He asked nine of them to wait for Him and chose *"Peter and James and John his brother, and led them to a higher mountain by themselves. And His appearance underwent a change in their presence, and His face shone clear and bright like the sun, and His clothing became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah,*

who kept talking to Him.” Only three of His most trusted disciples were given the privilege to witness such a glorious event. Why? Was this Jesus’s inner circle? It might have been because James and John were related to Him and Peter belonged to the same village as He, Nazareth. He might have had total trust only in these three people and that is why He called them to witness His transfiguration. It is also possible that He believed that only Peter, James and John had complete faith in Him. The other disciples would probably have used their powers of reasoning to judge Him. Jesus knew the heart of Judas. He knew that this disciple would betray Him. There could have been similar reasons for not taking the other disciples. Finally, only three of His disciples who believed with their hearts had the privilege to witness His Glory.

“...for many are called, but few chosen.”

Matthew 20:16

You must enter the innermost circle of Christ in order to be a witness to His Glory. There are about 2.1 billion Christians in the world today, i.e., nearly one-third of the total population of the world. In a manner of speaking, all Christians are believers and followers of Christ. However, there is a difference...not every one has the same level of faith. In any organization, institution or political system, there are always many circles of power. Likewise, faith too has various levels, like a set of concentric

circles. The outermost circle has the maximum number of believers. In this level, religion is more a matter of convenience. People in this circle think about what God can do for them and not what they can do for God. Their lives are governed more by reasoning and logic and less by faith. As belief grows and one becomes more and more staunch in his or her belief in Jesus Christ, reasoning and logic give way to total surrender. Believers in the innermost circle are the true ambassadors of Christ and embrace the Gospel of Suffering with great joy. Their joy in their faith is because they can see God's Glory in their lives and in everything that happens in the universe. Which circle of faith do you belong to? Do you stand on the fringes of faith or do you want to get into the innermost circle of faith?

I was witness to the Glory of God very early in life. At the age of nine, a miracle took place before my eyes. I have a brother who is younger than me by four years. He and his family are now settled in New York. As a child, my brother did not possess the ability to speak. When he was five my mother, on the advice of our relatives, sent him to the same school at which I was studying. He soon became the target of other students' ridicule due to his disability, and it became intolerable for him to continue at school. Since he could not defend himself verbally, my brother and I would wait after school to take revenge. He would pick up stones and hurl them at

his classmates. I too joined him sometimes, and it often ended in a brawl in which we were beaten up. Fed up with this, I threatened to leave school if my brother continued.

My mother was a very spiritual lady. She used to fast and pray for my brother. I often teased her about her fasting and intense spirituality because I never saw any effect of it. That year, when I was nine and my brother five, she decided to fast for 40 days at a stretch for my brother. On the 40th day, she asked us not to go to school but to sit and pray with her. During her prayers, one particular sentence touched my heart. She prayed, *“Lord, I am not praying for my son’s schooling or education. I just want to hear him call me mother (‘amma’ in Malayalam) before I die.”* Hearing this, I opened my eyes, looked at her and started weeping. My mother’s face was transformed and imparted a heavenly radiance. She stretched out her hand, laid it on my brother’s head and said, *“In the name of the living Jesus Christ, I command my son to speak.”* To my utter astonishment, my brother opened his mouth and uttered the word ‘amma’. That day I saw God’s Glory reflected on my mother’s face. I will never forget the beauty of the moment. From that day on, my brother began speaking fluently. He soon made up for his disability and went on to finish his studies successfully. I believe my mother belonged to the inner circle of believers because I felt the power of her prayers many times in my life.

Use your initiative and creativity to overcome problems and limitations so that Jesus will notice you and call you into the inner circle of faith.

Among the 2.1 billion believers, how will Jesus notice you? The Bible narrates the story of Zacheus, the moneylender whose main desire was to see Jesus. Alas! He was a short man, and Jesus was surrounded by a huge crowd of people who were desperate to see Him. So Zacheus thought of an idea by which he could overcome his limitation of being short. He climbed a tree—a sycamore tree—and stood on it so that he could see Jesus. Atop that tree, Zacheus became the tallest man. Jesus looked up to see the man whose strong desire to see Him had propelled him to use his intelligence and find a solution to his problem. Jesus acknowledged the efforts Zacheus had made to see Him. Jesus left the crowd who were thronging to see Him and reached Zacheus. Jesus commanded Zacheus, “*Come down from the tree and I will dine with you.*” Zacheus was called by Jesus because he did not let problems overtake him but instead overtook the problems to get what he wanted. Like Zacheus, we need to stand on a sycamore tree so that Jesus will notice us.

Many believers might argue that they have been baptized into faith so Jesus knows them. That is not so. Baptism is the first step, a symbol of entry into Christianity. It is not belief alone that will get you access to be among His chosen ones. You have to

prove your worth as a believer by facing and overcoming difficulties and challenges.

Reaching the inner circle or core of anything is very difficult. It is the same in religion. Not many people have the courage to withstand the hurdles that stand between them and the demands of faith. India, with a population of over one billion people, is the second largest country of the world. Though it is a secular nation, India has a long list of believers who have been persecuted for their faith. The rising tide of Hinduism has led to a rise in the victimization of the Christian population. And I have become one of them. The story of my persecution began with the killing of an Australian missionary, Graham Staines, and his two sons in Orissa. I was the first to announce his death to the masses gathered at St. Thomas Mount (the place where the Apostle St. Thomas was killed in AD 72). Personally too, it was a tragedy when I realized that Graham Staines was the same brother who had come to my house in 1996 for help regarding his visa. He was refused an extension of his visa by the government of India on account of his being a missionary. Since I had contacts in the Foreign Ministry, he had approached me and I had done what was necessary for him. Little did I realize that three years thence I would be announcing his death.

To protest the deaths of several Christians, a rally was organized in front of the Indian Parliament by

the Christians of India on 4 December 1998. Standing atop a truck, I addressed the crowds assembled there to encourage them to stand firm in their faith and warn the government that persecution must stop. The 10,000 people gathered there were electrified by these statements. Starting that very evening, I received several threatening calls and letters warning me that if I did not stop preaching, my family and I would be wiped out. But, looking firmly at the cross of Jesus Christ, I continued my evangelical work.

This angered a lot of people who perceived me as a major threat to their religion. Barely a few months after my speech in front of the Parliament, my car was stoned and I was hit on the head by shattering glass pieces. Being a heart patient, I was taking aspirin tablets to avoid clots in my blood. Due to this, I began bleeding profusely from the head. But by God's grace, a doctor was with me who stemmed the flow of blood and bandaged my head using the car seat cover before taking me to the hospital.

But worse was to follow. I had hardly recovered from the shock and was resting at home, when I got a call informing me that my younger son, Michael Job, who was a third-year medical student at the Himalayan Institute of Medical Sciences in Dehradun, Uttar Pradesh (now part of Uttarakhand State), was fatally knocked down by a speeding car. Michael died a week after his accident. The enemies of the Gospel

had struck a severe blow, and I paid a heavy price for it. Though my son's killers wanted to stop me from preaching the Word of God, the opposite happened. I began preaching the Word of God with renewed vigor because I had already faced the ultimate test of faith in my son's death.

Stand up for Jesus. Let Him see you. Let Him choose you. And let Him pick you as His choicest flower.

You will come face to face with Jesus when you enter the innermost circle of believers. This is the promise of God—a promise that is written several times over in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. In Genesis 32:13 it is written that Jacob came face to face with God. Numbers 12:8 again mentions the promise of seeing God face to face. In Job 42:5 Job came face to face with God, and finally, in the book of Revelation it is promised that one day we will see Jesus face to face.

Years ago in India, there was a Member of Parliament from Kerala, South India. He was among the 795 MP's of India. His political leader was the then Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi. One day, all of a sudden, his wife died. Being a man of simple means, he did not have much money. He had four daughters. He was a very sincere man and worked hard for the Congress party. On hearing of his condition, someone

from the political party informed the Prime Minister of his plight. The Prime Minister, in acknowledgement of this MP's sincerity and hard work, came to visit the MP. When he met the MP, he was struck by the man's simplicity and good nature. The Prime Minister supported him and selected him to be a Minister. After years of dedicated service, this simple man became a Governor of a state of India. This rise to glory happened only because the Prime Minister came to know this man on a personal basis. Likewise, it is not important that you know Jesus but it is more important that Jesus knows you.

This is the reason that some people are able to withstand problems in their lives while others succumb to them. Some have a song on their lips even when they face death, while others cry at every new bend in their lives. Once you enter the hallowed circle of faith, you will be in communication with God and develop an intimacy with Him.

On 29 June 1965, I left my home to study in the Theological Seminary at Yeotmal, Maharashtra, situated in the middle of India. Though I had studied Hindi and English, I had no practical knowledge of either language. I could neither write nor speak in either of the languages. Thus handicapped, I was very apprehensive of travelling alone and going to a place where only these two languages were spoken. My pastor, Rev. K.P. Philip, gave me a letter addressed

to the Station Master asking him to direct me from the Wardha railway station to the bus stand where I could catch a bus to Yeotmal, which was 40 kilometers away. On handing over the letter, the Station Master gave me directions indicating left and right turns with his hands. I followed the given directions and reached the bus stand.

All had gone well till now, and I was looking forward to reaching Yeotmal. At the time there were only two buses from Wardha to Yeotmal. When the first bus arrived, I was shocked at the sight of it. People were hanging out from it and there was no place in the bus. Some people pushed and pulled and struggled to get in. I also tried, but since I was a puny little boy with a large suitcase, I was pushed aside mercilessly and was unable to board the bus. I consoled myself by remembering that there was one more bus. But imagine my dismay when I saw the second bus also packed with people. I tried my utmost to get into the bus, but to no avail. The rush of people to get into the bus was so great that I was literally trampled on. The second bus also left.

I was horrified. What would I do? Where would I spend the night? It was 10 o'clock at night. I was the only person left at the bus stand, a young 20-year-old boy who did not know the place or the language or anybody. I was totally alone. I began to pace up and down. Feeling the need to relieve myself, I went

behind the bus stand to pass urine. On the way, to my horror, I saw a bloated, half-decomposed dead body. I lost all my composure and began shivering with fright. Suddenly, I remembered how my mother had prayed for my brother. I knelt down, crying. My tears soaked the muddy surface on which I was standing. I prayed fervently till I was spent. My heart was bleeding. I was broken, scared and weak. Suddenly I heard a voice. I looked around but could not find anyone. I thought my fear had affected my brain. The voice commanded me, "*Pick up your bag, take a left turn and you will reach the railway station. When you go to the front of the railway station you will see a hotel opposite to it. The hotel is called Annapoorna Lodge.*" I could not believe my ears but I did what the voice commanded. And right enough, when I reached the front of the railway station, I found a small hotel called Annapoorna Lodge opposite it. I ran into it like a deer scampers for safety.

A man at the reception looked up enquiringly. I told him that I needed a place to sleep. He told me that they had dormitories and that I could find a place in one of them if I paid one rupee for one night. I was worried because I had only two rupees with me, which I needed for my bus ticket to Yeotmal. Nevertheless, I paid one rupee for a bed and got a place to sleep near the entrance of one of the dormitories.

I quickly changed my clothes and lay down on the bed. But I could not sleep due to worry and hunger. I was tossing around restlessly when, around 11 p.m., a man walked past my room. Then he stopped and gave me a second look. Looking at my attire, he realized that I was from Kerala since I was wearing a colored *lungi* (a long piece of cloth, usually chequered, that you tie around the waist and that covers you from waist to foot). He asked me in my language, in Malayalam, whether I was from Kerala. I was so relieved to hear someone speaking in my native tongue that I burst out crying. The middle-aged man came to me, put his arm around me and comforted me. He asked me what the matter was. I told him my entire story. After listening to me, the man asked me whether I had eaten anything. When I replied in the negative, he took me by the arm and led me to the canteen of the railway station. There he bought me a full meal that was served on a tray. My hunger was so severe that I gobbled up all the food on the tray. Seeing the speed with which I downed all the food, the man asked for another tray of food to be served to me. When I had finished all the food on the second tray, my hunger was finally satiated. I looked at him with deep gratitude. Then the man asked me, “*Why are you so worried about getting to Yeotmal?*” I told him, “*I had only two rupees with me for the bus ticket to Yeotmal and I have already given one rupee for tonight’s stay at the hotel. I don’t know how I will reach Yeotmal.*” The man replied,

“Don’t worry. I am going that way. I will drop you off at your college.” The next morning, true to his word, the ‘good Samaritan’ dropped me off at my college. I thanked him profusely and took down his name and address so that one day I could repay him in some way.

Seven years later, in 1971, my marriage was arranged to Mary, who was from Trivandrum, the capital of Kerala. I remembered that the good Samaritan had said he was from Trivandrum. Fishing out the name and address that he had given me, I went in search of him to invite him to my wedding. I searched and searched in vain. Nobody knew of him; there was no house with that number and name. There was no street, either, by the name he had given me. I believe that it was God Himself who came that day to rescue me. I truly Beheld His Glory that day in Wardha.

Wardha has always retained a special place in my heart. Years later, I initiated a project through my local parish called the Wardha Mission. The Mission focuses on helping children learn vocational skills. It provides them with food and the means to a decent education.

Jesus looks into your heart. As human beings we are born sinners, and our sins might be in the form of actions, words or thoughts. We might be well respected in society, or popular with our peers, but

God knows our hearts. We cannot fool Him. He knows where and how we have sinned. Consider the story of Peter's life. He denied Jesus three times at the most crucial hour, yet when he wept bitterly after denying Him, Jesus knew that his heart was totally committed to Him.

I have been witnessing for Christ for the last 45 years in India and in 129 nations across the globe. I have witnessed tremendous persecution in all the continents I have worked in. There were times when I felt so anguished seeing the agony of Christian workers and their families that I myself have cried out in anguish. But the one thing that kept me going all these years was the many incidents in my life when I saw God's Glory. I also noticed that it was when I was most desperate in life that God took over and led me to green pastures. My prominent memories of childhood are of extreme poverty. My family and I led a very frugal life. At many times we did not have enough to eat. But I also remember that my mother was a very charitable person. She would not turn anybody away who would knock at our door for food. My brother and I sometimes protested at her hospitality since we had to go without food so that a guest could eat his fill. Even when I joined missionary work in 1963, things were no better. We had no food at home, and it was a standard joke between my mother and me that we always undertook compulsory fasting. But the joke became a serious issue when I

began to spit blood through such severe fasting. I was afraid that I would die. I was young and wanted to do much for the Lord. I did not want to die. I voiced my fears to my mother in a trembling voice. But my mother, instead of reassuring me, said, “*Son, don’t be afraid to die. So many people die in accidents every day. Their lives are snuffed out in a second. They die without a reason. But you are lucky. When you die, you will die for the Lord. What a glorious reason to die!*” When I heard these words, I felt my heart lift up with joy. At that moment, I realized that life and death have no boundary if your life is committed to the Lord. In life you live *for* God and in death you live *with* Him.

In the Theological Seminary at Yeotmal, we had an international faculty. The teachers were from different continents all over the world. Some were from the African nations like Rwanda and Burundi, while others were from the Far Eastern nations of Japan and Thailand, while a few were from Australia and New Zealand. Most of the students were from the different states of India, while a few were international students. My roommate was from Burundi. Since we all spoke different languages, the medium of instruction at college was English. But I was very poor in the language. I did not even have a basic grasp of the language. I struggled to pass English, but my struggle was in vain. For each exam I got a big zero. There was no improvement in my

language skills. Some teachers would give me an X mark. I would joke about it my friends that this was the cross I had to bear.

One day a new English teacher, a New Zealander, asked me to read aloud a portion from the textbook. I could not understand what he said and stood there staring at him. Realizing that I had not understood what he had said, he shouted, “*Who has sent you to waste another candidate’s place?*” Fortunately or unfortunately, I did not understand what he said. One of my classmates, a boy from Tamil Nadu, had to repeat what the teacher told me. I felt very ashamed. We had exams every Friday, and before the weekly exam the same professor warned me that if I did not pass in the forthcoming examination I would be thrown out of the college.

I was not afraid to go back, but my main worry was that I had no money to get a train ticket. Again the whole event of my brother’s miraculous speech due to my mother’s prayers flashed across my mind. In desperation, I rushed to my room, knelt on the floor and prayed, “*Dear God, if only You touch my brain, I will be able to study the lesson.*” Every day after ten at night I would go the top of my hostel building and pray for one or two hours. I studied very hard, but I could sense no improvement in myself. I was very scared.

On Thursday night, I went up to the terrace as usual. But my prayers were even more fervent. I pleaded with God, “*Until You touch me today, I will not go from here.*” I don’t know how long I sat there praying. Around two in the morning, I saw a bright light like a rainbow and felt somebody touch my head. I thought I was going mad. I went down to my room after this experience and slept for a few hours. The next morning when I received the question paper, I was able to understand everything and answer all the questions. On Monday when the results were announced, I had got full marks. My teacher called me. He suspected that I had cheated and copied the answers from somebody else’s answer sheet. He argued that if I had been an average student, he could have understood that I studied very hard and managed to excel. But he could not understand how a student who got only zero the whole semester could get full marks and be top of the class. I also had no logical reply. My only reply burst out in a song that I composed then and there:

*Somebody touched me
Somebody touched me
Somebody touched my soul
While I was praying,
Praying to Jesus
Somebody touched my soul*

Jesus requires you to be totally committed to Him. If

you don't have total faith in Jesus Christ, He also does not have total faith in you. Jesus is one with the Creator. He can see the 'real' you. He rips off the outer veneer of your existence and peers into your soul. When He looks into you, what does He see? Which circle of faith do you belong to? As believers, it is our duty to give Jesus confidence in ourselves. What can we do to create that confidence in Him? What can we do so that we can witness His Glory? What can we give Him so that He reveals His overwhelming presence to us?

When you confess, God will forgive. It is the first step to take in committing ourselves to God. King David was one of the most popular and famous kings in the Old Testament. If you read about his life in the Bible, you will find that David had committed some mistakes in his life. Then how did God tell him, "*You have the same heart as God*"? What is God's way of judging a person? It is certainly not the way man judges. David attained the heart of God because he confessed to God with such a humble heart that God washed away all his sins.

The only antidote to sin is confession. When you confess, you have said 'no' to sin. Then the sin should not be repeated. If you sin again after confessing to God, you will be mocking God. A repentant sinner is like a sheep that has fallen into slimy mud. He goes into it by mistake. But the sheep's basic nature is

such that he does not like mud and dirt. He will immediately rush out of the dirt and clean himself on the grass till he is snowy white again. But a swine is different. He loves mud and dirt so much that he wallows in it for hours. He hates cleanliness. A serial sinner is like the swine. He loves sin so much that even if he confesses, he gets back into sin. God forgives those who sin but confess and stop sinning. He cleanses their soul and makes it pure again.

The word *Christian* means to be 'like Christ'. A true believer is like Christ. He has the heart of Jesus. How can we have the same heart as Jesus? The four Gospels in the New Testament of the Bible give a detailed account of Jesus's life. The Gospels stand on two historical events: the death and resurrection of Jesus. **Jesus is a historical figure.** He is not a figment of anyone's imagination or a mythical figure. He walked on this earth when Augustus Caesar was the Emperor and Pontius Pilate was Governor. The places He visited, where He preached and performed miracles, can be identified on the map. Therefore, there is proof that Jesus was born a man, died on the cross and rose on the third day. **Jesus is a theological figure.** His birth and death were foretold by prophets in the Old Testament and witnessed by apostles in the New Testament. He was sent down by God to provide salvation to all mankind. **Jesus is contemporary.** He lives today. He is with us. He is within each one of us. Jesus is our example. When

we confess and surrender to Him, He will forgive us and give us the Holy Spirit (His Spirit). When we have a mind like God, we will be in His inner circle and witness His Glory. This is the key to developing an intimate relationship with God.

When I was studying at the Theological Seminary in Yeotmal, we had an Australian professor by the name of Prof. Cartmal who taught us History. He was a very strict teacher. He never gave anybody more than a C grade. All of his students either failed or barely passed. We were all afraid of him. One day, I summoned up some courage and went to his room. When he saw me he beckoned me inside and asked me what the matter was. I told him, *“Sir, it is very important that I pass your examination with good grades. But you give all the students only a C grade at the maximum. Can you help me?”* The professor looked at me intently for a moment and then said, *“OK, since you had the courage to come and ask me and have confessed your problem to me, I shall tell you the secret method of studying History and writing the answer paper.”* He then proceeded to tell me that I should know **what** every incident was about, **how** it happened, **when** it happened, **where** it took place and **why** it occurred. He assured me that if I knew all these facts about all the 3,000 events in our syllabus, I was sure to get an A grade.

Armed with this information, I rushed to my room. I

thought about the method of learning all these facts. Then I remembered that I had studied Greek using a chart. I decided to apply the same method to History. I took out some chart paper. On the top, I wrote down the years in chronological order. On one side I wrote down the words *what, when, why, how* and *where*. Then I drew columns and rows and for each event repeated the same questions and added the relevant answers. It took me a few days to prepare all the charts. Then I stuck all the charts on the walls of my room. When I had finished, there wasn't even a bit of bare wall left in my room. I would memorize one part of one chart every day and revise it again and again till I knew it by heart. On the day of the examination, when the question paper was distributed I found that I could answer everything. I wrote for the entire three hours that was allotted for the examination and put into the paper all the 3,000 events that I had studied. D-day came when the results were announced, and to everyone's surprise I got 100 out of 100, an A+ grade. I had made history in the subject of History. No one could understand how I had managed this feat. But I knew and the Professor knew. He had told me the secret to studying History and I had obediently followed his instructions and come through with flying colors.

Know and have the mind of Jesus.

I went through the tragedy of losing my younger son

to witness the extent of God's Glory. After Michael's death, my faith wavered sometimes when emotions overtook me. I prayed relentlessly during those days of crisis. I did not see the reason for my son's untimely death. I thought that the reason would be revealed to me only when I die and reach my Heavenly abode. But the father in me yearned to know the true purpose of my son's death. And the Lord answered my prayer. Within a short span of nine years, I am overwhelmed by the answer. The seed of this revelation began with a small plot of land that was offered to me in Coimbatore by a fellow believer. At the time I was contemplating building some kind of memorial for my son. It was a time when Christians in India were going through severe persecution, and hundreds of Christian workers were being killed. They left behind innumerable orphan children and poverty-stricken widows who could not fend for their children. Their plight was brought before me because all of them were dealing with the same kind of grief—bereavement. When I went further into the issue, I realized that there was a deeper problem. People who were willing to adopt these children preferred to take boys. The girls were being totally ignored. And statistics reinforced this aversion to girl children. A recent UNDP (United Nations Department of Political Affairs) report stated that 2,000 girls go missing every day in India. Five million fetuses of girls are aborted in government hospitals alone. Twenty-five thousand women are burnt alive every

year due to the dowry system. The callous and criminal attitude towards girls worried me. When two acres of land was presented to me by a well-wisher some months after Michael's death, I saw it as an opportunity to do something for them. I decided to build an orphanage for the daughters of martyred and persecuted Christians on the small plot of land. I felt that this was my calling.

I started by building a home for these children along with a chapel for their spiritual strength. But there were huge hurdles to cross. The land on which we were building had no access to electricity or drinking water. I was stumped, but I knew the Lord would direct me. During my enquiries I found out that the chief of the Water Department was a Christian. I requested a local pastor who knew him to arrange an appointment. Just as the pastor and I entered the office of the chief, I noticed a copy of the book *Why God Why?* lying on his table. And as the pastor introduced me, the man sprang up, looking ecstatic. He told me how moving he found my book and that he had been yearning to meet me. He said, "*It is indeed a miracle that you are standing in my office.*" But I replied, "*You are the miracle.*" He didn't understand, and I explained the problem we were facing. He said, "*Don't worry, you will have water.*" I was surprised. By five in the evening the same day, he came to our land with a couple of engineers and drilling equipment. He told me that he had surveyed this land

and found that there was a pipe running below it, which was used by the state to take water from other states. He quickly wrote a report and asked an engineer to drill a hole in that pipe and fix a connecting pipe to the surface. And God gave us water. And He gave it to us abundantly. When the whole of Coimbatore gets water for only a couple of hours in the morning and evening, we have a 24-hour supply of clear drinking water. **I Beheld His Glory.**

One day, I was sitting in my office and pondering the problem when there was a knock on my door. Asking whoever it was to enter, I was distracted from my problem by the entry of a little boy holding the hand of his father. Asking the man to sit down, I asked the boy, “*Hello young man! What is your name?*” He shyly replied, “*David Livingstone.*” I was surprised and curious. The boy’s father hastened to explain. This is his story:

Sir, I have wanted to meet you for the last four years. I came for your Gospel Outreach Meeting in Coimbatore in 1996. At the time I was very troubled. Hearing your testimony encouraged my faith. My wife and I had been childless for 14 years and I had lost all hope for a child. That day you preached about a great missionary called David Livingstone, the first white man who went to the dark continent of Africa to preach the Gospel. I was moved by your speech,

and I prayed, “Lord, if You give me a son, I shall name him David Livingstone and send him as a missionary to Africa.” And the Lord blessed me with a son the very next year. I have come with him to meet you to express my thanks to you.”

When I heard his story I praised the Lord. I told him that it was God who had worked the miracle. He asked me to bless his son since it was my preaching that had moved him in prayer. After I blessed the child, we sat down to talk and I asked him his profession. He replied, *“I am the chief of the Electricity Department of this district.”* I was stunned by this second miracle. The solution to my problem had come to meet me. I told him about the vision of the orphanage and our problem of electricity. Within a couple of hours, huge trucks came to the Michael Job Centre premises with electricity posts and cables. The man told me, *“I am giving you three lines. There is a practice of cutting off electricity for a few hours from each area. So when that happens, you will not be affected because you will be getting electricity from three different lines.”* God gave us light and He gave it abundantly. **I Beheld His Glory.**

As the number of children increased in our orphanage, the need was felt to build a second hostel to accommodate new entrants. But we did not have enough land. Though the adjacent land was vacant, there were many politico-social problems along with

financial restraints that prevented us from acquiring more land. As my team worked through the network of bureaucracy and I tried to raise funds, our faith grew stronger as the problems were erased gradually. Today, we have acquired the surrounding land and have built another hostel as well as two college buildings on this land. The chapel that previously stood on the border has become the center of the campus. The Lord gave us land. And He gave it to us abundantly to construct and create the vision of a wholesome life for the orphan girls. **I Beheld His Glory.**

Today, the Michael Job Centre is an example of God's miraculous ways and His blessings. It includes an orphanage for girl children of martyred and persecuted Christians, a Higher Secondary School, a College of Arts and Science and a College of Education. The Centre started out with a small group of 31 young orphan children and now is home to 356 children and 85 resident staff members. Children who had no hope of survival and whose lives had been destroyed by traumatic experiences received a new life once they entered the Centre. We provide these children with the love, safety and security of a home, free education at the Michael Job Higher Secondary School, vocational training in tailoring and computers and free college education at the Michael Job College of Arts and Science or at the College of Education. I have a vision that these

children will be ‘future missionaries of the world’ and when they grow old enough to leave the orphanage they will be empowered with a secular degree in one hand and a theological degree in the other. The Lord took away my sons, but He gave me 356 little daughters from various countries to look after, to nurture and to nourish in the ways of the Lord. **I Beheld His Glory.**

In my village in Kerala, the houses of St. Thomas Christian families (this denomination of Christians, to which I also belong, was founded by St. Thomas in AD 52) are clustered together in a square formation. There is a church in the middle of each side of the square. This unique structure was built during the reign of Emperor Tipu Sultan, a famous ruler of Mysore who wanted to conquer the whole of South India to expand his empire. He had conquered many parts of Tamil Nadu and was planning his invasion of Kerala. As the news of his impending invasion spread, all the Christian families built their houses together because they feared his forcible attempts to convert non-Muslims to Islam. He had conquered Pattambi, a nearby city, so the road leading from Pattambi to my village was guarded day and night by soldiers holding swords at the entrance of the church on that side. Since that time, the unique structure of my village has remained so. The advantage of such a structure was that anything that happened in one house would soon be known to

all, since news would spread like wildfire. One day a thief got into one of the houses. The family's pet dog that had seen the thief started barking. Hearing him bark, the dogs of the neighborhood also began to bark. Soon, the dogs of the entire village were barking. What a ruckus! After barking for a few minutes, gradually, one by one, the dogs stopped barking. They felt they had done enough to raise an alarm. But one dog continued to bark. This was the dog that had seen the thief. He did not stop till the thief was caught. It is the same when you see the Glory of God. You cannot stop barking. You have reached the sacred ground when you live for Christ alone.

But many believers have a tendency to be complacent in that state. They forget that the most important step is to remain within this circle. If you do not witness for Christ, then you cannot remain within the circle. Peter also made the same mistake. He thought that he could sit on the Mount and enjoy the privilege of seeing God's Glory. But as soon as he thought this, the clouds disappeared and Moses and Elijah disappeared. He then understood that only if you communicate to others what you experience will you have the privilege of being close to God. Be a witness of God's power in your life. Spread the message to as many people as you can so that they can also see the power of God in their lives. Then only will you remain forever in Jesus's inner circle.

Let Him use you for His Glory. Allow Jesus to work in your life. Let Him repose His confidence in you. Let your faith not waver when troubles drown you. When He knows that you have a heart like His, it means that you are in His inner circle like Peter, James and John. And His full Glory will be revealed to you in this life itself.

Chapter 2

DISLIKED DESTINATION

I had never thought that one day I would start an orphanage. I never thought that I would set up a school or an Arts and Science College or a College of Education as is here at the Michael Job Centre in Coimbatore. I never thought on these lines because I was neither an educationist nor was I a full-time social worker. And I never thought these institutions would be established in memory of my children! Which parent would ever expect such a nightmare to come true?

I was but a humble preacher whose only ambition in life was to preach the Gospel. I wanted to spread the message to the maximum number of people in the world. To fulfill my ambition, I began preaching on the streets of my village at a very young age. It was my belief that God had anointed me with the gift of preaching to spread His Word. My first sermon on a village street was to three people. I was not discouraged. I continued my preaching for half an hour. Then I noticed that two out of the three people were missing. Still I persevered. I did not give up. I continued till I finished my message for the day. I saw many ups and downs in my life as an evangelist.

It took me 40 years to reach the point at which my Gospel Campaigns became the largest mass gatherings in India. God had certainly blessed me. I am thankful to Him for all His blessings. Though I had wandered through many tough paths, He had always directed my paths for His great glory. In 1998, when I held a Gospel Outreach Campaign in Mumbai, it broke all records of any mass gathering held in the city. For three consecutive days, the 18-acre ground was packed with people. The city of Mumbai had never witnessed such an event. What an opportunity God had given me!

Then, suddenly, my life unraveled. The whole direction of my life was questioned when my younger son, Michael, was killed by the enemies of the Gospel. He was an innocent victim who was sacrificed for his father's sin of being a Christian evangelist. I paid a heavy price for being faithful to my calling. When I accepted the land in Coimbatore I had no idea of what I would do with it. In my old age, God turned my life and pushed me to walk on a path that I had never conceived. I began an orphanage for unwanted little girls of martyred and persecuted Christians and now have founded a school and two colleges. I remember the verse,

“...I say to you when you were younger, you girded yourself and did whatever you wanted. When you are old, you will stretch out your hands and be girded by another.”

John 21:18

When St. Peter was with Jesus, he witnessed miracles that made the impossible possible. He was sure that Jesus would save him from any sorrow or difficulty because he had seen Jesus do so. When Peter expressed his desire to walk over water, God empowered him to do it. This emboldened Peter in his belief. Peter glorified God and reveled in the greatness of His power. But when Jesus was betrayed, arrested and crucified, Peter could not understand what happened. His idea of Jesus as an all-powerful God took a beating. How could this happen to a person who had performed miracles? Why could He not save Himself? Peter panicked and denied knowing Jesus in the hour of crisis. But after Jesus rose again on the third day, He appeared to Peter to explain that Peter had to grow in faith in order to reach where Jesus was going. Peter realized that true faith was a higher calling, in which the faithful were expected to suffer just as Jesus had suffered. It was not the time for confusion or denial but the time to persevere. It was the time to mature in faith.

When Peter came to the decision to grow in faith, his suffering began. He suffered for Jesus. At the time of his death, he was crucified like his master Jesus. Peter had grown so much in faith that he, who had denied Jesus three times, asked to be crucified upside down on the cross because he felt himself unworthy of being crucified like Jesus.

When the life of a believer is fraught with suffering, it is a sign of maturing in faith. However, if you do not have a right understanding of faith, you will not be able to face suffering. When a person feels that God is not helping him to get what he wants or when he is faced with sorrow, he panics and his faith becomes weak. But this is the very time to strengthen his faith, because a disliked destination is kept for every believer to help him mature in faith.

Markus Zurcher, the Swiss Director of my Mission to the Persecuted Church, is a very old friend of mine. Two decades ago, he was a man with a terrible sorrow. His wife and he had no children. They were unhappy and prayed incessantly to the Lord. But it seemed that the Lord did not hear their request. Finally, they found a way. They decided to adopt two children from India because they had heard much about the underprivileged and unwanted children of India. They adopted a little girl from Mumbai whom they named Michal. Then they adopted a boy from Delhi whom they christened Timon. Both children were adopted from the orphanages of Mother Teresa.

Little Timon whom they adopted was physically disabled. His right leg was curved like an *S*. No one else was willing to adopt him, but these faithful ministers in Christ embraced him. They took him to Switzerland as their child. He received citizenship of Switzerland. They took him to several doctors and

finally, after a series of bone-grafting operations, Timon's leg was straightened. A few months ago, when I saw him, he was like any other 14-year-old who could walk and play normally.

One day in 1997, when Markus was driving me from Zurich Airport to his home in Winterthur, he told me that he would like to contribute half a million rupees for the Outreach Campaign I was planning to conduct in Mumbai. He said that this would be his thanksgiving to the city of Mumbai from where he had adopted his daughter Michal. I was very moved by his gesture and accepted his money for the Campaign gratefully. I thanked the Lord for directing Markus's life in such a way that through the disliked destination he was forced to endure (the sorrow of not having biological children) he had the strength and understanding to turn his sorrow into joy by adopting two unwanted children. By taking that decision, he had given Timon and Michal new lives and also provided the opportunity to millions of others to hear the Gospel.

How many times in life have *you* felt that you have earnestly prayed, pleaded and begged for something but it seems as if God has not heeded your prayers? It happens with everyone, and I mean each and every person who is born on this earth. And it happens with the staunchest of believers. What is to be understood is that **the relationship between faith and suffering**

is a direct relationship. The greater the belief, the greater will be the suffering. Does that sound strange? If so, it is important to understand that suffering is the core of faith in Christianity. Jesus loved us so much that He suffered shame and pain on the cross and died for us. Having died for the whole of mankind, He rose from the dead and is sitting in Heaven waiting for us. Now it is our chance to stand for Him and pass through the narrow road of suffering to reach the gateway of Heaven.

The journey of faith that each believer makes during his or her life is different from what you might expect. It is something akin to climbing Mount Everest (the highest mountain in the world). Initially the climb seems easy, but as you go higher and higher, it becomes tougher and tougher, till the conditions become almost unbearable near the summit. If you give up at that time, then you can never see and experience the joy of conquest. But if you persevere and withstand all the hurdles of the climb, you will experience the ultimate joy of standing at the top—a privilege that very few get. As part of the faithful, be ready to face danger, difficulties, obstacles and hurdles that Satan will throw at you, the closer you get to Jesus.

“Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it and distributed it...” **Matthew 26:26**

The above verse describes the important sacrament of communion in Christianity. But on a metaphoric level it also represents the life of the faithful. When God **takes** (chooses) us and **blesses** us, we are very happy; we are thankful and we praise God with great joy. But when He **breaks** us with problems, challenges and tragedies, we don't like it. The fact is that if He won't break us, how can He **distribute** us...how can we be fit to spread his message? Breaking our lives is a way of blessing many others. If my sons, Michael and John, had not died, I would not have broken down. And if I had not been a broken man, there would not have been a Michael Job Centre to save the lives of little girls.

God hears all your prayers, and He will grant you what you need. It just won't be in the way you want or have thought.

St. Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ, experienced a similar situation when he prayed to the Lord about his desire to go to Rome and preach the Good News to the Romans and the Roman Emperor. It was quite an impossible prayer, but Paul's faith was strong. In Romans 1:10-15 he said that he had requested the Lord and was anxious and ready to preach the Gospel in Rome. He mentioned that he had planned to go there several times but was always hindered. And suddenly Paul was arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27-34). But because Paul's father had acquired Roman

citizenship, Paul was a Roman citizen by birth; he could not be tried by anyone but the Roman Emperor. So his captors decided to take Paul to Rome to be tried.

The long distance of over 3,000 miles by sea from Jerusalem to Rome was full of hardships and trials for Paul. The ship in which Paul was travelling with 276 other persons from various backgrounds was caught in a ferocious tempest, and they were forced to anchor at an island called Clauda. For days the storm destroyed everything around them, and they were without food for fourteen days. From the island of Clauda they set sail and stopped at Malta, where a viper bit Paul but Paul remained unharmed because of his unshakeable faith. And through all these turbulent times, the Lord upheld Paul and his companions till they reached Rome. But Paul's tribulations were not over. In Rome, Paul faced betrayal and his friends deserted him. The sufferings that he had to endure were similar to those that Jesus had to face in His lifetime. Paul's prayer, to preach to Emperor Nero and the believers in Rome, was answered but not in the way he desired or thought. He reached Rome, not as a man empowered by the Holy Spirit who would convey the Good News to the Emperor, but as a prisoner, bound in chains and presented before the Roman Emperor as a condemned man. This pattern of suffering is repeated in the lives of all believers.

There is a very popular story called *Footprints in the Sand* by an unknown author:

One night a man had a dream. He dreamt that he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand. One belonged to him and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that at many times along the path of his life, there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times of his life. This really bothered him, and he questioned the Lord about it. He said, "Lord, You said that once I decided to follow You, You'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed You most, You left me.

The Lord replied, "My precious child, I Love you and I would never leave you! During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it is because I carried you."

The crises we face in our lives are the times to rejuvenate our faith. These are the opportunities to learn and earn—learn to be like Him and earn

a place in Heaven. On this earth, a wild wind is always blowing. You can get caught and blown away or you can learn to withstand it. We are standing on this earth when there is a wild wind blowing, and we can get blown away. The Bible says that if you build your house on a rock, you will not fall down. But if you build your house on sand, you will get washed away. There is a special significance to wind, rain and lightning. The rain attacks the foundation, the wind will bring down the walls and lightning strikes the roof. In this way these forces destroy the house completely. The faithful are always attacked from many sides. To bear these attacks, you need a firm foundation of faith, strong walls around you built by suffering and the determination to look up at Heaven to keep sight of your ultimate goal.

I have been in ministry to the persecuted church for the last 45 years. I receive a lot of letters with malice, abuses and threats. Some call me a thief; some address me as a bad man. Some are anonymous letters. The worst allegation was that my younger son died because he was a drug addict and an alcoholic. To withstand such criticism and slander, you need to stand on firm ground and not on shifting sand. You need strength to hold the Bible and preach the Gospel.

Here is the story of a family whose faith in the Lord never wavered despite the worst of tragedies

surrounding them. Justin (33), an active believer in Christ, originally belonged to a Hindu fold. He was born and brought up in Menganapuram, Thoothukudi District of Tamil Nadu. He got married to Esther, and the couple was blessed with three children: Rose (11), David (9) and Immanuel (6). It was a happy family.

After a few years, he and his family moved to Coimbatore, where he set up a small provisional store to earn his livelihood. The kids began attending school nearby, and Esther took charge of running the shop also.

Justin, a true believer in Christ, never once wasted his time in idle gossip or arguments of any sort but rather spent all his available time spreading the Good News of his Master and Savior, Jesus Christ. He would share this message with all his customers also.

True, there were opposition, resistance and threats from those who opposed the Gospel message. Yet he went on doing the good work relentlessly in a very amiable way. Despite his own kith and kin not fully appreciating this, he proceeded to achieve his goal of sharing the Gospel with all those he met. The Hindu fanatics, the RSS (a Hindu nationalist organization) wing of his village threatened to kill him unless he stopped preaching. But Justin did not take it seriously. His mission continued with more

enthusiasm. Meanwhile, the plot to do away with him was slowly hatching.

One fateful day, Justin as usual opened his shop and began the day's business with meditation of the Word of God and prayer. Soon his wife, Esther, was to take over. He was also expecting his morning customers. At this juncture, a gang of men stormed into the shop, ransacked it and began mercilessly attacking him in the head. Unable to withstand any more beating, he fell to the ground with blood pouring from his head.

A passerby—a 'good Samaritan'—ran to Justin's house and brought Esther to the spot, and they rushed him to the nearest hospital. But despite the best medical treatment, Justin our beloved brother in Christ passed into eternal glory, on 26 June 2003 at 8.30 a.m. after battling for a week in hospital. It is reported that his death was due to severe brain damage. (Ironically, my son Michael also died of severe brain damage on 26 June after battling for a week, in 1999).

During Justin's dying moments, he was holding tightly his precious Bible, and the verse he was reading was this: "*Behold! I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert*"—Isaiah 43:19. This was to be his passage to share in the upcoming Sunday service. A picture

showing the bloodstains on the above verse is with the police, bearing testimony to his steadfast faith and love for the Word. Apparently he had a premonition about his death and had noted it down in his diary.

Meanwhile, the family, having lost their only earning member, underwent severe financial stress and strain. The Christian workers in the area, though poor, did their utmost to collect money to help this family. But this was quite meager and was not even sufficient to meet their basic needs. To top it all, Justin's treatment had incurred a cost of 200,000 rupees during the week in hospital. This amount, borrowed from various people, had to be returned. Esther lost all her belongings, including their house, which she mortgaged to raise money. It seemed like the end of the road for the entire family. But God turned them to us - a local pastor told us about the tragic incident and the destitute family.

We immediately brought the family to the Centre. We adopted little Rose and admitted her to our orphanage. We employed Esther in the orphanage, thereby providing her with a source of income and the opportunity to be with her daughter. We arranged admissions for David and Immanuel into a boys' boarding school and have been paying for their education also. Today, Esther is the receptionist in the school office. Esther's family had to undergo

tremendous loss and suffering, but their faith never wavered and God uplifted them from the dungeons of sorrow and built a brilliant future for them—a future that Esther had never imagined for herself and her children.

“Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” John 12:24

I have witnessed this verse come true in my life, and it has made me accept suffering and sorrow as an opportunity to magnify the Lord. Through my 45-year-long stint in the ministry for the persecuted, I have seen that where persecution is the severest, there is a revival in faith. When my sons died one after the other, I felt that I would never again be happy in my life. For what can tug at your heart as much as the innocence and playfulness of your children? But I was wrong. Though I lost my sons, the Lord has given me 356 beautiful daughters. But this blessing would not have been possible without the Michael and John’s deaths. Whenever I visit the orphanage in Coimbatore and hear giggles and shrieking laughter coming from the children, my heart flutters with joy.

Every new child who comes into the Centre has a shattered past, a childhood that has been snatched away from her far too early. Most of them have endured great trauma, like losing one or both their

parents, suffering persecution with their family, being ostracized from their community, suspended from their schools and ridiculed by their friends for their faith. Some come with vacant looks that reveal that they are numb with shock, some come crying at their loss, some look defeated with life and some just look lost. But once they enter the gates of the Michael Job Centre, they leave behind their past. The other children and our dedicated faculty envelop them in an atmosphere of love, compassion, tenderness and joy—and their sorrows are forgotten. They are introduced to a brand new life, a new identity, and though the scars of their loss might take some time to heal, the balm of love that they receive here is the quickest healer. And with each child coming into the orphanage, the sorrow of losing both my children gets a little less heavy because I know that they fell so that hundreds of others could rise in their place—rise to take up the mantle of missionaries and spread the message of the Gospel.

You might wonder why I have shown this partiality towards girls. Yes, I have a partiality towards girls, because in India girls have been victims because of their gender. To be born a girl is a crime in itself. In most countries in the world, there are approximately 105 female births for every 100 males. In India, there are fewer than 93 women for every 100 men in the population. The official census puts the sex ratio at 721:1,000—only 721 women for every 1,000 males.

Reasons for such a great disparity can be attributed to the practice of female feticide in India. This ‘selective murder’ of girls before they are born is due to various socio-economic reasons. For a poor family, the birth of a girl child can signal the beginning of financial ruin and extreme hardship because of the dowry system, which requires the family to pay out a great deal of money when a female child is married. Also, our patriarchal society upholds the practice that only a male child can carry forward the family’s name. The official estimate of 5 million abortions conducted in government hospitals annually is equaled or even exceeded by the number being conducted in private hospitals and nursing homes. In Jaipur, the Pink City of India, bodies of newborn baby girls, fetuses and mutilated and decomposed parts of bodies were discovered in a drain near a nursing home. Such instances are reported from many places in India on a regular basis.

Furthermore, even if a girl child is not killed in the womb, she is greatly discriminated against in comparison to a male child. When a girl is born, there are wails all around, whereas when a boy is born, people dance and celebrate. This is the mentality that exists in India. In my wife’s charitable clinic, most of the patients live below the poverty line. There have been many cases in which parents come with their children for treatment but only the boy child is treated, and more often than not, the girl child is

sicker because of severe malnutrition. The parents simply refuse treatment for daughters, saying that the girl child is of no use and she will recover with time. This is the condition in a charitable clinic!

Apart from all this, education for girls is considered to be a sheer waste of money since most people feel that the girl child is for looking after the home and education will not equip her with the skills to manage a home. These facts may seem strange to many readers who live in urban and semi-urban areas, but it is also true that 90 percent of India lives in the villages, and a substantial number live below the poverty line.

Whether it is before birth or after they are born, girl children in India have very little chance of survival. So if you are a girl who is reading this, you are lucky—because you are alive. Think of the 5 million babies who were killed before birth. And if you are reading this, it implies that you have been educated—you are among the privileged, because 90 percent of the poor families in India do not educate their daughters.

Girls are the silent victims of societal prejudice. In India, even in this twenty-first century, **girls are controlled by their parents, enslaved by their husbands and humiliated by their sons.** If this is the condition of girls just because they are girls, what

will happen to the daughters of Christian martyrs and persecuted victims????? They become scum in the eyes of society, unwanted because of their gender and their religious antecedents.

I believe that girls are the cornerstones of society because when a girl grows up she becomes a wife who is the center of a home and later a mother who nurtures new life. Thus she is the foundation of a community. This is the main reason for the Michael Job Centre being strictly for girls.

We believe **adoption is better than abortion**. We provide hope, a home and security to the little lives that have been discarded by their families and society. We offer them a sound education and a secure future in which they can live with their heads held high in society.

In the middle of August 2007, we adopted a converted Christian evangelist lady with her three daughters. Sumi was born in a poor Hindu family in the Southern part of India. Her father was an alcoholic, and he never cared for his family. Sumi heard the gospel of Jesus Christ from some servant of God and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as her personal Savior in 1993. The next year, she obeyed the Lord in the waters of baptism. She desired to know more of God's Word, the Bible, so after passing her 10th year of school, she went to the South India Baptist Bible College at

Coimbatore to take the Bachelor of Theology (B.Th) course.

During her B.Th course at the Bible College, she met another Hindu convert named Jagdeesh and eventually married him in 1999. They both were serving the Lord together. Unfortunately, Jagdeesh fell terminally ill. He was diagnosed with a brain tumor. On 4 July 2006 he went to be with the Lord, leaving behind Sumi with three daughters, one still in Sumi's womb who is at present two years old, named Ayna. She was born on 21 August 2006. Aneena, the eldest daughter, is six years old while the second, named Asna, is five years old. As Sumi's parents and in-laws are still Hindus, they disowned her. Her in-laws turned her out of the house, saying, "*We cannot feed you four, and our son is no more so why should we keep you?*" Having nowhere to go, she approached the Baptist Bible College, who turned to me for help. At present, Sumi is being trained as a nursery school teacher at the Michael Job Centre while her two older children have already joined the Primary School.

Allow suffering in your life. Don't become distressed by it. These situations are examinations that you have to keep taking throughout your life in order to reach the peak.

Chapter 3

LIVING DEMONSTRATORS OF FAITH

The most terrible fear of my life, as for many others, was the fear of death. Let me take you through my journey of overcoming and conquering the fear of death. It was because of my mother's ardent desire and upbringing that I devoted my life to Christ. When I was a teenager, she would often voice her desire that I become a pastor. But I was totally against it. The reason was my secret fear. My house was near a cemetery, and not a day would go by without a funeral procession passing our house. I was such a softie at heart that I would wail along with the mourners irrespective of whether I knew the person who had died or not. If I knew the person who had died, then I would nearly faint with sorrow. One day, when my mother took me aside and expressed her desire very strongly that I commit myself totally to the Lord, I told her, "*Amma (Mother), I have no objection to fulfilling your wish. But I have a problem: I hate funerals. If I become a pastor, I will have to conduct funerals, and I don't think I have the courage to do that. Even before the relatives of the dead person faint, I will collapse. Then who will conduct the rest of the funeral?*" My mother kept quiet, not wanting to upset me.

However, God's master plan cannot be understood by the human mind. I not only became a Christian worker, but my entire missionary work centered on the ministry of suffering. I saw hundreds of dead, injured, mutilated bodies in my years of work in Africa, Eastern Europe, China and of the Communist Iron Curtain nations. Years later, I stood in front of my younger son's dead body on 30 June 1999, at his funeral. God had given me so much strength that I not only used it to withstand the sorrow of his death, but I used his funeral as an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel of Eternity. When I expressed my desire to build a dais at the site of Michael's grave so that I, my wife and my co-workers in Christ could speak, my staff thought that my mind had become crazed with grief. They told me that funerals are quiet and solemn. Then they argued that there was no electricity in the cemetery. But I refused to listen. A temporary dais was created and a generator was installed to provide electricity for the microphones, and I and my wife spoke of God's glory in our lives and the promise of Eternity. This, I felt, was the ultimate test. But I was wrong. Eight years later, my elder son, John, was killed in a motorbike accident. I felt numb with grief. How does a man with both his arms cut off feel? But as we made arrangements to say our final goodbye to our son, a voice inside reminded me: don't miss this opportunity to glorify the Lord. And I obeyed the Lord. It had taken over 45 years, but God had compelled me through circumstances

to overcome my fear of death and actually rejoice in it—because to die is to be with the Lord.

*“My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with **a demonstration of the Spirit’s power.**”* 1Corinthians 2:4

Faith is an active word. *Faith* is a dynamic word. We often forget that faith is not just a belief. It is a way of life. One must *live* a life of faith. Every situation in life, be it happiness or sadness, should reflect faith. Every decision you make should reflect your absolute trust in God. The way you handle problems, grief, agony, torture, crisis, bereavement and tragedy should demonstrate your faith in God. A true believer never feels dejected or depressed. Can you believe it? Never to feel misery or wretchedness or stressed or tearful? Is it possible to live a life on this earth without feeling any of these negative feelings? Yes—this is the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the very reason that he was born on this earth and died on the cross. He came to teach us the way of living with hope amidst hopelessness.

How can one demonstrate the power of God? A believer in Christ has a supernatural power within himself. In times of crisis, he should simply cooperate with God to utilize the supernatural power already within himself to be a demonstrator of God. 2 Timothy 1:6 encourages you to “*re-kindle the gift of*

God which is in you.”

When I was in Class 10, I was one of the youth volunteers at a Clergyman’s Conference being held in my village. Each volunteer was given the task of taking one pastor to visit a specific number of houses in the area and bring him back in time for lunch at the St. Nicholson Hall. I was asked to accompany a Rev. E.J. George on his pastoral visit. I immediately struck a very good rapport with the pastor. He was very inquisitive about my background and my faith. After visiting a few houses, I began to notice that the pastor was becoming more and more interested in evangelizing me rather than in visiting houses. He shared with me his experiences in the Lord, and we had long talks about Christianity as a faith. At around twelve thirty in the afternoon, I prompted the Reverend that we needed to go back to the venue for lunch.

As we re-traced our steps and neared the Hall, Rev. George suddenly stopped in the middle of the road and told me that he would like to pray for me. I reluctantly agreed since I felt a bit embarrassed standing in a street to have a pastor pray for me where every passerby knew me. Even as Rev. George closed his eyes and laid his hands on me, I glanced around furtively to see if anybody was looking at us. Suddenly, I felt a sensation like a bolt of lightning shoot through me. I looked up in alarm. I felt

somebody call me by name. It felt as though someone had anointed me. That very day I committed my entire life for the service of the Lord. Thus it was on the streets of Kunnamkulam that I saw a true demonstration of God's power through Rev. George.

In the Old Testament, we find no demarcation between preachers and demonstrators because all the prophets were preachers as well as demonstrators. God commanded them to demonstrate their faith, not just speak of faith. In the olden days, the general masses were not very educated. It was not possible to convince people by words. They needed to see faith in action. Prophets like Moses, Ezekiel and Jeremiah are examples of true demonstrators of faith, who, despite hurdles, sorrow and despair, demonstrated through their actions the commands of the Lord. In the book of Ezekiel, 24:15-17, the prophet writes, "*Son of man, with one blow I am about to take away from you the delight of your eyes. Yet you must not show any sorrow at her death. Do not weep; let there be no tears.*" Ezekiel did not understand the true meaning of this, but he was asked by the Lord to convey this message to the people. In the evening when Ezekiel returned home after his preaching, he found that **his beautiful, much-loved wife had died**. He then understood the Lord's words and bowed down his head and obeyed the Lord. **He did not cry or weep at her death.**

In the book of Jeremiah, God commanded the prophet, *“Take a yoke and walk with it to tell the people of Israel that they will be under bondage.”*

Who would have thought that a person who shied away from becoming a pastor due to his fear of funerals would stand up and give a testimony of his faith at his sons’ funerals? An important lesson I learnt was that the tougher the situation, the greater would be the effect of witnessing for the Lord.

Since I was a known religious leader and social worker in Delhi, people of all religions and communities had gathered for Michael’s funeral. There was immense security because the Government feared retaliation by Christians for the killing of my son. Standing beside me on the stage was a middle-aged man dressed simply in a safari suit. I did not know him, but I thought he was a supporter. After my speech and the funeral, I came back home, a tired old man, burdened with sorrow. As I was resting, I received a call. A quiet voice spoke from the other end, *“Am I speaking with Brother Job? Can I call you brother? I called to tell you one thing: till this evening at 5:00 p.m., I was a staunch Hindu, but from the time I heard you proclaiming the Gospel of Eternity beside your son’s dead body, I have become a Christian. No one could have the power to do what you did if your God was not so powerful. I was the man standing beside you. I am the Commissioner of*

Police. I saw your faith speaking through your tears, and I want to be part of that faith.” By the time he put down the phone, I felt that one of the reasons for my son’s death had been revealed to me then and there.

In today’s world, how many of us are demonstrators of the Word of God? The problem becomes even more serious when so-called preachers of the Word of God are not demonstrators. Over the years, you will have read of many cases in which the clergy have been found guilty of misconduct. Their lives do not reflect their expression of faith. People have become skeptical of preachers and theologians because they do not lead by example. How can one person share his faith with another when he does not practice what he preaches? When we demonstrate the power of God, we see that people are unable to deny the facts that are laid down before them. They accept the truth willingly. Demonstration is the most effective witnessing. It has the greatest impact on people’s lives compared to mere preaching. It influences their faith by strengthening it.

*“Now to him who is able to establish you by **my gospel** and the proclamation of Jesus Christ...”*

Romans 16:25

In the year 1998 God blessed me with the privilege of conducting one of the largest crusades in Mumbai,

one of the largest cities of India. Mumbai, the commercial capital of India, has a population of around twenty million people. It is the Hollywood and New York of India put together. Above it all, at that time, Mumbai was the stronghold of the Shiv Sena—one of the most hard-line Hindu groups in India. The very idea of holding a Christian campaign in this city required great thinking and re-thinking. But our faith propelled us forward. Our entire team worked for over a year for this outreach campaign.

I was able to hire a venue in the heart of the city. Somaiya Grounds, an 18-acre area, seemed the perfect place. There were three railway junctions in the vicinity, which meant easy access for people from all parts of the city.

We spent a lot of money on this campaign. The money came from various sources. A major donor was brother Markus Zurcher, our representative in Switzerland whom I mentioned in the previous chapter. He had a very sentimental connection with Mumbai. His wife and he had adopted two children from Mother Teresa's Ashram. The girl was adopted from the Ashram in Mumbai, while the boy was from their Delhi branch. So brother and sister Zurcher felt indebted to the city of Mumbai. Their large donation for my crusade was their way of thanking the city for having given them such a wonderful blessing. With their help and the help of hundreds of others,

we were able to conduct a lot of publicity work. We visited different schools in this city and distributed 500,000 picture Bibles to the students, which means that 500,000 Christian and non-Christian homes were reached. Another 500,000 Bibles were distributed in the audience. Since there were fewer Christians in India at the time, the majority of these picture Bibles went to non-Christian homes.

On the very first day, the venue was packed to capacity. To our delighted surprise, about 500,000 people gathered. We were amazed. We had been rather tense as the evening approached since we were facing great opposition from Hindu fanatics. But we marched on, and God opened the gates for us. I had received threats from the VHP—a militant faction of the Hindu government—that they would blow up the dais of the meeting. I was worried because carrying on with the meeting would mean endangering many lives.

So I approached the governor of Mumbai, a Christian with whom I had been associated a few years before. While in Delhi, we had prayed for his wife's sister, who had been suffering from cancer. Due to our prayers, she was cured. In fact, she is still alive. I approached him with an appeal for security. He graciously intervened, and thanks to his influence, the government in Mumbai had taken great security measures by placing 4,000 security personnel on the

grounds. We also had 4,000 volunteers with us to prevent any kind of chaos. When I saw the surging crowds on the first day, I praised the Lord. So many people hungry to hear the Word of God! I had chosen to speak on this very topic: The Power of the Gospel of Demonstration. The first and the second days were huge successes. The crusade was also receiving a lot of coverage from the press. A journalist for *The Times of India*, India's largest news daily, wrote, "*There is a magician who captivates people and is holding them for five hours, not on chairs but on the ground.*" It was a phenomenon that the city of Mumbai had not witnessed before, and many political leaders were dumbfounded at the response we received at the Outreach Program.

In anticipation, I waited for the crowds to come in on the third day. But, to my horror, by mid-morning I had lost my voice. Due to preaching for two days continuously, my throat had become so sore that I could only croak. I quickly took medicines to heal my throat. But till the evening, there was no improvement. The meeting began, and I was sitting on the stage: a mute witness to the expectant crowds who were waiting to hear me speak. Since it was the final day, there were many distinguished guests. Among them was the Chief of Mumbai Police. I tried to speak a few words, but my broken voice was virtually inaudible; I had to give up. I said a silent prayer. I could not understand God's plan. But I knew

that God had a purpose in keeping me mum: through past experiences I had come to know that **God never allowed me to suffer without a purpose**. The time was already eight thirty. Instead of me, two eminent personalities spoke. My co-workers advised me to finish the meeting since it was getting late and there was no hope of getting my voice back. I saw my wife, who was also sitting at the corner of the stage, begin to cry. Then the crowds who had come to hear me and be prayed for began to pray for me. So powerful were the prayers that I could feel a spirit of revival within me. Suddenly, from the seated crowd near the dais a young girl began to walk up and down. The security moved into high alert. The barricades were laid in front of the stage 15 feet away from the dais for my personal security. The police felt the girl was someone who had gotten up to attack me and moved in to arrest her. But her mother got up, crying aloud that a miracle had happened. Her daughter had never walked in all her life. She had brought her to the crusade so that we could pray for her disability. The crowds around began dancing with joy and in thanksgiving. The prayers became stronger. Then a second miracle happened. A dumb boy began to speak. Oh! What a spirit of faith at the Somaiya Grounds! All these events were being recorded and broadcast on huge screens so that all the people could witness the happenings. I thought to myself, this is why God wanted me to stay quiet.

Exactly at 9:00 p.m., there was a third miracle. I suddenly got my voice back in its original state. Thereafter, I preached for one whole hour from 9:00 to 10:00 p.m. But my preaching was nothing compared to what everyone had witnessed—a big demonstration of the power of God. Even if the most skeptic of skeptics did not believe the girl who had begun to walk and the dumb boy who had begun to speak, they could not deny the miracle that brought back my voice. Everyone knew that I had lost my voice; they had heard me try to speak; all had prayed for me and saw me receive it again. No one could oppose this demonstration of the power of God. **Demonstration is an expression people can neither object to nor reject. It is the most powerful and effective tool in bringing people to God.**

You may wonder why there is such a difference between preaching and demonstration. After all, preaching from the Word of God is spreading the Good News and encouraging people to accept the Truth. The crusades that I held in many states in India are proof of the fact that people are hungry to hear the Word of God. They search for signs and guidance in their lives to solve their daily problems and overcome their challenges. There have been tens of thousands of people who have heard my sermons and have accepted Christ. I am a person who began preaching as a 17-year-old teenager on the street corners of my village. I would have an audience of

two or three people of which two would soon walk away, but I would continue preaching to the one person who stayed. Over the years, the number of people who gathered to hear me talk increased manifold. Today, I have preached in 129 nations of the world again and again. I am still a preacher. Spreading the Word of God through preaching is important, but demonstrating the will of the Lord through your life is even more cardinal. It is one step higher in faith. Faith is brought alive by demonstration. **Why is demonstration of your faith higher than preaching of your faith? This is because the skill to preach can be acquired over the years.** You can study the art of preaching. A professional sermon can be written out and learned by studying the Bible. **But demonstration of faith is a result of the grace of God.** It is not the result of one's wisdom or power.

“(He) set his seal of ownership on us, and put His spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”
2 Corinthians 1:22

Our life is a gift from God. We are His and He is ours. When His Spirit resides in us, we become like Him and are empowered to conquer all our problems. We live by the assurance that when a Christian who is in His inner circle is in trouble, Heaven itself will come down to help him. He is our guarantee.

In June 2004, delegates from all over the world had come to attend our Annual International Conference for the Friends of Martyred and Persecuted Christians, which is held every year to commemorate the death of my younger son Michael. Mr. Thomas Beimborn of Brother Tom Ministries in Florida was also present for this particular conference. A month later, Mr. Beimborn sent me a letter along with a draft for 10,000 US dollars. The letter said, *“Please accept this for the children at the Michael Job Centre. Every morning when I was attending the Michael Job Chapel services, your children brought down Heaven to the Chapel.”* We were greatly inspired by reading that letter and receiving their gift for the children. I kept that precious letter in my hand bag for years and would carry it with me always as a souvenir.

In the month of November the same year, I was going to the US and landed at the Chicago airport. Since I have travelled to 129 countries and to some countries several times, my passport is more or less like a book. Our ministry is spread in many Muslim countries in underground churches, so I have many stamps on my passport of Muslim countries. Above all, since my immigration visa was from the United Arab Emirates, the police at Chicago suspected me of being a terrorist. I was taken to the police room at the airport. For two and a half hours I was interrogated by two lady officers and two gentlemen. They persistently harassed me and took every piece of

paper from my bag. I could not contact the people outside the airport who had come to receive me and were waiting for me. These officers found the letter of Mr. Thomas Beimborn mentioning the draft for \$10,000. They interpreted the phrase 'brought down Heaven' in a wrong way. The police officers shouted at me, took me one after the other to three separate rooms and stripped me of my clothes. I was afraid that they would deport me back in another aircraft. Suddenly, a higher-ranking officer came inside the room I was in. Fortunately, he knew me personally! I believe that he was sent by God to rescue me. He also knew Reverend Wurmbrand, as he was present in the audience when I was speaking at the Southern Methodist University Auditorium in Dallas. He greeted me, shouted at the other officers and apologized for their behavior. I then explained to the interrogating officers the meaning of Heaven coming down and told them that this was an example of **Heaven literally coming down to help me.**

About 150 years ago, there was a great revival in Wales, United Kingdom. As a result of this revival, many missionaries came from Britain and Germany to Northeast India to spread the Gospel. At the time, northeast India was not divided into many states as it is today. The region was collectively known as Assam and comprised hundreds of tribes. The tribal communities were quite primitive and aggressive by nature. The tribal people were also called head-

hunters because of a social custom that required the male members of the community to collect as many heads as possible. A man's strength and ability to protect his wife was assessed by the number of heads he had collected. Therefore, a youth of marriageable age would try and collect as many heads as possible and hang them on the walls of his house. The more heads a man had, the more eligible he was considered. Into this hostile and aggressive community came a group of Welsh missionaries spreading the message of the love, peace and hope of Jesus Christ. Naturally, they were not welcomed. One Welsh missionary succeeded in converting a man, his wife and two children. This man's faith proved contagious, and many villagers began to accept Christianity. Angry, the village chief summoned all the villagers. He then called the family who had first converted to renounce their faith in public or face execution. Moved by the Holy Spirit, the man instantly composed a song, which became famous down the years. He sang,

I have decided to follow Jesus.

I have decided to follow Jesus.

I have decided to follow Jesus.

No turning back, no turning back.

Enraged at the refusal of the man, the chief ordered his archers to shoot down the two children. As both boys lay twitching on the floor, the chief asked, "*Will you deny your faith? You have lost both your children.*"

You will lose your wife too.”

But the man sang these words in reply:

Though no one joins me, still I will follow.

Though no one joins me, still I will follow.

Though no one joins me, still I will follow.

No turning back, no turning back.

The chief was beside himself with fury and ordered the man's wife to be shot down by the archers. In a moment she joined her two children in death. Now he asked for the last time, *“I will give you one more opportunity to deny your faith and live.”*

In the face of death the man sang the final memorable lines:

The cross before me, the world behind me.

The cross before me, the world behind me.

The cross before me, the world behind me.

No turning back, no turning back.

He was shot dead like the rest of his family. But with their deaths, a miracle took place. The chief who had ordered the killings was moved by the faith of the man. He wondered, *“Why should this man, his wife and two children die for a Man who lived in a far-away land on another continent some 2,000 years ago? There must be some supernatural power behind*

the family, and I too want that supernatural power.”

In a spontaneous confession of faith, he declared, *“I too belong to Jesus Christ!”* When the crowd heard this from the mouth of their chief, the whole village accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior. This is the power of demonstration.

The Bible too reveals the power of demonstration. In the book of Daniel, the story of the conversion of King Nebuchadnezzar is a similar story. It is written that King Nebuchadnezzar built an image of gold and asked all his officials to worship it. He declared that *“whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace”* (Daniel 3:6).

But there were three officials—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who disobeyed this decree. Furious with their disobedience, King Nebuchadnezzar summoned them and ordered them to worship the image he had made. But they replied, *“If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and He will rescue us from your hand”*. The king then ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual and ordered them to be thrown into it. The King sat witness when his soldiers took Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to be thrown into the fire. The fire was so hot that the soldiers who took them were burnt alive and these

three men fell into the fire. “Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, “*Weren’t there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?*” (vs. 16-24).

When the advisers affirmed this, the king said, “*Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like the son of God.*” Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the fire and shouted, “*Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out!*” So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, “*and the princes, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.*” Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “*Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any God except their own God. Therefore, I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other God can save in this way*” (vs. 25-29).

Where is the fourth man who walked with

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego today? The fourth man is still in the fire. When we are thrown into the fire, it is He (God) who walks with us and rescues us from being burnt. For it is written in Isaiah 43:2, *“When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you.”* You might feel the weight of the yoke, but you will never be crushed by it. When Jesus was taken to be crucified, Roman soldiers asked Simon of Cyrene to carry the heavy cross. In the same way, when we carry our cross, **Jesus himself will take on the burden and carry it for us.** God will demonstrate His power through you if you are willing to surrender to Him and use your life as a ‘living Gospel.’ Demonstrating faith is tough. It requires immense faith, great courage and unshakeable commitment.

How can you elevate yourself from being an average believer to a higher level of being a demonstrator for Christ?

The first step is imitation—imitation of other men of God. Paul says in *1 Corinthians 11:1*, *“And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.”* Richard Wurmbrand, who was my spiritual leader, is a sterling example. His experiences had a deep impact on my mind. He has been an inspiration to millions of people

all over the world who have undergone persecution. His life of courage, faith and love was a living example of a demonstrator of the Spirit of God. A synopsis of his life, I hope, will inspire you also to higher levels of faith.

Rev. Richard Wurmbbrand spent 14 years in a Romanian prison for the 'crime' of being a Christian pastor, and his wife Sabina was a slave laborer for three and a half years, working on a canal on the Danube.

In a conclave of 4,000 pastors and Christian leaders summoned by the Romanian Communist government, Wurmbbrand was the only one to stand up for Christ and refuse to compromise his faith. He spoke against the well-orchestrated unholy alliance between church and state, calling it a betrayal of Jesus Christ. Thus he earned his suffering and prison sentence of 14 years. The fruits of his suffering can be found in all parts of the globe. As a result of the Wurmbbrands' dedicated ministry, the International Christian Association was organized to help the oppressed on all continents, where it maintains representative offices.

In 1964, Rev. Wurmbbrand was released from prison for the second time. In 1965, in danger of re-arrest for his underground activities, he and his family were ransomed out of the country for \$10,000—a high

price at that time. Anutza Moisev, a Romanian nurse who managed to escape to Norway during the Communist regime, worked there to raise money for their release.

When Wurmbrand came to America, many doubted his testimony. It was at a protest rally in Washington against the government policies in Vietnam that he gained notoriety and the attention of the American press. In Wurmbrand's own words:

“With sadness in my heart, I went to the open-air meeting. The speaker was a leftist pastor who ranted against the American army and praised Communism. I jumped to the podium like a force to be reckoned with. The pastor was a little fellow, and I am six foot three and looked then like a wrestler. I'm sure he was intimidated by my appearance as I pushed him aside and grabbed the microphone. I then issued this challenge: ‘You speak about Communism without knowing it. I am a doctor in Communism. I will tell you what it is like.’ He replied, ‘Go away. Such a doctorate does not exist.’ I said, ‘I'll show you my doctor's diploma in Communism!’ At that I undressed to the waist and revealed front and back of my torso the scars of great wounds. ‘This is what the Communists did to me, along with thousands of other prisoners they tortured.’ Now I had the attention and compassion of the watching public.

The pastor asked, ‘Why did they do this to you?’ I replied, ‘Let’s suppose it was because I was accused of murder. Would the torture then be justified? Was President Kennedy’s murderer tortured? But I have never been indicted for killing. I am a pastor like you. The Communists have tortured thousands of clergy and laymen like this simply because they are Christians. And you, a pastor, instead of praising Christ and defending His innocent brethren, praise the Communists. You play the role of Judas.’

Obviously, I reproduce only a small part of the scene. In the end, the leftist pastor was booed by his own audience. One listener even cut the wire to the microphone. I was against wars, but I stood up against this pastor who praised Communism. The meeting was finished and I was picked up by the police for having disturbed a lawful assembly. They drove me around the corner, then congratulated me and let me go.”

What happened next was a demonstration of God’s plan. Newspapers and television stations played up the story. Soon Wurmbrand was summoned before a Senate subcommittee, where he testified about his tortures under the Communist regime. Meanwhile, he wrote his first book, *Tortured for Christ*, which has now been translated into over 70 languages. I first had the privilege of reading it on New Year’s day of 1969, while travelling. Since then, I have had

the pleasure of knowing this man of God very intimately.

When foreign tourists and journalists were allowed inside his country, they found that Wurmbrand had told only half of the story about the atrocities. **Christians under Communism suffered enormous persecution.** Countless numbers died, some became mad, and most of those who emerged from prison were silent during the Communist regime. Since very few had the courage to speak up about persecution, Wurmbrand became the golden tongue for the oppressed. To imitate this great man of God is a privilege and a sure way to dedicated Christian living. I believe that reading the biographies and autobiographies of men whom God has used for His purpose is a source of great inspiration.

Another way of becoming a demonstrator is a step-by-step progression to increase our storehouse of faith. In the early days of my ministry for the Lord, I lacked the courage to become a demonstrator. I worked against persecution, but I myself had not undergone persecution. But seeing God work through others increased my own faith. The more I witnessed persecution and saw the persecuted getting stronger in faith, the more my faith increased.

During the 1970s and '80s, Rev. Wurmbrand and I

organized mass outreach meetings in the main cities of India. Rev. Wurmbrand was one of the pioneering foreign evangelists who came to spread the Gospel to Indian masses year after year. I particularly remember one year when we had scheduled meetings in cities in South India and we faced obstacle after obstacle at each meeting. But each of them proved to be of great revival as the Lord directed Wurmbrand and we witnessed how the Lord opened up the way.

The date was 28 November 1977 and our meeting was scheduled for the city of Madras (now Chennai). November is generally a rainy month, but since Wurmbrand had a hectic schedule of meetings all over the world, we could not cater to the vagaries of nature. Ironically, till the 28th of November there was no rain. But by that afternoon, great, dark clouds had gathered and a heavy downpour was predicted. The organizers were all anxious. By six in the evening, despite inclement weather, a huge crowd had gathered at the CSI Cathedral grounds. However, everybody was getting restless. Bishop Clark, the CSI bishop, advised me to cancel the meeting because once the downpour started, utter chaos would erupt in the grounds.

I was in two minds. Then it began to drizzle. A few people from the crowd got up to leave. At this point, Rev. Wurmbrand got to his feet, took the mike and requested the people to sit down peacefully. He

reassured them that it would not rain for the next two hours. People began to laugh and snicker at this announcement, but Wurmbrand repeated this statement with great confidence. His command and charisma over people was so great that people sat down again. But we were all skeptical. Surprisingly, as Wurmbrand began his speech, it stopped drizzling. He then told the crowd, ***“Jesus was a Jew. I am also a Jew. A Jew is very particular about money, and Jesus will not allow another Jew to lose his money. Great effort and money have gone into arranging this one-day meeting at which I get a chance to share the experiences of my tests of faith with you people. Jesus will not let these efforts or opportunity go in vain.”*** The crowd was dumbfounded as they heard his speech and witnessed the strength of this man’s faith when the rain stopped. For two hours, Wurmbrand held the crowd spellbound with a recount of his imprisonment in a Communist prison and the trials he had undergone for his faith. There was a great revival among the people that day. And after the meeting, as we reached the Connemara Hotel, it began to pour. The rains were so heavy that it created floods everywhere. This is the power of faith that the people of Chennai witnessed through Wurmbrand.

Years later, when I had a Gospel Outreach Meeting in the northern state of Gwalior, the same situation repeated itself. It was raining continuously, and there

was no hope of conducting the meeting. But people had gathered despite the rains. They were hungry to hear the message of God. Having witnessed Wurmbrand's faith in action at Chennai, I was stirred into attempting the same and stopping the rains. I and the crowd prayed together for the rains to stop so that the meeting could progress. And God heard our prayers. He answered our prayers by stopping the rains. The people of Gwalior saw God in action that day. And I had attempted praying for the rains to stop because I had seen it happen before.

The Book of Samuel, chapter 17, recounts the story of David the shepherd boy who defeated the giant, Goliath, the greatest weapon of the Philistine army. David's elder brothers were soldiers in King Saul's army due to Goliath's might. David, uneducated in the ways of warfare and a small boy, would bring food for his elder brothers. One day, when he heard them discussing the problem of Goliath and the defeat they were facing at the hands of the Philistines, he offered to kill Goliath. In the beginning his brothers scoffed at him, but later when they saw no other way out, they took him to King Saul. The king was very worried since he was facing continual defeats. King Saul's army had become physically weak. They lacked the courage to stand before the Philistines. Hearing David, the king wondered how this little boy could have the courage to think of defeating the giant whom the entire Israelite army could not defeat. To

Saul's question, David answered, *"I've been taking care of my father's sheep. Sometimes a lion or a bear would come and carry off a sheep from the flock. Then I would go after it and hit it. I would save the sheep it was carrying in its mouth. If it turned around to attack me, I would grab hold of its hair. I would strike it down and kill it. In fact, I've killed both a lion and a bear. I'll do the same thing to this Philistine. He isn't even circumcised. He has dared the armies of the living God to fight him. The Lord saved me from the paw of the lion. He saved me from the paw of the bear. And he'll save me from the powerful hand of this Philistine too"* (1 Samuel 17:34-37).

When King Saul heard these words, he was impressed by David's testimony. He allowed David to fight Goliath. He gave David his sword, his shield, and his armor, all of which were too heavy for the boy. Laying them aside, David took his sling and gathered five stones to fight the giant. Goliath emerged from the opposite side of the hill covered from head to foot with brass armor. Seeing David virtually unarmed and unafraid, Goliath was enraged. I think he must have **lifted his helmet** in mockery to laugh at the young boy's audacity. And David took the opportunity to attack the only place that was open for attack. He took a stone, fixed it to his sling, took aim, and let it fly. The flying stone from David's sling sank deep into Goliath's forehead. The giant fell.

David had the courage to kill the mighty Goliath because of his staunch faith that God would not forsake him and because of his experience in killing animals that were mighty and dangerous. There is a step-by-step progression in faith that encourages one to become a demonstrator for God.

The third and final step to being a demonstrator is to ACT. Many people feel that in order to do great things for God you need money, a car, a workplace and an evangelistic team. This is not true. God wants you. **Use what you have and act with faith.** God will bless the little you have and make it bigger than you imagine, just as He blessed the five loaves to feed 5,000 people. He is not looking at what you are but at what you can become with your faith. It is not your abilities but your availability for God that determines your faithfulness.

After the exodus from Egypt, the children of Israel found themselves caught between the Red Sea and Pharaoh's chariots. God's chosen people were helpless and hopeless. They could turn nowhere. They cried out in anguish against Moses. But Moses replied, *"Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still"* (Exodus 14:13-14). Moses, their leader and God's obedient servant, asked the Lord, and He

replied, “*Tell the Israelites to **move on**. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.*” (vs.15-16) And God’s obedient servant acted according to God’s command. Then, after Moses stretched out his rod over the Red Sea, God sent a mighty wind to divide the waters, and His people went through to the other side on dry ground, in a miracle of deliverance.

The year 1999 began on an exciting note for me. I had received an invitation from an underground church in Sanaa, the capital of Yemen, to speak to a huge crowd. I accepted the offer to break the barriers that the Muslim World had set. I saw this meeting as a victory of the Gospel. The dates were fixed for the beginning of July and the venue was the Auditorium of the Indian Embassy in Sanaa. This was the largest auditorium in the city where Christians could meet without fear of being arrested. All other buildings were under the Muslim government, and any religious gathering other than a Muslim gathering was banned. Interestingly, this auditorium, which was outside the purview of the Muslim government, was scheduled to be demolished a month after our meeting because of its dilapidated condition. Everything had turned out perfectly, and I was looking forward to evangelizing in Yemen.

Suddenly, everything went topsy-turvy. Michael was

killed days before the meeting. I was distraught. The church members in Yemen who had risked their lives in arranging the meeting offered to cancel the meeting in view of Michael's death. My health was wavering. I had very high blood pressure during those days. I made my decision. There would never be such a big opportunity to evangelize to hungry souls in the forbidden Muslim World. I informed the conveners that the meetings would go on as scheduled. Eight days after Michael's funeral, accompanied by my son John, I landed in Sanaa to the largest Christian revival meeting that the city had ever seen. The earlier plan had been to stay in a church member's house, but due to my medical condition we had to stay in a hotel that had ample medical facilities. John and I booked a room at the Hotel Taj, where John looked after me diligently during the day. My blood pressure was at 200/100. But we both knew that I had come for a purpose. I preached every evening for three days and rested during the day. I believe that the wave of faith that arose in the people who heard me in Sanaa was not because of the words that I uttered but more because of my presence in their midst. My presence was the true demonstration of my faith, and it revealed to the people the power and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When I was offered a piece of land in Coimbatore by a friend of mine to do something in memory of my son, I was rather hesitant. I could not understand

what I would do with two acres of land in a place that is five hours by flight from New Delhi, where I reside. When I went to see the land with a couple of well-wishers and friends, the place looked rather barren. Some friends advised me not to take it since there was no provision for water or electricity there. I was inclined to agree. As this dilemma of whether to accept the land or not whirled around in my head, I had a sudden flashback. Like a movie, a scene came to my head in which my mother was telling me about the rigors of being a Christian worker. She explained, “*Son, never be disheartened when you do the work of the Lord. Sometimes when you preach, people might walk away; they may criticize. At the end of the sermon, a person or two might give you one or two rupees. Sometimes, in your pride, you might not want to take it. But remember: **nothing is little in the kingdom of God.***” Then I heard her voice floating in my ears, “*Take the land; take it.*” And I accepted the small piece of land. The moment I acted and made the decision, God began to reveal His great plan. Today, the Michael Job campus covers an area of 60 acres and is still growing.

The power of demonstration is great. When faith is expressed through demonstration, it causes an effect that you cannot imagine. Just follow the three steps to become an active witness for Christ and you will see the miracles that God works in your life.

Chapter 4

TOUCHED BY HIS GRACE

One day, I was sitting on the verandah of my home, tired, weary and ready to die for Jesus. In front of my house there lived a man called Mr. Iype David who was the son of a Mar Thoma priest named Pastor Thanickal David. He was a rich man. His eldest son was studying medicine and his youngest son was studying with my younger brother. Suddenly, his life's story flashed across my mind like a movie. His father, Pastor David, died when Iype was very young, leaving his mother, his sister and him destitute. By then fortunately he had completed his schooling (10th class). After suffering terrible hunger and many difficulties, Iype went to Tamil Nadu to a place called Ooty, where foreigners and the elite went to spend their summer vacations. Iype was very handsome and he had a fine personality. In those days a matriculate could speak English very well, as the standard of education was high. So he got employment immediately in a small restaurant where he used to make receipts of five or six rupees for the food that had been sold. It was the time when the British ruled in India, and many British employees working for the British Government used to frequent this town during their holidays.

One British officer was so impressed by Iype that he enquired of his personal background. Iype told him that his father was a pastor who was serving the Lord Jesus but had died suddenly and he, his mother and sister were very poor. From that day onwards, Iype left his job and came back to my village, Kunnamkulam, to preach the Gospel. He was well looked after by that British man. His sister completed her education, became a teacher and got married. Jesus had bestowed His loving grace on them because Iype and his entire family were committed Christians whose hearts beat only for Jesus.

Remembering Iype's story lifted my spirits. It was as if the Lord was re-directing my thoughts. I felt strengthened and recharged. The God who changed the water into wine, fed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish and who transformed Iype's life would surely look after me. I felt Jesus envelop me in His arms and bless me with His grace.

In the Bible, the 14 letters of St. Paul (one school of theologians argues that there are only 13 letters; Hebrews should not be counted as one of Paul's letters) have three dramatic expressions of grace. All three expressions signify a different dimension of grace, and these three dimensions taken together characterize the nature of God's grace.

“...I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” Philippians 3:12

The expression, ‘Christ Jesus **took hold of me**’ is extremely powerful because it is a promise to all believers that Jesus owns us. He holds our hand. Through all our problems, our needs and sins, He will never allow us to fall down. He has His way of providing for our needs. When we put our entire trust in Him, He never lets us down. He takes on our problems and sorrows just like He did when He died on the Mount of Calvary. If we surrender our thoughts to Him, they will not fall prey to Satan’s evil schemes. He will bless and guard us if we make ourselves ready to receive His grace in our lives.

There is an old and very popular Hymn in English composed by an American who was the Director of the Baptist Church Choir in Chicago for over 40 years. His name was Tommy Dorsey, and in the year 1932 he wrote this song:

*Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand!
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.
Through the storm, through the night,
Lead me on to the light,
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home!*

In 1932 Tommy Dorsey, aged 31 years, was living with his wife Nettie in a compact apartment on Chicago’s South Side. The previous year he had committed to giving solo performances during the month of August 1932 at the Largest Revival Crusade

in St. Louis. As the Revival Crusade time approached, Tommy Dorsey was reluctant to go to St. Louis because his wife had completed her pregnancy term and was about to deliver their first baby. He wanted to be with her during her time of labor.

As the meeting had been finalized a year in advance, and thousands of people were eagerly waiting to meet him and to hear him sing, and with his wife's assuring permission, he decided to attend this meeting. But something was still tugging at his heart and saying, "*Stay back. Don't go.*" After having driven some distance, he remembered that he had forgotten to bring his personal music kit. Tommy Dorsey wheeled around his car and headed back home. With his keys he gently opened the door and found his wife sleeping peacefully. He did not have the heart to disturb her, so he quietly picked up his music kit and returned to his vehicle and drove off to St. Louis.

Dorsey was steaming in the St. Louis heat as the crowd called on him to sing again and again. Finally, when he sat down to rest, the manager walked up to him and handed him a telegram from Western Union. In sudden anxiety, Dorsey immediately ripped open the envelope. The yellow sheet flashed the words... "*Your wife just died.*" The crowd around Dorsey, unaware that tragedy had struck his life, were joyfully singing and clapping their hands. But this did not stop Dorsey from crying aloud in pain openly, as he

ran out in search of the nearest phone booth to call his residence. All he heard from the other end again and again was the recorded message of the answering machine saying, "*Nettie is dead.*"

When he reached his apartment, he learnt his wife had also given birth to a baby boy. He saw the baby boy, but on the same night the baby also died. The next day, Tommy Dorsey buried his dear wife Nettie with their one and only baby in one casket. Tommy felt God had been unjust with him. But then he remembered the tugging on his heart and His gentle voice saying, "*Don't go.*" He asked himself whether he had failed God in disobeying Him. He did not want to serve God any longer. In his grief he longed to go back to the Blue jazz world to write and to sing. Just then he remembered forgetting the music kit and rushing back to the house to find Nettie sleeping soundly.

Dorsey realized that God had brought him back to the house. Had he even touched her he would have learnt the truth and not influenced many lives in another city. From that moment on Dorsey vowed to listen more closely to God's voice.

Though Dorsey was lost in grief, God knew how to revive him. One of his friends took him to a neighboring music school on a Saturday evening. Tommy Dorsey sat down at the Piano and began

browsing the keys with his fingers. Suddenly God's peace took hold of him, and he felt that God had touched his heart and he composed this song,

Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand!

As a proclaimed evangelist, on one of my visits to my hometown, I took my children, John and Michael, then aged seven and three, along with me. It was monsoon time and the roads were flooded and slippery. I had to visit a friend, and my children and I began walking to his place. I told them, "*Hold my hand so that you will not fall down.*" Being boys and at an age where they wanted to be independent, they did not want to hold my hand. They said, "*Dad, don't hold our hands. We will walk on our own.*" After taking a few steps, they slipped and fell. Their clothes became muddy. I told them again, "*Let me hold your hands otherwise you will fall down again and dirty your clothes.*" But they said, "*Dad, don't hold our hands. We will hold your hands.*" Reluctantly I agreed. They held my hands but at another slippery patch, both of them fell down again. I again told them that unless I hold their hands they would fall down again and again. This time they agreed. They silently accepted my proffered hand. And this time when they walked, they slipped and began to fall. But since I was holding their hands I pulled them up before they could fall. Both my sons

looked at me with grateful smiles. This is the experience you will have in this world if you believe in Christ. Let Him hold you and you will not fall.

During the 45 years of ministering to the persecuted, I have had several experiences of witnessing the grace of God. In 1977, Richard Wurmbrand and I held a series of meetings in South India. However, that year we were assailed by unusually heavy rains that engulfed the whole of South India. After a meeting in Madras (Chennai) we were scheduled to leave the next day for a meeting two days later at Kunnamkulam, my hometown. But the rains did not stop and our flights were cancelled. It was the same condition the next day also. We simply had to reach Kunnamkulam in 24 hours. But no flights were taking off or landing in Chennai. Wurmbrand suggested that we should go to the airport. Though we tried to explain the situation, he was adamant. So we went to the airport and waited there without any hope till three thirty. Miraculously, at that time we saw a plane landing at the Chennai airport. On enquiring about this plane, we found out that it was going to Cochin. Still we were not hopeful, thinking that the plane would already be over-booked. But this was not so. All the local people had cancelled their tickets, fearing that no planes would take off in such terrible weather. And, by God's grace, we easily got tickets to Cochin and we were the only three people on that plane. God had arranged a special plane for us!

On landing at Cochin airport, we drove straight to Kunnamkulam and reached the meeting grounds at 8:00 p.m., where people were patiently waiting to hear Wurmbrand speak. God, our guide and protector, took us through the harsh weather and the most impossible situations and helped us reach the meeting. This meeting too was one of great revival as Wurmbrand related all the hardships of his life and the ways in which God had brought us to Kunnamkulam to speak to the masses.

Our next stop was Alleppy, in Kerala. This place is a known bastion of Communism, where a revolution had taken place and thousands had died for the Communist ideology. We had taken a huge risk in organizing a meeting there. As we discussed the history of the place and the peoples' attitude towards religion, Wurmbrand surmised, "*Preaching will not be enough to turn people's minds. They do not believe in God or theology. We will need a demonstration.*" When we reached Leo 13th High School Grounds, where the meeting was organized, we saw a big crowd waiting for us. But most of them were not believers. They had come out of curiosity to watch the proceedings and maybe even create trouble if the opportunity arose. Here too, dark clouds were threatening to burst, and as Wurmbrand began his speech with a prayer that fervently asked for a demonstration, it began to rain. But, to everybody's astonishment, the rain did not touch the meeting

grounds. We could see it raining on all four sides of the compound, but not a drop came into the ground. The people witnessed a miracle and as Wurmbrand spoke about the power of the Lord many turned towards the Lord. It was a moment of tremendous resurgence for all of us as He took hold of us and kept the wind and rain away from us so that we could witness His message to the masses.

The second expression of grace is this: “For God, who said, ‘*Let light shine out of darkness*’ made *his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*”
2 Corinthians 4:6

As a young and very enthusiastic missionary, I was brimming with the desire to spread the Gospel to many. I wanted to win many hearts for God. As a witness to miracles in my childhood, I felt that miracles would really win new hearts for God. I desired that God use me as an instrument and perform miracles so that the unbelieving would become believers. In those times, I was evangelizing in South India. One afternoon I was going to attend a meeting. A dog came running from behind and bit me on my leg. Afterwards it ran ahead and bit many others. Soon we came to know that it was a rabid dog. All who were bitten by that dog had to undergo the anti-rabies injections course, which consisted of taking one injection near the navel every day for 14 days. Those

of us who went for the injections soon became friends.

While we were waiting in the hospital for the doctor, we spent the time in small talk and enquiring about each other's health. After a few days, some were missing. We were told that they had died due to rabies. One by one, the number of persons who came kept dwindling. We who survived began to worry about our fate. On the 13th day, I was the only person who came for the injection. All, except me, had succumbed. I was mortally afraid. I thought my chances of survival were dim and my end was nearing.

After the 13th injection, I returned to my house. I was feeling sick and depressed. I remembered my beloved mother. Would I ever see her again? She was hundreds of miles away from me. Weary, I labored to write my last letter to my mother. I became very exhausted. I felt very hungry and ate some food. Suddenly I felt the urge to relieve myself. I entered the toilet and bolted the door. Soon I felt I was losing my consciousness and memory. I felt I was transformed into a dog. I rolled on the floor and howled like a dog. I howled louder and struggled like an imprisoned animal.

Hearing this commotion, the neighbors came in, but they were afraid to come near me. They opened the

door a little bit and somehow tied me. They took me out and kept me locked in another room. When I regained consciousness, I found myself locked in a narrow room.

I could not believe that I was alive. I felt Jesus had come down to that room and touched me. He had given me a new life. But much more than my amazement was the total amazement of my neighbors who had seen my condition. They had just witnessed a miracle, and they could not deny the grace and power of my Lord Jesus. God snatched me away from the darkness of death and blessed me with the light of life.

God's grace is so powerful and all-pervading that it can revive all those who are going through the blackest hours of their lives. During our lives on Earth, the happiness we experience is like the day bathed in bright sunshine, while our times of trouble are the pitch-black moonless nights. In the Scandinavian countries of the North, like Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, the sun does not set for six consecutive months. During such times people darken their rooms with thick curtains in order to sleep. Thereafter, for the next six months the sun is not seen at all. Street, house and vehicular lights remain on round the clock. It is bitterly cold and freezing. Some people have long times of prosperity like the Scandinavian summer months, and some

have long, suffering nights like that of the Scandinavian winter. We cannot escape either of them. But the difference lies in what we do during those bright days and the troubled times. Do we forget God when we see the beauty around us? Do we remember God only in fear? Do we call on God to guide us only when there is no other light available?

Active Christians never need to be afraid. Not because they won't see bad days or troubles and sorrows but because their God will bless them with a song in their blackest hours.

In Acts 16:25 Paul and Silas, who were imprisoned at Philippi, sang hymns at midnight even though their feet were fastened in the stocks. Paul gives a dramatic expression of God's abundant grace in 2 Corinthians. 4:6 by saying, "For it was God who commanded the *light to shine out of darkness.*" In the Bible, Job faced very tough times during his life, but he said, "*God my Creator gives me songs in the night,*" in chapter 35:10, 11, which means that God gave him songs to sing in the midnight. Many believers experience that same grace of God during their trials and tribulation. Only Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior can give grieving people the grace to sing though their dark hours of grief. It was in my grief that I was enabled by God to open this orphanage for the daughters of the persecuted and martyred Christians so that their children could also sing songs

to the Lord every morning of their lives. This literally happens in our orphanage at 5:45 a.m. every morning, when 356 young voices lift up their beautiful voices in prayer and singing.

Here I recall the story of two beautiful children in our orphanage who are alive today only by the grace of God.

Amy's story is that of a child born to die at the hands of man but destined to live by the hand of God. One night, a security guard at a factory was startled by a weak but consistent wail coming from the back of the factory. Curious and concerned, he picked up a torch and walked towards the sound. On reaching the place where he thought he had heard the crying, he stopped and looked around but could see nothing. The crying also stopped. He thought his ears must have played a trick on him so he began walking again. At once he heard the cry again. He realized that this was definitely a sound of something in pain. Everything looked still and plain except for a small mound of earth a few meters away. He walked towards it, and to his horror, he saw the head of a newborn baby peeping out. The baby's eyes were closed, but suddenly it let out a piteous wail.

Shocked into immobility, the guard stood there not knowing what to do. And as suddenly as it had started, the baby stopped crying. The ensuing stillness

galvanized the man into action and he began scraping away the mud with his bare hands. Soon he had uncovered the body of a newborn baby girl. Holding her in his arms, he ran towards the nearest doctor he could find in the village. On examining her, the doctor told the man that this baby had been buried a short time ago and was on the verge of death. Moved to tears, the old man requested the doctor to treat the child. The baby girl survived due to prompt medical care, and in a few days' time she was ready to be discharged from the hospital.

In those few days, the man had become attached to the baby. He considered her 'God's Little Miracle,' and decided to adopt her. For five years, this man cared for her and brought her up like his own daughter. He was not a rich man, but he worked hard to keep her well fed and clothed. But his health was wearing him down. He became sick frequently and felt that he could not look after the child. He began to fear for his daughter's future. Who would look after her when he died?

It was when he was engulfed with this worry that the Lord directed him to the Michael Job Centre. He met me and related his story to me. Though greatly saddened, I explained to him that we only take in children of martyred and persecuted Christians. But as I was saying this, I was troubled by the expressions of dismay and devastation that crossed his face. He

told me he had nowhere to turn and that his daughter would surely die if anything happened to him and he was willing to give her up if this would mean a secure future for her. This was selfless love. I made an exception, and this five-year-old child became part of our orphanage.

We christened this child Amy Carmichael after the famous woman missionary who set up the largest orphanage for girls in Dohnavur in Tamil Nadu. Amy is now one of the most vibrant children of the orphanage. She makes friends very easily and is always cheerful. She has got a mischievous streak in her and she loves to play small pranks on other children. Amy loves sports and singing. Every time I see her, my heart wells with emotion for the laughter and joy she brings to our lives and those around her. And I know that ‘God’s Little Miracle’ is destined for great things in life.

Emily, another of our children at the Michael Job Centre, was brought there in 2002 when she was an eight-year-old. Her parents had been martyred for Christ in Nepal by Maoist extremists because of their Christian work. She was brought to us by our representative from Nepal because none of her relatives agreed to look after her. Like most children who have been through the trauma of losing their parents, she was very distressed. She was a quiet child. After a few months at the Centre, she slowly

began to open up. All of us at the Centre praised God again for bestowing His grace on her. But her trials were not over. When she was 12 years old, she began to complain of headaches. After a thorough check-up, we were shocked at the diagnosis. She had a tumor in her brain. Like any other parent, I was devastated. With great speed we took her to the best hospital and got the best surgeon in Coimbatore to operate on her. Her operation was scheduled for 26 August 2006. I flew from New Delhi to Coimbatore on 25 August to be with her. Many mistook her to be my real daughter. After a complicated surgery lasting seven hours, Emily's doctor told us that the operation was a success. After the operation, she recovered fast. She underwent chemotherapy for two years before she was completely cured.

Her parents honored God by giving up their lives for His glory. God honored them through us by giving their daughter life. If Emily had been in Nepal, her tumor would not have been diagnosed. And even if it had been diagnosed, she would not have received the life-saving operation because of financial and medical constraints. Though the journey she went through of being orphaned and of having no relatives to support her was very painful, the bigger picture was beautiful. God had a plan, a plan to save her life and help her to become a "missionary" for Christ. The entire Michael Job family heaved a sigh of relief and thanked God for His mercy. He had saved Emily

not once but twice. And we all grew in faith—for we had just witnessed a miracle.

The third dramatic expression of grace is abundant and overflowing grace.

“The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 1:14

It was one of the strongest desires of Rev. Richard Wurmbrand to visit the Gospel-forbidding nation of Saudi Arabia and minister to the underground Christians. However, being a pastor and a Jew, he was refused entry into the country. We tried to get him a visa thrice but failed on all three occasions. It became nearly a hopeless situation. However, Rev. Wurmbrand and I continued our ministry for the persecuted church in other Middle Eastern countries. One day, while on a mission in Bahrain, I received a phone call from the Indian ambassador inviting us to coffee. We agreed and went to meet the ambassador and his wife. It so happened that the ambassador’s wife was a Romanian. When I mentioned to them Wurmbrand’s great wish to visit Saudi Arabia, the ambassador’s wife immediately requested her husband to use his office and sanction Wurmbrand’s visa. Within three hours, Rev. Wurmbrand had a visa for Saudi Arabia in his hands. The Lord had truly bestowed His abundant grace on Wurmbrand.

Wurmbrand went down on his knees and thanked the Lord for giving him the opportunity to break down another Iron Curtain with His message.

In the 1980s, Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, was witness to terrible violence and the systematic killing of Christian leaders. Thousands were killed for their faith. Their families witnessed horrifying persecution. To provide relief to the widows and orphans of the slain leaders, our German office gathered \$20,000. Richard Wurmbrand chose me to go to Maputo with the money and distribute it for the welfare of the martyrs' families. At that time the credit card system was not global, so we had to take the money in cash. It was a very risky mission, but I went in faith. At the airport in Maputo, I was dismayed to see that all the luggage of all the passengers was being thoroughly checked. The bags of the white men were opened and if the inspectors found money, they would take half the money. No one could protest as they were afraid of being falsely charged of some crime or another. I too stood in line with the other passengers, carrying my little duffel bag. I was sweating with anxiety. I prayed to the Lord, "O my God, this money that I hold is for the persecuted. It has been given to me in faith. If these people take away half the money, I will have only \$10,000. How will I answer Wurmbrand and all those people who have collected this money with great difficulty? How can I help so many families? God,

help me.”

As I inched closer to the officials checking the bags, my desperation grew. I could not see any way out. Finally, my turn came. The officer on duty reached for my bag. Then he looked up. On seeing a small brown-faced Indian with a small bag, the officer got angry. Holding my bag, he shouted at me, “You poor Indian, you have come here to make money, haven’t you? Get lost.” He thought I was wasting his time because at the time, Indians generally went to Africa to work and earn money. They rarely brought money into Africa. The officer threw my bag onto the other side and told me to get out. And he turned his attention to the foreigner standing behind me.

I thanked the Lord for His grace in rescuing me. He had heard my prayer and poured out His abundant grace for the sake of the forsaken.

Once when I was supposed to go to Saudi Arabia via Saudi Airlines, I went to the New Delhi Indira Gandhi International Airport to board my flight. However, due to some epidemic that had spread in Delhi, the International airport had been closed down. I returned home very disappointed. I knew that my friends in Saudi Arabia were waiting eagerly for me because they had arranged many meetings scheduled one after the other for me. But there was nothing I could do. I wondered why God had prevented me from speaking

to the faithful in Saudi Arabia. However, the next day all was revealed.

Apparently, even before my plane could take off a press release was issued by my enemies stating that Dr. P.P. Job had been arrested in Saudi Arabia for smuggling brown sugar! But my enemies had stepped overboard in their planning. They probably planned to plant brown sugar in my suitcase when the plane took off so that I would be arrested at the customs area when the plane landed, and thus prevent me from preaching in their country. But the heavens did come down, and the plane could not take off due to the closing down of the airport. In the morning, my friends and relatives who had read the newspapers started calling my residence. I would pick up the phone and say, “Job speaking,” but they would ask for my wife (probably they thought I was some other member of the Job family) and say that they want to speak to Mrs. Job. So I gave the phone to my wife, and this was one of the rare occasions when my wife gave a witty comment. They told her that I had been arrested in Saudi Arabia for smuggling brown sugar into the country. My wife replied, “What? My husband smuggling brown sugar! He doesn’t even take white sugar.” By God’s grace, I was saved and the enemies’ plans came to naught.

God blessed me and my wife with two wonderful sons, John and Michael. They grew up to be

wonderful human beings, obedient, successful and spiritual. However, within a space of eight years, both received their Home Calling and went to be with the Lord. Both were taken away in the prime of their lives. Michael was called when he was only 21 years old, a budding medical student who wanted to serve the poor and the destitute. We were just overcoming the death of one child when the second blow struck. John was 34 years old and died on 17 January 2007. My wife and I have nothing more to offer to the Lord except our own lives.

With both my sons gone, I felt as if both my arms had been cut off. But I am a soldier for Christ because I have been able to bear the sorrow of losing my sons only by the abundant grace bestowed on me by my Lord. His overflowing grace filled my wife and me with His Holy Spirit and strengthened us in our most tragic moments so that we could speak about His Gracious Will at both my sons' funerals.

In retrospect, I acknowledge as Abraham did that God never takes away a dear one's life or breaks one without informing us or giving us a signal and filling our life with abundant grace before the event.

Michael was declared brain dead due to massive brain stem injury on 19 June 1999, a Sunday evening. I received two signals from the Lord prior to his death. A week earlier, my car was stoned and I received

severe injuries to my head. When I was sitting at home nursing a bandaged head, two of our close family friends, Mr. and Mrs. V. Abraham, came to visit us after the morning fasting meeting in our church. A few minutes before their arrival, I had a vision. I saw a coffin in front of me and a body wrapped in a white sheet on the bed of Michael. I was badly shaken and disturbed by the sight of it.

When I described this vision to my friends, they consoled me and replied that probably I was supposed to meet my death in the stoning but was saved by God. I nodded but was not satisfied by the explanation. Two days later, everything became clear. Michael had met with a fatal accident and died after being in a coma for a week. On the funeral day, when the coffin bearing my son's body was brought home, I was shocked. It looked exactly the same as the coffin as I had seen—the same color and shape.

God prepared me for his death in another way. In our church, there are four readings from the Bible during the Sunday morning worship. These readings are planned according to a lectionary at the church headquarters at the beginning of each year. On 19 June, a Sunday, the first passage read from the Old Testament was from the Book of Job and was about suffering. The second reading from the New Testament was from the book of Corinthians; again on suffering. The third reading from the Epistles was

from Philippians and it also centered round suffering. The fourth was the Gospel reading, which was from the Gospel of John chapter 16, which again illustrated Christian suffering. The sermon by Rev. Daniel Thomas, our vicar at the time, also spoke about suffering in the life of a Christian. He quoted the verse, "We are not called just to experience the power of the Gospel but also to suffer for Him." At the end of the sermon, he called me by my name and asked me to pray. I was a bit surprised since he usually would ask anybody from the congregation to pray and not specify anyone by name. As I closed my eyes and began my prayer, words formed automatically and I prayed that God would give us grace to bear suffering.

It was that night that I received a call informing me of Michael's accident. A week later, on 26 June, when Michael was declared medically dead, it was Rev. Daniel Thomas himself who told me about his passing away. By that time, I was, in a way, prepared and strengthened by the abundant grace of God to face Michael's death.

When I look back, I remember that Michael had always been afraid of death. As a child of barely five or six years he would have nightmares of his own death and cry. Each time, I would tell him that everybody has to die someday or the other so one should not worry about it. In 1983, I was to speak at

the Mar Thoma Church on Good Friday. Sometimes I sang songs during my preaching. So I was practicing a hymn for my sermon when Michael interrupted me. He said, *“Please don’t sing this hymn here; I feel I am going to die soon.”* I did not realize that his premonitions would come true.

It is my personal belief and experience that if you believe in the grace of God, He will bless you with His abundant and overflowing grace before you face troubles. His grace will strengthen you to bear even the greatest sorrow. In 1973, one of my church members, a young brother, died suddenly at the Delhi Army Hospital. At the time, the priest of our church was Rev. Dr. A.P. Athiyal, and I accompanied him for the funeral. The sister of the deceased brother was hysterical. She could not come to terms with her brother’s death. In great shock and misplaced anger, she shouted at both of us to get out of the room and not to take the body of her brother for burial. I was stunned and upset by her reaction. From that day onwards, I used to pray to God to give me adequate strength and grace should such an eventuality occur in my family. And He did.

*“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the **Gospel of God’s overflowing grace.**”* Acts 20:24

Chapter 5

COMMITMENT

The main message that runs through this book is the importance of commitment to Christ. Whether it be in happy moments or in moments of difficulty, agony, tragedy and crisis, it is our commitment to Jesus that helps us to experience the sunshine and pulls us through the darkest hours.

Commitment requires immense courage because it means total surrender. Commitment to Christ means that we are putting our life into God's hands and are happy with wherever He leads us. However, commitment to faith also has many levels. The Bible illustrates two extremes of commitment in faith. I would put it in two simple words: **if** and **if not**.

Let us first examine the illustration of **if** in faith. *Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's house, then the LORD will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."* Genesis 28:20-22

There is no doubt about Jacob’s faith in the Lord. He was a deeply committed man who was constantly directed by the Lord and whom the Lord richly blessed. But at the very outset, we notice that Jacob sets a condition with God. **Only if** God fulfilled what Jacob asked was he ready to commit to the Lord. This kind of commitment is a transaction—a customer relationship.

The next example I choose is from the Book of Daniel to explain the concept of **if not**. I have quoted this passage before but in a different context.

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, 90 feet high and nine feet wide, to be worshipped by his subjects. He announced to everyone in his empire, “Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.” But Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—three very senior and powerful officials in his government—did not heed his order. Hearing of their disobedience, King Nebuchadnezzar summoned them. When he questioned them, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, “*O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even **if he does not**, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship*

the image of gold you have set up.” Daniel 3:18

This shows the highest level of commitment. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego display such great commitment to their faith in God that they are not worried about God’s response. Whatever the circumstances, they want to fulfill their commitment of standing firm in their faith as **disciples**.

How many of us can say with conviction that we have the *if not* kind of commitment to Christ? Is our faith without condition or have we set conditions before God?

Don’t be customers of God; become disciples of God. Being a disciple of Christ is to grow from being a customer to a follower.

In ancient India, education was imparted through the *Gurukul* system. This was a unique system in which a child lived away from his parents after he had attained the age of four or five. The teacher was the *guru* (literally, master) and the disciple was the *sisya* (student). The disciples lived in the master’s *ashram* (farm-residence) during the course of their training and in turn offered their services to the ashram. This period of learning of about 12 years was considered as a great sacrifice or a penance. The master identified the capability of his student and accordingly imparted knowledge. For a student, his master was like God,

who would provide him knowledge to live his life to the fullest. The student was his master's disciple. The student trusted the guru with his life and was like clay in his master's hands. A similar system was prevalent in the ancient Roman Empire also. St. Paul was the disciple of Gamaliel: "*Then Paul said, 'Under Gamaliel, I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers' ...*" Acts 22:3

In today's world, the concept of discipleship does not exist. Therefore, education does not have as powerful an effect as it had before, nor does a teacher have the same position that he used to hold. We have to learn to become disciples, not of any human being but of Jesus Christ. Only when we become disciples will we become truly committed Christians.

The misfortune that I notice in today's world is that the most committed minds use their lives to cause destruction and terror. Yes, I am talking about terrorists and suicide bombers. Imagine their commitment—they volunteer to die for what they think is an honorable death. I remember reading a report about the World Trade Tower attacks that shook the world. The pilot who had taught the terrorists to fly a plane remembered one comment that they had made. It had sounded strange to him at that time which is how he remembered them. They told him, "Teach us how to take off, not to land." In retrospect, it is easy to understand why they wanted

to learn only how to take off. Their aim was to fly the plane into the Twin Towers, and for that they did not need to learn to land. The more important underlying reason was that they did not want to have the option of landing in case their minds wavered. Knowing how to land would give them an opportunity not to complete their mission. So they cut out that option completely.

Though their mission was one of the most dastardly acts of terror and violence, the people who carried out these horrific tasks were truly committed to their tasks. They could have used their commitment for the good of mankind.

How many of us are ready to sacrifice our lives and the lives of our families for Jesus? Christianity today needs more disciples and not mere believers.

Christianity was introduced to the Gentiles by St. Paul, who came to Christ when he was an adult. Following his example, some theologians advocated a school of theology that propagated the importance of believing in Christ after attaining maturity. Their line of thought was very logical. A person who *chooses* to be with Christ will be a strong believer. I also agree with it; but there is also another side.

In the majority of people who adopt Christianity as adults, conversion is based on reasoning. But

reasoning alone is not enough to become a disciple of Christ. Christianity rests on two pillars: the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ. How can you explain these two incidents through reasoning? You cannot, because both these incidents are beyond the understanding of human knowledge. The advances in the field of science and medicine still cannot explain to us how a virgin can conceive a child and give birth to a baby. Nor can it explain how a dead person can rise from death. If you accept Christ only because you are convinced by your reasoning, your faith will not be strong because your reasoning will not be able to explain the two pillars on which Christianity is based. In the liturgy of some churches, there is a prayer that starts with the lines, “*O Lord, in the beginning, you were born without a mother, and ages later, you were born without a father...*” **If you cannot acknowledge the virgin birth, you cannot understand how the first man, Adam, was born without a father.** Thereby you will be questioning the whole creation of the world. What else can you question?

If you use reasoning to understand religion, it will be like peeling an onion. You will keep on peeling off layers that you do not understand till you come to—nothing. Certain students who have gone through theological college have come out as atheists. Do you wonder why? It is because they have used their power of understanding and logic to understand God.

This is also the reason why the churches established by St. Paul in Galatia, Philippi and Ephesus did not survive for more than a hundred years. In fact, this is the prime reason that churches are dying all over the world today. The church that exists in Europe at present was established by St. Augustine.

One needs to have faith beyond reasoning to become a disciple of Christ. Experience in Christ is what leads to belief. When you accept Christ in your heart, you will experience a miracle within you. Jesus will be born in your heart and He will resurrect within you when you are guided to act like Christ. This experience will lead you to faith beyond reasoning. Your experience in Christ will reinforce your belief, and you will be able to accept the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ because you will be able to accept that many things happen in the world that are beyond your understanding. Once you accept this, you will automatically feel strengthened because you know that God, who has power and understanding beyond your understanding, is guiding and holding you. This strength that you get from your experience and faith in God will tide you over all your sorrows and turn them into joy.

Religion does not need to be understood. It needs to be accepted in totality, because God cannot be understood, He has to be accepted. The acceptance without reasoning can happen only if something is

ingrained in a person since childhood. As we grow into adults, acceptance becomes limited because logic and reasoning gain more power. And our minds are certainly not evolved enough to understand the mind of God.

I believe—not by understanding and reasoning. I believe because I have experienced Christ in my life. I believe because God has been born in my heart. I believe because I have been strengthened by the Lord. I believe because I know that Jesus controls my life.

The greatest tragedy of my life till now has been the death of both my sons. I have been able to overcome this great loss because of my strong and unshakeable faith in the resurrected Christ. My faith tells me that He will not do anything against me. I cannot boast of being a disciple of Christ, but I can confidently say that I am more than a believer. I hope God will choose and train me to be a disciple in faith.

My faith is not the result of the theology I learnt in adulthood. It is a reflection of the life of faith that I saw in my mother. It is the result of the training I received in my childhood. Children are the greatest and strongest receivers of knowledge. This is the secret of why the churches established by St. Thomas in India, Philip in Ethiopia and Matthew in Russia have survived for centuries. It is indeed a miracle that Christianity survived despite 70 years

of persecution, torture and murders during Communist rule in Russia. Ethiopia, too, which endured 10 years of Communist rule, was under intense suppression and persecution of believers, but Christianity triumphed through it all. This is because the Christians of all three regions had adopted the Jewish technique of disciplining and training children.

The foundation of my faith was laid when I was very young. My parents were very staunch Christians. I belong to the St. Thomas church that was established when St. Thomas came to India in AD 52. The service in the churches of this denomination lasts for three hours. As a two-year-old, I had to sit in the front row of the church for the entire three hours of the service. This was my mother's order. Irrespective of whether I understood anything or not, I could not move out of the church till the worship service was over.

For people of the West, it might seem unimaginable that a two-year-old child is expected to sit still for such a long time. They would probably regard it as a big punishment for the child. In the West, even though the service is not so long, the practice is to send kids for Sunday school at the time the pastor gives the sermon. This is because it is felt that children will not be able to understand the sermon. But let me tell you from my own experience that children understand far more than what we imagine them to

be capable of understanding. Once, when I was staying with Rev. Wurmbrand in his house, we were sitting together and discussing the state of persecution in the European nations. We were also discussing the problems that our missions were facing in penetrating the Communist nations. Unconsciously, the word *problem* cropped up in our conversation several times. Rev. Wurmbrand's granddaughter, Amy, was playing nearby. She was barely three and a half years old. Suddenly, she turned, came up to her grandfather and said, "*Papa, there is no such word as problem in the Bible.*" We were stunned. We had thought that she was engrossed in playing with her toys, but apparently she was listening to our conversation as well. She knew the Bible so well that she could teach us that no such word as *problem* exists in the Bible.

Never underestimate a child's understanding. It is far greater than that of an adult.

As a child, I would try my level best to squirm out of having to sit inside the church for three hours. Halfway through the service, I would tell my mother that I needed to go to the toilet or wanted to drink water and then disappear till the service was over. My mother was a clever lady. She caught my tricks. She made it a point to ask me before entering church whether I wanted to drink water or use the toilet. She instructed me firmly that I would not be allowed

out for either of these reasons. I was trapped.

As I grew older and mastered the art of reading and writing, my mother would ask me to sit and write out the portion of the Bible from which the priest had preached the sermon. When I became a teenager, I had to recite to my mother the illustration the priest had used during the sermon. I would often get irritated at my mother and retort, “Why do you ask me? You were also there in church. Did you not hear the sermon?”

My brother was equally naughty. One Sunday, when the priest asked the congregation to close their eyes for prayer, my brother and a few of his friends slipped out. They roamed around in the streets and had fun, and just as the congregation shut their eyes for the closing prayer, they slipped into the church again. No one realized that the boys had disappeared for so long. This happened a few times, till one day my mother noticed and he got spanked for his disappearance. Another Sunday, while sitting with the rest of the children, my brother tied the shirrtails of an entire row of children sitting in front of him. When the service was over and everyone got up, the entire row of kids toppled over each other. My brother laughed and clapped gleefully. Oh! Was my mother mad at him!

However, my mother persevered in her policy of

seeing that we attended church every Sunday and understood everything that was said during the service. As a result, despite all the tricks and excuses we came up with, we learnt some very important lessons in our childhood. We learnt discipline, and more importantly, we learnt about God. We also learnt that there was no excuse when it came to God because God is there for us 24 x 7.

In retrospect, it was fantastic training for me. It helped to set very strong roots about God and faith in my heart. Over the years, the roots became deeper and deeper till I developed a faith that was beyond reasoning. Christ is embedded deep within me. I have surrendered completely to him.

Pope John Paul II made a very relevant statement when he said, “Europe has heard the Gospel, America has heard the Gospel, Africa has also heard the Gospel, but not Asia.” Do you wonder why?

The dominant religions in Asia are Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. It is very difficult to convert a Hindu or Muslim from his or her religion.

In comparison, it is much easier to get a Westerner to accept Christ. One only has to convince him with reasoning and he will accept Christ. But in India it is not so. Logic and reasoning will not help. A Hindu might hear the Gospel but he will not accept it on

grounds of reasoning because for him faith is something that goes much beyond reasoning. Even Buddha, who was born in India, faced the same problem. The religion he advocated could not flourish in India, the place of his birth, but found acceptance in the neighboring countries of Nepal, Bhutan, Burma and Sri Lanka.

The advantage Hinduism has over Christianity in the Indian context is that Hinduism is more a way of life. It is a socio-cultural phenomenon. Hinduism covers a whole paradigm because it has many gods, 330 million to be exact, several holy books, and has temples dedicated to all these gods. Hindus are very strong believers because Hinduism is their religion as well as their culture—in fact, their whole identity revolves around it. It is a culture they were born into and have imbibed since their childhood. Hinduism is also full of rituals and therefore holds an added fascination for a child.

These are the reasons why only 2.5 percent of the entire population of India is Christian even though the Gospel came into the country 2,000 years ago. In the modern age, with people having fewer children and with the concept of family planning becoming popular, the population of Christians is declining. Though conversions are taking place in different places in India, it is mainly among the tribal, the poor and the illiterate people. It is extremely difficult to

introduce the Gospel to an educated Hindu and expect him to convert to Christian faith. Even if he or she wants to accept Christ, there are many cultural and societal pressures that will make that person think twice before converting. New converts are often persecuted by their own siblings and parents. In some parts of rural India, converts are even killed by their relatives and community members. It requires great effort and commitment to even attempt to spread the Gospel in India.

One of the most effective methods used in India to influence the educated as well as the illiterate with the Gospel is through healing of the sick. The miracles in healing create very strong believers and advocators of Christ because they prove the demonstration of the power of God. I have dealt with the power of demonstration in chapter 3 of this book. The Gospel Outreach campaign that I held in Mumbai was proof of this. It was at this meeting that a lame girl began to walk and a dumb boy began to speak and I myself got back my voice, which had mysteriously disappeared. These miracles resulted in a mass conversion among the crowd that had gathered for the meeting. When such miracles take place, the conversion that happens as a result is not out of reasoning. It is an acceptance of the power of Christ through experiencing and witnessing a miracle. People who accept Christ after such miracles also become immensely strong in faith.

Like Hinduism, one of the most difficult religions to penetrate with the Gospel is Islam. However, in this religion too, it is miracles that have proved to be the best method to convert even the most fanatic Muslims. In Dammam, Saudi Arabia, a Sri Lankan expatriate was critically ill. He had severe diabetes with many complications. As he lay without much hope of living, some Indian Christian expatriates heard about his condition and came to pray for him. Their prayers were heard by God, and the man from Sri Lanka was miraculously healed. The Sri Lankan man converted to Christianity immediately. He then started a healing ministry by praying for the sick and curing them.

Local Muslim leaders heard of this man's activities and apprehended him. They took him to the magistrate with the complaint that he was converting others to Christianity by healing them. The judges who heard the complaint set a date for his trial along with a command that the man had to heal three sick men in front of them or he would be executed. It was as good as a death sentence!

The Sri Lankan man was desperate. He knew that the Muslim leaders had cornered him. On the day of the trial three judges, several lawyers and local people came to witness his execution. The judges asked the Sri Lankan to step forward and heal one blind man, a deaf man and a lame man. The strong believer

prayed in agony, “O Lord, this may be my last moment on earth. And I desire only one thing. Whether I am killed or not, Your name should be glorified in this nation.”

In tears, the man prayed to God for miracles to heal the three men. Lo and behold! The blind man got his sight, the deaf man could hear and the lame man began to walk. The people who had gathered, including the judges and lawyers, were speechless with shock. Then and there, all the people who had witnessed these miracles accepted Christ and became living witnesses for him. Hallelujah!

Recently, in June 2008, we adopted 25 children from Burma into the Michael Job Centre. The youngest among them is a two-year-old child called Cassidy. She is an adorable little child. She adjusted to the routine of the Centre very fast. There was only one problem: it was very difficult to wake her up at five in the morning every day. It was even more difficult to get her into the chapel service every morning at five forty-five. At the Michael Job Centre, all young and new students are taken care of by the senior students. Cassidy’s reluctance in getting up and attending chapel was brought to my notice by a couple of older girls who were assigned to look after her.

The day after I got this message, as I was entering

the Chapel, I saw Cassidy a few meters away. I went up to her, smiled at her, took her hand, kissed her and gently guided her into the chapel. I took her to the front row and seated her on a chair next to mine. I did not speak a word because she could not understand English nor could I speak her language, Burmese. All the children were staring at both of us. As the worship began, I pointed at the stage to show Cassidy that she should pay attention to what was happening. Soon, it was time for the sermon. Coincidentally, I was to give the day's message. As I went up to the stage and began my sermon, I saw Cassidy look at me with rapt attention. That day the child never fidgeted nor fell asleep.

The next morning as I was entering the chapel, I saw Cassidy walk in, head straight for the front row and sit on exactly the same seat where I had seated her. I sat a little away from her and observed her. I was amazed. She sat throughout the service, looking keenly at the stage. I can tell you with full confidence that Cassidy will become a committed follower of Christ when she grows up. And it is because she is following strict rules that will discipline and train her for life. She will hear about God every day of her formative years. And she will be able to acknowledge and accept the Lord readily because that is what she is seeing all around her—the commitment of the other 355 children.

This is the spiritual training that every child at the Michael Job Centre gets because I firmly believe that religion is upheld by a majority of childhood believers, not by new converts.

Children are the future. This is very true even in religion. It is my assurance to all of you that if you sow a seed of faith in your child and nurture that faith through the growing years, your child will become a Christian who is strong in faith and committed to Christ. Your child will be able to face the tribulation of suffering without flinching and will be able to turn all sorrows into joy.

EPILOGUE

- **The three dimensions of the Gospel are: the Gospel of Prosperity, the Gospel of Suffering and the Gospel of Grace.**
- **Faith in Christ should progress from popular to classical religion.**
- **Allow suffering in your life.**
- **God never allows anyone to suffer without a purpose.**
- **Use your initiative and creativity to overcome problems and limitations so that Jesus will notice you and call you into the inner circle of faith.**
- **Know and have the mind of Jesus.**
- **When the life of a believer is fraught with suffering, it is a sign of maturing in faith.**
- **The crises we face in our lives are the times to rejuvenate our faith. These are the opportunities to learn and earn—learn to be like Him and earn a place in Heaven.**

- **Demonstration of faith is an expression people can neither object to nor reject. It is the most powerful and effective tool in bringing people to God.**
- **Demonstration of your faith is higher than preaching your faith.**
- **Demonstration of faith is a result of the grace of God.**
- **God himself will take on your burdens and carry it for you.**
- **Don't be customers of God; become disciples of God.**
- **Faith is higher than reasoning. Those who cannot acknowledge the virgin birth, cannot understand how the first man, Adam, was born without a father.**
- **Nothing is little in the kingdom of God.**
- **Never underestimate a child's understanding. It is far greater than that of an adult.**
- **Blessed are those whose faith is instilled in them in childhood, for they will grow to be the strongest of believers and pillars of the Christian Church.**

- **My faith is not the result of the theology I learnt in adulthood. It is a reflection of the life of faith that I saw in my mother.**
- **Your stamina to fight tribulation and strong winds of depression in critical times of your life comes from Christ alone.**
- **If you can overcome all your difficulties, the best in your life is yet to come, like the Michael Job Centre for Orphan Girls.**
- **I believe that girls are the cornerstones of society because when a girl grows up she becomes a wife who is the center of a home and later a mother who nurtures new life. Thus she is the foundation of a community.**
- **Adoption is better than abortion.**

If you are blessed by this book, write to me at:

**Dr. P.P. Job
V-31, Green Park Main
New Delhi -110 016, INDIA.
E-mail: jjob@pobox.com**

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DR. JOB'S MISSION, P.O. Box 762, Capalaba,
Qld 4157, AUSTRALIA. E-mail: twil9899@bigpond.net.au

HOPE FOR ORPHANS (DR. JOB'S MISSION),
P.O. Box 425, Surrey Main P.O., Surrey, BC V3T 5B6,
CANADA. E-mail: hopefororphans@shaw.ca

H.C.L., 10 Gebhards Weiler, 88690 Uhdingen, GERMANY.
E-mail: hansmbraun@aol.com

LOVE IN ACTION SOCIETY, V-31, Green Park Main,
New Delhi - 110016, INDIA. E-mail: jjob@pobox.com

H.V.C., Dorpsweg 85, 4221 LJ Hoogblokland, NETHERLANDS.
E-mail: info@stichtinghvc.nl

DR. JOB'S MISSION, Gullstølsbotn 20, N-5152 Bønes,
NORWAY. E-mail: alvoll@msn.com

DR. JOB'S MISSION, P.O. Box 175, 69154 Karlskoga,
Diskusv 6B, SWEDEN. E-mail: contact@globaloutreach.biz

HOPE FOR GIRLS, Kreuzeggweg 15, CH 8400, Winterthur,
SWITZERLAND. E-mail: hopeforgirls@bluewin.ch

DR. JOB'S MISSION, P.O. Box 15769, Long Beach,
CA 90815, USA. E-mail: drjobsmission@aol.com

LOVE IN ACTION, South View, Picts Hill, Langport,
Somerset, TA10 9EX, UNITED KINGDOM.
E-mail: speedy_40@hotmail.co.uk