



VOL.1 No.2 MAR-APR 2012

# SOULCONNECT

INSPIRING YOU TO LIVE FOR CHRIST AND HIS KINGDOM



MUSIC WITHOUT  
A MESSAGE

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION



Although not as deadly as other forms of addiction, mobile phone addiction is still real trouble. Whether it is texting, checking out social networking sites, instant messaging, or calling; fixation in the use of the cell phone is already considered by many as an addiction. Psychologists argue that this dependence is unhealthy and term it as an “obsessive compulsive disorder.” If the user by any chance becomes unable to continue using the mobile at his/her previous pace, they literally suffer from withdrawal symptoms such as irritability, isolation, lack of concentration and depression.

### SIGNS OF MOBILE ADDICTION:

- \*Addicts tend to be crippled and upset when their mobile phones aren't around.
- \*Anxiety level increases when mobiles get switched off due to low battery or when it is not in their hand.
- \*An increasing expense related to cell phone usage (Top up's).
- \*Spending hours waiting impatiently for text messages and calls from people.
- \*Isolates oneself from others and is totally fixated on using the cell phone at all times.
- \*Spend hours on end talking or texting when more important activities or chores need to be done.

### CHECK IF YOU ARE AN ADDICT?

1. Do I charge my mobile more than twice or thrice a day?
2. Do I get anxious if my mobile phone is not around?
3. Is it a regular habit for me to text people and chat with them?
4. Do I prefer to stay isolated and talk for hours on the mobile?
5. Am I affected a lot if my text messages go unanswered?
6. Do I find it hard to switch off my mobile even during my quiet time with God?
7. Do I suffer from insomnia because I constantly check my mobile for text messages?
8. Do I find it impossible to switch off my mobile even while it is getting charged?
9. Do I sneak my mobile phones to places where they are prohibited?
10. Is it a regular habit to talk to people over the mobile when I'm driving?

(If you have answered YES to five or more of these questions you are a mobile addict)

### COPING WITH CELL PHONE ADDICTION

Being aware that you have a problem will make it easier for you to get back on the right track. Breaking free from mobile phone dependence is a road that mobile phone junkies are reluctant to take. But remember, conquering mobile phone addiction with God on your side would not be a hard feat at all.

- \*Acknowledge before God that you are a mobile addict and confess your inability to handle your mobile in the right way (1John:1:9)
- \*Start the weaning process. Reduce the time spent on your phone. Use the time elsewhere in some other hobby that you love. (Painting, playing games, writing, riding, walking, etc)
- \*Turn it off at night after ten and leave it elsewhere in the room. (Not under the pillow)

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how you can partner in this ministry.

## Editorial...

Dear readers,

Centuries ago, Apostle Paul wrote, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world...(Rom.12:2a). As disciples of Jesus Christ we are called to be counter cultural in our thought, speech and action. The pattern of this world is so strong and subtle. It has the potential to ensnare and shape us into its mold. Unless we are on our guard, we will surely be carried away by the values, principles and philosophies of this world. The pressure to compromise has never been so powerful on us. We live at a time when biblical teachings are either undermined or totally ignored. We are told that Scriptural teachings on wealth, money, marriage, sex, family, etc., are outdated. Likewise, the doctrine of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal.5:22-23) is considered unrealistic. Also, we are encouraged to live for the here and now. We are made to believe that the things of this world are real and important. All talk about eternity, they say, is nothing but 'religious excesses.'

Is it possible to survive the tide and stand against the current? Paul tells us how. "...be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is His good, pleasing and perfect will." Rom.12:2b. The need of the hour is this. We have to purposely strive towards renewal of our minds. Our Scripture reading and reflection holds the key to this. The more we dwell in the Word; we have a better chance of standing against the devil and his schemes. It is my sincere desire and prayer that SOUL CONNECT will help you to relate the Word to the World and inspire you to live for Christ and His kingdom. In this issue, the cover story focuses on changing times and Christian Music. The music world around us is changing. Lyrics are not that important in songs anymore. As Christians what is our response?

Please do mail your comments and suggestions about the magazine to [soulconnect2india@gmail.com](mailto:soulconnect2india@gmail.com).

Regards,  
Sam K John

## EDITORIAL TEAM

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## A CALL TO GIVE UP

A call to give up is what the Church seldom hears today. Many Christian leaders and popular preachers openly advocate a culture of selfish prosperity. In such a scenario often the call of Christ to give up goes unheard. We need to go back to the Scripture and to the very words of Jesus. Turn your Bibles to Mark 10:17-31. The disciples were closely observing Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler. The young man came so close to being a disciple but his love for money was so strong that it prevented him from coming to Christ. Jesus used this opportunity to teach Peter and the other disciples the need to give up.

### *Give up and enter the Kingdom*

The rich young ruler had greater love for his possessions than eternal life and he went away sad because of his unwillingness to give up. When Jesus saw him going back crestfallen he looked up to the disciples and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23).

Very often the rich tend to put their confidence in their material riches and this makes their entry into the kingdom difficult. Peter and the other disciples were totally amazed at the statement Jesus made. This was because they were deeply rooted in their Jewish belief. Riches and material wealth were seen as a blessing from God and poverty as curse. They believed God prospered the righteous and the rich were the ones who were in favour with God. Jesus turned away what the disciples thought was a prospective candidate to enter God's kingdom.

Jesus reaffirmed His words with an illustration. He said it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. (Mark 10:25). Jesus was using an expression of those times to say it was impossible for people who trust in riches to enter the kingdom. The rich may have the best this life could offer but they don't have any special privileges in the matter of salvation.

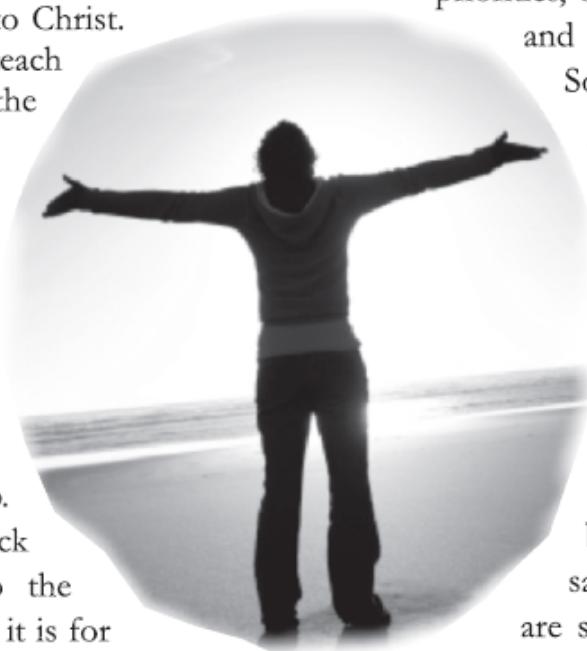
The decision to enter the kingdom involves giving up. We give up on sin, our order of priorities, our selfish plans and ambitions and give the control over to God.

Some of the modern day gospel preaching makes salvation look all too easy by preaching only part of the gospel message and not the whole counsel of God. We cannot downplay the sacrifices involved in following Jesus Christ. It is true we are not saved because we give up and neither do we believe in a work oriented salvation. We give up because we are saved and it is a result of our

salvation experience. Works are a natural outflow of true faith. Salvation is not in an empty bank account or in embracing a life of poverty. However, the question we have to ask ourselves is whether we are willing to place Jesus above all other interests. If there is a need to give up on something we treasure in order to follow Jesus, we should do so gladly.

### *Give up and extend the Kingdom*

As we read the New Testament accounts and biographies of Christian workers throughout church history it appears we extend the kingdom of God by our sacrifices. When we give up, we become instrumental in extending



the kingdom. A famous statement from the book *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* was the testimony of the early church, "The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church." Today it is not the martyrdom but the sacrifices of Christians that become the seed of the church. Peter had a wonderful testimony to share about the sacrifices he made for the gospel. He could say to Jesus and to others boldly that he had left everything to follow Him. There was no deception or guile in those words and Peter was speaking from his heart. Peter left the secure confines of his home, his thriving fishing profession, and his family life in order to follow Jesus. What have you and I left to follow Christ? Christian life should be a life of chosen suffering and we should be prepared to gladly sacrifice for the kingdom of God.

Jesus' words indicate that we need to give up houses and lands, material comforts, and relationships for the sake of the gospel (Mark 10:29). In this mad world people run crazy after money, wealth and success. In sheer contrast Christians ought to give a dynamic witness by being models of sacrifice and demonstrate that their priorities are different. When John Wesley died he left behind a handful of books, an old Geneva gown in which he preached, 6 spoons of silver that someone gifted him, and six pound notes to be given to the poor men who will carry his coffin. He didn't leave any material possessions by worldly standards but he left behind the Methodist church which will continue to remain until the Lord returns! He left behind not perishable wealth like many of us but a lasting legacy. Some Christians unfortunately

**Christian life should be a life of chosen suffering and we should be prepared to gladly sacrifice for the kingdom of God**

have no clue of suffering for the sake of the Kingdom of God. There is a nonchalant spiritual indifference in our churches which needs to be seriously addressed. It is fearful to think that the Kingdom is not extending because of our unwillingness to sacrifice. We are still bound by the cords of the world and it is strangling our spiritual lives and making us unproductive for God.

### *Give up and earn rewards in the kingdom*

Jesus responded to Peter's statement that he had given everything to follow him by highlighting on the rewards. Even though Peter had left everything he still had no complaints because Jesus had multiplied the blessings.

Moreover, he had the joy of walking with the Lord and serving Him. When God asks us to give up He also promises to give back. Discipleship is a combination of

blessings and sufferings. God restores us in multiple terms whatever we give up. Some people who come to Christ from another faith have to give up on their parents and family but they receive the parental affections from so many other believers and they find a new family in Christ. Nevertheless, the rewards are not entirely in this world but in the world to come. The promise Jesus made here to Peter is of eternal life and rewards that will not perish. People who are esteemed here on earth and tipped to be on the top will be the least (Mark 10:31). People who go un-recognised and treated as scum here will be on the top in the kingdom of God.

Peter, an uneducated fisherman became a leader of the church. He lived sacrificially and

gave his life for the cause of Christ. Peter was not operating on the principles of the world. He knew his present choices would determine his future reward. Peter's life challenges us to live in light of eternity. When we are obsessed with Jesus all other attractions lose its power. When we give up for Jesus sake we can consider it a privilege. The final reward we receive is Jesus Himself - we will be with Him forever throughout eternity!

### Ashwin Ramani

*Ashwin serves as a community pastor for the multi-ethnic ministry wing of the Centre Street Church, Calgary, Canada.*

### The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



“Friends don’t let friends lift up holy hands behind the wheel.”

### The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



Blow the trumpets and the sheep horns. Ps. 98:6



This book reveals the depth of the burden the author has for the youth of today and portrays the stark reality of the current generation. Surveys among church youth reveal that 50-60% of them do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God or that

He rose from the dead, do not believe that the Holy Spirit and Satan even exist, believe all faiths teach equally valid truths, believe there are no absolute truths or moral standards. Many youth have a distorted view of Christianity, of the truth, of reality and of the true Church.

Josh McDowell has done extensive research to understand the youth of today, their language, thoughts, ideas, attitudes, behaviors and has compiled these shocking facts. He attacks the root of the problem that we have not presented to our youth our God as a God of redemption, relationships and restoration. He details a blueprint to rebuild the true foundation of the Christian faith by changing our educational model to the Hebraic model of living out the truth. He explains how youth workers ought to make it a process-driven ministry and understand their youth better in order to make them better disciples for Christ. The title of this book may be shocking and sensational but the author is very true when he says - "Unless something is done now to change the spiritual state of our youth you will become the last Christian generation!"

### Shirley Robin.

*Shirley works as an anesthetist at St. Martha's Hospital, Bangalore.*

“In my library I have profitably dwelt among the shining lights, with which the learned, wise, and holy men of all ages have illuminated the world.” -

**Richard Baxter**

## MY FAITH IS SMALL, CAN GOD STILL DO A MIRACLE?

The Bible tells us that many people received healing because of their faith (Mk. 5:34, 10:52, Lk. 17:19, 18:42). But we also read about incidents where the sick person did not exhibit any faith and still got healed. In Mk. 2, four men lowered a paralyzed man through the roof of a house where Jesus was teaching. When Jesus saw *their* faith, he healed the paralytic. If you observe, the paralytic man's faith is not mentioned. In Mk. 9:23-24 the father of a demonized boy approached Jesus and got healing. But notice it is the faith of the father that brings healing to the boy.



There are other times, when we do not see faith in people. Only Jesus has faith. In Luke 7:11-16, a widow's son is carried dead. Jesus touched the coffin, and the dead man sat up. Did you notice that no one came to Jesus asking for help or with faith? But Jesus did that miracle. In Nazareth, people did not believe in Jesus because they had seen him as their village boy (Mark 6:1-6). There was a climate of unbelief that made Jesus unable to do anything more than heal a few sick people. But notice that Jesus was still able to do a few miracles. Only three out of ten times sick or needy people are said to have believed and their faith brought healing. So, what is the point? Unquestionably, faith in God is important (Jam. 1:6-7). However, 'only if you have faith, you will receive,' is not what the Bible teaches. God's ability to do wonders is not limited by our lack of faith! He is Sovereign! He accomplishes His will.

Likewise, some are too worried about the measure of their faith. Many even feel guilty about not having enough faith to experience a miracle. "More faith equals more miracles" is not what the Bible teaches. To the disciples who asked for 'more faith' Jesus replied, "if you have faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to the mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you." (Lk. 17:6). What is required by Jesus is that you exercise whatever measure of faith you have.

Most importantly we need to realize that faith is given as a gift from God. In John 6:65, Jesus said, "no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father." In other words, Jesus says no one can believe me unless the father grants that faith. Hence, we cannot generate faith by ourselves. Trying to *work up* faith on our own results not in increase of faith rather it only boosts our positive thinking! We can only respond appropriately to the faith that God pours into our hearts. That is why we must pray *for* faith like the father of the demonized boy in Mark 9:23-24, "I do believe. Help my unbelief." We are called to exercise faith in God not because our faith determines the end result (miracle) instead God expects us to have faith in His goodness and great wisdom (Pro. 3:4-5). When we commit our lives to Him in faith He will accomplish His best for us.

**Michael Thomasraj**

*Michael is a pastor-teacher, trainer and Bible expositor based in Bangalore, michaelthomasraj@gmail.com*

## Joshua Pramod



**Joshua Pramod is a star performer and champion motorbike racer who has 9 overall all-India championship wins to his name. He is a part of the TVS Racing Team and lives in Bangalore.**

### **Your love affair with motor sport, how did it all begin?**

When I was about 6 years, my grandfather bought me a bi-cycle and encouraged me to participate in school races. I won my first race while I was in class one defeating many of my seniors in school. So from early childhood I have been keen on racing and used to watch motor sport rallies on TV. In particular, bikes have been my passion. Many in my family had bikes and that was an added advantage! When I was 16, I took part in my first bike race in Bangalore and finished third. Ever since, I have not stopped racing!

### **When did you think of making motor sport as your career?**

After finishing class 10, I could not pursue higher studies. I tried joining a few courses but couldn't continue for one reason or the other. I was disappointed and frustrated for some time. One day I decided to part ways with studies. This upset my parents for a while. Later, I took up a small job to earn my living. Guess what? It was in a bike service station! I used to get just five rupees for washing a bike but I enjoyed doing that. The owner of the station was a racer and he owned a couple of foreign bikes. While he raced in premium categories, I was given a few chances to race at entry levels. Following a slipped disc injury, I stopped participating in races in the year 1998-99. After recovery, I took up a call centre job but I couldn't find any satisfaction. In the meanwhile, I made an attempt to join the merchant navy but that too didn't work out. Braving disappointment and frustration, in 2002, I decided to take up bike racing as a career.

### **Tell us something about your professional racing career.**

I entered the professional racing circuit in 2002. By then, bike racing in India was just beginning to flourish. I started participating on my own (private entry) in national races especially in the off-road categories. (I have always loved riding on potholes, rough patches and bumpy roads!). I did this for about 2 years. Private entrants get noticed only when they consistently beat factory-sponsored racers in competitions. I was hired by Yamaha in 2005. Since 2006, I have been with the TVS team. There are about 15 to 20 races in a year all across India. In the last six years, by God's grace I have been able to establish myself as a star performer. So far, I have won overall championships nine times!

### **Until now, what has been the proudest moment of your career?**

I was part of the TVS team for the Jaipur challenge in 2009. Originally, I was scheduled to participate in four



races, all in the category of Indian bikes. However, I had a great desire to ride in the foreign bike category. My repeated pleas was turned down by the management stating that I wasn't good at that. However, when I reached Jaipur I begged with the management to give me a chance. Eventually, they allowed me to enter the race with an old bike while my fellow team mates had new ones. When the race got over, I stood first on the podium to the astonishment of everyone.

### **Perhaps, the worst moment of your career so far...**

2010 was a very good season until I reached Baroda for the penultimate race of the year. I was also in a good position in the rankings to win the overall championship. However, it turned out to be a huge disappointment. During the practice session, while landing from a jump I injured myself and crashed out of context before the event started. I had to undergo a surgery and for almost a year I was out of competitions. Motor sport is a high-risk profession. An injury can jeopardize one's entire career. The moment you get injured, you run the risk of losing your job. Until you get back to winning ways, you are no good than an injured horse. It is a merciless field. It may look like a glamorous one for the outsiders but there are real challenges. Winning is the only way to survive.

### **Now tell us about your relationship with God**

The very reason I'm what I'm is because of his grace. He is the one who has given me life and talents to glorify him. I realize motor-sport is my calling. The least I can do for God is to give my best to him. I basically take my inspiration from the parable of talents. I work hard to excel in my sport as I consider it as my God-given responsibility. Time and again God has honored my hard work and given me success. I believe in the living God. He never lets me down even in my failing moments.

**“I realize motor-sport is my calling. I basically take my inspiration from the parable of talents. I work hard to excel in my sport as I consider it as my God-given responsibility. The least I can do for God is to give my best to Him.”**

He has helped me to face failures in life too. Before every race, I ask God for wisdom, guidance and protection. When I look back, I thank God for keeping me safe hitherto and I also realize that my life is ultimately in His control.

### **Do you identify yourself as a Christian in public?**

I have always made it a point to kneel down and pray before the race and also after winning a race. So many have asked me what I do on my knees. To them I share a few words about Jesus and my faith. I also carry my Bible wherever I travel and read it whenever possible. That's the least I can do to show the world that I'm a Christian. There are very few Christians in the Indian professional motor world. Therefore, I see it as a special privilege and responsibility from God.

### **What are your future ambitions and plans?**

I want to focus on Asian Champions in the near future. The race is highly competitive at that level and it is very difficult to get an entry. Likewise, I want to try off-road four-wheel racing in India. I do not know what God has in store for me in the future. But I would like to try my best.

**Interviewed by Soul Connect**

# Why this Kolaveri Di!

## Music Without A Message

I was not really surprised when my school going daughter one day returned home humming Why this Kolaveri Di. I didn't bother to ask her where she got the song. That question would have been irrelevant. Kolaveri Di is the talk of the nation and is a rage on the internet. Just type the word 'why' on Google search bar and you will be overwhelmed with Kolaveri Di info. The song had achieved 41 million hits on YouTube as of Feb 1, 2012. The most interesting thing about this song is that it has spawned several versions. There is even a Christian version of Kolaveri Di!

How did such a flop/soup song become a phenomenon? Several theories are doing the rounds. Some say it is because of the simple and catchy south Indian folk tune. Others say it is because of the 'Tanglish' lyrics. Some opine it is because of the foot-tapping and head banging rhythm. And some in the marketing world attribute the success of the song to a well planned and well executed digital marketing campaign. The talk is IIM-Ahmedabad will soon offer a course on Why this Kolaveri Di to analyze the success of the song from a business perspective. As of now, no one really knows why the song has become so popular not just in India but all over the world. Perhaps, the pundits will soon find out and tell us the reasons!

Let me now talk about what is so obvious about the song. The lyrics of the song has no meaning

and is complete nonsense. The singer himself has admitted this. Javed Akhtar made this point loud and clear, "...words (of the song) an insult to sensibility." It is incredible that such a song has become a sensation! In one sense, to me, the success of the song is a reflection of the times in which we live. In the post-modern era songs are no more about meaningful lyrics. Perhaps, they do not have to make any sense to anyone. They just have to be catchy, funky and empty! Should we Christians also change with the times? Do we have to sing as the world sings today? Do we have to really bother about what we sing? These are some vital questions which must be addressed by the Church today.

There is nothing wrong with contemporary music *per se*. The 21st century Church needs to have its own set of songs in addition to the vast collection from the past. I believe God has raised gifted song writers and musicians even in our generation. Similarly, there is nothing wrong with catchy tunes. William Booth of the Salvation Army was right when he remarked, "Why should the devil have all the best tunes?" Nevertheless, Christian songs cannot do away with sense. Lyrics are as important as tunes. I'm afraid some of the recent day Christian compositions are like Kolaveri Di. They have catchy tunes, foot-tapping rhythms and mass appeal but are awfully meaningless. Like today's marketing giants, popular worship leaders also target a youth audience. Therefore, in trying to make their songs a hit among youngsters, they



focus so much on the music and in the process compromise on lyrics. Similarly, with dance culture invading Indian churches today, worship leaders are more and more interested in composing songs which can help people dance rather than glorify God and edify each other! For instance, a recent trend witnessed in worship concerts today is to make people sing a couple of lines again and again until an emotional high is reached. Do not get me wrong. I'm not opposed to contemporary music, or action songs, or God-honouring bodily expressions. Surely, emotional expressions do have a place in our Christian life and worship. However, we do not sing simply to generate an emotional experience. Christian

**When we sing to the Lord we cannot utter meaningless (nonsensical) words. Can there be anything more dishonoring to God than that?**

singing is not purely for one's pleasure and Worship is not for our entertainment.

Why do lyrics matter in Christian music? First and foremost, lyrics matter because we sing unto the Lord (Psa.95:1, Eph.5:19-20, Rev.5:9). God is the focus of our songs. When we sing to the Lord we cannot utter meaningless (nonsensical) words. Can there be anything more dishonouring to God than that? Second, lyrics matter because we sing to edify each other (Col.3:16). Our singing should be one form of our ministry of God's word to each other. We all need to be built up in our faith. Our songs should be one of the ways by which we are taught the Scripture. Third, lyrics matter because what we sing is a declaration of our beliefs and teachings. One man of God said, "Show me your songs, and I will tell you your theology." As the focus is not on lyrics today,

it is no wonder even some of the most popular contemporary Christian songs are so shallow in theology.

Contemporary Christian music needs to be more counter-cultural. We just cannot blindly follow the trends of the world. Tunes, beats and rhythms are important but good lyrics are indispensable to Christian music!

**Sam K. John**, *Editor - SoulConnect*

*The same article also appears in Campus Link (March-April 2012 Issue)*

### ...Continued from page 2

\*Allow the mobile to have its time of rest at least when it is getting charged by switching it off.

\*Commit to turning the cell phone off, or putting it out of your sight, when engaged in a face to face conversation with another person.(Mat:7:12)

\*Work and romantic relationships are not built on 180 character sarcastic notes constantly exchanged with one another. Rather, healthy relationships are God ordained and to be treated with reverence.\*Use your mobile phone for the glory of God.

\*Try connecting with people around you instead of trying to get connected over the cell phone.

\*Minimize your long conversations on the mobile and talk to the point.

\*Ask God for the fruit of self control (Gal: 5:22)

Be encouraged and join the Apostle Paul in saying, "I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength."(Phil: 4:13).

**Sarah Susannah Sampath**

UESI Coordinator, Coimbatore.

## BEE SURPRISED!

What's to fear in one small bee? Not much, but put fifty or sixty of them coming at you relentlessly and then you know the meaning of "Apiphobia." That's exactly what happened to me a few months back!



Conducting the funeral of a dear friend's father-in-law; the last thought on anyone's mind was the furious attack of a few hundred bees! What triggered the attack is still hazy but the results were painfully clear. Many were stung and there was utter chaos all around: people fleeing helter-skelter to avoid being stung. I was not so fortunate; the bees closed in and soon my head, face and hands were covered with stings. Rushing to hospital like many others who were stung; I started becoming dizzy on the way and reached just in the nick of time. I had to spend four more days there. Reflecting on the bizarre incident three realities struck me.

**Life will always surprise you.** You never know what life throws at you in any given second. And you can never, fully, be prepared for these surprises. It may be a simple slip and fall or it could be something more serious - one of the people who were stung had a mild heart attack! While you can never be prepared for the surprises that life throws our way, we can be prepared to be surprised.

**You will always be surprised by people.** When the bees were stinging us we all just thought of one thing: To somehow escape the bees! No one knew what to do, or even if they knew they had become so disoriented with panic that they just ran. Almost no one came to help except one young guy, who drove his van right into the cemetery to save many of those being stung. When faced with a crisis most people thought of themselves and not their loved ones, or the old, or the weak! Helping others in times of crisis and danger does not come naturally to most of us; that is a trait we must strive to learn and practice.

**God is never surprised.** In all the painful and unexpected things that happen to us we can take comfort in the fact that nothing ever surprises God. He knows when something (pleasant or unpleasant) is going to happen to us. And yet, most times, we have to go through the experience. God knows more than just the occurrence, He knows how it will affect us and in His wisdom allows us to pass through many dark valleys (and bee stings) that we might grow closer to Him, grow in our faith and dependence on Him and also be a source of encouragement and comfort to those who go through similar experiences. So, trust in the God who is never surprised and every surprise that we encounter will be a step that we take to becoming the person God wants us to be. Sometimes sweet and sometimes stinging, each lesson will draw us closer to the God who is never surprised.

**Jaichand Sudershan**

*Jaichand serves as a pastor of the Bangalore Evangelical Free Church*

“The LORD is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my God, my stronghold in whom I take refuge, my shield, the glory of my salvation and my high tower.”

Psalm 18:2

## WORDS OF WONDER: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE SING?

Some Christians think music supersedes the word, both in its significance and effect. Others think that music undermines the word. But God himself wants them together. He gave us music to serve the word. How music does this is the theme of this message.

### Three Ways Singing Serves the Word

#### 1) *Singing can help us remember words.*

Ever notice how easy it is to recall the words of songs you haven't heard for 20 years? We store literally hundreds, even thousands of songs in our memory vaults. Music has an unusual mnemonic power. We remember patterns in music much better than patterns in words alone. Rhyme, meter and song are the most powerful mnemonic devices. They govern and restrict the way we say words and the time it takes to say them. Notice in Deuteronomy 31 that God uses music to help his people remember his words.

#### *Implications*

1. In the church we should use effective melodies, that is, melodies that people are able to remember and that they want to remember. And both familiar and new melodies have their place among the people of God. Some great hymn lyrics have been ruined by new melodies and others have been revived by it.

2. We should sing words God wants us to remember. It matters not only that we sing but also what we sing. Colossians 3:16 - It is the word of Christ, the gospel, that should dwell in us richly as we sing. The largest portion of our singing content should be the truths that we are responding to, not just words about the effect that truth has on us. Also, the lyrics of our songs should reflect the broad themes of Scripture. Ask yourself, If the teaching of our church was limited to the songs we sing, what would our people know?

3. We should seek to memorize songs. Don't be too dependant upon screens or hymn books.

#### 2) *Singing can help us engage the words emotionally.*

Music is a language of emotion in every culture of every age. It is capable of effecting us in profound and subtle ways (like when Saul's spirit was calmed by David's harp). Why does music affect us deeply? One reason is its associations. In our culture, a fast song in a major key is usually associated with happiness, whereas a slow song in a minor key is associated with sadness. Music can also bring forth old associations of things that happened in certain periods or experiences in our lives.

Musical skill also has a role in affecting us deeply. If it is played well it can affect us to a deeper degree, whereas poorly done music can be distracting or less effective. Music helps us engage emotionally with the words we're singing also by stretching things out. It gives us time to think about the words more carefully. Consider the repetition of Psalm 136 or the hymn "It Is Well." Through repetition the words and emotions are amplified.

#### *Implications:*

1. We need a broad emotional range in the songs we sing: reverence, awe, repentance, grief, joy, celebration, etc. The jubilant triumph of Christ's victory over sin cannot be duly communicated in an acappella hymn.

2. We don't need to pit different styles or traditions against one another. They each serve to help us in different ways.

3. Know that there is a difference between being emotionally moved and spiritually enlightened. Music has a voice but we're not always sure what that voice is saying. It can make us feel peaceful, but it can't tell us that the

Lord is our shepherd or that Jesus endured God's wrath in our place to bring us eternal peace with God.

4. Singing should be an emotional event. And they should be religious affections. We won't always be moved in the same way or to the same effect when we sing, but when the emotions aren't there we should repent and cry out for mercy to feel them appropriately again. God is worthy of our highest, purest, and strongest emotions. Singing helps express and unite them. Singing without emotion is an oxymoron. Vibrant singing enables us to connect truth about God with passion for that truth. We can sing theologically profound truths and not be affected. But none of that changes the fact that God wants to use music to help break through the apathy and hardness of our heart and engage him emotionally.

### *3) Singing can help us use words to demonstrate and express our unity.*

The first two points can be accomplished when we sing by ourselves, but this point needs others. People sing together in the strangest places: rock concerts, sporting events, birthdays, weddings, funerals. Singing together tends to bind us together. It enables us to spend extended periods of times expressing the same thoughts and passions. And when it comes to the church, it has significant implications.

Scripture doesn't only speak about congregational singing--God can be honored when we sing alone or when soloists sing in the church. But it is clear that the dominant theme of Scripture is believers singing together. Jesus died to redeem a universal choir, and every individual voice matters. We are not called to listen to others sing or to sing by ourselves. We are called to sing together. The question is not, "Do you have a voice?" The question is, "Do

you have a song?" If you're redeemed by Christ's cross then you do have a song.

### *Implications*

1. We should sing songs that unite rather than divide the church. We can appreciate the diverse musical styles and genres, but we shouldn't try and make church worship "something for everybody." There should be a unifying musical center that focuses on the sound of the people themselves. God commands us to worship him with instruments, but the majority of the commands tell us to worship him in song. Instruments are only there to aid the singing. So if you never sing without instruments, you should start singing acappella at times.

2. Musical creativity in the church has functional limits. Your iPod shouldn't be the starting point for selecting songs to sing together. We want to pursue a creativity that is un-distracting and not just innovative.

3. We must be clear that it is the gospel and not music that unites us. We should guard against gathering together in churches based upon our musical preferences rather than according to our unity in the gospel. The gospel is what unites us. Ephesians 2:14 - Jesus has united us, not our music. I don't connect with people at my church because they have the same song selection on their iPod. I love them because Christ has enabled me to love them. The host of heaven is not united in their style of music but in the words of their song (Revelation 5:9-10). What kind of music do people from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation sing? We don't know! But the Bible tells us what the focus should be: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. The Lamb must always be central to our corporate singing. Why? Because Jesus is the one who makes it possible. God doesn't hear us on account of our skill in singing. He hears it because it is in his Son. We shouldn't look for music to move us to sing.

What kind of music do people from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation sing? We don't know! But the Bible tells us what the focus should be: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. The Lamb must always be central to our corporate singing.

God has already done something worthy of moving us. How can we then keep from singing?

4. Ask yourself, What are we doing to encourage our church in corporate singing? What are we doing to discourage it? Our singing should more and more resemble what we see in Revelation.

Whatever we experience here in terms of the active presence of God, it is a mere glimmer of what is to come. In the new heavens and earth we will sing gloriously and for a long time. Our thoughts and passions will be focused, and we will have the strength to give him the glory he deserves. What a glorious thing to anticipate that time! And part of our singing here on earth is anticipation of what is to come.

### Bob Kauflin

[Http://www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org)

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Frances Jane Crosby was born into a family of strong Puritan ancestry on March 24, 1820. As a baby, she had an eye infection which an incompetent doctor treated by placing hot poultices on her red and inflamed eyelids. As a result scars formed on the eyes, and Fanny became blind for life. A few months later, Fanny's dad became ill and died. Mercy Crosby, widowed at 21, hired herself out as a maid while Grandmother Eunice Crosby took care of little Fanny.

Fanny's grandmother took on the education herself and became the girl's eyes, vividly describing the physical world. She read and carefully explained the Bible to her, and she always emphasized the importance of prayer. When Fanny became depressed because she couldn't learn as other children did, Grandmother taught her to pray to God for knowledge. A landlady of the Crosby's also had an important role in Fanny's development. Mrs. Hawley helped

Fanny memorize the Bible, and often the young girl learned five chapters a week. She developed a memory which often amazed her friends. Her blindness had simply forced her to develop her memory and her powers of concentration more. Blindness never produced self-pity in Fanny and she did not look on her blindness as a terrible thing. At eight years old she composed this little verse:

*Oh, what a happy child I am, although I cannot see!  
I am resolved that in this world contented I will be!  
How many blessings I enjoy that other people don't!  
So weep or sigh because I'm blind, I cannot - nor I won't.*

In 1834 Fanny entered the New York Institute for the Blind at the age of twelve and went on to teach there for twenty-three years. She became somewhat of a celebrity at the school and was called upon to write poems for almost every conceivable occasion.

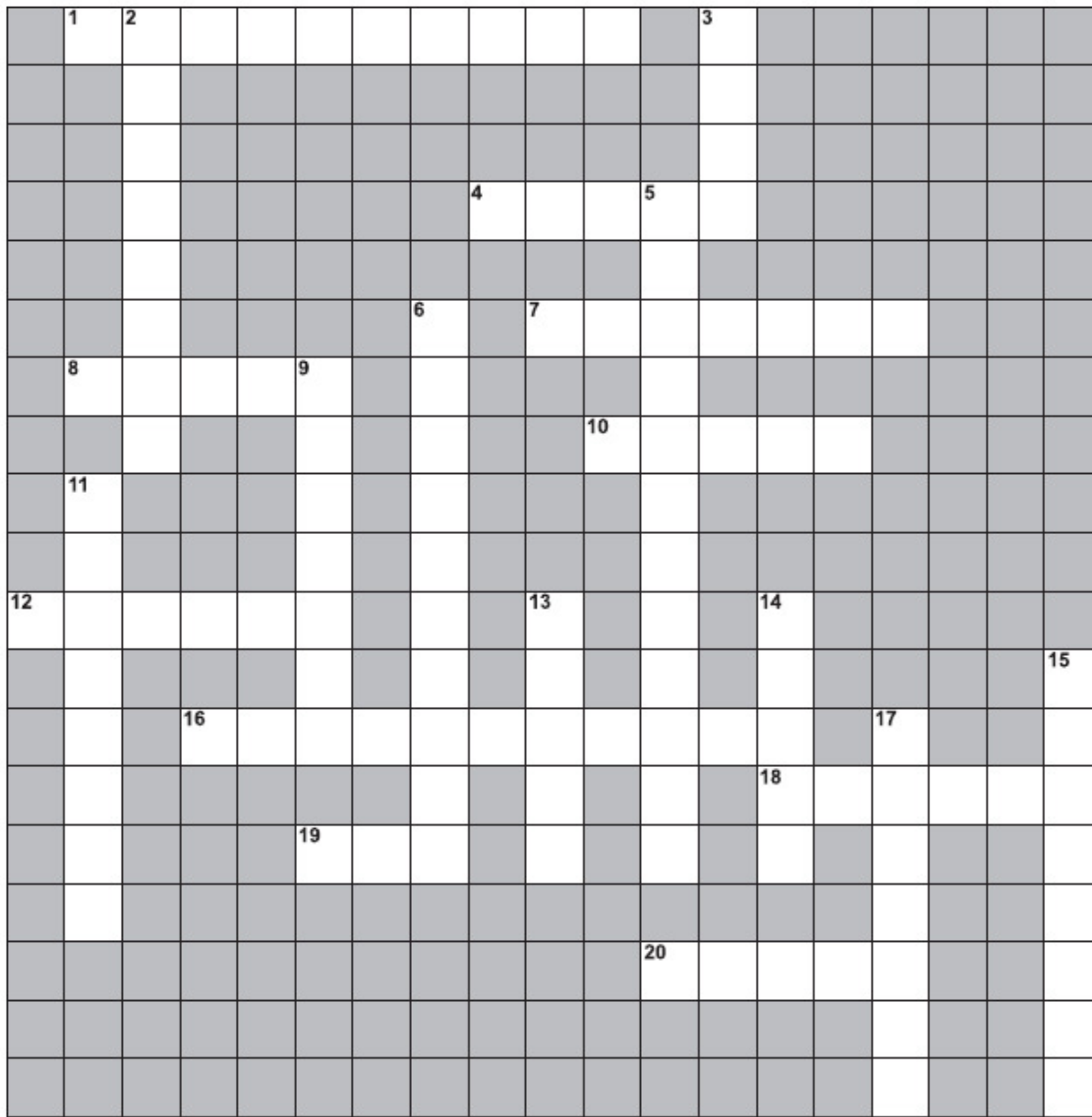
After her marriage, Fanny found her true vocation in writing hymns. She had an agreement with the publishers Bigelow and Main to write 3 hymns a week for use in their Sunday school publications. Though Fanny could write complex poetry as well as improvise music of classical structure, her hymns were aimed at bringing the message of the Gospel to people who would not listen to preaching. Whenever she wrote a hymn, she prayed God would use it to lead many souls to Him.

In her own day, the evangelistic team of Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey effectively brought Fanny Crosby's hymns to the masses. Today many of her hymns continue to draw souls to their Savior for both salvation and comfort: "Blessed Assurance," "All the Way My Savior Leads Me," "To God Be the Glory," "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior," "Safe in the Arms of Jesus," "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross," "I Am Thine, O Lord," and many more.

Though her hymn writing declined in later years, Fanny was active in speaking engagements and missionary work among America's urban poor almost until the day of her death in 1915. She sought to bring others to her Savior through her hymns and through her personal life as well.

**Adapted from: Eaec.org**

# CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

1. What John had on the island of Patmos
4. Getting what we don't deserve
7. In the beginning
8. He shall save his people from their sins
10. Not getting what we deserve
12. What we must offer God
16. Something that can cause us to think & act differently
18. Second in sixty six
19. What separates man from God
20. That which is a gift of God

## DOWN

2. God with us
3. What God showed the world
5. What we do not have in Christ
6. What we must flee from
9. Who we were before Christ
11. Union that God initiated
13. That which is deceitful above all things
14. The love of which causes evil
15. One who is obedient to the master
17. What we do when we sing

Send your answers to [soulconnect2india@gmail.com](mailto:soulconnect2india@gmail.com). Names of the first 5 entrants will be published.





Twenty years ago, I drove a cab for a living. One day I was responding to a call from a small brick fourplex in a quiet part of town. I assumed I was being sent to pick up some party-ers, or someone who had just had a fight with a lover, or a worker heading to an early shift at some factory for the industrial part of town. When I arrived at 2:30 a.m., the building was dark except for a single light in a ground floor window. Under these circumstances, many drivers would just honk once or twice, wait a minute, then drive away. But I had seen too many impoverished

people who depended on taxis as their only means of transportation. Unless a situation smelled of danger, I always went to the door. This passenger might be someone who needs my assistance, I reasoned to myself. So I walked to the door and knocked. "Just a minute," answered a frail, elderly voice. I could hear something being dragged across the floor. After a long pause, the door opened. A small woman in her 80s stood before me. She was wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it, like somebody out of a 1940s movie. By her side was a small nylon suitcase. The apartment looked as if no one had lived in it for years. All the furniture was covered with sheets. There were no clocks on the walls, no knickknacks or utensils on the counters. In the corner was a cardboard box filled with photos and glassware.

"Would you carry my bag out to the car?" she said. I took the suitcase to the cab, then returned to assist the woman. She took my arm and we walked slowly toward the curb. She kept thanking me for my kindness. "It's nothing", I told her. "I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother treated". "Oh, you're such a good boy", she said. When we got in the cab, she gave me an address, then asked, "Could you drive through downtown?" "It's not the shortest way," I answered quickly. "Oh, I don't mind," she said. "I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice". I looked in the rearview mirror. Her eyes were glistening. "I don't have any family left," she continued. "The doctor says I don't have very long." I quietly reached over and shut off the meter. "What route would you like me to take?" I asked.

For the next two hours, we drove through the city. She showed me the building where she had once worked as an elevator operator. We drove through the neighborhood where she and her husband had lived when they were newlyweds. She had me pull up in front of a furniture warehouse that had once been a ballroom where she had gone dancing as a girl. Sometimes she'd ask me to slow in front of a particular building or corner and would sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing.

As the first hint of sun was creasing the horizon, she suddenly said, "I'm tired. Let's go now." We drove in silence to the address she had given me. It was a low building, like a small convalescent home, with a driveway that passed under a portico. Two orderlies came out to the cab as soon as we pulled up. They were solicitous and intent, watching her every move. They must have been expecting her. I opened the trunk and took the small suitcase to the door. The woman was already seated in a wheelchair. "How much do I owe you?" she asked, reaching into her purse. "Nothing," I said. "You have to make a living," she answered. "There are other passengers," I responded. Almost without thinking, I bent and gave her a hug. She held onto me tightly. "You gave an old woman a little moment of joy," she said. "Thank you." I squeezed her hand. Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life. I didn't pick up any

more passengers that shift. I drove aimlessly, lost in thought. For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk. What if I had refused to take the run, or had honked once, then driven away? On a quick review, I don't think that I have done anything more important in my life. We're conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But great moments often catch us unaware--beautifully wrapped in what others may consider a small one.

**People May Not Remember Exactly What You Did, Or What You Said, But They Will Always Remember How You Made Them Feel.**

Narrated by: **Kent Nerburn** ([gatewaytojesus.com](http://gatewaytojesus.com))



## VITAL GLOBAL STATS FOR PRAISE & PRAYER

▶ There are approximately 6,900 total languages in the world, about 400 of which are considered "nearly-extinct" per the Ethnologue. Approximately 2,500 languages have some or all of the Bible.

▶ Of the world's approximately 6,900 languages, 4,785 have at least one of the following: Bible portions, the Jesus Film, Christian radio, or Gospel recordings. Total speakers of these languages is 6,200,000,000, which

represents over 95% of the world's population.

▶ About 4,400 languages are without Scripture portions available, with some 634,000,000 speakers. Translation projects are in progress in an estimated 1,600 languages that currently are without adequate Scriptures. There are about 2,500 languages needing Bible translation work to begin.

▶ There are 2,150 languages with the Jesus film available and 4,865 with Gospel recordings available (plus approximately 2000 language recordings that have not had Ethnologue codes assigned yet). 2,115 languages have none of these resources available, with about 195,000,000 speakers.

▶ 90% of the world's people, if they have an internet cafe and the funds, can hear the gospel in a language they understand.

▶ There is a 90% chance that a foreign Christian meeting a non-believer overseas could find a gospel recording on-line and give it as a gift to any non-believer they meet and it would be understood.

▶ Only 3% of the world's people speak a language that does not yet have a Gospel recording.

▶ About 40% of the world's language groups (divided by country) still do not have any Gospel recording in their language (approximately 4100 total language groups when divided by country.)

**[Joshuaproject.net](http://Joshuaproject.net)**

“ We never know how God will answer our prayers, but we can expect that He will get us involved in His plan for the answer. If we are true intercessors, we must be ready to take part in God's work on behalf of the people for whom we pray. ” **Corrie Ten Boom**

## HONEY OR MONEY?

**T**oday many families are ruined by a giant killer called money. The craze for affluence and fear of security are driving many couples to look for better job prospects that pay a 'little bit more'. Many a couple do not have time for each other. Husbands and wives sometimes meet each other only on Sundays. For the children, the father looks like 'uncle papa' and for the neighbors the husband looks like a weekend lover. For a 'little bit more,' couples are today, willing to live separately (in two places) for years together. Most think that wealth, houses, cars, life insurance policies, and children's education are the most

important things in life. How sad that for just a 'little bit more' many lose the whole joy of family togetherness, food, fun and fellowship. How true is God's word which says, "For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil." (1Tim.6:10).



One of the major purposes of family life is to remove loneliness (Gen. 2:18). We are created for companionship and relationship. Marriage is God's answer to man's (woman's) loneliness. That is why of all the relationships, the husband and wife relationship is very intimate and unique. Even a temporary separation is very painful. We do not feel deep pain when we leave our parents in search of a job.

It does not hurt us much when a friend leaves us on transfer. But, even a three-day tour away from home is depressing. We long to go back home. To be loved and to give love is a basic emotional need and the love of a spouse is very special.

Many people who compromise on their family life for 'a little bit more' end up struggling with loneliness. In many cases, loneliness leads to extra-marital affairs, addiction to pornography, discreet fantasies, and flirting (sexting) with the opposite gender. Once people get addicted to such behaviors (coping mechanisms), it is difficult to bring them out of the bondage. No wonder, today 60 to 70 percent of all divorces are because of unfaithfulness in marriage. Godliness that leads to contentment is what we need to pursue today. Do not be conformed or influenced by the patterns of this world (Rom. 12:1). Learn to live with what you have. Do not compromise your family joy and peace for some extra peanuts. Our prosperity and security are in the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ alone. Honey over money or money over honey? The choice is yours!

### Peter Premkumar

*Peter and his wife Sally are involved in marriage counseling, based in Pondicherry. They head FACT - Family Assistance Through Counseling and Training (factpondicherry@gmail.com)*



This monument that stands on the shores at Tranquebar on the East Coast of South India is a memorial to one man's passionate commitment to take the Gospel to unreached lands. Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg and his fellow missionary Heinrich Plütschau landed on this very spot on July 9 1706. Tranquebar at the time was a Danish colony. When the missionaries arrived here they were not allowed to enter the territory. They were made to stand under the scorching sun for almost a day. They were later taken in by an Indian. Ziegenbalg served in India until his death on February 23, 1719 at the age of 36.

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