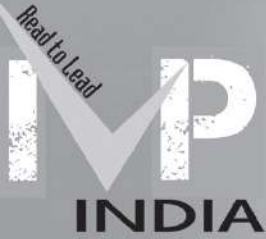


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My Role in Nation Building





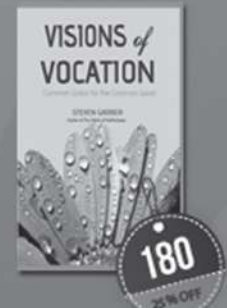
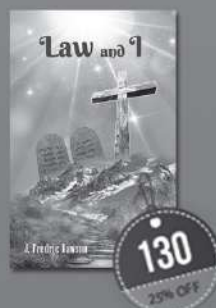
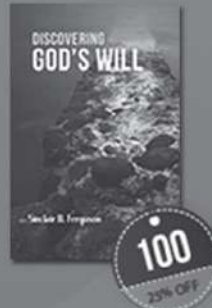
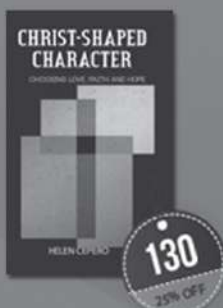
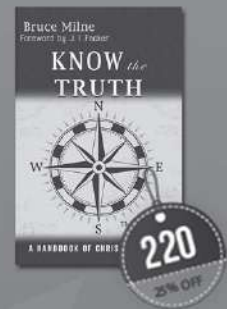
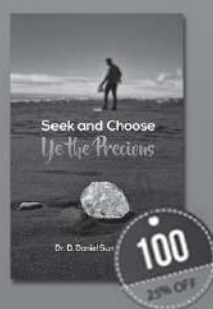
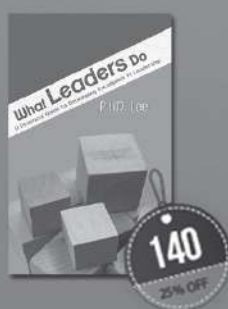
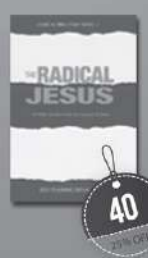
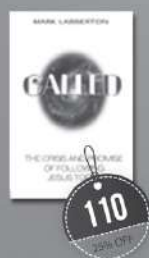
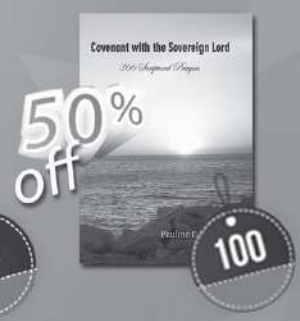
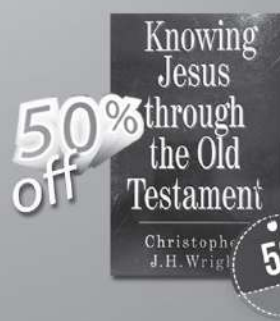
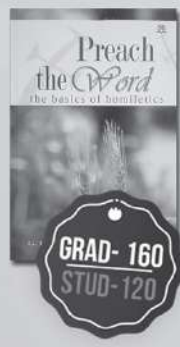
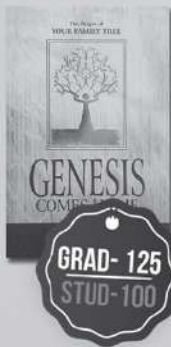
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SHOULD I BUILD?

When God called Israel to be His people, He gave the Land of Israel as a gift to them and it signified God's rule. God is the owner of the Land and the Life of God's people in the Land as stewards is significant. The Land is ethnologically prospective, ethically crucial and universally attractive, even now!

But the greatest question of all times is, 'Did Israel live up to what God expected of them?' The Scripture records how much they suffered when they failed to fulfill their role 'Light to the Nations' (Is. 42:6). When I am born as an Indian, the land I live is a gift from God because it belongs to Him (Ps. 24:1). This encompasses both privilege and responsibility. I am a steward of whatever God gives to me. It is very interesting to note how men and women of God have sacrificed their lives to make India what it is now. The development in health industry, education and technology take their roots in the sacrifice of God-fearing men and women of God.

You will be fascinated to read articles narrating a few stories of how God used a few individuals in developing our nation. True, there were challenges, there are and still will be. But they explain how God helped them overcome and how God continues to equip His own to achieve the intended purpose. The world history has shown many examples of transformation, such as alleviation of poverty, green revolution, upliftment of the oppressed, eradication of illiteracy and abolition of racial distinction. Most of these were made possible by people who had committed their lives to the Living God.

Should we not continue these good works in the nation God has placed us? It would not be good to wait for someone else to do it. If I had experienced the transformation it is mandatory that I commit to transform!

I thank all the readers for your continued support for the magazine. I bid good bye to Campus Link as the Honorary Editor! Sis. Jessy Jacob will be the Honorary Editor from the forthcoming issue. We covet your continued support.



T. Athma Soruban

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INSIDE

JUSTICE, RIGHTEOUSNESS, COMPASSION: GOD'S PLAN FOR NATION BUILDING . . **5**

- ASHISH ALEXANDER

NATION-BUILDING – GOD, DEROZIO, AND I **10**

- SHASHANK S. RAWAT

BUILDING THE NATION FROM ITS ROOTS **13**

- K. PAUL THOMAS

BUILD INDIVIDUALS, BUILD THE NATION **17**

- STUTI FARMER

CHILDREN OF GOD: TRUE PATRIOTS OR ANTI-NATIONALS **21**

- CAROLYN SAMUEL

THE HANDS THAT BUILT INDIA . . . **24**

- R P DWIVEDI

GOD'S HEARTBEAT FOR THE NATIONS **30**

- JESSY JACOB



Justice, Righteousness, Compassion: God's Plan for Nation Building

India is a multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic marvel of a nation. We have demolished the myth that we need one race, one language, or one religion to be a unified people. Our country is home to some 2,000 different ethnicities, speaking close to 450 languages, following all the four major religions of the world, and more. But we have demonstrated that *a desire to be one country* is the most crucial element to be a nation. To be honest, the seven decades of our indepen-

dence have not been all glorious. There were some ugly upheavals, such as linguistic agitations, unrest in the states, the Emergency of 1975 — all of which have left a deep scar on our collective psyche. Besides, there have been some deep-seated and perennial maladies, such as casteism, communalism, and corruption, for which we have not found any permanent solution.

In the light of all these complexities, our unity, as a nation remains

Lead

our greatest achievement. The question, however, may be asked whether it is not merely a political achievement that has nothing to do with the biblical mandate. Bible, many Christians believe, has nothing to do with earthly order; it is merely an instruction book that prepares us for heaven. How many of us have heard this ludicrous expansion of the acronym B-I-B-L-E: *Best Instruction Before Leaving Earth*? If Bible is about *leaving earth*, then committing ourselves to nation-building is an undesirable entanglement. Psalm 24:1 says "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (KJV). If the earth and its many blessings belong to God, if the world and its inhabitants are the creation and possession of God, then should Christians invest their time and energy in proclaiming only intergalactic escape plans? God wants us to be committed to the habitation He places us in. Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden to "dress it and keep it", that is, to develop it and look after it (Gen. 2:15 KJV). In Genesis 10 and 11, we see God's hand in creating nations, which in those initial times were uniform in their composition, with people belonging to the same language and same clan. In Genesis 12, God tells us, Abraham, that he would give him his land, separate

from his kinsmen. Common ethnicity, thus, is not an absolute condition for a nation. In Genesis 13, Abraham and Lot divide territories between themselves. Later, out of Abraham, the Hebrew community was formed. But this community, or "nation", was driven into slavery. They lived in Egypt; they had no rights there because they were not citizens of that nation. For them to be a nation, they must have their land to which they must be voluntarily committed. So through Moses, and later Joshua, God led them to Canaan, a land which they could call their own. During that journey, God taught them how to be a nation. It is in Deuteronomy 16 that we see God's clear commands to the slaves to turn themselves into a nation. It would be a great accomplishment to occupy the land, but more important was the culture that they must build on that land. God commanded the Hebrews to observe the month of Abib in which the "Lord thy God brought thee out of Egypt" (Deut 16:1 KJV).

Remembering their historical escape, the great act of God in the past through which they gained their liberation from slavery, was necessary; but, it wasn't sufficient to build a nation. The Hebrew slaves on their journey towards freedom and sovereignty must also learn

how to reflect God's character in their new existence as free people.

You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns that the Lord your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous. Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the Lord your God is giving you (Deut. 16:18–20 ESV).

Justice must be at the heart of this new community, emerging out of 400 years of slavery. Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey, was still only a hardware that would sustain a free people, a free society, only if it operates on the software of justice and righteousness.

It is Joshua who finally brings people to the Promised Land and helps them settle down. Each tribe is assigned their land and they are instructed that they will not cross their boundary to encroach upon the neighboring settlements. Borders are sacrosanct, and within their boundaries, justice and righteousness must rule. The rest of the Old Testament narrates how the emerging nation of Israel loses its way, gets divided into two separate

nations of Israel and Judah, and suffers exile and ignominy for their disobedience and stubbornness.

The unfinished agenda of the Old Testament, that is, the reign of justice and righteousness is given a renewed push in the New Testament when Jesus commands his disciples to go to all nations and make disciples. He had already taught them to pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Mt. 6:10 KJV), but now he commanded them to model it for the rest of the nations and teach them to show the key element that builds a nation: compassion. Compassion was the update in the cultural software of justice and righteousness. Justice is subverted because people are indifferent to each other. The pain of one person is not felt by the other. The need of a person is overlooked by the one who can fulfill that need. An enquirer asked Jesus what, according to Him, was the greatest commandment from God. Jesus told him the parable of the Good Samaritan

The biblical idea of nation-building can be said to hinge on the three principles of justice, righteousness, and compassion. People who are free, truly free, truly set free by the Truth (Jn 8:32) must build a culture that flows out of these principles.

Lead

Paul, the great evangelist who was consumed by the passion to spread the gospel, who undertook many perilous missionary journeys to take the message of salvation to the farthest places he could reach, was nevertheless committed to developing a culture of justice, righteousness, and compassion. For instance, he charged Titus to put in order things that remained and appoint elders to further create a new culture (Tit. 1:5). The biblical mandate was for the salvation of souls and also for reformation of the culture.

Reformation of the 16th century and the great missionary movement of the subsequent centuries all testify to the fact that God's will is to build nations, and within each of those nations, the top priority must be to seek God, as the Bible says in Acts 17:26 – 27 "And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way towards him and find him. Yet he is not far from each one of us."

The great missionary movement of the 19th and 20th centuries made a substantial and foundational contribution to the creation of modern India. Gospel of Jesus Christ—directly

and indirectly—triggered the comprehensive transformation of life, institutions, and morals on the Indian subcontinent. Christian missionaries, Indian Christians, and Indians from other religious backgrounds collaborated to make a fresh start. Before Indians began fighting for political freedom, they were wholeheartedly engaged in social reform. That generation of Indians had understood that without social reform, political freedoms would be untenable. Social evils had to be eradicated, collective or public spirit had to be cultivated and individual character had to be sanctified. After 74 years of independence, it is time for us to recognize that India is a nation not merely because of political freedom or national sovereignty; it is so, also because we have been committed to the social freedoms of our citizens that guarantees them a life of dignity, security, and justice.

In the light of the above, what can we conclude about our role in nation-building? As Christians, we need to have an unwavering commitment to justice, righteousness, and compassion. Whether it was God talking to the liberated slaves in Deuteronomy 16:27 or Paul instructing his spiritual son in Titus 1:5, the appointment of just and wise judges is a crucial element in creating a godly culture of justice,

righteousness, and compassion. By “judges” we mean not only those administering justice in courts of law but all people responsible for administration. The church must take it as a mandate to prepare people to take up leadership positions in the society, who will serve the nation as servant-leaders—a model perfectly illustrated by Lord Jesus Christ himself. Christian youth must aspire to be not only “worship leaders” within the four walls of the church but also “intellectual leaders” of the larger society. This they must have a desire to serve the nation through civil services, judiciary, media, and academia. Therefore, we build the nation by praying for, being and

appointing the right kind of people for the right kind of positions. And fundamentally, we build the nation by *becoming* people who can be considered worthy of worthy appointments.



Dr Ashish Alexander is Dean, School of Film and Mass Communication and Head, Department of English, SHUATS, Allahabad. He has freelanced for Indian Express and worked for Dainik Bhaskar. His articles have featured in The Tribune, Daily Post, Madras Courier and Caravan magazine. He has worked PEARSON and FORWARD Press magazine for a few years. His current research interests include intellectual history of modern India. He is married to a journalist and has two children.

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Nation-building – God, Derozio, and I



Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, despite what the name may suggest, is one of the pioneers of Indian Nationalism, a pioneer of the Bengal renaissance, and is considered by many to be the architect of modern Bengal. English Literature students would know him for his poems such as “The Harp of India” and “To India – My Native Land.” Historians will know how his poetry inspired countless Indians to rise against the colonial powers.

Derozio’s life is fascinating, to say the least. Born in 1809 to a mixed Portuguese and English family, he grew up calling India his native land. In 1826, at the age of seventeen, he joined the erstwhile Hindu College, now known as the Presidency University, not to study but to teach English Literature and History. Yes, you read that right. Surprisingly still, all Derozio had were the next five years to leave a legacy, to do his part in nation-building, because by the age of twenty-two he was dead!

Again, you read that right. A man who died at the age of twenty-two is considered by many to be the architect of Modern Bengal.

His professional life lasted just five years, but it was sufficient to launch a nation into a movement for freedom. One must ask, what exactly did he do? That is where his story connects with what we do as UESI.

In his five years as a teacher, he did three main things. He taught Literature and History, wrote poems, and spent time with his students. Of course, his teaching and writing were captivating, but it was the time he spent with his students that became life-transforming and nation-impacting. In these small group meetings, he challenged his students to look beyond their trivial pursuits of job, security, etc. He guided them to think critically and question the prevailing orthodoxy in Indian society at that time. He organized debates, invited speakers, and equipped his students to speak as well. By doing so, he prepared a generation of Indian thinkers, reformers, and even a pastor (Rev. Krishna Mohan Bannerjee).

In other words, he was (partly) doing the work of a graduate and staff, helping students impact their campus and the nation. So, when I think of this question, "What is my role in nation-building?" Derozio comes to my mind as an example. God used his story to challenge me

during the days when I was praying over my decision to answer God's call to students' ministry.

Derozio attracted his students through his creativity in the form of poems, now we may or may not have that gift, but we all have our lives. May our lives testify God's grace so beautifully that it may shine like a beacon of hope for others. Thus, I see my role in nation-building firstly by being a follower of Christ, by being the salt and the light, or as Paul would say a life worth imitating.

Further, Derozio taught, we also get opportunities to teach. I am quite sure that Derozio taught well or else why would the students be interested. When Jesus spoke, the people listened, they were amazed. May God help us to be faithful students of God's word and His world so that His wisdom is reflected in our teaching. So that the Gospel is preached in all its simplicity and with all its power. To that end, I see my role as a teacher equipped to teach faithfully, and a teacher committed to pray and be well prepared.

Finally, Derozio spent time with students. He mingled with them as one of them. I see my role in nation-building as being a friend of the students God has entrusted me with. My relationship with them

matters, without that relationship all I have are empty words, formal at best, and orders at worst. May the Lord help us to be friends with our students.

Derozio is not considered a legend because of his achievements, his legacy lay in what his mentees (his students) achieved. That is where I see my role foremost. I firmly believe that UESI is not the organization that will transform India, instead, the students of UESI will go on to do things that will transform India. I believe, God is at work in and through our lives to shape one student at a time and by doing so he is preparing the stage for them to be the new movers and shakers of our nation. It is a privilege to join

hands with God in what he is doing.

Derozio may have been a prodigy, most of us may not be as gifted but we have gifts of other kinds. We have the gift of God's grace which we have experienced personally. We have the gift of God's call to serve students as graduates or staff and then we have the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which He gives as he deems fit. So, we are gifted too, let none of us doubt that. We share other similarities with Derozio as well, we work among students. Finally, we also have a ticking clock called "this life." It is time to pray and act now.



Shashank S. Rawat a
UESI staff based in San-
tiniketan, West Bengal
along with his wife Asa
and son Caleb

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Building the Nation from its Roots

I had the privilege of attending the UESI - Kerala Mission Conference held in 1980, which changed my life significantly. I was convinced that the path that the Lord had laid before me was that of social work. Ever since, I had been on the lookout for opportunities to serve the underprivileged people of our society. I realized that only a holistic transformation of the poor and the marginalised could bring about a change in society. When I was working with IFFCO as a Marketing Officer, I was passionate about visiting the rural and neglected corners of the nation and learning about people living at the lowest ebb of society. The book, 'Issues Facing Christians Today' by

John Stott gave further clarity to my conviction that evangelism and social action are like two sides of the same coin.

I shared my conviction with a few friends and seniors in the EGF and after much prayer and discussion, we were led to found an organisation named 'Evangelical Social Action Forum'. It was registered as a charitable society in 1992. Initially, we focused on career guidance for the rural youth, awareness programs on HIV-AIDS, mobilising scholarships for needy students etc. In 1994, I was introduced to the Micro Enterprise Development activities of EFICOR, which was being established in several parts of the

country. I was immediately attracted to the concept of microcredit as that seemed to provide a solution to one of the questions I was struggling with, i.e. how to provide opportunities for the underprivileged people. At EFICOR, God gave me several opportunities to interact with people like Rev. C. B. Samuel, which shaped my theological understanding about a Christian's role in nation building.

In 1995, we launched our Micro Enterprises Development Division (MED), which eventually led to the formation of ESAF Microfinance and Investments Pvt. Ltd. in 2008. Through the MED division, we aimed at strengthening the economy by empowering rural households. We became the pioneers in the State of Kerala when it came to a structured form of lending through mutually trusted Self Help Groups at the village level. One of the learnings in the process was that the poor are more loyal and trustworthy as far as loan repayment is concerned.

From the perspective of nation-building, we have made some silent but revolutionary impacts in the rural hinterlands of the country, like empowering women through entrepreneurship, giving them a voice in the household decision-making, imparting financial literacy on wise spending, facilitating market linkages, providing affordable health care services, taking education to the jungle hinterlands of Jharkhand, launching garments manufacturing in rural areas that can generate employment, etc. We are also empowering the farmers through Farmer Producer Companies and giving them customized products to meet their agricultural requirements. We have crossed many a milestone in nation-building by strictly focusing on our triple bottom line approach to people, planet, and prosperity.

In the field of education, ESAF could make certain contributions through its initiatives in the tribal villages of Jharkhand. An initial survey con-

READERS' RESPONSE

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Hon. Editor

ducted in the district of Dumka revealed that most children had no access to primary education. Many of them were made to work in the coal mines or in the paddy fields. It was a pathetic sight to see little girls selling locally made liquor in the village markets. We realized that giving them opportunity to study was the only way to make a difference. ESAF opened primary schools in the villages which enabled hundreds of students to get primary education. Later, a high school and Skill training Institute were established in Dumka to help the tribal children to continue their education. Another project called 'Balajyothi' was initiated to provide opportunities for rural children to develop their life skills. This project is getting established in the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Assam.

Rural healthcare is another challenge in our country. ESAF focuses on giving awareness to rural communities on basic health and hygiene. Rural women who have proved their leadership capacity are given training to function as health workers (arogyamithras). They impart basic health education to people and help to check blood pressure, blood glucose etc. Similarly, selected women are given training in basic mental health and counselling to function as barefoot

counsellors (manomithras) in the villages.

Our nation-building approach was well recognized when a Social Return on Investments study conducted by an international agency in 2012, revealed that for every Rs. 1 invested in ESAF, Rs. 3.19 was returned in social value. "We build the nation from its roots", was our first major campaign as an NBFC, and the fact that the banking license came soon after this campaign really doubled our joy.

The contribution of ESAF in uplifting the rural economy for more than two decades was well acknowledged by the Reserve Bank of India through an in-principal license to set up a Small Finance Bank in October 2015. ESAF was the only Organization that managed to make the cut from Kerala. The bank finally commenced business on March 10, 2017. As a social entity, we strive to bring financial peace by fighting the partiality of prosperity. Now almost 50 lakh customers are enjoying the benefits of our nation-building efforts. As a bank, we focus on financial inclusion by offering small loans and expanding the banking services to the unbanked areas. At the same time, we stand as a bank for all.

God has placed each one of us in specific situations in our nation. It

is His will that we become 'salt and light' in our communities, addressing the issues that people face. The specific role of everyone depends on one's gifts and talents and the need that God wants one to meet. I believe that recapturing the Biblical concept of God as the Creator and Redeemer who is concerned about the spiritual, material, and social needs of people is the first step in this process. Then we need to prayerfully seek God's will regarding the specific role that God wants

us to fulfill in transforming communities and building the nation.



K. Paul Thomas is the Founder of ESAF group of social enterprises, which includes ESAF Small Finance Bank.

Currently he holds the position of Managing Director & CEO, ESAF Small Finance Bank. He along with his wife, Smt. Mereena Paul, are Members of Kerala Evangelical Graduates fellowship and closely associated with UESI ministry. They are blessed with four children Emy, Alok, Abhishek and Ashish and reside in Thrissur, Kerala.

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MENTAL HEALTH

MY WELL-BEING, OTHERS' WELFARE!

2020 was unprecedented due to the global pandemic. It resulted in the confounding of our style of living. Restrictions and isolations led to fear and anxiety. Coupled with the underlying mental health conditions, people with pre-existing mental health had to

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My well-being, others' welfare!





Build Individuals, Build the Nation

A tiny idea, one small decision, or even a few words you speak today can help build your nation. Building a nation is the process of building or reconstructing the economy, technology, education system, military, democracy, government, and the society. Each of these processes start with the building of people at an individual level and that in turn starts with building oneself. Let us take a few seconds to ponder upon our life, our words,

and our attitude. Are they building up someone or tearing them down?

Your emotions are the result of the things you feed your mind with: Building our nation, discovering our role, and creating something new - they all start with that one idea in our head. Your emotional wellbeing is as important as the other things in your life because “your emotions and thoughts drive your actions”, and what you feed your mind with, drives your emotions in turn. We

all have the choice of feeding our minds with gossips, hurtful words of people, wrong advice, and false hopes on the media or feeding it with the Bread of life, which God has given us - His word which is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword.

The sacrifices of so many men and women who fought for the independence of our country had one thing in common, though they were overwhelmed in pain and agony and were coerced to give up, they did not let these outward circumstances affect their inward emotions eventually leading to their fearless sacrifice for victory. A quote by B.R. Ambedkar reminds us that Freedom of mind is real freedom. Remind yourself daily that "just because a thought exists in your mind it isn't true." Proverbs 23:7 "For as he thinks in his heart, **so is he.**" May the Lord help us to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Him.

Cultivate Empowerment: Empowerment is a sense of authority that one holds, whether male or female, child or adult, rich or poor. It is much needed but still lacking in our country, especially among the women, girls, lower-income and discriminated people, etc. Empowerment is a concept we learn since our school days but I doubt if we ap-

ply that knowledge in real life. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see the most in this world." For instance, several people in day-to-day situations are bullied in college or the workplace because of their clothing or accent. Be the one to raise your voice against this rather than avoiding them. In recent years, the only rising numbers our country has read about in the newspapers are brutal, heinous sexual assaults against women. According to the latest NCRB report, 2019 saw over 4 lakh reported cases of crimes against women, up from 3.78 lakh in 2018 and 3.59 lakh cases in 2017. Doesn't this burn our hearts? If you want to help make your country a safer and a better place, then instead of ignoring this major problem, blaming the victims, or tolerating this inexcusable culture you need to amplify the voices of survivors and educate people around you about this. By standing up for such major causes which can build our country, you can cultivate empowerment and then you will yourself feel empowered.

How do you use the mightiest part of your body? - Proverbs 18:21 reminds us that the tongue has the power of life and death. We need to guard our lips to preserve our lives and the lives of others around us.

A few words uttered by us without assurance or complete information can turn into gossip and hurt people deeply. We are accountable for every word we speak to others. The more we spend time reading God's word, praying, watching quality content on social media, the more wholesome our conversations will be. Think about how your day-to-day conversations with friends in the college or with relatives at gatherings or with people in the workplace have pulled them closer to God? These are famous words by the Nightingale of India, Sarojini Naidu; We want deeper sincerity of motive, a greater courage in speech, and earnestness in action.

Salt and light: Be like salt, adding flavour wherever you go, use it to preserve a godly character, as mentioned in Leviticus 2:13, season your life with salt which you offer to God as a living sacrifice. Ask God's help to shine bright for Him in this dark and fallen world so that the people around us may come to know Jesus. As you study in various colleges of this country, work at certain places and walk through so many campuses, pray that your life may be salt and light wherever you set your foot in this nation. We can spread the love of Jesus by small stepping stones around us such as; Praying for our classmates when they aren't doing very well, extending your

hand to a co-worker who is in need, inviting your non-believing friends to gospel programs, encouraging them by sending weekly Bible verses and personally evangelizing them, helping them improve their spoken English and guide them for a future career, cooking meals for helping out families during desperate times, Spending time with them on occasions such as Christmas and reaching out to them with the gospel. Setting an example of integrity and purity in front of them and abiding by the laws of this nation as responsible citizens, taking care of not just the people around us but also the environment.

The neighbours around us, the crowds on the roads, and the authorities placed above us may not be able to encounter the gospel by reading it but they surely will read our lives. You have been planted in this country for a wonderful purpose by God, so bloom wherever you are planted. Are you being the salt and light for God in this nation? Are you cultivating empowerment among the citizens? Is your overall attitude on your campus, pleasing to God? Is your way of talking to people on the city roads or shopkeepers full of compassion? Are you honest in your profession and working hard in your chosen career? If your words and actions can help build or encourage even one per-

son today, that is not insignificant, that is not in vain. Discover your role in building your nation, start by building one person, I chose to start by first building myself. What about you? God used a simple fisherman like Peter as a rock to build His church on. God used Moses, who was not eloquent in his speech to lead the nation of Israel. God does

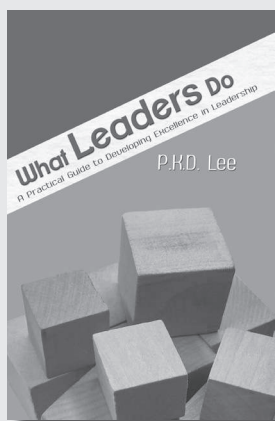
not require your quality, He requires your availability. Do you want to discover your role in building your nation? God is calling you to discover it, are you available?



Stuti Farmer is a student of ICEU Dehradun and a member of UESI Communication & Networking Department

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Children of God: True patriots or Anti-nationals

As Indians, we get goosebumps or highly patriotic when we hear news about valiant soldiers fighting on the frontlines with courage and martyred soldiers who die defending the country from enemies. Similarly, we become patriotic when our national song is played in the Olympic stadium and when sports persons from India win medals at Olympics. We feel very proud talking about them and showering laurels upon them bountifully.

On the other hand, we detest our country when we hear news about social evils existing in our land. Child marriage, child infanticide, child labour, child abuse, dowry,

sexual abuse, domestic abuse, rape, murder, suicide, bribery, addiction to drugs, alcohol and pornography, police brutality, lack of equity in education and employment, discrimination based on caste, class, colour, religion, language and the evil list goes on and on.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, our country was the worst-hit not only in the health care system but also in the economy and education sector. The lack of vaccines and oxygen cylinders showed the poor condition of our healthcare system. The digital divide caused the underprivileged students in the rural areas to stop their education abruptly. Loss of jobs made the

migrant workers get stranded in their places.

Amidst this chaos, our politicians and government were keen on passing bills in the parliament and in conducting election campaigns and elections. As believers, it is very easy to blame the government, media and judiciary for all the mishappening in the country. But how did we contribute towards the upliftment or in the process of alleviating the pain of our country? Have we brought hope to a hopeless soul during this pandemic? These are loaded questions that we need to introspect.

I believe strongly that God has made us Indians for a reason. Over the centuries, missionaries from foreign countries have been coming to India to share the gospel leaving behind the comforts of their home and country. Whereas, in the 21st century, most of the Christian families who are supposed to be salt and light in India, are settling down in foreign countries for financial prospects fulfilling the dream of world-class education and career. The largest unreached group is in India. India is the youngest country in the world since most of its citizens are below the age group of 35 years and the second-most populous country in the world. "The

harvest is plentiful but the workers are few" (Matthew 9:37).

Let the Lord of the harvest move in our hearts to be an instrument for His glory in the places where we live, study and work. Let schools, colleges, universities and hospitals run by churches and mission organizations provide quality education and health care along with the gospel of Lord Jesus Christ. Let churches and Christian organizations in India serve as places of refuge for the lost souls. Let us resolve to bring the light of Christ to people in the darkness yearning for God's love and forgiveness of sin.

Lord Jesus Christ says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). "In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16: 33b).

In a world turning atheistic, we find India to be unique in this aspect because the majority of the people in India are ready to worship human beings as 'God'. They even elevate sports personalities and movie celebrities to the position of 'God'. Though our country is known for piety, devotion and meditation, our people are blinded by the god of

this age from knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As children of God, we become true patriots when we intercede to God for our nation and when we share the gospel with our fellow Indian brothers and sisters. On the contrary, we become pseudo-nationals when we fail to pray and share the gospel light to those who require a loving Saviour in our country. God loves our country and so we as His children should love our country without any reservation. Let this chorus be our prayer for India.

*Shine, Jesus, Shine
Fill this land with the
Father's glory*

*Blaze, Spirit, Blaze
Set our hearts on fire*

*Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with
grace and mercy*

Send forth Your Word

Lord, and let there be light.



Carolyn Samuel is pursuing her research in Holocaust Literature at Lady Doak College. She lives with her husband Godson Samuel in Hyderabad.

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The Hands that Built India

A true Christian is ever a builder, be it an individual, collectively a society or a nation. He is ever engaged in the building of the Kingdom of God - of love, justice, equality, equity, liberty, brotherhood and loving kindness.

The nation building role of Christians in India started when Thomas, the apostle of Christ visited India as early as A.D 52. He was equipped with the message of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father (God) except through Me". This message was a direct answer to India's age-old socio-spiritual Vedic pursuit-

"asato mā sadgamaya
tamasomā jyotir gamaya
mrityormāamritam gamaya".

'From untruth, lead me to truth;
From darkness, lead me to light;
From death, lead me to
immortality'.

(Brihadaranyaka Upanishads 1.3.28)

Thomas was a herald who later paved the way for thousands of missionaries and reformers to come to India and contribute to the best of their abilities in building the modern nation, India. The same Spirit of Christ transformed thousands of natives as well to get involved in nation building using their socio-political and literary skills.

Before the nineteenth century, Indian education was chiefly religious and literary in nature. The Ashrams, Madrasas, Paathshalas and Shrines were the centres where non-formal education was provided. This lacked the tinge of modern formal education. What we know as the formal way of education in schools, colleges and universities today, was not the reality until the advent of the Christian missionaries from 16th century onward in India.

Thrilled with Christ's Spirit, the awakening of national consciousness stimulated many reform movements in India. The noted reformist *Ram Mohan Roy* was impressed by Christ's insistence that love of God must find expression in service of one's fellowmen. *Mahatma Phule* declared Christ's teachings on the equal dignity of all men. *Pandita Ramabai* saw the liberation of Indian womanhood in Christ's attitude towards women. *Mahatma Gandhi* found Jesus as the Prince of all Satyagrahis and wrote, "I shall tell the Hindus: your lives will be incomplete unless you reverently study the teachings of Jesus" (M K Gandhi-The Message of Christ, Bombay 1963, P.42). *Swami Akhilananda* remarked, "The teachings of Jesus are applicable in our daily lives; we go still further to say - "When they are not applied, life is not worth living"

(Swami Akhilananda: Hindu View of Christ, New York, 1949, P.139).

A famous historian R. L. Rawat, in his book on 'History of Indian Education', suggests that India will forever be indebted to the missionaries for the production of textbooks, dictionaries, and grammars, and for their zealous pursuit of educational advancement. Syed Mehmood, in his book -'A History of English Education in India' writes, "The missionaries' great help and energetic efforts must always be recognized as a prominent factor in intellectual progress of India". Likewise, Nurullah and Naik in their famous book-History of Education in India, spell out in terms like, "The missionary work has great value as the pioneer work which led to the building up of modern educational system of India....". Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his famous book "Discovery of India" (pp.317-318) referring about the development of Indian vernacular languages, acknowledges the contribution of the early missionaries saying that "The printing of books and newspapers by the missionaries, together with English- language education, no doubt broke the hold of the classics and allowed regional languages to emerge and blossom".

The foundation of the Santa Fe School in Goa, as early as, in 1540 by the Franciscan missionaries, was the

first ever formal education centre established and raised to the status of a college in 1548 renamed as St. Paul's College. Soon more missionary schools started in various parts of India like, -at Bassein (present Vasai in Palghar District in MS) in 1546, in Cochin in 1549, at Punnaicayil, Tamil Nadu in 1567, in Pondicherry in 1575, 1713, in Madurai in 1595, a High School at Ellacurich in Tamil Nadu in 1731 and a Sanskrit school at Mannanam, Kerala in 1846.

Meanwhile, the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity began to make their mark in the hearts and minds of Indian people by the way of Gospel. By 1818 the Serampur Missionaries established more than 100 schools at a stretch in West Bengal. Slowly the focus shifted to secondary and higher education and that too in English medium. It was during this time that some of the outstanding colleges came into being like- Scottish Church College, Kolkata in 1830, Wilson College Mumbai in 1832, St Xavier's College, Kolkata in 1835, the Madras Christian College in 1837, Noble College at Machilipatnam in 1843, Hislop College, Nagpur in 1844, St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli in 1844, St John's College, Agra in 1850, Christ College, Kanpur in 1866, St, Xavier's College, Mumbai in 1869, Baring Union Christian College, Batala in 1874, St. John's College, Palayam-

kottai in 1878, St. Aloysius College, Mangalore in 1880, St. Stephen's College, New Delhi in 1881, The American College, Madurai in 1881, and St. Joseph's College Bangalore in 1882, all are highly reputed until today. Soon the smaller towns and rural areas caught the attention of missionaries which describes their ability and inclination to understand the need of inclusive and balanced development.

In 1834 it was reported that the women literacy was only 1% in India. This was the time when the women missionaries lifted the baton for Indian women and tried to bring some respect and respite from the age-old bondages. They were the first to promote women's education in India. The first ever Girls' school in India was opened at Kottayam in 1819 and in Kolkata in 1820, followed by Serampore Mission which took the loftiest lead in this regard. The first women college, namely Isabella Thoburn College,



Lucknow, UP started in 1886 with a noble motto “We Receive to Give”. The inception of women education marked a great breakthrough in transforming the Indian society at large enabling the lady leaders in all walks of lives.

The field of medicine is another area where Christian community made a thumping contribution by establishing two medical colleges, one the Christian Medical College Hospital, Ludhiana, founded by Dr Edith Brown in 1893 and the other, the Christian Medical College Hospital, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, which grew out

of Dr Ida Scudder’s roadside clinic in 1895. Both these colleges are even today the capstones of medical education in India and are famous for high quality medical care.

They also tried to upscale the hands of farmers by establishing huge institutions like Allahabad Agriculture College in 1910 and Bethel Agriculture Fellowship in Salem, Tamil Nadu in the early 1960s with the idea of “rural reconstruction”.

It was in 1556 that the Jesuits missionary established the first Printing Press in Goa at St. Paul’s College.

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The Christian communities not only contributed in bringing about the modern and inclusive education and awareness in general with the values of liberty, equality and fraternity in Indian society but also participated in freedom movement from the beginning. It was A O Hume who founded the 'Indian National Congress' in 1885 which later became a prime political party for the national freedom movement. Indian Christians were heavily involved in Indian National Congress and Indian Freedom movement. The All India Conference of Indian Christians advocated for 'SWARAJ' and opposed the partition of India.

This has been the historical trajectory of Christians' roles in the making of Modern India. Equally important is what roles they are and would be playing in the development of self-reliant India which is free from all linguistic, gender, religious, regional, majority-minority biases, shaping her in the model of the kingdom of God. Our vision is for transforming India through transformed students and youths possessing the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of transformation being the Spirit of God works through believers and followers of Christ alone. For the all-round development of the nation India, filled with the Spirit

and attitude of Christ, they should lead her from all fronts with the best of their abilities and characters, by being exemplary leaders in all walks of lives. A transformed nation can be established only by the transformed people of God. Therefore, our Christian youths need to reach all heights and positions, be it civil, judiciary, political, industrial, arts and so on, with Christ-like, Christ-taught servant leadership attitude by transforming the system within and without to fulfil the purpose of Jesus Christ and the aspirations of people of granting and receiving the "fullness of life" (John 10:10).

If we are proud of our forefathers' services and attitudes towards our people and nation building who did so in spite of all disregard, shall we not give an opportunity to our descendants to be proud of our roles in nation building too, no matter what berated treatment we receive from the world in spite of our being good to them, in and for Christ?



R P Dwivedi, Bhopal Egf president and formerly a District Education Officer in Govt. of MP, is an educationist, blogger, preacher of Christ in indigenous manner who took voluntary retirement to be more available for ministry. He resides in Bhopal and is deeply involved in students' ministry



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God's Heartbeat for the Nations

Let justice and mercy flow like 'a river' is the heartbeat of God for the nations! God raised different leaders, judges, and prophets time and again to warn people about their evil ways and to turn to God. Prophets played an important role in the history of Israel. Amos was one of the Twelve Minor Prophets lived in the 8th c. BCE, stood for social justice. He appeared on the scene in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II who ruled Israel for long 41 years when both Israel and Judah enjoyed relative peace and prosperity (2 Ki 14, 15, 2Ch 26).

Context of Amos' Time:

Some of the people enjoyed great wealth, but others experienced

crushing poverty. The poor were oppressed, cheated, and exploited and their rights were denied. Immorality of every kind was openly and unashamedly practiced. Drunkenness, adultery, licentiousness, and self-indulgence had rotted the moral fibre of the nation. Prosperity led to Idolatry, luxury, forgetting God, disparity between the rich and the poor. The ruling elite (not more than 2% of the population) controlled up to half or more of the total goods and services and lived at the cost of the peasants. Forced labour and the burden fell on the low land farmers. Heavy taxation on the peasants to maintain the military set ups, confiscation of their inherited land

by revenue charges and taxes, resulted in alienation from the land. Human dignity was equalled to silver and a pair of sandals; they trampled the needy, skimping the measure, boosting the price, and cheating with dishonest scales. They were so greedy that they were impatient to get over the Sabbath saying, "When will the Sabbath be ended"? Their morality was at stake (2:7), father & son using the same girl and Israelite men went to pagan temple and participated in temple prostitution. Their judiciary was corrupt (5:7). Instead of administering justice, they turned it into bitter poison (6: 12). The leaders manipulated the courts and turned out those who wanted to speak against injustice (5:10, 13), oppressing the poor charging high rents from the tenants and if they approach the court for justice the wealthy landowners bribe the judges. They used this ill-gotten money to build mansions for themselves and to live in luxury.

Message of Amos:

He had no prophetic tradition (Am.7.14); but he was called by the Lord and sent with a message to communicate without dilution which was risky. He addressed the pagan nations for their cruel acts like sin of slave trade, oppression, war, murder, atrocity against

women (ripped open the pregnant women for extending their territory). Jews were very happy for God's punishment on the surrounding nations. But Amos speaks of God's impartial justice to his own people! Amos warned Judah & Israel against the harmonious order of their communal life and the judgment was based on the law. He challenged the system, the exploitation of the poor, their moral degradation, their religious hypocrisy, and their corrupt Judiciary. Their worship and singing were just a noise in God's ears (ritual), used religion to abuse their power, corrupted leaders, promoted social injustice than challenging it, indulged in idolatry (making their own altars, choosing their own priests). Amos challenged their religious traditions to practical ethical living and warned against their religious show off.

Amos showed a heart for the oppressed and the voiceless in the world. He listened to God, he knew his context well, addressed the issues boldly with convictions and reminded the people of the law of God's retributive justice with a call to lament and repent and to return to Him by changing their ways.

Context Now:

Is our society better than the then society? We see so much of poverty in our country despite the resources

Bible Study

we have. The poor are exploited in so many ways, be it human trafficking, immorality, confiscation of land for setting up industries and malls, lack of basic facilities, not getting the due wages, commercialization of education including Christian Institutions, privatization of government sectors, poor denied justice and so on. One side the elite rich living in luxury whereas the other end many die even of hunger. India's richest 1% of the population hold 42.5% of national wealth while the bottom 50%, the majority of the population, owns a mere 2.8%. (Economic Times, 20-Jan-2020). The rich becoming richer at the cost of the poor is a reality in India. There is no fair distribution of the nation's wealth and equal rights for every human. We heard the plight of migrant labourers and the poor people in our country during the pandemic. Many other gruesome practices like modern slavery, including forced labor, forced marriage, child labor, flesh trade, rapes even by close relatives, scams, killings, lies, dishonesty, caste, class and gender-based atrocities, all in the front news!! Even the so-called Christians are involved in many such evil activities.

Our Role:

Amos knew his context very well and was relevant to the time. He

was sure of his role in God's big picture, and played it fearlessly with convictions. Now we are the active players in the present context. Are we well-informed, do we get disturbed seeing the decayed society? Is our religion divorced from the realities of the world? We often escape our responsibilities by the secular- sacred divide under the cover up of spirituality. Do we settle down on organized religion (structure), formal & ritualistic having the form of godliness yet denying its power? God desires justice and how you treat the fellow human is important for God.

Is our Judiciary able to stand for the truth or pervert justice? We see the poor fighting for justice by spending all their living just to see that injustice is done to them! Do we keep quiet rather than speak up against things that are wrong? Late Prashant Bhushan (supreme court lawyer) had such bold convictions that when an apology was asked, he replied, "An apology cannot be a mere incantation and any apology has to be sincerely made. This is especially so when I have made the statements bonafide and pleaded truth with full details, which have not been dealt with by the court. If I retract a statement that I otherwise believe to be true or offer an insincere apology, that in my eyes would amount to the contempt of

my conscience and of an institution that I hold in highest esteem.”

We all know the recent case of late Father Stan Swamy, how he was denied justice just because he stood for the truth. The statements he made are remarkable: “What is happening to me is not something unique happening to me alone; it is a broader process that is taking place all over the country. We are all aware how prominent intellectuals, lawyers, writers, poets, activists, students, leaders, they are all put into jail because they have expressed their dissent or raised questions about the ruling powers of India. We are part of the process. In a way I am happy to be part of this process. I am not a silent spectator, but part of the game, and ready to pay the price whatever be it”.

We simply cannot separate ‘faith’ from ‘praxis’. God hates it when the rich and powerful neglect and oppress the poor and weak; He desires equal rights of every human and not treating them as a commodity. Justice is the foundation of God’s rule, true religion with practical living is what He expects. Jesus was the best model of God’s heart for justice. The very purpose of His coming was spelt in Lk.4:18,19 which is known as Nazareth Manifesto. He challenged the hypocritical religion of the society, was not just preaching a

universal salvation message for the world, but also addressing specific political, social, and racial issues.

The Church has a rich tradition of people who have been involved in political action for justice. Martin Luther King Jr, “We will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream”. William Wilberforce had a desire while he was in the University to get into the parliament to abolish slavery. He tried many times but failed yet did not give up till he succeeded. Not only history talks about such stalwarts, but even today many influence the nation with their deep convictions. Former supreme court Justice, Kurian urged his fellow Christians, “If you want to be a true Christian you have to be a true Indian nationalist”!

Many of our graduates are in the influential places impacting the society and nation at large. Students, now the baton is in your hands! The future leaders are in the make in Universities & Colleges who can influence the policy making, decisions, execution etc. So, take studies seriously and take up projects and research that will contribute to the needs of our country. As individuals and community, fulfilling our roles as responsible citizens, being sensitive to the needs of others and protecting the human values

Bible Study

and rights are the need of the hour. We are called as salt and light (Mt. 5: 13, 14) to such a decaying world to protect it from further decaying. God's concern is for a just, righteous, and holy nation/society and people who represent God here in this world. Instead of keeping silent about the political, social, and economic evils we should be willing to address these problems by applying biblical, moral and ethical principles. Truth is bitter but we need to stand for it. We need prophetic voices which confront and challenges the pseudo systems of the present context and contribute towards a just society which is the heartbeat of God, His original intention. What breaks the heart of God should break our heart! God longs

for a nation whose God is the Lord where justice and mercy flow like a river.

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Jessy Jacob, UESI staff based at Chennai, along with her husband Jacob Varghese and two daughters, Prashansa and Prerna.

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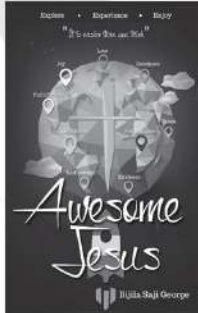
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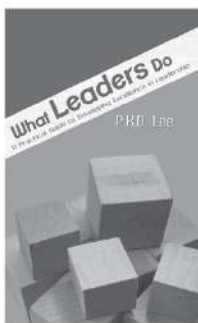
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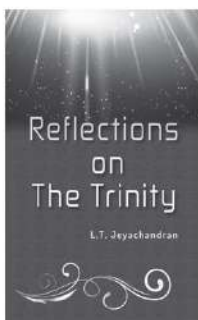
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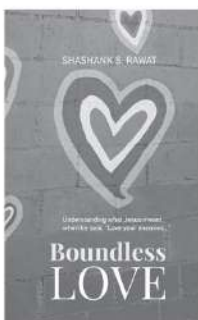
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Seek & Choose Ye the Precious



As human beings we always look and seek for good things and choose those that are pleasing and acceptable for us. In this material world, there may be many desirable things which we may wish to have for in our lives, not only for the needs but also for our happiness. Thinking and looking a little higher than these matters of this physical world, the spiritual urge pushes our minds towards the heavenly outlook. Here comes the most precious ones, which or whom we have to seek, choose, possess and enjoy in our personal lives whether young or old.

I dedicate this little work to my wife for 65 years in my married life, late Dora Pushpavalli who was not only my spiritual companion, but was responsible for leading me to salvation and deeper Christian life in Christ Jesus my Lord.

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