

JAN - FEB 2022
RS 20/-



www.campuslinklive.org



For the Child in You

*When you encounter a challenge, you
think is too hard,
you have in front of you a choice -
To let it slip
Or to give yourself a chance -
Maybe you will not succeed in others eyes,
In your own, even
But you still have a reason to be proud
To celebrate, even
For you found it in you
To give yourself a chance
To do well is great
But to try, fumble, and still not give up -
That, my dear, is richer still
For the journey is never always about
sweet victories
The journey is in the trying
And the ability to look within
To call on the reserves of inner strength
To accept failing with grace
Failing can teach us lessons too
Don't let the worry of 'what others will
think' eat you up*

*If you learn this - then, you are already
a winner
Dance when you have two left feet
Sing if your voice isn't like Taylor Swift's
Write stories not bothering whether your
page is peppered with errors
Read aloud even if you struggle to pro-
nounce words right
Who decides what 'perfect' is, anyway?
No diamond is perfect
In fact, it's the flaws that make it distinct,
unique.
It is time you know this
It is not about being perfect, but about
becoming all that you can be...
'Remarkable' becomes you when you
enjoy learning
'Indomitable' becomes you when you
tame mighty fear with tiny steps of cour-
age
'Beautiful' becomes you when you look
learn to within and accept who you are
'Exceptional' becomes you when you learn
to salute your spirit that won't give up
Better to be a scintillating diamond with
flaws than become a dull somebody in the
pursuit of perfection*



Debby Joel

(The author is a special educator based in Bangalore)

Beyond the Barrier

'COVID-19' shook the world upside down towards the close of 2019. Life came to a standstill suddenly in a fast-moving world with anxiety all around. The whole world suffered as the pandemic raged and uncertainty was the only permanent thing before us. 'Lockdown' forced everybody to be confined within the four walls of their homes and getting the normal things done was a big challenge. A tiny invisible virus had threatened our very living and fear gripped humanity. Many succumbed to the virus and many lost their livelihood. Human helplessness and hopelessness were very much evident in this struggle.

But soon a new normal came into existence. Mask (looks like part of dressing), sanitizer, social distance, etc. became a part of life. There was an explosion in the use of technology with a radical shift from real to virtual world! "Necessity is the mother of invention" was proved by work from home culture, online mode of classes, shopping, worship, camps, conferences, etc. combined with all its challenges. Many of us were not well equipped to use digital platforms, but were pushed into it. Soon 'zoom into the room' became the new normal and people quickly adapted to the change. By now, for many, it has become a comfortable way to be in their own convenient space. While this is the story of the privileged ones, a vast majority of rural population missed such online facilities due to several reasons such as no internet or poor net connectivity or even not possessing a smartphone. They were totally cut off during this season. Many students dropped out of schools not being able to attend classes.

There are severe effects of the pandemic in every spectrum of life, be it economy, education, work, health, relationships, and mission activities.

Nobody ever thought that the new normal will last so long and we still learn to live with the challenges even as new variants are on spike. But, getting accustomed to the new normal and finding out innovative ways to keep life going is the need of the hour.

I invite you to read these excellent articles by experienced writers that take us beyond our little cozy worlds.



Jessy Jacob

CAMPUSLINK VOL.24 NO.1

Hon. Editor

Athma Soruban

Editing by

Jessy Jacob

Sunny Pradeep

Preeti Khristmukti

Deborah Joel

Cover design & Lay-out

Prince Edwin. P

E-mail: campus.link@uesi.in

Website:

www.CampusLinklive.org

SUBSCRIPTION

For Students

One Year Rs. 100/-

Three Years Rs 200/-

Others

One Year Rs 200/-

Ten Years - Rs 1500/-

Overseas:

1 Year - \$ 20

10 Years - \$ 200

For permission to reprint
articles, write to the Hon. Editor.

DEPOSITING SUBSCRIPTIONS & CONTRIBUTIONS

A/c Name: UESI Publication Trust

A/c No: 1229135000004997

Bank: Karur Vysya Bank,

Branch: Purasawalkam

IFS code: KVBL0001229

Inform details of deposit to
campus.link@uesi.in

INSIDE

FOR THE CHILD IN YOU **2**

- *DEBBY JOEL*

EMBRACE THE NEXT NORMAL **5**

- *SANTHOSH MATHEW*

A WORLD OF "TELE-EVERYTHING" .. **10**

- *DIPESH KUNDU*

FROM THIS TIME FORWARD **15**

- *USHIA RAI*

GOOD OUT OF BAD? **18**

- *MAYURI NAG*

NEW NORMAL - A MISSION
PRESPECTIVE **20**

- *SUDARSHAN*

WINNING SIDE **24**

- *JANNIE SANJANA STEPHEN*

NEW (?) NORMAL (??) HAS IT
ARRIVED YET? **26**

- *REJI*

THE SHIFT IN THINKING **30**

- *FRANKY*

HOPE AMIDST CHAOS **34**

- *STUTI FARMER*

THE GIST OF FACING
UNCERTAINTY **35**

- *VAMSI RAPAKA*



As I start writing this article, the news around is being headlined with the Omicron variant of COVID-19. Perhaps by the time this article reaches you, the context of COVID-19 might have changed - for better or for worse. But one thing is certain - we are living in uncertain times. Most nations and experts were sure of turning the bend, only to be disproved again multiple times over the last few months. As of today, ongoing uncertainty seems to be the new normal - Uncertainty that comes out of a new normal of living with the virus.

Epidemics can end in two ways – One: transmission is well controlled and new cases come down to zero, and the epidemic becomes history. Secondly is that the disease becomes an ongoing part of the infectious-disease landscape, or an endemic. The shift from

pandemic to endemic entails a number of practical considerations for managing the epidemic and the way we live. But the shift is also psychological, as we will be deprived of the satisfaction that a clean pandemic end point would bring. Instead, societies will have to adapt to living alongside COVID-19 by making some deliberate choices about how to coexist.¹

Pandemics and endemics, in the past, have forced communities to move to newer ways of living and engaging in the world. Other major disruptions of life have also created new normal ways of engaging. Biblical stories are interesting examples. Adam and Eve had to build a new life in a new normal world outside Eden. Noah, Daniel and friends are examples of people who had to pick up the pieces and chart a new course, post flood and in captivity.

Lead

The influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 killed more people than the Great War, known today as World War I - at somewhere between 20 and 40 million people. More people died of influenza in a single year than in the four-years of the Black Death Bubonic Plague from 1347 to 1351. Nationalism pervaded as people accepted government authority. This allowed the public health departments to easily step in and implement their restrictive measures. The war also gave science greater importance as governments relied on scientists, now armed with new germ theory and the development of antiseptic surgery, to design vaccines and reduce mortalities of disease and battle wounds. The medical and scientific communities developed new theories and applied them to prevention, diagnostics and treatment of the influenza patients.

² Similarly the black death saw the origin of hospices and later the hospitals that we know of now.

The current pandemic that we are going through, with all the devastation it has left, has been traumatic for most of us. The physical effects of the virus, with high mortality, morbidity and many families losing their loved ones is the most evident. The economic, and the broader social impacts, the job losses, the migrants who have lost

their livelihood, the relational issues with increasing domestic violence, etc. have been in the news and some of us might have experienced them. Education related challenges and the impacts on the system, the children and parents, is yet another major issue. Cross cutting through all these is the mental wellbeing related issues.

A recent Lancet article reviews this well. The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on people's mental health. Yet, the global extent of this impact remains unknown. The authors estimated a significant increase in the prevalence of both major depressive disorder (with an estimated additional 53.2 million cases worldwide—i.e., a 27.6% increase) and anxiety disorders (76.2 million additional cases—i.e., a 25.6% increase) since before the pandemic. Increased prevalence was seen among both males and females across the lifespan. These findings are all the more concerning because depressive and anxiety disorders were already leading causes of disability worldwide.³

But at the same time, if you look around there has been many positive changes and trends emerging around us. The challenges that we as individuals, communities and humanity at large have faced, have been opportunities to engage

in a new way. New Normal was a well-known terminology in business circles but has become the current buzz word. ⁴ Most large organizations have ongoing research and strategy development teams looking at, sector by sector, what the new normal would look like. They engage in defining and understanding the new normal and coming up with strategies to limit the spread of disease at the same time mitigate the impact on other sectors. Some of them have gone ahead and coined terms like “Next Normal” or “Next Possible” as buzz words, to drive a new direction for tomorrow. ⁵

A few trends are highlighted here. This is not a comprehensive list, but just a glimpse into the massive changes that are happening around us.

Faced with uncertainty and facing our mortality, the core issues of our life, existence and meaning, are in the minds of many, though not publicly discussed. Questions like, if life is so uncertain and I do not have control of my life, how should I live, who am I, what am I in the world for, how can I find significance, have never been asked the way they are being asked this season.

Such questions are leading to many looking at job, career and work in diverse ways. Large numbers of people are leaving formal

work sector and are exploring more flexible ways of engaging. A Microsoft study discovered that 41% of workers worldwide are considering quitting their jobs described as the ‘Great Resignation’. The study shows that Gen Z is struggling more than other generations^{6, 7} Work life balance, being valued by managers, sense of belonging, a trusting and caring community at workplace, meaningful advancement of careers, flexibility and autonomy are what people are looking for. If this is not there, they are moving out to set up startups on their own.

For organizations and companies COVID-19 has brought on an even higher awareness that you cannot have healthy people on an unhealthy planet or workplace. So, companies are looking at climate change, healthy work environments recognizing that if they do not address these, that they may not have a competitive advantage in the market.

With social and physical distancing becoming a norm, Technology has become the driver of all engagements whether at personal, community, work or social levels. Digital systems and AI based algorithms helping in decision making and work has taken over many fields, including health

care. Digital natives, children and young people find this easy, but digital immigrants, and the seniors struggle with this.

But what is assuring is, we are not alone in this – there is a collective vulnerability of our world. The most macho leaders, the most high-tech scientific establishments, and the economic prowess have all met their match in this lowly virus. It should make us humble — think about what we need to do differently; how we need to act and behave differently.⁸

So how should we face and live in such a world? It was Darwin, who said, it is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent; it is the one most adaptable to change.

If we need to live lives as salt and light in this world, we need to cultivate some mindsets and lifestyles. Daniel and his friends in Babylon are a good case study to reflect on. Faced with a new normal they did a few things. They did not shy away from embracing the changes around them. They learnt the new language, immersed themselves in the new context and culture and lived lives of influence.

They built their knowledge and expertise in new ways of engaging and excelled themselves in the spheres of engagement. They built their lives with a long-term perspective, Daniel serving three empires and four emperors over 70 years. But they held on to the core values and their faith as foundations. They supported each other, as they faced challenging contexts and situations.

A changing context of the world and new normal emerging around us, is a call for us to live such lives. Return and renew our commitment to the core foundations of our faith and values that should undergird our lives. At the same time, accept and embrace change and excel in new ways of engaging. We need to live our lives with a long-term life perspective – a long obedience in the same direction. Rooted in our relationship to God build our dependence on the faith community that we are part of, to support and be supported in our journeys. Remember, God is still on the throne and in control. Such people and communities will continue to be salt and light in a world that is changing and losing its saltiness and light.

-
1. Pandemic to endemic: How the world can learn to live with COVID 19 Pandemic to endemic: How the world can learn to live with COVID-19 | McKinsey 2021
 2. The Influenza Pandemic of 1918; <https://virus.stanford.edu/uda/>

3. Global prevalence and burden of depressive and anxiety disorders in 204 countries and territories in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lancet. 2021 Nov 6;398(10312):1700-1712. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(21)02143-7. Epub 2021 Oct 8.
4. The new normal, <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-new-normal> 2009.
5. Beyond coronavirus: The path to the next normal, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare-systems-and-services/our-insights/beyond-coronavirus-the-path-to-the-next-normal> 2020
6. The Next Great Disruption Is Hybrid Work—Are We Ready? <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work> 2021
7. The Great Resignation: Microsoft Predicts 41% Attrition <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lucianapaulise/2021/07/21/the-great-resignation-microsoft-predicts-41-attrition/?sh=5b829fe42d4d> 2021
8. COVID-19: What will be the new normal <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/lifestyle/covid-19-what-will-be-the-new-normal-70458>



Dr. Santhosh Mathew is trained as a Physician and works part time in a Mission Hospital at New Delhi. He is the training coordinator of ICMDA and Regional Secretary for South Asia, ICMDA. He did his MBBS from Medical College Kottayam, and MD Medicine from CMC Ludhiana. He was involved in various hospital leadership roles across North India as part of Emmanuel Hospital Association from 1992. He was a lecturer in Nephrology and Medicine at CMC Ludhiana prior to joining EHA. He is married to Saira, an Anaesthetist, who currently heads Emmanuel Hospital Association. They have two grown up children.

Adieu to Bro. Athma Soruban

We are grateful to God for the sincere, patient and meticulous service of Bro. Athma Soruban as the Honorary editor of Campus Link for the past six years. He did an excellent job in raising the standard of the magazine and publishing it on time inspite of all the hurdles. He has trained the successor well to carry on the baton. The Campus Link team and CND sincerely appreciate all the hard labor he has rendered to UESI through his varied skills.

Adieu Dear Bro. Soruban! May the Lord continue to take you to greater heights as you step into a new venture.

A world of “Tele-Everything”



Pew Research Centre, known for its opinion polling, computational social science research, published a report on February 18, 2021, on what “New Normal” life will be in 2025. As many as 915 innovators, developers, business and policy leaders, researchers, and activists responded saying that people’s relationship with technology will deepen as we rely more on digital connections for work, education, health care, daily commercial transactions, and essential social interactions. Many of them described this as a “tele-everything” world. They said telework will result in de-urbanization, enhancement

of telehealth system, the establishment of tele-justice, and inundation of tele-education.

Time for disruptive change in higher education

Prof. Ranjit Goswami, Dean (Academics), and Officiating Director of Institute of Management Technology (IMT), Nagpur, believes that we are seeing the beginning of a rapid possible disruption of higher education. As Victor Hugo observed, “Nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come”, higher education is facing that moment of disruptive change today. Starting with computational technologies, the Internet, penetration of

handheld devices and open access of knowledge within the formal education system, higher education is ready for a massive overhaul. Objectives of higher education are therefore getting redefined, and it no longer is time or location bound. There are clear signs that campus-based full-time enrollment in higher education has already hit its saturation point.

A blended mode of learning is the norm

While speaking at the recently concluded 10th edition of the University Distinguished Lecture (UDL) Series, organized by SRM University, Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Satish Chandra, Special Chief Secretary, Higher Education, Andhra Pradesh, highlighted the challenges associated with online education and said future of education brings a blended environment with both online and offline teaching-learning options. He opined that Learning Management systems (LMS), online platforms, gadgets such as desktops, laptops, or tablets are going to be a part of the new normal in education.

Teaching the Generation Z

Mr. B. V. R. Mohan Reddy, the founder Chairman, Cyient Ltd and Chairman of the Board of Governors of IIT Hyderabad and

IIT Roorkee, says online education is not about broadcasting to students using audio/video communication technologies. That is distance education. Online education is not even about hours of teacher monologuing followed by student assignments and tests. He says to effectively engage Generation Z (born after 1996) during online sessions, the content must be modular, the pedagogy be refreshed, and the evaluation systems more robust. There is a need to experiment with new methods such as “flip learning”, where classwork becomes homework and homework becomes classwork. Educational institutions must replace face-to-face, long teacher monologues with modularized audio-video capsules of 10-12 minutes (Generation Z’s typical attention spans). Further, they need to reinforce the learning with follow-up quizzes, group activities, breakout room discussions, and problem-solving exercises before delivering the next module. There is no single way to address these ensuing challenges. Teachers will have to find innovative ways to engage students based on the subject, student behavior, and available infrastructure. Teachers also need to constantly look at the feedback to suitably modify their content. One solution will not fit

all. More importantly, blended learning offers greater flexibility to students allowing them to pursue other interests outside of traditional learning.

A highly personalized menu

Maja Vujovic, a consultant for digital and ICT at Compass Communications, predicted (in the report published by Pew Research Centre), “Higher education will become a terrain where a small number of entertainment-savvy lecturers attract huge student audiences via tech-enabled remote learning, while professors unskilled in it become dispensable. A ‘marketplace’ will emerge, where students will be able to pick and choose courses from any university, to create unique, personalized schooling ‘menus.’ This will create a demand for a certification mechanism at a level above individual universities. Distinguished schools with vast traditions will thus have to reconsider and redefine their missions and their very purpose and a number of them may not prove sustainable.”

Higher education to be costlier and largely virtual

At present, India is facing manifold challenges such as returning to a “normal” rate of economic growth,

recovery from the economic contraction, rising unemployment, and poverty rates. With resources being scarce, it is unlikely that the country will witness heavy investments in higher education from the government in the coming years. And with the opportunity provided by online and blended modes of learning, private players are rapidly making their presence visible in higher education. Therefore, we must not fail to understand that higher education is going to be far more expensive. To pay for this increase in costs, students from middle-class families (and with lower financial abilities of other sections) will be forced to take up relatively low-paying jobs in delivery segments, restaurants, and malls, etc. This means they will increasingly be absent from traditional time-bound higher education institutions and opt for a flexible mode of learning. Many universities and institutions are even considering having two shifts of work to enable students who would prefer to work in the daytime and study at late hours.

Students are highly susceptible

Gurjant Singh and Shana Quraishi published an article on July 20, 2021, in *Psychological Studies* (66, pages 303–307). Taking a sample of 844 students from different

colleges and universities of Haryana and Punjab, their study concluded that the students are developing mental stress due to uncertainty over the studies and completion of the syllabus. This stress itself may lead to increased panic forcing the students to take unhealthy and harsh decisions to avoid disappointment or failure. In other words, we now have students with much higher mental stress who are at high risk of making inappropriate decisions compared to before March 2020. Most of the faculties and administrative staff are unaware of this new mental framework of the students.

Challenges for UESI

UESI has been a campus-based ministry since its inception. Over the years it has successfully learned to pattern itself into a specific schedule and mode of functioning. But it is time for UESI to undergo a disruptive change.

(a) A campus-less environment

Regardless of our realization, we are increasingly moving toward the “campus-less” or “virtual campus” mode of the system. Before March 2020, we went to the campuses, hostels, met students, and conducted Bible studies. When the campuses became virtual, we opted for zoom bible studies. Due to poor

network connectivity and scarcity of data, we have perpetuated a system of “video-off” mode of teaching and learning. Little do we understand that today is the age of “Learn on the Go” as it is “Work on the Go” for graduates. So, the students are constantly multitasking even when they are in bible studies or normal academic classes. Many of us are firm believers that learning cannot happen effectively in online mode as the delivery of lessons has several limitations. Hence, we wait for the return of the “normal”. But the “new normal” is going to stay. For ministry in the “virtual campus” scenario, we at UESI are ill-prepared. As a movement, we have failed to develop a system of robust learning and discipling using tools such as the Learning Management System (LMS) and many more which most of the universities and institutes have already implemented. Instead of facing the challenge ahead, we await the return of the old days!

(b) “Guess-me” time schedules

In UESI we successfully developed a system of conducting certain camps at a specific time of the year. But is this applicable even today? Where is the significant semester break between the courses today? No wonder when we roll out registration links, the registrations are so dismal. How can students

register when they are not even aware of their academic schedule! We think that if life comes to “normal”, we will get back to the earlier pattern and everything will be fine. Let’s not forget that with the blended mode of learning to be the norm and continuous evaluation to be the assessment pattern, their academic schedule is going to be a “guess-me” type of schedule. Are we prepared to deal with that challenge as UESI?

(c) Open homes being “closed”

One of the backbones of the UESI ministry are open homes. With covid-19 creating havoc, omicron threatening another wave, and open homes being “closed”, we don’t seem to have alternative strategies to reach out to students who are burdened with high levels of mental stress. Students, taking up temporary and part-time jobs to support their cost of education, are mostly going to be absent from physical camps or attend at a loss of income. What alternative mode of discipling do we have for them? There was a time when students

were kind of free in the evenings. Today an average student seems to be busy with “work”, “assignments”, “unscheduled lectures”, or “part-time jobs”. How do we reach out to students who seem to be always caught up with some things in the evenings!

Instead of investing days and months on strategic thinking on these “new normal” challenges, we in UESI spend hours together debating over policies and issues which are of very little significance with the enormous change that has come upon us. Unfortunately, we have left the strategic and abstract thinking to a group of individuals who form a sub-committee with only recommending authority! Some of us have the God-given prerogative to shoot down their ideas when brought for an open discussion and then by the end of the day we discuss how to stop becoming an organization and become more of a movement! Time is short. We have no dearth of resources to face this “new normal”. Let us all rise above ourselves.



Dipesh Kundu serves as a faculty of commerce in an undergraduate college in Bolpur Santiniketan, WB. He is married to Mrs. Themboi, from Nagaland. They are blessed with two daughters Anwesha and Anushka. They both serve UESI as graduates and have an open home.



From this time forward

I look back to the day when the nationwide lockdown was called up while the same was happening around the globe. We were helpless in the face of death; everyone was in dread and uncertainty. Suddenly all of us were thinking about surviving. Out of fear we saw people hoarding hand sanitizers, masks, toilet paper, groceries, etc. We writhed in the agony of not being able to meet face to face with our loved ones, the suffering of the people overwhelmed us as well as various losses in personal, national and global aspects. It not only created a health crisis but also affected education and the economy leading the learning curve and GDP to go down.

The good thing about it was the shift of thought which made us understand the value of human relationships and rest in the age that glorifies busyness making us reflect on our own lives and surroundings.

It also revolutionized the way we do ministry as we had to shift to the new patterns of doing our fellowship, solely on virtual mode, having its pros and cons. On the other side, we saw people taking advantage of someone's misery to make their fortune and the rampant spread of rumors and fake news over social media platforms catapulted fear and anxiety in people.

The result of surveys and studies conducted to find the pandemic effect says that some people were good adjusters and some poor. Whatsoever it is, we all have been affected by it in some way or the other. Some of us out there have lost our family members, loved ones, and some, their job, years, etc. Some of us have recovered from the pain of loss and some are still in the journey of healing. Every one of us has our degrees and levels of experience which is unique.

We all have seen it, experienced it, and moving forward with it.

As we are embracing the new normal, the things we learned in the dark period about valuing relationships, loving, and caring for those who are suffering and in need may stay with us. Jesus Himself gave the commandment in John 13:34-35 to love one another just as He has loved us and by this everyone is supposed to know that we are His disciples. Likewise, John in 1 John 3: 18 urges believers to love one another not just with words but in action and truth. We see in the world love for one another growing cold, especially in these trying times where we are told to remain physically distanced from one another, may we who are called to be the children of God share this love and care in whatever capacity we can. We are taught to be sacrificial, not selfish in our relationship with one another by valuing others above ourselves in humility and not looking only for our interests but the interests of others. It could be through our prayers, checking in with each other, helping, etc. When we have a heart, God will show us the way.

There's some positive sign that the learning institutions are opening slowly in the country. The students have missed so much of what

we call school/college life and interactive learning and some have lost the year. But it's not even long that we have already been warned of another strain of covid. It looks like we are running in circles but may we make the most of this time. It's a human tendency to either romanticize the past or daydream about the future and despise the present, the pandemic has made us despise it even more. A few months back I came across Ecclesiastes 7:10. The author writes "Do not say, why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such question". It is okay to reminisce the past or look for the better days to come but also have to understand that the good old days weren't always good and the future may not be as we expected. When we were in the year 2019, I'm sure many of us might have felt unfulfilled and might have been looking forward to the year 2020, then covid happened and it is still going on.

Covid is new to us but people in the past have faced covid like plagues having different geographic origins and paths of spread. At the beginning of the pandemic, I heard so much about how the Christians made an impact in the past during the worst plague that hit the Roman Empire by caring for the sick and the suffering who were left in the streets to die. We

admire great people when we read and hear about the amazing revival, revolution, and impact they have brought in society and the world but when we observe closely, we see that the times they lived were not favorable, so many things were at odds against them. The only thing that made a difference was instead of making an excuse, whining, complaining, and daydreaming, they made the best of the present.

Having said that, I would like to encourage myself and all of

us to make the best use of the opportunity as the scripture also encourages us to do so (Eph. 5:15-17) and understand what God wants us to do during such times as these where everything looks bleak & uncertain. He is still sovereign. He is on the throne. He is in control, directing His plan and purpose. He is God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He is always near to hold us today, and tomorrow; so we can trust Him completely as we live through the new normal.



Ushia Rai, currently pursuing a PhD in Agricultural Extension from UBKV, Coochbehar, West Bengal. She has been involved in the UESI ministry ever since her early University days as a student leader and now as a senior advisor of the UBKV EU and a member in UESI CND. Writing is one of her favourite hobbies.

Themes for Campus Link - 2022

▶ Mar-Apr 2022: Career specific Skills

Articles to be submitted by 20th February 2022

▶ May-Jun 2022: Campus Engagement

Articles to be submitted by 20th April 2022

▶ July-Aug 2022: Work vs Vocation

Articles to be submitted by 20th June 2022

Word limit - Article = 1400 words maximum,
Poem = 16 lines maximum





This moment is unlike anything that most of us have ever experienced. We turn on the news or look out of windows to see empty streets and darkened buildings. We see no familiar walking around the block, no kids on bicycle riding nowhere in particular or parents bringing their children to the park. The crowds that normally surrounded us in the office /college, on the train and in coffee shops have now dispersed. Visits with our friends and family have lessened.

Because of covid-19, a mere virus, many of us are seeing communities act like they existed generations ago. We are cut off from one another, passing our days in varying degrees of isolation. Worries about our health, finance and the future we had planned, dominate our

thoughts. The world has changed and nothing seems to be quite normal.

We have fixed our mind and heart on what we have lost - our routines, our plans, freedom of movement, maybe even our jobs... Imagining the good that might come out of our current situation comes less easily to us. Yet when we look back through the history of God dealing with humanity, we see that God has brought forth good from evil time and again.

Blaise Pascal once said "All of humanity's problem stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone". We focus our attention "out there" because we are afraid of confronting what is "in here" No doubt the pandemic has brought

additional stress and work hours upon many medical professionals and workers in essential industries, for many others much of life's daily activity - commuting to work, attending meetings, running errands - has abruptly reduced. Again, this may be a gift that we never would have given ourselves. Many of us have been living like Jesus' friend Martha, who was overwhelmed by all the work to be done. We have been so beholden to our *to-do* lists that we have lost sight of what is most important. Now, however, in the midst of a global slowdown, we may finally be able to hear Jesus words to Martha as something intended for us: "you are worried and distracted by many things. There is need of only one thing" (Lk 10:41). Jesus makes clear what is that "one necessary thing" earlier in the chapter (Lk 10:27): 'love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength and all your mind'; but it is worth mulling over for ourselves what is most important to us, and whether our daily living actually reflects it. Now, we have no choice but to

let go of the old normal. We occupy space on both sides of a threshold. One foot is rooted in something trying to end, another is planted in a thing not yet defined, something waiting to begin.

COVID-19 is causing many serious and unfortunate effects on our society. But shattering our illusion that "busy" and "big" are the same as "fruitful" and "effective" certainly isn't one of them.

Maybe with less to do, we'll learn to get along with less. Maybe Sunday mornings will become more special. Maybe we'll realize that being an effective Christian requires fewer programs, fewer pre-packaged curricula, or even fewer high-production-value videos.

"Lord, teach us to number our days" is the prayer of the Psalmist Moses (90:12) who in difficult times exhorts the pursuit of wisdom and perspective, which involves honest reflections about life and its harsh circumstances, and also pleads for the Lord his God to rescue him and his people.



Mayuri Nag hails from Bhimtal, UK and doing her Bachelor of Fisheries science from GB, Pantnagar. She is a student representative of Hindi Training Cell (HTC) and also serves as the ICEU secretary



The Context

We are torn between our expectation of the imminent end of the pandemic and the dismay over the news of yet another mutated variant of the virus having emerged. Some dished out false hopes that the virus would be eliminated once people are vaccinated. When it did not turn out as expected many reconciled themselves to the inevitability of having to live with the virus, accepting the scenario as the new normal. Does this mean conceding defeat or waiting it out till the situation resolves naturally? This attitude is more harmful than trying to do something in the face of adverse circumstances even though we may later realize it could have been done differently.

A Biblical Parallel

After the king of Judah, his officials, the elites and skilled people were

carried away as prisoners to Babylon, Hananiah, a false prophet predicted the return of all these people within two years (Jer.28:1-4). Whereas Jeremiah, a prophet of integrity, faithful to God and his people, said he too would be exceedingly happy if Hananiah's prophecy were to come true. Jeremiah prophesied an exile of not less than seventy years. Understandably Hananiah's prophecy was what people wanted to hear and he readily played to the gallery. Jeremiah's prophecy, true to God's revelation, must have been very unpalatable to the people. He wrote a letter to the exiles urging them to reconcile themselves to a long period of exile which would be their 'New Normal'. Going by Jeremiah's prophecy most of the exiles would never be able to return to the land of their fathers before they died. A newborn infant would be seventy years old by that time. Hence the preservation of the race,

their religions and their socio-cultural identities would only be possible if they accepted their exile as their new normal and continued with their lives in a cultural, social and religious milieu alien to their own.

Impact on Missions

The pandemic threw up both challenges and opportunities for missions. Indigenously funded mission organisations, especially the smaller ones ran out of money to pay salaries to their staff. Pastors with small congregations were finding it difficult to sustain themselves with church services suspended for months on end. Those mission agencies that were not hard-pressed for money had no clue as to how the ministry could be carried on when camps and gatherings could no longer be organised. Ministry itself was kept in abeyance with leaders looking forward to the eradication of the virus and restoration of the situation before the pandemic. They waited for it to be 'Business as usual' rather than preparing themselves to face the new normal. Except for the extensive use of the digital video conferencing platforms in formats not different from physical meetings and gatherings nothing critically significant was done. Obviously, these did not have

the same impact as physical, in-person meetings. This is not to say these were futile for these virtual meetings were the best alternative to physical, in-person ones. What I rue is the failure to formulate strategies and programmes specific to the New Normal. These need not be completely different from time tested strategies based on God-given values, attitudes and concepts. Much of what is needed relates to the restoration of basic but crucial principles for the lasting impact which has been sacrificed on the altar of short term gains. In this connection, I would like to suggest certain areas of our lives and ministry that need to be recalibrated in the context of the New Normal that cannot be just wished away. These are from a missions perspective but could also be applied to ministry among students

a) Shift from a resource centered and programme centered strategy to a people-centered strategy

In Luke chapter 10 when Jesus sent out his disciples, they were asked to go with the bare minimum of resources. Their dependence was to be on God who endowed them with power and authority and on the people they were going to minister to for stay and food. Our pioneering missionaries to various

people groups walked to villages, preached the good news and stayed in the house of anyone ready to host them, eating whatever was served. Now that roads are well laid out and missionaries are provided motorbikes and funds made available for projects and programmes, the focus has shifted from people. In my first place of posting in a mission field, my colleagues and I had bicycles on which we would load our harmonium, dholak and literature and go out to villages in the evening, have dinner in the house of the one who had invited us to do a Satsang which would go on until the wee hours of the next day morning. It cost us nothing and it endeared us to the people for whom hosting us was a privilege even when they had not become believers

Excessive dependence on material resources rather than on God leads to erosion of spiritual power and authority. F.F. Bruce in his, *The Book of Acts*, Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), pp 77, 78 referring to the healing of a cripple by Peter and John in Acts 3:4-6, quotes an incident in which Thomas Aquinas once called on Pope Innocent II when the latter was counting out a large sum of money. "You see Thomas", said the Pope, "the church can no longer say,

'Silver and gold have I none.'" "True Holy Father," was the reply, "neither can she now say," Rise up and walk."

B) Shift from a patronising model to an equipping, empowering and entrusting model

It is human nature to be possessive and protective of our congregations and the ministry in general. We may have genuine apprehensions that the ministry would suffer a setback should we take our hands-off. The reason for this patronising attitude is that we have failed to equip our congregations, empower them to steward the ministry, personally share the faith among the neighbouring communities and in the process entrusting the ministry completely to them. We need to be prepared to let go and thus let them grow. Today it is Covid 19 but tomorrow it could be something else that could bar our access to our congregations and believers. We need to adopt Paul's model of ministering. He formed and planted churches, taught them, stayed with them for several days or months and sometimes for a couple of years. When away from them he would engage with them through his letters periodically. He appointed, empowered elders and overseers and kept moving on to new avenues. This resulted in robust congregations that were

equipped not only to self-manage but also to self-propagate.

C) Shift to a spirituality that translates into kingdom values, attitudes and behaviour that those outside the church can perceive

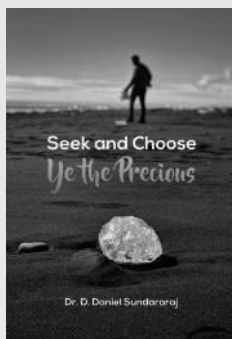
The shift in Christian spirituality has been unfortunately more towards what we do inside the church building. The mission field congregations are not an exception to this. This reduces our spirituality to an esoteric experience that means nothing much to those outside. When the identity of Christians as perceived by those outside the church is limited to external forms like the way they

greet one another, the names they give to their children, the way they celebrate their weddings, the way they dispose of their dead, the way they worship, the songs they sing and does not relate to the way they live their lives in terms of concern for the poor, integrity in all areas of life, readiness to help those in need, willingness to forgive others, refraining from using swear words, keeping away from addictions, the church stops growing and impacting its neighbourhood. The church needs to be systematically taught from the Word and trained to live it out in everyday life. "...let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Matt.6:5)



Sudarshan and his wife Lydia serve with FMPB in the areas of church planting and Bible translation. Having completed a five year term as General Secretary, he along with Lydia and their daughter Mahima will be returning in the next few months to Haryana where they had ministered earlier."

InterVarsity Publishers India Announces



Seek and Choose ye the precious

New book Available in IVP Book Room

Come & Grab your copies

InterVarsity Publishers India

19, Millers Road, Kilpauk, Chennai - 10

Contact:

Bro. Wilson: 09176988987/books@uesi.in





WINNING SIDE

2021 was a year full of constant changes. The COVID scenario eased in the early couple of months only to take a quick, devastating turn of events with the second wave costing us several lives. It marked a year more of COVID and us still struggling to cope up. Even through the struggle of such a year, God's hand remained always faithful. At the dawn of 2022 the word around is the coming of the third wave in India and Omicron. COVID has made us realise that each day that we wake up to, is full of uncertainties that we never fathomed. But for the lot of us who believe in Christ, something has been constant- a faithful and good God who reveals Himself to us.

We have now come two years closer to the coming of the Kingdom of God. The reality strongly resonates with this- harvest is plenty but the workers are few. So much has changed across the globe in the

last two years and the work of the Gospel feels greatly hindered having been forced to stay indoors and work from home. Each of us wonder how the Gospel can get through with merely WhatsApp statuses and/or Instagram stories. Witnessing Christian lifestyle has surely been the key to unlocking evangelism throughout mankind's history and for two years the world shut the doors on it. But many have found creative and new ways to get the good news through. At every opportunity to connect with others many Christians have jumped right in to the picture and have shared the Gospel. Why! The online reality has led us to connect beyond geographical constraints and in UESI we saw that to a large extent and we praise God!

Many of us in the body of Christ, however seem to take to this attitude- that all this will be gone and we can go back to life just as

it was, with nothing lost. We still struggle to completely embrace the reality of today and the tomorrows to come, that we have gone through a lot for the world to just hit reset and go back to December 2019. No! The God of Abraham at Hur, the God of Israel at Egypt and Christ at the Cross is pointing us to this- that change has happened and that the Sovereign hand of God is moving across the globe and across our nation. When Elijah fled to Mount Horeb, probably thinking to himself that going to a place where God gave a great revelation to Moses would be his source of strength amidst the persecutions that followed him. There God shows himself to him, not in a powerful wind nor fire, nor earthquake but in a gentle whisper. We do sometimes find ourselves in Elijah's place: quite often holding on to the past and expecting the miracles of the past while our God intends to make new ways and lead us through them.

The new normal is this- more uncertainty, a life on earth with the COVID virus and possible waves after waves and variants from time to time. But with the hope of eternity to come, what is greater

uncertainty for any of us? While the world ponders on and on about the futility of life and living with greater uncertainty, we as the body of Christ know surely of the end days and urgency of the Gospel. Increasing COVID restrictions and mandates have become the norm. While they are means to be precautionary, they are not reasons to fear. The past surely had its own privileges but the present needs us to walk in discernment and leading of the Holy Spirit.

We've lost loved ones, watched some through the strife and writhe to not be able to be there for them. But let's remember that those who slept in Christ have gone to their eternal homes as we mourn them and Jehovah Rapha watches over us all. Career and education have taken unplanned turns but we each are where we are right now, according to the plan of God, just as He willed. Let us unanchor from our pasts so as to be able to cherish them, be hopeful for the future and put on the armour of God and step into the battleground of the present. We have nothing to fear for we fight on the winning side!



Jannie Sanjana Stephen is an MS student at IIT Madras. She did her B.Tech. at Shiv Nadar University at Greater Noida and was part of Greater Noida EU committee. She continues to be part of UESI and enjoys writing poetry and discourses.





*"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. They are **NEW** every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness" Lam. 3: 22-23*

The world entered 2020, the new decade with several Vision 2020 streams and pursuits inside and outside the church. Progress has led us to believe, that we, the people had all the know-how to define and predict 2020 and beyond. The pronouncements of several world leaders were underlining the belief until then, that the normal that is ahead in the new decade and

all sections of the society. Early in the Pandemic *Lockdown – Unlock season* itself, the coining of phrase "NEW NORMAL" came into common usage. It was the natural heart cry for getting back to NORMAL (even if it's a NEW normal).

We have not arrived at the NEW Normal yet. It's still a marching work-in progress that started with the March 2020 experiences, some of it is narrated here:



beyond is going to be a predictable progress, in their own terms.

However, jolting all our visions for 2020 came March 2020, demolishing what our definition of normal was, and it was painful for

1. **The Homing:** - Little did I know when I flew down to Pune in the 3rd week of March 2020, that there will be no travel for the next few months!!! The skies gave way to the smaller birds, wide highways were open for stretched out walking (the painful scenes of reverse migration), even ships were anchored. Except for those

stuck elsewhere, many were “homed”, for 24x7 and that was indeed a new experience. While the professionals were



homed with/without work, several thousands of migrant laborers getting back to their villages with/without new opportunities.

2. **The Zooming:** - Work continued, with WFH – Work From Home - meeting online, struggling to make sense of the new normal that is to arrive soon. But families, especially children got to know what their dads and moms are involved in as they peeped into their Zoom



and zoomed into their world. The Zooming also gave quite a lot of e-meet fatigue

The Praying: - All religions across were praying and even corporate offices started their own dose of daily prayers, motivation and meditation talks, introspections, and so on. Even for a short while,

the world, and the business world in particular, which was otherwise in a rat race, got time in this grinding halt for an introspection.



This list is not exhaustive, yet these and many other features that got into our streams are the shaping steps of the New Normal that is in the making!!!

Incidentally, ending the series of Lock downs in India, the **Unlock 1** started off on Sunday, 31st May 2020, the Pentecost Sunday of 2020 (If Disciples were in **Lockdown 1** (fearfully shut inside after crucifixion till resurrection), **Lockdown 2** (between Resurrection and Ascension) and **Lockdown 3** (between Ascension and Pentecost), did they graduate to a NEW NORMAL from the Day of Pentecost in their transition? It's good to co-relate and think.

Digging on the word “NEW”

When we meditate on the word NEW, a verse that comes rushing to my mind is Lamentations 3:22-23 - God's Mercies are NEW every morning. If steadfastness, faithfulness, unceasing etc., may

hint at God's *NORMAL* way, it is amazing to observe that *NEW* is the *NORMAL* way of God's faithfulness and steadfastness. Yes, *NEWER* and *NEWER NORMALS* is the way how God works, as prophetically stated by Jeremiah in the shutdown of the exile (with captivities, deportations, burning of their Temple etc.,) as different levels of Lockdowns were ending their normals till then. About a millennium from their Exodus from slavery in Egypt; half a millennium from the Empire of David and Solomon with a glorious Temple in Jerusalem central to their normal spiritual life, the *EXILE* came demolishing all their *NORMALS*.

New (Normals) for the People of God – Exile and thereafter

When Jeremiah, the weeping prophet during the lockdowns of Exile wrote "His Mercies are *"NEW"* every morning, little would he have realized about the *NEWER* dimensions evolving in his times.

- **From Pentateuch to The New Normal Old Testament:** Exile and thereafter was the period when the Scriptures expanded and were compiled as the Old Testament as we see today - the 39 Books. If they had only "the Law" – the Pentateuch until then, the Scriptures expanded to "the Law", "the Prophets" and "the Writings" (as Jesus certified

in Luke 24:44) including the narratives and history of God's people from the times of the Pentateuch until the exile.

- **From Temple Times at Jerusalem to the Decentralized Synagogues:** With the loss of the Temple, the worship services were moved to open places, and later to synagogues across the world. While the temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem, the assemblies and sacrifices etc., started spreading from then on

From a few priests and prophets, to servants in all places: Daniel was not prophesying at the temple or sitting among the comforts of an evangelical assembly. He was right at the palace of the pagan king that burnt down the Temple, and was serving in their non-secular Kingdom. It's an amazing host of people from varied walks of life that served the Lord in the new normal after the exile.

Can in our times too, the *NEW NORMALS* turnout to be a blessing?

Can we recapture a new connection with the Lord, which we lost in the mechanical old normal visions till 2020 that we are desperate to get back to? Probably like Jeremiah if we weep about the sins of our times and cry out to God, our generation too will be able to prophetically testify like the weeping Jeremiah

that the steadfast love of the LORD never ceases and He expresses His faithfulness with newer and newer answers to the challenges of our times.

The New Normal?

The MASK, the PHYSICAL DISTANCING, ONLINE CLASSES with peer meets in Colleges / Schools? the NUMBER LIMITS for physical meetings, TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS, FREQUENT TESTINGS,

New WAVES with NEW Variants, ONLINE Meetings, VIRTUAL Fatigue

Pains and Challenges as we march to the New Normal

- The Mask that will deprive of a smile / gesture of fellowship / friendship to each other?
- The Physical Distancing, will it result as Social Distancing? Can't we hug and receive one another any longer?
- The Number Limits in meetings – Its no more the old normal congregation of young and old. The plight of the elderly is

pathetic. Their social connect that they always looked for, is now deprived off.

- Students in schools & colleges deprived of community activities and peer learning?
- Risks in travels and visits – can't we visit places for work and holidays?
- Less personal and more virtual decision making, both at corporate and in politics, will we become victims of dictators that would use digital to push their way?
- With markets crumbling, and expenses due to calamities and climate change shooting up, will there be sustainable livelihood opportunities?

We can list many more pains and challenges as we await the New Normals!

Let us pray in confidence that we will receive His NEW Mercies as in other transitions when People of God cried out for help.



Reji & Betsy Koshy make their home in Pune, with their daughter Monica a lawyer and son Roshan a Social Science Student. The family cherishes friendships, open home, discussions on contemporary topics, organic terrace farming, creative healthy cooking and lots of baking.

Reji, a sustainability professional is currently working as Head- Sustainable Banking at ESAF SMALL FINANCE BANK. Reji also serves in the Pastoral Team of the APF Congregations in Pune.



THE SHIFT IN THINKING



Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring - proverbs 27:1

"Skype? That's impossible! I need to be with my clients in person; only then can I do therapy or bring change," said Sakshi, a speech therapist, to her husband, who asked her to try Skype once for a client who lived far from the city. That was in 2010. Fast forward to 2021, she has done over 200 therapy sessions online in the last 18 months besides in-person therapies. Like therapists, many professionals who had never worked online started offering services online. Our family's general physician started taking online video consultations, something that was unthinkable once.

Paradigm shift

What changed? The Shift in thinking! There was a paradigm shift. Something that seemed impossible, the pandemic made us

rethink, and our mind convinced us it's possible. There was a huge need for therapies, but physical meetings weren't possible; online was the only option, and it worked. The normal routine that was once unshakable, unchangeable, uncompromisable has changed forever.

A few years ago, I remember telling the leaders in my church to utilize Skype or Google for prayer meetings and Bible Studies for those who could not make it physically. That never happened. The justification was that people would stop attending physically and become cozy at home. Post pandemic, there would perhaps be no church on the planet that hasn't done at least one online session - barring churches in rural places without the infrastructure. My own church has met only a few times

physically, a number that you can count on your fingers using one hand.

Who thought that schools or colleges would entirely happen online. Not that online education didn't exist. It has grown over the years. However, there was a clear distinction between the premium in-person and the low-cost online. That demarcation had now vanished. Every schoolchild, including the youngest, is currently attending online.

In short, what everyone started thinking is, *'if there's a need and is possible online, do it.'* No one ever said this but has become the little small voice. This is a clear 'shift in thinking.'

Getting better

Some sectors in the economy like IT, e-commerce, online education, coaching that were already online or employees were already working from home have accelerated in growth. A classic example is that of the online zoom platform. I have used zoom infrequently many years before 2020. None of my family members knew zoom, and neither did I bother to tell them. During the pandemic, if there's one technology company that has taken advantage and built its brand, that's zoom. Every tongue and tribe now use

zoom. We attend at least one zoom meeting in a week, sometimes more. Most of us have had an overdose, yet we cannot get rid of it, probably forever.

Paytm, Gpay, Phonepe, and many other mobile payment methods that were at a nascent stage have now picked momentum. Earlier only a few accepted this mode of payment, but now a few do not accept. A significant shift in the thinking of people of India, even those who are not smartphone or tech-savvy

Setback

Well, the disruption didn't happen without upsetting things around the world that have an effect on the economy and lives of people. All labor-intensive sectors suffered, and so obviously, those employees suffered, too. Pay cuts, forced leaves, or job losses, though they sound cruel, became a norm. The aviation industry that was once flying is now crawling. The sectors closely connected to aviation, i.e., tourism, hotel, entertainment, have taken a nosedive. These are times where artificial intelligence and machine learning rules, and driverless cars are no more fantasies. Where you only choose the play and fast forward button. Who thought there would come a day when the world would take a pause. There

will be no airplane in the sky, no car on the street, and every family member together in the home 24/7 for weeks and months together. This generation now believes it's possible.

However, the most painful reality of our times has been the large-scale loss of lives. Young men and women have left behind shattered young families. Some homes have children who are yet to see high school. Imagining the pain of these families cuts the heart. Lives were lost in the millions across the globe. One significant Shift in thinking that has happened is, death is not something that happens after you become old. Young men and women, even children, would have thought, at least once, that they could die young. This generation has never stared at death so closely.

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. (James 4:13-16)

Ministry

What happened in the Christian world? Something similar. Church services, Bible studies, prayer meetings, Christmas programs, Evangelism workshops, and many other online programs. What does that really mean to us? We are now open to having any program online, and physical meetings are not the only possibility. There are numerous benefits of online programs. Speakers can be from any part of the globe. Travel and accommodation are not hassles anymore and a lot of money could be saved for camps and conferences. No doubt, it has its share of drawbacks. We all know the benefits of in-person meetings, which you cannot substitute. The way forward seems like a hybrid model. In-person meetings that will also accommodate online participants. This is a model that was unthinkable once—a clear shift in thinking.

However, all these programs are discipleship in nature, but what about the very heart of Christian ministry? Sharing the good news! For example, campus ministry is the heart of UESI. Students share God's love to their friends in a world of uncertainties, pain and sorrow. They are living testimonies there. Only the physical presence of our students can draw others to Christ's

love. The tea breaks, discussion in groups, asking questions, and sharing opinions over hot topics are what build the case for sharing the gospel. All that has come to a standstill. The great commission is, as though, under threat. Why would God even allow such a huge roadblock to happen in our lifetime? Isn't it challenging his plan and purpose for humanity?

These are questions from our finite mind. God is Sovereign, and he has allowed this catastrophe to happen, and he is not surprised, isn't He? That only means there is another way. We need to wait on the Lord and seek answers. Things will become normal someday, and we will meet physically, but I am sure there is a shift in thinking that is inevitable. Those who are stuck to their old ways and want things to happen exactly like before are wasting precious time. Souls will continue to perish in the intermittent period, and God loves those souls too. Times are rapidly changing, and sharing the gospel in traditional ways can no more be taken for granted. The Pandemic is just one of the many such hurdles.

A shift in thinking is required urgently? While we continue to do the old way, which is getting harder by the day, we must discover the new path. The world is already doing it to benefit their earthly kingdom, and they are successful. How about his people? Shouldn't we find ways to benefit God's kingdom? As we pray and take initiatives, may God open our eyes. Many churches quickly shifted to online because they believed conducting a church service and fellowship was essential. Sharing the good news is essential, too! The great commission is the church's mandate. We need to shift quickly, and to some extent, we have seen success. There's no time to debate; we should use the same methods, tools, and technologies that the world is already using to reach the same world.

Let me close with the quote from Charles Stanley that I thought was relevant for our times. "God's *plan for enlarging His kingdom is so simple - one person telling another about the Saviour. Yet we're busy and full of excuses. Just remember, someone's eternal destiny is at stake.*"



Franky has spent nearly 3 decades in the financial services sector. He is a certified executive coach, trains and coaches on personal finances, teaches on family relationships and a certified pre-marital counsellor. He is currently serving as Treasurer for UESI. He is married to Shabeena and they are the parents of two teenage daughters.



Hope amidst Chaos

Fewer weekend plans, fewer physical fellowship gatherings, fewer programs on college campuses, and even lesser outings with family - all these things used to be new once, but gradually they blended into our lives in such a way that we accepted them as the 'new normal' post coronavirus outbreak. This new normal from now on will always be part of our lives, so in the words of Nancy DeMoss, "In every circumstance, you can choose to respond in one of two ways: you can whine or you can worship!" The festive season surrounds you with celebrations of Christmas and the New Year, filled with lights, decorations, sweets, and laughter. Underneath all this, there is a hidden pain that goes deep inside many hearts. We try to cover it with facades of fake smiles and try to hold back our tears. The truth is that we have still not adjusted to this New Normal, we still crave for those days of our lives that were much more peaceful; we dwell in the past, and time and again we look back at the wounds in our hearts. This past year has been filled with many different feelings. You may have lost a dear one, you may have faced struggles within your family, you may have gone through a season of depression or loneliness, you may

have faced challenges in studies or at the workplace. But, even in moments such as these, there is hope, even in your weaknesses, God is close to you, even in those messed up emotions which you cannot handle, He understands you.

The days of our lives are full of chaos which keeps on increasing. In this ever changing chaos, what stays the same? The answer to that is Jesus Christ. The hope, comfort, joy, and love which He gives you is beyond your limited understanding. He gives you the comfort and hope no other human being can ever give you, the hope and comfort that 'stays, stays even amidst chaos.'

I do not know about the rough patch you are going through in life right now but I request you, take a moment, stop whatever you are doing, and smile! God knows your every thought and unspoken struggle. He has recorded every tear which you shed, He has carved you on the palm of his hand. In this world, you will always have trouble and chaos, but take heart, He has overcome this world. (John 16:33). He has died for you, conquered death for you, and yet in every breath He has loved you, with an everlasting love.

You do not know what the future holds but you very well know who holds the future. He is your closest friend and your Abba father, run into His arms and pour out everything to Him. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house

of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23:6)
As we boldly embrace this New Normal, may we experience His unconditional love, His immense peace, His sweet comfort, and His greatest Hope, in all the days of our lives!



Stuti Farmer Hails from Dehradun and completed B.Sc in Botany Zoology and Geology. She is a student representative in UESI Communication and Networking Department and also serves as the Secretary of ICEU Dehradun and a member of UK SSC.

The gist of facing uncertainty

When things slip from worse
to worst

Worry not

For it causes one to rust

Resting on God's promises is
the best

Hand it over to God

Cling to your Lord

Pray and rest

Trust God's timing is best

Forget the past

Fix your eyes on Him fast

Your burden you'll lose

And kiss goodbye your blues



Vamsi Rapaka is from AP, completed his M. Pharmacy in JNTUK University, Kakinada

IVP India books available in Amazon

HURRYUP • GRAB YOUR COPIES



KINDLE BOOKS



Rs. 49/-

ORDER NOW

<https://www.amazon.in/dp/B09CNVRJQ4>



Rs. 100/-

ORDER NOW

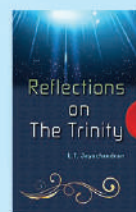
<https://www.amazon.in/dp/B0992H7TVK>



Rs. 99/-

ORDER NOW

<https://www.amazon.in/dp/B09C613P3P>



Rs. 49/-

ORDER NOW

<https://www.amazon.in/dp/B09CG9QXTX>

PAPERBACK



Rs. 120/-

ORDER NOW

<https://www.amazon.in/dp/9385141090>



Rs. 140/-

ORDER NOW

<https://www.amazon.in/dp/938514121X>



Rs. 100/-

ORDER NOW

<https://www.amazon.in/dp/938514135X>

InterVarsity Publishers India

19, Millers Road, Kilpauk, Chennai - 10

books@uesi.in/09176988987



UESI PUBLICATION TRUST

Published by Mr. Saji Easo & Printed by Mr. D. Devavaram on behalf of UESI PUBLICATION TRUST.

Printed at Meipporul Achakam, No.278, Konnur High Road, Ayanavaram, Chennai 600 023.

Published from New No. 19, Old No. 10, Millers Road, Kilpauk, Chennai 600 010.

Editor Mr. T. Athma Soruban.