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**PENTECOSTALISM:
PRESSING ON IN
THE SPIRT (Phil. 3:14)**

**INDIA BIBLE
COLLEGE AND
SEMINARY**

*Graduation
Service*



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Years ago, the late Billy Graham, held one of his large evangelistic crusades in a certain city. A prominent minister of that city was approached by a reporter who asked him how he thought the crusade was going.

The minister grumbled, "Billy Graham has set back the churches of this city fifty years!"

Later, the reporter told Billy Graham what that minister said. Billy Graham replied with a smile, "I pray I will set back the churches of this city two thousand years!"

Billy Graham was referring to those days immediately after the Day of Pentecost. On that day, the Holy Spirit descended upon a group of 120 men and women in an upper room, and their lives (and ours) were changed forever. That day, the church was born.

On that day, Peter, the arrogant and cowardly fisherman from Galilee, found within himself a newfound ability to preach his first of many eloquent sermons before a crowd of thousands of people from all over the then-known world.

That day, the former coward, Peter, boldly preached a hard-hitting sermon, and when it was over, 3,000 people were added to the church. From that day, the gospel spread like wildfire throughout the known world, and within only 30 years, the gospel that began with a handful of people had spread to Europe as far as Rome and even to Spain.

The church was off to a good start. Through Paul and the rest of the apostles, the church kept focused upon its main mission - to make disciples among all peoples, preparing the way for the Second Advent of Christ who would bring about a New Heaven and New Earth, free from the curse of sin and death.

There was a great sense of electrifying expectancy that all of this could take place in their own generation. Those early Christians lived and worked in this world without becoming a part of the general corruption that marked the society and religious establishment. The society took notice, and many people from all walks of life wanted to become a part of this new movement, even members of the household of Caesar and of Herod the Great (see Romans 16).

What were the marks of that first Spirit-filled church that was marked by transformed lives? Luke tells us in Acts

MARKS OF A SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH

2:42-47 that the Jerusalem church was characterized by

- teaching the Word of God,
- worship, praise and prayer,
- fellowship,
- evangelism,
- stewardship,
- Spirit-envisioned leadership,
- care for the poor.

From this foundation rose a church marked by transformation, power and love. We are told that every day, the Lord was "adding to the church those who were being saved."

Satan hates Spirit-filled churches. Such churches quickly fulfill the Great Commission, the one condition that must take place before Jesus comes again, sets up His kingdom and puts Satan out of business forever! Thus, Satan does all he can to quench the Spirit through persecution, corruption and distraction. He is a master at persuading churches to major in minors or avoid too much "fanaticism", i.e., do nothing.

Has your church been "set back two thousand years"? Do you have a Spirit-filled church where the Lord is adding daily those who are being saved? Is your church marked by the same signs of the Jerusalem church that accomplished so much in so little time?

How many new believers (not church transfers or biological growth) have been added to your church lately? Is your community transformed through the Spirit-led vitality of your church? What sacrifices do you and your church make to transform others by the gospel, both at home and abroad, especially where the gospel has never gone before?

Do we live and work in the world without becoming a part of it? Do we and the other members of our churches stand out from the general culture and its corruption? Or is our testimony corrupted by "the system" of which we have become a part?

Do we have an electrifying expectancy of the imminent return of Jesus Christ? Do we have a vision of the New Heaven and New Earth that His Second Coming will bring? Do we regard the sufferings of this present time to be unworthy of the coming glory that will be revealed in us?

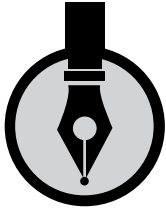
In the life of every church, policy debates arise over the church's function. Without a model other than our own feelings, the church always goes off course and fails at God's mission for the church. That mission is to take the gospel to all peoples whom He loves and become salt and light, preparing the way for His glorious kingdom on earth.

We have a timeless biblical model in the church of Jerusalem. As we confront new challenges in the days ahead, let us keep this model before us. Any deviation from this model is less than satisfactory to God and His long-range purposes, however satisfied we may feel.

Pray that all our churches will be set back two thousand years!

Father God, in our troubled times, we need a church that speaks and acts by the power of the Holy Spirit even as it did in those days when you gave your Holy Spirit to your people. Set me back 2,000 years, and set my church back 2,000 years, that we may glorify your name, and that your gospel will cover all the earth. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

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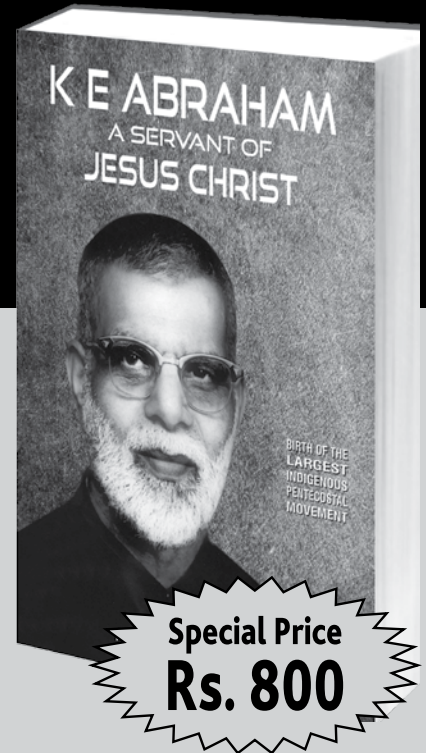
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Pastor Dr. John K. Mathew

PENTECOSTALISM

Pentecost means 'fiftieth' because this feast was held fifty days after the Feast of First fruits. It reads in Leviticus, " *You shall count fifty days to the year after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord. You shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of wheat flour, baked with leaven. They are the first fruits to the Lord.*" (23:16-17).

The calendar of the Jewish Feasts in Leviticus 23 is an outline of the work of Jesus Christ. Passover pictures His death as the Lamb of God. Apostle Paul underscores this in his first epistle to the Corinthians. " *Therefore purge out the old yeast, that you may be a new batch since you are unleavened. For even Christ, our Passover has been slaughtered for us*" (5:7). *The feast of first fruits pictures His resurrection from the dead. Again, Apostle Paul vouches for it in the same book.* " *But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came by man, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*" (15:20-22). Fifty days after first fruits is the Feast of Pentecost, which pictures the formation of the church. At Pentecost, the Jews celebrated the giving of the law, but Christians celebrate it because of the giving of the Holy Spirit to the church.

But 'Pentecostalism' can be defined as an intense form of revivalism so that it is always been criticized

for the lack of proper theology. The fact is it is not true!

Guy P. Duffield, the author of the book, '*Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*', clearly states that, "the Pentecostal movement is not just based on an inspirational experience. It is grounded upon the entire Bible as the Word of God. We are Bible believing people. We subscribe to all the counsel of God. Our spiritual blessings are balanced by the doctrinal teachings of the Scriptures so that we might be rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith".

For Pentecostals, there is nothing greater than the Scriptures which is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim.3; 16,17). (Paraphrased).

That doesn't mean that we should worship the Bible as fetish: but we do worship the God and the Savior that the Bible tells us about. And because we love our God and our Savior, we love dearly and devotedly the Book that is from Him and about Him. Nobody can deny the fact that Pentecostalism is the fast-growing faith in the world. In spite of all the trials and persecutions, Pentecostalism is thriving. The simple reason is that they believe in the Bible and the God Bible presents. ●



PENTECOSTALISM AND NATION BUILDING



DOMENIC MARBANIANG

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When the Visigoths sacked Rome in 410, Christianity was blamed for weakening the once powerful Roman empire. In response, Augustine of Hippo wrote the book *The City of God* in which he vigorously argued that none of the non-Christian religions could account for the strength of Rome but only for its demise; on the other hand, it was only by the will of the true God of the Bible that Rome was built and flourished. Numerous miraculous acts of God, he argued, demonstrate the strength of the Christian faith over the self-deceptive cult of Romulus, Rome's founder, that Rome created and portrayed as a form of political religion. A man-made philosophy or religion can never be the strength of any nation.

When the old era of empires began to collapse in the eighteenth century, beginning with the French Revolution, the world saw the rise of nation-states along concepts of nation-building and nationalism. Democracies began to emerge finding justification for their identity and existence in the concept of the nation-state, or "one nation, one state" concept. In places such as India where multiple ethnic and linguistic groups exist, the shaping of a unifying national on the model of unity in diversity became an important task of nation building. This concept of unity upheld the values of equal respect for all religions, languages, and cultures. Secular and liberal values were sought after, as in Europe and America, to ensure freedom of thought, faith, and expression. However, this did not mean that a religious approach to nation-building no longer existed. In fact, religious forms of nationalism emerged in places where a particular religion or sect was dominant. Thus, for instance, we see Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka and Myanmar, Hindu nationalism in India, Islamic nationalism in Pakistan, and Christian nationalism in the United States, Canada, and Poland. In places where Christians were a minority, the accusation that they disturb the sense of national stability through evangelistic or proselytization works began to arise. One



such example was the Niyogi Committee Report published by the Government of Madhya Pradesh in July 1956. It vehemently opposed missionary work on the grounds that conversion to Christianity often led to separatist tendencies, for example among Adiwasis of Jharkhand, Karens of Burma, and Nagas. The Report alleged that it found nowhere “Christians taking part in the nation-building activities” and cited a Christian writer saying in the National Christian Council Review of April 1955 that “Indian Christians, as a whole, have not identified themselves with nation-building activities.”

Such accusation is not dissimilar from the kind that Christians faced in Augustine’s time. The Pentecostal answer might not differ from Augustine’s either: the Spirit-empowered Christian does not weaken a nation; rather, a Spirit-empowered community is the greatest strength of a nation.

The original Pentecostal experience in

Jackie Pullinger who ministered among triad members and drug addicts inside the then triad-controlled Kowloon Walled City of Hong Kong, a place where police dreaded to enter except in groups. She saw that as soon as these addicts were baptized with the Spirit and spoke in tongues, they were instantly delivered from addiction.

Acts 2 was both multinational and transnational. The gift of tongues broke across cultural, linguistic, and national barriers demonstrating God’s favor open to all humans. When God poured out His Spirit, He did not destroy ethnic and linguistic identities but affirmed them, accepted them, and reached out to them in a language understandable to them. When the Spirit was poured out on Cornelius’ household and they praised God in tongues, the disciples instantly knew that God had accepted the nations of the Gentiles into the family of God (Acts 10:46-48; Eph.2:14-17). Therefore, the Pentecostal experience is unconditionally evangelistic and transnational. No doubt, the rapid growth of Pentecostalism today owes to the fact that it is inseparable from mission and evangelism.

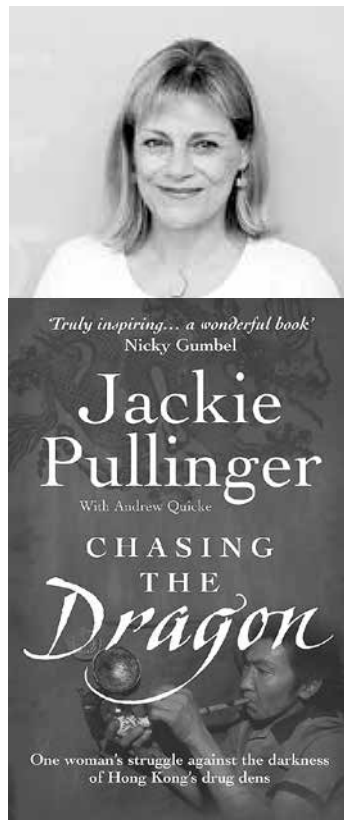


York reached by David Wilkerson and the Teen Challenge, it appears as real deliverance from drug addiction and a life of violent crime after being filled with the Spirit. The same is true about Jackie Pullinger who ministered among triad members and drug addicts inside the then triad-controlled Kowloon Walled City of Hong Kong, a place where police dreaded to enter except in groups. She saw that as soon as these addicts were baptized with the Spirit and spoke in tongues, they were instantly delivered

In recent times, scholars have noted the various ways in which Pentecostalism has contributed to nation building in nations all over the world. In this article we will look at two of these areas: concrete spirituality and spiritual warfare and intercession.

Concrete Spirituality

Pentecostal spirituality is unblushingly concrete, literal, and non-idealistic. Its hermeneutics is literal and its pneumatology concrete. The Bible is taken literally unless required otherwise and spirituality has to do with a vital relationship and communion with the Spirit of God. This concrete spirituality unravels in different places and times in different concrete experiences that are deeply connected to the experiencer's own socio-political, economical, and spiritual context. In the case of the gangs in New



from addiction. She started spiritual rehabilitation homes for such people, helping hundreds and thousands. Her story is recorded in the book *Chasing the Dragon* (1980). The government recognized the success of her ministry and donated land for constructing rehabilitation homes. Isn't the conversion and transformation of criminal triad members a thing to celebrate? The work of the Spirit not only reduced crime but also reduced the government burden to rehabilitate and cure addicts in that area. This certainly was a constructive contribution to society.

Pentecostal history has many such examples of concrete city transformation. In the early 1900s the healing ministry of John G. Lake had such an impact on the city of Spokane that it was declared to the healthiest city in the United States. His Spokane Healing Rooms were visited daily by around 200 persons.

Neither can social and economic transformations be overlooked. Sociologists like Peter Berger studied the deep connection between the

Pentecostal explosion and socio-economic development in developing countries of Africa and Latin America. The idea of the Pentecostal ethic for development, based on Max Weber's Protestant Ethic emerged out of these studies. Weber's view was that the notion of rational conduct based on calling, which is a key element of modern capitalism, was born "from the spirit of Christian asceticism." Employing this viewpoint, Peter Berger observed that this attitude is alive today in the Pentecostal ethic of "personal discipline and honesty," proscription of alcohol and extra-marital sex, and encouragement of "ordinary people to create and run their own grass roots institutions." He stated that Pentecostalism today was a "carrier of modern capitalist culture" leading to social mobility and the rise of the Protestant middle class. Even the infamous prosperity gospel seen in mega churches, Berger noted, posed no economic threat when the message plainly was "One: God does not want you to be poor! And two: You can do it!" In fact, Berger concludes that "speaking sociologically, the prosperity gospel is closer to the empirical facts than a romantic idea of the noble poor." With reference to "You can do it!" Berger points to research data that indicates Pentecostals as being "more optimistic, more self-confident than their non-Pentecostal neighbors." Thus, salvation is not merely from a future punishment but from sin, sickness, and the concrete reality of poverty.

Spiritual Warfare and Intercession

Power evangelism and power encounters are part of the normal Pentecostal life. But, the emphasis on city-wide transformation through spiritual warfare became more obvious with the Third Wave of Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal movement in the 1980s and 1990s. A key theologian in the movement was Peter Wagner of Fuller Theological Seminary who wrote about the various levels of spiritual warfare that begin with the ground (personal level), and go on to occult (power encounter with occults like satanism, witchcraft), and strategic-level intercession (warfare with territorial

spirits that control regions, cities, nations). Notable among leaders who promoted strategic-level spiritual warfare (SLSW) towards city-wide transformation and revival were George Otis, Jr. Ed Silvano, and Cindy Jacobs among others. George Otis, Jr. produced two documentaries Transformations: A Documentary (1999) and Transformations II: The Glory Spreads (2000) that report success stories of strategic-level intercession in cities of California, Columbia, Guatemala, Kenya, Canada, Uganda, and Scotland that saw drug cartels destroyed, witchcraft-control broken, crime rates go down and city-wide transformation seen not only in changed lives but also in the bloom of agricultural products and betterment of economy.

While critics may doubt whether these claims have been sufficiently verified and disagree with teachings related to spiritual warfare with territorial spirits, the fact that city-wide or nation-wide intercession by a unified church is called upon by example and exhortation in the Scripture is undeniable. We have the example of Esther's call for a fast and the great deliverance of the Jewish nation in the Old Testament, the example of the Church praying during Peter's imprisonment that was followed not only by Peter's deliverance but also the anti-Christian Herod's death. In fact, Scripture calls upon and mandates intercessory prayers leading to national peace (1Tim.2:1-4). But the main point of interest to us is the fact that such intercessory movements signify a strong city-wide and national concern to bring about a moral transformation, stability, and harmony in society. Given that fact, it is undeniable that Pentecostalism contains a strong national interest governed by the missional goal of seeing people delivered from the domain of darkness, turn away from sin and be reconciled to God.

In addition to the above, researchers have also noted nation-building phenomena in the context of mega-churches in South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Nigeria, and other places around the world. These churches not only contain a strong community-building focus on biblical moral

and professional organizational standards, crucial to any nation-building project, but also reach out to the community around through mercy ministries, literacy centers, rehabilitation centers, homes for elderly and other community-development projects—needs that the government alone could not be expected to fulfill; thus, contributing immensely to stability and harmony in the community. In addition, the strong involvement of women in the Pentecostal movement speaks to the upliftment of women in society.

Thus, it has been observed that Pentecostalism and nation-building go together. In fact, Pentecostalism has a stronger moral basis and spiritual outlook that is more sustainable than mere nationalism as it aims first at self-edification and then at community development. The clear instruction is that one first be baptized with the Spirit before one can be Christ's witness in one's city, then in the cities around and around the world (Acts 1:8). Pentecostalism takes scripture literally, emphasizes on concrete spiritual experience, and demands adherence to the Pentecostal ethic. On those grounds, we can well argue that Pentecostalism plays a major role in nation-building.



FUTURE TRAJECTORIES OF INDIAN PENTECOSTALISM

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The Pentecostal movement is one of the major Christian denominations in India today. The World Christian Encyclopedia, terms India as one of the major hubs of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. Its growth and consolidation can be seen in metropolitan cities, interior villages and towns. Many sociologists, anthropologists and researchers of Indian Pentecostalism have shown that the majority of the people attracted to the movement is from the poorer sections of the society - Dalits, tribals, poor women, slum dwellers and so on. They find warmth and fellowship among Pentecostal churches and also receive answers for vexed problems like prolonged illness, demonic attacks and possessions, peace of mind and joy in their personal and family affairs.

Moreover, life changing worship in the power of the Spirit, constant Bible teaching, fellowship, use of spiritual gifts and prayer in Pentecostal congregations enact radical changes in their spiritual, social and personal outlooks. The believers become bold enough to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and bring liberation to others. This liberative impulses have enabled the poor, Dalits, tribals and other lower classes people to integrate into Pentecostal churches, unlike many other mainline denominational churches. Besides, ordinary people find Pentecostal spirituality - lively worship with clapping and dancing, the presence and activities of the Holy Spirit, tongue speaking, healing, exorcism, prophecy, visions and so on - attractive and comparable to their previous traditions. Many have been healed of their sickness, delivered of demonic possessions, fear and curses they dreaded in their previous life. Now they are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, began administer healing, exorcism, prophecy, gospel messages and their testimonies to people around them. Thus, Indian Pentecostalism, not only liberates people from their old life and struggles but empower them to transform lives of their compatriots. This transformative thrust



of the movement is the reason behind its growth in Indian society.

Irrespective of this liberative credentials of the movement, Indian Pentecostals are being constantly opposed and persecuted by many political, cultural and religious groups. Churches are demolished, worship services have stopped, Bibles are burned and many pastors and believers have been put in jail in the name of 'forcible conversions.' It is also found that the law enforcement agencies and administrative systems of our society, rather than helping the victims of violence, side with perpetrators and put helpless Pentecostal believers in jail or prolonged legal tangles. Even in the midst of such grave struggles, Indian Pentecostalism brings positive changes in the lives of thousands of ordinary people.

Even though these liberative activities place the movement in the forefront of religious and social movements, in places where Pentecostalism is a century old, its spirituality and liberative potentials have

Indian Pentecostals are being constantly opposed and persecuted by many political, cultural and religious groups. Churches are demolished, worship services have stopped, Bibles are burned and many pastors and believers have been put in jail in the name of 'forcible conversions.'

been considerably declined. The structure and form of the church take precedence in many of the Older Pentecostal denominations than the lived experience of the Spirit. Emphasis placed on the holiness ethos that emphasized integrity in intentions and actions are not fully visible today. Personal and communal holiness that infused through the born-again experience and the power that bestowed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit are being diminished considerably. Furthermore, among the leadership and laity, elements lacking personal integrity and moral uprightness are increasing. The fraternal feeling and egalitarian attitudes which were the hallmark of the movement in the early period are replaced with superiority and in certain instances of animosity. In Pentecostal denominational settings, clashes for leadership



and court cases have brought considerable damage to the movement. Although mission is rapidly growing in newer mission fields, growth in the older places is plateaued.

Having crossed a century since the inception of the movement, and with many Pentecostal denominations in India celebrating their centennials, it is crucial to look ahead and comprehend the direction in which the Pentecostal movement is heading. We need to assess and plan our future, ensuring that whether the movement stays on the God-intended path. Exploring numerous areas for future outlook is significant, however, for brevity, we will broadly focus on the spiritual, theological, denominational, and missional aspects of the movement. Our purpose is to ensure the movement remains dynamic and continues

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to be a vibrant spiritual, missional, and theological force in the coming years.

Spiritual Trajectories: The Pentecostal movement from its inception was a spiritual movement, emphasising holiness, fervent prayers and fasting, a biblically oriented lifestyle, the baptism in the Spirit, glossolalia, prophecy and so on. However, recently the importance many of these spiritual elements have been given less emphasis. Pentecostalism's roots lie in the pursuit of a holy living, vibrant spiritual life and emphasizing the experience of the Holy Spirit and gifts. Moreover, it is also significant to emphasise the fruit of the Spirit that would present Pentecostal community as the light of the world. Pentecostal believers need to be equipped to exercise spiritual gifts for the wellbeing of the larger society for transformation. The future vision of the movement must involve a renewed emphasis on holiness, experience of the Spirit and ethical life to prepare a people for the Lord.

Another area that needs emphasis is the eschatological fervour, which served as the cornerstone of the movement's global proliferation and mission endeavours. This element not only enabled believers to lead holy and simple lives but also empowered them to confront the onslaught of sinful surroundings. Unfortunately, after a century, the movement has lost its eschatological thrust, falling behind in holiness, missional commitment, and ethical living. The movement's future vision should prioritize regaining this fervour, preparing its members for the imminent coming of Jesus Christ, nurturing holy living, and actively engaging in missions.

Theological Trajectories: Pentecostalism, in Indian setting, always emphasised spiritual experiences based on the scriptures. Nevertheless, it gave less preference to theologising their spiritual experiences into theological categories. Many early Pentecostal leaders had a negative attitude towards theological education and writing down what they believed and practised in theological format. This attitude has resulted in a lack of an articulated theology within Indian context. The pioneers of the movement

were so engrossed in their mission that they were wary of developing a carefully articulated theology of their vibrant faith.

Besides, even though missions were developing at a rapid pace, theological education was not given due importance. Consequently, Pastors were not able to provide in-depth biblical teachings to believers or lead them to a higher level of Christian doctrines. This had a negative effect on the spiritual growth of the community. Therefore, it is important to administer appropriate theological education to pastors and lay leaders for both ministry and mission. Moreover, Pentecostal theologians should strive to form theological frameworks that address the contextual need of the Pentecostal communities in various parts of India to cater the specific needs of the pastors and believers.

Another issue needs to consider in the movement's future outlook is the recent emergence of prosperity gospel and its outworking. Although in certain extend this form of the Gospel can be beneficial to the poorer sections of the society, more often than not it has produced unwanted influences upon Pentecostal believers of the older churches. Pentecostal leaders and theologians need to consider this issue urgently, reflecting on its implications, both positive and negatives. This can help the Pentecostal community to have a nuanced understanding of prosperity gospel within the broader framework of Pentecostal theology.

Pentecostals need to urgently consider another area for the future, their participation in the ecumenical movement. Historically Pentecostalism has looked at the ecumenical movement with suspicion. Some Pentecostals may have serious reservation due to differences in doctrines and spiritual practices of other Christian denominations. However, in this juncture, it is worth nurturing close fellowship with like-minded Pentecostal denominations to have common ventures in theological formations, missional and social justice endeavours.

Denominational Trajectories: From the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, it has been divided into various groups

and denominations. Instead of being a monolithic entity like other Christian denominations, Pentecostalism in different geographical locations have formed into various denominations under the leadership of various individuals. This is true even today in various parts of India and this freedom of forming denominations have ushered church growth and proliferation of the movement all over India. This trend should be continued to reach out to more and more people.

However, within the older denominations, a recent trend has emerged involving conflicts between various factions contesting for power within the hierarchical structures. The factional politics within these denominations has descended even lower than that of secular party politics. Therefore, the future trajectories should focus on efforts to bring unity among leaders within denominations, aiming to enhance spiritual growth, foster mutual love, and stimulate greater efforts for mission activities.

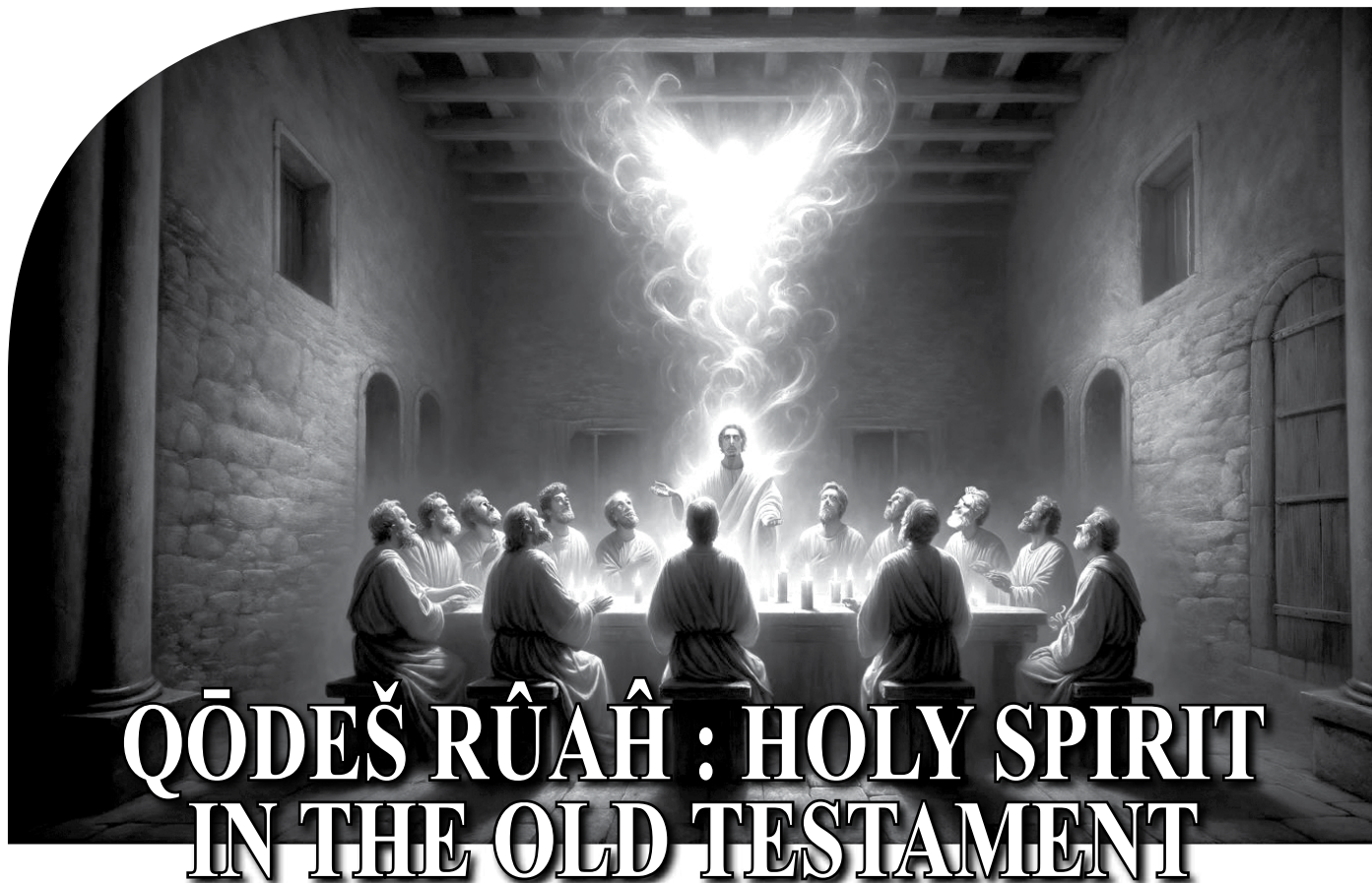
Besides, many Pentecostal denominations have witnessed the consolidation of leadership in a manner that dampens the spiritual and missional growth of the movement. Here, we need to encourage the idea of the 'priesthood of all believers' and involve the laity in both spiritual and denominational structures. Equal status should be given to the participation of women and their ministries to tap into the spiritual resources of the community.

Missional Trajectories: Missionary outreach is the lifeblood of Pentecostalism. The reason behind its growth in India and around the world is rapid mission activities carried out by ordinary believers in their own contexts. Even though Pentecostals in the Indian context face violent opposition from Hindutva forces and other religious and cultural organizations, evangelism, mission, and church growth activities are advancing at a faster pace. Even in the future, this trend will continue in newer mission fields and bring many people to Christ. Despite such growth and momentum, in instances where the movement has surpassed a hundred years, the momentum

of church growth, evangelism, and mission has slowed down. In many of the older churches, new members are seldom added, or at least in certain churches, pastors and believers are not so keen to bring new members into the fold. This attitude of the older churches needs to be challenged and believers should be encouraged to involve in evangelism.

Additionally, in the changing scenario with the rapid advancements in technology, Pentecostal missions also need to explore innovative ways to utilize digital platforms for evangelism and discipleship. This move could help the movement to reach out to untapped areas in the context of opposition and persecution. Besides, Pentecostal missiologist and mission practioners need to suggest new methods and strategies of mission in the context of shifting political and religious landscape. Thus, in our future vision, we should include a greater focus on holistic mission, which integrates evangelism with social action, community development, peace-making efforts in partner with other Christian denominations and NGOs.

As we conclude, it is crucial to envision the future of the movement at a juncture where it has reached a century but is facing internal and external threats. Both leaders and believers must come together to assess the future trajectories of the movement, determining whether we are progressing or inadvertently regressing from our original God-given commission. We need a renewed understanding of our spiritual practices, theological formulations, denominational conduct, and missional practices. This will enable us to move forward into the future with life-changing vitality and vigour, bringing many people to Christ. ●



QŌDEŠ RŪAĤ : HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT



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Faculty, India Bible College
and Seminary

Introduction

The Old Testament serves as a rich repository of history, laws, prophecies, and divine encounters of ancient Israel. Within its pages, the Holy Spirit emerges as a vital and recurring theme, reflecting the sacred and divine nature intertwined with creation, revelation, and human endeavors. The concept of the "Holy Spirit" in the Old Testament is a profound and multifaceted theme that intertwines the sacred and the divine. It is rooted in the Hebrew terms- "holy" (qōdeš) and "spirit" (rûaĥ). Its association with Yahweh and God deepens its significance, portraying the spirit as a divine force intertwined with creation, inspiration, community, leadership, and human endeavors. Understanding the biblical concept of "spirit" necessitates a broader perspective than solely relying on the term "holy spirit" alone. This article provides a comprehensive examination of the Holy Spirit's role in the Old Testament, drawing from biblical texts, theological insights, and historical perspectives to illuminate its significance for believers today.

The Concept of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

The term "Holy Spirit" finds its roots in Hebrew terms, reflecting divine attributes and roles intertwined with creation, inspiration, community, and leadership. This section examines the fundamental meanings of the term "spirit" in Hebrew texts and its association with Yahweh, portraying the Spirit as a divine force active in the world. The term rûaĥ appears 378 times in Hebrew texts and 11 times in Aramaic passages. Its fundamental meanings include "wind," "moving air," and "breath." The term possibly reflects the wind's power to move objects. In the OT, rûaĥ's meanings converge when associated with Yahweh as his 'spirit' (23 times) or as the 'spirit of God'

(16 times), or with a possessive pronoun referring to the deity. This notion emerges in texts, such as Isaiah 63:10,11 and Psalm 51:13. While these passages suggest the anticipation of the spirit's bestowal, the broader understanding of the "spirit" in the Old Testament transcends the mere terminology of "holy spirit" alone.

Functions of the Spirit

"Rûaḥ" - the Spirit of Creation and Providence

The Spirit is portrayed as an almost impersonal force of God's awe-inspiring power in creation (e.g., Gen. 1:2; Ps. 33:6; Ezek. 37:1-10). In the opening verses of Genesis, the Spirit of God hovers over the waters, participating in the act of creation itself. The Hebrew word used for "Spirit" here is "rûaḥ" denoting breath, wind, or spirit. The Spirit's presence signifies divine activity, bringing order out of chaos and sustaining the created order.

Spirit - A sign of Covenantal relationship

The Spirit's presence is intimately linked to the covenant relationship between God and His people, as seen in passages like Ezekiel 11:14-21 and 36:22-32. Within the Old Testament narrative, the Spirit's presence is poured out upon individuals and the community as a sign of God's faithfulness and commitment to His promises. In the book of Ezekiel, the prophet envisions a future restoration in which God will cleanse His people from impurity and give them a new heart and a new spirit.

Spirit of Leadership: Consecration and Impartation

The Spirit's role in endowing Israel's leadership with charisma and authority is evidenced by Moses, Joshua, and the seventy elders (Numbers 11:16-17; Deuteronomy 34:9). Instances such as Moses and the seventy elders, along with the empowerment of Joshua, underscore the Spirit's essential role in legitimizing leadership and administrative authority in Israel. Through these narratives, the Spirit is shown to empower individuals for

administrative tasks within the community, validating and sustaining Israel's leadership throughout its historical journey.

Spirit as the mouth piece - Prophetical Spirit

One of the most prominent roles of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is its function in prophecy. Prophets serve as mouthpieces for God, inspired by the Spirit to proclaim His word with authority and conviction (Numbers 11:25-29). The Spirit moves upon them, inspiring messages of warning, consolation, and hope for Israel

The term "Holy Spirit" finds its roots in Hebrew terms, reflecting divine attributes and roles intertwined with creation, inspiration, community, and leadership. This section examines the fundamental meanings of the term "spirit" in Hebrew texts and its association with Yahweh, portraying the Spirit as a divine force active in the world

and the nations. Through the prophets, the Spirit convicts Israel of its sins, calls for repentance, and announces God's plans for redemption and restoration (Ezekiel 2:2). This includes the coming of the Messiah, the establishment of God's kingdom, and the renewal of all creation.

The Empowering Spirit – Spirit of Wisdom

The Spirit's influence extends to human

abilities and endeavors, as seen in the craftsmanship of Bezalel in constructing the tabernacle. Bezalel's craftsmanship in constructing the tabernacle is attributed to being "filled with the Spirit of God" (Ex. 31:3; 35:31), highlighting the Spirit's role in enhancing human abilities and enabling individuals to fulfill their roles and responsibilities effectively.

Pressing on in the Spirit: Connecting to the Main Theme

Two Biblical narratives which serves as a good example for pressing on in Spirit can be found in Exodus and 2 Kings. Just as much as Holy Spirit is significant in the Old Testament, experiencing the Holy Spirit also requires a strong determination of pressing on. In Exodus, Joshua, the young assistant of Moses, remains in the tent after the tent meeting, pressing on to experience the presence of God in the cloud and fire pillar. This can be seen in Exodus 33:11 where Moses is described as man of God who had an intimate communion with God in the tent of meeting, and then turned again into the camp. This particular verse also present Joshua as a young aide who did not leave the Tent. The reason behind this according to some scholar's is that Moses had intended speedily to return to the tabernacle of the congregation, he left Joshua there, for it was not fit that the place should be empty, so long as the cloud of glory stood at the door (v. 9). And also that if God had anything to say out of that cloud while Moses was absent, Joshua was there, ready to hear it. Joshua would not depart from the tent. It is remarkable that the trust was committed to Joshua, rather than to Aaron, or any of the Levites. The reason for



this can be that Joshua alone had no part in the idolatry of the calf. (See. 32:17.)

Now the tent of meeting was a symbol of sacred space, inviting individuals like Joshua to draw near and experience divine communion. Joshua's earnest desire for continuous communion with the divine presence and his unwavering persistence in seeking spiritual encounters are beautifully captured in the Hebrew word "dabeq" (דָּבַק), which denotes clinging or adhering closely. By employing this Hebrew term, we gain deeper insight into Joshua's character and spiritual disposition, highlighting his profound longing for intimate communion with God and his steadfast commitment to pursuing divine encounters within the sacred space of the tent of meeting, a willingness to press on.

Similarly, 2 Kings 2, encapsulates a profound narrative of spiritual inheritance and succession. V. 9 Shows Elisha's plea to Elijah, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit." As Elijah and Elisha journey toward Gilgal, Elijah

Instances such as Moses and the seventy elders, along with the empowerment of Joshua, underscore the Spirit's essential role in legitimizing leadership and administrative authority in Israel.

attempts to persuade against Elisha from accompanying him further, yet Elisha determinedly insists on staying by Elijah's side. This steadfast determination to cling to Elijah signifies a profound commitment to press on in the Spirit. Elisha's encounter with the company of prophets further underscores his unwavering resolve. Despite their attempts to discourage him, Elisha persists, echoing his desire

for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. This request, rooted in the biblical tradition of the double portion as a symbol of blessing and inheritance, speaks to Elisha's goals for a deeper spiritual empowerment and effectiveness in ministry. The narrative climaxes with Elijah's departure and the passing of his mantle to Elisha. As Elijah is taken up to heaven, Elisha, now endowed with Elijah's cloak, invokes the power of God to part the waters of the Jordan—a symbolic affirmation of his succession and the fulfillment of his request. The proclamation, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha," solidifies Elisha's newfound role as the spiritual leader of the prophets. This narrative exemplifies the theme of pressing on in the Spirit—of pursuing spiritual growth, empowerment, and leadership despite challenges and obstacles. Elisha's unwavering determination and faithfulness serve as a poignant reminder of the importance of persistence and steadfastness in our spiritual journeys.

Conclusion:

In the tapestry of Old Testament theology, the role of the Holy Spirit emerges as a vital thread, weaving together creation, revelation, empowerment, prophecy, and covenant relationship. Through biblical narratives and theological insights, we see how the Spirit's presence and influence permeate every aspect of Israel's history and faith journey, from the creation narrative to the prophetic utterances of redemption. As we trace its manifestations throughout Israel's history, we discern the Spirit's ongoing work of guiding, empowering, and renewing God's chosen people. It also gives us a deeper understanding of God's character, His relationship with His people, and His ultimate purposes for the world. As we embrace the lessons and insights gleaned from Scripture, may we be inspired to cultivate a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit, allowing His transformative presence to guide us, empower us, and lead us into a deeper understanding of God's purposes for our lives and the world.

CONTROL, WHO NEEDS IT?

Tony Kanimangalath

A river knows its course
and flows not off its way.
When the evening comes,
For the moon the sun makes way,
Each plays its part and knows its role
None strays away from its control.

This is the harmony that man is seeking today
While he juggles a thousand tasks each day.
Mossive machines & structures he has built.
To control them he has just a button or a switch.

A bridle for a horse,
Buttons for a crane
From gears in a sports car
To hydraulics on a plane

Need I write tales of his control
We are daily users of the swipe and scroll.
To Find, biuy, watch or skip
All we do is search, scroll, or click
Much has he toiled to control things around
him.
That he often forgets things within that
control him.

Greed, Jealously, Lust and Pride
He's been subdued by them all.
This is the truth of his inmost being
Guilty of a few or of them all

Look within yourself, O man.
Your wandering mind is what needs control
Watch the thoughts that enthrall you
For they are what control you.

Hold tight its reins, don't let it wander
Upon thoughts that cause anxiety, don't' you
ponder

Think about what's right instead,
What is noble, pure and lovely.
It'll fill yo with heavenly peace
Your days will be joyful and lively.

Forget not therefore what ancient wisdom says
Let your heart be pure and straight be your
ways
Caution your mind and awaken your soul
For like a city without walls is a man without
self-control.



Tony Antony Kanimangalath

A Digital Marketer by profession, he writes poems and composes songs inspired from God's word and his walk with the Lord. He also serves the lord through youth and children's ministry.

Through this poem, he draws attention to the advancements that man has made in the modern day, gained so much control over things around him and feels powerful. But is very vulnerable to the core of human nature, where he stumbles and fails due to evils that originate from his thoughts.

He encourages us from Phil 4:8 that provides us instructions on how our thoughts should be and concludes with a caution again from the scripture portion Pro 25:28 that's indeed thought provoking. Enjoy the poem and be blessed.



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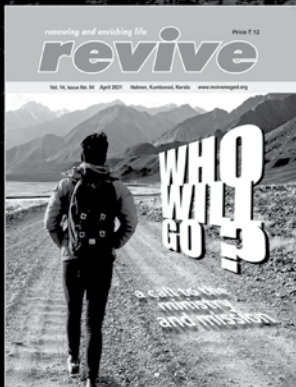
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INDIA BIBLE COLLEGE AND SEMINARY **GRADUATION SERVICE**

18th MARCH 2024



Graduation Service at the Capital Worship Centre, IGO Campus



Presidential Charge was given by
Rev. Dr. T. Valson Abraham
President, India Bible College and Seminary
Translation: Pastor Phinni Joseph



Convocation Message by
Dr. Arren Bennet Lawrence, Regional Secretary,
Asia Theological Association, India



Graduates lift their voices with a grateful heart



Faculty lead in Prayer
Pastor Varghese Chacko and Rev. Eldho K. Mohan



Welcome and Annual Report
Pastor Dr. Saju Joseph, Principal



Congregation offering corporate prayer for the graduates

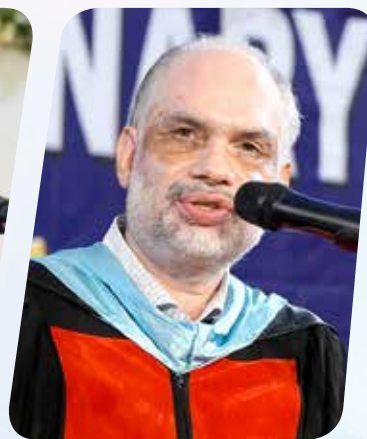
FELICITATIONS



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Vadasserikkara



Bro. Varkey Abraham
General Jt. Secretary IPC



Dr. Shaibu Abraham
Senior Faculty



Mrs. Laly Abraham



Faculty and friends pray for graduates



Rev. Abraham Chacko and Pastor T. T. Simon lead the responsive prayer for students

Rev. Phinny Kuruvila



IBC Melody leads the congregation in a wonderful time of worship

Theme Verse Phil: 3:14

was recited in the 25 languages and dialects represented at IBC



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Vunnam Hanantha (Telugu)



Samuel Rongphar (Karbi)



Samuel Bohein (Burmese)



Jaya Rai (Nepali)



Mruthyunjaya (Lambani)



Naveen Alappatti (Kannada)



O. Syam Sukumar (Hebrew)



Lola (Mara)



Mangisetty Yalroye (Arabic)



Ebenezer E. (Tamil)

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Nibu Pushpam
Dip.Th. (Malayalam)



Satmang Kipgen
M.Th., Manipur



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BD Graduates receive certificates from
the College President Pastor Dr. T. Valson Abraham

Blesson Benny, Haryana



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Naveen Alapatti, Karnataka



Sanu K.T., Wayanad

Rev. Dr. T. Valson
Abraham presents
certificates to
M.Div.
Graduates



Josh Ebenezer, Maharashtra



Anushya N., Tamil Nadu



Dilin M., Tamil Nadu



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Paul Moody, Andhra Pradesh



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Andhra Pradesh

B.Th. Graduates receive their certificates



Finohas A.G., Kerala



Jehol Shalom EJS, Tamil Nadu



Subhash Gaurav, Nepal

Vice Principal Pastor P.A. Mathew awards certificates to Malayalam Medium Graduates



Rittu Johnson, B.Th.III



Nibu Pushpan, Dip.Th II

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Mrs. Starla Luke announces Special Prizes and Awards



Sabin P. Sunny, M.Div. receive from Mrs. Annie Jacob the P.T. Chacko Endowment Award for Best Student Evangelist



Samuel George, M.Div. receives the Pastor K.E. Abraham Endowment Award for Best Outgoing Student from Mrs. Laly Abraham



Lt. Col. V. I. Luke reads *Teacher's Appreciation Awards* and Pastor Dr. T. Valson Abraham presents to Pastor P. A. Mathew and Mr. Jacob Thomas presents to Pastor P.J. Daniel.



Pastor K. V. Chacko Principal, Zion Bible College was thanked for his donation of books to IBC Library



Commissioning Prayer by President Dr. T. Valson Abraham



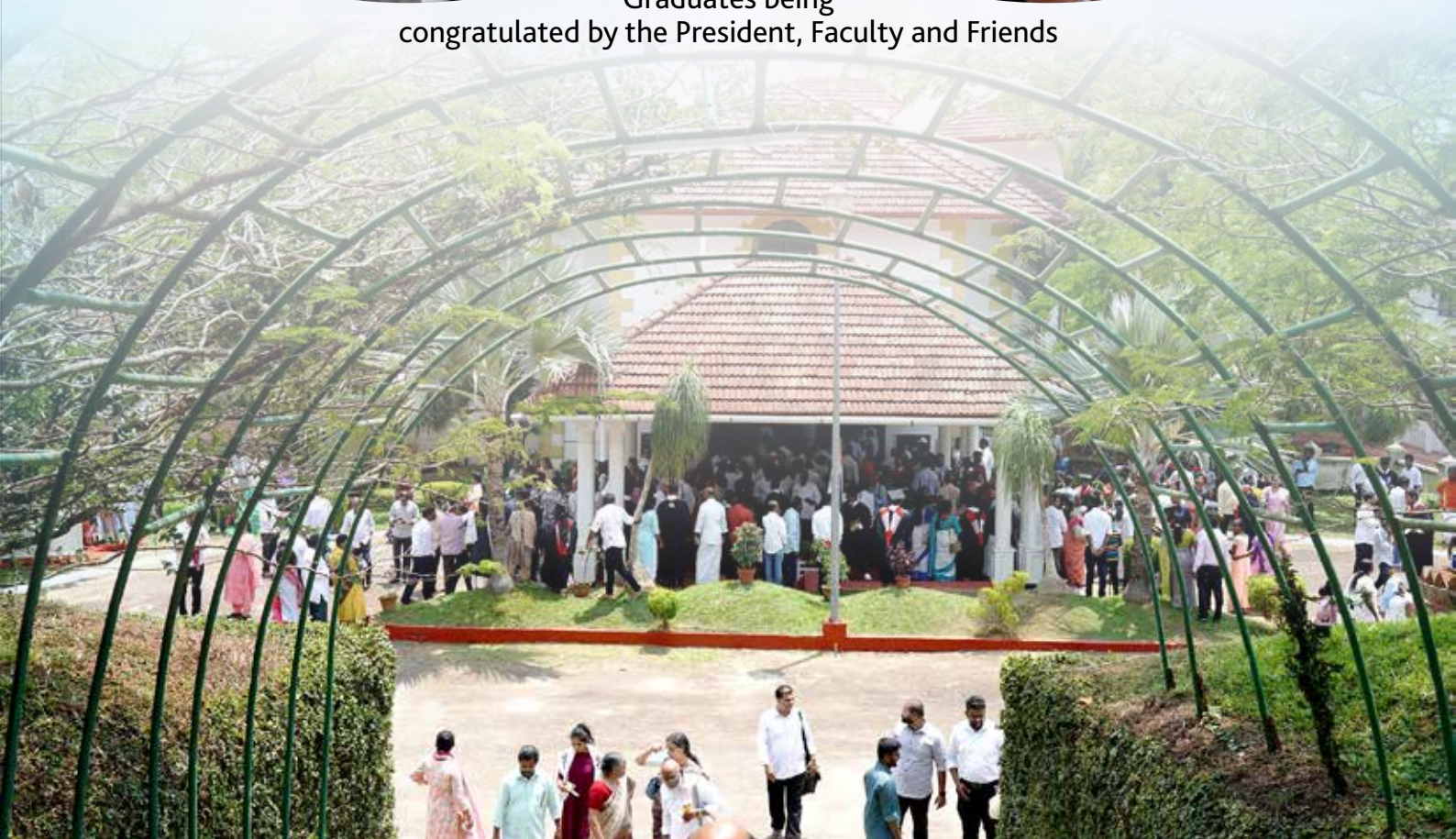
Executive Committee Members of the IBC Alumni Association



The very blessed Graduation Service ended with prayer and benediction by Pastor Benjamin Varghese



Graduates being congratulated by the President, Faculty and Friends





Graduates of the academic year 2023-'24 along with the Chief Guest, President, Board and Faculty Members



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