

like an emergency tocsin reverberated in several minds- *what* had gone wrong? The foam debris was the familiar, yet unfamiliar, answer that the team at NASA was trying not to remember.

How often do we ignore similar alarms that go off at crucial moments in our lives? How often do we stop to judge the depth of the consequences of our actions while making choices every day? It is not uncommon to have spots in our hearts which feel vulnerable to inferior forces. This vulnerability is potent. It can either allow the Spirit's fruitful work in one's life through absolute surrender, or, conversely, it can turn into avenues through which adversities from the enemy materialise.



The unsettling confrontation between the whispers of the enemy and the voice that speaks God's safety in submission, is an inescapable aspect of living a God-centred life while on earth. Human ignorance is funnily crippling and presumptuous in nature. It feigns confidence that speaks untrue assurances despite its discomfoting presence in our minds. Does this mean that we as believers are unprotected. No, we aren't at the losing end. Each one of us carries the autonomy of free will. We can *choose* to learn or to unlearn, to welcome or to return, to allow or to prohibit. We stand protected through the finished work of Christ in our lives. Christ, the Son of God himself, went through His journey here on earth with temptations that could have easily tipped Him off His purpose. We have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit that equips us to build discernment- that which saves us from unhealthy choices. The act of continual surrender strengthens this tool called *discernment* which further helps us to fend off the hidden guile of this world.

Are You Kidding Me taught me to be more receptive to the Spirit and to sharpen my "no" to the enemy.

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 But test them all; hold on to what is good. Avoid every kind of evil.

Please feel free to share your prayer needs to the intercessory team:
Sis. Anitha - 9911134007, Vini Jojoy - 9810611334, Preet Bijoy - 9990037613

F-58, Green Park Main, New Delhi-110016, For feedback and suggestions please email us at tcfcimes@gmail.com We also welcome classifieds if it can be of help to the congregation.

TCFC Times

Oct-Dec 2019

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE CITY FELLOWSHIP CENTRE

A LIFE WELL LIVED

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LEAD ARTICLE A Life Well Lived

By Mrs. Anita Samuel

It is a human nature to show the best part of oneself while meeting someone new. The not-so-good parts will get gradually revealed over a period. Good friends might know each other better than acquaintances, or a couple living together.

Since I got married in 1990 to Pastor Samuel Thomas (Ps. Sam), I lived in the same house with my mother-in-law, Mrs. Marykutty Thomas. It was an atypical relationship, where there was not much difference between what people saw outside her home and what I witnessed. I thought I will capture her life from the lens of a daughter-in-law, so that we could all learn from a life lived well.

I cannot recall a single incident where we had a misunderstanding or an argument over anything. This is because my mother-in-law never interfered in their children's lives. In early days of our marriage, Ps. Sam and I would go house-visiting and come back late. Not once she asked us where we were or what we were doing etc.,

When I got married, I was a very shy person. I found it hard to speak to other people. However, I found mummy to be very sensitive. Not once she has questioned me about my personal affairs. She also never pressed me to contribute towards



household work. I did what I could without being told what to do. (I worked as a nurse for 11 years after my wedding. I quit to join pastor in serving God full-time.)

This formed the strong base in our relationship that strengthened as time passed.

The second quality I liked in her is not discriminating between her children, but instead prayed for them constantly. All were treated equally. All her children and grandchildren too, in some way or the other have chosen to serve God, many of them full

time. I believe none of them were coerced into it. They are coming of their own will.

The third aspect of her life that touched me was her ability to adapt fast and be content. Before she got married, Ammachi was from a middle-class background where there was no lack in terms of necessities of life like food or shelter. But after her marriage to Ps. K T Thomas, things changed dramatically. She had to face scarcity in terms of food and money many times, especially in the early days of the ministry. Often, she would have to face it alone as her husband would have been touring because of ministry. Imagine taking care of her five kids, along with ten other men who are getting trained to become pastors. That's what she faced, but she never complained. Because of this, Ammachi was able to nurture many relationships, as evident from the outpouring of reactions after her passing away.

It's tough to live a consistent life, and I had the privilege of living with her for the last 29 years, and I can confidently attest that she lived a good life.

(Mrs. Anita Samuel is a daughter-in-law of Mrs. K T Thomas, who passed away on August 25th, 2019).



Anita Samuel

Ammachi's thoughts and views

By Angeline Lydia Shalini

Mrs. Marykutty Thomas, affectionately called as 'Ammachi', passed away on August 25th, 2019. She was 84. TCFC Times met with her few times to talk about her life and her thoughts on different topics. Here, we are reproducing some of them.

How her husband, Ps. K.T Thomas, accepted Christ (when she got married, ammachi was only 16 years old, and Ps. K.T Thomas hadn't accepted Christ)

In the early days of our marriage I used to go to church alone. But my heart longed for my husband to know the Lord and attend church with me. So, I prayed. I kept praying for about a year. It so happened in the year 1956 there was a Billy Graham convention in Delhi and my husband attended it. In that meeting he received the Lord Jesus as his Savior.

Her favorite verse

"For the mountains may move and the hills disappear, but even then, my faithful love for you will remain. My covenant of blessing will never be broken," says the LORD, who has mercy on you." (Isaiah 54:10)



saw the same elder God had showed me in the vision. He was having a bag full of groceries for the family. He said he had come to ensure we had food in the absence of my husband, I just could not control my tears when I realized God's hand at work in that situation. No matter what God provides for his children. He is faithful.

On Satan's powers

I believe Satan has no power or authority over our lives, yes, he tries to disturb us. But I never gave much importance to him trying to think this problem is because of Satan or not. I looked to God who is my solution and focused on His promises and words alone.

A message for young Christians

The younger generation of today is nothing but the fruit of the prayer and the hard work of the pioneers of this church. They need to carry on that legacy, carry the baton of prayer and hard work until Christ comes. The work of the church has not been completed yet, it needs to continue. But my encouragement for all of you is always remember to sow the seed in the morning and to continue it to evening because God may use the morning work or evening one, or both equally. So, continue to do the work and do not despise small things.

Continue to do the work and do not despise small things

Her supernatural experience

I could tell so many. However, one really stands out in my memory. Once my husband was out of town for several days. He was travelling and ministering through parts of North India. One afternoon as I was making lunch, I realized that there was no more dal or atta at home. I began to worry about how I will give the next meal to my children. I prayed to God and remembered his promise of provision to me and my family. As I was having lunch with my children God showed me a vision, in which I saw an elder in our church coming home. I was surprised as he never usually comes. A few hours passed and I heard a knock. When I opened the door I

Camp Shape

A Youth Camp at TCFC

By T. Apoorva Chiranjeevi



"What does it mean to be intentional", "What does it take to be purposeful?", "Am I really an ingenious creation", "What defines my place?"

These were some questions that, I believe, played through most of our minds as we entered the camp venue. We were a motley of various talents and a rainbow of all possible personalities seeking direction for our inner man at camp Shape.

The camp comprised of nine core sessions, soulful worship, homely food, early morning

devotions, loads of team work, games that loosened our arms and feet and a delightful time of fellowship spread out over a period of three days. We reached Navjivan Renewal Centre at 9 am on Thursday, 21st November. The Centre was inside St. Xavier's School. Mr. Alan had come all the way from Shimla to enlighten us about the process of shaping our



hearts and minds.

Romans 12: 11 says 'Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.'

The world is hurting, its pain has been written in histories of violence and abuse over millennia. The world's a place which is becoming dreadful day by day. *Where* does one stand in such a place. *How* does one stand in such a place? If we deconstruct SHAPE, it

would be, Spiritual gifts Heart Abilities Personalities and Experiences. The word 'shape' is a verb and also a noun. In the same way we're expected to do and to be. A continual discovering and rediscovering of the elements that make me 'me' and a continual endeavour to be 'me' in all uniqueness. Camp Shape was all about learning about the innate qualities that one grows up with. Qualities that are helpful, inclinations that are given by the Creator himself. It was about finding the patterns that define our approach and our

histories that contribute to the making of our individuality. We were taught about various ways in which we could apply the theory of mission-minded serving in our practice. Group discussions helped us build accountability, it helped us share our experiences and thoughts. Group discussions were a space of reciprocal growth with our mentors. Standing shoulder to shoulder, we prayed for each other, we praised and danced, we laughed at silly banter and, most importantly, we found in ourselves the

people that God is calling us to be. We didn't know the depth of the grave issues surrounding us. Here, at camp Shape, we discovered the beginning of the journey of becoming a true servant of Christ, not in glamorous ways, but in the mundane. In the language that the world understands the best. In the language of Christ's love and through the skills of perfection drenched in humility.

Camp Shape Testimonies

A Youth Camp at TCFC

21st Nov- 23rd Nov 2019

I have been a cynic almost all my life, with my faith in God being a major bone of contention. But after attending this camp, I feel like I'm not only closer to God now but much more inquisitive about my faith, thereby increasing it even further. The answers that I got from this camp have now given me a purpose in life to work towards and have helped me accept my past painful experiences which have bogged me down all my life. I came out of the camp feeling joyful and victorious and I now feel like I have finally started my journey of making peace with myself.

-Anish

I was not thrilled about it nor wanted to attend the camp. But somehow later I made-up my mind for it. I believe it was God's plan. I could do some soul searching while in the camp. I got to understand my God-given talents, personality (which is unique for everyone), motivation, weakness and strengths. I learned that those qualities are given to me for a reason. To follow Yeshua with all of it. If it were not for the camp, it would have taken me a long time to understand these things.

- Jijo

I never had second thoughts about the camp. Infact, I was thrilled about it. However, my exams were the only hindrance as my practical exam date was not released and I was worried that my practical might happen on the same date. But by the grace of God I was able to get there and experience the blessings in the camp. This camp has completely changed my perspective towards the objective of my life. Few days back I was perplexed about my career, but now I trust God's plans for my life.

-Pooja

In the camp I was able to correct and appreciate the SHAPE I was till now. God taught me to continue changing into His likeness. My past helped me check all my stars and my scars I gathered till now. God comforted me in the truth of His blood that was shed for me for my scars. In one of the indoor games, I used my ability to protect and defend myself from the ball. Though our team lost at it, I received praises for my technique. Then a brother told me that this technique conveyed a message, "when the enemy comes, fight back!". God taught me to enjoy playing volleyball, He taught me to be available for Him. He conveyed a message through my skill which I did not know about. I believe God's work to shape us is a continuous process and I encourage everyone to be available and sensitive to God.

-Yapang

Carecell Feature NOIDA



TCFC Noida cell is a new cell group that was started last year. We meet every Friday evening at 7 pm. The venue alternates between sector 77 and sector 107 Noida as we have two families who have opened their home for the cell meeting.

Our care cell family includes three families, students and professionals based in Noida. Few of our members have moved out from the group after finishing their studies in the city.

God has enabled us to study the book of Haggai with the help of Ps. Reji Babu and Dr. Bobby John over this period. In this span, we have seen God answer so many of our prayers and we are grateful to him for that. We also

thank God for all the members who have truly supported each other in times of difficulties.

As a care cell, we look forward to using opportunities to share the good news. God graciously enabled us to share his love with those around during the Christmas season. We are also actively praying for our neighbours to come to know the Lord.

All staying in and around Noida are welcome to join our family!

By Sis. Deepa

If you live in Noida or nearby and would like to join this carecell, please contact Deepa @ 88601-81517

Testimony

Dr.Madhumathi.J

I am working as a Scientist in the Indian Council of Medical Research, an apex body promoting biomedical research, and I work in the antimicrobial resistance program of the Government currently. I could complete my Doctorate in Biotechnology and developed vaccines for the disease Elephantiasis, for which I was selected for “New Investigator Award” by the International Society of Infectious Diseases, USA. I always had passion for science and was interested in research, which ultimately lead me to become a scientist.

I liked spending more time in lab experiments even in school. I entered graduation with lots of aspirations and I was happy to find good friends around me. Although I was good in studies in college initially, my friends started to have a strong influence on me very soon. I was born in a Christian family and had accepted Jesus as my Saviour early during my school days. However, during my college I wanted to be accepted in the group of my friends and needed their attention. So, I would do whatever they do and would always desire to impress them. I participated in all their activities “just for fun” and momentary happiness. We would bunk our classes and go to movie theatres and restaurants. We would spend hours together in chatting, gossiping,

joking, movies etc. I was slowly and steadily drawn into a life of corrupt talk, filthy jokes, evil thoughts and wrong habits. I started going to theatres with my friends regularly and slowly became so addicted that in a single day I would watch four movies continuously. My lifestyle changed swiftly, even before I could realize its seriousness. My mind was becoming corrupt day by day and I was being poisoned without my knowledge. Jesus says “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” Mathew 6:22,23. I was filled with darkness indeed.



In my third year of college, God tried to intervene and spoke through His word to be separated from my friends. But I kept disobeying the Lord to please my friends. The devil used the opportunity to catch hold of me. I started hearing voices that would tell me that I will die soon, and my family will be destroyed. I would have nightmares and would not sleep for days. I was completely gripped with fear. I went into severe depression as the voice would often tell me “You are rejected by God forever” and “you are going to hell”. I was in mental agony and could not even tell anyone. I was even taken to a psychiatrist as I behaved abnormally for few days.

One day the voice told me “you are going to hell anyway, now or later. Why not go now?” Since I could not bear the mental torture and fear, I decided to end my life thinking “Anyway I am hopeless. What is the use in living in fear?” “Anyway, I am going to hell...why not go now?”.

At that very moment, by the immense grace of God who created me, something inside me urged to look into the Bible, just one last time. I thought to myself, if God would speak to me and say that He will give me another chance, I will live and not die.

I opened the Holy Bible and these words of life popped out of the Holy book as if

God is directly speaking to me. Isaiah 44:22, “I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.”

No words can express the joy I had. It was the gift of eternal life I received again from my heavenly Father, when I returned, like the prodigal son. The word gave me life. He gave me another chance to live. I was a victim of devils' lies and oppression. But the Lord Jesus delivered me from Satan's grip and lifted me out of the pit of darkness, depression, guilt, shame and fear. Over the next few days I had supernatural encounters with the Lord and the divine power of God delivered me and cleansed me from all sins. Once I saw Jesus as a bright light in my room opening his arms and calling me to come to him. When no man could understand and no one could help me, the Sovereign Lord, Jesus Christ himself came down directly to rescue me, in his mercy. Today he is using me to deliver many such people who are caught similarly in devil's trap. He

No man could understand and no one could help me.....

conquered death and grave to give us “Life”. He is a mighty and loving God who is ready to forgive and redeem us from the power of sin.

“Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved”-Joel: 2:32.

Team Creatives



Know your church series

Mary Didla

Ever wondered what goes into making the worship and service seamless? How many of us might have thought about all those hands, minds and hearts behind the scene? This time we are going to look at the Creatives team.

It is an amalgamation of various teams in Church – art, sound, worship, graphics, video and photography. The team is led by Ben Thomas, the elder son of Ps. Samuel Thomas.

Driven by the vision and mission of The City Fellowship Centre (TCFC), Team Creatives' vision is to "develop leaders in all creative fields so that they can take part in growing

other campuses of TCFC and be ready to further God's work and to be skilful in whatever it does".

I joined this team to support media work in August, 2019. Barely equipped with the requirements of the role, I was initially sceptical if I would stand a chance to be part of the team, unsure of how I would manage to pull myself together amidst the leaders and the tenured. However, I was amazed by the humbleness and patience that the team displayed to absorb and train me from the scratch. It lovingly nurtures the newcomers and makes them feel at home.

Detailed training and shadowing is provided for both English and Hindi services to equip the newcomers with the end-to-end functioning of the team. Each person is assigned with specific roles so that all the three services are run smoothly every Sunday. The team meets every month to brainstorm new thoughts and ideas so as to enhance the spiritual experience of the church. Every meeting is filled with fun, games and thoughtful discussions, followed by refreshments and fellowship. What binds them all together is their heart for God, the willingness to serve Him with all their strength and soul.

Want to join the team?

All you need is a heart to serve, coupled with the right attitude and enthusiasm. There are no pre-requisites to be able to sing, click pictures, know computers, or have any technical skills before you join any of the "Creatives" units. Skills and gifts can be built, nourished and taught if you come with an open mind and a willing heart, to serve God.

As 1 Peter 4:10-11 reminds us:

(V:10) "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." (V:11) "If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."

Come join the Creatives in whichever unit God leads you into and be a blessing to the TCFC community by putting together the best of your gifts, strengths, heart, and soul to glorify God.

Learning From Others

Joanna Jones

Editor's note: This is in continuation of our series 'Learning from others' where we will talk to fellow church members from different walks of life on how they handled tough or difficult situations that are contrary to Christian values. They could be at their school, college, workplace or business venture.

Joanna narrates her experience as a teenager in a Delhi school, and how she handled many situations.

JOANNA'S TESTIMONY

I attended St. George's School, South Delhi. Being a believer, one of the problems that I face is to be at peace with everyone – to not get into any unnecessary argument. A lot of foul language is used by my classmates in their daily conversations, so not getting influenced by these and 'standing out' - being different from the normal crowd is a challenge. To own up for the mistake done intentionally or unintentionally is a challenge. I have observed students making silly excuses even for matters such as completing homework, project work, etc. Also being truthful in my words and deeds; even trying to not take a shortcut – be it studying, completing an assignment or giving an examination; always striving to do it the right way, God's way.

One of the challenging situations I went through was during our transfer from Bangalore to Delhi in April 2013. I was poor in conversing in Hindi then and was not able to communicate that well with others in Hindi. Most students at my school prefer to converse in Hindi. Being the new student of the class gave others the opportunity to make fun or annoy me either by talking about me behind my back or making fun of my name, etc. Making friends was very difficult and most of the time I was ignored. I knew it would take time to adjust but my only thought back then was "When would I go back to Bangalore?"

Criticism, in any form, is hard to accept. They make you wonder whether what was said about you is true or not. Well, we are a better judge of ourselves – if we think what is said about us is true, then we need to change. But if we know that people just say negative things just to put us down then we should have the courage to ignore these and not let it affect us in any way.

If I describe myself, I am a sensitive person, so when things got beyond my enduring point, I would get disheartened and wonder - Why had God brought us to Delhi? Why did we have to leave Bangalore?

However, coming to think of it all – these experiences have enabled me to grow more in the Lord and face challenges by trusting God and not on my own wisdom and understanding. Be it examinations, competitions or even being different from

others, I depended on God's strength. Prayer wasn't just a ritual for me – even for small matters I didn't rely on my own capabilities but trusted God to guide me through. As it is written in the Bible "If God is for us who can be against us..."

The principles that were taught to me at home and at Sunday school from childhood enabled me to face these issues strongly. I tried to hold on to the Biblical truths as much as I could. Sometimes, I even shared my sorrows with my mom who gave me advice and pacified me too. The prayers of my parents, grandparents and church members supported me immensely.

Most importantly, I would like to share with fellow teens that 'Prayer' must play a vital role in our day-to-day life. Just commit in the mighty hand of God, thank Him for all He has done and is going to do. Be it any situation, you can take it to the Lord in prayer. Being a student has its own challenges, however you are not alone. This is just one phase of our life and more challenges are sure to follow. But never forget that the God who brought you thus far is sure to lead you through.



Sacrifice to Salvation -Marked by the Blood!

Poem by Mary Didla

The Shepherd was slain for His flock,
With His blood, He washed the sins of our cloth (flesh).
He bought us all, each counted and numbered,
In His blood, each one is remembered.
The love, as it paved our way,
On the cross, we're carried away.

Tender and faithful was what His heart like,
Humble and gracious, it beat His whole life..
Victorious, from the dead He rose to the light,
To prepare our way, to give us eternal life.

The lamb in us got crushed in its soul,
To cleanse our spirits, to make us whole.
The Son was sacrificed on the Cross,
To lift us all, from all our falls.

The Son of Man that He became,
Knowing the filth in us, still He came.
Every guilt, every shame, He took it up on the Cross,
To free us from sin's endless bonds.

God wept when Jesus died,
The Spirit crushed when His body was laid..
They made Their Beloved go through it all,
To reconcile us, once and for all.

Dear friend, rise to your feet,
Reach out to the riches of the Spirit.
Kneel down to humble,
There they wait for you to meet.

The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit..
They call us home, sweet home.
Let us pick our Cross, and make our way,
Let us live the Word by the day,
Let us rejoice and praise and dance and sing,
As we are led by His wing.

The walk will lay its thorns to bleed,
But the thorns will have their time to heal.
Times testing us, they chisel our character,
And as we process through, we reflect our Creator.

Let us rise, pick up our Cross,
Dear Friend, it is time to walk.
The pain we feel, it will be overwhelming,
But it prepares us for His Second Coming.
Pick the Cross, learn to endure, and keep your trust,
Coz the Bible says,
"the first will be last, and the last will be first!"
(Matt 19:30)

Are You Kidding Me

A Youth Meeting at TCFC

T. Apoorva Chiranjeevi

I let out a big "are you kidding me" towards the end of the docu - drama that was screened in the youth meeting on 22nd September, at TCFC. The docu - drama was about *Columbia*, the space shuttle known for its catastrophic disintegration. The mishap took place during its atmospheric entry, killing seven crew members, on 1st February 2003. It was initially thought to be a freak accident. It seemed like the members involved in the execution of the flight operation had not foreseen the extent of destruction that followed, perhaps not even remotely. The accident was caused by something as insignificant as foam debris, which, at one point, had made an appearance on the screens of the mission controllers in America who were monitoring the operations of *Columbia* in space. Floating foam debris was not uncommon, or so they thought, as they ignored the subtle, yet blaring sign of disaster. The shuttle moved on without any inconsistencies in its functioning after the collision with the debris. It deceptively gave hopes of a safe achievement as it was nearing the end of its journey. Nobody could see the truth of the impending tragedy, it lay hidden. Soon, an unbelievable crash took place only a few minutes away from its landing on earth.

Seven precious souls and a multimillion-dollar project were lost, all in a miniscule amount of time.

Who could have imagined an end like that of *Columbia*. Sorrow and remorse poured out from across the world. A pinching question,