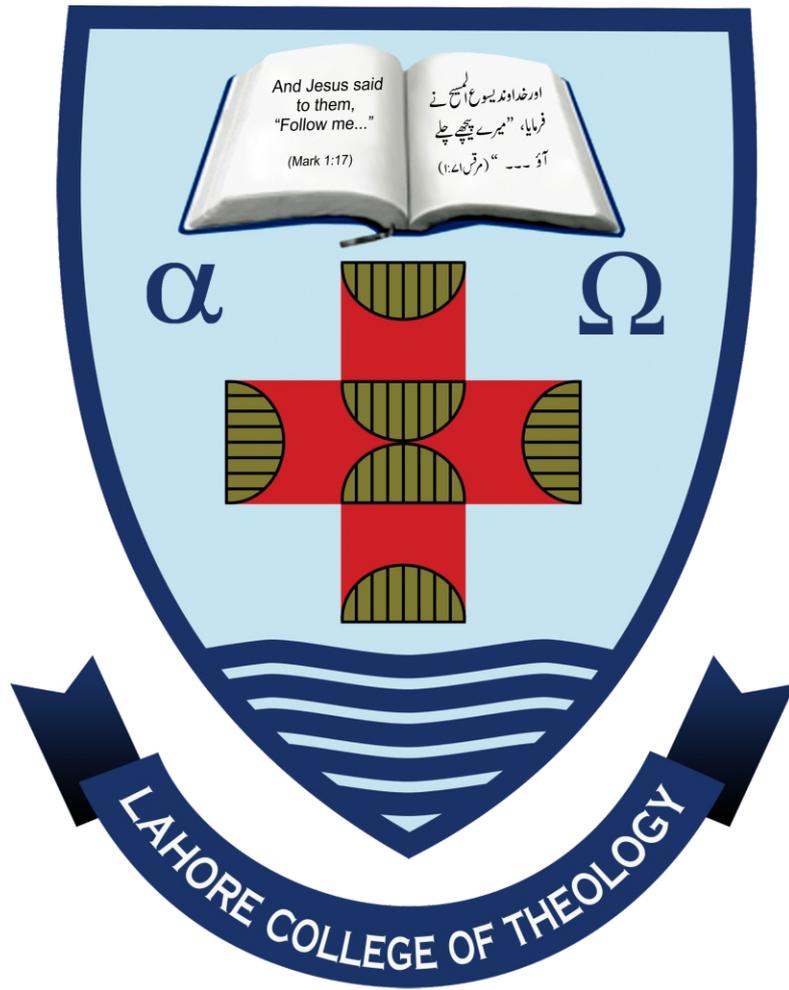
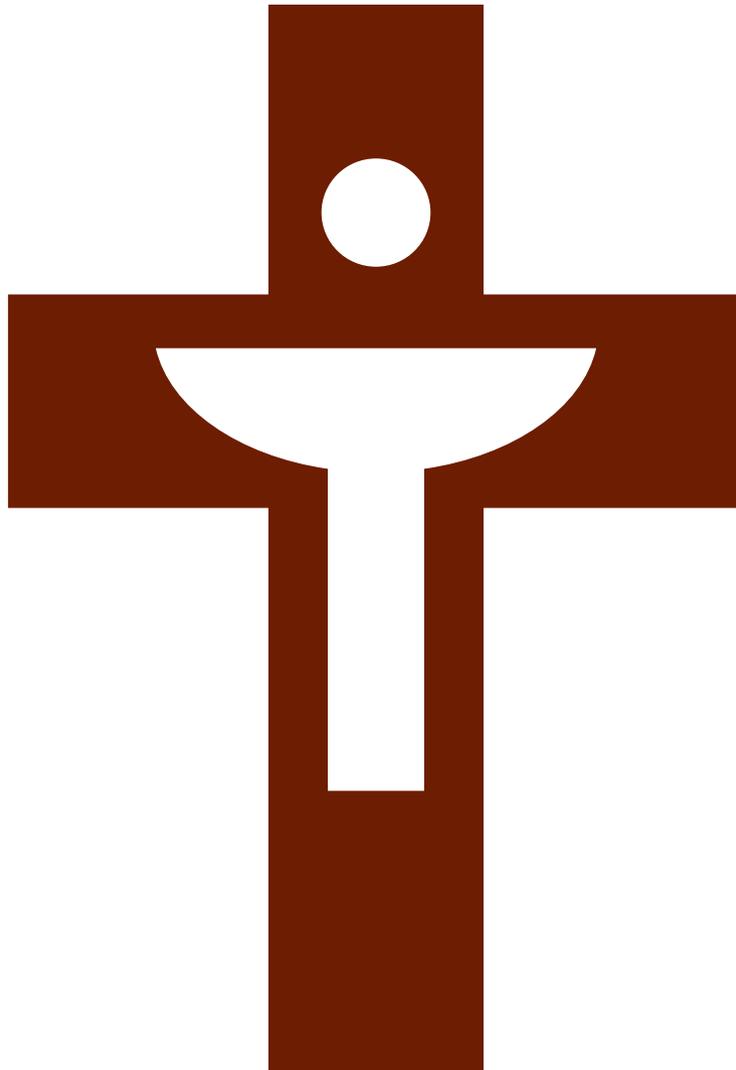




# LCT

Lahore College of Theology  
Graduation 2016

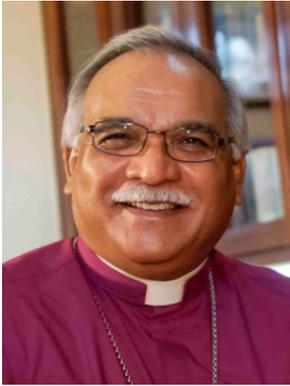




“ The form of this cross enhances Christ without the form of Christ himself. Christ in this cross is visible by absence of His form. A circle for the head, a crescent for the outstretched arms, and the long rectangle to represent the body, is a powerful reminder to us at the college, with each passing day, of the hope and invitation to the Christ of the Cross in the chalice and host, braiding together, the Eucharist as shared meal, as sacrifice entailing suffering and death, as with Jesus. ”



## More than Victims



Rt. Rev. **Azad Marshall**, DD.  
Founder & Chairman LCT

“If the story in our local and national Church is becoming the story of a victim Church, it is time to stop and take account.”

Paul's letter to the Romans in its eighth chapter, resonates with the hope and assurance of which the Global Church and thereby our local churches is sadly lacking in these times.

Why we lack this hope and assurance is the tragedy that we need to face up to and engage with. Paul's letter has neither been removed from the Canon of Scripture nor has it been relocated in the last 2000 years. It remains faithfully nestled at the cusp of the Church's journey beyond Pentecost.

The promise that nothing can separate us from the love of God and that we by the power of this love are more than conquerors was a message then, and still is, to the beaten, tempted and undermined Christians in a violent, cruel and broken world.

It was to such a world that Christ came. It was for such a world that His Cross was crafted to bear not only his physical weight, but more than that, the weight of the sins of the whole world. It was within an equally violent, cruel and broken world of Roman occupation that Christ declared 'Take heart for I have overcome the world'. He was speaking of a world that is not alien to the same tragic actions of persecution and suffering, a world that was groaning under the weight of sin and a world that knew discrimination, injustice and oppression. Jesus was speaking to people like you and I and, Paul, later, was writing to people like you and I, in times as broken and despairing as these. Times when the political, religious, economic and industrial tides were tumultuous.

Then why the amnesia within the Church of the victory cry that comes from the Son who bears our sins on our behalf and conquers death to free us from the yoke of sin? It is this very amnesia that makes us continually enslaved to all that binds us and makes us blind to the hope, assurance and freedom of the Cross of Christ.

We live within earshot of stories of anger and unfairness. Every one of us knows a brother or a sister, a parent, a relative or a friend, listless under the weight of revilement and rejection or trying to rise out of the ashes of violence and slavery, or those who can look back over their shoulders and witness before their eyes their hometowns destroyed by the ravages of war and sin. Remembering Lot's wife brings us a helpful reminder that God does not wish us to keep our eyes on the brokenness, but on the perfection of His restoration and His redemption and the renewal He promises in making all things new.

If the story in our local and national Church is becoming the story of a victim Church, it is time to stop and take account. We choose to worship in amnesia and worship without surrendering to the promise that we are not only victims, but overriding that, we are victors in Christ Jesus. We are more than just conquerors and we cannot be separated from the love of God. Then why is such a vast population of the human race choosing to dwell within a stagnant story of victimhood? Why are we not strengthening our Churches, to reach out and be the hand that is needed to help the crippled to walk and the blind to see?

This worrying case of forgetfulness of the hope and assurance of triumph over our circumstances being overridden by our preoccupation with brokenness

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“ Our initiatives will remain no more than actions unless the Spirit of God breathes victory and life through them ”

has stifled our faith journey and filled us with hopelessness. We either huddle together in unreachable clusters where we concentrate on our wounds as opposed to looking at Christ's glorious ones. Or we scatter and disperse showing, yet again, no semblance of a people drawn together at the foot of the Cross and then dispersed and encouraged onward to look like Christ to this broken generation.

We no longer demonstrate the passion to preach the Good News of Christ. Is this because although we stand aghast at the unbelief and depravity that fills the world and sit in judgment over the wrongs of fellow brethren we spend too little time in prayer and worship which empowers us to live the victorious Christian life?

At LCT, we recognize the need for the Good news. Every year God reminds us afresh, through the stories, experience and heartache of our first years that this world brings us portions and degrees of victimhood. We are equally reminded that His cross is still standing in the gap and making the victim a victor, while the journey of healing progresses toward the restoration, encouragement and strengthening of the person, the community and the Church. It is imperative that even now, while some communal memory of a victorious Christian life exists, that we demonstrate willingness for the Lord to release us from our amnesia and bring us inspiration and healing of Pentecost proportions. Our initiatives will remain no more than actions unless the Spirit of God breathes victory and life through them. Our prayer remains that we may know the constant refueling by the Holy Spirit of our various efforts like Bible Literacy, Sharing of the Good News, Retreats, Prayer ministry and Trauma Counseling.

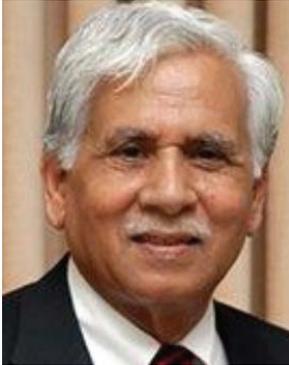
While we seek God's direction in furtherance of these ministries, looking to the author and finisher of our faith, may the Lord, through our theological reflections and our commitment to spiritual formation at the Lahore College of Theology, continue to encourage our hearts to look forward to the return of Christ?

I will close with a story from a community of believers who partner with us in prayer. They are a simple, unassuming community of men and women who have been emptied of the frivolities of modernity. They do not wish to be named or glorified, they prefer to remain quietly in prayer where they are called. They have little but they bring much to the communion of saints; they live under the shadow of the Cross each day because of their commitment to the truth. “We sing, we acknowledge the greatness of God, we worship him with thanksgiving, we read His scriptures, we ask questions and seek answers. Then we ask Jesus to come back soon, but until He does we ask Him for the strength and joy to look like Him in this age”, said the glowing elder who leads the community.

Are we glowing? Are we crying ‘Maranatha’? Are we excited about the value God places on each victim and that, no matter what we face, nothing can separate us from the love of God. Let us remind ourselves often that we are more than conquerors in Christ, in Him final victory is ours, no matter where we have been called to serve. Come soon Lord Jesus!



## From the Principal's Desk: LCT Annual Report 2016 Greetings in the unique name of our Lord and Savior



Rev. Canon  
**Emmanuel Bahadur**  
Principal LCT

It is with the great honor and God's good Grace that we will celebrate our 6<sup>th</sup> Graduation for our B.Th and M.Div students who have read with us, prayed with us, grown with us, wept and rejoiced with us. Before our very eyes they have transformed from one day to the next into women and men of integrity and compassion, motivated for the Gospel of Christ and the excellence of their theological studies.

The 2015 to 2016 academic year was paved with effort and the pouring out of spiritual and physical ministry to ensure that we too would meet them with the same incarnational ministry and excellent teaching and discipleship. All this to continue our mission of teaching, training, equipping and nurturing men and women for ministry as they strive for their educational pursuits and increased their learning in LCT degree programs. The year has been filled with teaching, reading, discussions, music and song and the desire to create a community here at LCT who worships the Lord in fullness of their calling.

We seem to have found ourselves the custodians of a ministry of hospitality and ministry to those who come through our gates. The year was pleasantly enriched by the visits of friends and prayer partners, women and men who faithfully walk alongside us through the year, not forgetting us. Some of those guests were Mrs. Pat Stock, Korean friends who accompanied the Honorable Minister- Kamran Michael, a visit by Mr. Jeff Taylor, CEO Salt International, old time friends Tim and Rachel Green, Alex Mccume & Rev Howard Castleberry, and Dr. Bruce Nicholls. Alas, here on the edge of Lahore, an ancient city of culture and gardens, we are brought friends from across the Atlantic, from Europe, Korea and China. We look forward to our international ties deepening in a spirit of hospitality, ministry and partnership: always servant hood.

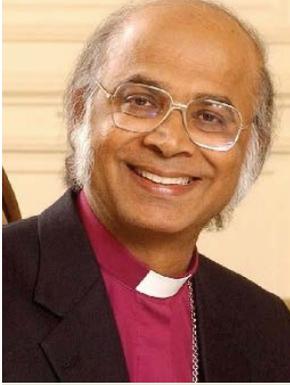
This October 2016, 19 students will graduate receiving M.Div and B.Th Degrees. It is with awe and thanksgiving, that I can report an increase in our student numbers this year. On the September 15, 2016, thirty-five full-time students joined us in the first year and currently 70+ students are enrolled. God has continued to send us godly and gifted women and men who are committed to serving God's people in a wide range of ministries. Yet, we must not give up praying that God might send more. Globally the Church is crying out in the desperate need for precise and clear thinking, warm hearted, gospel-driven men and women to take the gospel to the nations.

To provide for the growing needs of students and church, various facilities such as: a contemporary library, teaching rooms and a Chapel that allows the entire College community to worship is being completed. We have the opportunity of reaching even more people across the world with these valuable resources and our hope is always for us to live and breathe and have our being in Christ and these gifts to pulsate with His goodness. The work is not finished yet. A whole host of innovative proposals are currently being tested in order to make this an even better learning experience. One such example of which we are really excited to inform you is our e classroom. This term, we introduced OT lectures by Dr David Upp who is in the United States of America. Finding a suitable time for him, our students have made use of our resources and been able to tune in under the watchful care of our IT and Media Department. The lectures have been inspiring, educational and rich, making space for teaching, mentoring and discussions. We hope to develop this aspect of our teaching further in the years to come.

Our hope is that our readers, our guests, our students, our faculty and our Board will all endeavor to walk together in prayer and the hope for Gospel passion and Academic excellence.

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## What is Christian Education: Taking every thought captive to Christ (2 Cor10:5).



Rt. Rev. **Michael Nazir Ali**  
D. Litt. Doctor of Letters DD.

The Church has been involved in the task of education from the beginning. Literacy is required to read the Bible itself, for instruction in the Christian life and for liturgical worship. From an early time churches, and then monasteries, encouraged the copying of manuscripts not only of the Bible but of other Christian writing. They also promoted the development of the use of music in worship and of art for instruction in the faith.

It would, however, be wrong to think that the Church has been interested in education only for this reason. We have known for long that there are two books of God: the Bible and Creation. We learn of God's purposes and his nature from them both. One of the challenges of a properly Christian education is how to relate knowledge in one area to knowledge in another. Especially in our age, we need to bring new knowledge constantly to the scrutiny of the Scriptures. Much in secular knowledge can be affirmed and even used but basic biblical teachings about purpose, meaning and freedom, for example, cannot be denied.

We need to learn also from those faithful Christians down the ages who have wrestled with the relationship between Divine Revelation and our use of God-given, but fallen, reason. Christianity is a religion of the Logos, God's reason, incarnate in Jesus Christ, and it is always working for the expression of the right relationship between reason and revelation. The one cannot contradict the other. There is a fashion these days to see education as merely instrumental i.e. as a means of entering a profession or developing research for application in some field. Against this, Christians will want to uphold education for its own sake, for extending the range of human knowledge about the second book of God and indeed, about themselves.

What does all of this mean for theological education today? It should, of course, mean a thorough grounding in Scripture: in the text, its original and ancient languages, in the formation and transmission of the various books, in its history, anthropology archaeology, geography etc. It will mean taking history seriously as the God of the Bible is Lord of history. This will not be just Church History but world history, the history of nations and peoples, of clans, tribes and even families. We will have to be alert to the literature and the oral traditions of the people amongst whom we are to minister and to witness. We should be aware of people movements, urbanisation, poverty and wealth and what the Social Sciences are telling us. Philosophy can help us to think clearly about the issues we face.

All of this has to be delivered within a limited time frame. This means that continuing education is vital for our future. We must keep reading, developing our libraries and using public ones. The internet revolution has given us access to much information but we need to learn how to use such information wisely and usefully, without becoming captive to this medium or misusing it. Being open to mentoring by those who have been in ministry and mission before us is a way of husbanding our knowledge in beneficial ways.

Education never ends. We go on learning all of our lives and even in heaven there is what a famous saint called the 'journey in God' as we grow more and more in knowledge, love and intimacy of our Creator and Redeemer: One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



## Subtleties that Matter



Rev. Nathaniel Kidd

What is the difference between preaching the Gospel and preaching the Faith? It is a subtle distinction, certainly, but it is one that we, who are trusted with teaching, forming, and equipping the faithful must be diligent to consider. By “the Faith,” I mean the whole history and tradition and experience of the Christian life and religion: a thing infinitely deep and rich and beautiful, to be sure. But it is easy to get so caught up in the details of “the Faith” that we lose sight of the Gospel, which is its beating heart.

The Gospel is this: God in Christ Jesus is reconciling the world to himself, not counting our sins against us. When we were helpless and hopeless, God himself came to save and deliver us. In Christ, God became man. God who is beyond history entered into history in the most profound possible way: he took on our frail and sick and broken nature to heal us from within, and to show us what it means to be fully human. And as though that were not enough, he took the guilt of our sins upon himself. He paid the punishment we were due for our transgressions, offering himself upon the Cross for our salvation. Yet the grave could not hold him down: he defeated Satan -- that ancient enemy of our race -- and burst the bonds of death and hell. Rising

victorious to life again, he set free all those captive to sin and the devil, and then he ascended triumphant to heaven, to sit at God's right hand as our mediator and advocate to the end of the ages.

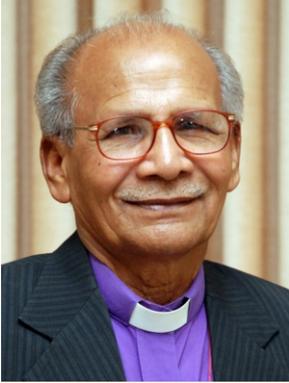
We who were once far from God can now have intimacy with the Father in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit he gives us. More than that, we have the promise of eternal life, the promise that we will share with Christ in his resurrection, enjoying his presence forever and living eternally with him in the new and perfected creation he will establish when he comes again in power and glory. We live this life, therefore, in faith and hope, joined together with the whole family of Christ as his Body extended through time and space, throughout history and around the world. The love that he has poured out on us becomes the love wherewith we love one another, as day by day he teaches us by his Word and Holy Spirit to keep his commandments, and follow in his ways. It also draws us upwards, towards him in prayer and in worship, as we sing to him ceaselessly in our hearts.

This is a life that we share with the whole family of faith whom God has won in Christ. Our fathers and mothers in Christ have much to teach us, as do our brothers and sisters. Many of them have walked this way for longer than we have: they have deep insights into prayer the Scriptures and the challenges of Christian life. Such gifts are not to be taken lightly, and indeed, the Spirit leads us to study them diligently. However, if they are taken apart from the life-creating Gospel, they become a kind of a law: a system that tries to work on us from the outside, rather than changing us from within. It is easy to become a kind of Christian Pharisee, judging things from the appearances, as to how well the trappings of good religion are kept up, rather than discerning the heart. It is easy to enforce the rules and to police the boundaries of the community, rather than listening patiently for the stirrings of the Spirit. Such zeal is well-meaning, but misdirected: it clings to good things, but misses the one thing needful.

Let us fix our eyes, then, on the Gospel, and the good things of “the Faith” will follow. The Gospel ministers salvation to all who will hear and receive, whether sinner or Pharisee. More than that, the Gospel edifies all who hear, imparting “the Faith” by inspiring “faith” within us. Let us then measure our preaching and teaching by this standard: not whether we impart good “advice” or true “information,” but whether at the beating heart is the living and life-giving truth that God has given us all in giving us his Son.

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## Ink from the Teachers' Pens Reflections of a Chaplain



**Rt. Rev. John Victor Mall**  
Chaplain to Board Members  
and Faculty LCT

The year 2015 to 2016 has caused us to reflect much on the institution and the persons' formation, and the relationship between the two. Essentially it is driven by "Vision". Vision and commitment work in complementing one another. We witness it when we study Abraham's calling, which is a vast and incredible vision (Genesis 12:3). It was God's given vision which Abraham accepted and stood fully committed to it. Commitment is a willingness to do whatever it takes. It is a promise to yourself from which you refuse to back off. There is a difference between interest and commitment. When you are interested, you do it only when it is convenient, but when you are committed you accept no excuses. Only results. This is what we work through every day at the Lahore College of Theology.

As Chaplain along with my fellow faculty members we share in the hope that our efforts toward the spiritual formation of our students will always depict Christ in all His fullness. Then we have no doubt, Kingdom results will follow.

Institutions, like the Lahore College of Theology are established for the formation of the human person to look like Christ. So while we, ideally, as a theological college or seminary aim to impart excellent theological knowledge, and provide training to our students, our hope is that they graduate, to preach the word of God, in the Spirit of the Word of God. Our hope is that as the years progress we may ever fulfill our role of preparing men and women who look like Christ and are grounded in theological truths. Our prayer is that they go out as well-equipped servants of the Lord. For five years we have prayed on our knees and live our prayers in active ministry to our students who have come through our gates.

Commitment means paying your dues and disregarding your critics. Jesus Christ set this example with grace, before his believers in common and his ministry in particular. It has been noticed that the vision and the commitment proclaimed at the time of admission looks markedly, different from the time they depart at the completion of a three years program. It seems as if they lose their focus of vision and commitment to their own idea of ministry and find the pearl of great price on the journey. To witness this blossoming in the student is truly an enriching and edifying experience for us as we plough through the challenges of such ministry.

May those who find in their spirit the urgings to pray for us, do so and may you be encouraged either as student or bystander to pray for the ministry of the Lahore College of Theology and the men and women who leave here in cap and gown but go forth to serve the Lord in faithfulness and Christ as their ultimate garment.



## Lost Lessons from the Early Church



Rev. Canon  
**Christopher Edgar**  
Faculty Member

As we consider reflecting briefly on the lost lessons of the early Church, we realise that there are some of the crucial areas and practices that are forgotten, ignored or discarded in the present age. To reflect on all areas in depth will be hard in the given space. However, I have chosen to highlight just a few. I am glad to recognise that the present Church is holding on to the Orthodox Christian faith and practice as much as it can, yet there are some crucial practices that are becoming weak if not abandoned.

**The Diaconate:** The Office and the ministry of a Deacon was established as a result of recognising a special need in the practical life of the early church and later the scope of this office was enhanced and developed holistically. The three major aspects of the Deacon's office were ministry of the Word, Liturgy and Charity. It is encouraging to see that the Diaconate these days is faithful to the ministry of the Word in preaching and teaching and also in the ministry of Liturgy such as conducting the Worship and sacraments. However, works of Charity seem to be absent as the central and major aspect of ministry of the Diaconate today. It is probably due to the fact that despite the acceptance of a holistic mandate of the Universal Church, the Church in its practice is not

focusing so much on the practical Pastoral Care of the faithful. If that were the case the church has not only forgotten the strong tradition of the Apostles but is also in the danger of missing the path of balanced care that Our Lord Jesus Christ has so clearly marked before us through His own example.

**Commitment to Simple Living:** Blessed are the poor in Spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' The poverty in the spirit is one of the signs of a believer. It is to be understood in its holistic sense, i.e. the understanding that one has for one's own self and also how that poverty of spirit is demonstrated. The early church was not afraid of the consequences of following Christ's value system. Therefore, they willingly shared their belongings, sold their possessions and shared them with the needy. This is in line with the spirit of Kenosis, (The emptying of the Son of God) It seems that the modern Church, with all the developed methods of giving and understanding of self-denial, lacks a deeper understanding of the spirit of emptying itself: becoming poor to lift up our brothers and sisters. Glimmers appear across the global Church, but there is a sense that the experience of the early Church Fathers has been put away and may become forgotten in the rising trend of the prosperity doctrine.

We see examples of the orders of St Francis of Assisi, who set before us the emptying in a different light. He gave up all that he had for the needy and became a beggar to fulfil the need of others. This is different from the Robin Hood mentality i.e. Robbing to give to others. Whatever our understanding is regarding the extent of emptying of ourselves, the fact remains that in this age of self-dependence and material prosperity, the Church has forgotten this lesson of self-giving and utter dependence on God's grace. The sacrificial element only remains to be desired in the general trend of individual and corporate giving of the Christians.

**The Singing and the Recitations of the Psalms and Readings of the Scriptures at length:** The tradition of singing the psalms in the early Church was regular and a cherished manner of praising God. Paul regularly mentions it and even Tertullian about the end of the 2nd century confirms the practice of the Christians singing Psalms. In *Ad Uxorem*, he mentions that Christian husband and wife would echo Psalms and hymns to challenge each other for better chant to the Lord. In *De Spectaculis*, he refers to the Christians who would recall Psalms in the theatres during the singing of the theatrical singers. The Apostolic Constitution also had a particular emphasis on the singing of the Psalms in the worships. It is good that in the Urdu and Punjabi Church the Psalms are cherished, sung and still considered a source of inspiration. They call to close proximity with God. However, in many churches the emphasis on the reading and singing of the Psalms is being replaced by other inspirational singing. In Pakistan, there is a marked decline in the reading of the Psalms in the regular

Sunday services. Added to that is an increasing lack of the reading of the scriptures at length. Usually, long readings are avoided and reading of passages like the Ten Commandments is replaced by the Summary of the Law etc. This is resulting in the lack of acquaintance with the Scriptures for the Church.

**The Agape Feasts:** The early Church is known to have gathered for regular love meals along with worship. This was a special time when rich and poor would come together in loving fellowship to demonstrate the oneness that the Gospel of Christ offers. Even though there were certain problems yet it seems that this tradition was practiced long after the apostolic age. In our age, the meeting together around the table for love feast is reduced to festivals and occasions. In our own cultural past, Prem-Sabah (Love gathering) was a very important element of the life and fellowship of the Christians. This seems to have disappeared. It is important to share the bread and share our love with each other in the context of sharing food in actuality and not just symbolically. It shows equality, love and commitment.

## Languages and Faith : Reflecting Together



Rev. Shafqat Saleebbi  
Faculty Member



Rev. Peter Percy  
Faculty Member

Why Ancient Language Texts Matter to Today's Christian? (Cultural, Context & Language).

In regard to the importance of understanding Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek in our study of the Holy Bible, Martin Luther- the great Protestant reformer said: "Languages are the sheath in which the sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored." It is indeed imperative for an ardent student of the Bible to go through its ancient language texts. In order to do that, one needs to have familiarity with Biblical Languages as these languages not only benefit us to look at the Bible in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century from a historical perspective but they also give us deeper and better understanding of the Word of God, increasing one's capability to consider its vital details that are sometimes ignored by the readers. Regarding our faith there are certain levels of thinking and assurance that are possible only when one exegetes the original language, John Owen, the famous Puritan theologian wrote: "There is in the originals of the Scripture a peculiar *emphasis* of words and expressions, and in them an especial *energy*, to intimate and insinuate the sense of the Holy Ghost unto the minds of men, which cannot be traduced into other languages by translations, so as to obtain the same power and efficacy. . . . It is [therefore] of singular advantage, in the interpretation of the Scripture, that a man be well acquainted with the *original languages*, and be able to examine the use and signification of words, phrases, and expressions as they are applied and declared in other authors." (Owen, J, *The Causes, Ways, and Means of Understanding*) So, in order to understand the nature of Biblical languages one needs to know both the background and history of Hebrew and Greek in general, and the history of the Biblical Text in particular. At LCT, we hope to encourage the analysis of the context in which it was recorded, along with a thorough study of its grammar. This is what we are committed to, here at LCT; to help the students to prove the truth and disprove the error, to recognise falsehood, and to support them in their exegetical studies and in translation since in doing so, some of the nuances do not transfer well from one language to another.

We hope and trust in the Lord that our students being equipped with biblical languages will lead the Church in the Spirit's direction which speaks through the Scriptures.



**“ I’m a little pencil in the hand of a writing God, who is sanding a love latter to the world, ”**

**Mother Teresa**

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## The Gallery



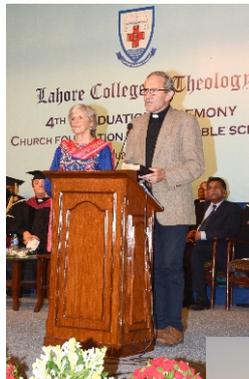
**Graduating Class 2015**



**Graduating Class 2016**

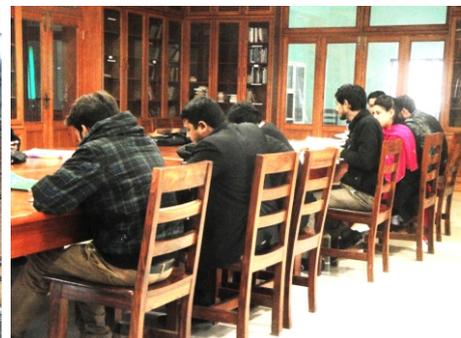


## Graduation 2015



Baccalaureate Mass 2015, Carols by Candlelight, & Ester Vigil Services at LCT





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## Introducing Jesus to a Fatherless Generation



**Shaleem Jonathan Robert**  
Alumni

Humankind faces perilous times: economic uncertainty, natural disasters, terrorist threats, and an overall spiritual decline. To survive these storms and serve our nation, a solid foundation in Christ needs to be reinforced. People can be orphaned sometimes by the loss of natural parenting, discipleship and also by lack of healthy spiritual leadership. We see an entire generation isolated, away from the face of the 'Good Shepherd' because of these perils one encounters in his/her journey. Each person is searching for something real to lean onto during life's storms. What do they find? An example was the tragedy that took place in Youhanabad in 2015. It was the lack of consistent teaching and discipleship over the years that had exhausted Christians in Youhanabad and led to a reaction. The response was natural but lacked the supernatural i.e. the grace of God. What we saw from that experience were natural responses of the "unparented". By demonstrating the love and nature of our Heavenly Father, God's own can bring hope to a fatherless generation, setting them upon the rock foundation of Christ.

One of the chief social concerns prevalent today is fatherlessness or lack of a father figure. David Blankenhorn says in *Fatherless America*: "Fatherlessness is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation." It becomes the root cause of many social ills like: poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, criminal & sexual activity and teen pregnancy. According to *Relevant Magazine*, "every problem our culture has can be directly or indirectly traced to fatherlessness in one form or another." It is probably the greatest curse in the history of any nation. And needless to say that it is one of the most destructive social trends in modern history.

Spiritual fatherlessness is a dilemma experienced in our churches and communities today. Billions of people are fighting their way through life with an overriding sense of emptiness in their soul. Many people have left the Kingdom because of the treatment they receive from church leadership, failing to provide fatherhood and mentorship. Although many live with an orphan mentality, God the Father intends to restore us to a sense of home. Ever since the fall, the enemy has sought to deceive people. Many have chosen to live as orphans without knowing a personal relationship with the only perfect "Father". As a result, we see fatherless families and nations. Like Israel in the Old Testament, fatherless people kept asking for a king because everyone did what was right in their own sight (Judg. 21:25). What we all need is the King (Jesus), who will show us the Father. In Matthew Chapter 6 Jesus tells us that if God cares for the birds of the air and lilies of the field, He will surely care for those who choose to be His children rather than live as orphans.

Moreover, in John 14:18, Jesus assures, "I will not leave you as orphans." In OT times, orphans needed someone to plead their case. Here, the term ὀρφανός (orphanos, orphan) is employed in a metaphorical sense, in connection with Jesus' departure and resulting in the loss that will be experienced by his disciples. Even during his absence, his disciples were to be nurtured by him, in spirit, as his children. Hence there would remain a relationship of children. Many churches are filled with people who have an "orphan mentality". Jesus gave the answer when He said, "I have revealed the Father. If you've seen me, you've seen Him" (John 14:9). The Father in heaven loves us so much that He gave His own Son to redeem us. He calls us by name!

Scriptures clearly instruct that an orphan cannot be left neglected (James 1:27). It is our responsibility to introduce Jesus to the fatherless generation and to reclaim God's standard for education and preparation of the second line church leaders. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14: 7) Spiritual fathering in our generation has the capacity and scope to correct the outstanding dysfunction that exists in



our global communities and societies at large. Following this commission, CITMED endeavors to introduce Jesus to a fatherless generation in Pakistan by their course -Christianity Explored. It primarily focuses to promote discipleship, the lost art of Christianity. This module is developed to let the Gospel tell the Gospel: it takes group members on a ten-session journey through Mark's Gospel to discover the Identity, Mission and Call of Jesus. The aim is to give them an understanding of what the Christian faith is about and what it means to be a follower of Jesus in the fatherless world today.

When one gives their life to Jesus, He redeems him, and he/she begins moving from an orphan mentality to understanding what it means to be a child of God, his/her loving Father. There is only one way to fill the gaping hole created by fatherlessness in the human heart, and that's with the presence of the living God. When one puts Jesus in charge, one would be fatherless no more.

## The Cost Of Conviction



**Kaiser Feroz**  
Student

Conviction draws our immediate attention towards feelings of guilt and of wrong doings. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our transgressions when we sin against God. (John 16:7-9)

On reading Psalm 51, we observe that when King David sinned against Bathsheba and killed her husband, the Holy Spirit convicted him and he repented.

Conviction also draws our attention towards our belief. Our conviction can be rewarding and may lead us to eternal life, but we always have to pay a price for it, sometimes heavy. Scripture is rich with examples of 'the cost of conviction' in the Bible. In the New Testament Apostles and disciples had to pay a high price for their convictions leading them to the laying down of their lives, but they were rewarded with eternal life.

Today, more than ever, it is not necessary that all would agree with your personal convictions. Some may oppose you strongly and try to harm or even kill you. We need to be very careful while sharing our personal convictions with others especially with non-Christians. We should deal in grace and wisdom in

such situations in order to share what we believe. The Christian's desire should never be to force another to their way of thinking. Our conviction in Christ will always prove costly as we come to the foot of the cross and place our world view humbly there before taking up the cause of Christ given us for this aching world.

I remember the day when my Parish Priest encouraged me to respond to the call of Jesus Christ on my life. The journey ahead of me was dauntingly intense. How would my family survive if I followed Jesus and left everything to do so. Under the Holy Spirit's conviction and healthy discipleship at my local church I was lead in incredible ways to follow the Lord in obedience. Fear left me. God would provide and lead and form the way ahead of me. Critical to my journey was the role of my priest. His ministry to me as a speaker of truth, gently but unafraid that I would turn my back on his incredible idea, he did not turn back. The example may seem incredulously small, but its influence on my faith journey and ministry decisions has been colossal. At LCT we are formed and guided to continue to make our way down a path of much resistance. We will need to watch every step carefully in the journey ahead but we are not alone. The Chinese Church has much experience of 'Emmanuel' which is inscribed on the door post of many of their churches. May this be our experience too: that when the price is high, Christ is with us.

## Building Sound Theology through Good Storytelling



**Jessica Alexander**  
Student

21st century: an age where technological advancements are at an all time high, an era when man's intelligence is believed to be at its peak. According to the UN's report of 2016, almost 86% of the world's population is known to be literate. Developed nations have a literacy rate of 99.2%. And yet 80% of the world's literates do not prefer to learn through reading.

Pakistan, the sixth most populated country is ranked 160<sup>th</sup> in literacy and more than 45% of population is illiterate while a mere 2% prefers reading as means of learning. This can be considered as one of the major factors behind the nation's underdeveloped state.

Sindh has 25 million people as its inhabitants, 50% of whom are deemed uneducated. Baluchistan, the largest province in terms of area, has a meager literacy rate of 28%. In these areas, social convention dictates that education isn't even an option for people to be considered. Children are asked to refrain from learning lest they be "secularized". Therefore, a sound and appropriate method is required to educate such people.

In response to this, a number of ways are introduced such as audio visual aids, educating through skits, etc. And surely enough, these methods have proven quite effective. What's more interesting from the Christian perspective is that these techniques have also helped further the cause of sharing the Gospel. However, it is not accessible to everyone. We are all able to access community. Therefore an easier and affordable technique by Dorothy Miller and her team in 2006 has made lasting paths into the world of story telling.

Simply the Story is a simple and creative method used to equip low literacy learners to join multiple literacy spectrums. The technique can reach into all age groups, among all social groups regardless of the ethnicity or economic status or religious background. Stories are taught and discussed through dramas, songs and conversational five minute stories are chosen.

The six step stage helps the listener to contemplate upon the story as he/she grasps the spiritual truths that lie within the story. The process includes the following steps:

1. Introduction- Defining the context to help familiarize oneself with the situation.
2. Narrating the story- The story is conveyed through actions, dramas or songs while the words of the Bible are the preferred script simultaneously.
3. Re-telling the story- This is to help the audience memorize. Usually a volunteer among the listeners is asked to participate so that they might get involved.
4. Lead through the story- Anything lacking or left behind is addressed by the five questions of who, what, where, when and how.
5. Spiritual observation- The listeners discover or draw spiritual conclusions for themselves wherein the characters and actions of both God and the people are considered upon. The story is observed by looking at the circumstances, characters (God as the chief person in every story), conversations, conducts, choices, and the consequences.
6. Spiritual application- There could be more than one application which is comprehended by the listener. Four questions lead the audience to narrow their comprehension of the application: i. looking at the results and changes ii. Analyzing if this happens today also iii. Seeking an example in the learner's life or nearby iv. Demanding a practical move.

This technique presents a format that can be easily understood and remembered even by the least literate. It would, therefore, not be surprising that this mirrors the story telling method in the Bible which is 75% story telling narrative. STS encourages listeners to explore spiritual lessons they come across and helps them understand through well directed questions.



“Simply the story” method has lasting effects in the process of evangelizing and making disciples throughout the world. This idea is being used in about 40 countries and over 11 million people in Pakistan are its beneficiaries. It also helps in building up the mental ability of people and often the most illiterate person can point out towards a deep Biblical truth.

No matter how modern the world is, the simplest of methods can have drastic outcomes. In the current age of intellect, it might not be necessary that sound theology be communicated merely through sophisticated ideas and means. In many situations, a simple story telling method will suffice for the extension of God's kingdom.

## Building Sound Theology through Good Storytelling



**Jahanzaib Daniel**  
Student

G. Stanly Hall, an American psychologist and educator said, “Let me tell stories and I care not who writes the textbooks.” Storytelling is from one of the oldest art forms. In ancient times people used to tell their children stories to help keep the memory of important events alive. Because of its impact on many societies throughout the ages, it may also have been the most formative element in culture. The History of storytelling reveals that a decline began in the Gutenberg era, invention of the printing press (Gangel, K. 2003). Later there was a great revival of storytelling as the world realized and began to study its values. Storytelling is an interactive art and is relevant across the world, but specifically well used and trusted in South Asia. The two-way interaction between storyteller and listener/listener actions such as physical movement or gestures, sighs and expressions on the face of the story teller, encourage the listener to imagine the story and participate with what is being narrated. While going through the Gospels carefully, we find Jesus used stories to preach the Gospel. A prominent feature that brings the Gospel accounts to life. (“And He was not speaking to

them without parables”(Mark 4:34 NASB). What is storytelling? Storytelling is not a rocket science. Undoubtedly, everyone can share the stories but it really needs preparation and knowledge to do the storytelling to get fruitful result. The method of storytelling somehow seems simple, but it is very much technical. Actually simplicity and technicality go together in storytelling. It could be started while you are walking on the road with your friend, in a cab, in a restaurant or anywhere with your friends and family or with anyone. It is as simple as when you talk about different topics, such as politics, governments, international affairs or anything else. By using storytelling we can make a better understanding of Theology in the Church of Pakistan, especially in the low-income and low-literacy community of the Punjab and KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) provinces.

Christianity spread here by St. Thomas the apostle in about AD 52. Centuries Christians of Pakistan are lacking in Theology. Christians of Pakistan could be heard saying “Jesus the Father,” that clearly highlights the collapsed theological side of the community.

How could storytelling be helpful? As I said before “simplicity and technicality go together in storytelling”. The storytelling could play a role of an effective and powerful medium to refine and build the sound understanding of the theology, for instance St. Matthew records the parable of a young man (Matt 19:16.22), this parable helps us to understand sola gratia. There are so many passages that play a vital role to understand the theology of the Bible. Apparently it seems simple, but because of its two-way interaction it takes the audience

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into the deep message of the Bible. Above all audiences fully take part in the storytelling and answer the questions raised by the storyteller. That is the core value of storytelling. In this way the audience goes step by step into the deep-sea of the story and collects the pearls of teaching for them. KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), 3 million population, 60.9% literacy rate, dominated by Pathan Muslims, is situated in the north-west of Pakistan. There is a sizeable population of Christians in the deeply conservative north-western province, KPK, particularly in Peshawar city. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics there are 0.21% Christians in KPK. One of the most persecuted Christian areas. We can reach them by storytelling and take them into the deep teachings of suffering, persecution and martyrdom. This would not only strengthen them in their faith but comfort them about their beloved who lost their lives in suicide bomb attacks, burnt in fire, kidnapped and slaughtered for their firm faith in LORD Jesus Christ.

The Punjab is known for being the historical bread basket of the subcontinent and for its rich cultural heritage from its Moghal past. With the rising population, lowered literacy reach and higher crime and poverty, all that was once elegant and of literary significance is at risk of becoming obsolete. But the technique of story telling remains relevant and precise. Although the Punjab's literacy rate is higher than that of KPK, none the less, minorities in both parts of the country face challenges because of their religious status. This affects how people receive religious education and biblical literacy. According to research and studies observed by 'Perspective' a Lahore based research and advocacy initiative, the Punjabi Christian is severely lacking in basic awareness about their Christian faith. 'Pakistani Christians may know that their faith is based on the teachings of Christ, but mothers from the lowest income group, tent dwellers, and street children tell us that teaching their children about Jesus is a risk and they receive warnings even on the street as beggars, not to talk about their faith. Mothers would rather not tell their children Bible Stories than have to watch their children arrested like Rimsha Masih (2013 blasphemy case). The community is facing internal and external threats. Different heretical teaching has taken hold in Punjab as a result of this void in the 'educational equipment available to the Christian who does not even know the basic bible stories like Noah's Ark Samson's story etc...' (Perspective, 2016). Christians claim to believe the Bible is God's word but the relevance of that is far removed from their every day reality, which poses to the local Church.

We have new horizons of technological advancement; easy access to world television, social media and the internet has made the world a global village, making accessible a global culture that is devoid of Biblical truths and Christian living or bringing into the homes of Christians false teachings and incomplete doctrine. With little access to literacy the Christian is not able to stand up to falsehoods and these dilute the truth upon which the Christian must stand for spiritual and communal health. Interestingly, media relies on the simple story telling techniques to be able to capture an audience. From scandal to soap opera, it is the design of story telling to attract the consciousness of the viewer or listener. Our instinct for a good story continues respond to a plot and characters woven skillfully together. Who could be a better story teller than Jesus. As imitators of Him the Church can draw story telling techniques into their strategy to minister to the needs of the local church and educate Christians in the Punjab and KPK. Perhaps a drive toward more story telling, more interactive methods to encourage today's Pakistani Christian to become part of the crowd who saw Jesus turn water to wine or a little boy's lunch into the food of 5000. Storytelling would not only refine their theology, relatively it would be the simplest technical way of building a sound theology by good storytelling. This is the simplest way to take low-income and literacy communities into the deeper realities of the Bible in a friendly environment. And it works beyond imagination. Storytelling can not only equip the Christian community to combat both internal and external threats, it could also be used to reach un-reached groups of people. Perhaps we will see in the years ahead the Church use simple techniques of telling stories, and playing the role of a parent to the child and nurturing and spiritually forming that child to prepare him her for the return of her bridegroom.



## Truth and Faith: A people of the Word



**Sarfraz Shaukat**  
Student

In the midst of the trouble times in which we live, the reminders of God's sovereignty grow further and further away from our consciousness as the truth the world looks for is not founded in the hope and promise of Christ. Instead the truth, we pine for is worldliness: shallow and quickly weakening, unable to sustain our needs.

An individual may have different understandings of the word 'hope'. Some may see 'hope' as a pining heart and others may see it is an assurance of what is to come.

In the Old Testament we were shown a wide angle lens on the people of God. They had hope in Him and He delivered them from their troubles and trials according to His promises to them. The place of God's promise is critical to the Christian journey. God keeps His word. He cannot 'un-speak' His promises or neglect to bring them to completion, to deliver His people and to be their provider, healer and all in all.

Noah had hope before he made the ark, Abraham had hope when he left his father's home, Joseph had hope when his brothers sold him and even when he was on his death bed, he had hope that his God would deliver him to the Promised Land of Israelites. Likewise, every man and woman of God in the Old Testament had hope because they all lived in assurance and confidence. They were not only walking around with an illuminated sign board on their person saying: hope. They, in fact, were in action, practice and faith: the hope for the people of their age, because the truth (the Word of God) outworked itself among the people of God and through God's people to others. . And God made them a blessing for others.

The Truth revealed in the New Testament is Christ Jesus. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). And only Christ offers real hope in this broken and groaning age. In our attempt to make sense of brokenness and our faith and make it relevant and alive in these days, we are not left helpless, nor are we left to seek solutions to our seeking on our own. In fact God gives to each the opportunity to become right with God and His fellow men. The comparison between the fullness of what Christ offers and the brokenness we encounter in our daily journey is stark. He offers what no other does: a full life to those who will accept Him because He says "...I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). This is a turning away from the one who comes to kill, steal and destroy which is a reference to Satan in the preceding verse. God's work in our age continues to be one of promise and restoration so that we can hope for an eternity spent with Him.

He has abundant life which never ends. Only in Him, mankind has a hope of life everlasting based upon the promises of God in Christ that He is the resurrection life and in Him we are to live and breathe and have our being. While ascending to heaven Jesus said, "All authority has been given to me in heaven..." (Matt 28:18-20) Amen.

So if the challenges and difficulties of this time overwhelm the Christian today, the Church is challenged to reaffirm fellow believers in the truth that Jesus gives His power, authority and motivation to everyone who believes in Him and this truth is entirely relevant to the Christian's life and then to the life of the Church.

The greater challenge at hand is the role of the church in building relevance in the midst of the wide spread despair that discourages the body of believers globally and weakens its state. Jesus did not utter these words only during His heavenly ascension but also in His earthly life. He gave power to His disciples.

After Jesus' ascension the disciples continued this ministry and today in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church, this ministry is within reach even now. Will we reach out and take hold? Again we see how Scripture illuminates the way of

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God's people and deepens the call to ministry through the examples of those whose stories are mentioned in the Holy Scriptures.

Peter's ministry was rich with the experience of God's interventions and mighty right hand "so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed" (Acts 5:13-16). Philip's ministry demonstrates similarly that "the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was *great joy in that city*" (Acts 8:5-8).

The followers of Christ have special a call to the world around them. Jesus chose them to serve the nations, preach the Good News, call them to repentance and draw them in the kingdom of God. The ministers of the Lord, were then an actual hope for the world, because they knew the Truth and they had shared the Truth. The Church today has beheld God and known Truth and known His power. 'Movements of His transforming power continue to decorate the story of God's people despite the despair we are introduced to regularly. The disciples were spreading the gospel and through them, the people were receiving joy, happiness, healing and blessings of God.' (Samuel, M, 2016). Disciples and all the people of God performed well and proved that they are the people of the Word who proclaim the truth and are "hope" for this tormented world. People can know and understand God and His Son Jesus Christ through them to have eternal life.

Here lies a deep reminder for us all to proclaim that we are the people of the Word. Are we declaring the truth and being the agents of hope for others? Are we sincerely helping people so they could meet Jesus through us? Are we honestly ministering Jesus' authority and His message through our lives? Are forlorn and lost receiving their missing hope through us? Are we the paving ways for misguided to the Truth? Are we helping others to overcome and subdue the hopelessness and uncertainty of life? We must be the genuine people of the Word and while telling truth, be a hope for the world.



## Conversations in Lahore: Dr Manzur Gill

Dr Manzur Gill, at the 'young' age of 75 holds many titles, an inventor, a teacher, a poet, an electrical engineer, a scholar and a child of God; who is known throughout Pakistan as someone who has challenged the status quo and achieved for himself and for his community. Dr Manzur is credited with 86 US Patents with Intel Corporation relating to the field of non-volatile memory research. The technology that allows our phones, iPads, and USB drives to work effectively.

Born in 1941, while the attention of the world was on war and fascism, India at that time began its walk towards independence. The Christian community to which Manzur belonged worked for powerful landowners; his forefathers worked for these families in the fields or in their houses as 'slaves'. Manzur as a child noticed inequality, he says, 'As a little boy maybe 7 or 8 years I used to wonder why no one comes to our home to do the servant's work. And my family goes out to do it for others, then I noticed that among some of my relatives; there were two families (Gill) who didn't clean other people's homes'. 'I noticed that the heads of two of those families, were teachers.. as a little boy I realized that the difference is education, fortunately for me, I had the opportunity to go to CTI Sialkot'.

His determination to study hard was epitomized during an incident, he recalls, 'One day, at CTI during the morning worship during 8<sup>th</sup> grade while the boys sitting outside, and Master Zia would lead in a song or Psalm and a scripture, that particular day when the formal presentation was over, Dr Foster, the resident missionary got up and introduced the speaker, who spoke in English, Dr Foster translated, sitting down on the ground with the winter sun rising, I said one day I will go to America and get the highest degree'. He would only realise it was a Ph.D. when he began studying at University.

In his 9<sup>th</sup> year at school as a teenager, Dr Manzur, when he lost the support of his father, found his reliance and dependence on God the Father. When he asked his mother's a godly woman who hugged him, in tears his mother replied, 'Don't worry God will take care of us'. With these words, Dr Manzur's dream of getting 'the highest degree' in America was never dulled. He was able to acquire government scholarships in BSc in Physics and Mathematics from Punjab University (Lahore), an MSc in Physics from Forman Christian College. And began to dream of getting a Ph.D. from the United States of America.

He recounts, 'during my masters I had to go to the library to hand copy from the textbooks because I didn't have textbooks, there were no photocopiers' this in the 1960s. After working at Gordon College, I applied to Aitchison college as a teacher of Physics. He says, 'The purpose for working at Aitchison was that I could visit the United States Information Service (USIS) library to find out some magazines which would give me information on universities in the United States'. 'One day, there was a job for a science teacher in Quebec Canada. So I sent them (by mail) my application Sometime later a call came through to the Aitchison office from Canada, I didn't know how to use the phone in those days. So anyway I picked up the phone, and I couldn't understand the accent, but understood that they were offering me a job in Quebec and the United States is next door, but my dream was a Ph.D. from America'.

While working in Quebec, Dr Manzur applied to the University of Dallas in Texas (similar weather to Lahore), and worked as a Teaching Assistant during his MSc in Physics, he then worked as a Research Assistant while completing his Masters in Nuclear Physics.

He recounts that in 1973 during the OPEC oil crises, he was at a petrol station; and he saw the cover of 'Time' magazine. It displayed an image of a graduate dressed up in a convocation gown and academic cap pouring petrol into a car, with the title reading, 'Ph.D. in Physics'. It worried him because he says, 'it was showing that if you do your Ph.D. in Physics you will end up pouring gasoline for living'. As he was about to commence his Ph.D. in Physics; he discussed this issue with his wife Susheela and friends.

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Dr Manzur decided to do his Ph.D. in 'electrical engineering. He says, 'with a specialty in micro-electronics; as it was a growing field at that time. I got my Ph.D. with a specialty in micro-electronics, and joined Texas Instruments afterwards'. 'I received a lot of blessings there, I started publishing; Texas instruments allowed me to move around Texas, I left to join the National Semi-conductor based in Silicon Valley'. 'National Semi-conductor was about to close their entire memory division but it was 'lucky' in the sense that I had already established myself in the industry; I met Stefan Lai when presenting scientific papers'. Stefan was the head of Intel memory division'. So Stefan called Dr Manzur in for an interview. Since then Dr Manzur has worked at Intel, in pursuit of excellence, building memory chips and technologies relating to Flash memory also called Non-Volatile memories. 'I had been involved in non-volatile memories since the mid-1970s so I joined Intel and God blessed me'. The blessing involved great achievement to help his company Intel to become the largest chip manufacturer in the world to receive success and achieve his dream, 'to get the highest degree while sitting down to 'chapel' as a poor Punjabi Christian boy in Pakistan'. Dr Manzur never forgot his roots, he never forgot the debt he owed to those who made it possible for his life's achievements.

Dr Manzur made his return to Pakistan following the denationalization of Christian schools. He knew that while President Bhutto's decision to nationalize schools existed he would never be needed. Dr Manzur returned to CTI, the first school to be returned by the government to the Presbyterian church. Dr Manzur made frequent visits to rebuild the walls of the school. He then began a support programme to restore the buildings of CTI. In 2004 at the age of 65 years old, Dr Manzur left the United States of America, left his position at Intel, and at the request of Dr Armacost took up the position of 'Chief Advancement Officer' at Forman Christian College. He left FC College in 2012, and now works tirelessly to provide free accommodation to deserving young Christian men and women studying at the universities in Lahore.

The message from Dr Manzur Gill to this next generation of Christians in Pakistan is 'to dream BIG'. He says, 'I never felt I was poor – poverty never actually kept me down, and I never jumped for wealth but God gave me that also'. His advice is, 'Don't dream about how many houses I must have; how much wealth I must have, but dream big, money will follow you, just dream big in whatever you choose to do'.

## Online training at LCT

The Lahore College of Theology is pleased to announce the launch of our online lecture series on Old Testament Studies. The lecture is being taught by Dr David Upp from Milwaukee in the United States of America. We are thankful for the media and IT resources that have been provided to students at the Lahore College of Theology under the care of Mr Zenas Massey.

Dr Upp works alongside facilitators from our own LCT staff (Rev Peter Percy). Rev Percy attends the online lectures with students; helping to translate, articulate and provide teaching around topics to aid the development and understanding of the students. "It took us only a few hours to work out a rhythm. It took a few days to refine it and now, three weeks into the course, we are seeing relationships develop as students open up to Dr Upp, ask their questions and receive answers from him and Rev Percy", says Mr Zenas Massey, who heads up the IT services at the Lahore College of Theology.

Bishop Azad Marshall, Chairperson of the LCT Board, is thrilled at the new development 'It is good to find a personal flow of relational communication between Rev Peter and the students as Dr Upp delivers his lecture and faculty are able to mentor them through translation and cultural and linguistic contextualization to ensure the scholarship remains relevant'. This portal opens them up to access caring discipleship by teachers and mentors whose theology and worldview is consistent with the Word of God in the face of headwinds that seek to attack the Church in these times. Our initiative at LCT is designed to protect hearts and minds, using all available technology with the objective to encourage our students to grow intellectually, spiritually and reach out in excellence to the wider world.



## Surrendering to Hope



**Kaleem Gulzar**  
Student

St. John Climacus says: *“Do not be surprised that you fall every day; do not give up, but stand your ground courageously. And assuredly, the angel who guards you will honor your patience.”*

Our definition of hope is uniquely different from God's having been marred by the fall and tributaries of fear and worry that run through our existence. We might hope our team wins the ICC championship, or we might hope we don't lose our jobs or our house. The Biblical definition of hope suggests an assurance and a definitive confidence in God's sovereign power and outworking. God will never allow us to suffer beyond our own capabilities. There is nothing on this earth more certain than hope and trust in God who never leaves or forsakes us. He is our anchor of all times.

The Church is called up to encourage Christians toward assurance and dwelling in the peace that passes all understanding (Phil 4:7). Recent polls conducted for Christian ministry in Europe and North America according to Synergistic suggest the high rates of stress among Christians. 90% of Pastors are not prepared for the opposition, resistance, spiritual back clash and frustration

that will become their sum stress. Pastors suggest from their pastoral ministry practice that the numbers are almost same in Pakistan where the stress spikes are significant and distinctive causing trauma from acts of terror, the refugee crisis and natural hazards like floods. Why is this when we have the scriptures promise just the opposite?

So in the times when the world seeps in and has drastic affects on the statistics of the Church, making them appear worldlier, we are forced to consider the question: Who is our God? Are we relying on an idol that is unable to rid us of stress? The God we may have rejected in favor of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century option, made promises that he intends to keep. He rescued the born-again believers from certain judgment and promised us an eternal home with Him.

His promises are written in Christ's own blood which seals our redemption permanently. Studies also show that those who grasp deeply God's all deep work on the cross, are able to resist stress better. Why is this?

When our trust is in the Lord and not in us, it is an unshakeable trust. We know that there is always hope in God for He has given us His Holy Spirit to seal us as we read in Ephesians 1:13, *“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.”*

Resting in knowing God and His plans for you has significant impact on the hypothalamo-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, distorting the neurological and physiological impact on the brain, its development and the individual's growth. This eventually has critical impact on our human function, taking us further away from the 'health' for which God created us.

The God of the Bible, in His fullness had plans not intended to harm you but to prosper you. Another cause of stress stems for the search for riches in light of the use of the word 'Prosper' He does plan for you to have a secure future. God says that He has plans for you and He knows them even if we do not. Perhaps it is time to see the writing on the wall and repent for the sin of idolatry which has led to a Church that is wrought with stress and fear, a Church that needs cleansing. Why wait till Jesus comes with a whip to over turn our tables of sin in the courts of His dwelling? Hope began in an empty tomb, grasp the hands with marks in them today and walk in truth. Why wait?

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## Cost of Conviction in the Market Place



**Augustine Gill**  
Student

If you have a point of view, be prepared to pay the price for it. Nelson Mandela, a South African anti-apartheid revolutionary, politician, and philanthropist and then President of South Africa and the recently sainted and well loved 'Mother' Theresa of Calcutta are both example of those who dug their heels in from they believed. Where he stood, Nelson Mandela, from his vantage point and in the assurance of His conviction took pride in standing for what he was on fire for. He was a freedom fighter who stood for the rights of his nation and raised a voice against white on black violence. For the achievement of his goal he paid the cost of his conviction in form of prison. He survived 27 years in prison. 'Mother Theresa' stood firm in the slums of the world deeply convinced in 'emptying' herself to look more like Christ to the poor, the downtrodden, the forgotten and the ailing. She faced criticism, insult and illness, loneliness and exhaustion but she never gave up. Today a whole order within the Catholic Church exists to continue the call to serve the poor. These are just two examples. Dietrich Bonhoeffer gave up his life for speaking out against the injustice of Jewish persecution under Hitler. In Pakistan, Shahbaz Bhatti paid

his own life for the repeal of the Blasphemy Law and the injustice against religious minorities. In an interview with the BBC he explains that he knows well, the consequences of his drive to speak out against these injustices.

In the Old Testament we see Moses's decision not to return palace. He knows he would never inhabit again because of his conviction in the aftermath of his escape from Egypt. His conviction was to stand before Pharaoh, empowered by God, and to call for the release of the people of God who were enslaved and ill-treated by Pharaoh. Many other women and men of God paid the cost of their conviction, they suffered a lot even accepted death but they did not walk away from their faith. Paul, a Roman citizen and formerly a darling of the Jewish Authorities, risked everything, even his reputation to preach the Gospel and minister to the Church, even in chains!

As followers of Jesus Christ, what are we convinced about? What mission are we on? Are we infected by the 'political correctness' of these days, when we refrain from saying anything the world disagrees with and appearing 'fashionable' in our opinions? As believers, if our conviction is in the completed work of Christ for the glorification of the Godhead and the return of Christ for the Church, then the message is clear: Fear Not. We should not feel shy or hesitate in declaring our faith or viewpoint. We need to be bold. We should always be ready to be called on to pay the price for our convictions. We live in an age who may not agree with us. Church history, from the very earliest demonstrates that the early church suffered even unto death for their faith.

Even today the Church faces persecution. We as Christians do not need to be afraid of this persecution because Jesus has already told us: "Blessed are ye when [men] shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake".

Our eyes, as today's Church, in the midst of promises of persecution, and evidence of groaning nature around us, need to be on the way set before us by our Lord. We need to walk that way, with conviction not fearing the cost of that conviction instead with our eyes boldly on our target as Paul says in Philippians 3:14 (NIV): "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus".



## Ron's Reading:

Join visiting faculty member Ron Boyd McMillan at the book shelf for a good read

The Irony, Tragedy and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World,  
by James Davison Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

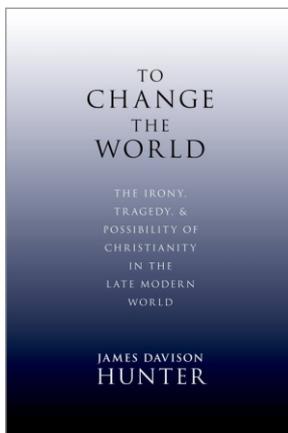


Dr. Ron **Boyd McMillan**  
Writer, Researcher & Teacher

Sometimes you need to read a very provocative book to keep your thinking honest and realistic. A good candidate is James D Hunter's, *To Change the World*. A distinguished professor of religion in the USA, and the leading expert on the so-called "culture wars," his challenge is simple: Most Evangelicals are out to change the world, but most try to change it the wrong way, and fail!

The wrong way, he says, is to think that one must focus on evangelism, and keep the focus there until the number of converts grows to reach a tipping point, and then the culture will change as all these new Christians live out their radical, world-changing Christian values.

Nonsense, says Hunter. Look at the USA today he argues. Nearly 88% of people adhere to a faith commitment – an overwhelming number - but in the last fifty years they have lost every battle as the culture gets more materialistic and secular. A large number of converts does not change the culture. Changing the culture was never about numbers. It's an influence game. Culture is shaped by cultural elites.



These elites shape culture because they have the power to embed their truth in the institutions, networks, interests and symbols that make up a society. And by the way, you don't change a culture in a generation, according to Hunter. It takes multiple generations, which makes a lot of mission planning that proudly sets goals to change a society by 2030 or 2040 look ludicrously optimistic.

This is a major uppercut to modern everyone-can-do-it thinking, and Hunter is at least sensitive to how this will be contested. Much of his book then is to examine cultural change through 2000 years of Christian history. It's an exhilarating ride. Culture change is possible, but you have to know how to play the power game, and even then the forces of change are mysterious.

It took three centuries for Christianity to become culturally significant in the Roman world, and really only changed when a new Emperor converted to the faith in battle, convinced the Christian God had granted him victory.

The Christianisation of Europe in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>s centuries was accomplished by the Franks, through an alliance with the most super-educated monks of the time, like Boniface, and the most powerful kings of the time, like Charlemagne.

The Reformation changed Europe again in the same way – an alliance between super-educated monks like Luther, and new kings like Frederick of Saxony – and a new culture was spawned to replace the old corrupt one. It

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didn't hurt that the newly invented moveable-type printing press technology ushered in a new era allowing subversive ideas to spread faster.

On and on Hunter goes. How did slavery get abolished in the West? Thanks to the aristocratic Wilberforce, who succeeded significantly because the Prime Minister of the day was his best friend.

Cultural change is possible, but it's not bottom up, nor ever was!

American Christians are too guilty, Hunter goes on, of thinking they only need to elect Christians as politicians and they will change the culture in a more religious direction. That's naïve. There is a lot more to culture change than a Christian judge sitting on a bench, or a politician trying to re-write a law. This could not be more relevant when one sees the spectacle of many US Christians bracing themselves to vote for a Presidential candidate they despise purely because he has promised to appoint a Christianity-friendly Supreme Court Justice during his administration. Don't sweat it, Hunter would counsel, you lost that culture war a long time ago, and one Justice is not going to turn an incoming tide back.

Still, his is not a counsel of despair, just a refreshing realism about how difficult it is to change a culture, and how long it takes. Think glacial time scales when it comes to culture change!

Mind you, Hunter is a lot better at the negative than the positive. What then is the way to bring about culture change? The answer – and it sounds disappointingly prosaic – is “faithful presence”. The church lives out a faithful presence, and if it can be strategic enough, and patient enough, a culture can be reformed, remade, redeemed, over a hundred years or so.

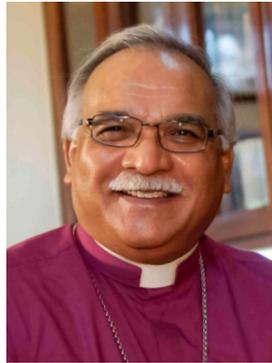
In other words, you need to have the patience of Job, and the strategy of Paul, and it doesn't hurt to have the wealth of Job and the connections of Paul either.

That's a tall order, and perhaps the bar is set a little too high. But the book is not ultimately a discouraging read, but a dose of strategic and spiritual realism. It is no bad thing to be reminded that much of cultural change is mysterious, is directed by the Holy Spirit in ways we cannot even begin to see, and take our place humbly affecting trends that began before we were born and will have their greatest effect after we are gone.

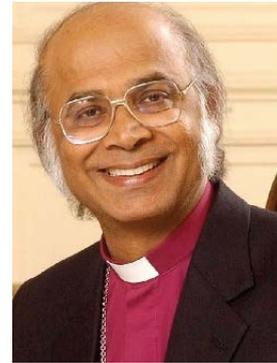
We cannot change the world. It's God that does...through the church. But the church will never know quite how. And that, strange to say, comes as a sobering and uplifting comfort. To see how, you'll need to read the book.



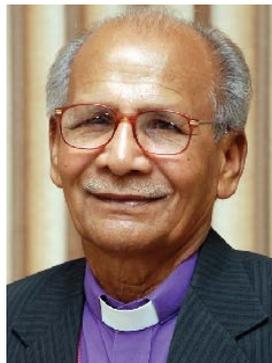
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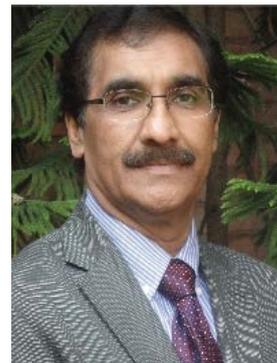
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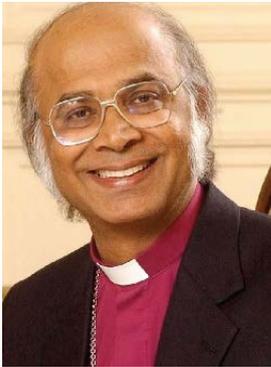


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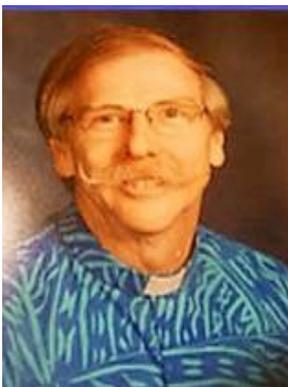
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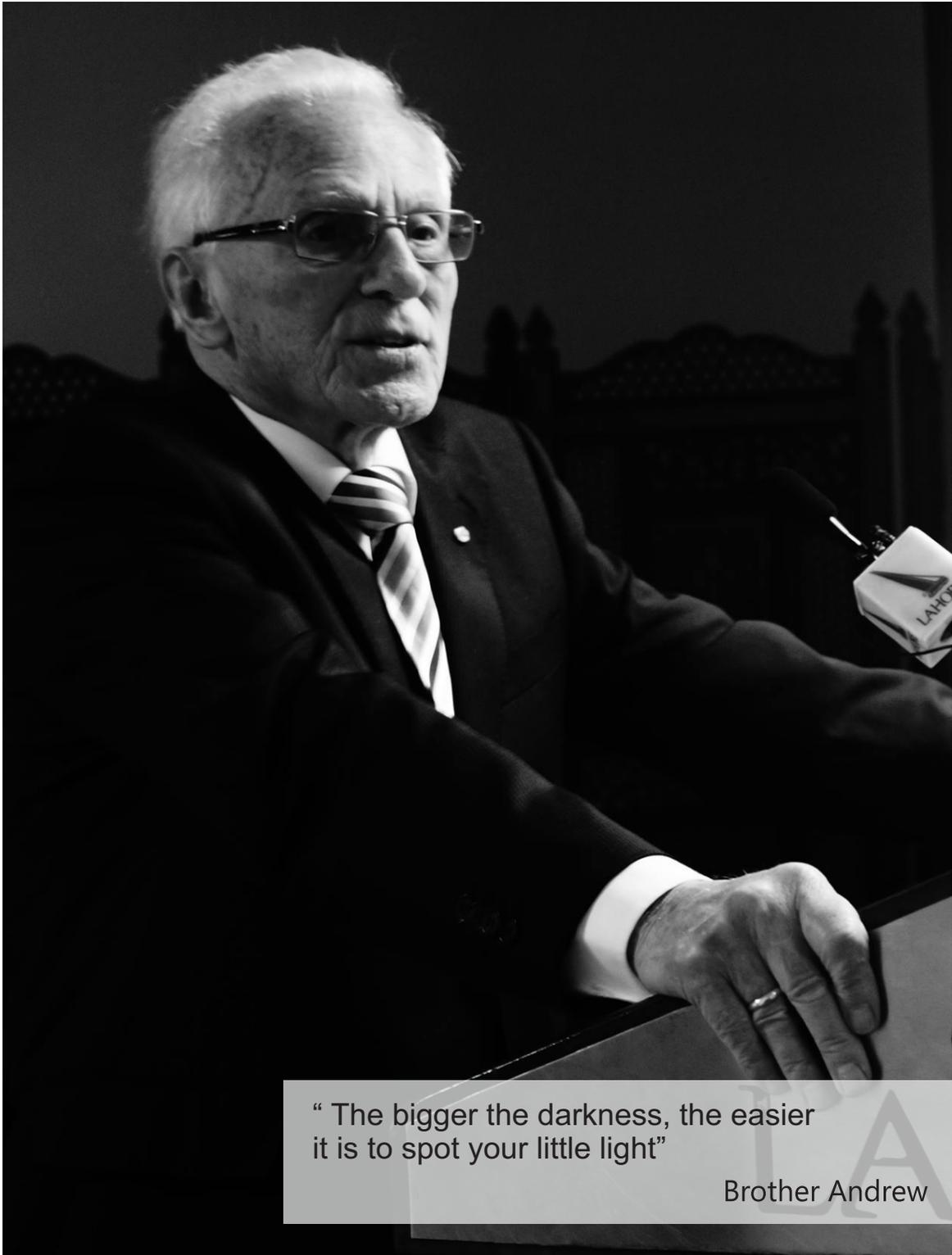
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“ The bigger the darkness, the easier  
it is to spot your little light”

Brother Andrew

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This magazine was produced in partnership with CITMED.