

Empower, Evangelize and Equip



The midterm exam allows the teacher to evaluate the students midway, while a bit more time is left to teach them before the final exam. In Luke chapters 9-10, Jesus administered the midterm exam, first on the twelve and then on seventy-two. While giving the instructions for the exam, he first set an unprecedented sense of urgency. He had worked hard to sow the seeds, watered, and nourished the seeds faithfully and now the field was ready for harvest. He instructed them- "pack light and no chit-chats on the way"-why? there was very little time to waste, a lot to be done and only a few to get them done! I wonder what our world would become if we, the workers in the kingdom of God, followed the same sense of urgency.

He then proceeded to instruct them, and in my words, the **Triple-E principle of Soul Harvesting: Empower, Evangelize and Equip**. He asked his students first to **Empower** those in need, i.e., do what it takes to bring them peace. It is often hard to digest the gospel on an empty stomach. It is even harder when the stomach belongs to our child, as some of us who are parents can empathize. It is hard to focus when our loved one is sick and ailing and often too noisy to understand when the roof leaks. Jesus instructed - bring peace first, heal first, i.e., **Empower** first and then **Evangelize**. In our rush to tick the evangelization box, I wonder if we pay enough attention to connect with the person first and care for their needs before we preach the Gospel. Is compassion our driving force?

Jesus violated all principles of urgency and growth when he instructed the worker to stay put and not move around from house to house. He didn't want them to do touch-and-goes, but to follow through. He wanted the worker to spend time to **Equip** the person and the household. As he had just finished teaching them in the previous chapter, the birds, rocks and thorns will destroy the fruit without follow through. Unlike other teachers in his time, Jesus led by example. Moved by compassion, he first healed and cared for the people, i.e. **Empowered** them, before he **Evangelized** them. He then **Equipped** them, especially the twelve, to greater depths of the truths in the kingdom of God. The twelve later turned the known world upside down!

The results were phenomenal! The disciples saw unprecedented levels of success, they led with signs and wonders and routed Satan and his demons with vigor and pomp. They passed the midterm exam with flying colors.

The results didn't come from extensive preparation or by using might and power but through obedience. While following their teachers' instructions, unseen to them, a new authority had bestowed upon them, to trample on snakes and serpents and to overcome all powers of the enemy. Little did they know that the Master had put a shield around them and made them invincible. They had gone as lambs among wolves but returned as lions. And we read - the teacher was full of Joy - the class did well on the midterm exam and Jesus was ready to take his teachings up a notch.



How would we fare if our Master administered the midterm exam for us today? Do we have the sense of urgency that our Master intends for us? Let us take a moment to grade ourselves on the **Triple-E principle**.

Are we intentionally connecting with the people around us or are we in a rush to preach the Gospel? What are we doing to take care of their worldly needs, to **Empower** them? Do we feel what Paul felt regarding **Evangelization** when he shouted "Woe to me if I don't speak the Gospel"? Are we chasing numbers or spending time to **Equip** the people we have Evangelized? I pray that the Lord will enable us to do mighty things for His Kingdom while following His instructions and the example He has set before us.



Dr. Giby Raphael, Associate Pastor
Faithcity Church, Kochi, Kerala

Dr. Giby Raphael is a world-renowned expert in Artificial Intelligence and an award-winning researcher in Humanoid Robotics.

His work was awarded many patents and key publications. He has a Ph.D. in Artificial Intelligence and Robotics from the University of Southern California and five postgraduate degrees, including Master of Science degrees in Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, and Neuroscience, an MA in Theology from Fuller Theological Seminary, and an MBA in Cornell University. He currently works as the CEO of Remote-X Inc, a Robotics company in the United States. He has a passion for evangelism and missions and serves as the Associate Pastor of Faithcity church in Kochi, India. He resides in Portland, Oregon, United States along with his wife Dr. Amee, a medical doctor, and kids Kevin and Rachel, and his mother Gracy Baby. His deep desire is to carry forward and expand the vision of his late father, Pastor P.R. Baby for Empowering, Evangelizing, and Equipping the world for Jesus.



Empower



Faithcity A.chik Mission is the fulfillment of the vision given to Pastor P.R. Baby in the year 2000 to help the natives of the North Eastern Hill Region of India.

Pastor Baby prayed for nineteen years and in 2019, the Lord led him to the city of Shillong, in the state of Meghalaya, India. "A.chik" means "Hill people". The main objective of the A.chik mission is to work among the people belonging to the Garo tribe living in the Garo hill districts of Meghalaya. The mission is chartered to "Empower for success, dignity, and harmony".

Empowering means to make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights. A proverb goes "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish (and presumably buy him a fishing rod) and he will eat for a lifetime". Empowering people for success means giving them proper skills, resources, and opportunities and further making them responsible and accountable for their work. The six important steps to empower the community for success are:

Share knowledge: Knowledge builds trust. It will enable them to make the best possible decision in critical situations.

Create clear goals and objectives: Clarity in goals and objectives builds confidence. It will help them make empowered decisions.

Teach them to learn from mistakes: An environment of psychological safety is a prerequisite for learning. Allow mistakes, but make sure one learns from them.

Create an environment that celebrates both successes and failures: Encourage risk-taking by celebrating not only success but also failures.

Create a learning environment: A reflective analysis of situations accelerates learning. Discuss how handling things differently would have achieved better results.

Work towards autonomy: Support as necessary to eventually transition the team from dependency to autonomy.

John Alex, Joint Director of Agriculture (Rtd), Kerala State Agriculture Department, India.

Pastor. P.R. Baby

A Great Leader turns Vision into Reality



1952 - 2022

Faithcity is the outcome of a divine vision received in the seventies by Pastor P R Baby during his time at Mar Basil Engineering College, Kothamangalam, Kerala. He was born and brought up under the strict Catholic faith and regularly attended all Catholic church activities. During his college days, he happened to attend a retreat organized by a prayer group and he had an encounter with Jesus Christ. That changed his life.

After B-Tech and further M-Tech from CUSAT, he joined the Naval Physical and Oceanography Laboratory (NPOL), a research institution under India's Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO), as a Scientist. He was instrumental in the design and development of many military systems and won various awards for his work. His work culminated in holding the post of Deputy Director of NPOL and simultaneous head of both Engineering and Administration. He quit his job for full-time ministry while there were 10+ years left before official retirement.

Faithcity was incorporated in 1994, with 14 members in attendance, and now it has become a large family made up of thousands of believers in different parts of the world. The vision of Pastor Baby was not only for a church gathering but also for impacting the community by training and developing model citizens. The church is known for its deliverance meetings with manifestations of signs and wonders. Almost every attendee in the church has experienced a miracle at some point in their life. Faithcity "Charis" programs provide in-residence rehabilitation and training for addicts and backsliders. Faithcity B'school provides both theological and vocational training for men from all parts of India. Faithcity has many branch churches in Kerala and across the world and together they worship our Lord Jesus Christ.

The secret of the growth of Faith city church was the leadership of Pastor P R. Baby, who led with vision, passion, and integrity. The sincere cooperation of Faithcity members, including the children, youth, and elders helped materialize Pastor Baby's vision. Faithcity members are passionate about the kingdom of God, and they work hard to fulfill the Great Commission. Faithcity church has completed 25 years in the Lord's service. The church is marching forward toward the fulfillment of the vision that the Lord gave to Pastor Baby. Pastor Baby was a visionary, and everything at Faithcity church is the manifestation of his vision that was brought into existence by his faith!

*Benny V John
Offshore Drilling Specialist (Rtd)*

The Garos

The Garos who call themselves A.chiks are the second-largest tribe in Meghalaya. They are a Tibeto-Burmese ethnic group and are spread across Northeast Indian states including Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura, and Nagaland, and in some neighboring areas of Bangladesh. They speak the Garo language with an English script. The Garos are one of the few remaining matrilineal societies in the world. The individuals take their clan titles from their mothers. Sons leave their parents' house at puberty and after getting married the man lives in his wife's house.

A typical village has about 100 huts made of bamboo, thatched leaves, and in some cases tin sheets. The villages are separated by agricultural land providing their main staple diet, rice. Schools and other educational opportunities for the kids are limited. The kids typically help parents in the fields. Hospitals are only in the cities and the Garos often travel long distances to get medical help. The Garo men typically work in the fields and hardly venture out into other trades. Some villages may lack electricity, which is used only for lighting. Above everything else, the Garos live a content life even without the bells and whistles of the modern world

Pr. Sijo M George, Mission Coordinator



Evangelize

Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, "Surely we did not know this," Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?

Proverbs 24:11-12



Jesus instructed us to do it. At its core, the Great Commission, evangelism, is sharing the good news of salvation, forgiveness, and grace. Without those things, we would all be lost without hope, without a savior, and would have to endure the consequences of sin - death.

Christ commanded it. In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus commanded us to do it. It is our evangelistic and disciple-making command. There are many other places in the New Testament where the priority of evangelism is clearly evident. Christ commanded it. We must do it.

Christ is the only way to salvation. Salvation is exclusive. There is only one way. In John 14:6: "Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Christ died for the world. Jesus died for the world. He is the only way, but He has provided a way for everyone. That is a message that is urgent and worth telling.

Churches that are not intentional about evangelism typically are weak in evangelism. They will give mental assent to the priority of evangelism. But they do not practice the priority of evangelism in their churches.

Churches tend to obsess inwardly when they fail to move outwardly. Where has a lot of your church's energy been expended lately? Rancorous business meetings? Expressions of petty church preferences? Worship wars? Power struggles? Those are inward obsessions. Lead your church to an evangelistic priority and watch the focus shift for the better.

Churches become content and complacent with transfer growth.

Some churches are growing. Others are adding members without significant numerical growth. But many in both categories are growing at the expense of other churches. Some may be reaching unchurched Christians. That's good, but that's not enough.

Evangelistic Christians actually grow stronger as better disciplined Christians. Those who are evangelistic are obedient to Christ. Being obedient to Christ means that we are following His teachings and becoming a better fruit-bearing disciple.

Sunny Thomas, International Treasurer, India Pentecostal Church (IPC)

Missionary Highlight

Pastor Sijio M George, a native of Palakkad, Kerala, started his missionary work in Meghalaya among the Garo tribal community 20 years ago. He did his theological studies at Malabar Theological College, Chungathara, Kerala. When Pastor Sijio landed in Meghalaya, neither did he know anybody there nor did he speak the Garo language. He set up his residence in the East Garo Hill area, in Williamnagar and started engaging with the Garo community. Today, after years of toil, he speaks the Garo language fluently and he has full acceptance as a missionary and a member of the tribe. Many Garos have come to Christ because of Pastor Sijio's ministry. Currently, he lives in the city of Shillong along with his wife Janet and two children Godwin and Geona. He works as the local missions coordinator for Faithcity A.chik Mission.



PRAY FOR:

Empower : Establish Facilities to educate children and provide healthcare for the Garos.

Evangelize: Plant Churches in every Garo village of Meghalaya. Raise Pastors and Missionaries.

Equip : Establish Theological and Vocational training centers in Meghalaya.





Equip

By definition, to equip means- "to provide someone with what they need to fulfill their purpose." Not just any purpose, but the God-given purpose - a purpose that is much greater than what the individual can ask for or imagine!

Growth is intentional. We don't plant a rose plant and expect it to grow without tender care. Weeds grow automatically, but not so for anything with beauty and endurance. The creation lost its privilege to grow without care due to sin in the Garden of Eden. Empowering is not optional but must be an intentional activity. As children of God, we are expected to transition from milk to solid food as Paul puts it. If growth is stunted there is something wrong and one needs intervention.

Equipping others not only blesses others but also lets grace flow into our lives. Even with all his weaknesses, Paul didn't empower others in his own strength (Ephesians 3:2) but by relying on God's grace (Ephesians 4:7). The prayer in Hebrews 13:20-21 says that the God of peace "make you perfect/equip (kataritizo) you in every good work". The prayer is not only to equip for work but also in (the course of) work. We are equipped as we take steps in faith, i.e., when we are exposed to work. All teaching and training must lead to putting them into practice.

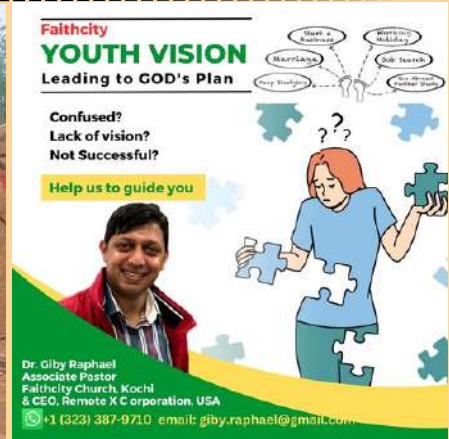
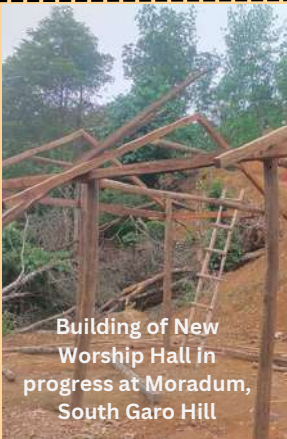
Giju David

The True Story behind the Song 'I have decided to follow Jesus'

'I Have Decided to Follow Jesus' is a Christian hymn originating from India. The lyrics are based on the last words of a man in Garo Hills, Meghalaya. About 150 years ago, there was a great revival in Wales. As a result of this, many missionaries came to north-east India to spread the Gospel. The region then known as Assam was comprised of hundreds of tribes who were primitive and aggressive head-hunters. Into these hostile and aggressive communities, came a group of missionaries from the American Baptist Missions spreading the message of love, peace, and hope in Jesus Christ. Naturally, they were not welcomed. One missionary succeeded in converting a man, his wife, and two children. This man's faith proved contagious and many villagers began to accept Christianity. Angry, the village chief summoned all the villagers. He then called the family who had first converted to renounce their faith in public or face execution. Moved by the Holy Spirit, the man said: **"I have decided to follow Jesus."**

Enraged at the refusal of the man, the chief ordered his archers to arrow down the two children. As both boys lay twitching on the floor, the chief asked, "Will you deny your faith? You have lost both your children. You will lose your wife too." But the man replied: **"Though no one joins me, still I will follow."** The chief was beside himself with fury and ordered his wife to be arrowed down. In a moment she joined her two children in death. Now he asked for the last time, "I will give you one more opportunity to deny your faith and live." In the face of death the man said the final memorable lines: **"The cross before me, the world behind me. No turning back."** He was shot dead like the rest of his family. But with their deaths, a miracle took place. The chief who had ordered the killings was moved by the faith of the man. He wondered, "Why should this man, his wife and two children die for a Man who lived in a far-away land on another continent some 2,000 years ago? There must be some remarkable power behind the family's faith, and I too want to taste that faith." In a spontaneous confession of faith, he declared, "I too belong to Jesus Christ!" When the crowd heard this from the mouth of their chief, the whole village accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour. The song is based on the last words of **Nokseng**, a man from Garo tribe of Assam (now Meghalaya), India. It is today the song of the Garo people.

Babu N George, Assistant Principal, Faithcity B' School



Activities of the Faithcity A.Chik Mission are managed by Faithcity A.Chik Mission Religious Trust, registered in Meghalaya and governed by the family and well-wishers of the late Pastor P.R. Baby.

Faithcity A.chick Mission, Rakesh Momin Bldgs, House no: 144, Near Congress Bhavan, Kusimkolgre B, Willamnagar, East Garo hills, Meghalaya - Pin: 794 111
Email: faithcityachikmission@gmail.com, Phone: +91 9446035917