

Issue 17

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**Youth Cross
Experience
Christian Magazine**

The logo for Youth Cross Experience features a stylized cross with a crossbar that curves to the right, ending in a wing-like shape. The letters 'YCE' are written in a small, bold font along the curve of the wing.

**I See
The
STAR**

May 2024 Be Blessed!

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Be

Blessed

Always

Editorial

THE BEST IS YET TO COME

There is something highly motivating about the statement “The Best is Yet to Come”. I feel it’s more like a declaration one can prophesy for their future while reminding themselves that it’s not always going to be about the position they are in right now but that tomorrow things will get better. It assures them that tomorrow there could be a sudden change in one’s situation that will not only push them closer to their destiny but also elevate them to be who God has called them to be.

Isaiah 40:31 says “**but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.**”

Proverbs 16:3 says “**Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.**”

Being optimistic isn’t very easy, especially when you have arrows flying at you from every side. We all go through some pain that makes it difficult to achieve what we are destined for but it is not impossible. The Word of God says that we should hope in the LORD and He will renew our strength so when we do come under attack we need not worry too much because in our weakness God’s strength is always made perfect. The enemy always tries to end what God has planned for His children and although the devil may be plotting, Jesus is already on the battlefield waiting for you to give fight to Him. Jesus gives us hope to continue and hope for a better tomorrow.

Our future is in God’s hands and many of us find it difficult to trust God’s plans completely. We doubt, and that’s how some of the problems are created. It’s hard letting go of the wheel especially when you know what you want. We need to sometimes remember when God said “**For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,**” declares the LORD. “**As the heavens are higher than the**

earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” **Isaiah 55:8-9.** We may not always have it figured out the right way but the best thing about trusting in God is that He knows the outcome before it happens hence He leads us in the right way we should go.

A famous scripture we always go to is **Jeremiah 29:11** “**For I know the plans I have for you**”, declares the LORD, “**plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future**”. We should also remember that Jesus said in **Matthew 6:34** “**Don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will have its own worries. Each day has enough trouble of its own**” We get caught up in life so often that we forget that there is a bigger picture and that picture we cannot see as yet so what good will worrying about it bring? Our lives are all intertwined whether we know it or not and each person has a part to play in someone else’s story so don’t stay stuck where you are. Just keep moving, hoping and believing because I guarantee you that God’s promises are never wrong and one day we will all look back and know that the best was always coming.

Britney Jenine

Editor-In-Chief



I see the Star

I lift my head, I see the Star
 From the East, I travel afar
 To put an end to the suspense
 The mystery of recent events

I come bearing presents
 Gold, Myrrh and Frankincense
 An angel is telling them
 To journey to Bethlehem

Listening to what the angel said
 The shepherds search for the Good Shepherd
 They find the baby who has a manger for a bed
 God in the flesh slept in swaddling spread

I see the star, The bright Morning Star
 He comes to make war
 Wickedness will end, justice will prevail
 Babylon begins to weep and wail

For the One born of a virgin will remain
 And He is here to reign...



Kristian M. Marion

Author, Poet, Blogger

ENCOURAGEMENT

BY PADMINI GOVENDER (TOOTSIE)

Isaiah 9:6 says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." What a powerful and inspiring scripture. It is that time of year where people are preparing to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Bright and Morning Star, the sweetest Rose of Sharon, the Light of the world and there are so many other names to describe our Lord. Christ is the reason for this season and as children of God we should be thankful, grateful and blessed to have this awesome and amazing God in our lives. Personally, I want to take this opportunity of thanking God for who He is and what He has done in my life.

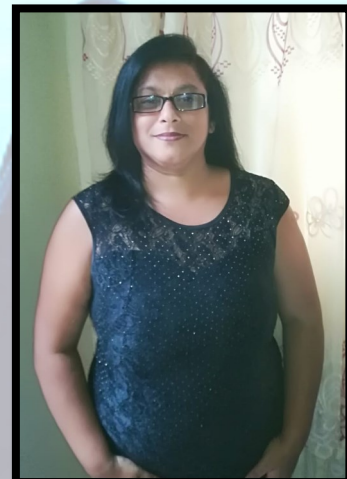
2023 started off on a good note and I can assure it never stayed that way. There were challenges and difficult times that I faced and during this time my faith and belief in God was being tested. I felt alone and I allowed fear and doubt to take over the battles that I faced. Prayer became difficult in this time I was facing. Eventually I decided to give up and call it quits as I became exhausted physically and spiritually. I never gave God a chance to take control of my challenges or my situations. I became impatient and discouraged drifting away further into the world. Just when I thought it was over God stepped into my situation and reminded me of who He really was, I AM who I AM and from the deep dark valley that I had fallen into I saw the hand reach out to me and say, "Let me lead you my child". BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.

All through my challenge I stopped reading my Bible, stopped praying, stopped going into the house of God and tried to fix it all on my own. I am grateful to God for the friends and prayer warriors and also Pastor that stood by me and prayed for me and with me. As I share this experience with you, there could be someone out there that could be in this storm and facing a similar challenge and just like me you too could be drifting away from God and allowing yourself to be robbed by your

circumstances. A word of encouragement to you don't give up and don't give in. Instead seek the face of God, surrender yourself to Him and allow Him to be the light in your dark situation. The battle is the Lord's and Victory is ours. We should praise in good times and bad.

In this special time of celebration, let us examine our lives and ask God to intervene on our behalf drawing us closer to Him, where we can have a deeper and stronger relationship with Him. As the New Year approaches, let us leave behind the things of the world and look unto Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith. May our faith in God increase as we continue to serve Him daily. Our prayers should be create in me a clean heart oh Lord and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence oh Lord take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of my salvation and renew a right spirit within me.

I will leave you with this words that are found in **Proverbs 3:5-6** that says "**Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your paths.**" During this festive season I pray that God will be the shining star in your life and may the love of God surround you and your family during this time of celebration and May the peace of God that passeth all human understanding be yours always. Merry Christmas and a blessed new year to you. God bless!



16 Days of Activism!

BY LORRAINE PILLAY

16 days of activism is a global campaign that is held annually from 25 November until 10 December. The campaign focuses on raising awareness to the devastating impact that gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) has on women and children and also remembering all those that lost their lives to GBV. The theme for 2023 is “Accelerating actions to end gender-based violence and femicide: leaving no one behind”.

Gender based violence is a global public health, gender equality and human rights priority. It remains a crisis, affecting 1 in 3 women worldwide. Risks increase during humanitarian emergencies or when women face greater curtailments of their essential rights, such as access to education, healthcare or freedom of movement. Women and girls in certain groups, such as those living with disability, adolescent girls and older women, often face even greater difficulty to have their voices heard or to access support.

Too often people respond to violence by blaming or shaming the victim - for instance, for what they wore or what they did, or because they belong to a particular group. Healthcare workers are often the first, sometimes only point of contact for women experiencing violence or abuse. They can provide compassionate care for the survivors by offering support, medical treatment and referral to other services but the emotional and psychological support for the victim is often overlooked.

We as the communities can be activists against GBV in our homes, communities, work and positions. We need to teach our male figures in society that it is not acceptable to promote violence and abuse against women and children.

We can play our part by:

- ⇒ Reject and report abusers - act and don't look away.
- ⇒ Do not protect abusers, report them.
- ⇒ Sign the pledge against gender-based violence. Do not engage in abusive activities and become an abuser – STOP ABUSE.

⇒ Challenge and denounce cultural practices that perpetrate gender inequalities.

⇒ Be sensitive and supportive to GBV victims - share helpful information and support causes near you.

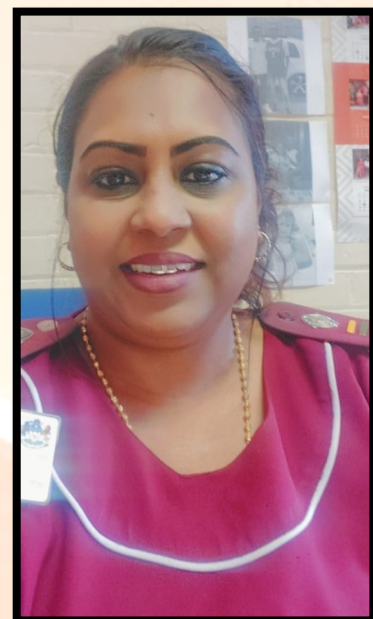
⇒ Seek personal help to change harmful behaviors such as alcohol and substance abuse.

⇒ Teach children values of gender equality.

⇒ Protect children from exposure to violence and harmful content on the internet and social media, including pornography, sexual solicitation etc.

In the Bible, all violence is considered an offence against God and against humanity. Scripture is full of condemnations of violence - time and again violence is associated with wickedness and condemned as “detestable to the Lord”. (Psalm 11 and Proverbs 3 & 10). The bible says that God hates abuse, viewing it as sinful and unacceptable and **“he delights in rescuing the oppressed” 2 Samuel 22:40**. God is not violent but is love, so human violence is always a violation of our creation in God's image.

God bless you as you gain knowledge that will allow you to empower others



The Nazarene and the Star

Look up, I say, Look up

Can you see it?

The shepherds spoke

The angel appeared bringing forth good news

Of the Nazarene that was born

And when they heard the news they were gone

To see the King, O King of Kings

Jesus the Nazarene and the joy He brings

The star kept shining above the king

And at His birth the angels sing

The wise men saw His star when it rose in the sky

And they followed it to where he lie

O Star shine bright, O Star bring Light

O Star I'll follow you to Jesus

By Britney Jenine

The background of the page features a light blue gradient with numerous white starburst effects. In the lower-left corner, there are dark silhouettes of camels and riders, suggesting the journey of the wise men. The overall theme is the birth of Jesus and the appearance of the Star of Bethlehem.

This is an inside look on the poem “The Nazarene and the Star”

This is a Christmas poem. This poem is mainly focused on the star that was above Jesus leading the shepherds to Jesus.

Lines 1-2: These lines refers to the shepherds looking up at the star in the sky and following it to Jesus.

Lines 3-10: Now the poem goes backward to the where it all began. As the shepherds were keeping watch of their flock they were visited by an angel and this angel brought them the good news of the birth of Christ.

After the angel spoke, a host of angels appeared from heaven and started singing Glory to God in the highest. Then the shepherds went to see what the angel had said and they followed the star to Jesus.

Lines 11-12: Then wise men also saw the star and followed it to Jesus.

Lines 13-14: These lines ends the poem as it makes a connection to our daily lives today. This reminds me of a sermon by Pastor J.F.Rowlands when he preached on the star and the key point was this: We are the star that others need to follow to Jesus. Now with this, are we the star that others can follow to Jesus?

The last lines in this poem are simply this, “O Star shine bright, O Star bring light - O Star I’ll follow you to Jesus”. These lines are from those in darkness that needs a touch from God and they are yearning for that light that they can use to come closer to Jesus. For it is written in

John 12:46 “I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.”(NKJV).

Since we believe in Jesus we therefore carry the light of the world in us, so as we are shining as stars for Him let each of us be the Star to lead someone to Christ.

Extracted from “Conquerors Unashamed”.

POWER VERSES

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Revelation 21:5

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Isaiah 43:18-19

"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Ephesians 4:22-24

To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

BIBLE STORIES

The Magi Visit the Messiah

(Matthew 2:1-12)

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Biblical Facts

DID YOU KNOW?

Bethlehem means house of bread



DID YOU KNOW?

Bethlehem was considered a tiny, insignificant town

DID YOU KNOW?

Scripture foretold the Messiah's Birth in Bethlehem

DID YOU KNOW?

Jesus was born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth.

DID YOU KNOW?

Bethlehem is known as the City of David.

DID YOU KNOW?

Bethlehem was the place where lambs were raised for temple sacrifice

DID YOU KNOW?

The Star of Bethlehem, mentioned in St. Matthew's Gospel, is one of the main symbols associated with Jesus' birth, embodying the light of hope of salvation in the midst of darkness.

Youth Cross Experience

Thank you to our Team who have contributed towards making
YOUTHCROSS EXPERIENCE a **SUCCESS**.

Our team:

- Britney Jenine
- Kristian M Marion
- Padmini Govender
- Lorraine Pillay

If you would like to be part of this magazine, don't hesitate to write to us.

We will inform you about our requirements.

This is a good opportunity to impact someone's life!

Invite us on WhatsApp and let us know what topics you would love to read about. This is also a great way to directly receive our latest Issues .

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Editor-In-Chief

Owned by God
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Sealed with the Holy Spirit

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