

Christian Participation in Nation Building

Opening Prayer

P: Dear Lord, Creator of all, thank you for bringing us together in your presence as we celebrate our country's Independence. We thank you for all the Christian leaders who have contributed to our nation building. Help us to realise that our participation should continue to contribute greatly for our wonderful country's growth. Teach us that our light is meant to serve everyone in our nation, not just those who share our faith. Turn our hearts toward the family of nations in the world: to understand the ways of others, to offer friendship, and to find safety only in the common good of all. Amen.

Opening Hymn

There's a call comes ringing o'er the restless wave,
"Send the light! Send the light!"
There are souls to rescue, there are souls to save,
Send the light! Send the light!

Send the light, the blessed Gospel light;
Let it shine from shore to shore!
Send the light, the blessed Gospel light;
Let it shine forevermore!

We have heard the Macedonian call today,
"Send the light! Send the light!"
And our grateful offerings at the cross we lay,
Send the light! Send the light!

May the grace of Jesus unto all abound,
"Send the light! Send the light!"
And a Christ-like spirit everywhere be found,
Send the light! Send the light!

Let us not grow weary in the work of love,
"Send the light! Send the light!"
While we gather jewels for our crown above,
Send the light! Send the light!

Words & Music : *Charles H. Gabriel* (1888)

Kauma

P. †Glory be to the Father our Creator, to the Son our Redeemer and to the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us.

C. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

P. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.

C. Blessed is He that has come and is to come again in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

P. Holy art thou, O God.

C. Holy art thou, Almighty Lord.

P. Holy art thou, Immortal Lord.

C. O Lord, the Messiah who was crucified for us † have mercy on us.

(To be repeated thrice)

P. O Lord, have mercy on us.

C. O Lord, have mercy on us and bless us.

P. O Lord, accept our prayers and worship and have mercy on us.

C. Glory be to you, O God.

P. Glory be to you, O Creator.

C. Glory be to you, O King the Messiah; who has mercy on us sinners. Bless us, O Lord.

(Let us sing together the prayer that Jesus taught us)

***All:** Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is done in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

(Cong. to be seated)

1st Lesson: Nehemiah 2:13-20

2nd Lesson: 1 Timothy 2:1-4

L: Meditation

Role of Indian Christians in the Indian Freedom Struggle

Independence cannot be attained by a single person or a particular section of the society: it is a collaborative effort. During the period of India's Independence, a major role was played by Indian Christians who formed the educated and influential class of the society. Despite being in the minority, they actively participated in the national movement. There were many prominent leaders whose endeavors, till date, have still not received due recognition by their own countrymen.

As we celebrate India's independence, the Christian community has reasons to legitimately feel proud of its contribution towards the nation. Though small in number, its endeavors stand tall in every aspect of nation building, encompassing politics, society, religion and education. The education and medical facilities set up and managed by the Christian community have hugely contributed to the economic development and wellbeing of Indians. And their service to the poor and untouched sections of society have given humanity a deeper meaning. Despite this, the community finds itself insecure amidst hate and vicious propaganda. Professor S.C Mukherji, a prominent Indian Christian leader, stated in 1923, "One immediate duty of an Indian Christian would be to remove from the minds of the people of other faiths the misconception that the Christian community is a denationalized one". Patriotism continues to be a Christian virtue. The Indian Christians sympathized very much with the national spirit and wholeheartedly adopted constitutional methods. In fact, they were among the prominent ones who pioneered and shaped the goals of Indian nationalism. After independence too, the community has been equally active in educating the young with the ideas of secularism, universalism and egalitarianism. Be it armed forces or civil services, education or police, science or medicine, sports or social services, there is virtually no sphere where the Christians have not marked their presence: they have been actively involved in several grassroot movements and nongovernmental organizations.

Early Christian contributors to the Independence include Madhusudan Das of Orissa, Kali Charan Banerjee - the founder of 'the movement for emancipation', Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya (George Thomas) - the 'Hindu Catholic' sadhu and theologian, J.C. Kumarappa, Paul Ramasamy, T.M. Varghese, A.J. John and so on. Among the women, Pandita Ramabai Saraswati's contribution is outstanding. Other female leaders were Mrs. Annie Besant, Akkamma Cheriyan, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and many more.

The Christian community was also very active in the Quit India Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement and Swaraj Movement. Learning from these, we must remember that Christians have as much right and ownership in India as any other citizen and we must always stand up for our faith and what is right, and question authority whenever there is any wrongdoing.

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Hymn

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art –
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart;
High King of heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won;
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun;
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall;
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

Words: Ancient Irish Hymn, translated by *Mary E. Byrne* (1905);
Music: Irish Folk melody by *Patrick Joyce* (1919); Arranged by *David Allen*

L: In Loving Adoration

In loving adoration
We come to worship thee,
Thou Author of Salvation,
So wonderful, so free;
Oh, teach us how to praise thee,
As we before thee stand,
And hear us, as we pray thee,
To bless our own dear land.

For millions still in darkness
Within this land of light,
For those who've wandered blindly
From God and home and right
And those who ne'er have seen thee,
Thou God of love and might,

We earnestly beseech thee
May they receive their sight.

Be thou our strong defender,
Our confidence alone,
Be with our country's rulers,
Our nation's cornerstone;
And thus led by thy Spirit,
And heeding thy blest Word,
From ocean unto ocean
All men shall call thee Lord.

Author: T. B. Penfield

(Congregation to stand)

Prayer of Confession

Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

P: Eternal God, before you, nations rise and fall. Help us to repent of our wrongs, and to choose your way of reunion and renewal. Help us to bring peace on earth, where death and violence and hunger will be no more, and where all nations will gather in the light of your presence.

C: Dear Lord, forgive us for not standing up for our faith, forgive us for not contributing as much to nation building. Teach us peace, that we may plough up battlefields and pound weapons into building tools, and learn to talk across old boundaries as children in your love. Help us to end all prejudices, and may we put a stop to injustice and cruelty, which divides or wounds the human family. Draw us together as one people who do your will, so that we may be a light to our nation sharing your love and Word to others. Amen.

Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Psalms 112

P: ¹ Praise the Lord.

Blessed are those who fear the Lord,
who find great delight in his commands.

C: ² Their children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

P: ³ Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

C: ⁴ Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,
for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous.

P: ⁵ Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

C: ⁶ Surely the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be remembered forever.

P: ⁷ They will have no fear of bad news;
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord.

C: ⁸ Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.

P: ⁹ They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor,
their righteousness endures forever;
their horn will be lifted high in honor.

C: ¹⁰ The wicked will see and be vexed,
they will gnash their teeth and waste away;
the longings of the wicked will come to nothing.

Intercessory Prayers

L: Dear Lord, we pray for all our leaders – especially we pray for the President, the Prime Minister, the Governor, the Chief Minister and all those in offices of Government. Guide them in their duties, and help them to put all their trust in you as they govern our great nation. Give them purity in their intentions, and godliness in their convictions. We pray that you surround every leader with wise counsel, that they would be humble and kind, patient and loving through their actions and words. Energize their spirits and bodies physically and spiritually, protect and provide for their families. Inspire them to motivate the nation in one spirit of love and respect. Amen

C: To be sung

**We are One in The Spirit,
We are One in The Lord.
We are One in The Spirit,
We are One in The Lord.
And we pray that all unity
may one day be restored.**

***And they'll know we are Christians by our love,
By our Love, Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love.***

L: We give thanks for those on the frontline who are tirelessly caring for our nation during these times and pray that they lead each day with renewed strength from you. We pray for our Defence Forces, the Police and Fire Departments. We are thankful for their service and sacrifice and ask you to guide and protect them as they continue to keep our country safe. We pray for those who work behind the scenes for our nation's welfare; we request you to grant them peace and prosperity. Thank you for their commitment to serve, often in scenarios where they are in danger themselves. May our country sleep at night in peace knowing that we are protected, cared for and kept safe by them. Guide us to work with all peoples and communities for the upliftment of each other. Amen

C: To be sung

**We will work with each other,
We will work side by side.
We will work with each other,
We will work side by side.
And we'll guard each man's dignity
And save each man's pride.**

***And they'll know we are Christians by our love,
By our Love, Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love.***

L: We pray for all Christian Educational and Medical institutions. We pray that they continue to share your love through their work. We pray that the country recognises the huge contribution of Christians in the building of our great nation - India. We pray for the Missionaries, Nuns and others who work relentlessly in sharing your love through their work. We pray that people of all communities appreciate this humble and loving service and respect these workers of Christ. Bless them with the understanding that all are God's children, irrespective of region, colour or race. May we reflect your light in our actions and do as your Son, embracing those that were outcasts or different from him. May we extend the blessings in our life to those who may not have their own. Expand our minds to see, acknowledge and appreciate those that are different from us in ability, religion, community, orientation, belief and so on, and do our bit in building a nation and a world where everyone belongs, where everyone is given the space to exist on God's wonderful creation-Earth. Help us to continue to walk in faith and love, spreading the news that God is in our land. Amen.

C: To be sung

**We will walk with each other,
We will walk hand in hand.
We will walk with each other,
We will walk hand in hand.
And together we'll spread the
News that God is in our land.**

***And they'll know we are Christians by our love,
By our Love, Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love.***

Gospel Reading

P: †Peace be with you all.

C: May the Lord make us all worthy to listen to His Word.

P: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which proclaims life and salvation to the world as recorded by **Evangelist Luke**.

C: Blessed is He that has come and will come again. Praise to the Father who sent him for our Salvation. May His blessings be ever upon us.

P: In the days of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, the Word of life, God incarnate of the blessed Virgin Mary, it happened in this way.

C: So, we believe and affirm.

Luke 20:19-26

(After reading the Gospel, the priest says, †'Peace be with you all')

C: With you also. We thank you, Lord, that you have given us your gospel which is indeed the light of the world, that we may be drawn closer to you through the living words from your gospel which we have now heard.

The Nicene Creed – To be sung

We believe in the one true God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven, Maker of earth,

We believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
begotten of the Father before all world;

God of God, Light of Light, Of all things invisible, and all in light.
God of God, Light of Light, of all things invisible and all things right.

Being one with the Father, by whom all things were made,
who for our salvation, came down from heaven,
Incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin and was made man.

In the days of Pilate, He was crucified,
He suffered and died and was buried.
The third day He rose again, ascended into heaven,

He will come again for the living and the dead
and of His kingdom there will be no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life;
together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified;
God of God, Light of Light,
who spoke through the prophets and the apostles.

We believe in one Holy Church,
One baptism for the remission of sins;
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and the new life to come.
Amen

(Cong to be seated)

Birthday, Wedding Anniversary & Thanksgiving

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see:
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow—
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Words: *Thomas O. Chisholm* (1923) Music: *William M. Runyan* (1923)

Announcements

Offertory

"Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee,
Op'ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!

All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,

Chanting bird and flowing fountain
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living,
Ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother,
All who live in love are Thine;
Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals, join the happy chorus,
Which the morning stars began;
Father love is reigning o'er us,
Brother love binds man to man.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife,
Joyful music leads us Sunward
In the triumph song of life.

Words: *Henry J. van Dyke* (1907) Music: *Ludwig van Beethoven* (Melody from Ninth Symphony);
Arranged by *Edward Hodges* (1824)

Message

(Cong. to stand)

Closing Prayer

P: We thank you, Almighty God, for this our country—our sweet land of freedom, a haven of hope and above all, our home and inheritance.

C: We consecrate this day to the celebration of the sacred ideals of our nation of justice and independence, which brought it to birth. Help us to remember that freedom does not automatically perpetuate itself, that we have to work at it, nurture it, protect it, and pray for it. Freedom like faith, needs our attention and our cooperation. Defend our liberties and help us stand as one united nation, birthed from many cultures and tongues. In times of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the days of trouble do not allow our trust in you to fail. Amen.

Benediction

P: May the strength of God sustain us; may the power of God preserve us; may the hands of God protect us; may the way of God direct us; may the love of God go with us this day and forever. In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Doxology and Kiss of peace

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me.

Be Thou Thyself before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

The National Anthem

[illegible]