

ASIAN ECUMENICAL YOUTH ASSEMBLY
(AEYA-2026)

BREAK EVERY YOKE
— BIBLE STUDIES —



Christian Conference of Asia

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FOREWORD

The Holy Bible contains an extraordinary collection of writings composed over many centuries and has, for more than two millennia, been read, memorised, analysed, and studied by billions of people, including sceptics, believers, theological educators, and biblical scholars. Yet the Holy Scriptures continue to motivate us to study and understand the essence of the truths revealed in the Bible. In this context, Bible studies are effective tools for deepening our understanding of the Holy Scriptures. To guide and enrich our understanding of biblical teachings, essential principles and parameters need to be followed within a framework that instructs, corrects, comforts, exhorts, and guides us toward transformation.

The theme of AEYA-2026, “Break Every Yoke,” is deeply rooted in biblical and theological bases (Isaiah 58:6). The term “yoke” here refers to anything that enslaves. It speaks of conditions or influences that bind people, through circumstances or behaviours experienced in life. A yoke is traditionally a wooden harness placed on animals to control and guide their movements while ploughing fields or carrying loads. Spiritually, however, a yoke represents what we are attached to, subjected to, and driven by. The prophet Isaiah speaks of yokes imposed in ways that turn people into slaves – physically, spiritually, emotionally, psychologically, and socially – leading to sinfulness, unrighteousness, ungodliness, and forms of spiritual distortion, including occultism. In contrast, Jesus offers something different (Matthew 11:29–30). He describes his yoke as “easy” and his burden as “light,” offering rest to those who are weary and burdened. The yoke of Christ represents his gentle teaching, way of life, and authority, rather than the heavy burdens of legalism, sin, or self-reliance. It frees us from various forms of bondage – social, economic, and spiritual – that manifest in different ways in people’s lives. Such yokes not only enslave but also compel individuals into a diminished way of living, dependent on forces other than God’s strength. Jesus understood the intricacies of satanic yokes, and therefore offers an enduring invitation to take up a different kind of yoke.

The Bible studies presented in the accompanying pages are designed to assist those who desire to learn more about the biblical and theological bases of the theme of AEYA-2026. They provide a brief account of each biblical context analysed in the contemporary situation. It is our hope and prayer that the Bible studies included in this book will be a helpful instrument for the participants of AEYA-2026, enabling them to draw insights from these biblical and theological foundations and to engage in learning and reflection on the theme within the contemporary context.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr Mathews George Chunakara', with a horizontal line underneath.

Dr Mathews George Chunakara
General Secretary, CCA

I. GOD'S CALL TO BREAK OPPRESSION AND RESTORE JUSTICE

Breaking Every Yoke: A Call to be Formed as Repairers and Restorers

Rev. Hazel Joyce D. Salatan

Isaiah 58:1–12

1 Shout out; do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. 2 Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practised righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they want God on their side. 3 “Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day and oppress all your workers. 4 You fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. 5 Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? 6 Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin? 8 Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. 9 Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, “Here I am.” If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, 10 if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. 11 The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail. 12 Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Let us imagine faith as a field. Seeds are always being planted. They come from families, churches, governments, markets, and media. They sink into us quietly. Over time, they teach us what is normal, what is possible, and what we should accept.

From these seeds, we can grow obedience without compassion, prayer without courage, and worship without justice. We can become good at religion but poor at love. But Christian formation is never a neutral soil. In Isaiah 58, God walks into the field and asks a disturbing question: What has your faith been growing?

The people are serious believers. They fast. They pray. They gather faithfully. They expect blessings. Yet God reveals a contradiction. They worship while workers are exploited. They seek God while many go hungry. They bow down, but neighbours are bent under heavy burdens. Indeed, their spirituality rises upward, but it does not reach outward. So God begins to teach again. “The fast I choose is this: loose injustice, undo the yoke, let the oppressed go free.” (Isaiah 58:6)

The message is simple and costly – “Break every yoke.”

Faith is no longer private. Worship becomes public. Love must enter the arrangements of society. God is paying attention to what our faith is bearing. If suffering remains untouched, something in our Christian formation has failed. We have learned devotion, but not liberation. Furthermore, we are shaped not only by what we are told to believe, but also by what we are trained not to see. Yokes survive when people stop noticing them.

We hear it everywhere:

“This is life.”

“This will never change.”

“Be patient.”

“Do not make trouble.”

“Let’s just wait for heaven.”

These words are also seeds. If you water them long enough, they will grow into resignation, hopelessness, and acceptance of the yoke on their shoulders.

But Isaiah is a different kind of farmer. The prophet plants questions. Who benefits from this system?

Who is exhausted?

Who is invisible?

Who carries the future on wounded backs?

Suddenly, what looked natural begins to look constructed. This is awakening. Awakening begins.

This is the moment we move from merely surviving the world to reading it. We begin to recognise patterns, power, and design. Conscientisation is not only seeing pain. It is understanding why the pain repeats. And if injustice has been built, it can also be dismantled.

That realisation changes everything. Change is uncomfortable because it threatens those who benefit from the way things are or who are satisfied with the status quo. Awareness rearranges relationships and can begin to dismantle what once looked permanent. But once our eyes are opened to injustice, we cannot simply close them again and pretend not to see.

The field will never look the same again. But God does not awaken us to leave us in bitterness. God grows something stronger, a rage rooted in love, a refusal shaped by dignity, a courage that believes freedom is possible. And then God shows us the future of people who choose to break every yoke.

If you feed the hungry, if you stand with the afflicted, light rises. You become a watered garden. You become a spring that does not fail (Isaiah 58:10–11). Life begins to move through you towards others. And the promise widens. Ruins are rebuilt. Foundations rise again. Streets become liveable (Isaiah 58:12). Breaking yokes becomes rebuilding worlds. Then God gives a new name: repairers of the breach and restorers of the streets to live in. People who once felt small rise into their God-given worth. People trained for silence take back their voice. People who believe they were powerless step into history with God and are strengthened together in community.

Believe this: we are not only plants in the field. We are farmers with God. Every gathering plants something. Every prayer plants something. Every silence plants something.

If we plant fear, fear will grow.

If we plant indifference, indifference will spread.

But if we plant awareness, solidarity, and stubborn hope, repairers and restorers will rise.

Remember this: God keeps working the soil. God keeps sending light. God keeps trusting that new life can rise.

The question is whether we are ready to join the work, to break every yoke and cultivate freedom. History is waiting for repairers. Neighbourhoods are waiting for restorers. The future is waiting for people who have learned to see. Will we remain comfortable plants, or will we become farmers with God?

Questions for Reflection Together

1. What injustices have we learned to treat as normal?
2. Who benefits from our blindness?
3. When did you realise something you could no longer ignore?
4. Why can awareness feel risky?
5. What kind of church or community forms repairers and restorers?
6. What are we planting for the next generation?

Prayer

God of liberation, open our eyes and keep them open. Disturb what we have accepted. Turn anger into courage. Turn courage into rebuilding and restoring. Make us people who break every yoke and cultivate lives where dignity can breathe. Amen.

What God Requires: Justice, Kindness, and Humble Discipleship

Dr S. Joseph

Micah 6:6–8

With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with tens of thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Our Real Questions

Let us begin with honest reflection. In our daily dealings — at home, in college, at work, and in church — are we fair and just? When people hurt or misunderstand us, do we still show mercy? In our Asian context, humility is sometimes seen as weakness. Do we feel that way? Or are we learning that true humility is strength under God's guidance? As young Christians, are we growing in humility, or only in knowledge and activity? These questions prepare our hearts to hear God's word through Micah.

Understanding the Text

Micah prophesied in Judah during a troubled period (742–687 BCE), when religious activity was strong but moral life was weak. The primary purpose of the chosen text is to turn back to true worship and obedience.

Israel responded to God's call by trying to soothe Him with ritual sacrifices, hoping that this would appease Him. Israel tried all kinds of ways to please Him, but sacrifices and other religious rituals aren't enough; God wants changed lives. He wants His people to be fair, just, merciful, and humble. God wants us to become living sacrifices (Romans 12:1–2), not just doing religious deeds, but living rightly (Jeremiah 4:4; Hebrews 9:14). It is impossible to follow God consistently without His transforming love in our hearts.

Three main lessons to be pondered, meditated upon, and practised:

(i) Do Justice

God is just and has always acted justly towards his people; in return, he required them to act and live in justice. No amount of frenzied temple activity could fill the vacuum of justice. Justice was notable by its absence in Israel. Yet justice is a paramount virtue without which human beings cannot live together in the manner that God intended.

(ii) Love Mercy (Kindness)

Kindness, or loving-kindness, as the Hebrew word is frequently translated, is again one of the principal attributes of God in the Old Testament. As God always acted towards his people in loving-kindness, so too he required them to act thus towards one another. Loving-kindness, though intimately related to justice, goes beyond the first virtue; it gives, where no giving is required, it acts when no action is deserved, and it penetrates both attitudes and activities. It is a part of the virtue extolled by St. Paul in his extraordinary hymn to love (1 Cor 13:1–13).

(iii) Walk Humbly with God

It is the daily walk in relationship with God that lies at the heart of religion. The ritual of the temple could give expression to the vitality of that walk, but it could never replace it as the centre of Israel's faith. And the humble walk with God went hand in hand with the practice of justice and the love of kindness. This triad of virtue forms the foundations of religious life; this was what God required of Israel.

Living the Word Today

For the Asian Christian youth, this word is deeply relevant. Doing justice may mean refusing corruption, speaking truth gently, and standing with those who are ignored. Loving mercy may mean forgiving a friend, helping a struggling classmate, or serving without expecting recognition. Walking humbly with God may mean daily prayer, teachable hearts, and quiet faithfulness even when no one applauds.

Personal and Community Response

1. How can we practise justice in our homes and churches this week?
2. Whom do we need to forgive or treat with greater mercy?
3. In what areas of life must we learn humility before God?

May our faith be more than ritual. May our lives reflect justice, mercy, and a humble walk with our Lord.

True faith in God generates kindness, compassion, justice, and humility. We can please God by seeking these attributes in our work, our family, our church, and our neighbourhood.

When Worship Without Justice Becomes an Offence to God

Rev. Ashish John Archer

Amos 5:21–24

21 I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. 22 Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them, and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. 23 Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. 24 But let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Imagine attending your church every Sunday, singing praises, offering yourself and physical gifts, and finding out that God is not pleased. In fact, God is repulsed. That is exactly what Amos 5:21–24 is about. Speaking to the people of ancient Israel in the 8th century BCE, God delivers one of the most confrontational messages, “I hate, I despise your festivals....”

The people were not irreligious. They were showing up. They were performing every required ritual, the festivals, the burnt offerings, and the music. From the outside, everything looked fine. But something was seriously wrong. The wealthy were exploiting the poor. Judges were taking bribes. The vulnerable were being crushed. And every Sabbath, everyone gathered to worship as if nothing was wrong.

Israel was very prosperous by all perceivable measures during Amos’ time. Under King Jeroboam II, the nation had expanded its territory and enjoyed economic growth. But behind this so-called prosperity, there were uncomfortable truths: corruption, exploitation of the poor, human trafficking, sexual immorality, and a legal system that favoured the rich. The blessings God had given were being hoarded and weaponised against the very people they were meant to benefit.

Romero describes a powerful concept he calls the “Between Time”, that moment within worship when the past and the future briefly meet in the present, and one is confronted with a choice. Do we allow our faith to change us? Or do we keep performing religion and walk away unchanged?

Amos 5:24 is exactly that hinge point. The image of water rolling down is not decorative poetry; it is urgent and intentional. Adegboyega notes that the Hebrew phrase suggests water rolling on under its own power, driven by an inner force moving towards completion. Justice, according to Amos, should be like that: powerful, self-sustaining, impossible to ignore or stop. It should not be like a forced responsibility we have to think about during worship and forget all about when it becomes inconvenient. In this context, justice means working to address historical injustices, ensure equitable treatment for disadvantaged groups, and uphold the dignity of those who have experienced oppression.

Oppression and injustices are the lived reality of millions across Asia today. And the Church, often growing numerically and vibrant in worship, must ask itself the same question God posed to Israel: Is our religion producing justice, or merely producing comfort?

Asia presents this question with particular sharpness. We need to consider the context we live in. In South Asia, the caste system continues to determine who receives dignity and who is denied it. Dalits face discrimination in employment, education, housing, and even within the Church. Christians in India have at times adopted caste hierarchies inside our own congregations, reserving leadership and marriage alliances for the so-called upper-caste believers while marginalising those the system has always marginalised. In Southeast Asia, migrant workers from countries like Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines leave their families to work in factories, construction sites, and so on. Across the region, gender-based violence, child labour, bonded labour, religious persecution, and ethno-nationalist violence all demand a response from communities that claim to follow a God who hates disconnected religion.

Amos does not call Israel to a general feeling of concern. He calls for justice that rolls, that moves, that flows, that does not stop. For Asian Christians today, this demands more than awareness. It demands a reorientation of how we understand our faith in our communities. The Church today has traded its prophetic voice for political safety. The task of the Church today has been reduced and limited to worship services and growing congregations, while remaining silent on corruption, ethnic injustice, and economic inequality within and without. In our public witness, the Church

must recover its prophetic voice: the daring to name injustice by name, even when it is costly. In many Asian contexts, the Church has acquired social respectability at the price of silence because of the fear that it may offend governments, donors, or majority communities. Amos shows us that this silence is not neutrality. It is complicated. The God who said I do not like your festivals is not impressed with our institutional caution.

True faith and devotion to God are not measured by the volume of our songs or the size of our offerings. It is measured by whether the people around us, especially the most vulnerable, are being treated with dignity, fairness, and care. Amos is not telling Israel to stop worshipping. His call is not less religion; it is more integrity. He insists that justice must be inseparable from it, as natural and unstoppable as a river after heavy rain. The rolling water of verse 24 is not a threat. It is an invitation. Let it start with us.

Questions to Discuss

1. How does Amos' harsh condemnation of religious festivals make you feel? Does it challenge your understanding of worship? Where do you think genuine worship ends and performance begins?
2. The Church has sometimes replicated the inequalities it should oppose (e.g., caste hierarchies, gender discrimination within congregations). Have you witnessed any of this around you? How did it affect you or your loved ones?
3. Amos uses the image of an ever-flowing river, something that does not stop when inconvenient. What justice issue in your life do you often ignore around you?
4. What is one concrete thing you think you could do that moves from awareness to action?

C. Gilbert Romero, "Amos 5:21–24: Religion, Politics, and the Latino Experience" in *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology*, 1997.

J.A. Adegboyega, "Social Injustice in Amos 5 and its Implications for Contemporary Society," in *Pharos Journal of Theology*, 2022.

Religious Power, Hypocrisy, and the Burdening of Others in God's Name

Jon Dave Angeles

Matthew 23:1–7

Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice. They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honour at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the market places, and being called rabbi by men.

Introduction

Matthew 23:1–7 talks about the final week of Jesus' time in Jerusalem. Tension is high. Religious leaders feel threatened. Crowds are watching. And Jesus speaks not softly, but prophetically. He addresses both the crowds and His disciples, exposing the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees. These were not ordinary people. They were respected teachers of the Law. They knew Scripture. They held authority. They "sat on Moses' seat."

Yet Jesus reveals a painful truth: they taught the Word, but they did not live it. Their sermons were right, but their lives were wrong.

This passage isn't just a critique of the leaders of the first century. Instead, it serves as a mirror, reflecting the beliefs of every generation of believers.

Faith is not measured by titles, influence, or religious activity. It is seen in integrity, obedience, and transformed living.

Authority Without Integrity (vv. 2–3)

"The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat."

There was literally a seat in synagogues symbolising teaching authority. Jesus acknowledges their position. Authority itself was not the problem. The misuse of it was. They taught correctly, but they did not practice what they preached. This is where the tension becomes deeply relevant to us. Today, many churches preach holiness, love, and justice. We hold conferences. We livestream services. We build beautiful sanctuaries. But

the question remains: Are we living what we proclaim? In the Philippines, a quiet exodus is underway among the youth. It is not always a rejection of Christ, though. Instead, they find a disconnect in the Church and society. Church rituals are adhered to, but the Church cannot be felt by the community. Christians attend church service every Sunday but forget to go to the margins, slums, and those forgotten by society.

When the church becomes comfortable inside its walls and distant from broken communities, we begin to resemble the religious leaders Jesus confronted. Wesleyan theology reminds us that holiness is not only correct doctrine (orthodoxy), but also correct practice (orthopraxy). Faith must be lived out as holiness of heart and life.

Heavy Burdens and Legalism (v. 4)

“They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their fingers.”

The Pharisees created layers of religious expectations. They made spirituality exhausting. Instead of leading people towards freedom in God’s grace, they made religion oppressive. This happens today when churches: focus more on minor rules than major mercy, demand performance but offer little compassion, emphasise appearances but neglect transformation.

Young Filipinos today are already carrying heavy burdens—economic struggles, family pressures, corruption in systems, and anxiety about the future. When the church adds shame instead of grace, control instead of compassion, we are not reflecting Christ. Jesus, in contrast, said: “Come to Me... My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Holiness in the Wesleyan tradition is never about earning God’s love. It is a response to grace. It flows from a heart transformed by love.

Religion for Display (vv. 5–7)

The Pharisees enlarged their phylacteries and lengthened their fringes—visible symbols of piety. They loved seats of honour and public greetings. Jesus exposes the motive: they acted “to be seen by others.”

This speaks powerfully in our social media age. It is possible to display spirituality online while neglecting it in private. It is possible to post Bible verses yet ignore suffering neighbours. It is possible to look active in

ministry yet remain disconnected from the real mission.

In the Philippine context, some churches have become routine-driven: services start at a fixed time, the same format every week, the same rituals repeated, little engagement with the poor, the slums, and the struggling communities. When worship becomes routine without mission, it becomes an empty form. God has never been impressed by ritual alone. The prophets declared this long ago: what God desires is justice, mercy, and humble walking with Him. The Church is not called merely to conduct services. It is called to embody the Kingdom.

A Prophetic Call to the Church Today

Matthew 23 is uncomfortable because it confronts religious systems, not just individuals. If churches no longer go to the margins, if we are more concerned with maintaining buildings than healing communities, if our programmes are active but our compassion is inactive, then we must ask: have we become too similar to those who “sit on Moses’ seat” but do not carry the burden of the people?

Holiness of heart and life means: personal integrity, social responsibility, active compassion, and courageous discipleship. The youth of the Philippines are longing for authenticity. They are not looking for perfect leaders but for real ones. They are not asking for louder preaching but for lived-out faith.

A Call to Authentic Discipleship

Jesus does not simply condemn. He calls us back. Back to integrity. Back to lived obedience. Back to grace-filled holiness. Back to mission beyond the church walls. The church must once again: enter the slums, mentor the youth, feed the hungry, speak against injustice, and live what it preaches. The world does not need more religious performance. It needs Spirit-filled authenticity.

Concluding Prayer

Our Lord of Freedom, search our hearts. Where we have performed instead of obeyed, forgive us. Where we have chosen comfort over mission, awaken us. Where we have preached what we do not practice, transform us. Make Your church in the Philippines a living testimony not of ritual, but of revival. Not of performance, but of compassion. Not of power, but of holiness of heart and life. Raise a generation that will live what they believe. In Your name, Amen.

II. LIBERATION AND GOD'S PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE OPPRESSED

God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed and Calls Liberators

Dr Tan Ee Yan

Exodus 3:7–12

7 Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, 8 and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Now go, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." 11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" 12 He said, "I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

Introduction

The story in the book of Exodus begins at a time when the Israelites were foreigners and migrants in the land of Egypt. Being foreigners and prosperous (Exod 1:7), the Israelites were viewed with suspicion by Pharaoh and were perceived as a threat. As a result, Pharaoh's policy was "to deal shrewdly with them (1:10)," and this included imposing forced labour on them for Pharaoh's renowned building projects. Urbanisation and development in the ancient world came at a human cost, just as they do in our modern world today. The plight of the Israelites in Egypt also reminds us that migrant communities continue to face institutionalised suspicion today, and as a result, are often subjected to policies that exert control and dominance over them.

The Israelites had unforgiving taskmasters who oppressed them, making forced labour hard labour. They suffered greatly and cried out to God. This crisis brings us to Exodus 3, when God appears to Moses in a burning bush.

God's Empathy

When God speaks in Exodus 3:7, we can sense God's concern with human affairs. God is not a distant being; God uses the first-person

pronoun, “I”, and refers to the Israelites as “my people,” establishing an immediate and direct relationship with them.

God’s awareness of Israel’s suffering is described. God is the subject (agent) of successive verbs: “I have observed (literally, ‘see’ in the Hebrew text)..., I have heard..., and I know... (3:7).” The verb “see” is emphatic in the Hebrew text. It conveys the meaning that God has truly seen. In other words, God has paid close attention and has watched carefully, just as a parent watches over young children.

God’s hearing and knowing reflect God’s understanding of the Israelites’ experiences and feelings. For God to know one’s suffering, God has to be present alongside the one suffering. To know our suffering suggests that God experiences it too, and God feels it too. Few would dare to say to a friend in pain, “I know your pain,” or “I understand how you feel.” It is not possible to know (to feel or to experience) a friend’s pain at that moment. When we often say “I understand,” we do not really, unfortunately. God alone can know pain the way the sufferer experiences it.

God’s Deliverance

The three verbs testifying to God’s solidarity with the oppressed and suffering Israelites are followed by three verbs that describe God’s plan of liberation: “I have come down... to deliver... to bring them up....” God is intervening to deliver the Israelites from Egypt and to lead them to a homeland.

We will notice that God’s divine intervention is twofold: first, to deliver the Israelites out of an oppressive situation; and then, to usher them into a new land to rebuild their lives.

Likewise, many resolutions of injustices in our society today require a two-step pattern of deconstruction and dismantling of systems (deliverance, liberation), and reconstruction (restoration, rebuilding). It requires a cessation of injustice and a reconstruction of new circumstances that is marked by justice, restitution, reconciliation, accountability, and resources for a way forward into a new future.

God’s act of deliverance stems from (i) God’s relationship with the Israelites; (ii) God’s empathy concerning their oppression and affliction; and (iii) God’s salvific intent in the face of oppression.

Our impetus for taking action, for championing the cause of the oppressed, should stem from similar inner convictions too: (i) our shared humanity with those who are suffering (relationship); (ii) empathy for others, such as God has shown us; and (iii) a conviction that God has called us to bear witness to God's justice and righteousness in the face of oppression.

God Calls Liberators

God's plan for divine intervention requires human participation. Just as God said to Moses, "I am sending you..." God is sending us, too. God's presence accompanies us in this call to go into our communities, just as God promised Moses, "I will be with you...."

Questions for Reflection

1. God has shown us an acute awareness of human suffering and oppression. Are you aware of issues in your society that you see, hear, and understand? Applying the 'awareness questions' to migration as an example: Are there migrant communities near you? Have you paid attention to your foreign neighbours or migrant workers in your community? Are you aware of the legal, social, or economic issues they face? Have you considered the emotional burdens they might carry? Do you care, and if so, how much and why?
2. What would justice look like in your community? What could you do to alleviate an unjust or oppressive situation there? What resources would you need to make your community a safe and just space? What is your local government doing about this issue, and how might you learn more or be involved?
3. What are the spiritual or theological convictions in your heart that are necessary to sustain your commitment and courage to address situations of injustice or oppression?

Justice for Migrants, Destitutes, and the Economically Vulnerable

Rev. Mathews George

*“We’re connected by currents of humanity / that bind us,
‘alliances, allegiances, histories // for the salt in the sea,
like the salt in our blood / like the dust of our bones,
our final return to mud...”*

- Selina Tusitala-Marsh, New Zealand/Pasifika Poet

Deuteronomy 24:17–22

17 “You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow’s garment in pledge. 18 Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore, I command you to do this. 19 “When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings. 20 When you beat your olive trees, do not strip what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. 21 “When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. 22 Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore, I am commanding you to do this.

Context

Deuteronomy chapter 24 is part of Moses’ second discourse to the Israelites before they enter the Promised Land—a reminder of God’s covenant with them. This passage calls God’s people to embody justice by protecting the dignity of the vulnerable: aliens, orphans, and widows.

1. Upholding Dignity and Justice for the Disadvantaged

Aliens and orphans were disadvantaged before the law: there was no one with eloquence or experience to argue their case. Widows faced indignity when the lending system exposed their poverty. God’s command addresses both legal injustice and social humiliation.

The Hebrew structure of this command uses the emphatic negative particle “Lo” (לא) with an imperfect verb: a grammatical form indicating timeless, permanent principles, as found in seven of the Ten Commandments. The command carries covenantal weight.

As Enrique Dussel reminds us, “The ‘poor’ are those who, in the relationship of domination, are the dominated, the instrumentalised, the alienated.” In times when people who are different from one’s own group are dehumanised through caricature and demonisation, God demands we make the bold move of seeing the human person in the stranger, the orphan, and the widow. Their personhood is affirmed through our embodied practices.

For Asian Christian youth, addressing the plight of migrants, the destitute, and the vulnerable is not optional. Instead, it is a divine command. This challenges governments that displace people in the name of development or criminalise minorities who resist majoritarian ideologies. Jesus’ ministry consistently affirmed the dignity of marginalised women (John 8:1–11; Luke 8:2–3; John 4:1–42), modelling this covenantal imperative.

2. Covenantal Memory as the Foundation of Identity

This passage begins and ends with the command to remember (vv. 18, 22). The Hebrew word *zakar* implies making a distinct mark for recognition. Israel’s identity was carved by their redemptive history. They were rescued from slavery, sustained in the wilderness, and marked by covenant. Their memory of being slaves redeemed by God was to shape their treatment of aliens, orphans, and widows. The redemptive action of God underpins the laws and narrative in Deuteronomy.

Christian youth from Asia stand as covenant people redeemed by Christ’s sacrifice. Our identity derives from this historic experience of redemption from the bondage of sin—personal, structural, and systemic. This covenantal memory must inform our embodied action toward the vulnerable today.

3. Trust and Redemptive Generosity

Living as covenant people requires embodied redemptive action. Verses 19–21 command harvesters to leave behind grain and fruit for the disadvantaged. This seems counterintuitive: Why not claim all you’ve laboured for? Because God is the giver of every harvest. Trust in God’s generosity makes us generous.

Walter Brueggemann writes, “The point of the manna narrative is not simply that Israel was fed in the wilderness, but that Israel learned to live by trust and not by securing. The lesson of the wilderness is that life consists not in satiation but in obedience, not in possession but in reliance upon the word of God.” This command liberates us from anxiety

about accumulation. Pacific theologian, Upolu Lumā Vaai, challenges the narrative of possession (“we have”) with the narrative of identity (“we are”): “The earth is part of us... It is a principle that decentralises power and production to achieve responsible economic management. It promotes the idea of ‘enoughness’ that encourages sharing and distribution of wealth equitably and challenges greed and individualism.”

Gustavo Gutiérrez reminds us: “To be free is not simply to cast off one’s chains. It is to live in such a way that one’s life is oriented towards God and neighbour... true freedom is not autonomy but dependence on God.” By depending on God and sharing what we have, we continue God’s redemptive work, challenging narratives of scarcity with covenantal generosity rooted in trust. We model Christ, who poured himself out so that we, poor in sin, might be made rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). Thus, we untie cords and break yokes that oppress the vulnerable. We raise the flag of God’s righteousness high.

Application

Be part of the scandal of incarnation. Jon Sobrino writes, “The God of the Exodus is not the God who watches from a distance, but the God who accompanies in the journey. This is the scandal of the Incarnation: God does not simply liberate from above but walks alongside in the wilderness.” We are called to let the Word become flesh through our embodied actions, walking alongside those in life’s wilderness.

Covenantal faithfulness amid crises. Brueggemann challenges us: “Deuteronomy offers Israel an alternative consciousness—not the consciousness of empire which says, ‘we did this by our own might,’ but the consciousness of covenant which says, ‘God delivered us, God led us, God provides for us.’” The Holy Eucharist reaffirms our identity as a covenant community brought together as one by the love of God, who offered himself as a sacrifice for sinners. This narrative of love that empties oneself offers an alternative to the narratives of those in power. Asian youth may embody the politics of this counter-narrative, making the body of Christ actively filled by the Spirit.

Embodiment through prophetic art. The prophets embodied God’s message through dramatic acts (Jeremiah 27; Isaiah 20; Ezekiel 4). Gen-Z and Millennials possess creative tools unprecedented in history. We must use technology and art to break yokes and challenge narratives of domination. As Brueggemann concludes, “Every generation must choose between the narrative of empire and the narrative of covenant.

The Empire says: you earned it, you deserve it, you control it. Covenant says: it was given, it is grace, it requires gratitude and generosity.”

Discussion Questions

1. Who are the ones disadvantaged and vulnerable in your society? How does God’s emphatic assertion of their dignity change our approach to these communities?
2. What is the fundamental experience that marks you as called out by God? What stories of God’s faithfulness have shaped your family or church community?
3. How can covenantal memory and redemptive generosity enable youth to uphold justice and righteousness? How does this play out in the context of migration, economic upheaval, and political uncertainty?

Prayer

Liberating God, you heard the cries of your people in bondage and set them free. Today, we cry out for those who remain oppressed—migrants seeking safety, the destitute searching for dignity, and the vulnerable trampled by systems of injustice. Remind us that we, too, were once strangers, far from you, until your grace brought us near. May this memory soften our hearts towards all who suffer. Grant us the courage to see their full humanity when the world seeks to dehumanise them.

Free us from the anxiety of accumulation. Teach us to trust your provision so deeply that we become generous with what you have entrusted to us. Help us embody the scandal of incarnation—walking alongside the marginalised as you walked with us.

Empower our Asian Christian youth to choose covenant over empire, generosity over greed, community over individualism. May our lives proclaim: our Redeemer lives. Through creative witness and sacrificial love, help us break every yoke of oppression. In the name of Christ, who poured himself out that we might be made rich. Amen.

Brueggemann, Walter. Deuteronomy (Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries).

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Covenanted Self*.

Dussel, Enrique. *Ethics and Community*, p. 22.

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Divine Sovereignty that Annihilates the Yoke of Idolatry

Musung Mun

Jeremiah 30:8–9

On that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will break his yoke from off your neck, and I will burst your bonds, and strangers shall no more make a servant of him. But they shall serve the Lord their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

Before reading Jeremiah 30:8–9, we must recognise that nearly the entire book of Jeremiah stands as a fearful testimony to God’s judgement. The prophetic announcements of judgement against Judah’s idolatry are an expression of God’s wrath toward those who pursue only their own interests in a chaotic world and a verdict against a society that turns away from the vulnerable. Jeremiah’s background is the political crisis of the kingdom of Judah under the looming threat of Babylonian invasion. God was angered that those in power filled their own pockets rather than establishing justice. The ruling elites clung to a pro-Egyptian policy to protect their privileges (Jer 2:18), while priests and prophets parasitically depended on power, proclaiming the lie, “Peace, peace” (Jer 6:14). Jeremiah denounced this parasitic posture as idolatry and spiritual adultery—an unwillingness to follow the will of God (Jer 3:1–10; 5:7).

While such idolatry prevailed, the condition of the poor (*ebyonim*) grew ever harsher. Jeremiah’s prophecies of judgement against idolatry carry within them a deep anger toward a society that neglects the poor. The sin of Judah’s idolatrous leadership is seen in the fact that their garments are stained with “the lifeblood of the innocent poor” (Jer 2:34) and that they administer unjust courts for the orphan and the needy (Jer 5:28). Because “a horrible and shocking thing has happened in the land” (Jer 5:30), Judah has become a defiled land where neither goodness nor justice can be found. God’s wrathful judgement comes precisely because there is no trace of the divine command that calls for righteousness and justice.¹

We cannot dismiss the turmoil of Judah as an ancient relic; it is a universal suffering of communities facing overwhelming change, much like the recent history of Asian nations. Imperialism, the myth of Western-centric “progress,” and the capitalisation of global environments have driven Asian societies into a disorienting compressed modernity, stripping them of the initiative to pursue justice.²

This has resulted in structural tensions where agrarian traditions and global market competition clash. Within this vortex, communal bonds fragment as generations inhabit different moral eras, accelerating a relentless race for individual survival. While poverty is stigmatised and elites privatise resources, the most vulnerable—women, children, and the disabled—are the first to suffer tragic collapses in the absence of a social safety net.

Such greed is not merely a collection of individual sins but a clear structure of “idolatry.” Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle captured this insight incisively at the 2008 International Eucharistic Congress. He points out that those who follow false gods—such as profit, pleasure, and progressivism—sacrifice the lives of others and the earth for their own gain. We see factory workers forced into low wages for the god of profit; women and children violated by the gods of domination and lust; nature destroyed by the god of “progress”; and the poor, immigrants, and refugees offered as sacrifices to the gods of greed and national security.³ The tragedy of idolatry lies in this very cruelty: destroying the lives of others to preserve one’s own interests.

Therefore, the most painful truth for Asian Christian youth is the realisation that the tyranny of these idolaters has already reached a state beyond control. The entanglement of chaotic values and rampant greed tightens around our necks like a “yoke of slavery.” Asian Christian youth already live as slaves beneath the massive wheel of history, for this selfish social structure refuses to share power with us. Moreover, the helplessness that forces us into silence when our neighbours are exploited—the despair of being unable to offer any help—are themselves marks of that yoke.

I have portrayed a deeply pessimistic and sombre reality. The book of Jeremiah also continues such a narrative of devastating despair across twenty-nine chapters, filling nearly every page with stern prophecies of judgement until the very end. Yet precisely in the heart of that despair, within the deepest centre of the prophetic book—chapters 30 and 31—we finally encounter “The Book of Consolation.” To a people whose very existence had been erased in Babylon, God declares: “On that day, I will break his yoke from off your neck, and I will burst your bonds, and strangers shall no more make a servant of him.” (Jer 30:8).

Within this promise, we come to realise that the sovereignty of liberation never depends on the mercy of capital or power that dominates the world. The power by which God breaks the yoke appears as a force that

intervenes in the very midst of history with the solemn truth that “the order of this world is never eternal,” shattering the hardened vision of the youth. When we have become too powerless to break the yoke ourselves, God, through this promised word, first demolishes the absolute authority we had unknowingly granted to idols.

This is precisely what it means for divine power to come upon us. When the “false divinity” claiming that capital and growth determine the course of our lives collapses, we finally cease the habits of slaves who worship idols and gain the courage to respond as citizens of the Kingdom of God. Because God has already severed the chains of defeatism that once crushed us, we are now able to reject the logic of development and exploitation and participate in a “revolution of grace” that chooses the justice of Christ.

That revolution is accomplished as the idols of greed are driven from the centre of youth’s lives. A kingdom where development, exploitation, and lust find no foothold already dwells within us, as Jesus Christ declared (Luke 17:21). Empowered by the Holy Spirit granted by God, we cast off the yoke at once and serve only Jesus Christ—the true David of justice and peace, our genuine King (Jer 30:9). This liberation is not merely political but an inner and structural revolution in which God’s justice replaces the logic of capital.

The posture of Asian Christian youth must be a daily return to God’s justice. Asian Christian youth must ceaselessly resist the currents of idolatry in the Asian context. We must stand in solidarity with those under threat, those in poverty, and those driven into the dangers of sexual violence—with every neighbour in tribulation. We are people who live as though “The Day of the Lord” has already arrived. The Spirit is renewed each day as That Day within the church. If we recognise that Asia’s despair originates from idolatry that venerates distorted structures, Asian Christian youth must look further and behold the radiant vision that the kingdom of God has already drawn near to us (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17). Our resistance to life is worship, and our solidarity of love is hope.

Questions for Reflection

1. Cardinal Tagle named profit, prestige, progressivism, and the ideology of success as modern idols. Among the values you may have pursued (perhaps unconsciously or inevitably) under the banner of “progress” or “success,” which have in fact depended upon the sacrifice of others or

compromised your own humanity?

2. The author describes the despair of being unable to act in the face of the suffering of the vulnerable as a “yoke of slavery”. When was the last time you felt powerless while witnessing the suffering of neighbours—women, children, migrants, or others—in the news or around you, thinking, “The world will never change”? How might that helplessness be transformed within faith into holy anger or solidarity?

1 Kyung-chul Park, “The Final Form of the Book of Jeremiah and ‘Sitz im Buch’,” *Theological Thought* 175 (2016): 60-62.

2 Kyung-Sup Chang, *The Logic of Compressed Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2022); Kyung-Sup Chang, *The Risk of Compressed Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2025).

3 Luis Antonio G. Tagle, “The Eucharist, the Life of Christ in Our Lives: Spiritual Worship and Authentic Adoration,” Homily at the 49th International Eucharistic Congress, Quebec, June 18, 2008, Vatican Archives, accessed February 12, 2026, www.vatican.va

III. JESUS CHRIST: PROCLAIMING AND EMBODYING LIBERATION

The Nazareth Manifesto: Embodying the Liberation We Proclaim

Sukyi S. Y. Pang

Luke 4:16–21

16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” 20 And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

When Jesus stood to read in his hometown synagogue, the air was thick with tension. This was no ordinary Sabbath reading. It was a public declaration aimed not just at hearts and minds, but at bruised and weary bodies. As young people across Asia face the yokes of economic anxiety, political pressure, and digital exhaustion, Jesus’ words in Luke 4:16–21 are not a distant echo but a living proclamation of liberation for our very flesh and bones.

A Jubilee for the Body

Jesus unrolled the scroll to Isaiah, proclaiming “the year of the Lord’s favour” (Luke 4:19). His audience would have immediately recognised this as the language of Jubilee (Leviticus 25), the radical sabbatical year when debts were cancelled, slaves were freed, and land was returned. This was not merely a spiritual metaphor. It was a vision for a complete reordering of a society that was physically crushing its people. The Jubilee was God’s reset button for a world where bodies were commodified, imprisoned, and broken by the Roman Empire.

Today, we live under the shadow of new empires, and their yokes are deeply embodied. We feel the crushing weight of a hyper-competitive global economy in our burnout and restless nights. We carry the stress of authoritarian systems in the fear that makes us hold our breath. For many in East Asia and beyond, the “economic miracle” has been sustained by a revitalisation of patriarchal ethics that demand conformity and filial piety,

yokes that are written onto the bodies of women and youth, dictating how they should move, speak, and even feel.

To resist such embodied oppression, we need a politics that extends beyond the state—one that prioritises the holistic prosperity of the entire community, focusing on their basic survival, physical vitality, and general flourishing.¹ It is precisely this politics that grounds Jesus' proclamation of Jubilee, confronting the empires of our time by announcing that God's favour is for the bodies that are poor, captive, and bruised—the very bodies that the powerful deem disposable.

The Embodied Gospel: Breaking Every Yoke

Significantly, Jesus does not just quote from Isaiah 61. He masterfully weaves in a line from Isaiah 58:6 when he declares his mission is “to let the oppressed go free.”² This phrase is the very heart of the AEYA–2026 theme: “to break every yoke.” By inserting this, the Gospel ensures we understand Jesus' mission as the embodiment of true worship—not empty religious ritual, but the active, physical work of justice. The “fast” God chooses is to loosen the chains of injustice. The “acceptable year” is one where the yokes of economic exploitation, political oppression, and patriarchal domination are shattered from the bodies they bind.

But to break these yokes, we must first recognise them. In this light, the phrase “recovery of sight to the blind” becomes a profoundly physical and political act. It is a recovery from a kind of “epistemic violence”—a systemic erasure of the subjectivity of the oppressed that reduces them to a mere “Other”—which makes us see our own bodies, and the bodies of others, through the eyes of the oppressor.³ It is a healing from the cultural blinders that normalise suffering and train us to accept injustice as “culture” or “tradition.” To receive sight is to see the inherent dignity in the body of the Dalit woman, the queer youth, the migrant worker, and the political dissident. It is to recognise how colonial Christianity often imprinted a sexual theology that feared and controlled women's bodies, and to reclaim our bodies as sacred and good.⁴ To receive sight is to be empowered to speak a new truth, to stand with a new posture, to embody a freedom that the powers-that-be cannot comprehend.

Jesus' manifesto in Nazareth was not a gentle suggestion. It was a declaration of war on the forces that crush human bodies and spirits. It was a promise that God's kingdom is a kingdom of release, of aphasis—a total liberation that must be felt in our bones and lived out in our communities. For us, as young Asian Christians, this is our mandate. We are called

not just to believe in this freedom, but to embody it, to become agents of Jubilee whose very lives become a testament to the God who sets the oppressed free.

Guiding Questions for Group Discussion

1. In what specific ways do you feel the “yokes” of our time (economic pressure, political anxiety, social expectations) in your own body? Where does it manifest as tension, exhaustion, or silence?
2. The essay suggests that “recovery of sight” involves seeing the dignity in bodies that society devalues. Whose bodies are most invisible or devalued in your community, and what “cultural blinders” keep them hidden? What is one concrete, embodied action your community could take to affirm their dignity?
3. Liberation is not an automatic consequence of social change but must be intentionally practised. What is one embodied practice of freedom (e.g., rest, protest, communal eating, dancing, mindful breathing) that helps you resist the yokes of oppression?

Concluding Prayer

Spirit of the Lord, who anointed Jesus in Nazareth,
Anoint our bodies today.
Open our eyes to see the yokes of injustice around us.
Unstop our ears to hear the cries of the oppressed.
Unleash our tongues to proclaim your year of favour.
And strengthen our hands, our feet, and our very bones to break every
yoke,
Until your Jubilee is embodied on earth as in heaven.
Amen.

1 Kwok Pui-lan, “Feminist Theology, Southern,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 195–198.

2 Benjamin Kantor, “‘Untying the Knots of the Yoke’: Yom Kippur and an Agricultural Allusion to Jubilee in Isaiah 58:6,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 85, no. 4 (2023): 666–85.

3 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 76.

4 Kwok Pui-lan, “Feminist Theology, Southern,” 197.

Rest That Breaks the Yoke: Jesus' Call to the Weary

Rev. Dr S. Sureshkumar

Matthew 11:28–30

28 “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Across Asia, many young people are tired in ways that go deeper than physical exhaustion. This tiredness comes from carrying responsibilities too early, expectations too heavy, and futures that feel uncertain. A young graduate in Sri Lanka wakes up each morning scrolling job listings, wondering how long patience can last when the household depends on them. A student in South Korea studies late into the night, afraid that resting even for a moment might mean falling behind in a fiercely competitive system. A young woman in rural India quietly leaves school to support her family, her dreams paused without choice. A migrant worker in Southeast Asia works long hours in a foreign country, sending money home while carrying loneliness in silence. These are not isolated stories. They are everyday experiences for many Asian youths.

Into this shared weariness, Jesus speaks with surprising gentleness: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”¹ Jesus does not begin with commands, conditions, or spiritual pressure. He begins by noticing exhaustion. His invitation connects deeply with the AEYA–2026 theme, “Break Every Yoke,” because it recognises that many young people are already carrying yokes they did not choose. Jesus does not shame the weary; he welcomes them.

In the Bible, a yoke represents systems that control, exploit, and reduce people to tools rather than persons. Israel remembered the yoke of slavery in Egypt, and the prophets condemned yokes created by injustice, corruption, and empty religion.² God’s message was clear: faith that ignores suffering is not faithful. In Jesus’ own time, ordinary people lived under Roman occupation, heavy taxation, and social systems that protected the powerful while burdening the poor. Many felt trapped, unheard, and exhausted.

Asian youths today live under similar pressures. In Bangladesh, young garment workers labour long hours for low wages, carrying both physical

exhaustion and economic anxiety. In Myanmar, young people live with fear and uncertainty under militarisation, unsure whether education or activism will cost them their safety. Across Asia, many face unemployment, climate-related displacement, gender discrimination, digital exploitation, and growing mental health struggles. Social media intensifies comparison and self-doubt, while political and religious spaces often exclude youth voices. These are modern yokes, but they weigh just as heavily.

When Jesus offers his yoke, he offers something radically different. He does not deny suffering or promise an easy life. Instead, he offers a shared yoke. He walks alongside those who are burdened. Jesus describes himself as “gentle and humble in heart,” revealing a vision of power rooted not in domination but in compassion and closeness. God’s strength is shown not by controlling others, but by standing with those who suffer.³ For young people who have experienced authority as harsh or dismissive, this gentle Christ offers healing.

For many Asian youths, rest feels unrealistic. A migrant worker cannot simply stop working. A student facing competitive exams feels guilty for resting. A young activist fighting injustice worries that slowing down means giving up. When Jesus promises rest, he is not offering escape from reality. He offers rest that heals and strengthens—the kind of rest that restores dignity and helps people stand again. This rest quietly resists systems that treat human beings as machines valued only for productivity.⁴ In the Bible, rest is always connected to liberation. Sabbath follows freedom from slavery, reminding people that they are more than their labour. Rest grows where justice, compassion, and care are practised.⁵

When youth groups become safe spaces where struggles can be spoken without shame, when churches take mental health seriously, and when communities stand with migrants, unemployed youth, or survivors of violence, they begin to embody Christ’s rest in practical ways. These small acts matter. They slowly form communities that resist exploitation and nurture hope.⁶

Jesus also says, “Learn from me.” This learning is not about memorising doctrines, but about learning a way of life. Learning from Jesus means pausing in a culture that glorifies exhaustion and unlearning the lie that worth depends on success, income, or approval. When a young person allows themselves to rest without guilt, when a church chooses care over constant activity, or when a community protects its most vulnerable members, these become quiet but powerful acts of faith. Following the

gentle Christ does not make young people passive. It gives them the strength to resist injustice without losing their humanity. Asian youth are called not only to rest, but also to rise—with resilience, wisdom, and hope—as participants in God’s work of breaking every yoke.⁷

As we reflect together, we are invited into prayer and action. We can ask: What yokes weigh most heavily on young people in our community? Where do we see exhaustion—in ourselves, our friends, or our churches? How might Jesus’ gentleness reshape our understanding of power and leadership? What would it mean to practice rest as an act of resistance? Even one small, faithful action—listening deeply, creating safe spaces, standing in solidarity—can become part of God’s work of liberation.

Prayer

Gentle Jesus, you see our tired bodies and anxious hearts. You know the weight we carry. Teach us your way of humility and courage. Free us from every yoke that steals dignity and hope. Make us communities of rest, justice, and compassion. As we walk with you, renew our strength to love, to resist, and to serve. Amen.

1 The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version (London: HarperCollins, 1989), Matt. 11:28–30.

2 See Isa 58:6; Exod 3:7–12; Amos 5:21–24; Mic 6:6–8 (NRSV).

3 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (London: SCM Press, 1974), 276–290.

4 Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 102–115.

5 Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 203–220.

6 Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 3–19.

7 Christian Conference of Asia, *Background Note: AEYA 2026 – “Break Every Yoke”* (Chiang Mai: CCA, 2025).

IV. YOUTH, COMMUNITY, AND LIFE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Elijah's Burnout, Despair, and God's Gentle Care

Rev. Shella Gracia Vennya

1 Kings 19:1-8

1 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." 3 Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there. 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." 5 Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly, an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." 6 He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. He ate and drank and lay down again. 7 The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you." 8 He got up and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.

One of the most dangerous misconceptions held by some who profess to be religious—including Christians—is measuring the depth of one's connection with God by an unwavering resilience, as if faith means never hitting rock bottom. Many seem comfortable within this "toxic piety", where being honest about one's fragility is misinterpreted as a spiritual failure requiring repentance.

Through Elijah, the Bible contrasts this by showing that piety does not make one immune to mental and emotional exhaustion. Elijah was not a man who lacked the fear of the Lord. He boldly confronted the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel to demonstrate to all Israel that God alone is sovereign. He challenged them to summon fire from their gods, yet despite their frantic cries all day long, nothing happened. When Elijah called upon the Lord, the sacrifice was consumed by fire. God answered, and His sovereignty was made manifest. However, when Jezebel heard from her husband, Ahab, that the prophets of Baal had been killed, her fury was unleashed. She vowed to take Elijah's life. Evidently, the victory at Mount Carmel did not lead to an automatic repentance from Jezebel or those around her.

Jezebel's threat shook Elijah to his core. Overwhelmed by fear, he fled for his life. Elijah understood that Jezebel's influence was vast and her cruelty was no empty boast; she had killed the Lord's prophets before. This looming shadow took a toll on Elijah's psychological state. The prophet, who had gallantly stood as a beacon of faithfulness, now lost his courage. It was as if the memory of God's triumph at Mount Carmel had faded into the background.

Paralysed by fear and hiding in the wilderness, Elijah reached a point of total despair, even wishing for death. Rev. Joas Adiprasetya once explored this narrative, bringing the text into dialogue with our human reality. His reflection suggests that Elijah's experience of burnout and despair is a vivid mirror of our own lives. A person's life is often lived in the "in-between"—between strength and frailty, courage and fear, triumph and collapse. We face moments where we feel God's blessing and care, yet at other times, it feels as though He has turned His face away, leaving us in confusion. However, our focus should not remain on those shifting feelings, but on how we navigate every event with the conviction that God's providence remains constant.

The beauty of this text lies in how God chooses to restore Elijah as he sinks into burnout. God does not force him to appear strong, nor does He lecture him to "strengthen his faith". Beneath a broom bush in the desert, as Elijah lamented his life, God touched him through an angel who said, "Get up and eat." Elijah ate, drank, and lay down again. The scripture then testifies: "The angel of the LORD came a second time, touched him, and said, 'Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.'"

It is profoundly significant that the narrative details God feeding Elijah twice. One of the clearest signs of losing one's zest for life is the inability to perform even basic tasks. In this state of hopelessness, God used food—what Abraham Maslow calls a basic physiological need—as His medium to sustain and restore Elijah; not just physically, but mentally. From that place of care, Elijah began to gather himself once more, continuing his journey to face the mysteries of life, where he would again find wonder in ordinary, everyday events through God's gentle and calming touch.

Questions for Group Discussion

1. In your current journey or ministry, have there been moments when you felt like Elijah—desiring to "stop and give up"? What kind of "nourishment" or "gentle touch" have you experienced that allowed you to "resume your

journey” once more?

2. How well do you feel the Church provides a sanctuary for people navigating mental health challenges? Do you see it as a place of support or as one that mistakenly judges their struggle as a sign of weak faith?

Concluding Prayer

God, thank You for Your steadfast care; You accept us in our weakness and seek us out at our journey’s end. As You restore us, make us a presence for others who are navigating the shadows of their hearts. Amen.

God's Judgement Against Unjust Systems and Rulers

Dr Toar Hutagalung

Psalm 82

1 God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgement: 2 "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah 3 Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. 4 Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." 5 They have neither knowledge nor understanding; they walk around in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. 6 I say, "You are gods, children of the Most High, all of you; 7 nevertheless, you shall die like mortals and fall like any prince." 8 Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations belong to you!

Reflection A

Verse 1 says that God is in his divine council along with other gods, giving a judgement. When I read this verse many years ago, I thought the psalter somehow acknowledged that there are other gods, which is, of course, in contradiction to the Law that was given to Moses. Furthermore, to whom does God hold his judgement? To this council of gods or to human beings?

Let's pause for a moment. How do you all respond to these two questions:

1. Who are these gods?
2. To whom does God hold the judgement?

Reflection B

Responding to the second question first, I think God is giving judgement to the gods. Why? To discuss this further requires a perspective where we bring power and privilege into account. The 2002 movie *Spider-Man*, starring Tobey Maguire, has a dialogue which says, "With great power comes great responsibility." The problem is that not everyone wants to be responsible, even with great power. They may abuse their power by harassing others or simply ignoring them because they have power. Whatever they do, their power will affect the lives of others. Think of the rulers of nations with their capabilities of sending military power. We see the situation in Ukraine, Gaza, Latin America, Africa, and even in our own countries in Asia. War can happen because of military power. And it's not just military power; we can also think of other forms of power, too. It can

also be a form of economic or racial privilege.

Back to our text, I believe God holds God's judgement against gods who have the power to judge (as one form of power). There is a 2026 Korean fictional drama called *Judge Returns*, where a judge acts unjustly, but is later set up, put in jail, and then dies. Nevertheless, the story shows how he is given a second chance. He returns to his life ten years younger, and then he starts to fix all the bad things that he did in the past. He then tries to use his power and judge justly. I assume that is why the verses two to four show God's rebuke of the gods in that divine council. God admonishes these "judges" who show partiality to the wicked but do not give justice to the weak, the orphan, the lowly, the destitute, and so on. With their power, these "gods" or "judges" should have rescued and delivered them instead from the wicked.

Then who are these gods? They can be us who are given responsibility by holding certain power and privilege in life. In fact, because we are God's children, we all have something that can influence the lives of others. Look, for example, at how in September 2025, the Gen Z protesters in Nepal managed to use the power of the people and the power of a digital communication platform primarily used by the gaming community, Discord, to reform their government. We do have the power to judge. In fact, as verse six clearly says, if we don't help the needy, even as God's children, even as gods, we shall fall. The psalter seems to remind us to live and act justly for the sake of the marginalised people.

Group Discussion

Let's have another discussion in a larger circle by focusing on these questions:

1. Who would you identify as "gods" in your context?
What is their power/privilege?
2. How have they exercised their power in relation to other people?
3. If they are doing badly, why do they keep doing it?
4. What are/could be the factors that perpetuate them in doing that?
5. How should these people in power do better?

Also, ask ourselves these same questions.

Reflexive Action

One simple action is to raise our awareness. List any privileges that we might have. For example, I can get a job more easily because I have a higher degree. Then, write down one thing to help us focus on how not to take it for granted.

A broader awareness would be achieved by reflecting on how people around the world, in their own underprivileged conditions, struggle to live a just life. Find some news about the injustice that happens in a certain region. Then, write down your reflection on what you would dream of for a peaceful and just situation in that context.

Prayer

O God of the earth, raise up responsible rulers in every nation. Inspire them to act justly towards those who are marginalised in society. Grant us courage and awareness to walk together with the weak and the needy. Guide us in our lives, as we are also eager to practice kindness and justice towards others with what we have. In Jesus Christ, through the help of the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

V. DISCIPLESHIP, NEW HUMANITY, AND ECUMENICAL WITNESS

Breaking Barriers of Race, Gender, Class, and Status

Rev. Dr Farhana Anthony Nazir

Galatians 3:26–28

26 For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. 27 As many of you as were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

1. Introduction

Paul's message powerfully addressed early converts, highlighting them as the primary audience of his letter to Galatians. In Galatians 3:26–28, upon embracing the Christian faith, they are wholeheartedly welcomed into the community of God's chosen people through their faith in Christ Jesus. Historically, the Church has faced various challenges, including persecutions, socio-political limitations, theological debates, differing interpretations, and gender divisions, as well as leadership controversies. The early Christians in Galatia were divided by their religious backgrounds and theological perspectives. Yet, the path to true discipleship, embodying a compelling witness for Christ, and fostering genuine unity within the Galatian Church among Jews and Gentiles—despite their conversion—remains a critical concern that continues to echo within the South Asian Pakistani Church today.

2. Theological and Contextual Reflection

In Galatians 3:26–28, St. Paul emphasises the unifying foundation of Christian faith, stating that all believers become children of God through their faith in Christ, regardless of their religious or ethnic backgrounds (v. 26). He highlights that in Christ, believers undergo a profound transformation and share a remarkable equality, as they have “put on” Him (v. 27). Through baptism, they enter a process of integration where barriers of identity—Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female—are dismantled (v. 28). Jews can no longer cling to pride based on their heritage, nor can Greeks boast solely of their wisdom or knowledge. The divisions that once characterised the Greco-Roman world have been shattered, “breaking every yoke” and paving the way for equal respect for all, including women and slaves. God “shows no partiality,” and every believer is transformed by the outpouring of His Spirit and grace. Ultimately, this spiritual transformation highlights the new identity, new humanity, and freedom that all believers embrace within God's powerful redemptive plan.

Given the rich and complex history of the church, it is difficult to imagine that Paul was advocating for a complete transformation in the religious, gender, social, and legal realities of the early planted Church, granting all equal acceptance and respect. In the continuing Church mission, the act of leaving behind one's religious identity has remained an intricate issue, often requiring a profound journey to fully embrace and declare one's Christian faith. St. Anselm described theology as "faith seeking understanding," yet the path toward this understanding is seldom swift. It requires time, experience, and the pursuit of unseen blessings that enrich one's faith in Christ. Stephen V. Sprinkle insightfully observes, "the community of faith tries to hold strong convictions in creative tension with one another," reflecting the dynamic struggles within religious communities.¹

3. Contextual and Guiding Questions for Group Discussion

This brief Bible study presents a historical and contextual overview of the Church's mission in Pakistan, highlighting its establishment amid adversity. Historically, within the South Asian Church Mission, a significant portion of early Pakistani Christians originated from lower castes, such as the Megs, Chuhras, and Dalits, who converted to Christianity during the mission period of 1870 to 1930.² While early converts from both impoverished and higher castes, including those of Muslim background, may have genuinely sought to embrace Christ, historical records and experiences also highlight the extraordinarily challenging journey they faced in expressing their newfound Christian faith and fostering unity within the Church. Such believers were entrusted with faith and significant responsibilities, yet a critical reflection is necessary to address the current decline, division, and limitations facing the Church. What can we discern about those who succeeded and bore fruit, versus those who faltered or faded into obscurity in the Church's history in Pakistan?

4. Reflective Action Point

After reflecting on Galatians 3:26–28, we find that our faith in Jesus unites us as God's people. Let us lift our heads and renew our strength, for God's grace allows us to belong to Jesus. Together, let's bow in humble prayer and approach the Lord's Cross. This shared faith strengthens our connection and highlights our equal standing in Christ, a profound truth eloquently expressed by John Stott: "At the foot of the cross, we shrink to our true size."

1 Stephen V. Sprinkle, *Ordination: Celebrating the Gift of Ministry* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 1.

2 Churhas were considered lower-class sweepers and cleaners. It later became a derogatory word to insult Christians, and today, this term is commonly used as a title to describe Christians. Stock, *People Movements in the Punjab*, 69. Pieter Streefland, *The Sweepers of Slaterhouse, Conflict and Survival in a Karachi Neighbourhood* (Assen: The Netherlands, 1979), 7; Gordon, *Our India Mission*, 173.

The Architecture of Peace: Dismantling Walls in the Asian Context

Rev. Dr Jaisaodee Chananporn

Ephesians 2:13–22

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us, 15 abolishing the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, 16 and might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. 17 So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, 18 for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, 20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone; 21 in him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Introduction

In a world increasingly defined by borders—both physical and invisible—the letter to the Ephesians offers a radical vision of a borderless faith. Writing to a community divided by deep-seated ethnic and religious tensions between Jews and Gentiles, the author describes a cosmic “reconstruction project”. In Ephesians 2:13–22, we find the blueprint for a new humanity in which the “dividing wall” has been permanently dismantled, not by human diplomacy, but by the very person of Christ.

Contextual and Theological Reflection

The passage begins with a profound shift in spiritual geography: those who were once “far off” have been brought “near”. In the ancient world, the “dividing wall” (v. 14) referred to the soreg—the stone barrier in the Jerusalem Temple that separated Jews from Gentiles under penalty of death.

1. Christ as Our Peace

Verse 14 boldly states, “For he is our peace.” It does not say Christ negotiated peace or brought a temporary ceasefire. He is at peace. By inhabiting a human body, Christ absorbed the hostility of our divisions. In the Asian ecumenical context, peace is often misunderstood as the mere absence of conflict. However, the Pauline vision suggests that peace is a relational reality found in the “one new humanity” created through the cross. As the pioneering Asian theologian C.S. Song suggests, the cross is the place where God’s heart meets the suffering of the world, turning enmity into a shared identity.¹ Modern scholarship further emphasises that this reconciliation is a “social and political subversion” of the systems of exclusion that shape our regional landscape today.²

2. Breaking the Yoke of Exclusion

The text moves from the language of conflict to the language of belonging. We are no longer “strangers and aliens” but “citizens” and “members of the household of God” (v. 19). For young adults navigating a fragmented Asia—where migration, statelessness, and religious majoritarianism are prevalent—this is a powerful reclamation of identity.³ Our primary citizenship is not defined by the passport we carry, but by our position in this new “household” (*oikos*). This transition from “stranger” to “citizen” is the ultimate “breaking of the yoke” of systemic discrimination.⁴

3. A Living, Growing Building

Finally, the passage uses the metaphor of a building that is “growing” into a holy temple. This is not a static monument of the past; it is a living, breathing structure. Christ is the “cornerstone”—the element that determines the orientation and stability of every other stone. As we are “joined together”, we discover that our diversity is not a flaw in the design but a structural necessity. We are being built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Guiding Questions for Group Discussion

1. Identifying Walls: What are the modern “dividing walls” in your local community (e.g., denominationalism, caste, or socio-economic status) that keep people “far off” from one another?
2. The “In-Between”: The passage speaks of those who were “aliens” becoming “citizens”. How can our local churches better welcome the

marginalised who feel like “strangers” in our society?

3. The Cornerstone: If Christ is the cornerstone of our “building”, how should that change the way we approach social and political conflicts in our own countries?

4. Living Stones: Verse 22 says we are “built together”. What is one practical, collaborative action your youth group can take with people of other faiths to reflect this “new humanity”?

Reflective Action Point

Identify one “wall” you have built in your heart against someone from a different background. This week, seek to engage in a “ministry of presence” by initiating a respectful conversation with that person, acknowledging Christ as the bridge between you.

Prayer

Gracious God, who broke down the walls of hostility through the cross of Your Son, we thank You for calling us out of isolation and into Your household. Help us to be ‘living stones’ that build bridges rather than barriers. May Your Spirit dwell within us, that the world may see Your peace reflected in our unity. Amen.

¹ C.S. Song, *Third-Eye Theology: Theology in Formation in Asian Settings* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 102.

² S. Blay, Nurul Barizah, and Mas Rahmah, *The Right to Peace: ASEAN Perspectives and Prospects* (Jakarta: ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, 2025).

³ Christian Conference of Asia, ‘Country-Specific Challenges to Freedom of Religion and Minority Rights,’ *CCA Reports* (January 2026), 4.

⁴ M. G. Chunakara, ‘Break Every Yoke: Biblical Perspectives on Emerging Asian Realities,’ *Theme Paper for AEYA–2026*, Christian Conference of Asia (December 2025), 2.

VI. HOPE, NEW CREATION, AND YOUTH AS AGENTS OF TRANSFORMATION

Living with Uncertainty

Rev. Dr Seoyoung Kim

Revelation 21:1–5

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and be their God; 4 he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” 5 And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also, he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

A Brief Introduction to the Text

Revelation 21:1–5 opens with a vision of a new heaven and a new earth, and with the promise that tears will be wiped away. It can sound distant at first, almost too beautiful to be real. Yet these words were first heard by communities living under the weight of empire. Their lives were shaped by decisions they did not make and powers they could not challenge. They knew what it was like to feel small inside a vast system, to live in a world where strength determined whose lives mattered and whose were ignored.

The theme of AEYA–2026 calls us to break every yoke. A yoke is not just a private burden. It settles on people, on communities, even on the earth itself. It shapes how we live. We grow used to competition, inequality, and a way of life that wounds the earth. Revelation 21 invites us to pause and ask a question: Is this really the world God envisions for creation? Or have we learned to accept as normal what God calls “the former things”?

Contextual and Theological Reflection

1. What Is Passing Away?

Many young people across Asia live with uncertainty. Stable work is difficult to secure. Housing feels fragile. Competition shapes relationships. War, conflicts, and political tensions shape what can be safely spoken of

or hoped for. The climate shifts and extreme heat or flooding become more common. When such pressures continue for years, they begin to feel normal. We tell ourselves that this is simply how the world works. We grow used to shaping our lives around these pressures.

The Book of Revelation names this reality in a surprising way. It speaks of the “first heaven and the first earth” passing away. What feels established is not eternal. It also says that “the sea was no more.” In Scripture, the sea often represents chaos and threatening power. It is the place from which destructive forces rise. To say that the sea is no more is to imagine a future in which fear and domination no longer organise life. Creation is not discarded. What fades are the patterns that have wounded it.

2. Where God Dwells

Scripture says, “I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.” The city does not rise from the earth. It comes down. Then a voice declares, “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them.” These words recall the story of a people in the wilderness, carrying a tent in which God chose to dwell. Not above them. Not far from them. With them. In the dust, in the heat, in uncertainty.

In Revelation 21, that promise returns. God’s future is not to escape from the earth. It is a shared life. If God dwells with us, then this earth is not a temporary stage. It is the place of shared presence in the streets of our cities, in the rivers under strain and in the soil and oceans that feed us. God remains with the world God has made.

3. How Then Shall We Live?

“See, I am making all things new.” The promise is spoken in the present. God is not only preparing a distant future but is already at work. Waiting does not require stepping back from the world. It can take the shape of living in the light of a renewal that has already begun.

To break every yoke involves refusing to treat the present order as final. If God is renewing creation, our lives may begin to reflect that reality. Communities might be shaped around compassion rather than competition. Truth might be spoken where silence feels safer. The earth might be tended as a shared home rather than consumed as a resource.

Such practices may not seem dramatic. They may unfold quietly and

slowly. Yet through them, another way of inhabiting the world becomes visible. In choosing this way, waiting and hope begin to intertwine with daily life, and participation in God's ongoing work becomes more tangible.

Guiding Questions for Group Discussion

1. In your context, what feels so normal and permanent that it is difficult to imagine it ending?
2. If God dwells here with us, what does that change about how we see this world?
3. If God is already making all things new, how are you being invited to live differently, and what might this be a call from and to?

Concluding Prayer

God of all creation,
when the world feels heavy and unchanging,
remind us that the former things are passing.
Dwell with us here,
on this earth you love.
As you make all things new,
make us faithful participants in your vision.

Amen.

CONTRIBUTORS

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“The Holy Scriptures continue to motivate us to study and understand the essence of the truths revealed in the Bible. Bible studies are effective tools for deepening and enriching our understanding of biblical teachings, and essential principles and parameters need to be followed as they instruct, correct, comfort, exhort, and guide us toward transformation.

The Bible studies contained in this booklet are designed to assist those who desire to learn more about the biblical and theological foundations of the AEYA-2026 theme, ‘Break Every Yoke’ (Isaiah 58:6). They provide a brief account of each biblical context analysed in the contemporary situation which will be a helpful instrument for enabling us to draw insights from biblical and theological foundations and to engage in learning and reflecting on the theme within the contemporary context.”

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