

October Youth Bible Study Synopsis

Topic: "Natural Disasters: Part II"
Place: Bency & Benoy Thomas' residence (Rockland, NY)
Date: Friday, October 21, 2005
Time: 7:30pm

The October Youth Bible study was held on Friday, October 21, 2005 at the residence of Bency & Benoy Thomas. The topic chosen for the Bible study was a continuation of the previous Bible study topic, "Natural Disasters". The Bible study started at 7:58pm. 15 youth members from both Hudson Valley and Rockland CSI Youth Fellowships were present at the Bible study. Also present were Rev. Dr. Geomon K. George and guest Cecil Mathew bringing the total attendance to 17.

Reena Abraham led the youth with an opening prayer and we sang 7 songs before proceeding to the Bible study. Rev. Dr. Geomon K. George led the discussion by informing those present that there are no set answers to most of the questions that come up through out the night.

To open the study, Pastor George asked the first question of the night "How do we understand Natural Disasters?" and "Do we think it is punishment from God?" Geomon stated that people from all religious faiths question God when Natural Disasters happen. When asked "How do we understand Natural Disasters?" Some of the answers that came back included: "We shouldn't blame God for it, they are part of life..." And that "...God will make you stronger through it." Geomon directed us to the Book of Genesis to see the first Natural Disaster mentioned in the Bible (Noah & the Great Flood).

Another question was asked "How do we understand God in times like this?" "If our God is a loving God, how can God be impartial?" Some answers included "...God has a plan for all of us and we must have faith in God in times like this." One youth member stated that he heard of a two part theory that some state that "God is involved in every aspect of this world" and the second part of the theory says "God just sets the motion and through physics everything else happens." Geomon explained that "Science can't answer *why* Natural Disasters happened but that science can only answer *how* Natural Disasters happened."

In order to get us thinking, another question was posed to the group "What is our understanding of God in light of Natural Disasters?" Some of the answers that came back were that there are two natures of God: "Love of God" and "Wrath of God". In the Bible, it is mentioned that God made a covenant and won't punish everyone else again like with the "Great Flood" found in Genesis.

Ajo Cherian mentioned that this topic is important because a lot of world religions were formed due to a fear of Natural Disasters. (i.e. In Greek Mythology, Zeus was a God of lightning and Poseidon was a God of water.)

Geomon stated that a lot of times, people want to find out why these disasters happened. In the Bible, it says because of sin. The classic example of Gilgamesh- flooded due to immorality. We are reminded that the God of the Old Testament was a loving God and God created human beings as a "God of love". Another question that was left for us to ponder about was "How do we respond to these disasters & how do we overcome suffering?"

"What is the role of human beings in Natural Disasters?" There is no universal answer. Geomon stated that he believed that Hurricane Katrina was a wakeup call and that the US was too dominant and prideful. God has always disliked prideful people. The Tower of Babylon is a classic example of this. The people thought they could build up to the heavens and it was their prideful thinking that brought them down.

"Can we contribute to Natural Disasters?" What about Global Warming/Price of Oil? God says to take good stewardship of the resources that he has given us. Geomon asked "As Christians, do we need to rethink our lives and the decisions that we make?"

Some lessons that we can learn from this include:

- Be thankful to God for everything.
- These events teach us to make priorities in life and figure out what's important in our lives.
- That God is in control.
- That we should pray for the nations that have been affected.
- It teaches us to be humble. God is the master of control. The Bible says "Let not your hearts be troubled..." God is with us towards the end.

Our challenge as Christians is to communicate that the Love of God will be there for others in times like these.

Some practical things we as Christians can do include:

- 1) Spend more time with family
- 2) Fellowship is important (Re-examine our lives)
- 3) Praying/Reading the Bible
- 4) Pray for those people who have been affected
- 5) Utilize our professions/talents for others

A question of whether we should pray for other Christians/Non-believers was raised. It was agreed that we should pray for everyone. "How can we be a witness of the Gospel?" Reena mentioned in the book of Job, he suffered mightily. And unless you suffer, how do you know what you have? Some final questions to think about included "How do we react when Natural Disasters happen to non-believers? Does Religion play a role in Natural Disasters? and "What should the church's role be in Natural Disasters?"

Ajo Cherian closed with a word of prayer and the Bible study ended at 10pm. Dinner was served by the host family.

For His Glory,

Justin Cherian,
CSI HV Youth Secretary