

Report: Intensive Summer Independent Study (ISIS) 2016

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Since the Summer of 2012, ND-EGF has been privileged to be a part of Intensive Summer study and it has since then become a regular event and a much anticipated one.

This year, Summer study looked like it was not going to happen due to busy schedules of our mentors as well as the time constraint. However the sheer determination of our mentors saw the fruition of ISIS 2016, ie., Intensive Summer Independent Study.

The duration of this year's Summer Study was from June 18 and culminated in a 3 days half day retreat from July 15-17. We had Kanato Chophi come and inaugurate the official start of Isis on June 18 in ND-EGF group. He spoke on how in the absence of real relationships there can be no real concept of tolerance and shared to us from his personal experiences and anecdotes.

This year we had 16 participants mostly from Delhi itself but 3 members joining us as long distance participants from Hyderabad, Kolkata and Nagaland. They could not be present for the 3 days retreat in Delhi.

The three mentors who guided us throughout this Summer Study are *Samuel Vaiphei, Azhoni Krichena and Kanato Chophi*.

This year a slight change was made in the nature of the study. Unlike other years where a list of readings was distributed and taken up by the mentors, this year saw the participants choosing books from the list of books for our independent study and then presenting it in the 3 day interaction meet.

The Sessions began at 11am and lasted till 6pm with a lunch break from 2pm-3pm. The presentations by participants were taken up before lunch leaving the evening free for our Mentor to address to the participants. The first day was solely reserved for the registered members but on the Second and Third day, the evening session which began at 3pm was also kept open to members of EGF and visitors.

Day-1

Study on the Books of Acts and Galatians was taken up by Samuel Vaiphei. We looked at what the New Testament church should be like and its role as a uniting factor that transcends ethnic boundaries and embraces the other. The Church were of one heart and mind and shared everything they had and when the Grecian widows were overlooked by the Hebraic Jews, the Church responded by appointing seven wise men to oversee the matter. There was no needy persons among them thus highlighting the role of the church in taking care of each other. In the New testament Church, barriers that had hitherto existed between Jews and the Gentiles broke down. Philip went to the city of Samaria to proclaim Christ and he was also used to testify about Christ to an Ethiopian eunuch. Peter was sent to Cornelius, a Roman Centurion. God showed no favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. Therefore the division that exists among Churches on the lines of Caste, tribe ethnicities in the present day is and anomaly and reerects artificial boundaries that have already been broken down.

Regarding the book of Galatians, we see that Paul received the Gospel from Jesus Christ and that vindicates his Apostleship. We also see how God made use of a person's life opportunity from the life of Paul as he was already a learned Jew. Paul opposes Peter when he followed the Law and distances himself from the Gentiles. Jesus is the seed that was promised to Abraham and through faith in Jesus Christ, all are invited to share in the sonship. Now because God shows no partiality the church is always to have concern for the poor and non-members as well. A neighbor is someone who needs our help and it can be anybody. Power is not the individual but in the living life of the community. Freedom in Christ does not mean to live a life of self-indulgence.

Presentations

- **Midnight Furies-Nisid Hajari**

Presentors- Sunibala, Rajiandai and Yantsuthung

- **On Violence- Hannah Arendt.**

Presenter- Caroline.

- **Battles Half-Won: An improbable democracy - Ashutosh Varshney.**

Presenter- Neimei Gongmei

Evening Session: Satish Simon (from Uesi) on "Visions of Vocation"- Steven Garber.

In the book Visions of Vocations we studied about how vocations begins in Sacramental learning, i.e., a learning that is born out of love of God for the World. Our Vocation is integral, not incidental to the *missio Dei*. One's learning should teach one to see- to see ourselves implicated in history, to see that we share a common vocation to care not only for our flourishing but for the flourishing of the world. A learning that leads to Knowing should involve living out what we know - *knowing is doing*.

DAY- 2

The morning Session began with a study on the Book of Proverbs led by Priya (UESI). We looked the authorship of the books of Proverbs

- i. Solomon
- ii. Wise men
- iii. Agur son of Jakeh
- iv. King Lemuel

The contesting theories on the dates

- I. 4B.C- 350 BC or later
- II. 7B.C- 6 B.C
- III. 10B.C- 6BC

The book of Proverbs is extremely well structured and begins with how wisdom can be found in relationship with God. The areas in which the teachings of Proverbs can be applied are at - home, in friendship and the world. We talked of 22 principles that can be found in Proverbs teaching one on how to lead a productive and creative life. A productive life open doors for opportunities and laziness is the nemesis of productivity.

Proverbs offered a self-critical side of Hebrew life and it should be continued to be used as a tool for self-evaluation.

Presentations

- **Great Game East:** India, China and the struggle for Asia's most volatile frontier- Bertil Lintner
Presenter- Goutum Khwairakpam.
- **Connectography:** Mapping the future of Global Civilization- Parag Khanna
Presenter- Gaijuan Rwangmei
- **Revenge of Geography-** Robert Kaplan
Presenter- Leiyaton Chithung

Evening Session:

Simone Weil's paper "Reflections on the right use of School studies with a view to the love of God"- was taken by Samuel Vaiphei. We learnt about effective knowledge, a learning that pays attention to things that matter and it is in learning to pay attention that we begin to understand the meaning of life and learning. To pay attention is to see what matters and what does not matter, to discern rightly and to choose well. Her vision is formed by the story of the Good Samaritan, a man who learnt to see 'a neighbour' where others saw only 'a man', the Samaritan has learnt to pay attention, to understand what he sees and why it matters.

In a comparative study on the leadership of Mandela vs that of Ibobi and Phizo, we see the importance of an educated mind bent towards a lifelong learning. Very early on, Mandela learnt the importance of not being afraid of failure which involved taking risks in life, to embrace education and to strive for personal development. Progress starts with self and it starts with a sense of personal responsibility and willingness to be self-critical which is not found in many leaders.

DAY- 3

Morning Session began with a Study on the Gospel of Matthew. The book starts with the Genealogy of Jesus which is important in order to understand that Jesus is the promised Saviour from the Davidic line. The Birth of Jesus marks the end of exile. The book was written by Matthew, a tax collector who clearly understood that the call for repentance comes at a very high cost since after they repented it changed the direction of their life. Matthew chapters 5-7 contains the central message of the Gospels for Christians, setting new standard for Christians to follow. We are called to be peace makers on Earth, not peace lovers. We are also called to be the salt of the earth preventing society from decaying.

Presentations

- **True Scientist, True Faith:** RJ Berry

Presentor- Caroline Vaiphei

- **Blood Oil:** Leif Wenar

Presentor- Kuba Pgdha

- **Political Order and Political Decay:** Francis Fukuyama

Presentor- Mhadeno Jungi

Evening Session - In an introductory study on the book, "Rebuilding the Matrix- Dennis Alexander," we looked at how the faith and science interacts and the book has been marked to be taken up later in ND-EGF sessions.

In continuation to the comparative study on the leadership of Mandela, Phiso and Ibohi, we saw what marks a great leader from other leaders including having friends who help you see problems from all sides and not just sycophants. Mandela prized intelligence and loyalty in friends. For Mandela it was very important to speak in a responsible manner and he steered clear of 'blood and thunder' speeches. For him the most powerful weapon is not violence but talking to people, i.e., building relationships. One should also know when to stop and step back.

With this, we carried on the Celebration to a gala dinner where the participants were each given time for reflection.

This summer study was an exercise in learning effectively and productively, to cultivate knowing that enriches the heart and not just the mind, and to combine learning with the art of presenting effectively. We learnt that in knowing who our neighbor is, we learn to pay attention to things that matter, and develop a sense of vocation that is not self-indulgent but cares for the flourishing of the world that is our home.

The official end of Summer Study does not mark the actual end of it. Write-ups by the participants will be made available in our blog and hopefully we continue to carry forward this journey we have

embarked upon together.

The books taken up by the outstation participants which could not be presented are:

- **Eichman in Jerusalem**- Hannah Arendt
- **How much should a person consume** - Ramachandra Guha
- **Concrete Economics** - Bradford De Long
- **The Origins of Order**- Francis Fukuyama.

Note: The write ups/ journals for ISIS 2016 is posted on the
egfnorthdelhiblog.wordpress.co

Author: Samuel Vaiphei and colleagues

Date: 18 June to July 17

Event organizer: The North Delhi Evangelical Graduates Fellowship (EGF) and Inter-Collegiate Evangelical Union (ICEU)

Event topic: Foundations for Christian Leadership in a Secular World

Location: Manali Himachal Pradesh

Country: India

Participants: Recent graduates of Indian universities

Language: English