

DIDACHE: “GENERATIONS”  
Dr. Padu Meshramkar and Atul P. Meshramkar

**Question #1:** *What is your current role?*

*Padu Meshramkar*

Right now I am the local senior pastor of the Washim Church of the Nazarene. Actually, I have retired from being the India Coordinator for the Jesus Film Ministry. I served in this role for eleven years.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

How did you end up being a pastor?

*Padu Meshramkar*

I ended up being a pastor not by choice; but upon a request of the local church to be their interim pastor and to help them. I did that for couple of years, and now at the request of the church; I am doing it full time. God has been good!!!

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

Did you actively prepare in your early life for pastoral ministry or with the inclination?

*Padu Meshramkar*

I knew from the very beginning that I wanted to teach. And God made it possible for me to do that for the past 40 + Yrs. So, looking at myself with this background, I see myself as teacher with a pastoral heart. When I preach, I teach. And when I teach, I preach. This combination seems to be working. I truly believe that God had been preparing me for this pastoral ministry all through-out my life.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

My current role is that of the Country Coordinator and Director for Nazarene Compassionate Ministries in India. I have been serving in this capacity since December 2000. I fully enjoy my work and it is my passion.

*Padu Meshramkar*

I remember when you went off to the Nazarene College in Mount Vernon, Ohio, you were so determined to be a successful business-man with lots of money. What happened?

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

To answer you simply in one line: God got a hold of me in a chapel service. The background of that experience is that I had been avoiding listening to his voice—until that one day when I felt I could not run anymore.

*Question #2: Why did you choose this discipline or ministry?*

*Padu Meshramkar*

I would like to answer this first from my perspective as a teacher. I never wanted to be in the full time ministry. I had felt that (ministry) should be some thing anyone should always think of as a last option. But God was after me. It was in the second year of my college days that God got hold of me and said to me : “ I need you.” I just said “yes.” What it meant, I did not realize in the moment, but God led me one step at a time. After finishing college I went to the seminary to prepare my self for the ministry. It was at the completion of my Bachelor of Divinity that I was asked to come and teach at the Nazarene Bible Training School at Washim. I had many open doors to enter. But I wanted to be sure of God’s will. Through a friend God seemed to guide me saying “Out of all the open doors, enter which ever you feel is the most difficult door for you”.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

Was that advice helpful to you?

*Padu Meshramkar*

I did not know if that was theologically correct counsel or not, but it was given by a godly person with wisdom and counsel.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

How long did you teach at the Bible College?

*Padu Meshramkar*

For 27 Years.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

You earlier talked about “entering through the difficult door.” Was it all worth it?

*Padu Meshramkar*

During those years (1965-1992) I saw many of our young people graduate and enter the Nazarene churches as pastors, preachers, teachers, and deacons. They are now the leaders in the Nazarene churches and because of them the work is rapidly growing. So, yes it has been worth it all!!

Secondly, I want to respond from my role and ministry as a senior pastor. I do not think that I would have imagined myself as being a pastor. Now that I look back and reflect on it, it seems amazingly appropriate how God navigated me, prepared me, gave the exposure needed, the education, and wise counsel of godly people. This entire time the process of equipping me was going on—for—almost 44 yrs. All of that preparation for only one task: To be a shepherd. I think that it is the biggest responsibility that one can take on his or her shoulders.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

44 yrs is a long time....to be preparing for a role.

*Padu Meshramkar*

That is correct; however, it was not until recently that it began to dawn upon me that all this time God was preparing me to be a shepherd, when I thought that I had given him the best.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

As I was completing my degree at Mount Vernon Nazarene College (now University) and preparing to graduate, during the last final year I had a chance to attend Compassionate Ministries Regional Conference at Mount Vernon. The speakers profoundly impacted me, one of them being Dr. Robert Scott and Dr. Hermann who were there to meet with interested people. It would be improper to say that I chose “social care and concern” as my discipline. I believe that God called me into it, and I was “accepted” into the discipline. Thus began my journey of struggle and conversations with God in terms of future ministry and the role that he would guide me to do.

*Padu Meshramkar*

I think you mentioned a very important point: you were called and accepted. I would summarize and say, “God equips the called. It is amazing to see how God equipped you and me for His ministry. Atul – how were you groomed for the role that you are in today. I am sure that there was something that has been ingrained in you deeply...”

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

Yes Dad. Do you remember how I was talking in Dec 1997 about being able to come back home, and then in Feb 1998, I returned back to India? I returned sensing and confirming God's call for me to be engaged in helping the church respond to the needy and the vulnerable. It was in a Christian higher educational institution that the roots of my present ministry were woven and sown. It was the attitude of *servanthood* that was taught by the professors; not in the class but in the actions of their lives. It was the attitude of *acceptance* shown by the “faith community” of MVNC when I felt out of place; but I was loved and accepted. It was the *humility* of servant hood shown by our teachers, workers, employees, and staff. Professors had a profound impact and left a lasting impression on me. I believe that my four years at MVNC prepared me for my present discipline and ministry.

*Padu Meshramkar*

You have mentioned some excellent qualities that we as forgiven people must possess. How do you see them being used in your area of work?

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

I remember having a discussion Dr. Gustavo Crocker who at time was serving as the Nazarene Compassionate Ministries (NCM) International Director in Kansas City. It was during my visit to the head offices. We had discussions and during those times, it was said by him that we at NCM must enable and equip the church to be infused with the DNA of God's compassionate love for the needy and the vulnerable and bring hope for the hurting.” That statement has been very important reminder for me even today. And I believe that to be infused with God's compassionate love for the hurting, vulnerable, neglected, and oppressed, we need to have qualities such as *acceptance, humility and servanthood*. So did I choose this discipline? No, but God used an institution called MVNC and a “few good men” to equip me for this discipline.

Upon my return to my home in India, I felt it was necessary to be academically qualified and hence I went back to college and completed my graduate degree in Social Work.

**Question #3:** *What key contributions does your discipline or ministry offer?*

*Padu Meshramkar*

1. Emphasis on holiness preaching.
2. Encouraging young people to enter ministry
3. Ensuring the involvement of the laity in building the kingdom.
4. Faithful giving and stewardship.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

What did you mean by holiness preaching and giving?

*Padu Meshramkar*

It is not just the preaching but helping the people to understand that it is not enough to just be forgiven, rather it is also necessary to be cleansed by the incoming of the Holy Spirit. This is the core of the Wesleyan thought and holiness that I as a pastor want to and desire to share, teach and preach from the pulpit. People are hurting and hungry—and we need to share that Jesus is the answer to all these problems.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

We minister to the whole person, not just an aspect or a part of it. We exist to bring hope to the hurting world. Sometimes it is giving medicine to the sick child, at other times its helping a mother rescue her child. At other times, it is standing with someone who is facing injustice or is being oppressed. We also equip, enable and encourage the church to be extensions of God's compassion in everyday life. We strive so that a compassionate lifestyle for the people and churches becomes as simple as breathing is to us for survival. What is truly interesting is and I see a parallel with how we minister; it is in fact how I was ministered at MVNC holistically as a whole person and in fellowship with one another in the pursuit of Christ-like character.

**Question #4:** *What is the future of your discipline or ministry?*

*Padu Meshramkar*

The work of a pastor/shepherd never ends. We must continue to keep guiding, loving, and showing the way to those who seek. I as a pastor must continually share my personal experience of knowing Christ, and keep guiding our people towards the experience of receiving personal forgiveness of sins and entire sanctification.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

As long as people who are hurting exist; touching them with God's love and hope can never cease to exist. I believe, however, with so much advance taking place in the world, the fast pace of life, and "McDonaldization" of our lives—it is very important to ensure that we do not lose the personal touch. Much of our "contact" with people has become very impersonal and limited, and hence we are losing the opportunity to ministry to the whole person. What is important, however, is that in the days to come we need to be prepared to seek out people where we least

expect them to be; and be lonely, vulnerable and hurt. We need to reach out to these who are hurting

**Question #5:** *What do you see proves a challenge to Wesleyan Higher Education?*

*Padu Meshramkar*

(1) As one of the elders in the Church of the Nazarene in India, I see the challenge to reiterate the fundamental doctrinal position of John Wesley in our teaching and preaching ministries. Dr. J. B. Chapman, a great leader of the Nazarene church, was asked a question before he passed away. “Sir, do you think a day will come when the Church of the Nazarene will cease to teach and preach the old fashioned doctrine of entire sanctification?” Dr. Chapman replied, “No, but the thing I fear most is that the time will come when our people will have the theory, but not possess the experience.” The personal experience of entire sanctification is very necessary and needed for our Christian life. We must not become narrow by not sharing the need to experience personal forgiveness and entire sanctification.

(2) I also worry that we do not have a strong pulpit ministry in terms of preaching holiness and entire sanctification. The head knowledge is good and essential, but the heart must have the experience. This I believe is a matter of great concern. The possibility is that we can drift away from our doctrinal position. We may show the growth numerically, but if we lose our very reason for existence as a distinct holiness denomination then we need not worry about our theological position at all.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

I agree with you on strong pulpit ministry. I at times sense that we have good and nice messages being delivered from the pulpit, except that we have forgotten our heritage of preaching holiness the way it was practiced in the early days of our founding as a denomination.

In my response, I want to add that people want to see living, breathing example in a person’s life that has been molded, and shaped. The kind of person that people want to talk to, ask questions to, and share their dreams and hopes with. And it is in that personal sharing of hope that people connect with the other person and see Hope. I somehow feel that the “personal” touch of connecting, of sharing the personal experience of receiving grace, and of sharing dreams is also missing. Also, what is most important is that you have competent, committed and capable faculty who will emulate servanthood, humility and acceptance and help other students learn by being a “living” example. It is not only enough that we minister to the whole person, but also help him to have the experience of forgiveness that the Lord gives. What we are missing is the fact that living a forgiven life in a Christ like manner means more than just attending the church. How can we make it easier for people to understand our theology, so that they can embrace it, live it out practically and make a difference?

**Question #6:** *Where are you hopeful concerning Wesleyan Higher Education?*

*Padu Meshramkar*

There are some hopeful signs that we are seeing today. Our youth are more interested in becoming a vital part of the community of God. They are not interested in belonging to a

denomination, but to become real followers of Jesus Christ and want to get involved in God's mission.

I am confident that God will continue to move among us. I am optimistic as I remember my teaching days, and how people have embraced the theory in their practical personal experience. It is this experience that is helping them to grow day by day as the church grows.

I am sure that the small seed that is planted will result in fruit that remains!!!

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

It gives me immense hope to know that our college and faculties have the commitment and dedication that is needed and required to make a lasting impact.

**Question #7:** *Final words for future "generations?"*

*Padu Meshramkar*

1. Honor God in all that you do.
2. Concern as to how they will respond to the pressure of the world today as they grow.
3. Keep yourself pure and out of the harm's way.
4. Surrender their lives to Lord Jesus Christ. And be used of God for His glory to lead the future generation.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

Become clay in His hands. Be molded. Be filled. Overflow.