

# INFORMATION

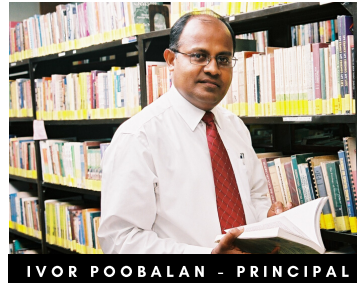
Newsletter – February 2020

## Understanding the Times

*and Knowing What to Do*

### FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Tucked away in the middle of 1 Chronicles is a remarkable comment about an otherwise little-mentioned tribe of Israel: '... from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do – 200 chiefs with all their relatives . . .' (12:32).



IVOR POOBALAN - PRINCIPAL

The nation was in transition as the despotic reign of Saul was giving way to David. From each of the tribes, large numbers in their thousands were rallying around the new king. Yet, Issachar catches the Chronicler's attention because they made a unique contribution: just 200 leaders who were astute about current realities and knew exactly how Israel should respond.

We are just weeks away from the first anniversary of the shocking Easter attacks of 2019. The painful memories and effects of that unprecedented violence against the Church are still raw and palpable. Few, though, have paused to ask the bigger question: How was it possible for extremely religious young people to even imagine that the unprovoked massacre of 257 men, women, and children would signify their great devotion to God?

Just a few weeks ago, a clergyman of a dominant religious community was filmed verbally abusing and slapping a Christian man for coming to the Eastern province to distribute gospel literature. Although at a different time in history the evidence of such a blatant act of violence and impunity would have drawn universal condemnation, not so now. The discussion on social media quickly diverted to whether it is right and permissible for Christians to share their experience of Jesus with other people. Right-wing religious groups in India are touting this infamous slapping incident as a model lesson from Sri Lanka for how Indians must respond to Christian evangelism! How are we to understand this disturbing trend in South Asia?

Australia has been on fire since September 2019. In addition to the charring of a land mass the size of Belgium or Hawaii and people dying, it is estimated that nearly one billion animals have been killed. As I write, earth's lungs are being incinerated as multiple fires rage in the Amazon and huge swathes of the tropical rain forests of Indonesia are slashed and burned: these to help bolster profits of a handful of companies growing soya bean and oil palms. How is such reckless greed even conceivable?

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What is the Christian faith? What beliefs unify all Christians across denominations? Why did the Apostles consistently speak out against 'false teachings'? How do false teachers affect the Church? These questions are by no means trivial.

The Sri Lankan Church is facing particular and, in some ways, novel challenges. The growing influence of cult-like movements and heterodox teachings on the Church, in general, alongside rapid modernisation and cultural shifts, require a coherent Christian response.

This response must be contextual, unifying, and unambiguously Christian. In other words, we must approach afresh the charge given in Jude 1:3 – 'Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people'.

'The Faith Entrusted Theology Conference' has been organised for the benefit of the Sri Lankan Church. The main goal is to explore how we understand the faith and what it means to be faithful to it. The conference is for reflective Christians, including pastors, theologians, ministry leaders, and students.

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## Negombo Awards Ceremony

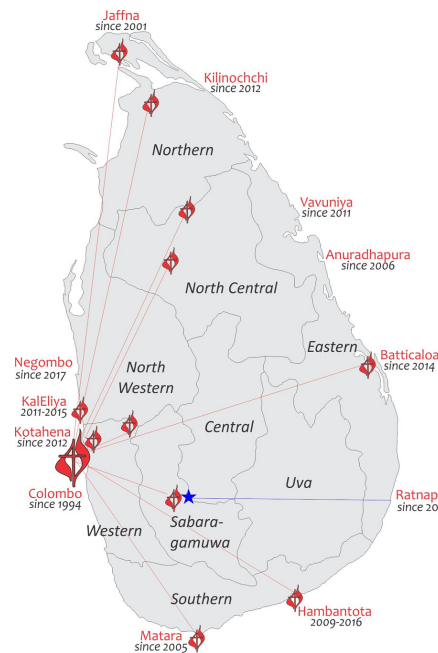
The first Awards Ceremony of the Negombo Study Centre was held on 8th February 2020, at the Kurana Methodist Church. Fourteen men and women were awarded the Certificate in Christian Studies, and a further fourteen were recognised for having completed Stage 1 of the programme.

## Understanding the Times (continued)

And, then, there is the plastic. No one saw it coming because we were busy, for years, ensuring nuclear non-proliferation. What we needed was a 'plastic non-proliferation treaty' that would have prevented us from now collectively dumping eight million tons into our oceans every year. In addition to the obvious havoc plastic pollution wreaks on the environment, there is the unquantifiable harm caused by microplastics, and now nanoplastics. A recent study concluded that by the time a person reaches seventy they would have ingested two four-foot garbage bins of micro-plastics as part of their diet.

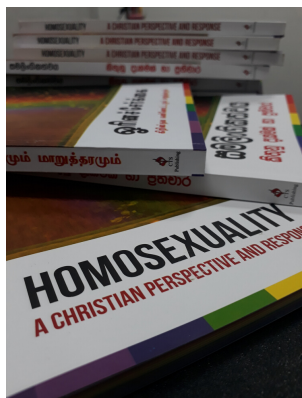
What will Christian responsibility look like? These and the other novel challenges of the twenty-first century could well be the final gasps of a world fatally wounded by human wickedness. Thank God, He has planned a 'new heavens and a new earth' when the old order passes away. In the meantime, how will the Church respond to this period of transition from the old to the new? Will she go beyond mere numbers and pray for disciples with the Issachar-spirit: leaders who understand the times and know exactly what we should be doing?

## CTS @ Ratnapura



The first CTS class in the Sabaragamuwa province was held in January 2020 at the Assembly of God Church, Ratnapura. The inaugural course, 'Discipleship', was taught by Mr Rajaram Hariharan (Extensions Manager, CTS). This study centre will be CTS' first bi-lingual Extension as it is set to offer teaching in Tamil and Sinhala.

## CTS PUBLICATIONS



## Homosexuality: A Christian Perspective and Response

| now available in three languages |

The early twenty-first century has seen a sea-change in cultural attitude to the issue of homosexuality. The purpose of this book is to enable the reader to grasp the main concerns of the subject of homosexuality, to develop Christian convictions that are biblically grounded, and to respond to the ongoing conversation with courage and compassion. The product of a series of discussions involving a diverse group of Christian leaders, this publication was facilitated by CTS at the request of senior leadership from within the broader Sri Lankan Church. First published in English, this invaluable resource is now available in Sinhala and Tamil.

THE FAITH ENTRUSTED TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD

# The Faith Entrusted THEOLOGY CONFERENCE

**February  
28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>  
2020**

Sri Lanka Foundation Institute (SLFI)  
100 Independence Square  
Colombo 7

**Keynote Speaker**  
**Dr Simon Chan, MDiv, MTh, PhD**  
Former Professor of Systematic Theology and Dean of Studies, Trinity Theological College, Singapore; Editor, Asia Journal of Theology

**Plenary Speaker**  
**Rev Asiri Perera, BTh**  
President/Bishop, Methodist Church of Sri Lanka

**Plenary Speaker**  
**Dr Ivor Poobalan, BA (Hons), MTh, PhD**  
Principal, CTS; Co-Chair, Lausanne Theology Working Group

**Plenary Speaker**  
**Rev Jeyakumar Emmanuel, MEd, MDiv**  
Senior Pastor, Powerhouse Church; Founding Member, Grace & Truth Coalition

**Workshop Facilitators**

Dr Li Szeunayak, BTh, MA, PhD  
President, Lanka Bible College and Seminary

Rev Dr Sanku De Silva, DMin  
President, Association of Christian Churches

Rev Anurath Nadesan, PhD (cant)  
Principal, Theological College of Lanka

Dr Luthi Edda, MDiv, DMin  
Senior Pastor, The Hope Centre, 402 Galle

Rev Maheshwar Manikam, BTh  
Executive Pastor, CTS

Dr Manu Emmanuel, FCCA, BTh, MA, PhD  
Head of Academic Advancement, CTS

Mr Nagesan Perumathas, BTh, MTh  
Adjunct Faculty, CTS

Mr Nathaniel Sornathas, BTh, MA  
Lecturer, CTS

Rev Ravi Ganesan, DMin, BTh, BA, MA  
Associate Dean, CTS

Mr Prabha Mithulakshari, MDiv, MEd, MA, PhD  
Senior Pastor, CTS

Van Sankar Parakkal, BTh

Rev Sean Rajagopal, BTh

Rev Dulani Fernando, BSc (Eng), BEd, MA



## Mano Emmanuel: Outgoing Academic Dean Takes on New Role

Mano joined CTS in 2001 as Accountant cum Lecturer, soon after graduating with an MA in Aspects of Biblical Interpretation from the London School of Theology. Prior to this, she had qualified in the UK as a Chartered Accountant and completed seven-years as an Audit Senior at a firm of Chartered Accountants in the UK. She took to teaching as a 'natural' and, within a short period, her giftedness and development as a lecturer saw her entrusted with the role of Academic Coordinator.



Four years on, Mano was appointed Academic Dean. One of the very few female Academic Deans in the world at the time, she distinguished herself in that role. Under Mano's care, CTS has come to be recognised as a model and innovative seminary in its ability to run over 250 courses conducted by some seventy lecturers, under five levels of programmes.

In December 2019, Mano was felicitated on the completion of her 14-years as Academic Dean at CTS. We congratulate her on her exceptional and exemplary service!

Following Mano's new appointment as Head of Academic Advancement, we ask you to join us in supporting her in prayer as she continues to teach, write, and invest in the development of CTS' academic resources.

## Saying farewell



### BAWANI PERERA

Senior Accounts Officer, Bawani Perera, completed her service at CTS at the end of 2019, as she and her husband welcomed a second son in to their family. We rejoice with them as their family grows and are grateful for Bawani's dedicated service at CTS.



### MAHINDA MUNASINGHE

Mahinda Munasinghe stepped down as a member of the full-time faculty at the end of 2019. He also served as Extensions Coordinator for the Sinhala-medium Extensions. It is a joy that Mahinda continues in his teaching role as a member of the adjunct faculty.

## Ravin Caldera: Inducted as Academic Dean



Ravin Caldera takes over the reins as Academic Dean with effect from January 2020. His induction was held on 16th January at the CTS Chapel.

Ravin is one of the few people to have witnessed the transition of the seminary from CTS' predecessor - Impetus Institute - to Colombo Theological Seminary, in 1994.

From the onset, it was clear that Ravin possessed an unusual passion for books and study. In 2003, as he prepared for graduation, Ravin was invited to join the CTS Team as a Graduate Assistant, in preparation to becoming a faculty member. A dedicated lecturer, his two years as a Master of Biblical Studies student at Dallas Theological Seminary (USA) provided Ravin with an even higher level of competence as an academic. His thirst of learning saw him enrolling at the Open University for a degree programme in Sociology, which he completed with a first class, in 2019. A person of immense versatility, teaching the full range of the theological curriculum Ravin is always involved in multiple projects such as translations, writing of manuals, drawing maps, or assisting CTS' Research Professor. In 2006, Ravin helped CTS to pioneer the Rajarata Extension, and served as its first Coordinator. His passion to create excellent systems for academic work sees Ravin use his superior ability with software to good effect.

Ravin was appointed Assistant Academic Dean in 2013 and distinguished himself in that role by providing strong support to the Academic Dean, and by being an encouraging leader to the rest of the faculty. We congratulate Ravin on his new appointment and ask for your prayers for him.



## Ramesh Schaffter Ordained to the Diaconate of the Church of Ceylon

Ramesh Schaffter (Treasurer, CTS Council) was ordained to the Diaconate of the Church of Ceylon on 21st September 2019, at the Cathedral of Christ the Living Saviour. Ramesh (2nd from right) is seen below with the Bishop of Colombo and the other Deacons. Ramesh is also the Chief Executive Officer of Janashakthi Plc, and Co-Founder of SwargaTV and Chraft.



## In Memoriam

### DR TIM BULKELY

Dr Tim Bulkely went to be with the Lord in October 2019. Tim, who was an Old Testament scholar, was a regular lecturer on the MA programme, since 2012. Our prayers are with his wife, Barbara, and their family.





# CTS PRAYER WEEK

*Touching Heaven  
Changing Earth*

It was a time of great joy and blessing as students, faculty, and staff of CTS came together in prayer from 4th to 8th November.

Praying together, hearts, minds, voices, and hands were lifted up in praise, thanksgiving, and intercession, for four specific areas: CTS; the local Church; Sri Lanka; and, the World.



## Basic Counselling Seminar *Purposeful Parenting*

A seminar to equip parents to build stronger and more peaceful relationships with their children through connection and empathy was held on 5th and 12th October at CTS. Organised in partnership with Serving In Mission Sri Lanka, the sessions were facilitated by Dileeni Abraham (MA Counselling), and Sohani Fernando (MSW, Licensed Clinical Social Worker). The topics and discussions included 'Intentional Parenting', 'Connecting for Calmer Kids', 'Positive Discipline', and 'Empowering Yourself as Parents'. The seminar concluded with a panel discussion featuring Ivor and Denisa Poobalan, Rev Dharshan Fernando, Dileeni Abraham, and Sohani Fernando.



## CTS SPORTS DAY 2019



The CTS Sports Day 2019 was another event to mark the 25th Anniversary of CTS.

Organised by a Committee of students, faculty, and administrative staff, it was held on 26th October, at the Boys' Industrial Home Grounds, Colombo 6. Almost 100 students and staff from diverse denominations joined in the fun and games. Cricket, dodgeball, tug-of-war, and relays were just some of the activities that brought team-spirit to the surface and spurred on healthy competition between four teams. This memorable event was funded by the enterprising initiatives of the organising committee.

## How to give to CTS

Contact the Resource Development Manager ([rochelle@cts.lk](mailto:rochelle@cts.lk)) for more details.

Remit your gift in any of the following ways; Cash, Cheque, Bank Transfer, Online (USD and CAD).

### CHEQUES

Address to Colombo Theological Seminary (Account Payee)  
Forward to The Principal  
Colombo Theological Seminary  
189 Dutugemnu Street, Kohuwela, Sri Lanka

### BANK TRANSFER

Bank Standard Chartered Bank  
Maya Avenue, Colombo 6, Sri Lanka  
Account Name Colombo Theological Seminary

• If you wish to make an online donation, please contact us for details + 94 11 5524257, [rochelle@cts.lk](mailto:rochelle@cts.lk)