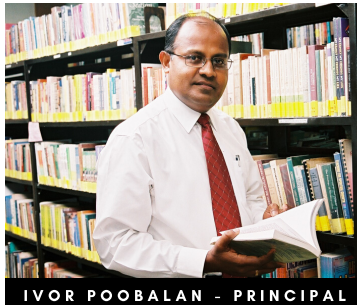


# INFORMATION

May 2020



IVOR POOBALAN - PRINCIPAL

## A Calm Confidence when Chaos Threatens

*The message of Psalm 46 in the midst of the global pandemic*

**FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK**

It is not as if the earth stopped spinning or nature's cycles ground to a halt when the pandemic hit us. On the contrary, to me, it seems the sky is more blue, the bird calls more clear, and Colombo's air has not felt purer in decades. Yet, never before since the Great Flood did humanity stop so suddenly: the wheels of commerce, the clatter of industry, and the buzz of frenetic urbanites stilled, almost instantly. No traffic to jam the highways, no luxury liners in the sea lanes, and ninety percent of commercial aircraft grounded. A meme is circulating: a picture of our planet with the caption 'Closed for Repairs'.

This surreal drama is not over. Two forces threaten to return civilisation, as we know it, to a state of chaos: the calamitous effects of the spreading virus on health and mortality rates, and the catastrophic consequences of the impending global recession on national economies.

The writer of Psalm 46 experienced something comparable. Simultaneous blows from the world of nature and from the world of international order assailed them: a devastating earthquake, on the one hand, and traumatic wars, on the other. It felt as if the very earth was 'slipping' and the immovable mountains were crashing to the sea.

For years, we had bought into myths about global superpowers and the invincibility of developed nations against any threat. Yet, the unrelenting march of a nanoscopic virus belies our empty boast. Millions are infected and thousands have died, and the most powerful nations seem, by far, the most helpless. Experts say that the global economy is in a self-induced coma, and her post-operative rehabilitation will be long and difficult.

In ancient Israel, those who sang Psalm 46 were calm and confident, like a child looking over the crashing waves from the safety of her daddy's arms. They were not afraid because 'God is our refuge and strength, and ever-present help in trouble' (v1). It was not bravado or vacuous optimism. Their confidence came from their consistent experiences of God's covenant loyalty: 'Yahweh Almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our fortress' (vv7, 11). This intimate relationship with God gave Israel a deep assurance of security and safety in confusing times.

*continued on page 2*



As the world grapples with the new realities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the big question for CTS has been: How do we continue to resource the Church so that the mission of transforming nations continues unabated in this global 'new normal'?

As far back as 2016, when CTS was working out its strategic plan for the next five years, the need to venture into online learning was identified as a top priority. In line with this, CTS had commenced the foundational work of discussing, envisioning, researching, and testing what online learning would look like at CTS. These preparations over the past few years helped CTS make the bold decision to take its courses scheduled from May to August ONLINE.

This pandemic has opened a fresh hunger in many hearts to understand, live, and share 'the faith entrusted' to us. On 25th May, CTS will take the plunge into the deep-end of online learning. We are excited by the prospect that this opens up opportunities for believers in Sri Lanka, for whom the limitations of time and travel have been barriers previously, to follow CTS courses. And, now, believers outside Sri Lanka can also be a part of the CTS learning community! CTS' online courses are being conducted in Sinhala, Tamil and English.

Please join with CTS as we journey through this largely unfamiliar territory in asking the Lord that we may, at all times, 'keep in step with the Spirit' (Gal 5:25).

## Inside:

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# The Faith Entrusted Theology Conference

28th - 29th February

The Sri Lanka Foundation Institute

Over 360 participants came together to engage in learning about, reflecting on, and discussing our responsibilities with respect to 'the faith entrusted to us'.

## Calm Confidence when Chaos Threatens(continued)

Yet, the psalmists also sensed another priority: that God was personally speaking to the nations in the midst of such chaotic events: 'Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth' (v10).

Perhaps Psalm 46 has rich applications for us as Christ-followers in the face of a protracted pandemic. The worshippers in Israel read calamity as a summons from God to pay attention, and their double calamity only intensified their resolve to turn towards Him and not away. As the fears of social and economic devastation assail us we must, like them, regain that growing confidence arising from the intimacy of our experiences with God. And, as we share in this tragedy with an increasingly bewildered world (more confused now with social and digital distancing), we may find that, through us, God is summoning the nations to pay careful attention. Let the churches obey and the nations be stilled. God has not forgotten us: it is as if Jesus is crying out again over the pounding of the Galilean waves: 'The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the Good News' (Mark 1:15).



CTS PUBLICATIONS

## Where is God in a Coronavirus World?

John C Lennox

| now available in Sinhala and Tamil |

*'We are living through a unique, era-defining period. Many of our old certainties have gone, whatever our view of the world and whatever our beliefs. The coronavirus pandemic and its effects are perplexing and unsettling for all of us. How do we begin to think it through and cope with it?'*

Oxford mathematics professor John C Lennox examines the corona virus in light of various belief systems and shows how the Christian worldview not only helps us to make sense of it but also offers us a sure and certain hope to cling to. CTS is privileged to have had the opportunity to translate and publish the Sinhala and Tamil versions of this timely book. Through the generosity of The Good Book Company, both versions are available digitally as a FREE resource. Visit CTS Publishing's facebook page for access: <https://www.facebook.com/Colombo-Theological-Seminary-Publishing>



## Exploring Pauline Theology

with  
DR JACOB CHERIAN

Fourteen students of the PGDip/MA in Theology were privileged to explore the distinctive shape of Pauline Theology with Dr Jacob Cherian. Professor of New Testament and Dean of Faculty at South Asia Bible School, (SABC Bangalore), Dr Cherian is a graduate of SABA, Regent College (Vancouver) and Princeton College (USA). His infectious passion for all things pertaining to Pauline scholarship and his engaging style of teaching inspired and challenged his students to delve deeper into the world and writings of the apostle Paul.

A hallmark of the Post-Graduate Diploma/MA programme at CTS is to provide students the opportunity to learn from internationally renowned theologians.



## The Plenary Sessions

Simon Chan, MDiv, MTh, PhD

Former Professor of Systematic Theology and Dean of Studies, Trinity Theological College, Singapore; Editor, Asia Journal of Theology

- The Word and Spirit – Spiritual Theology The interplay
- between the revelation of Scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit
- The Transmission of the Faith – A historical and theological
- development
- Heresies Old and New – Characteristics of heresies and
- heretical movements

Ivor Poobalan, BA (Hons), ThM, PhD

Principal, CTS; Co-Chair, Lausanne Theology Working Group

- The Emergence of the Deposit of Faith – A New Testament
- survey of early doctrinal development

Emmanuel Jeyakaran, BE, PGDMM

Senior Pastor, Powerhouse Church; Founding Member, Grace & Truth Coalition

- Strange Fire – The Truth unveiled in regard to novel movements and figures

Asiri Perera, BTh, MA

President/Bishop, Methodist Church of Sri Lanka

- God's Watchmen – The Pastoral Importance of Sound Doctrine



**Keynote and Plenary Speakers and some of the Workshop Facilitators Seated L-R:** Dr Ivor Poobalan, Dr Simon Chan, Rev Jeyakaran Emmanuel, Bishop Asiri Perera. **Standing L-R:** Dileeni Abraham, Nathanael Somanathan, Rev Ravin Caldera, Rev Dr Senaka De Silva, Rev Lakshman Rajapaksha, Prabo Mihindukulasuriya, Napoleon Pathmanathan, Dr Mano Emmanuel

## Some workshop facilitators in action

### Pedagogy: Christian Education



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



Dr Lal Senanayake,  
BTh, MA, PhD  
President, Lanka Bible College and Seminary



Rev Arulnathan Nadarajah,  
PhD (candidate)  
Principal, Theological College of Lanka



Mr Prabo Mihindukulasuriya,  
PgDipM (CIM), MA, PhD (candidate)  
Deputy Principal, CTS



Mr Napoleon Pathmanathan,  
BTh, MTh  
Adjunct Faculty, CTS

### Re-visiting the Biblical Doctrine of Man



Rev Dr Senaka De Silva,  
DMin  
Principal, Assemblies of God Bible College



Mr Nathanael Somanathan,  
BEng, MA  
Lecturer, CTS



Rev Maheswaran  
Manickarajah,  
BTh  
Executive Pastor, PCAG



Dr Lohan Bibile,  
MDiv, DMin  
Senior Pastor, The Hope Centre, AG Galle



Rev Ravin Caldera,  
DipAgri, BTh, BA, MA  
Academic Dean, CTS



Mr Kumar Subramaniam,  
BTh, MA  
Lecturer, CTS

### Guard Rails: Spiritual Disciplines and Community Life

### The Psychological Impact of Cult Movements



Mrs Dileeni Abraham,  
BSc, MA  
Counsellor



Rev Sean Rajapakse,  
BTh  
Associate Pastor,  
Colombo Gospel Tabernacle

### One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism



Ven Samuel Ponniah,  
BTh  
Archdeacon of Jaffna, Church of Ceylon



Rev Duleep Fernando,  
BSc (Eng), BD, ThM  
Honorary Chaplain, CTS

### The Authority of the Prophet in the New Testament and Exercising the Ministry of Prophecy in the Church Today



Pas Laxman Rajapaksha,  
BTh  
Pastor at Calvary Church

# RESPONDING TO COVID-19

As the CTS community observed the enforced 'hibernation' COVID-19 brought to a large part of our planet, it continued to find creative ways to resource the Church. Here is a selection of such resources.

## For such a time as this . . .

For these thought provoking articles written in response to COVID 19 visit

<https://ourdailybread.org/for-such-a-time-as-this-1k/>

### Rumours of a Pandemic

Ivor Poobalan

Principal, CTS

None of us likes bad news, because it makes us uncomfortable; it spoils our plans and spreads a feeling of gloom. Yet, what if the rumour is about something true? Ignorance is dangerous.

### The Post-COVID Landscape for Missions

Bishop Emeritus Dr Robert Solomon

CTS Graduation Speaker 2009

The world is being shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic. Apocalyptic scenes from around the world are being conveyed to our screens.

### Corona Virus and Psalm 91

Ajith Fernando

Founder-President, CTS

Can we quote Psalm 91 to assure ourselves that we will be freed from the Corona virus? A scriptural consideration of this issue.

### Community and Curfew

Mano Emmanuel

Head of Academic Advancement, CTS

How has social distancing rules affected you? Learn about community and Jesus.



### Lament

Speaker: Prabo Mihindukulasuriya

CTS Deputy Principal speaks on the place and importance of lament in response to suffering and COVID 19.

To watch:

<https://www.facebook.com/kmcyaf/videos/558836004747893/>



### DIGITAL THEOLOGY: A NEW FRONTIER A WEBINAR

This webinar will be of particular interest to Christian educators, pastors, ministry leaders, and theology students. It will consider the application of the Christian faith in a digital age.

#### Speaker

Dr Jonas Kurlberg  
Deputy Director,  
Centre for Digital Theology,  
Durham University;  
Former MA Coordinator,  
Colombo Theological Seminary



## Digital Theology: A New Frontier

Speaker: Jonas Kurlberg

Deputy Director, Centre for Digital Theology, Durham University; Former MA Coordinator, CTS

CTS hosted this webinar on the 18th of May. To watch, connect to <https://www.facebook.com/www.cts.lk/videos/2951818504896967/>

## COVID-19 AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

### 4 part series

1. JUDGMENT AND THE BOOK OF REVELATION
2. HOPE AND LAMENT
3. FAITH AND SCIENCE IN DIALOGUE
4. THE CHURCH'S MISSION AND A WAY FORWARD

#### PANELISTS



DR. JACOB CHERIAN  
Dean of Faculty of  
Theology at CTS &  
Co-Chair of Lankan  
Theology Research  
Group



DR. IVOR POOBALAN  
Principal at CTS &  
Co-Chair of Lankan  
Theology Research  
Group



DR. PRABO  
MIHINDUKULASURIYA  
Deputy Principal at  
CTS & Head of CTS  
Pastoral



DR. NATHANAEL  
SOMANATHAN  
Lecturer at CTS  
MODERATOR



DR. AJITH FERNANDO  
Teaching Director of  
Theology at CTS &  
Sri Lanka and Pacific  
Region



DR. MANO EMMANUEL  
Head of Academic  
Advancement &  
Senior Lecturer at  
CTS



DR. VINUTH  
RAMACHANDRAN  
JED Secretary for  
Discipline and Social  
Engagement



DR. NORMAN DE MEL  
Executive Director at  
Veritas Research

Colombo Theological Seminary  
Resources to the Church for the Transformation of Nations  
For more info visit - <https://www.facebook.com/www.cts.lk>

This 4-part series produced by CTS, and hosted by Nathanael Somanathan (Full-Time Faculty, CTS) explores Christian responses to the current pandemic. Approaching this from various angles, the series seeks to empower the Church to think biblically and theologically about the important task of preaching hope and walking in the light.

To watch all 4 parts of this exciting series tune in to the CTS FB page @www.cts.lk

## Remembering Easter 2019

Even as the world reeled as the numbers of victims of COVID-19 increased and we grappled with the realities of lockdowns, curfews, and social distancing, it was almost possible to miss the fact that April 21st marked one year since the tragedies of the Easter Bombings in Sri Lanka. Almost. But not quite.



llangaiye is a worship song in Tamil, written and produced by CTS student Beniel Walter to commemorate the Easter Tragedy of 2019. Watch this music video on [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qniVNkGF7i8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qniVNkGF7i8)

## CTS is now on Facebook

To stay up-to-date on the latest news on courses and happenings at CTS, visit our page on FB @www.cts.lk



Colombo  
Theological  
Seminary  
@www.cts.lk

## 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  
\*Contact us for more details

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