

INFORMATION

October 2021

Misreading the Scriptures and Missing Our Future

We've just been to 'Shaker Village', a heritage site a few miles from Asbury Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. Built in 1805, this 3000 acre property was once home to a community of a few hundred Christians. Today Shaker Village, with over 30 restored historic buildings, is only of interest to tourists and historians. The 'Shakers', or more accurately The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming, no longer exist.

In fact, it is estimated that in 2019 only three elderly Shakers were to be found in all of America!

The Shakers, were an offshoot of the Quakers in England, and had moved to America in the late 18th century. They were led by Ann Lee, who in 1770 had claimed to have received 'a special manifestation of Divine light'. Like the Essenes within ancient Judaism they isolated themselves from the 'sinful' outside world of people.

However, there was a deep flaw in their theological foundations. They believed (on the basis of Genesis 1:27) that God was both male and female, leading them to surmise that Jesus was only the male manifestation of Christ. Ann Lee, their leader, was the female manifestation of Christ and the 'bride prepared' for the Second Coming of Jesus! Although they showed many commendable traits like pacifism, simplicity, and moral sensibility, their lifestyle was shaped by a misreading and misapplication of the Scriptures.

**FROM
THE
PRINCIPAL'S
DESK**



They were big on prophecy and ecstatic spiritual experiences and one of their deepest convictions was that Jesus's Second Coming (to unite with Ann Lee!) would definitely happen within their lifetime. (They also held that the original sin of Adam and Eve was sex, which meant that a Shaker was by definition a celibate). Their all-important millenarian outlook (the vision on Christ's 'thousand year reign' in the future) overshadowed all other considerations and fuelled a singular focus on the Rapture.

Jesus had said, "About the day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matt 24:36), but like many over the centuries, the social upheavals of their time had made the Shakers vulnerable to apocalyptic imagination and to authority figures who seemed to speak directly from God. And so they lived out their existence 'protecting' themselves from society, and speculating about the future.

In a little over a hundred years the Shakers became unsustainable, their communities imploded, and their villages became desolate. Ironically, although they had defined themselves by convictions about

"...we must never forget that no misinterpretation of Scripture is innocuous, it can have massive consequences."

the future, the future was the very thing that eluded the Shakers.

Our world is going through unprecedented turmoil and social upheaval. With the devastating effects of the third wave of COVID-19 infections and the onset of the greatest meltdown of the Sri Lankan economy, I daresay that the engines of apocalyptic imagination are already on overdrive. This will undoubtedly give rise to bizarre theologies, and new prophets and seers will appear on social media, espousing wild speculations and timetables about the future.

All such tendencies usually begin though with a seemingly innocuous misuse of Scripture; a fanciful, interesting, populist interpretation that would fly under the radar. Yet, we must never forget that no misinterpretation of Scripture is innocuous, it can have massive consequences.



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Interdenominational | Multicultural | Multilingual | Sri Lankan

COUNCIL AND OFFICE-BEARERS 2021-2022

The Council and Office Bearers for 2021/2022 were appointed at the Annual General Meeting held May 2021. Rev Charles S Jansz will continue on as Council President, working closely with the new council members to navigate CTS through the challenging realities of COVID-19.



REV CHARLES N JANSZ
GTh, MDiv, JP (All Island)
Former President of the Christian Reformed Church Sri Lanka.
Pastor, CRC Dehiwela and Koluwela.



REV ROGER KOELMEYER
BA, MDiv
Senior Pastor,
Colombo Gospel Tabernacle.



REV DHARSHAN FERNANDO
BTh, MA
Regional Pastor,
People's Church Assembly of God.



MR RAMESH SCHAFFTER
FCMA (UK), ACIM (UK)
Group CEO, Janashakthi Plc; Chairman, Incorporated Trustees, Church of Ceylon; Co-Founder, Swarga TV and Chraft.



DR IVOR POOBALAN
BA (Hons), ThM, PhD
Principal since 1998.
Co-Chair, Theology Working Group of the Lausanne Movement. Member of the Kollupitiya Methodist Church.



REV NEROSHAN PERERA
BTh, MTD
Vice President, Assemblies of God of Ceylon; National Convenor, World Needs a Father Movement Sri Lanka.



RT REV DHILORAJ CANAGASABEY
BTh, BDiv
Bishop Emeritus, Diocese of Colombo, Church of Ceylon.



DR ROSHAN PERERA
PhD
Economist. Member of the Methodist Church Nugegoda.



MR PRASHAN DE VISSER
MA
Director of Sri Lanka Unites and Global Unites, and member of Kithu Sevana Church



MR ROSHAN H MENDIS
BTh, MDiv
Director/Head of Operations of APBAid (Asia Pacific); Member of Mount Lavinia Methodist Church



MS RUTH SURENTHIRARAJ
BA (Hons)
Lecturer, Department of English Language Teaching, University of Colombo; Deputy Chairperson, GCF/FOCUS; Member of Canaan Fellowship International

EXCITING NEW ADDITIONS TO THE CTS LIBRARY

Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture and Extended Collections on Hinduism and Buddhism

A significant extension to the special collections on Hinduism and Buddhism, as well as the entire set of the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* are now part of the CTS Library collection.



NEW TRACK! MASTER OF ARTS IN COUNSELLING

With the commencement of the inaugural MA course on the Counselling track, the new track was off to a very good start!



The inaugural course on the MA in Counselling, *Counselling Foundations*, is being taught by Dr Heather Davediuk Gingrich and Dileeni Abraham to the first batch of 30 students.

The Church and society need Christian counsellors, who are well trained and moulded in both skills and compassion, and knowledge and spiritual depth. The launch of the MA in Counselling marks another of CTS' responses to the pressing need in Sri Lanka for professionally trained Christian counsellors.

Saying Farewell

Prabodith Mihindukulasuriya



It was an evening of fond memories and joyful thanksgiving as the CTS community gathered online to appreciate and bid farewell to longstanding faculty member and Deputy Principal, Prabo.

Prabo has served as a much-loved lecturer on the full-time faculty of CTS since 2004. For a number of years before that he taught as a visiting lecturer.

He was involved in pioneering and coordinating the Extension Programme in Matara, which commenced shortly after the Tsunami of December 2004. More recently, he served as Deputy Principal and as Head of Publishing. Under his wise counsel and stewardship, CTS Publishing has grown in influence and impact. He is also the Editor of the CTS Journal. A passionate scholar and researcher, Prabo's own contributions to CTS publications are significant.

Prabo will continue his involvement in CTS as an adjunct lecturer as well as Editor of the *JCTS*. As Prabo, Dorothy, Micah and Jesse move on to foreign shores and new beginnings, we pray that their service in the Lord will reach far and wide.

Kumar Subramaniam

Kumar completed his service at CTS at the end of August. A graduate of CTS, Kumar was invited to join the CTS faculty as a Graduate Assistant, in 2010 shortly after he graduated. He subsequently went on to complete the Master of Arts in Biblical Studies at CTS.



During his tenure of just over a decade, Kumar

invested deeply in the CTS ministry, serving as Practical Ministry Training Coordinator and Spiritual Formation Coordinator. Kumar also regularly travelled to CTS' study centres in the provinces to teach the students there. His trilingual abilities have made him a key contributor in building up CTS' multilingual ethos. We wish Kumar, Pradeepika, and Jeremy God's blessings as they move into a new phase of life and ministry.

Augustin Sebestian

Augustin completed his service as Accounts Officer at CTS at the end of June. We wish Augustin all the very best with the next chapter in his journey.




Welcome Bernard Costa

Bernard Costa has joined the in-house faculty of CTS. A graduate of the COTR Theological Seminary (India) and the International Graduate School of Leadership (Philippines), Bernard formerly served as the Academic Dean of the Lanka Bible College Centre for Graduate Studies. He is passionate about building up church leadership at various levels. He worships at Calvary Church. Bernard also takes up the role of MA Programme Coordinator.



CTS PUBLICATIONS

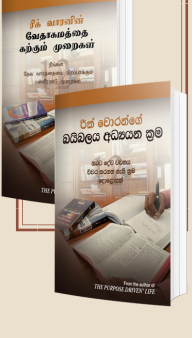
Ajith Fernando's *Sharing the Truth in Love* and Rick Warren's *Bible Study Methods* are now available in Sinhala and Tamil.



Sharing the
Truth In Love

How to Relate to
People of Other
Faiths

Ajith Fernando's
practical and
inspiring guide to
effective evangelism



BIBLE STUDY
Methods

12 Ways You Can
Unlock God's
Word

The easy-to-
understand book by
Rick Warren,
author of
Purpose Driven Life.

In Memoriam - Priya Handy

One of the first batch of BTh graduates (1997), Priya proceeded to do his MTh in Wales. He was a great help to CTS in launching its first Extension programme, in Jaffna, in 2001. Priya served as a much loved adjunct faculty member and was a mainstay of CTS' Tamil stream. Later, he served as Principal of Baldeaus Theological College (Trincomalee). Priya was deeply loved by his colleagues and students and would go to great lengths to do things for others. We thank God for Priya, who invested deeply and passionately in the Kingdom of God. Our prayers are with his family, especially his beloved wife Nimalka (who herself is an alumnae of CTS), and their daughters.



CTS IN ACTION

resourcing the Church to face the challenges of contemporary times . . .

THE ISAIAH SERIES

Three insightful webinars by internationally reputed scholars took participants on a deeper study of the book of Isaiah

UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH

Dr Lena - Sofia Tiemeyer

What is Prophetic Literature? | Theological Themes Spanning the Book of Isaiah

HOW MANY ISAIAHS WERE THERE AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Dr Richard Schultz

Assessing the Evidence for the Compositional and Thematic Unity of the Book of Isaiah

UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH 66:23

David Nekrutman

Exploring the Universal Message of Shabbath with an Orthodox Theologian



Ameer Abikaiban (in the foreground) leading a Bible Study in a believer's home

Get to Know a CTS Student Persisting with the Truth

While working in Dubai for a few years, I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour. The Scriptures I received there completely transformed me and made me want to serve the Lord. Because of that I was praying to come back to Sri Lanka and to serve the Lord. The Lord also led me to start working in my hometown in the northern province of Sri Lanka.

At the time, there were no congregations within 10 kilometres of my home. The Lord inspired me to proclaim Jesus Christ among my fellow-villagers. The Lord especially helped to lead my wife's relatives to faith.

I first came to CTS for a course on 'Christian Ethics'. It motivated me to study theology with more interest. My studies at CTS have been of great help to me in my personal life, in my challenges, and in helping me develop persistence in the truth. I truly consider it a privilege to study at CTS.

The challenges of COVID-19 have made it difficult to meet in homes. However, with my family's support, in the midst of the pandemic, I found a way to reading the Scriptures in small groups and I have been able, in this way, to share the Good News.



[Click to listen](#) ➤

A BEAUTIFUL SINHALA GOSPEL SONG OF THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S GIFT OF CREATION SUNG BY IVOR POOBALAN



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

SPIRIT AND SOUL AT CTS

These webinars focused on aspects of Christian spirituality and were led by Dr Chris Hall, Dr Simon Chan, and Drs Bob and Terri Watson.

From Loss & Mourning to RESILIENCE

RECLAIMING HOPE THROUGH SELF AND SOUL CARE PRACTICES

Drs Bob & Terri Watson

[Click to watch](#) ➤

Silence & Solitude

DR CHRISTOPHER HALL

[Click to listen](#) ➤

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

A discussion on the important ministry of the Holy Spirit in mediating Christian Spirituality.

Dr Simon Chan

How to give to CTS

Contact the Resource Development Manager (rochelle@cts.lk) for more details.

You can give in any of the following ways; Cash, Cheque, Credit Card, Bank Transfer, Online (USD and CAD).

CHEQUES

Address to Colombo Theological Seminary (Account Payee)
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189 Dutugemunu Street, Kohuwela, Sri Lanka

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