

INFORMATION

JUSTICE DELAYED

JUSTICE DENIED

FROM
THE
PRINCIPAL'S
DESK



DR IVOR POOBALAN
PRINCIPAL

Procrastination afflicts everyone sometime or the other. It is the tendency to put off for a future time, a matter that requires immediate attention. Studies show though, that about one person in every five displays an acute tendency to procrastinate. When God commanded Haggai to speak to the people of Judah that had returned from their Babylonian captivity, the prophet found an entire populace procrastinating on their most important responsibility.

After their long and despondent years in exile God had miraculously opened the way for the Judahites to go back to their homeland. He had promised that following their years of punishment, he would bring back a remnant. Ezra 1 preserves the remarkable testimony of how God moved the pagan king Cyrus to authorise, promote, and even finance the reconstruction of Solomon's Temple and reinstitute the worship of Yahweh. God was acting to set things right for the people He loved.

The Jews of the first remigration needed no further encouragement. They were a people with a mission, and they immediately got down to working on their priorities. In a matter of months an altar for sacrifices was erected, and into their second year they had reconstructed the foundations of Solomon's once-magnificent structure.

However, the Samaritans to the north of them undermined the courage and enthusiasm of the Judahite builders. The work slowed down, the people got distracted, and began to build and beautify their own homes, and they procrastinated on a God-given opportunity - for nearly sixteen years.

Haggai sees this as an injustice - but not towards other people. Rather, the singular charge that he levels is that the people of God are collectively guilty of injustice towards God:

'My house remains a ruin while each of you is busy with his own house' 1:19

The unfolding story in the book, however, is hopeful. The people of God are, thankfully, not intransigent, and so they respond positively to Haggai's hard truths and quickly recommence the work and complete the project.

We commonly think of injustice only in terms of systemic or individual acts of wrongful violence and corruption against others. Haggai shows us that injustice can also arise from a sense of misplaced priorities, procrastination and benign neglect, even when it comes to our relationship to God.

Could what happened to Judah in the sixth century BC be happening to the Sri Lankan church?

Because of hundreds of years of colonisation, churches in Sri Lanka had remained largely under the leadership of Western agencies, even after Independence in 1948. Furthermore, Christianity had been experiencing rapid decline for most of that century. The transfer of responsibility to national Christian leadership began in the 1960s, and in the next two decades there was a remarkable turnaround.

Evangelism, disciple-making, and church-planting led by bold, Spirit-led men and women brought renewal, and the Sri Lankan Church did what healthy churches do best - she began to grow again.

Then came the external challenges - accusations of unethical conversion, intimidation, litigation against Christian activities, assault, burning of Christian places of worship and martyrdom - and the glorious work of sharing the Good News slowed down in many places in the early 1990s. Churches began focusing their energies within: organising activities and programmes to motivate and build up the believers.

Now, even though the world around has changed and there are numerous new possibilities for witnessing to those who have never heard the gospel, the Church seems too 'busy' to return to its missional purpose: 'The time has not yet come' (Haggai 1:2).

Yet, carrying out Christ's Great Commission mandate to 'make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19) is the Church's *raison d'être*. To neglect this is to delay what is rightfully due to the Lord. And, as we well know, justice delayed is justice denied!



WELCOME

FAREWELL



GIHAN SAMARASINGHE
Publishing Manager



DIYAN DE SILVA
Administrator

Nirmala Fernando

Nirmala has served at CTS since 2015 and has contributed significantly to the CTS ministry, specifically in the area of Information Technology. We are grateful to the Lord for the seven years and nine months that Nirmala served at CTS, notably in stabilising the IT infrastructure and contributing significantly to CTS' speedy migration to online teaching when COVID-19 struck. We wish Nirmala God's blessings as he moves on in his career path.



Certificate in Christian Studies: Children's Ministry

Designed to equip effective Children's Ministry Workers for the Church and Society

In 2022, CTS commenced a specialised track on the Certificate in Christian Studies programme - Children's Ministry. This is CTS' very first fully online programme, and it is available in both Sinhala and Tamil mediums. It is designed to equip ministry workers with biblical foundations, psychological knowledge, social and relational insights, and practical skills that will help them minister effectively to children. They will be empowered to nurture children, supporting the development of healthy spiritual lives, wholesome self-identities, and biblically-informed worldviews. A second batch will commence the programme in May 2023.

A Visual Reminder through Local Craftsmanship



Faculty members seen with local artisan, Ajith Kumara (sixth from left) with his wooden sculpture depicting Jesus washing the feet of a disciple

Since December 2022, the CTS lobby has been graced by this eye-catching wooden sculpture. It is a constant reminder of Jesus' unforgettable enactment of our call to serve as He did. No one in history understood servanthood as Jesus did: He chose it, espoused it, and lived it.

Selfless service is an integral feature of the CTS educational ethos. This is highlighted at every Graduation Service of Thanksgiving and Commissioning, where each graduate receives a 'Graduation Towel' symbolic of the calling and character of the one who chooses to follow the way of Jesus. It is a reminder that the Passion of Jesus began with a servant's towel, and that our passion cannot be less.



AGENTS OF RESTORATION



Are you yearning to see a restored and healthy Sri Lanka?

God's Word promises that He will make all things new.

At a time that our beloved nation is yet reeling from the aftermath of economic and political turmoil, the CTS theme for 2023 is a reminder of the privilege and opportunity to be a part of a learning community that is passionate about being shaped by God's Word so that the Church can fulfil its calling to be God's agent of transformation.

Congratulations

CTS Student Sasha wins State Literary Award for BEST LITERARY WORK FOR CHILDREN

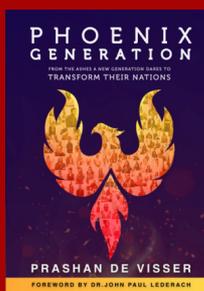


Sasha Wickremaratne Jayamaha was awarded the Best Literary Work for Children at the 2022 State Literary Awards for her book titled 'A Different Home'.

A student on CTS' MA programme, Sasha is the Managing Director of Kiribath Publishers Sri Lanka. She is also a Counsellor at ASA Wellspring, Colombo - a centre that is focused on grief counselling.

Congratulations

CTS Council Member, Prashan De Visser, launches maiden book 'Phoenix Generation'



Prashan De Visser, Founder of Sri Lanka Unites (SLU), a youth movement for hope and reconciliation, in Sri Lanka, launched *Phoenix Generation* as he stepped down from leading SLU as its President after 15 years.

He is also the Founder and President of Global Unites, an international youth movement for transforming conflict, established in 13 countries across the world.

Phoenix Generation is a culmination of 15 years of work with youth for peacebuilding in four continents. An international speaker and trainer in conflict transformation and proactive youth leadership, Prashan shares his research and findings on the impact of grassroots movements toward national and global transformation.



ATA General Assembly 2022

The Digital Turn in Theological Education: Impact, Challenges and Opportunities

Ivor Poobalan and Rajaram Hariharan (Provincial Studies Manager) participated in the triennial General Assembly of the Asia Theological Association held in Malaysia, in September 2022. The key question for the assembly was 'Shall the digital turn in theological education lead to a new kind of theological education or is it just an upgrade of the old?'

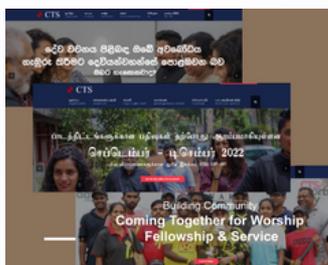
Ivor served as one of the speakers in the plenary on 'The Landscape of Witness and Discipleship in the Digital Age', which looked at how theological institutions needed to go beyond the default mode of using digital as a tool of mission to shaping a holistic theology and praxis of witness and discipleship in a digital community and age.

ICETE C-22 Global Consultation, Izmir, Türkiye

'Formal and Non-formal Theological Education: Beyond Dialogue'



Ivor Poobalan participated in C-22, the 18th Global Consultation of the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) held in Izmir, Türkiye, in November 2022. The week-long programme explored practical steps to promote collaboration among all forms of global theological education, particularly in the areas of pastoral training and leadership development. The consultation brought together over 500 participants from 80 countries representing 221 theological programmes and resource providers to engage on the theme 'Formal and Non-Formal Theological Education: Beyond Dialogue'.



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[WWW.CTS.LK](http://www.cts.lk)



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