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INFORMATION

Newsletter of the Colombo Theological Seminary

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

When God's Call is to Wait

A Reflection on Luke 2:25-35



Ivor Poobalan, PhD
PRINCIPAL

Officials at a cross-country marathon are crucial to the race. The runners may pass through gruelling terrain with no one in sight, so when they turn the corner and spot the official ahead they are rejuvenated. It is assurance to the athlete that she is on the right track, and also a means of information on the way to go. For the official, though, there is very little to do except to watch, and to wait.

For Mary's marathon as the Messiah's mother, God had appointed some race-officials to assure her and inform her. One of them was Simeon. He was deeply concerned for "the consolation of Israel" that had been denied his nation for six hundred years, ever since the Babylonians had ravaged Jerusalem. Unlike many before him, who had tried to manufacture a solution to their political ills through conspiracy or compromise, Simeon refused such presumptuous pathways. He was *righteous* and *devout* and deeply spiritual. In fact, Luke thrice mentions Simeon's spirituality: he was Spirit-endowed (v25), Spirit-instructed (v26) and Spirit-led (v27).

In our modern activism-obsessed age, Simeon's spiritual calling seems like the strangest mission: not to *do* anything but to *wait* until he saw "the Lord's Messiah". And, he had waited so long it felt like he had been shackled to this calling, like a slave to his chains (v29). Nevertheless, Simeon waited - patiently and faithfully - until the day "the parents brought in the child Jesus" (v27). Only then had the climactic moment of his special calling come: "Now O Sovereign Lord, release your slave, according to your Word, in peace, for *my eyes have seen your salvation*".

A powerful word of assurance and direction to Mary (vv34-35), and Simeon is gone from the pages of Scripture. Yet, not without leaving behind that necessary reminder that God has many callings in His great drama of salvation.

In 1755, John Wesley devised *The Covenant Service*, a liturgy for the first Sunday of every year, which enabled God's people to strengthen their discipleship by recognising and renewing their relationship with Jesus Christ. Generations of Christians to this day have been blessed through this annual re-dedication to the covenant, especially through its most famous prayer of commitment:

*"I am no longer my own but Yours.
Put me to what You will, rank me with whom You will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for You or laid aside for You,
exalted for You or brought low for You;
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to Your pleasure and disposal."*

Mary had her marathon calling to bear the Saviour and journey with him to the cross and beyond. Simeon had a different calling: to believe God's promise, and wait, so he could simply be there to speed the bearer of the Saviour on her way.

"They too serve who only stand and wait"
(John Milton)

CTS MAKES THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION MORE ACCESSIBLE TO BELIEVERS ACROSS COLOMBO

COURSES OFFERED IN ENGLISH AND SINHALA MEDIUM AT NORTH COLOMBO STUDY CENTRE FOR THE FIRST TIME



'Discipleship' - Dr Sanath Athukorala (Sinhala)

CTS reached a milestone last September as it commenced classes in English and Sinhala at the North Colombo study centre. For 13 years, CTS served the surrounding church community offering courses in the Tamil medium. The study centre was relocated and refurbished to increase capacity and provide better facilities for the students. It now serves as a trilingual study centre cum library.



'New Testament Survey' - Rev Roville Blom (English)

Situated amidst the hustle and bustle of Dam street, Pettah, the study centre, housed on the top floor of the Methodist City Mission building, is well placed for those living or passing through the area after work.

A new student, who enrolled in the inaugural English medium course, taught by Rev Roville Blom, shared that every question she had was answered thoroughly, with context and evidence, which helped her understand the Holy Bible on a much deeper level. *"Having attended countless lectures during my bachelor's and master's programmes, I had never experienced anything like this—it wasn't just another lecture; it was deeply personal and truly impactful. It stirred something within me to grow in reverence and inspired me to become a person who carries a passionate love for Christ"*.



Fellowship tea time

The Sinhala medium class on 'Discipleship' was conducted by Rev Dr Sanath Athukorala. A pastor, also a first-time student, commented: *"We were taught about discipleship clearly and systematically. We learned the importance of making disciples, who a disciple is, how to apply it to the current church context, and practically implement what we learned"*.

The North Colombo study centre also has a growing library with books in all 3 languages. Membership is open to all church members.

CTS WORLD MISSIONS PRAYER WEEK



The annual World Missions Prayer Week, in November, created opportunity for the CTS community to learn about and pray for unreached people groups and difficulties faced by our Christian brothers and sisters around the world. A highlight was the prayer walk organised by the students. Along with members of faculty and staff, they walked through the neighbourhood of the main campus, praying for open doors and open hearts for the gospel. This was followed by a time of joyful fellowship with a meal of chicken kottu!

FOR PRAYER....

Students: For students working towards graduating in 2027, that God will enable them to complete the necessary classes and practicum and engage wholeheartedly in their research papers.

New Students: That they will have a lifechanging experience and develop a passion to continue studying the Word of God systematically.

The Sri Lankan Church: For unity and revival within the Church. That God will raise Godfearing mature leaders to shepherd His people.

FACULTY NEWS

REPRESENTING SRI LANKA IN THE GLOBAL CHURCH



Dr Mano Emmanuel attended the 6th World Conference of the **World Council of Churches on Faith and Order**, which was held at the St Bishoy Monastery at Wadi El Natrun, near Alexandria in Egypt in October 2025 on the theme “Where now for visible unity?”

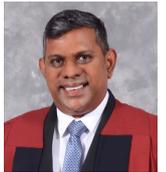
She spoke at a plenary on the final day of the gathering along with theologians from different regions and contexts, on the topic of “Living Visible Unity.”



Dr Ivor Poobalan attended the **Asia Theological Association's triennial general assembly** in August 2025. It was held in Taipei under the theme, “Christ-like Leadership Formation for our Turbulent World”.



Rev Ravin Caldera, Academic Dean attended the **World Communion of Reformed Churches, 27th General Council**, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The gathering was held in October under the theme “Persevere in your witness”.



Nathanael Somanathan participated in the **Lausanne Orthodox Initiative** held at the Logos Papal Center in Egypt in November 2025.



He was invited to present at a session on “New ways of engaging with the Nicene Creed by South Asian evangelicals and Pentecostals”. Beyond the warm and refreshing ecumenical encounter between Orthodox Christians and evangelicals at the consultation, he speaks of the profound experience of being in the land of Coptic spirituality.



Dr Sanath Athukorala participated in the **World Evangelical Alliance General Assembly** held in South Korea in October 2025. This event brought together evangelical leaders, national alliance representatives, and partners from across the globe to unite under the theme: “The Gospel for Everyone by 2033”



CONGRATULATIONS!

Prof Anbahan Ariadurai Awarded the AAOU Meritorious Service Award 2025



Council Member, Prof Anbahan Ariadurai was awarded the AAOU Meritorious Service Award 2025 by the Asia Association of Open Universities. This prestigious award, presented to one individual each year since 1997, recognises outstanding contributions and dedicated service to the advancement of Open and Distance Education. Prof Anbahan is the first from Sri Lanka and the Open University of Sri Lanka to receive this award in its 29-year history.

Godfrey Yogarajah Appointed Chair of WEA International Council

Mr Godfrey Yogarajah, a Founding Council Member of CTS, was appointed Chair of the World Evangelical Alliance International Council, at its General Assembly in Seoul, Korea in October 2025.

Mr Yogarajah also serves as Chair of the Asia Evangelical Alliance and CEO of the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka.



VISITING LECTURERS AT CTS CAPITAL

DR TABEA BINDER



Ezra-Nehemiah-Esther - how these leaders kept courage and hope in challenging times.

Isaiah - Studying the historical background, authorship, critical issues, and message of Isaiah with applications for today.

Developing the Christian educator - An MA course helping students gain core educational and leadership competencies.

DR HAVILAH DHARAMRAJ



'1 and 2 Kings'

MA students had the opportunity to understand God and His world through His interaction with His people, the Israelites, and through this, learn how we may be faithful followers of Jesus.

DR DAVID C GOODWIN



'Introduction to Human Development'

Students engaged in learning about how developmental stages impact spiritual growth and how to effectively support individuals in their personal and faith journeys.

Restoring Hope

Practical insights | Encouragement | Biblical truth.

CTS produced a special series of interviews on restoring hope. The videos feature a faculty member and alumni in discussion on how to restore hope through understanding personality types, developing healthier relationships, and understanding the impact of trauma and how we can heal from it.

Click here to watch on



TRANSFORMED LEADERS TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES.

Would you join CTS in forming Christlike leaders
in Sri Lanka?

HERE ARE SOME EXCITING REPORTS FROM CTS STUDENTS AROUND THE ISLAND



WESTERN PROVINCE
Content Writer by Profession,
Counsellor-in-training

Everything I have learnt has not only given me an incredible foundation for working with people professionally but has also transformed me personally to be a better friend, mentor, wife, and daughter as I have learnt to listen and empathise better in all my relationships. I only wish I had learnt these skills much earlier in life!



NORTHERN PROVINCE
Hair dresser by profession,
and ministering in pastoral and
prison contexts

My CTS journey was transformative. It didn't just deepen my biblical knowledge; it opened my spiritual eyes. I learned to properly meditate on, research, and preach the Bible, moving beyond my previous experience-based sermons. These studies greatly enhanced my personal growth and ministry effectiveness.



SOUTHERN PROVINCE
Pastor

After suffering from epilepsy for 17 years, I stopped taking the two medications I used morning and evening. In the same year, I dedicated myself to serve God. Later I received the opportunity to study at CTS. Although I had to study amidst many obstacles and difficulties, that period was a golden chapter in my life. God was gracious to me.

NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE
Magazine Editor by profession,
and ministering to Youth

I serve among today's youth who are not quick to accept God or the Word of God. They are often skeptical and more inclined to ask questions. I have been able to give clear answers to them without hesitation because of my education at CTS.



EASTERN PROVINCE
Sunday School Teacher and Pastoral
Ministry worker

Every lesson has revolutionised my personal life. CTS courses are helping me to perform better in the ministry that I have undertaken. I find the teachers' personal stories comforting me and they have helped me live meaningfully. Even now we are undergoing some issues but the lessons learned from CTS are helping me have courage to overcome all these issues.

The majority of CTS students would not be able to engage in theological education if not for scholarship support. The generous giving of believers from Sri Lanka and around the world has sustained this scheme which makes theological education financially possible.

**YOUR MONTHLY GIFT OF RS 5,000 (USD 17) OR MORE,
TO THE CTS SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME WILL HELP CTS CONTINUE
TO EQUIP BELIEVERS FOR EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN SERVICE.**

How to give

- **Bank transfer and Foreign Remittance (USD and CAD)**
Talk to us for more details!
- **Cheque**

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