

OCTOBER 2026

INFORMATION

Newsletter of the Colombo Theological Seminary

Small People, Small Things, and Small Beginnings

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK



Nathanael Somanathan, PhD

As a Majority World institution, we at CTS are often confronted by the tension between dreaming big and the very real limitations that can make those dreams difficult to accomplish. These limitations may be resources, time, personnel, infrastructure, technology, or any number of other things. But we have also realised that, if we are not careful, these realities can lead us into either defeatism or covetousness.

The method we see God using throughout Scripture to carry out His great plan of redemption—the missio Dei—is not always from the centre. It does not always begin with kings and rulers, those of high status, unlimited resources, or political power. Instead, a recurring pattern emerges: God uses small people, small things, and small beginnings to accomplish His great purposes.

Small People

We can easily get caught in a cycle of “what ifs”. What if we had the resources our friends in the Western world have? What if our services were more efficient, and we did not have to wait so long for every little approval? What if we could purchase the best technology for our classrooms? What if we had more people, more space, more money, more time?

The list goes on.

Yet, at some point—and perhaps at many points—we have had to pause and preach to ourselves: the mission of God, and the mission of CTS, is not defined by the limitations of our context but by the possibilities those limitations create for us to experience the very real power of God.

Think about the people of Israel.

God reminds Israel in Deuteronomy 7:7–9 of the reason for their election:

“The LORD did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.”

Israel's significance did not come from being large, strong, or powerful. In fact, God explicitly reminds them that they were small. Their identity and calling rested not on their own greatness but on the character and faithfulness of the God who had chosen them.

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CTS GENEROSITY MONTH 2026

The month of October has been dedicated to encourage generosity among the CTS community.

WILL YOU JOIN CTS IN THE URGENT WORK OF FORMING CHRISTLIKE LEADERS ALL OVER SRI LANKA?

PRAY. INVITE. GIVE.

Refer page 4 to see payment details and specific needs of CTS

World Missions Prayer Week



2nd - 6th November 2026

Concluding with Big Chapel

INAUGURAL 'HUMAN LIBRARY' AT CTS



For the first time, students were able to borrow a “human book” from the CTS Library. Borrowers were able to engage with the ‘books’ by listening to individuals sharing their stories and experiences, ranging from forgiveness, death, evangelism, marriage, intrusive thoughts, church and media, youth, and to dig deeper by asking questions. This special initiative held earlier this year caused much excitement in the community and more sessions are expected in the coming months.



FACULTY NEWS

FAREWELL AND APPRECIATION: DR KUMAR AND DILEENI ABRAHAM



An evening of appreciation and farewell was held in June for Dr Kumar and Dileeni Abraham as they moved on to their next chapter in Australia, after 15 years of service in Sri Lanka. In the early stages, Dr Kumar served on CTS’ full-time faculty, and then went on to serve as an Adjunct faculty member as he gave himself more fully to the ministry of evangelism. Dileeni has worked passionately to nurture the counselling programmes at CTS and has served as a teacher, coordinator, counsellor and mentor. They will be deeply missed!

SEMINAR: THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE



Rev Devsiri Peiris, Chairperson of Scripture Union Sri Lanka, along with the SUSL team, conducted a seminar on “The Importance of Engaging with Scripture” They shared the mission of the Scripture Union ministry and the importance of leading children and youth to engage with the holy scriptures daily through devotions, in schools, camps, and other church activities. The students were also invited to brainstorm and present creative ways of scripture engagement as outreach projects in their own settings.

VISITING LECTURERS AT CTS CAPITAL



Stephen Bailey, PhD

Associate Professor of Mission and Development Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary was the speaker at the end-of-term communion service in July. He taught the MA course on World Religions during his time at CTS.



Mandy Kellums Baraka, PhD

Associate Professor in the Clinical Mental Health Counselling Programme at the School of Psychology, Counselling, and Family Therapy at Wheaton College (USA) taught an MA course on Counselling Theories and Techniques.

COUNCIL AND OFFICE BEARERS 2026-2027

The Council and Office Bearers for 2026/2027 were appointed at the Annual General Meeting held in September 2026.

Please uphold the CTS Council as they guide CTS to stay on course with her mission while navigating through the challenging economic and political realities confronting the Sri Lankan Church.

CHAIRPERSON



Rt Rev Dhiloraj Canagasabay
BTh, BD
Bishop Emeritus of Colombo, Diocese of Colombo - Church of Ceylon.

VICE CHAIRPERSON



Rev Romesh Bulathsinghala
MD, MA
National Leader, Foursquare Gospel Church National Board | Senior Pastor and Supervisor of Living Way Church, Colombo 3 | A medical doctor by profession.

SECRETARY



Ms Ruth Surenthiraraj
BA (Hons)
Lecturer, Department of English Language Teaching, University of Colombo | Deputy Chairperson, FOCUS Council.

TREASURER



Mr Prashan de Mel
Finance professional.

PRINCIPAL



Dr Nathanael Somanathan
PhD



Mr Roshan H Mendis
BTh, MDiv
Humanitarian/ Development Practitioner.



Prof S Anbaban Ariadurai
BE, PhD
Senior Professor, and Immediate Past Vice Chancellor, Open University of Sri Lanka.



Rev Dr Lohan Bibile
MDiv, DMin
Senior Pastor, Calvary Center AG.



Rev Stanley Nelson
BTh, MMin
Collegiate Minister and Former President, Christian Reformed Church of Sri Lanka | Former President, National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka



Ms Deepika Fernando
BTh
Pastor - Children's Ministries, and Project Head - Kidz Klubz, People's Church Assembly of God.



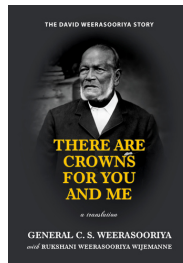
Ms Dayanthi Samaranayake
Attorney-at-Law & Notary Public, MBA
Specialist in Real Estate Law | Personal Mentor.

SPECIAL VISITS



David Brown (2nd row, 4th from left) Chairman of Local Leaders International visited CTS in August. With him are members of the CTS Council, and staff.

CTS PUBLICATIONS



BOOK RELEASE: THERE ARE CROWNS FOR YOU AND ME

Set in the 1800s in the deep south of British Ceylon, *There Are Crowns for You and Me* is the first-hand account of Don David de Silva Weerasooriya, an arachchirala from a prominent Buddhist family, whose conversion to Christianity sparked controversy and courage in equal measure. This book is a translation of the original Sinhala biography published in 1959. The English translation is by his great-grandson General C S Weerasooriya, and his great-great-granddaughter Rukshani Weerasooriya Wijemanne. (Available at the CTS Bookstore in Kohuwela)

CTS IN ACTION

DR MANO EMMANUEL AS EXPOSITOR AT 9TH GEORGE GOOD MEMORIAL BIBLE EXPOSITIONS

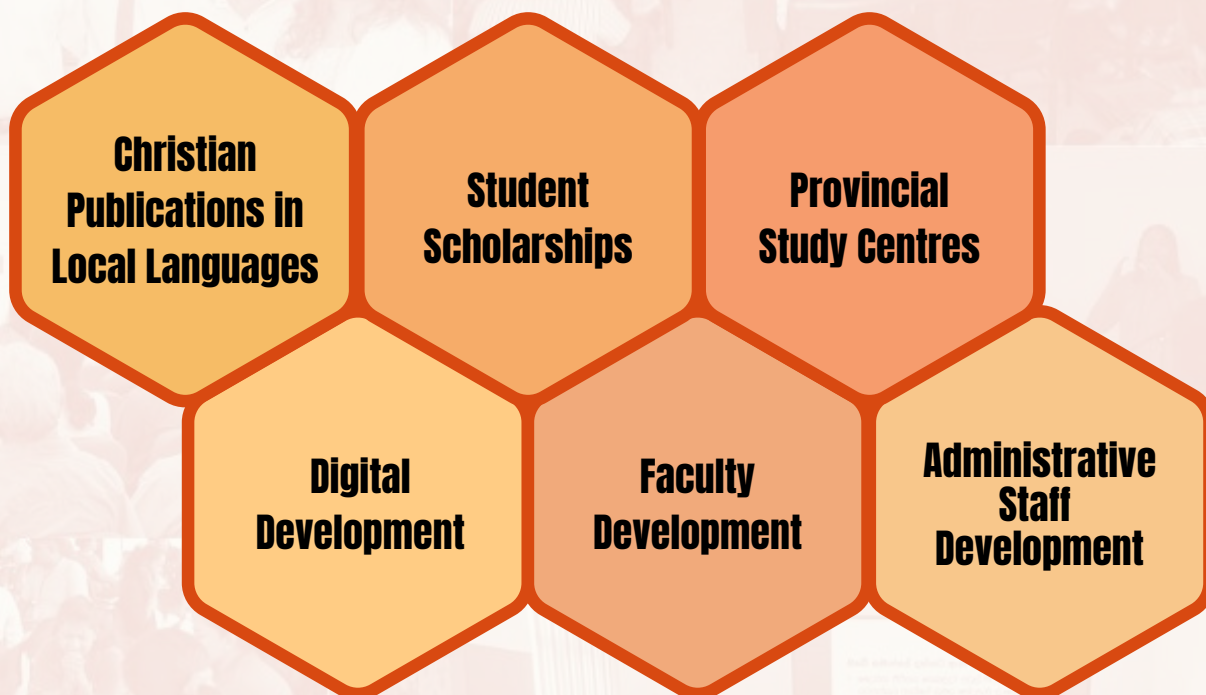
Dr Mano Emmanuel, Lecturer, and Head of Academic Advancement was the expositor at the annual George Good Memorial Bible Expositions hosted by the Kollupitiya Methodist Church. The exposition was delivered over 3 days on the theme, 'The Heart of the Matter' and explored the stories of Hannah, Jonathan, King Saul, and David in the book of 1 Samuel.



CTS is called by God to serve the Church
by training men and women to be rooted in the Scriptures,
filled with the Holy Spirit, mature in Christian character,
and competent in ministry, according to the highest academic standards
and by producing quality Christian resources.

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For more details, contact the Resource Development Manager, Rochelle Hakel-Ranasinghe
+94 77 350 2930 | rochelle@cts.lk





Small People, Small Things, and Small Beginnings

Being a small people is a good thing in God's economy. Not because God is self-serving or egotistical, but because human glory is inadequate and vain while God's glory is good and redemptive. Israel's smallness was not an obstacle to God's purposes. It became the context in which God's faithfulness could be seen.

Israel is not the only biblical example. Christ Himself enters the world with a humble human identity. It is not accidental that the saviour of the world was born to a peasant mother and father, in a lowly barn. There is something scandalous to the world about this counterintuitive method of God carrying out His purposes.

Paul is unapologetically direct about this in 1 Corinthians 1:27-29:

"God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him."

We must also remember that there is a smallness that is simply allotted to us by the conditions into which we are born or the circumstances into which life thrusts us. But there is another kind of smallness that we must also intentionally embrace: the humility of making ourselves low when we become great, popular, or influential in the eyes of others.

We are in the business of John the Baptist:

"He must become greater; I must become less."
—John 3:30

*There is a beautiful old poem that captures this:
Where is the lore John Baptist taught,
The soul unswerving and the fearless tongue?
The much-enduring wisdom, sought
By lonely prayer the haunted rocks among?*

*Who counts it gain
His light should wane,
So the whole world to Jesus throng?*

To become smaller is not to think less of ourselves, but to think of ourselves less so that Christ, the desire of all nations, might shine forth.

Small Things

But God not only uses small people. **He uses small things.**

Scripture is filled with seemingly ordinary and insignificant things through which God accomplishes extraordinary purposes: a shepherd's staff, a jawbone, a little oil, five loaves and two fish, and ultimately a wooden cross.

Again and again, God takes what appears inadequate and makes it a sacrament of His presence and a symbol of His power. Think about God's simple question to Moses which is remarkably ordinary:

"What is that in your hand?"
—Exodus 4:2

Moses' answer was not something impressive. It was simply a staff. And yet, that ordinary staff became an instrument through which God demonstrated His power.

This is something that we at CTS have had to consider. We can spend so much time looking at what we *do not* have that we fail to ask what God has already placed in our hands. What is in our hands?

- A classroom.
- A lecturer.
- A student.
- A book.
- A conversation.
- A computer.
- A small gathering of people.
- A theological idea.
- A persistent prayer.

Small Beginnings

Finally, God's method of mission never despises small beginnings.

In Zechariah 4, we encounter a broken and disappointed people struggling to imagine the rebuilding of the temple. The task before them was enormous, while their resources seemed painfully inadequate.

It is a picture many of us know well: **big dreams, a great task, and a small, limping beginning.**

But God tells Zerubbabel that the temple will be completed. To the sceptics who would question such a possibility, God asks:

"Who dares despise the day of small things?"
—Zechariah 4:10

And yet one of the great declarations of Scripture come a few verses earlier:

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the LORD Almighty.
—Zechariah 4:6

That's it right there. There's the answer to our timidity and fears. Not by my power, but by the Spirit. What an encouragement! Small beginnings are not an embarrassment to God. **They are the workstations in which God's great projects are catalysed.**

Perhaps the questions we need to ask ourselves are these:

- **Are we ashamed? – Small People**
- **What is in your hand? – Small Things**
- **Why the delay? – Small Beginnings**

The reality of being **small people, with small things, and initiating small beginnings** is something we encounter every day at CTS. However, no longer as complaints and reasons for discouragement, but as the formative context in which we seek to see the power of the Holy Spirit and learn to boast in Christ alone!