

The Herald

· OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF SRI LANKA ·



Public Profession of Faith - Wolvendal - Good Friday 7th April 2023

**"ENCOURAGEMENT - A MISSING INGREDIENT !" - SEE INSIDE
ALSO INSIDE - "THE POWER FOR MARRIAGE"**



HONKING the Barnabas way !!

One of the greatest tragedies of our times is that there are so few kind people around! There are plenty of mean spirited, critical, cynical people but there are so few who just take the time to be kind as a life style. Yet that is our challenge as the Lord's people.

If we are honest, all of us are at times opinionated, self centered, rude and sometimes even mean in our dealings with others. This ought not to be. The Lord would have us practice a ministry of encouragement and become sons and daughters of encouragement, as we walk through this world. This need is so vital that we decided to make this the theme of this issue of "The Herald".

Bruce Larson in his book "Wind and Fire" talks about some interesting facts about Sand Hill cranes. It is said that these large birds who fly great distances across continents, in a V formation like geese have three remarkable qualities. Firstly, they rotate leadership. No one bird stays in front all the time. Secondly, they choose leaders who can handle turbulence. Thirdly, all during the time one bird is leading, **the rest are honking their affirmations.** This certainly is not a bad model for the church! We should all be honking our encouragement to each other – instead of honking what is mean, critical and negative.

There are many encouragers in the New Testament Church. However, one character stands out. That man is Joses or Joseph. We may not recognize him by that name though! Because He helped and encouraged people so much, he was given a new name by the Apostles and that name was Barnabas – which means "son of encouragement."

Looking at his life there are some truths that stand out to illustrate what every "son and daughter of encouragement" can and should do when it comes especially to the body life of the church.

Firstly, an encourager seeks opportunities to help with physical needs. The early Church in Jerusalem had many poor people and those in need due to many reasons. Barnabas responded by selling his property on his native island of Cyprus and bringing the proceeds to the Apostles to be used for the poor. (Acts 4:37). It was encouragement that went beyond cheap talk. Maybe the Lord will not call us to sell our properties but the call to meet the needs of the marginalized is a call to put our money where our mouth is!

Secondly, an encourager welcomes new people into the Church. Picture the reaction of people to Paul's conversion. The situation

Vol CXI Nos.04,05,06

April - May - June

2023

The Herald

Official Organ of the
Christian Reformed Church
of Sri Lanka.

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ANNUAL Subscription

Local - Rs. 250/-

Overseas - U.S. \$ 10/-

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(Profession of Faith Candidates
at Wolvendhal. Pics by Shane
Dirckze).

was touchy. Paul was rejected by all and accepted by none. It was Barnabas who cleared the way. (Acts 9: 27). Not only did he reach out to Paul, but he was among the first to accept the new Gentile believers. (Acts 11: 23/24).

Thirdly, an encourager involves others in the work of the Lord. We see this in the way Barnabas enlisted Paul in his work. The work grew in Antioch and needed teachers and preachers. Barnabas went to Tarsus, found Paul and brought him to Antioch. (Acts 11: 25). It was because of Barnabas that Paul began his great missionary work the Lord had called him to do.

Fourthly, encouragers work to keep people in the Church. When Barnabas and Paul set out on their first missionary journey, they took John Mark with them as their helper. For whatever reason Mark left them before their work was done and the journey over. On their next Missionary journey there was strong disagreement over taking Mark with them. Barnabas took the position that he wanted to give Mark a second chance and encourage him. The disagreement was so pronounced that Paul and Barnabas parted ways but later Paul regretted his error when he wrote to Timothy (2 Tim 4:11).

Coming to think of it, what an investment in encouragement Barnabas made as an encourager. He never wrote a book that found its way into the Bible, but he encouraged two men who wrote more than half of the New Testament!

As far as the Church goes there are many who need a word of encouragement....the **distressed** (of all kinds)...the **dedicated workers** (who give of their time, resources and gifts)...the **new believers** (including our young people who have made Profession of faith)...the **uninvolved** (who basically are 80 percent of any congregation!) We need to look around. We need to open our eyes. This goes for everyone but particularly also to those who are in leadership roles. When did we last speak a good word to any of those in the groups that have been mentioned? When was our last act of kindness? Or the better question may be, when was the last time we were mean, critical, opinionated, tearing down and not lifting up?

As someone said, we may have the best facilities, worship programs, music etc, but if any one leaves the church without feeling welcomed we have failed! We need to honk more affirmations to one another – just like those Sand Hill Cranes – and stop honking the crap that spews out when we decide to open our mouths!



By Pastor Dhanaraj Ajendran

Encouragement – a missing ingredient !

It feels so encouraging to write a meditation in keeping with the theme for this issue of “The Herald,” – “ sons and daughters of encouragement”. For the world we live is full of negative vibes and filled with disheartening spirits. Everywhere people experience evil and that evil leads people to lose hope and are dejected and distressed - their belief, education, knowledge, experience, wealth and health doesn't fulfill the real vacuum and fear of future. These hopeless people desperately need positive vibes and encouragement in their lives and faith.

We who are God's people also need encouragement at times of distress and need the fellowship and friendship of inspiring people. The fact that we are children of God does not alienate us from discouragement, but the comfort is that we know and have more than enough help from God to deliver us from every fiery dart of the enemy, and to keep us in the faith till His glorious appearing (Jude 24-25).

Along with this hope, we are called by our Lord to be his light and salt in this dark and sinful world and in turn called to bless and be encouragers. As Paul says we are Ambassadors of Christ and are given the task of reconciliation and hope (2Cor5:20). The Biblical idea of encouragement is not simply complementing someone's achievement or a haircut. But this encouragement is about sharing the living hope that will lift a person's heart toward the Lord. It points out evidences of irresistible grace in another's life to help them see that God is comforting them. It points a person to Christ's promises that assures them that all they face is under His control. Remember God kept you in this world at this time to be His channel and an encourager in this broken world to broken people.

(Pastor Ajendran, presently pastors the CRC congregation in Hatton.)



Sons and Daughters of Encouragement

By Shane Dirckze

We live in a day and age where we hear many stories of discouragement rather than words of encouragement.

Sometimes it has been due to over protectiveness of parents and loved ones around us. But some instances have been due to ulterior motives such as jealousy of certain individuals for not wanting someone to do better than themselves.

Therefore, let us be the change agents in making the transition as believers in Christ to be sons and daughters of encouragement.

Encouragement **re-reinforces confidence and hope in a human being**, which originates from the inner circle of associates as they are the ones who communicate with you the most.

At the same time, overprotective parents can make a big blunder by infusing fear into their own children when it's by nature that children want to try out something new during their growing years.

No doubt, **if the act is out of line**, it should be discouraged and disciplined in accordance to the attempted offence, but very often, parents and even CHURCH (Community of believers) tend to do so, which bring about discouragement and destroys the creativity, adventure, and courage of any individual who is trying to do something different.

For example, when a child is learning to ride his/her bicycle for the first time, which will develop his/her motorable skills, a parent or someone within the circle may say, **“Be careful you may fall”** rather than guiding the child prior, with the pros and cons of the act to be ventured out into with the intended safety precautions to enhance the confidence of the child's new adventure as physical exercise need to be encouraged.

If this encouragement begins within the family circle at an early stage in life, such sons and daughters would reach great heights for God and man.

They become confident in their decision making and always aim for success by mitigating calculated risks.

Joseph the son of Jacob is a classic example of two extremes as a son of encouragement who was loved by his father but hated by his siblings. The calamity of Joseph led him to govern with Godly wisdom to the extent of Egypt being self-sufficient in food during a prolonged period of famine in that entire region.

Sons and daughters of encouragement do have a vital character of a forgiving spirits even against intended evil experienced by their own siblings as they do have the God given courage to overcome hate through the empowering of the Holy Spirit knowing that God orchestrates all things for the good of His children.

Success is not final, and failure is not fatal as courage to continue, with JESUS is what counts.

Encouragers will continue to encourage even though they remain in difficult circumstances as they are aware of the value it brings upon another soul. For example, Paul wrote Scripture while he was in a dungeon. What an encourager which is been spoken of even today.

We also need to realize that Jesus came to liberate the imperfect, therefore encourages will help to uplift/develop another who struggles through life.

People may falter, but encouragers will help to handle the fault by being a part of the solution rather than aggravating the problem.

Encourage people to share their resources sacrificially whether it may be time for patient listening, money or any other valuable gift which should become a habit when practiced.

This is true love in action which Jesus demonstrated while He lived upon the face of this earth. Therefore, believers in Christ should demonstrate their love to their family and neighborhood in good times and in bad, sickness and health. Such practical ways will encourage the onlookers to live out a similar life and become encourages which will influence the society.

Encouraging others, should be a lifestyle of a Christian as some prefers to be in their own comfort zones taking care of their own wants and not been sensitive to the needy.

Therefore, its best that we do not sell out our birth right for carnal desires but live by keeping the end in mind that there is life beyond death. This is why encouragement is so vital than been discouraged due to obstacles of the past.

We need to remind each other **that there is something much better and more beautiful in the world to come** rather than holding onto the hiccups of this present world.

Therefore, the personal experience and practice of the past and current pain and hardship will always help to bring out the best in us to encourage the downcast around us as we **“Seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well”** (Matthew 6:33)

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY OF OUR LIVES NEED TO BE SHARED WITH OTHERS AS WE QUALIFY TO BECOME SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT.



How can you be a son or daughter of encouragement in the world today?

Inspired by Cecil Siriwardene's 'Sons and Daughters of Encouragement' web article

The world in which we live is a pretty discouraging place. When you check social media posts, majority of the comments are negative & spreading hate more than love & appreciation. Imagine posting a picture of doing charity work, a group picture with your friends have fun or even when you achieve a milestone in your life; only to be greeted with discouraging comments like "Oh, you're only posting this to show off" or "Haha, big deal. I got this a few years ago, can't believe it took so long to get it. What a loser".

Even when you see a post or read an article of people doing heart-warming work, many people react with the "haha" reaction in a sarcastic way because something deep inside them just causes them to feel like they need to be hurtful.

The world in which we live is a place where ungodliness and unrighteousness prevail, and it is therefore a place where there is much to discourage us. There are attitudes of self centredness, rivalry, conceit, a lack of harmony and in general – a lack of love; leading to a lack of concern for one another.

Attitudes such as those mentioned above foster discouragement amongst the people of God. Paul addresses all Christians when he says, 'Therefore encourage one another and build one another up' (1 Thessalonians 5:11) One man whom Scripture sets before us as an encourager is Barnabas. Barnabas was not his given name; his given name was Joseph, but the apostles called him Barnabas which means 'son of encouragement' (Acts 4:36) because they saw this as the chief characteristic of his life.

When your friends think about you what is the chief characteristic they associate with you ? Are you the popular one? The stylish one ? The adventurer ? The Instagram / tik-tok influencer ? Has anyone thought of you as a refreshing & encouraging person ? Their go-to person for inspiration? Try to be that person and surround yourself with friends who lift each other up.



I'm interested in becoming an encouraging person. What can I do to be a 'Barnabas' for someone else?

1) Be Generous

Barnabas, sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet. (Acts 4:36-37) Being generous and willing to meet the needs of those who lacked was one way by which Barnabas was an encourager. Being generous does not always have to do with our material possessions. We can be generous with our time by using our leisure time to connect with our friends or help our community. When was the last time you called or met up with your friend to catch-up or helped your parents with some chores at home & got to learn more about them ?



2) Be there for people when no-one else will

When Saul of Tarsus was the arch-persecutor of the early church he set out for Damascus to arrest and to bring back to Jerusalem any who were the followers of the way of Jesus Christ. On the road Saul himself was gloriously converted. When Saul tried to join the disciples in Jerusalem, however, they would not receive him. Luke tells us that the disciples at Jerusalem 'were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple' (Acts 9:26). This is understandable. After all, it was not much earlier that these same disciples had witnessed the evil Saul had done to them and to their brothers and sisters.

However, we read that Barnabas was willing to stick his neck out and accept Saul as a disciple. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. Likewise, there are other ways that we can be an encouragement to others. We can be the bridge who introduces new Youth members to the church community. When you are new you are understandably shy however as many can relate I'm sure after you get to know everyone else you get along like a house on fire.

3) Continue to be a Follower of Christ

Each week as the church gathers for worship there are invariably those amongst us who come bringing with them various burdens. Some are discouraged; some are sad; some are fearful, and others are in some turmoil. Such friends need for us to come alongside them to express to them our love and support. We are to bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.



What a blessing it would be to any church, if all the members of the youth & congregation were committed to cultivating a ministry of encouragement! Let me urge you, each one, to be a son or daughter of encouragement to the glory of God. Such a ministry is a paramount need within the church.

Youth Page

Edited By: Joshua Aldons

Dig Deeper

As Christians we probably have some great examples of encouragers in the Bible as well as at our church.

Do any such people come to mind ?

What about your friends and connections who don't have a positive person in their daily lives ?

Can you become an encouraging 'Barnabas' for them ?



Just For Laughs

Which Bible character was super-fit?

Abs-alom.

Why wasn't Boaz a nice man before he got married?

He was Ruth-less.

Which king liked to do things on his own?

Solo-mon.

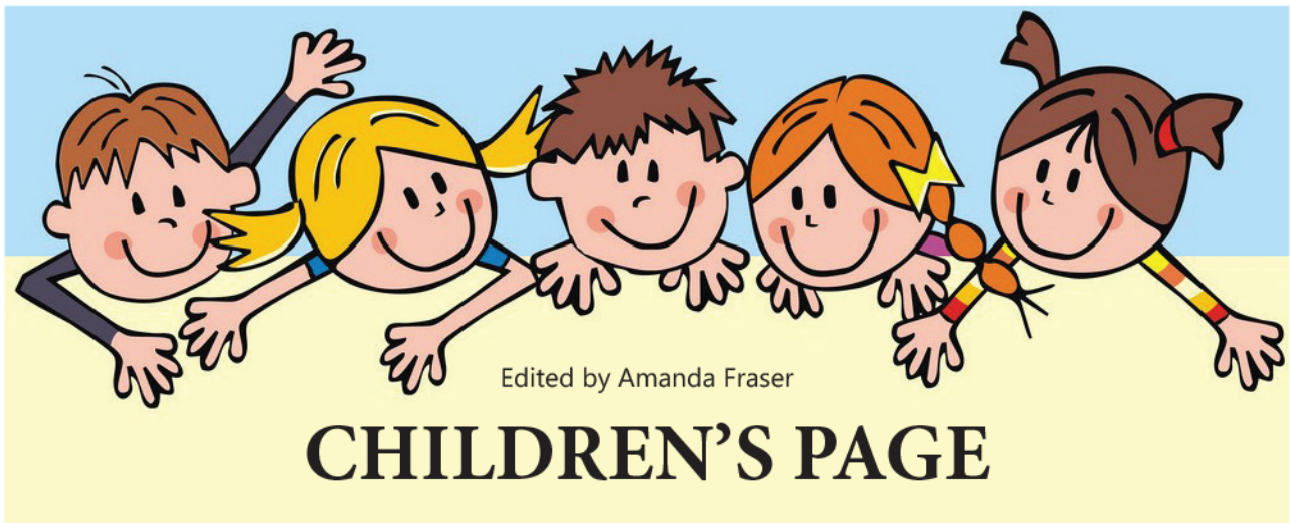
A teacher was giving a lesson on the Old Testament and asked one of her students, "Tommy, who knocked down the walls of Jericho?"

Tommy answered, "Well, it wasn't me."

Worried about this lack of Bible knowledge, the teacher called Tommy's mother.

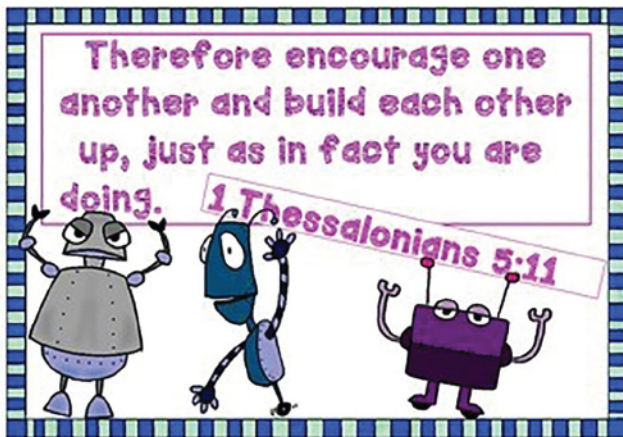
His mother said, "Look, my son's a good kid. If he says he didn't knock the wall down, he didn't knock the wall down."

More worried, the teacher called Tommy's father. He listened to her story and said, "Well, look, I don't want any trouble. Just tell me how much this wall costs, and I'll take care of it."



Hi kids!

Do you know what the word 'encourage' means?



To encourage means to comfort and strengthen others by the things we say. But it's not only about saying nice things to someone, although it is nice to hear someone tell you how great you are! It also means doing kind things for people to let them know they are important and loved.

The bible talks about a man who's friends nicknamed him Barnabas. Barnabas means 'encourager'. How cool to be known for being an encourager!

I think that would be a great nickname. Don't you?

So how can we encourage your friends and family. It could be making them a card or gift or doing something helpful and kind without being asked. It could be that we cheer them up when they feel sad or show how happy we are for them when they do something great.

When we go out of our way to be kind and encourage others, it helps them see that Jesus is in us.

That's a great way to show Jesus's love to the world.

Lots of love and hugs,
Aunty Mandy.



MY HEART IS FULL OF KINDNESS



My heart is full of kindness

I greet people with a smile

I do nice things for others

Spreading happiness all the while.

My heart is full of kindness

With my actions, I spread cheer

I want others to be happy

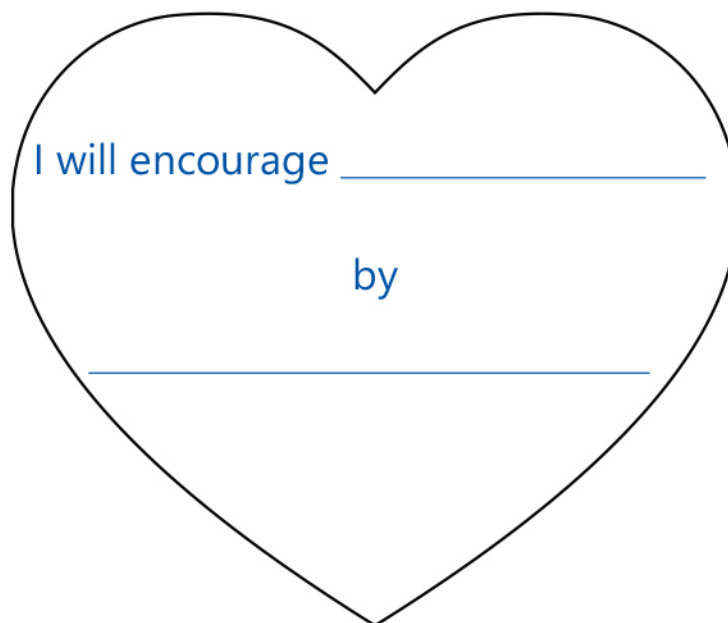
Not sad, when I am near.

I know I make a difference

With these small acts I do.

Jesus helps me be kind

And he can help you too.



Here are some encouragement cards for you to cut out and give to someone. Be sure to ask your parents before you cut it out of the Herald!



The Power for Marriage

by Marsha Navamanie

We spoke in the last issue about the Great Secret of marriage. Paul said it, "Marriage is a great mystery, or a profound secret." Paul explains in Ephesians 5 that the secret is what Christ did for the church, he "gave himself up for her..." This is what husbands need to do for their wives. Jesus died to his own interests and looked to our needs and interests instead. When we do the same marriage becomes a great adventure.

But where do we get the power for this "looking to the interests of the other". Paul covers this too in Ephesians 5. The section on marriage could start with verse 21. "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." The King James version says, submitting to one another in the fear of God. This is actually the end of a long sentence starting at verse 17 on how we are to live and walk filled with the Holy Spirit.

Many modern readers do not like the word submit and will not want to listen to what Paul is saying here. But if we realize that the key is being filled with God's Spirit, we can look at the word differently. Only then will we have the power to face the challenge of marriage as our most intimate of relationships. It is only in his power and understanding the "fear of the Lord" that we can love the "other".

Some other key verses are Philippians 2:2-3 and Romans 15:1-3. Just like Jesus, we are called not to please ourselves but to serve others.

Let's face it. Sin causes us to be self-centered. When we focus on our own needs and how the other person is not meeting them, this leads to problems in marriage. But love is not self-seeking (1 Cor. 13:4-6). And love is what we need in abundance. If we are filled with the Holy Spirit and living by what God is telling us, we have "money in the bank". Or as Gary Smalley says, if our love tank is full, we can give love unconditionally. If you are having a problem in

your marriage, ask yourself what is the root cause. It almost always comes back to selfishness and unwillingness to serve

the other.

Submit is a military word. In the army you give up your right to make your own decisions and have to follow your commanding officer. In marriage it means giving up your right to make decisions unilaterally. You have to consider the other person in everything you do. "Fulfillment is on the far side of sustained unselfish service, not the near side." It is a universal principle of life.

If you can see self-centeredness as the main problem you need to make a commitment to "root it out" Even if only one partner begins to do this, it will make a difference. The key is thinking of yourself less. Don't look to your spouse to be your savior, that is the job of Christ. When you stop thinking about how unhappy you are, you will find happiness growing.

The fear of the Lord implies a relationship, a growing relationship. The Old Testament idea is to

be controlled by the Lord as we experience his grace and forgiveness. It motivates us to serve one another. And after all, Jesus forgave us, can't we also forgive our spouse?

I know this is not easy. I personally find it hard to get young people today to spend time in God's Word developing that close relationship with God. But until we really understand what Jesus teaches and have that relationship that relies on his promises, and his Spirit to fill us,

we won't experience all that we could have in our marriages.

Practically, I hope all the couples reading this will spend time every day in prayer together and looking at God's Word. Start with the passages on marriage, and love, and move on to the "one another" passages in the Bible. It will change the dynamic. For me it has taken years of reading good books on these subjects and concentrated study on God's Word, the Bible.



Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Phil. 2:2-5

The Covenant (Love and the piece of paper)

Marriage in our Christian Reformed tradition is a “Covenant” relationship. Covenants are binding. This is why we say “I do” and sign a piece of paper when we get married. What we are saying is the good of this relationship takes precedence over the individual needs of the people involved. Parents don’t throw out their children because they are difficult, or cry too much. And we shouldn’t throw out our marriages because there is conflict.

God designed marriage in the Garden of Eden. It is part of his perfect original design, so the man would not be alone. It is the most profound covenant of all between two human beings. Ephesians 5 says it well, in verse 31: “As the Scriptures say, ‘A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’” The older translations used the word “cleave”, which has the idea of being glued together. Have you ever tried to separate things that are glued together? That is the idea.

And this covenant is established “before God”. When we say our vows during the marriage ceremony we first give our pledge to the Lord, “will you take” is before God, and “in sickness and in health” is our promise to each other. When you break the covenant you are also breaking faith with God.

Real love desires permanence. The covenant is a combination of law, the vows we make, love and a piece of paper that makes it permanent. Feelings will change, but vows give us a sense of security. “Promising means limiting your options now to have fuller options later. Promising is about future love.”

Keller refers to Kierkegaard’s ideas of, aesthetic, ethical and religious as outlooks on life.

“We all start with the aesthetic, but if we live only for what is thrilling, we have a mistaken idea of what freedom is. We are not masters of ourselves, but what is around us masters us (like the alcoholic). Only when we link our feelings to an obligation, marriage as an ethical obligation, can you be truly free. The ethical commitment enables the spontaneity of romantic love to achieve the stability and longevity that it can’t supply by itself. “It is the covenantal commitment that enables married people to become people who love each other. Only with time do we really learn who the other person is and come to love the person for him or herself and not just for the feelings and



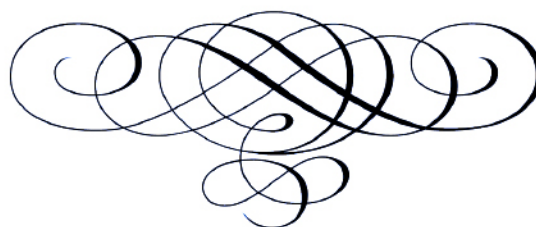
experiences they give us. Only with time do we learn the particular needs of our spouse and how to meet them. Eventually these lead to wells of memory and depth of feeling and enjoyment of the other person that frames and enhances the still crucial episodes of romantic, sexual passion in your married life.”

Keller concludes with this thought. “Paul says, “Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

*This means we must say to ourselves something like this: “Well, when Jesus looked down from the cross, he didn’t think, “I am giving myself to you because you are so attractive to me.” No, he was in agony, and he looked down at us—denying him, abandoning him, and betraying him—and in the greatest act of love in history, **he stayed**. He said, ‘Father forgive them, they don’t know what they are doing.’ He loved us, not because we were lovely to him, but to make us lovely. That is why I am going to love my spouse.” Speak to your heart like that and then fulfill the promises you made on your wedding day.*

Items in quotes are from: *The Meaning of Marriage*, by Tim Keller, New York:Dutton, 2011.

Marsha Navamanie and her husband Ron have been working with the Christian Reformed Church in Sri Lanka. They enjoy helping parents raise their children in the Christian faith. If you desire help doing this, please contact them. m.navamanie@yahoo.com.



+++ CHURCH NEWS+++



❖ Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Services.

Special services were held in the local churches to commemorate these services.



On Palm Sunday many local services saw the participation of the children and young people. On Maundy Thursday the traditional Service organised by the WMU of Dehiwela was held on the theme "In The Upper Room With Jesus," and ended with the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper being administered. The message was primarily through an inspirational Script involving the conversations of the disciples and through song.

On Good Friday the traditional United Profession of Faith service took place at Wolvendhal. Four young people professed their faith, namely, Nikitha Kimberly Adikari, Raya Aleena de Zoysa, Alana Cheryl de Zoysa and Gavin Walpola. Revd: Shirley Faber delivered the Sermon whilst Pas Lakmal Wijeratne, Pas Andrew Cottling, Bro Shane Dirckze and Revd: Charles Jansz, participated leading other parts of the liturgy. The congregation at Dehiwela had an evening service led by Revd: Jansz. Easter Sunday saw the local services well attended. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered at all such services.

❖ Women's Federation Office Bearers 2023.

The following were elected at the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 11th

March, 2023, at the CRC Wellawatte.

President – Arlene Vandersay.

Vice-Presidents – Winifreda Fernando, Chri-santhy Daniston.

Secretary – Rose Nelson.

Asst Secretaries – Rohini Perera, Shereen Bocks.

Treasurer – Vino Schubert.

Asst Treasurer – Sanjina Daniel.

❖ Caring Hands...

This was the theme of a project organised by the Dehiwela WMU which took shape in the first few months of this year and was concluded in March 2023. Approximately 20 ladies of the WMU participated. They were divided into groups according to their location, so that they could meet without too many challenges. Fifteen families/Individuals mostly from outside the CRC were helped.

Amongst those were families struggling to provide the basic necessities to their school going children, an 8 year old differently abled autistic child, unable to face a serious spinal operation due to being malnourished, a Trishaw driver who due to a serious accident had lost his means of livelihood, three families in need of essential provisions, an impoverished family with 4 teenage boys, a 31 year old widow who found it difficult to survive with her two young daughters due to the sudden death of her husband, an 84 year old lady who lived in squalid conditions.

The main aim was not only to help those in need but also to help the WMU Community to think out of the box and reach out to people struggling financially or emotionally, due to the hard circumstances they faced in life. Ultimately, it was a project that blessed both the giver and receiver.

❖ Sunday School Teacher Training Programme 2023.

The Annual Sunday School Teacher Training Programme was held on Saturday the 29th of April, 2023, at the CRC Wellawatte. The program was in all languages, with the Sinhala segment of Teachers meeting in the Church



Sanctuary, whilst the Tamil Teachers met at Calvin Hall and the English segment of Teachers met in the Board Room of the

Church Office. The following did the particular presentations – Sinhala, Pastor Lakmal Wijeratne and Pastor Amila Dilshan, Tamil – Revd: Stanley Nelson



and Pastor Gomes, English Sis Marsha Navamanie. The Sinhala and Tamil Segments focussed on the Law of Communication and the Law of Activity, whilst the English focussed on the Laws of Heart, Encouragement and Readiness.



A total of 107 participated. The program concluded with lunch.

❖ **Ron and Marsha Navamanie.**

Ron and Marsha Navamanie who have served the CRC SL as Missionaries for 23 years returned to their home in the USA on the 30th



They were both involved in diverse ways within the denomination and were part of the local congregation

at Dehiwela, where they worshipped and were involved in many ways. Their ministry mainly focussed on discipleship and were involved primarily working with individuals, young people and families on a “one to one” basis. There was also a time that Ron used his technical skills to indent the minutes of the General Consistory of the CRCSL. Marsha spent loads of time in the teaching ministry. Involved with the denominational Teaching and Training Committee she served as Secretary for many years and was also full of ideas and resources to sustain this arm of the church. She was involved in many Vacation Bible Schools and many were blessed through her “SHAPE” Seminars as they discovered their gifts in serving the Lord. Many a young life has also been blessed through the time and effort they put in

to grow them in the faith with the world view that ultimately matters. Marsha also edited the “Family pages” of the Herald for many years. Additionally, they also sought to equip parents in the nurture of their children. Their parenting Seminars too were a blessing to many.

They lived very simple lives, somewhat different from the traditional missionaries who serve around the world. As they embark on another phase of their lives, we do express our sincere gratitude to them for their selfless services to our part of God’s Church and wish them the Lord’s continued provision and care, good health and much grace, as they continue to fulfill the Lord’s good plan and purpose.

❖ **Travel** – Pastor Lakmal Wijeratne, visited the Netherlands from the 1st to 13th of June, attending a Conference in Zwolle, on the theme, “Resident Aliens; what can churches contribute for the well being of society?” This was Organised by DVN together with the Viaa Hogeschool, and the Theological University of Kampen.

❖ **In Memoriam** – Daisy Ferdinands.

Daisy Ferdinands passed away after a prolonged struggle with illness on the 22nd of March, 2023. Daisy was part of the Isaac family who were born and bred members of the Christian Reformed Church, with their roots especially at Maligakande and Regent Street. Daisy together with her siblings and family were very involved in the life and ministry of the Church at Regent-Street. She not only faithfully worshipped but also was involved teaching in Sunday School, the WMU and served in whatever ways she possibly could. Even when the family relocated to Kesbewa, Daisy kept faith with the congregation at Regent Street, when it came to church attendance and involvement, though it may have been a challenge when it came to transportation.

Full of life and much humour, it was not easy to see the limitations that crept upon her physical life especially during the past few years. Through all of her physical struggles she continued to keep the faith and held firmly on to her Lord to the very end. In these days when many only talk about faithfulness, Daisy has left a legacy of faithfulness to her family, extended family, her church family, all emanating from her spiritual resources, as a result of her life being built on the rock foundation of faith in Jesus. And as the bible says, her life stood

the test of time, when the storms of life did its work. New spiritual movements and the glitz and glamour of self proclaimed hawkers of God's Word, did not entice her. She was content to faithfully serve the "faith of her fathers" with the zeal and love that did not diminish with the changing years or changing scenes.

We extend our deepest sympathies to Julian, her son, and all of her siblings and families near and far away. Daisy now rests in peace in the nearer presence of Jesus whom she loved and treasured to the end. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord..."

❖ **Tribute to Revd: Neville Lawson Koch –**
(A tribute to his life, witness and ministry, by the Revd: Charles Jansz, on behalf of the CRC in Sri Lanka, read by the Revd: Crosbie de Kretser, at the Service of Thanksgiving at the Christian Reformed Church, Dandenong, Australia.)

It was with much sadness that we received the news of Neville's passing, even though we did know that he was struggling with his health and when a message from Lorraine, a couple of weeks before, said "Neville is not doing good."

To myself and Maxine it was also a loss, because we were friends through decades. Maxine being a school mate of Lorraine at Lindsay and I being a friend of both of them from my youth. So much so that we were both in the bridal party when Neville and Lorraine got married. I as the bestman and Maxine as one of the bridesmaids. Whilst all of that is true and we do have many personal memories that we can treasure and share, the tribute today is on behalf of the Christian Reformed Church in Sri Lanka, to which Neville gave decades of his life, complemented by Lorraine especially when the two became one!

Neville graduated with a Graduate of Theology degree from the DRC Seminary and Bible Institute on the 23rd of July, 1969 and was ordained to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments of the then Dutch Reformed Church on the 27th of August, 1969 in the historic church at Wolvendhal. In 1977 he was granted a Scholarship to Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids Michigan, USA and graduated with a Master of Divinity degree. Whilst in Grand Rapids he also followed a course of Clinical Pastoral Education at the Pine Rest Christian Hospital, working closely with emotionally disturbed people. Neville served the CRC SL in many Leadership roles. He was President of

the Denomination, Moderator of the Presbytery, President of the Youth Federation, President of the DRC Sunday Schools, Editor of the Denominational Magazine, the Herald and directed the Youth Choir when Revd: Crosbie de Kretser was not available. His gifted singing voice also led him to be part of the DRC Music Guild, in addition to being part of Quartettes, Trios and other Choirs.

His Pastoral Ministry involved the CRC SL congregations of Regent-Street/Maligakande, Bambalapitiya, Wellawatte, Dehiwela and Kothuwela. In his capacity as Pastor of Wellawatte, he also gave leadership with a passion to the outreach ministry in Ulapane in the Gampola area and also served as the Chairman of the Brohier Memorial Home. His pastoral ministry, highlighted his gifts of preaching and teaching which he used to feed and nourish both the sheep and the lambs, and his pastoral care was demonstrated through his visitations, compassion to the needy and pragmatic and biblically oriented counseling that gave hope and healing to the forlorn and hurting.

At time when there was a dearth of Christian Counsellors in the Church, Neville filled that vacuum both within the CRCSL and outside and his skills were much in demand.

With his Ecumenical and Evangelical vision, he also was involved outside of the CRCSL. He served as President of the National Christian Council, the National Evangelical Alliance gave leadership to the Lanka Evangelical Alliance Development Society. With the blessings of the CRC SL, he was also the first Principal of the Colombo Theological Seminary, giving 50 percent of his Ministerial time to CTS in that capacity and also teaching a Course in Theology.

His vision for a self sufficient church and his drive to grow the Church both inwardly and outwardly, made him part of a Committee that drafted a "White Paper" that recommended meaningful structural changes both denominationally and locally, some of which have become part of the DNA of the CRC SL. He also gave leadership to the Church during one of the most difficult times that saw immense financial challenges.

We in the CRC SL and in Sri Lanka, give thanks to our faithful God and King of the Church for the life and ministry of Neville whose leg-

acy of faith and faithfulness will be a memory and a legacy that would be remembered by many through time. We assure Lorraine, Nicola, Kevin, Carter, Graeme, his sisters, Joan, Romaine, Cherine and their families, of our prayers for the Lord's grace, peace and courage, as they strive to come to terms with their sad loss.

As Rick Warren once said, "Servants think of ministry as an opportunity, not an obligation. They enjoy helping people, meeting needs and doing ministry." Those words would eloquently describe Neville and his ministry in Sri Lanka. To God be all the glory!

Revd: Charles Norton Jansz. 26th March, 2023.

❖ Church Register

❖ Baptism.

"For the promise is unto you and to your children..."

Teana Kate, infant daughter of Kevin and Jeeva Passe, on Sunday 30th April, 2023, at the CRC Dehiwela.

❖ Deaths.

"Forever with the Lord..."

Daisy Ferdinands, on the 22nd of March, 2023, of the Regent-Street congregation.

Edward Hannibal, on the 23rd of April, 2023, of the Dehiwela congregation.

(Pics received from Vino Schubert, Suresh Karmegam, Christian Jeshuran, Shirley Faber.)

(The "News" in these pages is gathered from the Bulletins published by the respective local churches and available in the Church office. Any other news of events or involving the membership could be sent directly to the Editor of "The Herald," for publication according to the established criteria. – Ed.)





8 Signs of a Healthy Intergenerational Church

By Robert and Laura Keeley

Many of us grew up in multigenerational churches. Churches not only had children, teens, parents, and grandparents sitting in the same sanctuary, but had programming for each of them: church school for kids, youth group for teens, and Bible studies for adults. This model for church was adapted from schools, where children and teens are separated by age.

Fewer churches, however, are *intergenerational*. Intergenerational churches are those that are intentional about bringing different generations together in a mutual, influential relationship so that they can achieve common goals. The key words are *intentional* and *mutual*. Those differences seem subtle, but they are important.

In their book *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, Holly Allen and Christine Ross point to several reasons why striving for an intergenerational community is worth the effort. The first is a sense of belonging. They write, "Intergenerational faith communities provide experiences that foster (a) deep sense of belonging in children, teens, and adults; all feel welcome and received." When we look around on

a Sunday morning, we see people of all ages who expect us to be there and miss us when we're not.

Intergenerational congregations also can provide support for families or people who need additional help. When a church is intergenerational, the concept of a family beyond the nuclear family is expanded. The community is already prepared to help because everyone knows all the other people, regardless of age.

This year our daughter, who already had two children, gave birth to twins. Without needing to be asked, her church community brought food, offered babysitting, and even did her laundry. Now two young mothers sit with the twins in the back of church every Sunday morning, allowing our daughter and son-in-law to sit with their other children. Bringing the people of God from all ages together opens the members up to experience deeper relationships and the different ways God has been faithful in the lives of God's people.

We need a deep community in which we know each other. In her chapter in Cory Seibel's book *Engage All Generations*, Tammy Tolman describes intergenerational ministry as creating

spaces where generations collide. With more opportunities for this collision, people get to know each other well. Holly Allen expands this idea when she notes that as a child or a new believer participates in a relational community, doing "Christian" things with those further down the road in their faith, these newer members can begin to identify themselves with the Christian community.

So here, in no particular order, are our top eight signs of a church that is making strides toward being intergenerational:

» **Leadership buy-in:** The end goal is not for churches to do intergenerational things, but to actually become an actively intergenerational community. This shift requires that the council, pastors, and staff buy in to the value of intergenerational ministry and commit to changing the culture of the church. Unless the leadership is on board, efforts to become more intergenerational will be short-lived.

» **People of all ages involved in leading worship:** Activities could include Bible reading, offering prayers, leading music, or running the sound and video technology.

These opportunities reinforce belonging to a community that uses people's gifts. Research has shown that leading in worship is one of the indicators that kids will continue to be involved in churches as they grow older.

- » **Multi-age conversations:** Look at who is talking. Are adults and kids talking to each other before and after worship? Debra Reinstra wrote that "teenagers are the canaries in the coal mine of community." Do they hang out in the same area as the adults? Do people other than their parents engage them in conversation? The teenagers are an early indicator that the community is not siloed by age.
- » **Community first:** Service to other members of the church community comes before individual needs. People are willing to give up something so that other members of the community can flourish. Are people who are not parents of young children willing to serve in the nursery? Are seniors willing to teach Sunday school? Do congregation members attend programs where someone from their church is performing? These are all places where intergenerational community can be built.
- » **Accessible worship:** Work to make sure the worship service speaks to all ages and situations whenever possible. There is a lot more to a worship than preaching, but sermons take a lot of the time in a typical worship service. As they're making their sermons, preachers should recognize the different ages of people in the pews. Sermon series about marriage aimed at young adults, for example, can cause singles and seniors to feel like the only important people are married with kids. Work on using liturgical elements that children might

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already be familiar with, such as songs and Bible passages that children know from Sunday school.

- » **Church whisperers:** Become a congregation that encourages parents and other adults to be "church whisperers," a term coined by Robbie Castleman. Kids learn what worship means when they experience it and when it is explained to them. That means that sometimes parents or caregivers need to be talking to their children during worship about what is happening. People sitting in front or behind them need to be affirming about the additional noise this makes and be pleased that the next generation is learning.
- » **Faith storytelling for all ages:** Stories told by members of your congregation will demonstrate how our lives speak to God's faithfulness and how God has been at work in

our lives. Find times and places for people to share their stories. The Faith Storytelling Toolkit (crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits) has a number of resources to help you help members of your community tell their stories.

- » **Mentoring:** There are dozens of ways that mentoring can take place in a church. Older couples can mentor young married couples. Adults can mentor teens in running the church audiovisual equipment or in playing musical instruments. Teens can mentor children in building pinewood derby cars. The point is that people take care of each other and share their gifts with younger people.

Becoming an intergenerational church is a process that will not happen immediately. People can start building relationships with people of other ages simply by working on learning each other's names. By introducing places where people of all ages collide and are encouraged to talk to each other, an intergenerational community begins to form. Soon, committees and programs will see this as a built-in value and discuss how other parts of the church can also include generations of all ages. 



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(Reprinted from "The Banner," Publication of the Christian Reformed Church of North America, March 2023)

TAIL LIGHTS

by C.N.J



"Get me
to the
church
on time."

"GET ME TO THE CHURCH ON TIME !"

(for Gawd's sake !!)

Some of you would recognize the title ! Part of the song "I am getting married in the morning," from the film "My fair lady" While that one liner of the title, from the song is a noble quest – in practice most of the time it is not so when it comes to weddings in particular and to worship and church events in general.

But this "timely" thought crossed my mind again following a meeting with some other church leaders. One of them said that he had been assigned a new congregation and that the service begins at 7.00 a.m. He said he is there early and would begin even if there were two or three in the congregation. All present thought that was great and one Pastor went on to say that today, when it comes to church attendance and worship times, many do not mind **keeping the Lord waiting** ! I had not thought of that along those lines. Have you? !

Of course since then this has crossed my mind every Sunday, especially when I see the habitually late creeping in! "Creeping" is really what they do, thinking that nobody would see! Some of these people are late for everything, especially though when it comes to the things of the Lord.

Thinking through further, I came across three reasons someone has suggested as to why we should get to church on time. **Firstly**, it enables us to meet new people! Never mind the new people. It enables us to meet others even briefly. **Secondly**, it encourages those who serve. Whether it is the Pastor, the Worship Leader, the Choir, the musicians or anyone else. It shows that we do appreciate what they do and **thirdly**, it shows and sets our sense of priorities. Arriving late may not seem a big problem to some but is indicative of a bigger symptom. We don't see the things of the Lord as important!

I think a lot of the Lord's people need to reflect seriously about what Christian worship and church attendance is all about from what the Bible says in **Hebrews 10 vss 24 and 25** – including whether keeping the Lord waiting on a Sunday is a testimony that would encourage and edify others!!

THE HERALD

of the

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF SRI LANKA

No. 363, Galle Road, Colombo 6.

Registered as a Newspaper at G.P.O.