

The Herald

· OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF SRI LANKA ·

381st
Anniversary

"BE RENEWED. BE REVIVED."

Christian Reformed Church of Sri Lanka



"GOD SENT HIS LIGHT INTO OUR DARK WORLD" - SEE INSIDE
ALSO INSIDE - LOVING THE STRANGER

LET THERE BE LIGHT !



This is the time of the year when the days are shorter and it gets dark early evening! And just like everything else there are those who complain about these short and dark evenings ! But imagine living in a place where there are 65 days of darkness in any year, when the sun does not shine. It is said that this is part of life in the little town of Barrow, Alaska. It is located on the farthest northern tip of the state of Alaska, above the Arctic Circle. For almost two months of the year the Sun does not show itself – but when it does the whole town comes out to celebrate!

We are also somewhat familiar with this kind of darkness – when we did experience the pronounced power cuts and also frequent breakdowns or the power “cuts” apparently due to “maintenance work” !

The Bible pictures you and me and the rest of the world, as people living in darkness, people who have been waiting and waiting for the sun to rise. The Prophet Isaiah used the metaphor of light in a pronounced way in his writings. I am thinking of two great verses of Scripture from Isaiah’s prophecies, that perhaps we know or that we would hear frequently at this time of the year...

Isaiah chapter 9: vs 2: *“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”*

And Isaiah chapter 60 vs 1: *“Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.”* Both these verses focus on the theme of this issue of the Herald and what Christmas is all about.

God pictures our world as a very dark place. Spiritually dark. We can see evidence of spiritual darkness by looking around us today. Look around, watch people, listen to them talk, see what they do, be informed by the media and it will become very very clear that our world is a very dark place spiritually. But perhaps the most frightening place to look is within ourselves! People look within themselves for something good but the more closely you look, the more clear it becomes that there is nothing but selfishness and materialism – at least most of the time!

Yes, “thick darkness is over the people,” but the Bible says, “the Lord rises upon you and His glory appears over you.”

The birth of the Lord Jesus Christ is described as the coming of light and the rising of the sun on a very dark place. The sun rises and the darkness disappears.

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IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial	2
Meditation	4
God Sent His Light into Our Dark World.....	5
Youth Page	7
Children's Page	12
Family Page.....	15
Church News	17
Sermon Preached by The Revd: Charles Jansz at the 381st Trili- ngual Thanksgiving Service.....	21

Front cover – Pics from the
381st Thanksgiving Service.

Sent by Pas Suresh Karmegam.

Christmas is all about God stepping into a place that was dark and empty. He came down from Heaven, lived our life and was put to death for our sins. It is as though the sun has risen for us, just as for the people in that little town of Alaska.

When Isaiah talks about the wise men, in Chapter 60, he does say an equally interesting word, throwing more light on our subject! - In verse 3 he says, "Nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn." Later in verse 6, "...all from Sheba will come bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord." As the story reveals, there in the form of a little child, the wise men saw the light of the world. There they saw the glory of God and this is what filled them with a spirit of awe and worship. They had gone from darkness to light, and they rejoiced and gave this child their gifts from afar.

This story of the wise men as portrayed by the Prophet Isaiah, is a challenge for anyone living in the darkness of sin, people like you and me and those wise men from the East – anyone can come and see the glory of God, as He reveals it through the person of Jesus. Just as the sun, every morning, rises on us, so it is with Christ. His grace, His forgiveness, His salvation, rises and shines on every person who believes and finds their salvation in Him. The bottom line is this – No matter who we are, we too can go from darkness to light.

This light from Jesus is like walking through a room we have never been in before. If we walk in that room when there are no lights on, we might be anxious and uneasy. We don't know where the obstacles are, how the furniture has been laid out. We are not certain what might be there in the dark that would cause us to perhaps stumble and get hurt. But if the light's on – we walk with confidence and see exactly what we do need to see. There are no longer obstacles. No longer anything that can hurt us or cause us to be anxious and troubled. That's the kind of difference that Jesus brings into our lives. We no longer walk in darkness, uneasy and anxious. We walk with His light and our lives are completely different.

As the days get dark earlier at this time of the year, bringing us closer to the day of that first coming of Jesus...may we know that we have passed from darkness to light by virtue of our faith in Him as our Saviour...and continue walking in the Light of the Lord ! In that sense may we say what God said on the first day of Creation..."Let there be light!"



WHO CAN ADD TO CHRISTMAS ?

"The Perfect Motive is that God so loved the world.

The Perfect Gift is that He gave His only Son.

The only requirement is that we believe in Him.

The Reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life."

- Corrie Ten Boom.

By Pastor Andrew Cottling

THE LIGHT IS SHINING IN THE DARK !

When we look at the world, everywhere, lives are in darkness, and people have become victims of different kinds of darkness. That is why the word of the Prophet Isaiah in Isaiah Ch 9 vs 2 needs to be considered carefully.

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. ”

Darkness represents the sin and evil schemes of people. According to Isaiah those who lived in such circumstances have received “light” that is needed. So, they experienced some kind of hope, and through that hope, they had joy. That’s why we too are able to sing at this time of the year, “Joy to the world the Lord is come...”

But the sad part is that not many are walking in this light. As John says in Chapter 1 vs 5 of the gospel, **“The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.”**

John says further that Jesus is the Light – recalling the words of Jesus Himself, **“I am the Light of the world.”**

Because of their sinful nature people then and now are not ready to accept the Savior, but everywhere at this time of the year, we see Christmas celebrations and traditions, apart from the true Light, Jesus Himself.

We have forgotten the real message given through the prophets, angels, and the Scriptures and have diluted the true message of Christmas. Truth has been turned into fiction. And we have covered the light with our own covers (programs, activities, decor, etc.) not considering whose birthday it really is.

So this Christmas, let us like the Magi, who learnt from their mistake of first going to the wrong place to find the King, and then went back to follow the star to the Manger, let us also take the route that matters and find our Saviour this Christmas. Let us come to that point of faith, when just like Simeon in Luke 2: 30-32, we also could say, **“...my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the sight of all nations; a light for revelation to the gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.”**

When at that point of faith, may we continue to pray that the eyes of many would be opened to see the Light that matters – the Light that continues to shine in the darkness. Amen.

(Pastor Cottling is currently Pastor of the English language congregation of Wolvendhal and the Sinhala language congregation of Regent-Street).



God Sent His Light into Our Dark World To Change Our Cockroach-like Nature

By Revd: Dr. Winston Gauder

I dislodged a brick paver with my spade, upsetting a few cockroaches who immediately headed for another dark hole. Apparently, all creepy crawlies have a “cockroach-nature” that love darkness. They fear the light because it exposes their harmful activities. Our human nature is much the same. Can God miraculously change us?

Right across our world we are seeing a different kind of darkness that is growing – it is not due to the absence of electricity. But it is the absence of integrity, compassion, truth, love for others, respect for parents, for teachers and all whom God appoints to restore order in our chaotic world. Some 700 years ago, before Christ was born, God warned us: Woe, and judgement, to those who call evil good and good evil, who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness, who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! *Isaiah 5:20*

“The True Light has Come into The World” – to Change Our Cockroach-like Nature

The Light that God has sent will overcome the darkness! All political solutions aim to increase the socio-economic standard of living. Do more material possessions, more money, better jobs, and housing with better education meet our real needs? Look at first world and third-world nations where evil and corruption equally apply to both. The real root of our global problem is our corrupt human nature. It is the cause of racial divisions, injustice, immorality, greed, abuse, and godlessness.

Let’s listen to how Jesus, *The Light of the World*, listed four elements that need fixing, when he commissioned the apostle Paul, to deliver this life-changing prescription to the whole world struggling with the disease of darkness:

“I am sending you to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light,
and from the power of Satan to God,
so that they may receive forgiveness of sins
and a place among those who are set apart to be holy, by faith in me.”

Bible: Acts 26:18

It was my encounter with the cockroaches that helped me to figure out why mankind has a hostile nature towards God – who is light and in whom there is not even a spec of darkness. No one person will come to the light unless human-nature is changed to seek the light. Jesus lived, died, and rose

again so that all who seek him can be changed! John gives reasons why people resist the Light and live in the dark by choice:

“This is why people are condemned: Light has come into the world,
but people loved darkness instead of light,
(*Why?*) because their deeds were evil.

Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light,
for fear that their deeds will be exposed.”

Bible: John 3:19-20

God is both Creator and Judge of his world. He has released the Report of his Royal Commission concerning the root cause of our global problem. The problems are not many, but one – Our diseased heart, the control centre that governs our intellect, emotions, and our actions. What outcome can we expect when we build a family or a nation if the human heart is beyond cure?

“The human heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure. Who can understand it?
I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind,
to reward each person according to their conduct,
according to what their deeds deserve.”

Jeremiah 17:9-10

Let's get personal. We must each ask questions about ourselves and our spiritual condition. Like the cockroaches, “We do not come to the light for fear our deeds will be exposed.” Are you living out your life in the kingdom-of-darkness under Satan or in the kingdom-of-God under Christ, who is the Way, The Truth, and the Life? John 14:6. These questions have to do with our life's journey, our dreams and aspirations, our values and purpose in life, and our final destiny. The most quoted verse in the Bible sets out two destinations: either perishing eternally or receiving eternal life. Its Hell, or Heaven.

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,
that whoever believes in him should not perish
– but have eternal life.” John 3:16*

Our sovereign God and Creator launched a “love and rescue mission” through Jesus Christ, to deliver us from the darkness of hell and judgement and establish his Kingdom where there will be no more darkness, sorrow, or tears, where his glory will shine.

Unless God opens our blinded eyes to see our true condition like that of the cockroach, we will continue to live in the dark hole, as slaves of Satan till we die and perish. Many may not take God seriously and even mock him in their ignorance! Psalm 2. Reading the Gospel of John will greatly help your understanding of Jesus our Saviour. God in his mercy is seeking his lost sheep and even now is gathering them from the four corners of the world.

May God help us to stop trusting our flawed moral goodness and transfer our trust to Jesus who suffered, died, and rose again, having paid the full penalty for your sin and mine.

As God's children who are born-again from above, we are miraculously transformed and given a new nature that embraces the Light. With the help of God's Spirit, we gradually learn to live a life of thankfulness and service to God. Jesus our Rescuer will help us to resist the darkness of this world. God will never leave us or forsake us until he takes us to our heavenly home even though life on earth becomes difficult and we may be called to suffer for our faith. What's more – God promises all believers that not even Satan can pluck us out of his hand!

(Revd: Gauder is a former CRC SL Minister and founder Pastor of the ICF Betterlife Ministry in Sydney, Australia)

Light In The Darkness

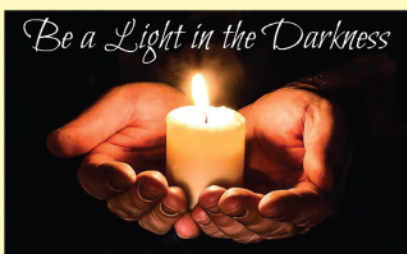


"Darkness in the world" is a metaphor often used in Christian theology to describe the presence of evil, sin, suffering, and spiritual darkness that exists in the world. It signifies the moral and spiritual challenges and the brokenness that people encounter in their lives. For Christian youth, "darkness in the world" can be understood in several ways.

- Darkness represents the presence of sin and moral decay in the world. This includes actions and attitudes that are contrary to God's teachings, such as dishonesty, greed, hatred, and immorality.
- The darkness in the world includes suffering, injustice, and the oppression of the vulnerable.
- The division and conflict that exist in the world, whether on a personal, communal, or global scale, are part of the darkness.
- Many people are spiritually blind, unaware of God's love and purpose for their lives.
- The world often prioritizes materialism and secular values over spiritual ones.
- Darkness is present when people are indifferent to the suffering of others.
- Many individuals struggle to find purpose and meaning in life.

For Christian youth, recognizing the darkness in the world is the first step toward addressing it. We are called to be "light in the darkness" by living out our faith, demonstrating love, compassion, and justice, and sharing the message of hope found in Christianity. By doing so, we should try to make the world a better place, bring people closer to God, and alleviate the spiritual and moral challenges that darkness represents.

How to Be a Light In the Darkness: 3 Keys from Scripture



by Jennifer Waddle

Imagine you're in a completely dark room, and can't see anything. It's scary, right? But when you turn on a flashlight, suddenly you can see where you're going, and you're not

afraid anymore. That's what Jesus does for us. He's like a flashlight, showing us the way out of darkness and into the light.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:5)
This verse from the book of John may paint a sad picture of the world's lack of understanding, but it also gives us hope. The verses preceding it remind us exactly Who we represent when we cast His light into the darkness.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:1-5)
From this passage, and many more, we are given not only the truth about the dark state of the world, but also the "how-to" of being light.

Here are three ways Scripture tells us how to be light in the darkness.

1. Bear Witness



"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world." (John 1:6-9)

The role of a witness is to answer questions truthfully and give an honest account of what they have seen and heard. As Christians, we can be light in the darkness by responding to non-believers with truth and testifying to what God has done. Remember, it is not our job to make people believe, but to share the truth boldly and lovingly. What do you know to be true about the Lord Jesus Christ?

What has He done in your own life?

These are essential questions that you need to be able to answer. Answering these questions prepares you to testify to the truth and to be light. John bore witness to Jesus because he knew without a doubt Who Jesus was and what He would do for the world.

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, "After me comes a Man

who is preferred before me, for He was before me.""(John 1:29-30)

2. Follow Jesus' Commands



"Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'" (John 8:12)

When you choose to follow the commands of the Lord and reject the ways of the world, others will notice. Especially when you hold fast to what is true, your light will shine. Though people may reject it, there will be some who are drawn in, curious as to why you live differently.

The challenge for us is to keep our eyes on the One we follow. For the moment we take our eyes off of the Savior, we will be tempted to slip into the darkness of the world. Just as Jesus set his face like flint toward the redeeming cross, we too must set our faces like flint toward the Redeemer.

The Bible says that if we claim to be in communion with the Lord, but walk in darkness, we are not practicing the truth. My prayer is that we will take Jesus' commands seriously and live as light in the darkness by walking in obedience.

"This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:5-7)

3. Put Yourself Out There



"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who

are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)

It can be a little scary thinking about shining the light of Jesus for all to see. It's much safer to casually mention Him, in hopes of not offending anyone. However, Jesus proclaimed in Matthew 5 that His disciples were the light of the world. They were not to remain hidden. They were called to shine their light as a city set on a hill.

We are Jesus' disciples too. We're not meant to stay tucked away in our protected corner of the world. We are to boldly let our light shine before men!

Here are a few ways to put yourself out there and be a light for Jesus:

1) Get involved at Church !

There are so many areas at church where you can use your gifts, talent & enthusiasm. You can help out at Community Outreach Projects, join your local Youth for a Bible study & meetup, join the praise & worship team or help out at Sunday school & church for small tasks every now & then.

2) Be a Positive Role Model

We are often exemplary role models for our peers. Our commitment to living a life of purpose and virtue is a source of inspiration to many. We should strive to show that it is possible to live in accordance with one's faith while still engaging with the world and contributing positively to society.

3) Promote Unity & Spread Hope

Division and polarization seem to be on the rise globally. In a world often overshadowed by despair and negativity, young Christian youth are bearers of hope. We need to be committed to bridging these divisions.

We should promote unity and encourage open dialogue and understanding between people of different backgrounds, beliefs, and cultures. By promoting peace and reconciliation, we serve as agents of healing in a fractured world. We should share messages of encouragement, inspiration, and the promise of redemption. Our actions and words can offer a glimmer of hope to those who may be struggling in the darkness, reminding them that a brighter future is possible.

Youth Page

Edited By: Joshua Aldons

Dig Deeper

In what ways do you see darkness in your own life or in the world around you?

How can following Jesus help you to overcome the darkness and enter into the Kingdom of Light?

What are some practical ways that you can listen to Jesus and put His teachings into practice in your daily life?



Just For Laughs



What did Adam say the day before Christmas?

It's Christmas, Eve!

Why is David considered the best babysitter in the Bible?

He rocked Goliath to sleep.

What is a missionary's favorite kind of car?

A convertible.

Why was Moses considered the biggest rebel in the Bible?

He broke all Ten Commandments at once

Children's Page

Edited by Amanda Fraser

Hi boys and girls,

Do you use a night light when you sleep at night? Sometimes it helps to have a light on when it's really dark huh?



The bible talks a lot about Jesus being a light in the darkness. When we have Jesus in our life darkness can never be near us or frighten us. The Bible also tells us to be a light to others and show them how to live a good life.

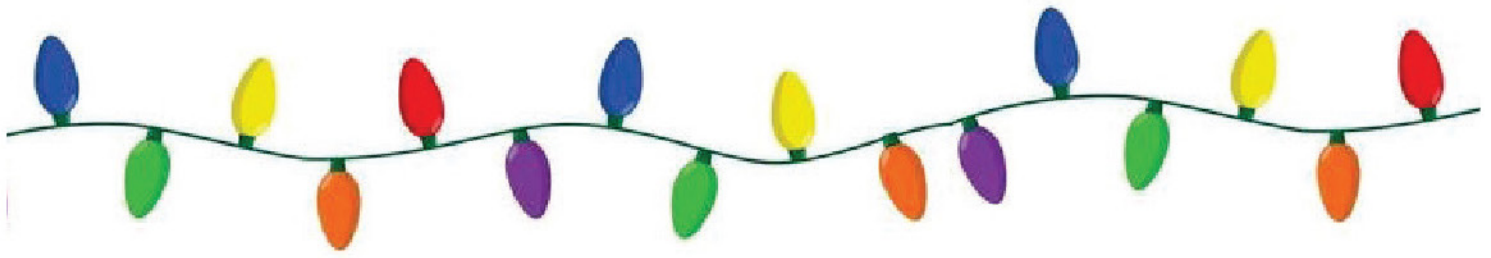
Christmas is full of lights too! On the tree, on street decorations and everywhere you look!

Christmas has become about so many other things over the years. The lights, presents, songs and food! These things aren't bad, but it can take away from the real meaning of Christmas.

We must remember that Christmas is a time to remember that Jesus, the Saviour of the world, was born. He came as a baby, then grew to be a man who gave His life for you and me, so we could live with Him forever when we die. We celebrate His birth because of our faith in Him as God's son and what he did for us by dying on the cross to save us from our sins.

So, let us celebrate Jesus' birthday together, and remember why He came.

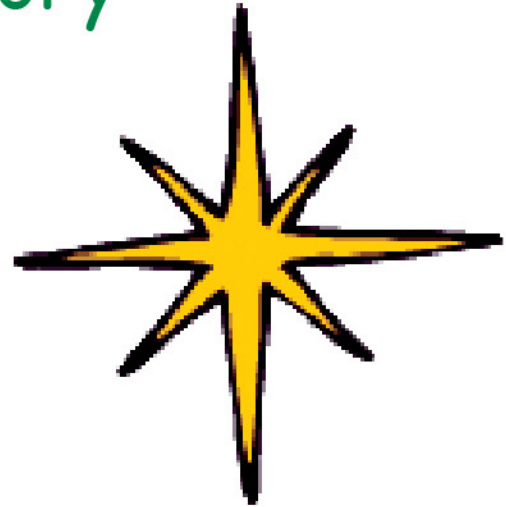
Lots of love,
Aunty Mandy.



The Christmas Story

by Leanne Guenther

Once upon a time,
A long, long time ago.
Begins the story of a baby,
That most of you should know.

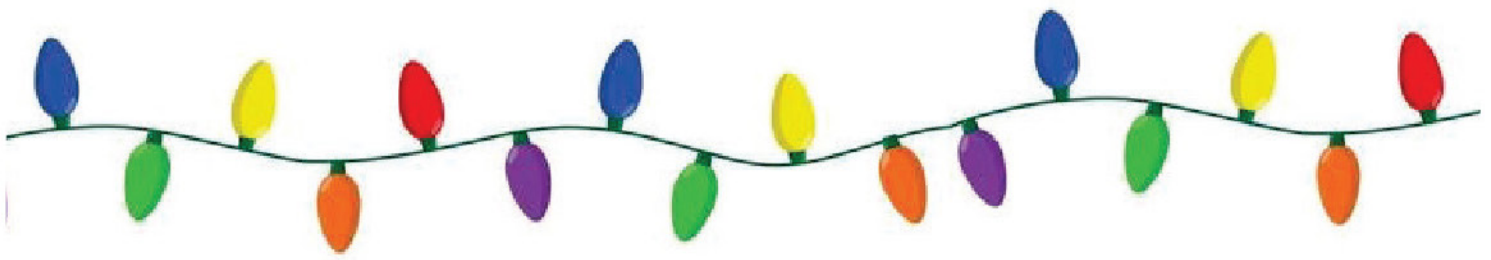


His daddy's name was Joseph,
And Mary was His mom.
This babe was very special
He was God's only Son.

Some angels came from heaven,
And they began to sing.
To the shepherds in the fields below,
"Glad tidings do we bring!"

A bright star lit the heavens,
To light the magi's way,
To the baby in the manger
Who was born on Christmas day.

And all who gathered round Him,
Rejoiced and praised His birth.
For the babe, the King, named Jesus,
Is our Saviour here on earth!



Find Missing Vowels

Find the missing letters in the following list of words!

 N G L One of these appeared to Mary.

B T H L H M Mary and Joseph had to travel to this town.

G B R L The Angel who appeared to Mary

J S S Who was born in the manger

J S P H The man who married Mary

H R D The name of the King who was jealous of Jesus.

M N G R Jesus was placed here as a new-born baby.

M R Y The mother of Jesus.

N Z R T H Joseph lived here.

S H P H R D S These were in the field when the angel appeared

W S M N Followed the star



Loving the Stranger

By Marsha Navamanie

This is the fourth article in our series on marriage based on Tim Keller's book, *The Meaning of Marriage*. Over the past three articles we have looked at the **secret** of marriage (what Christ did for the church, he "gave himself up for her...") and where we get the **power** to love our spouse as Christ loves us (the Holy Spirit). We talked about commitment and the piece of paper and the value of making vows that last. In the last article we talked about how God instituted marriage for friendship, and the importance of our spouse being our best friend, and helping them become their "glory-selves". In this article, we want to share how marriage changes us, and steps to working at using marriage to become better people. I start with a quote:

"Let's recall the point made by Stanley Hauerwas: We never know whom we marry; we just think we do. Or even if we first marry the right person, just give it a while and he or she will change. For marriage, being [the enormous thing it is] means we are not the same person after we have entered it. The primary problem is . . . learning how to love and care for the stranger to whom you find yourself married. If you have been married for a long time this sounds right to you. In other words, marriage changes us. Having children changes us. A career switch changes us. Age changes us. Marriage brings out and reveals traits in you that were there but were hidden from everyone including you, but now they are all seen by your spouse."¹

The romantic love you feel for someone at the beginning of your relationship usually dies between 6 months and 2 years of when it started. Now you see each other with all your faults, and then the problems can begin.

What if, however, you began your marriage understanding its purpose as "spiritual friendship for the journey to the new creation?" What if you expected marriage to be about helping each other grow out of your sins and flaws into the new person God is creating? Then you will actually be expecting the "stranger" seasons, and

when you come to one you will roll up your sleeves and get to work. Even if you didn't understand this when you got married, you can start with this understanding today.



"God created marriage as a divine institution, with several components that we can use to make our relationships better—the power of truth, love, and grace."

We begin with truth. The Bible commands us to speak the truth in love – Ephesians 4:15, Romans 7. Your spouse has the opportunity to expose all

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:15,16

your flaws, the sinfulness of your heart. Marriage shows you a realistic, unflattering picture of who you are and if you are going to live without conflict in your marriage, you are going to have to deal with it. Keller likened it to a bridge with small faults, only an engineer can find them perhaps. But your spouse is like a container truck driving onto your bridge. The weight will expose

all those faults. Now you can see where the flaws are, maybe even things in your life you were not aware of before. The sooner you deal with them, the better. This is good. "Finally, you can begin dealing with the real you. Don't resist this power that marriage has. Give your spouse the right to talk to you about what is wrong with you. Paul talks about how Jesus 'washes' and 'cleanses' us of stains and blemishes. Give your spouse the right to do that."

The only way you will find the perfect spouse is to make your current spouse their "glory-self". You have to stick with it for this to happen (Heb. 3:13)

The second component of marriage is the **power of love**--reprogramming our self-image. Love can overcome self-criticism. God's love covers our sins. Your spouse can help in this process. But you have to give love in a currency that is meaningful to your spouse, find what communicates love to them, (Gary Smalley's book on **5 Love Languages** can be helpful here). Friendship love means spending quality time, giving gifts, supportive loyalty, sharing of the mental world like books, and movies, listening and being open. It can be reflexed in how we show affection, by holding hands, focused attention, taking walks together. For some verbal affirmation is important, showing gratitude, praising your spouse in front of other people. For more information, check out Smalley's website: <https://5lovelanguages.com>

Brainstorm with your spouse what might be your love language or take the quiz online, then work on using these in your relationship. You can discover the love languages of your children too, and it may even help in the office.

Marriage by its very nature has the power of truth and the power of love. The power of truth is marriage's ability to show you who you really are. The power of love is marriage's capacity for reprogramming your self- image, redeeming the past, and healing your deepest hurts. And now a warning is in order.

"Truth without love ruins the oneness, and love without truth gives the illusion of unity but actually stops the journey and the growth." The way these work together is through **the third component, grace**. "The experience of Jesus's grace makes it possible to practice the two most important skills in marriage: forgiveness and repentance."

"To wield both the power of truth and the power of love in the life-changing, integrative, balanced way that they should be used, it takes deep humility and yet profound joy and confidence. Where in the world can you get that? The answer is that it must come from outside of this world. Unaided, our human nature is incapable of producing them in combination. Without an experience of God's grace, people who feel they have succeeded in life feel confident but are not humble before others who are wrongdoers. People who feel they have largely failed in life are humble

You must warn each other every day, while it is still "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. Hebrews 3:13

but not confident and joyful." We learn this by experiencing God's grace. What Jesus did for you, you can do for your spouse. Forgiveness is the power to help our spouse become something glorious spiritually.

Helping your spouse to grow spiritually involves encouraging each other to participate together actively in church, in Christian community. It means reading and digesting Christian books together as well as studying the Bible together. And most important, it means praying together. For centuries, Christian spouses have observed various forms of daily family prayer.



We all look beautiful at our weddings, but as our relationship goes on, do we become more beautiful, or start to go sour. If you and your spouse correctly use the power of truth and love, with grace in each other's lives, you will grow more beautiful together, like a diamond being cut and set. Be committed to the adventure of "spiritual companionship, to partner with God in the journey to the new creation." As it says in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: *That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.*

Quotes from: **The Meaning of Marriage**, Tim Keller, with Kathy Keller. Penguin Books, New York, 2011.

Marsha Navamanie and her husband Ron have been working with the CRC SL in Sri Lanka for the past 23 years. They recently returned to the U.S.

+++ CHURCH NEWS+++



❖ CRC 381st Trilingual Thanksgiving Service...

The 381st Trilingual Service was held on Saturday the 7th of October in the CRC Dehiwela. The incessant rain in the days previous and also that morning, did not prevent a full Church giving God thanks and praise for the ministry and mission of the CRC SL through centuries and decades. Many of the CRC SL Pastors and lay leaders participated whilst the sermon was preached by Revd: Charles Jansz, with Pas Lakmal Wijeratne and Bro Andrew Selvarajah, doing the interpretations in Sinhala and Tamil respectively. A Trilingual Praise and Worship Team(s) led by Madhubashini Ravindarasa, Pas Sashikumar and Bro Lindsay Melder, led the congregation in a time of Praise and Worship. A Photo tribute of historical significance and also portraying the expansion and growth of the Denomination, prepared by Bro Lindsay was another highlight, whilst the congregation was also privileged to hear greetings from the Revd: Crosbie de Kretser, a former Minister of the CRC SL and from Bro. Paul Killian, Chairperson of the Sri Lanka Project support group of the DRC Helderberg. The morning proceedings ended with fellowship and light refreshments in the Parish Hall.



A team led by Vice President Ministry CRCSL, Pas Suresh Karmegam, together with Bro Lindsay Melder, Pastors Sunil Gunasekera, M. Sashikumar and Chaminda Ratnayake were responsible for all the planning and preparation which also saw much time spent in prayer for the Lord's blessing. The showers of rain that were persistent through the previous days and continued that morning, ended once the praise and thanksgiving for 381 years of showers of blessings took center stage through a grateful CRC SL Community of diverse ethnicity and language. And one of the fundamentals tenets of the Reformed faith, can say it all, "Soli Deo Gloria" – To God be the glory!

❖ Redeemers Youth Ministry

Redeemers Youth Ministry has embarked on a new six week series entitled "Boundaries", led by Roshni Foenander. The main purpose has been to discover the importance and Biblical implications of good boundaries for healthy relationships. Following the 2nd session of the series held on the 28th of October, there was a screening of the Movie, "The Greatest Showman".

The "Boundaries" series will continue until December, with other Youth building activities in between. Amongst the other plans in the pipeline are a Water day, a Christmas workshop and participation in the Christmas Community Outreach project.

❖ Service of Thanksgiving.

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life and ministry of the late Revd: Neville Koch, was held at the CRC Wellawatte on Monday the 30th of October, 2023 at 5.30 p.m, with the participation of CRC Pastors, representatives of Ecumenical and Evangelical Organisations and others. A representative gathering of family members, church family and friends who were blessed by the ministry of Revd Koch were present. The Sermon was preached by Revd: Charles Jansz, whilst there were many tributes from far and near. A time of fellowship followed over light refreshments. All in all it was a worthy expression of gratitude from a grateful church in Sri Lanka for a ministry that

had spanned almost 27 years and impacted many lives and Christian Organisations.

❖ **Delegation from Helderberg in Sri Lanka.**

A delegation from the DRC Helderberg, part of the “Sri Lanka Project Support Group,” visit from the 2nd to the 21st of November, 2023. Led by Bro. Paul Killian the delegation also included, Sister Louise Theron and Revd: Melanie Smit. Bro Paul and Sis Louise have visited many times before, for Revd: Smit, it was her first time. They primarily were involved visiting the Mission stations they support, namely, Hatton, Rakwana, Kaha-watte and Kalpitiya. They were accompanied on these visits by Pas Karmegam and Revd: Faber. They also renewed the MOU with the CRC SL and Sis Louise and Revd: Smit, conducted a program for the Ladies, at the CRC Dehiwela on Saturday the 18th of November, under the auspices of the CRC SL Women’s Federation, entitled, “Shine for Jesus.”

❖ **CRC SL Pastor’s Retreat -**

A Retreat for all CRC SL Pastors, organized by the Teaching and Training Committee, took place on the 17th and 18th of November, 2023 at the Sanctuary House, Pamunugama, on the theme “Regaining Resilience During Hard Times.” Mr. Paul Navamanie was the Resource Person whilst CRC SL Pastors led the daily devotions and group discussions. Attended by almost all CRC SL Pastors, it was time of being encouraged by the Word of God and also deepening personal relationships.

❖ **In Memoriam.....**

❖ **Phyllis Hesse -**

Phyllis Hesse, passed away in Sydney on the 21st of September, 2023 at the age of 94. A vibrant lady in life and faith, she together with her family were active members of the Regent-Street congregation. Coming from a family where most were closely connected with the CRC – in their times – DRC, that was no surprise. Phyllis involved herself in the many ways possible when it came to the ministry at Regent-Street, prior to her emigration, but also was very much involved in the lives of the Community in Hunupitiya where the family lived. She was sought after for practical help advice and guidance by many and she always reached out to them in the ways she possibly could.

In Sydney too she was very much part of the life of the Church giving of her time and resources.

Even though the last few years of her life, was spent in a nursing home, she continued to be the object of the intense love and care of her family, right to the end.

The tributes paid at the funeral service demonstrated how much love existed in the relationship that she enjoyed with children, grand children and extended family.

“To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.”

❖ **Harold Juriansz.**

Harold Juriansz was the Eldest son in law of the late Reggie Solomons, who was one of the stalwarts of the CRC at Kohuwela. Harold was married to his eldest daughter Charmaine. Harold and Charmaine, also living in Kalubowila used to worship regularly in the Kohuwela Church prior to their emigration to Australia. And it was at Kohuwela, during my Seminary days that we got to know each other and enjoyed a great and meaningful friendship for over five decades, irrespective of the fact that lands and seas separated us through most of that time! Harold sadly passed into the nearer presence of his Saviour on 14th September, 2023, at the age of 86.

Harold and Charmaine, were avid readers of the Herald and during the last few years were also recipients of the Online Messages. They were also eager to hear news from the Church back home and whenever they were on holiday, made it a point to worship in the CRC.

Harold was a Cricketer of reputation, beginning at Wesley as a Wicket keeper batsman and continuing his Cricketing career with the BRC. Amongst the many Cricketing feats that one could recall was his hitting of six sixers in one over, representing Brook Bonds, the Tea firm he was employed with, in the Mercantile Cricket Tournament.

There are so many stories that one could relate from the memory bank that overflows with them, but the most important would be to reflect on his faithful friendship through decades. He was no fair-weather friend. He had and found the time to make contact and stay in touch. Life or settling down to a new life “Down Under”, together with all of the challenges that such relocation brings, did not intrude upon relationships that mattered, whether it was family, extended family, colleagues or friends. He was never too busy to touch base or to extend great hospitality when the occasion demanded. Nor did he forget his roots even though after emi-

gration he relished his Australian citizenry and touted wholeheartedly for the “baggy green” when it came to Cricket. His care for his dear wife through many challenges involving many health issues, is what “Agape” love, is all about. So we do thank God for Harold and the great memories that we can treasure and to our God be all the glory and more !

“A friend is always loyal and a brother is born to help in time of need.” (Prov: 17:17 NLT).

❖ **Dulcie Elia Peiris**

Dulcie Peiris – Auntie Dulcie to those who knew her in Church, passed away in the early hours of Sunday the 1st October, after a brief stay in hospital at the age of ninety one. She was yet another stalwart of the CRC primarily spending most of her Church life at Regent-Street and Maligakande as well.

Living in Maradana many years ago she took great pride and pains in nurturing her children in the Reformed faith, encouraging them to attend Sunday School, Youth Fellowship and as they grew to attend Worship. In her matriarchal way, she led from the front when it came to Church life and ministry. Auntie Dulcie faithfully served, involving herself in whatever way was possible and needed.

When the family moved to the Ragama area she continued to worship until she was able to and always encouraged the children and the grand children to do the same, as far as is possible.

She set the pace when it came to home life and gave the family the direction necessary for their lives and they can all be thankful for what they are today. She was definitely the wind behind the sails of the life of her dear family.

Auntie Dulcie reminds me of the grand mother of Timothy, as mentioned in the Scripture, passing down the faith through spiritual genetics.

As the family quite rightly said in a Tribute at her funeral service, “Her devotion to Jesus was the foundation on which her life was built, a light that guided her through every storm.”

We can thank God today for her faithfulness, love, caring and absolute faith in the Lord – not forgetting her allegiance to the CRC SL – especially to the congregation of Regent-Street. As she now rests in the nearer presence of the

Lord she loved, we can give God thanks every time we remember her.

❖ **Tissa Jayasinghe**

After perhaps a prolonged time in which his health was challenged, the curtain came down on Tissa’s life on Sunday the 22nd of October 2023. Although of a different faith Tissa, was always liberal in his thinking and was very supportive of his dear wife Charmaine who was so very much involved with the Church, when it came to presiding at the Organ or Piano, which she did at one time at the Presbyterian Church at Maya avenue, the CRC Kohuwela and Dehiwela. Tissa who was also musical accompanied Charmaine and their daughter Shaumya on the Violin at a number of the special services at Dehiwela, in the years gone by.

His open mind was always willing to listen to God’s Word at a Worship service, sit through when the Sacrament was administered privately at home and respectfully participated in the prayers offered during the numerous personal and family occasions. He always encouraged Charmaine and Shaumya in the service of the Lord whether it involved coming with them to a service, driving them to and fro and even when it came to supporting financially some ministry and mission of the Church. It was a couple of years ago that Tissa and Charmaine, made a substantial financial contribution to the Dehiwala Church.

One would recall the good food, great hospitality and the fun times we have enjoyed on the special occasions that were part of his life and I always prayed with him on his birthday, irrespective whether there was a “happening” or not. This year I thought I should make a visit on that special day. To my surprise, it was so different from my other visits during these past few months. Seated up he carried out a good conversation with me during a stay of about 20 minutes. Not once did he cough – which he was seriously prone to, during the past few months and as usual the visit ended with a prayer of thanksgiving and commendation of both him and Charmaine to the Lord’s gracious care.

His neighbourliness was demonstrated in so many ways – from sharing food and the fruits in his garden to even bringing “leaves” for our pet tortoises, during the times when such things were scarce and vendors did not turn up.

So we can join his family and thank God for Tissa. For an amiable life well lived with malice to none and charity to all. For Tissa, charity definitely began at home but never did it end there.

❖ Church Register

❖ Deaths.

"Forever with the Lord..."

Dulcie Peiris, on Sunday 1st October, 2023, of the Regent-Street Congregation.

Tissa Jayasinghe, on Sunday 22nd October, 2023, of the Dehiwela Congregation

Leslie Reimers, on Wednesday 8th November, 2023 of the Kohuwela Congregation.



(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.).

CRCSL Pastors Resilient At Pamunugama.



RESILIENCE

මෙය 50:7
HEB 12: 3
1 SAM 30:6
PSA 37: 23, 24
PROV 24:16
FULL VALUE CONTRACT
F.V.C
1. DON'T DISCOUNT YOU
2. DON'T DISCOUNT OTHERS
3. DON'T DISCOUNT LESSONS
4. DON'T DISCOUNT APPLICATIONS

(Pics by Revd: Faber, Pastors Yogarajah and Karmegam).

Sermon Preached by The Revd: Charles Jansz at the 381st Trilingual Thanksgiving Service –

Saturday 7th Oct, 2023 at the CRC Dehiwela.

Introduction.

Dear friends, we are gathered here this morning to give God thanks and acknowledge His leading and guidance through 381 years of Denominational life. It is good to have all of you here, inspite of the extreme weather and I also welcome all those with us via livestream. The theme of this service is **"Renewal and Revival"** –and the invitation I received to preach suggested that the purpose of the message in keeping with the theme, should be to urge the CRC SL family to renew their commitment to worship and serve the CRC SL where they belong. And I would try to stay within those parameters. The very words "revival/renewal" say that something is alive but is about to die...it is struggle with life and needs to be awakened..so the words mean to have life, to remain alive and to sustain life.

We are familiar with Revival meetings where most of the time people are shaken for a moment but not stirred. At such meetings it is not so much revival that is sought but increased church attendance...more baptisms, professions of faith etc is not revival as important and good those things may be. As someone said, **"Revival has little to do with reigniting the dulled emotions of Christians but rather it is the intense realization of the one great need to renew our relationship with God."**

If you are a non Christian you don't need revival you need regeneration.... if you are a Christian then there is a good chance that we would need a few revivals ...so what do we need for renewal and revival in the CRC today... in keeping with the suggestion in the invitation letter...I would say three things that we need...

A. The Realization that we are the body of Christ.

In the NT the church is described with many metaphors...but the Apostle Paul while writing to the Roman believers gives a powerful analogy of the human body to explain what the church is and should be...Rom 12: 4 and 5, *"For just as each of us has one body with many members and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."*

The word "church" is so often used out of context. The word in the NT comes from the greek term "ekklesia," which is formed from two greek words meaning, "an assembly" and "to call out," or "called out ones."

Let us establish who really is in charge of the church. Eph 1: 22 -23, *“And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.”* In summary , the NT church is a body of believers who have been called out from the world by God to live as His people under the authority of Jesus Christ.

So in the CRC SL we must believe that Christ is the head of the church and we are all members of His body with designated responsibilities and authority.

Think of how the body works. The human body is one of the most complex organizations that exists. Intricately and beautifully created by God. In a perfectly healthy person all these parts are working together for the common good of the whole body. Just imagine what happens if these parts do not cooperate with each other and stop functioning the way they are supposed to function, worst of all if they start working against each other and fight against each other. Could that body survive or thrive? Absolutely not!

The Apostle Paul brings this parallel truth to the body of Christ, almost in a warning way. Understanding this concept as the body of Christ can radically change the way we look at ourselves, others and in general the Church. As certain as a physical body cannot function efficiently without the cooperation of other parts, so does a local body of Christ. Only with the cooperation of its members and doing their job selflessly , sacrificially and tirelessly, the church will survive and thrive.

B. The Recognition that we belong to each other.

What does it take to be Church today in a highly individualistic, self sufficient, self reliant and do it yourself culture? To be the Church that God wants us to be, we need to realize that we cannot do it ourselves and we need others to help us along. That was what the Apostle Paul was so passionately communicating to the Roman believers. They were part of the body of Christ and they could not do it by themselves but were in need of other members of their own survival. In order to make them understand he gives them two principles to be the Church ,**Recognition** and **Release**.

We need to recognize in Christ we are many, yet we belong to each other. This recognition is very critical for our survival. I encourage all of you to think about that seriously. There is a place for you in the CRC SL, you belong here, we need you and cannot do without you. Those of us who are already serving need to recognize that we are primarily serving Christ

and one another. Joni Erickson Tada once said, "believers are never told to become one; we are already one and are expected to act like that."

This recognition also includes the truth that each of us is uniquely gifted by God and these gifts are for serving the Church and others. In Romans 8 Paul mentions eight gifts...that section is for an elaborate study on another day...but for now we need to recognize that God gave each of us a special gift for serving the church and others which leads me to my third point....

C. The Release of our gifts to serve the body.

This is the second principle I mentioned earlier...We need to Release ourselves in our gifts to serve the body of Christ. Any ministry is a gift, not a privilege. The Holy Spirit determines who to give those gifts, therefore we have nothing to boast, except to humbly receive them by faith. The Apostle Peter writing to the persecuted church encourages them to use their unique gifts....**1 Pet 4: 7 - 10.** *"The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. **Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.**"*

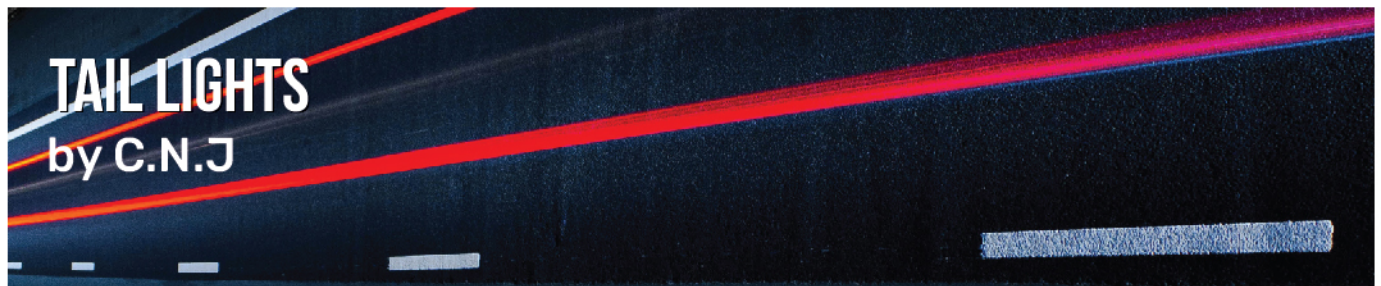
The Apostle Paul shows us how we can use our gifts and be the Church; vss 9 - 13 ***"Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people, who are in need. Practice hospitality"***.

The message of both Peter and Paul is one and same. Each of us is given a special gift, not for ourselves but for the purpose of serving others. We should release ourselves in our gifting. When I look at the CRC SL today, we see some of these ministries happening. We are blessed to have faithful people in leadership....dedicated Pastors, gifted lay people, anointed worship leaders, committed and passionate young people, delightful children, caring and loving people, gifted in hospitality, technically creative people, people burdened for prayer and missions, mercy oriented people ready to serve the practical needs of those marginalized. And we do thank God for them. If you want to use your gift to serve God and one another, there is a place for you here. Talk to your leadership. Get involved. The best would be done to see you released in your gifting. The Lord needs you so does the CRC SL.

I hope that the CRC SL in this new year of Church life will move within and without its borders, connecting and being the salt and light in tangible ways. Through our love for God and for one another many would be brought into the Kingdom. Recognizing that Christ is the head and we are all members of the body, let us learn to release the potential within us to serve Christ and this part of His body.

Duncan Campbell once said, "The Kingdom of God is not going to be advanced by our Churches becoming filled with people, but by people in our churches, becoming filled with God". Someone else said, "Revival has nothing to do with the church itself, it has everything to do with the people that make up the church." It starts with each individual person; It fails in each individual person. We have to make a choice to make it work ! That choice is yours and mine ! Amen!





NAME TAG SUNDAY !



The other day I was reading a news item in a Magazine I receive which mentioned that a Pastor in a particular church had instituted a "Name Tag Sunday" Setting Sundays apart with a particular theme is not surprising, after all have we known "Unity Sunday," "World Communion Sunday," "Mission Sunday" "Bring a friend Sunday," "Pastor's appreciation Sunday," and on an even lighter note, "Coffee Sunday" ! But "Name Tag Sunday" was kind of brand new for me.

The strategy was simple. Everyone arriving for the Worship was given a name tag. In spite of a few groaners, mostly everyone tagged up it seems. At the end of the service, the Pastor remained at the door to greet the leavers...but no one seemed to leave...everyone was socializing! Ever since that day, at every gathering all were given name tags. Apart from helping to remember names, it also took down any formal barriers and encouraged people to meet, greet and talk to one another.

I thought it was a good practical idea to make social engagement take shape in the Church, which is lacking with most... other than those "clicking!" And even some of the leadership cannot name those who are part of the Church family though some have been part of the family for years. So identity is usually by height, weight, complexion, hair style or the seat they occupy!

Then, I was gratefully reminded of the many texts in the Bible which mentions that God knows us by name! Ex 33: 7, Isa 43:1, John 10: 14 & 15 etc....how amazing is this ! He knows us apart, even if we have the same first name !! And that is foundational to the truth that He loves and cares for us.

This is amazing since it is the Salvation story as well but there is more **when I know His Name !** His Saving Name. His Healing Name. His powerful Name. In the Church family let us strive to be literate knowing names of those who are part of us – but also make sure we know the Name of Jesus – since there is no other Name under heaven, by which we could be saved !

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