

# The Herald

· OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF SRI LANKA ·



*Jesus is*  
**ALIVE**  
**FOR EVERMORE!**

REVELATION 1:18

“RESURRECTION CHANGES EVERYTHING” - SEE INSIDE  
ALSO INSIDE - “DYING AND RISING”

# EASTER - CHANGES EVERYTHING !



Some of you would remember the song by Andrew Lloyd Weber, "Love changes everything." Beautiful lyrics that highlight the power of love. I found two of the lines most interesting..."Love changes everything, hands, faces, earth and sky...Love changes everything, **how you live and how you die!**".

In keeping with the theme of the Herald for this Quarter, I thought I could easily replace the word "Love" with the word "Easter" or "Resurrection" for truly Easter and the Resurrection change everything, especially how we live - living in the **power** of the resurrection – and how we die – with the **hope** of the Resurrection.

In the greatest chapter of the Resurrection in the Bible – 1 Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul makes his case for the importance of the Resurrection of Jesus by emphasizing the opposite. What if Christ had not been raised ? What then ? He then goes on to spell out a whole series of things that would have devastating consequences for the Christian and for the Christian faith (not forgetting the Church).

Beginning with verse 14, the Apostle Paul lists six consequences If the Resurrection of Jesus did not take place. The Apostles preaching (and ours too) is useless.,14. Our faith is empty and futile, 17. The Apostles are false witnesses, so we know nothing about God.(15). We are still in our sins (17). Those who have died in Christ are lost (18). And we are pathetically deluded, living in a world of make believe (19).

After having painted such a horribly dark picture, he changes everything with the use of the little word "But" ! This three letter word changes everything in the passage, just like the Resurrection changes how we live and how we die. This is the Easter truth that matters and that makes the difference..."*But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep*"(20) And if that is the truth, then our faith in Christ isn't useless. It is the key to everything. Then the Apostles have not misrepresented God. Their message is the truth. Then we are no longer in our sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ are not lost but in the many rooms in the Father's house. Then we are not the deluded people , living in a world of make believe, but rather people to be envied, since we have the secret of life everlasting.

So, the Resurrection truly changes everything. Because Jesus lives we can face today and tomorrow, and live sustained by His

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power and when the curtain comes down on our lives in earth, we have the hope of the Resurrected life. As Jesus Himself said to Martha at the funeral house in Bethany, "I am the Resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live and whoever lives and believes in Me, will never die..." ( St John 11: 25/26. The Resurrection changes everything. But the question remains, has it done so for us ??



## MEDITATION



By Sis Gayathri Duckworth

# The Resurrection Changes Everything

I remember a time when our National identity cards were checked at numerous checkpoints where the armed forces would determine whether we were a threat to national security or safe civilians. This was a common occurrence during the civil war that spanned over 30 years in our country. Our identity was everything that ensured us safe passage to our homes. The Resurrection is everything to our faith and it changes a significant part of our existence: our identity.

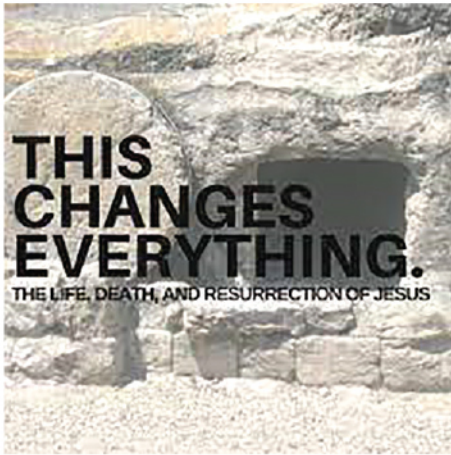
As a born again Christian, I have experienced the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a joyous occasion of complete spiritual renewal and transformation. The death of Jesus was the necessary sacrifice for my sins, but the resurrection, was the victory. It is by His resurrection that I can live life in victory each day. As Galatians 6:15 states : "It doesn't matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation." Through the Resurrection, I am being raised up to a new life as I experience growth. I have received a new nature, a changed identity through my faith in Christ and I have a relationship with Him.

I am being reformed, restored and transformed by Jesus. I can begin to see suffering, grief, loss and all the brokenness around me through a new lens and truly see God's Grace, mercy and peace in all that surrounds me. We must reflect, with grateful hearts, on the spiritual renewal, forgiveness of sins and the new life that we have received, giving thanks for the privilege of finding our identity in Christ, living in accordance with God's will, which will ultimately deliver us safe to our heavenly home.

*(Sis. Gayathri is the Superintendent of the English Sunday School of CRC Wellawatte and a student of the Counselling program at the Colombo Theological Seminary)*

# RESURRECTION CHANGES EVERYTHING

by The Revd: Bernard Bocks.



Christians all over the World celebrate the resurrection of Christ Jesus on Easter Sunday faithfully and joyfully. Sunday has become special because of the resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus is genuine and glorious and has made an impact and brought changes that is a blessing indeed. Therefore the resurrection has to be stressed and remembered always in our Churches. I wish you all a meaningful Easter which brings hope and lasting happiness. The topic in this article must awaken us to realize and reckon the changes it has on Christ's position and power, the sad destiny of human-

ity, the power of the Christian and the impact and the changes upon the Church. As I write about this important topic I must honestly and humbly say that the resurrection of Christ has and will bring changes in everything. Let us learn its changes and bring a great desire to change our lives and serve faithfully.

Jesus the carpenter's Son was indeed humiliated and belittled and then was crucified at Calvary shamefully before a large mixed crowd but Jesus experienced resurrection to life as He claimed (John 2:18-22; Luke 24:6-7). Further the beautiful appearances of Christ after the resurrection made to individuals and groups as recorded in the Gospels and the brief recording in 1 Cor 15:5-8 by the Apostle Paul testify that Christ's resurrection event showed the view held in Jesus's day was imperfect. Thus Christ's resurrection cannot be dismissed.

Let us now focus on the changes the resurrection made on Christ our Lord. Let us firstly see in regards to His position. The Apostle Peter in the sermon on the day of Pentecost says that Jesus was called to the right hand of God (Acts 2:33a) The Apostle Paul says that Jesus was made to sit at His right hand in the heavenly realms. Further he says that Jesus is far above all rule, authority, power and domain and every title. Paul the Apostle says that God placed all things under His feet (Eph 1:20b, 21-22b). He was made head over everything (Eph 1:22b) Paul also says that Jesus will be the future Judge (Acts 17:30-31) and His name is exalted (Phil 2:9-11). In Christ's lofty position could He make an impact or bring change on the social, political and other structures He can. Further be involved in the future activities with God for He reigns with Him. The resurrection of Christ guaranties that God will one day transform all creation (1Cor 15:20-28). Secondly let us see the changes on His power He enables us to have the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33; John 7:39) which did happen. Christ resurrection will be able to free us from the curse of sin and its power. Further from death and free us from the devil (Rom 6:11-14; Heb 2:14-15) we will after death enjoy the resurrection (1 Cor 15:13,21).

The resurrection of Christ gives hope that the destiny of humanity and their cultures can be restored from sin and death and experience Christ if they believe. Further enjoy the resurrection. The resurrection of Christ has changed and will change humanity and their cultures in the future to live for Him.

Let us see the changes the resurrection brings upon the power of Christians, they are secure with Christ (Eph 2: 4, 6) and enjoy the new birth and a living hope (1 Peter 1:3). These blessings will enable Christians to overcome temptations the power of sin (Rom 6:10-14) and discern situations (Rom 8:35-39) because we have the love of Christ. Therefore we can be more than conquerors in Christ. (Rom 8:37). We too will enjoy the resurrection (1Cor 15:42ff). As God's workmanship we are able in doing good works thus Christians can be fruitful and excel (Eph 2:10).

Let us see the impact and changes made on the Church by the resurrection for if Jesus Christ was not raised we will not have the Church but the Church began with Pentecost and thereafter grew steadily. The Church the body of Christ (Rom 12:5; Eph 1:22-23) was able to enjoy His power and presence. Jesus in His great commission to the disciples shows its truth (Matt 28:18 ff). Thus the Church can be fruitful and enjoy His peace and be strong. The Church has the responsibility to proclaim and teach the resurrection not only on Easter Sunday but in all situations. Thus all who listen and experience transformation will be able to honor Christ through their lives. The resurrection power can enable the Church to be united and in that make her presence felt in the Church and the society. The resurrection must guide the Church to grow and be fruitful.

As I conclude this article I would like to ask you to thank God for the resurrection. May the peace of the resurrection be with you always and strengthen you.

*( Revd: Bocks who served the English congregation at Regent-Street in a Pastoral capacity, continues to make use of opportunities to preach, teach and write. – Ed.)*



## ***Has The Resurrection changed anything?***

For hundreds of years, the prophets in Israel had foretold the coming of a Saviour. Then, in the fulness of time—about 2000 years ago—God sent forth His Son, Jesus of Nazareth. At the age of thirty, Jesus began His public ministry. He was a worker of mighty miracles, but he was more than this. He was God; and because He claimed to be God, He was crucified.

**Jesus Himself had said** that He would suffer many things and be crucified but that He would rise again on the third day. When His enemies asked for a sign that He was the Son of God, Jesus said that He would give them one sign—the sign of Jonah the prophet. He explained,

***"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."***  
***(Matthew 12:40)***

In effect, Jesus said, ***"I will be crucified, but I will rise again on the third day. My resurrection will prove that I am what I claim to be."***

### **The Risen Christ appeared to His disciples**

**He was crucified, and He did rise again on the third day.** After His resurrection, the Lord Jesus was on the earth forty days. During this time, He was seen by many of His followers, on one occasion by a group of 500. The first to have the joy of seeing Him was Mary Magdalene. Later He appeared to ten of the apostles with Thomas absent. When the disciples told Thomas that Jesus had risen, he did not believe them. Jesus appeared to the apostles again, and this time Thomas was present. When he saw the Lord Jesus, Thomas worshipped Him saying, "...my Lord and my God." (John 20:28)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the greatest facts of all history. Each year Christians the world over celebrate His resurrection from the dead. But what does this great event really mean?

#### **1) The Resurrection proved Christ's claims**



Jesus said, ***"I and My Father are one."*** (John 10:30) And ***"He who has seen Me has seen the Father."*** (John 14:9)

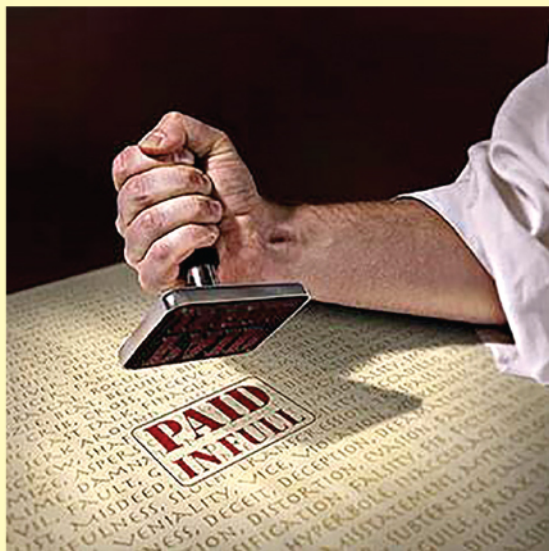
If Jesus Christ were not what He claimed to be, He would be an imposter and a deceiver and could not even be called a good man. But His resurrection proves that He is exactly what He claimed to be.

The Bible says that Jesus Christ is ***"declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead."*** (Romans 1:4)

This is the meaning of the resurrection—that **Jesus Christ is God**, and everything He said is true. Our Chris-

tian faith rests upon His resurrection, and our faith is not in vain.

### 2) The Resurrected Lord paid our sin debt



Jesus said, "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28) He did give His life in payment for our sins, and the resurrection shows us that God has fully accepted that payment, and that our sins are forgiven.

**In ancient days, when a man owed a debt and could not pay it, he was cast into a debtor's prison. He remained there until the debt was paid. If he was seen out of prison later, it meant one thing—the debt had been paid.**

We owed a great debt of sin—"the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23) We could not pay it,

but the Lord Jesus went into the debtor's prison of death for us. He remained there three days and three nights, and then He came forth alive forever more. He is a living Savior, and His resurrection proves that our debt of sin has been fully paid. And the wonderful thing is that God not only forgives our sins for Jesus' sake, but He forgets them! God says, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." (Hebrews 10:17)

### 3) The Resurrection opened the gateway to life



Jesus said, "Because I live, you will live also." (John 14:19) Because of the resurrection, death need hold no fear for Christians. Those who have received Christ have everlasting life, and no power in the universe can take that life from them. For Christians, death is not the end of life but rather the gateway into real life.

**Because of their faith in the resurrection,** Christians of all ages have been able to face death without fear. Dr. J.G. Fleming tells how that the rebels during the Boxer Rebellion in China, captured a mission school, blocked

all gates but one, and placed a cross on the ground before it. Word was sent in that anyone who trampled on that cross could go free but that anyone who would not trample on it would be killed. The first seven of the young people trampled on the cross and were allowed to go free. The eighth, a girl, knelt before the cross and was shot instantly. All the rest in a line of a hundred students followed her example.



These young people believed in the resurrection, and they were willing to lay down their lives for their faith. They are alive today in heaven, and they will always be honored in a special way as those who laid down their lives for their Savior.

#### 4) The Resurrection proclaimed the Good News



The Gospel is good news, and the good news is that God's Son died for our sins and rose again the third day to be our living Savior. If you will open your heart to Him, He will gladly come in. He will be your friend during this pilgrim journey on earth: and then one day, He will take you to live with Him forever in Heaven.

Because of the resurrection, the Apostle Paul actually looked forward to death. He said,

*"For me to live is Christ [His life in me], and to die is gain."*  
(Philippians 1:21)

Death can be the greatest gain or be the greatest loss. ***It all depends on what you do with Jesus.***

Happy Easter!

# Youth Page

**Edited By: Joshua Aldons**

## Dig Deeper

Jesus has Risen! He has conquered death & has extended his hand to you to join Him in His Kingdom for Eternity.

The Good News is out there!

What are you going to do with this Good News?

Do your non-Christian friends know about it?

Eternal Life will be boring without them, so spread the word ! Make it #GoViral!





# Just For Laughs

**Why was Jesus so popular after his resurrection?**

Because he really knew how to "rise" to the occasion

**Why was Jesus such a great gardener after his resurrection?**

Because he knew how to bring the dead back to life!

**What did the angel say to the Roman soldiers guarding Jesus' tomb?**

"You're guarding a tomb that's not meant to be a final resting place, but a place of resurrection - talk about job security!"

A priest and a taxi driver both died and went to heaven. St. Peter was at the gate waiting for them.

'Come with me,' said St. Peter to the taxi driver.

The taxi driver followed St Peter to a mansion. It had everything you could imagine from a bowling alley to an Olympic size pool.

'Wow, thank you,' said the taxi driver.

Next, St. Peter led the priest to a rough old shack with a bunk bed and a little old television set.

'Wait, I think you are a little mixed up,' said the priest. 'Shouldn't I be the one who gets the mansion? After all, I was a priest, went to church every day, and preached God's word.'

'Yes, that's true, but during your Easter sermons people slept. When the taxi driver drove, everyone prayed.'





## Children's Page

Hi Boys and Girls,

Have you ever wondered why everyone is always talking about eggs around Easter?!

Eggs usually represent a new life. When a chick is inside an egg it doesn't walk around or eat or do anything really. But once it hatches it has a completely different life. It can eat and scratch the ground and chase its siblings and grow! Being hatched changes everything!

But what does that have to do with Jesus?

On Easter, we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. That's a pretty big word huh? But **Resurrection** simply means to rise from being dead.

That's not something you and I can do and it's definitely not a magic trick! It was a miracle! And when Jesus rose from the dead, He changed everything. Jesus made a way for us to be with God forever and that is definitely something to celebrate! Yay!

Have a blessed Easter!

Lots of love,  
Aunty Mandy.

## Make a resurrection garden!

Here's a fun activity you can do with a little help from an adult.

You will need:

- **A shallow pot or plate for the base**
- **A small terracotta pot**
- **a stone to close the 'tomb'**
- **A few small stones to decorate**
- **Potting soil**
- **Some grass/moss or small plants to cover the 'tomb'**
- **Small sticks to make the crosses**



# The Easter Story

Based on Matthew 26-29, Mark 14-16, Luke 22-24, and John 14 & 18-20



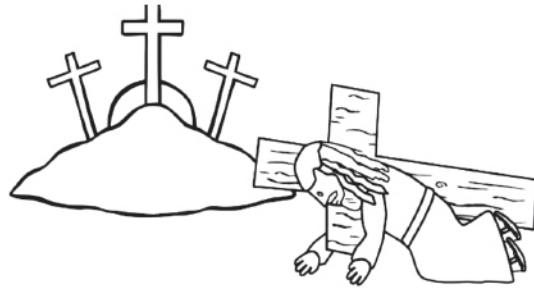
It was Passover. Jesus ate a special meal with his friends. He took some bread and wine. Jesus thanked God for the bread and wine. Then, he gave some to his friends. Jesus told them, "When you do this, think of me."

1



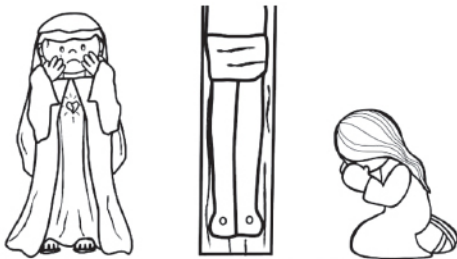
Jesus went to pray in the garden. He prayed for God's will to be done. While Jesus was there, soldiers came to take him away.

2



The soldiers took Jesus even though he had done nothing wrong. The leaders did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. They put Jesus on a cross.

3



Jesus died on the cross. His friends were very sad. They had forgotten what Jesus had said. Jesus had told his friends that he would



Jesus' friends put his body in a tomb. After three days, there was an earthquake. An angel of the Lord came down from heaven. The angel rolled the stone away.

5



Jesus came to see his friends. He showed them his hands and feet. Jesus was alive!



Jesus told his friends that he would come back again. Soon, he was taken up into heaven. Jesus died on the cross to save us

# Embracing the other



This is the fifth and last article in our series on marriage based on Tim Keller's book, *The Meaning of Marriage*. There is still one area we have not dealt with, and that is gender specific roles in marriage. I know that this is a controversial subject today, even in the church, but that is no reason to not talk about it.

I think it helps to start at the Beginning, to look at God's purpose for marriage and gender roles. We know that God created man and women equal in the garden, both were given the mandate to care for the garden and to multiply. Genesis 2 tells us that among all the things in the creation that were good, when God looked at Adam He said it was "not good" for him to be alone. So, he used a rib from Adam to make Eve as a "helper" for Adam, a companion. Many people take the word helper to mean servant, but that is not the meaning in Hebrew. The work "ezer" in the Old Testament is mostly used to refer to God as our helper, certainly not a subservient role. It can also be used when the military is called to "help" in a battle. The idea is to "make up what is lacking in another person with your strength". That was God's idea when he created Eve.

The word "suitable" also carries the idea of being complementary, Literally, it would be "like-opposite", they are "two pieces of a puzzle that fit together because they are not exactly alike, not randomly different, but they are differentiated, such that together they can create a complete whole."

No one can deny that men and women are very different in physical and emotional makeup. God created us different, but equal, so we could be complementary, sharing the load, and meeting all the needs. When you think of raising children, you can see the value in the differences. Women should not ignore the differences and try to be "like men", but to understand the gift of who God meant us to be. It is not that we can't do what the man can do, but that we need to find what roles God has made for us. What fits best with the way he made YOU! This can vary between individuals. It requires some thought as to how to apply it in your marriage.

In Philippians 2:5-11 we see Jesus as the "servant" submitting to the Father in his role as the sacrifice for our sins. We talked in earlier articles about men taking the "Jesus role" to love their wives as Christ loved the Church (Eph. 5:25-30) This is an example for women to take the "Jesus role" by submitting to their husbands in the same way as Jesus did in order to secure our salvation. This fulfills the "helper" role.

Let me quote Kathy Keller:

This is one part of the glory of marriage, in the Biblical conception. Two people of different sexes make the commitment and sacrifice that is involved in embracing the Other. It is often painful and always complicated, but it helps us grow and mature in ways no other experience can produce, and it brings about deep unity because of the profound complementarity between the sexes. This has nothing to do with who brings home the biggest salary or who makes the most sacrifices to care for the children...the tender, serving authority of a husband's headship and the strong, gracious gift of a wife's submission restore us to who we are meant to be at creation."

Within our homes we can be a window to a restored society, where gender leads us to deeper understanding of ourselves and our spouse, with men as the "servant leader" and women as the "strong helper."



You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5-11

## Family Page..... Contd.....

The Bible is not very specific on how this should be worked out in the home, other than through examples in various Bible stories. Everyone knows that women are more nurturing, hence they have the child rearing roles, (1 Peter 3:1-2, 4). I always encourage women that if they can it is good to be at home when the kids are little, but sometimes that is not possible.

In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives.

Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. 1 Peter 3:1-4

Men are directed more often to lead, provide for and protect, but that doesn't alleviate them from responsibility in training their children (Eph. 6:4, 1Tim. 3:8). What if there are no jobs out there for them? They should not be threatened if their wives have bigger salaries or positions than they do. And if it is necessary for the wife to work outside the home, the husband should always be ready to help with matters in the home.

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord. Ephesians 6:4

Discuss these things and work them out.

Even the Kellers explain that at one time they became overextended and Kathy had to go to work for a while in order to make ends meet. This meant that Tim had to take care of the children getting off to school, etc. We all have to adjust to make the household work smoothly. We should not leave everything to do with "home" to the wife. And if you read about the excellent wife in Proverbs 31, she wasn't sitting around at home watching teledramas. She also was doing what she could to increase the income of the home.



Marriage can help us as individuals by looking at situations we face in different ways. By living closely with this person who is "like-opposite", so different from you, you can begin to see the world as they do, gaining their perspective, and responding more

appropriately. If we try to understand the others perspective, to "embrace it" so to speak, we can achieve a unity more like the one God created for us, before sin messed up our relationships.

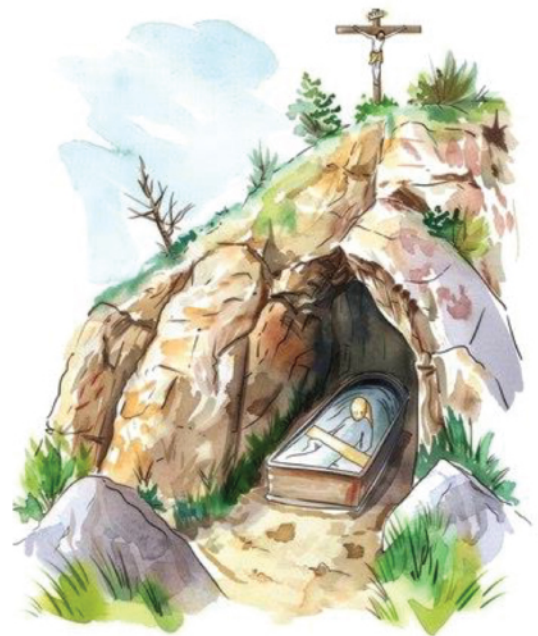
Just think of the example we will be to the world around us.

Quotes from: ***The Meaning of Marriage***, Tim Keller, with Kathy Keller. Penguin Books, New York, 2011. I recommend you read the book if possible as I could not possibly cover all the relevant points, or say things as well as Tim and Kathy Keller. There are also chapters on singleness and marriage and sex and marriage.

### Questions to discuss with your spouse:

1. What did the roles of husband and wife look like in your home when you were growing up? How is that different in your home now?
2. What do you think the Bible says about roles in marriage? How does that fit with modern ideals?
3. Discuss some ways you can help each other use your roles to enhance your marriage partnership, to embrace the otherness of your spouse.

*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+++



### ❖ Christmas, Watchnight and New Year Events and Services.

Christmas day worship services were held in all local churches with an increased attendance as usual. Carol services took place on the Sunday before whilst New Year Services at which the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed in most Churches took place on the 1st of January 2024. The Traditional Watchnight Service was held at Dehiwela, followed by a time of fellowship over breakfast.

The Annual Carol Service of the Women's Federation of the CRC SL was held on Saturday 2nd December, 2023, at the CRC Wellawatte. The WMU's of the Local Churches together with the Women's Fellowships involving the Women from all the language streams came together to present special items signifying their oneness in Christ. Each local church presented part of the Nativity story using their talents for the glory of God.

Following the program, over 250 women enjoyed a time of fellowship over light refreshments.

This year too ladies of the congregations contributed items for Hampers which were distributed to needy families from the churches in Matara and Kahatagasdigiliya. It was certainly a meaningful way to celebrate the greatest giving when our faithful God gave us His only begotten son to be our Saviour.

The Annual Christmas get together and Dinner for the Ministry workers and Denominational Staff and families was held on the 1st of December, 2023 at Calvin Hall. As in the years gone by a great time of fellowship and food was enjoyed by all. "Santa Claus" made his presence felt again with gifts for the children and an abundance of sweets thrown into the air, that saw many scrambling to get their hands on one or more.

### ❖ Wellawatte Sunday School

The third Annual "Sprout For Life" tree planting campaign was held on the 19th of November, 2023 to also commemorate the 115th anniversary of the English Language Sunday School of the CRC Wellawatte. The children of the Sunday School planted fruit and other trees in the Church premises. Gayathri Duckworth gives leadership to the Sunday School, as Superintendent.



### ❖ Community Outreach

The Community Outreach programme of the Dehiwela Diaconate continues to provide dry rations on a regular basis to the poor and needy of the Dehiwela Community. The last programme took place on the 24th of February 2024. 152 packs of dry rations consisting of Rice, Dhal, Sugar and Flour were distributed.



Shalini Ferreira together with Tamara Rebeira with the support of Revd: Stanley Nelson and Pas Sunil Gunasekera and many from Dehiwela English congregation sustain this outreach ministry.



### ❖ Caring Hands.

"Caring Hands" is combined ministry of the Dehiwela English, Sinhala and Tamil Congregations, to which Roshni Foenander gives leadership. Mindful of the issue of Malnutrition that is affecting many of the School going children, especially from State Schools, this ministry serves cooked food twice a month, to the children of the Presbyterian Girls School, the Tamil Mixed School and the Little Lambs Montessori. Together with Roshni, many oth-

ers are involved in the work of this ministry, including Revd: Stanley Nelson, Pastor Sunil Gunaskera, Revd: Charles Jansz, Sis Rose Nelson, Sis Rohini Perera, Sis Melani Gunasekera, Sis Helen Rebeira, Bro Lasitha Wijeratne, Gabriella Jesudhason, Avel Nicholas, Vellimalar, Sashikala and many others who help with the cooking, washing up, cleaning, purchasing etc.

Roger Foenander and David Mutton from Australia are in the frontline providing resources whilst there is much financial support locally as well, with the Dehiwela Diaconate sustaining any shortfall. The last effort on the 1st of February, 2024, fed 195 children and adults.



❖ **Travel.**

The Rev Faber and Rev Nelson took part in the General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN) held from the 30th of January to the 3rd of February this year. The CRCSL was restored to the sister church relationship in 2014 with the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (Liberated) (RCN-L) a federation of orthodox, reformed churches in The Netherlands. The RCN and RCN-L formed a Committee for Relations Abroad (CRA) on the 1st of May 2023. The “Verre Naasten” (Distant Neighbours) and “Steunpunt Kerkenwerk” (Church Work Support Centre) located at the CRA secretariat have been assigned to facilitate this work. CRCSL is also a beneficiary of this work.

The synod dealt with subject matters such as ‘Responding to LGBTQ+ within the church community’ ‘being a confessing church while living the confessed faith’, and ‘Gospel and Muslims.’ The delegates also visited the community centre and drop-in centre in a multicultural part of Utrecht. The visit to the Theological University of Utrecht enabled exploring the possibility of benefitting from our reformed heritage. Rev Nelson was interviewed by a publication on the topic of rituals and reformed

traditions from African and Asian viewpoints.

The visit also provided an opportunity to discuss a comprehensive project proposal for the Conservation of ancient church buildings of CRCSL that are protected under the Archaeological Act with Sri Lanka and Netherlands Foundation.

❖ **Office Bearers – Dehiwela WMU.**

The Dehiwela WMU AGM which took place on the 9th of December, saw the following appointed to Office for 2024.

President: Gayathrie Wijeratne.

Vice-President: Vino Schubert.

Secretary: Ranmuthu Aldons.

Asst Sec: Sherine Lowe.

Treasurer: Bawani Jacob.

Committee: Nirmalie Felsing, Carmelita Labrooy, Bernie Jayasekera, Sheryl Jameel.

❖ **Dehiwela Local Consistory Office Bearers 2024.**

The Dehiwela Local Consistory Office Bearers for 2024 is as follows:

President: Revd: Charles Jansz.

Secretary: Sis Tamara Rebeira. Asst Sec: Bro: Lindsay Melder.

Treasurer: Bro Shane Ingram Asst Treas: Bro. Marlon Jansz.

Diaconal/Mission Fund Treasurer: Bro. Marlon Jansz.

Diaconal Coordinator: Bro. Lindsay Melder.

GCEC Representative: - Pastor Clement Yogarajah.

Presbytery Elder: Bro. Steve Schubert.

Warden: Bro. Jerome Marianayagam Asst Warden: Bro. Lasitha Wijeratne.

Community Outreach : Sis Tamara Rebeira (E), Caring Hands: Sis Roshni Foenander (E), Pas Sunil Gunasekera (S), Revd: Stanley Nelson (T) Sunday School Rep: Bro. Lasitha Wijeratne.

WMU Rep: Vacant.

“Little Lambs” Montessori Rep: Bro. Lindsay Melder.

RYM Rep: Bro. Marlon Jansz.

Teaching and Training: Revd: Stanley Nelson.

Auditors: - Local Accts: Bro: Bevin Mack General Accts: Bro. Steve Schubert, Bro Marlon Jansz, Sis Roshni Foenander.

❖ **CRC SL Office Bearers 2024.**

At the AGM held on Friday the 8th of March, 2024, the following were elected – President: Pastor Lakmal Wijeratne.



Vice-Presidents: Pastor Pepchal Rickson (Ministry) Bro: Steve Schubert (Administration).  
Secretary: Bro Christopher Fernando  
Asst Sec: Bro Liyanage Abeywickrema.  
Treasurer: Bro. Alex Duckworth.  
Asst Treas: Bro. Shane Ingram.  
Book Keeper: Bro. Marlon Jansz.  
Convenors: Missions – Pastor Sunil Gunasekera, Diaconate – Pastor Chaminda Ratnayake, Teaching and Training: Revd: Charles Jansz.

❖ **CRC SL Womens Federation Office Bearers 2024.**

At the AGM held on Saturday 9th March, 2024, the following were elected to serve...  
President: Rochelle Ratnayake.  
Vice Pres Tamil – Shama Paul.  
Vice Pres English – Sherine Bocks.  
Secretary – Rose Nelson.  
Asst Sec Sinhala – Rohini Perera.  
Asst Sec English – Diana Labrooy.  
Treasurer – Vino Schubert.  
Asst Treas: Sanjina Daniel.

❖ **Seminary Students.**

Mr. Rohan Fernando and Mr Pasindu Madhava were accepted as full time Seminary Students and would follow Theological Training at the Colombo Theological Seminary.

They also signed the Bond that is mandatory for those who join in this capacity. They join, Christian Jeshuran and Vijith Kumara Jayapala who are working towards completing their Theological Education.

❖ **Church Register**

❖ **Wedding.**

*“What God has joined together...”*

Shannan Oswald Salgado and Nima-sha Charuni Hopwood on the 23rd of February, 2023, at the CRC Dehiwela.

❖ **Baptism.**

*“For the promise is unto you and to your children ...”*

Leraan Mikesh Nathaniel, infant son of Lasitha and Nilu Wijeratne on 17th March, 2024, at the CRC Dehiwela.

❖ **Deaths.**

*“Forever with the Lord...”*

Elizabeth Thomas, on Thursday 1st February, 2024, of the Dehiwela Congregation.

Mabel Premaratne, on Sunday 25th February, 2024, of the Regent-Street congregation.

Ingrid de Zilva, on Monday 18th March, 2024, of the Dehiwela 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.)*





# Dying and Rising

By Darrell Delaney

**T**his story is based on a true story: Once upon a time there was a girl who grew up in a dysfunctional home. She had been raised by a single parent. As she grew older, she saw her mother become addicted to drugs, and as a result she suffered from neglect and was parentified at an early age. She lived in a situation that made her the built-in babysitter because her mother often would leave the younger siblings with her. She missed a lot of school. She had to make big decisions no child should have to worry about. How would she eat? Would she go to school today or stay with the siblings? Where was Mom? She grew up in a situation that made her act out in inappropriate ways. She sought ways to cope with her frustrations and pain. Did I mention she was a Christian? Yep, since she was 11 years old. However, she did not see how Jesus could speak into her current

situation Monday through Saturday. Sundays were cool, though; she was able to go to church. But the preacher did not do a good job of helping her see how Jesus mattered for everyday life.

This brings me to a point. Easter is a season where we learn of the resurrection of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. Every year we teach and share the good news that he is risen. We remember that all our sins are paid for, that Christ took the punishment we so deserved, and that we get the gift of eternal life and a new status: heir and forgiven child of God. That is good news. I happen to believe that although Advent is important and the inauguration of the kingdom of God on earth is vital, the resurrection is far more important because our sin debt was paid in full at the moment Jesus said, "It is finished." The fact that he rose is the part that encourages me. Many important people live and die, but because he is alive again and

dies no more, it gives me hope. Our old life also dies, and a new life arises in its place.

Playing on the English meaning of the word "testament," I was recently thinking about insurance policies, because I'm at that age. I am married and have children. Sooner or later I'm going to go home to be with the Lord. When that happens, I want to make sure my affairs are in order and my estate is dispersed to my family in the way I wish it to be. As a family we go to see a lawyer who helps us plan our estate. I designate my wife as benefactor. I have assets I want our children to receive. I name who gets what. It's my last will and testament. Isn't it interesting that the good news of Jesus is found in the New Testament? The good news of Christ's resurrection is found in God's "last will and testament" to us, where all of his promises to us are "Yes and amen!" And then Jesus died! When Jesus died, all the heavenly

inheritance was unlocked and passed to us by faith. We have inherited it because the proof of death was shown to the Father. Then Jesus changed the game when he rose from the dead. That. Changed. Everything.

If the resurrection didn't happen, then none of this matters, and I suppose you can live however you want, do whatever you want, and sin to your heart's content. But because the resurrection did happen, it changed everything. Now how we live matters. Now we have hope that God will sort out everything. Now we can tell people there's more to life than the repetitive rat race, the corporate ladder, and the life that is shallowly glazed over with pleasures and frivolous living. There is more to life thanks to the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection means God has the last say, and that word is good for those who hope in Jesus, live in Jesus, and die in Jesus. The resurrection truly does matter.

It mattered for the girl. What happened to her? She got involved in a Christian group in college, and they walked with her. They helped her sort out her pain and disappointments. They were the church to her. She also met her now-spouse in the group. Thanks to the newfound hope that the resurrection gave her, she was able to talk to her now-sober mom about the past and reconcile. Things are improving in their relationship. She also has a therapist that helps her rewrite some of the unhelpful scripts and internalization that happened in her early life. She began the long and slow process to put away the things in her old life and embrace the new life in Christ. She is going to be OK.

All of the strength to do all of this comes from the fact that she serves a risen Savior who has helped her along the way, encouraged her when she made mistakes, wiped her tears, and


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hugged her scarred soul. We serve a wounded Savior who hugs us with his wounded hands as if to say, "I too have wounds, and I understand." The girl is now a woman with a family of her own. She has broken the generational curses of addictions and poverty. She gives all glory and credit to God for breaking unhealthy cycles and patterns in her life. That is why the resurrection matters: because the power God used to raise Jesus from the dead is present and available to every believer.

Our God is also one who works with those in between death and life. Some of us don't have such a triumphant story and are still waiting for God to do miraculous things. Some of us are waiting for God to do small things. History has shown us that prayer doesn't always get answered immediately. Sometimes it doesn't get answered at all, or if it does, it is in ways far different from what we expect. Our God works there too. We have a faith that says we trust the Lord when we get the answer, and we trust when we don't. We trust not in manifested blessings, but a God who is able. He is who he is whether we get the answer to prayer or not. We have a relationship with the Creator of the universe, who came down into

the middle of difficult circumstances and therefore understands firsthand the already-but-not-yet nature of our world. He meets us where the longing still is, where the kingdom has come but not yet fully. The resurrection of God's Son is a promise that things will get better, and he sits with us in the difficult times, the pain, the waiting, the disappointments, and the setbacks. He sits with us either way—on the high mountain or in the low valley. We serve a God who loves us that much.

Our God is one that specializes in bringing dead things back to life. Sin has put to death many things, including relationships with God and with one another. But thanks be to God that we serve a risen Savior who can give us new life! Our life with him changes, and our life with one another changes as well. And if he can help that little girl, he can help you as well. Our God is a helper.

To God be the glory. 



Darrell L. Delaney lives in Allegan, Mich., and is pastor of spiritual formation at campus ministry at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Mich. He and Kia, his wife of 15 years, have three children.



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# TAIL LIGHTS

by C.N.J

## GILLETTE MACH3+



In case you are wondering what the title is all about...may I simply say that it is this particular Razor that I have been using for decades for a close shave ! And talking of close shaves - there have been many, some not having to do with Razor's!! Anyway like all things that breakdown, my dear Mach 3+ of many years died on me! Providentially I had another. And when the news spread I got a couple from near and far, including one that was sent from "down under" gift wrapped and all !

Looking at the attractive box that held Mach, I noticed that it gave 3 steps to a great shave ! Had I missed something in years? So I took a look. It read, 1) Lather with Gillette Gel 2) Shave with Gillette Mach 3+ 3) Refresh with Gillette after shave! What did I not know?!! I thought of some of those 3 point sermons - same old, same old, nothing fresh ! Basically, I always did all three - only that "Gillette" was not part of the 1st and 3rd Steps !

It also got me thinking of the many times I read about "three steps " to this, that and the other! Three steps to resilience; three steps to success; three steps to losing weight; three steps to meet your goals; three step for better humour and much more that you would know!

Then my mind focused on the spiritual! Three steps to heaven; three steps to receive Jesus; at one time there were the four spiritual laws; and one that got ingrained in my mind - the ABC's of Salvation. That read like this; **A**dmit you are a sinner; **B**elieve that Christ died and rose again and **C**onfess Jesus as your Saviour and Lord!

Of course this is not the Gospel but steps to make the gospel workable in your life.

But then as someone said the Gospel may be ABC but most of us are DEF ! Having said that, let me get back for another close shave a la Mach3+ !!

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