April, May, June 2025

The Herald

OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF SRI LANKA.



"BEING DISCIPLES AND MAKING DISCIPLES" - SEE INSIDE ALSO INSIDE - "ARE YOU A COACH FOR YOUR CHILDREN"

AFTER WE BELIEVE What ??



The Theme of the Herald for this Quarter is actually an answer to the question of the caption of this Editorial. Perhaps it would become clearer as we go on !!

As we do know from Scripture Jesus rejoiced at the witness of His followers, but He wanted them to understand clearly what it meant for Him and for them. So, after we believe, what next? After we declare that Jesus is the Christ, the Saviour, the Lord, what then? What will it mean for our lives?

Some of us would have known of instances of people, especially young people who became enthusiastic Christians. They were aglow with their faith. They sang about it. They spoke about it. They were eager to attract others. But today for some the party seems to be over. The hard realities of living, working and sustaining themselves have taken its toll and the place of those enchanted beginnings as well.

So I thought we should focus somewhat on the encounter that Jesus had with Peter in Chapter 8 of St Mark. As soon as Jesus heard Peter's great confession, He cautioned all His disciples to tell no one about it. That was surprising in itself, but they were even less prepared for what followed. He began to teach them about His sufferings and death and that after three days He would rise again. Peter responded negatively and Jesus responded with those famous words, "Get behind me, Satan...!" Then He spoke to the multitude and His disciples and told them what discipleship is all about. Read Mark 8 vs. 34.

Discipleship is a following that firstly,involves denying ourselves, saying no to our own plans, wishes and hopes. It means a radical change in the way we approach everything. According to Jesus, we cannot say a realistic yes to God's way, without saying a repeated no to our own.

Secondly, if that seems strong, what comes next is even stronger! Take up the cross. The phrase could mean only one thing at that time. If you saw a man with a cross on his back, you knew, he was headed for execution! So following means denying ourselves and coming after Him even if it means death! That is what discipleship really entails.

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The Herald

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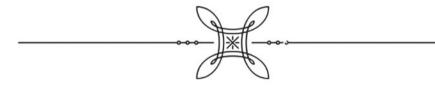
Front Cover – Candidates who Professed faith at Wolvendhal, Good Friday, 18th April 2025

Pic by Lakshan Hirumal.

Were you told that when you became a Christian? Many have not! Now like in everything else, the church has woken up from slumber and the talk is all about discipleship. But discipleship has always been part of the Christian life, from the earliest of Scriptural times! And on another note, it is true that only a disciple can make a disciple!!

Did Jesus want people to follow Him? Of course He did. But He loved them too much to hide the cost and struggle of it. So when we tell people that their faith in Christ will lead them to success, prosperity and fame, we distort, almost contradict His teaching. No wonder people are dismayed and indignant when the going gets tough! So the bottom line is that discipleship should follow the decision to believe in Christ and receive Him as our Saviour and Lord.

And what is it all about ? What does it really involve? With a quote from A. W. Tozer, I will rest my case! "A true disciple does not consider Christianity a part time commitment. He has become a Christian in all parts of His life. He has reached the point where there is no turning back". Have we reached that point? That is the main point!!





By Wishanka Gregory

Discipleship: The everyday commission!

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age". (Matt. 28:19-20)

Having grown up in the church, my understanding of discipleship has gone through several rounds of refinement. One of the most significant shifts I've experienced is realising that discipleship isn't a church program reserved for pastors, evangelists, or Bible study leaders. It's the lifestyle of every believer – and that includes you and me!

Discipleship begins with being discipled. In the Gospels, Jesus walked closely with his twelve disciples—teaching, praying, and revealing his glory to them. Like them, we need to grow in our personal walk with the Lord. While we don't have Jesus physically with us, we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us and the gift of growing alongside other believers through spending time together in the Word and prayer.

The second aspect of discipleship comes directly from the verse above. Jesus leaves his disciples, and us, with this charge: "Go and make disciples of all nations." My understanding of this verse is what has been shaped and refined over time. This isn't a separate task for people in ministry, it's a mission for all of us—whether we're students, working professionals, homemakers, retired or even taking care of grandkids. God has uniquely placed us in our homes, schools, workplaces, and neigh bourhood to reach people only we can.

Maybe you spend your days in back-to-back meetings. Even there, your kindness, your words, and your loving responses in difficult moments, are part of your discipleship mission. Perhaps you're caring for grandchildren. Discipleship happens in every story you read, every game you play, and every life-giving word you speak over them. Jesus modelled this beautifully. He didn't limit discipleship to teaching in synagogues or formal gatherings. He discipled as he walked through villages, shared meals in homes, and even met the fishermen and tax collectors while they were at work!

As followers of Jesus, we're called to make disciples wherever God has placed us. This mission isn't limited to Sundays, outreach programs, or mission trips—it's a daily invitation to bring his kingdom into every situation. And we're not alone – the verse ends: 'And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age'. The Holy Spirit empowers and guides us, teaching us to be disciples and to disciple others in our everyday lives. So, as you begin each day, ask the Holy Spirit to show you what discipleship looks like today—in your heart, your home, your work, and your community.

(Wishanka, is a member of the CRC Dehiwela and former Editor of the Youth Pages, presently in the Teaching Profession in the UK.)

Being Disciples and Making Disciples

by Pastor Rickson Anthony

When we discuss discipleship, our thoughts often turn to Jesus and the journey He undertook with His disciples. While His life and ministry provide a profound example of discipleship, understanding its full depth requires us to look beyond the New Testament. Discipleship, in essence, is about entrusting others with the mission envisioned by the original author. This concept is not confined to the New Testament but is deeply embedded in the very fabric of creation.



In the Garden of Eden, we find the foundational principles of discipleship. Genesis 1:25 states, "God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds." This declaration affirms that God created a perfect and complete creation, and He deemed it "good." God's intention was for this perfection to endure eternally.

Following this, Genesis 1:26 reveals God's plan: "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over... all the creatures that move along the ground." Being made in God's image signifies that humanity shares in His nature and purpose. This likeness empowers humans to steward and care for creation, reflecting God's intent for them to fulfill His purposes on Earth.

Thus, from the very beginning, discipleship was integral to God's design. He created humanity to His own image and entrusted them with the responsibility to care for and cultivate His creation. This foundational mandate underscores that discipleship is not merely a New Testament concept but a divine principle established at the dawn of time.

Discipleship is about aligning with God's original purpose: to reflect His image and steward His creation. As we look to Jesus as the ultimate example, we are reminded that our journey of discipleship is rooted in the very beginning of God's creation narrative.

However, this calling comes with a profound cost. John Stott says,

"The Christian landscape is strewn with the wreckage of derelict, half-built towers—the ruins of those who began to build and were unable to finish. For thousands of people still ignore Christ's warning and undertake to follow him without first pausing to reflect on the cost of doing so."

Reflecting God's image in our daily lives demands more than superficial commitment. It requires a deep, unwavering dedication to live according to His will, often at great personal sacrifice. Jesus Himself cautioned potential disciples to count the cost before embarking on this journey, emphasizing that true discipleship entails self-denial and a willingness to bear one's cross daily.

Therefore, as we endeavor to mirror God's image and fulfill His purpose, let us do so with full awareness of the commitment it entails. May we be among those who, having counted the cost, faithfully carry out the task entrusted to us, reflecting God's glory in all that we do.

Understanding Discipleship in Jesus' Time

When we study Jesus' call to His disciples, we may wonder why they immediately left their nets and followed Him without hesitation. To grasp this, we must first understand the Jewish rabbinic traditions of that era. In Jesus' day, discipleship was deeply academic and selective. Jewish boys began memorizing the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) by age seven. If they succeeded, they would later memorize the entire Old Testament. Around age twelve, they would present themselves before a rabbi for evaluation. If the rabbi deemed them worthy, they would be chosen as disciples. If not, they would return to their family's trade.

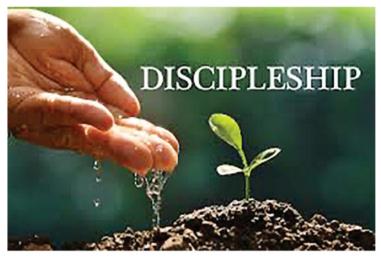
This makes Jesus' approach extraordinary. Unlike the rabbis, He did not call the "elite" scholars—those who had proven themselves academically. Instead, He called fishermen, tax collectors, and ordinary workers—men who the religious system had already passed over. This shows that true discipleship is not based on human merit but on divine calling.

The Nature of Jesus' Call

Jesus' invitation to follow Him was not an academic selection but a sovereign, grace-filled summons. The disciples did not earn their place; they received it by His word alone. Their identity

as followers of Christ was not something they achieved but something they were given. This has profound implications for us today.

Discipleship is a gift, not a reward. Just as the first disciples did nothing to deserve Jesus' call, we—born in sin (total depravity)—cannot earn our salvation. Our new identity as children of God comes solely through His grace (Ephesians 2:8–9). Jesus calls the unqualified. God does not choose us because of our ability but because of His purpose. Like



the disciples, we may feel unworthy, but His calling transforms us. Following Jesus means surrendering all. The disciples left everything because they recognized the authority in Jesus' voice. True discipleship requires complete trust and obedience, not just intellectual agreement.

In light of Francis Chan's powerful reminder, we see that Jesus redefined discipleship not as a matter of effort or human striving, but as a response to a divine invitation. He is not seeking admirers or part-time followers—He calls us to full, surrendered obedience. We do not follow Him because we are worthy; rather, in following Him, we are made worthy by His grace. This is the essence of the Gospel: salvation not earned, but freely given—by grace, through faith—leading us into a life that reflects His love, His truth, and His mission.

As A.W. Tozer wisely said, "Only a disciple can make a disciple." True discipleship is not a title we claim but a life we live, shaped by intimacy with Jesus and obedience to His Word. When we embrace this call, we become part of His multiplying movement—disciples who make disciples, not in our strength, but through His transforming grace.

When we talk about discipleship, we cannot overlook the Great Commission found in **Matthew 28:18 - 20**, where Jesus declares:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

This commission has **two essential parts:**

- 1. Winning people to Christ, and
- 2. Making disciples.

In today's church, we often focus heavily on the first part—bringing people in, increasing attendance, and growing our seating capacity. While evangelism is vital, the second part—**making disciples**—is often neglected. Discipleship is not simply about gathering people; it's about **equipping and sending them out** for God's purposes.

Jesus modeled this clearly in Mark 3:13-15:

"Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons."

Here we see a clear rhythm: Jesus **called** them to be with Him, and then He **sent** them out. Discipleship starts with **presence**—being with Jesus—but it leads to **purpose**—being sent by Him.

The mission is not ours to define or carry out on our own terms. The mission belongs to God. We, the Church, are called to participate in **God's mission**, and at the heart of that mission is **making disciples.** Not just filling seats, but raising and releasing followers of Jesus to carry His message and ministry into the world.



Conclusion

Discipleship is more than just following a set of rules—it's a way of life rooted in God's original purpose for us. From the beginning in the Garden of Eden, God designed humanity to reflect His image and care for His creation. Jesus came to show us how to live out this calling by inviting ordinary people to follow Him, demonstrating that discipleship is about grace, not human achievement.

Being a disciple of Jesus requires surrender. It's not about being perfect, but about being willing to follow Him completely, no matter the cost. As John Stott said, true discipleship comes with a price. We must be ready to give up our own desires to follow His will.

The Great Commission calls us not only to share the Gospel but also to help others grow as disciples. It's not enough to just bring people in; we must equip them to go out and make disciples, too. Jesus called His followers to be with Him first and then to go out into the world to spread His message.

Let's embrace both the privilege and responsibility of being disciples who make disciples. By following Jesus and living out His mission, we become part of God's plan to transform the world and share His love with others. May we faithfully answer His call, reflecting His image in all we do.

(Pastor Rickson Anthony, pastors the Tamil Language congregation of the CRC Wolvendhal and is also the Vice President for Ministry within the CRC SL.)

Sermon Discussion: A Better Way

at Grandma's house, in church meetings, or in conversation with family or friends. Our discussions might be positive or negative. A few years ago, when I started attending Brookside Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., with my new bride, I joined a sermon discussion group that I experienced as a better way.

Longtime Brookside member Glen
Van Andel facilitates the group. When
asked how the group came about, he
explained: "Oftentimes when we leave
the worship service, we don't talk to
many people about it, and if we do, it
frequently becomes a critique of the
sermon or the pastor. Several of us
wanted to focus on what the Spirit was
saying to us and how to apply that to
our lives, so we formed an adult education class that meets the hour following the service."

The group usually has between 12 and 20 participants and follows this simple format:

- Pleasant chit-chat as the group gathers, then an opening prayer.
- 2. Group discussion guided by these three questions:
 - » What did you hear the Spirit say to you in today's message or worship service?
 - » In light of today's discussion, so what?
 - » Looking to the week ahead, now what?
- 3. Sharing of joys and concerns and intercessory prayer.

Soon after the meeting, the facilitator provides a written summary.

The three questions are foundational. Rather than asking participants what they thought of the sermon, they are asked what they sensed the Spirit was saying to them personally. An exciting richness unfolds as participants tell stories and share insights of hearing God in differing circumstances and in such need-meeting and inspiring ways. The "so what" and "now what" questions are equally important. They help people move beyond talk to committing to real change in one's daily walk with Jesus.

Good facilitation is crucial, and Brookside has been favored with a competent and committed facilitator. Good facilitation also can happen with multiple facilitators—provided they are mature Christians who have the respect of the pastor and the group and genuinely facilitate by helping the group share with and learn from one another. Good facilitation requires focus, regularly reminding the group of its purpose and process. It requires flexibility, at times allowing for discussion of tangential or unexpected issues. And always it requires gentleness.

Finally, a timely written follow-up sent via email is valuable as well.

Van Andel thinks of it as a reflection on or overview of participants' insights along with their joys and concerns.

This summary provides a record for the participants and blesses the pastor with appreciative feedback.



Alfred Mulder is an emeritus Christian Reformed minister who served three congregations and denominational missions. He lives in Grand Rapids, Mich., with his wife, Joanna Meyer, and is a father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.



Discipleship: What It Really Means to Follow Jesus

"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." – Matthew 16:24 (NIV)

So... What Is Discipleship Anyway?

Let's be honest—"discipleship" sounds like one of those big church words that only pastors or super-Christians use. But here's the deal: discipleship is just about following Jesus. That's it. Not just believing in Him on Sundays, but actually learning to live like Him every day.

Being a disciple means choosing Jesus over everything else—your comfort, your popularity, even your own plans. It's real, it's personal, and it's worth everything.

Jesus Didn't Call Fans—He Called Followers

Jesus didn't walk around handing out VIP tickets to heaven. He said things like "Take up your cross," and "Lose your life for my sake." That's intense. Why? Because following Jesus isn't about being a fan—it's about being all in.

You don't have to be perfect. The original disciples had doubts, fears, and even failures (Peter literally denied Jesus three times!). But they kept coming back—and Jesus kept calling them.

What Does a Disciple Look Like in High School & in your workplace?

Here are 3 ways discipleship can play out in your everyday life:

1. Spend Time with Jesus

You can't follow someone you don't know. Discipleship starts with a real relationship with Jesus. That means talking to Him (prayer), hearing from Him (the Bible), and listening when He speaks to your heart.

 \rightarrow Try this: Start your morning with one verse and a quick prayer. Small steps matter.

2. Live Different-Even When It's Hard

Jesus said people would know we're His disciples by our love (John 13:35). That means being kind to the kid who's always alone, not gossiping even when it's tempting, and standing for what's right even when it's unpopular.

- → Real talk: Being a disciple might cost you some likes or laughs. But following Jesus is worth way more than fitting in.
- 3. Bring Others Along
 Disciples make more disciples. You don't need a Bible degree to tell someone about Jesus. Just be real about your faith and how He's changing you.
 - → Think about it: Who in your life could use a friend who follows Jesus? Pray for them. Invite them to youth group. Share your story.

Discipleship Isn't a Vibe—It's a Journey

Some days, following Jesus feels awesome. Other days? Not so much. But discipleship isn't about having spiritual highs all the time—it's about staying close to Jesus through the ups and downs.

He's not asking for perfection. He's asking for your heart.

Final Thought: Are You All In?

If Jesus showed up at your school today and said, "Follow me," would you drop what you're doing and go?

The truth is—He already has. The question is: will you follow?



Youth Page

Edited By: Joshua Aldons

Dig Deeper

Just like Jesus' 12 disciples who had doubts, fears, and even failures, Ho is looking for you to become a disciple of him. There are no perfect disciples, but there is our perfect God who is willing to reach out & meet us where we are. Not where we think we need to be. Will you accept God's outstretched arm to follow him & find disciples for him?



Just For Laughs

Why did the disciples never play hide and seek with Jesus?

Because He always found them in prayer!

What's a disciple's favorite type of exercise?

Cross training — it's all about following Jesus and carrying your cross!

Which disciple was always late for meetings?

Thomas-He even doubted the meeting time!



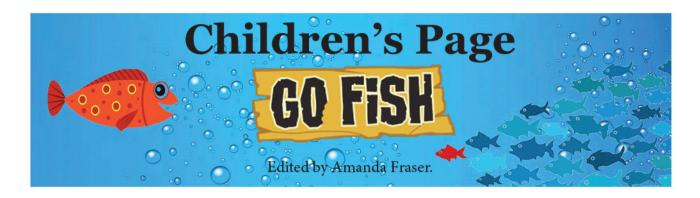
So Jesus walks into a restaurant with his disciples... ...and asks the waiter for a table for 26.

"26? Is your whole party here sir?" He replied.

"Oh yes" said Jesus.

"But there are only 13 of you here" replied the waiter.

"Well we always sit on the same side of the table" said Jesus.



Hi kids,

Have you ever been fishing? You know, fishing rod, hook, bait...the whole thing?

I've never been fishing but I imagine you would need a lot of patience and skill to Catch a fish or two.

You know something weird? In the bible, Jesus tells us to be fishermen! But instead of Catching fish, he wants us to Catch other people...to be fishers of men! But what is he talking about?!?!

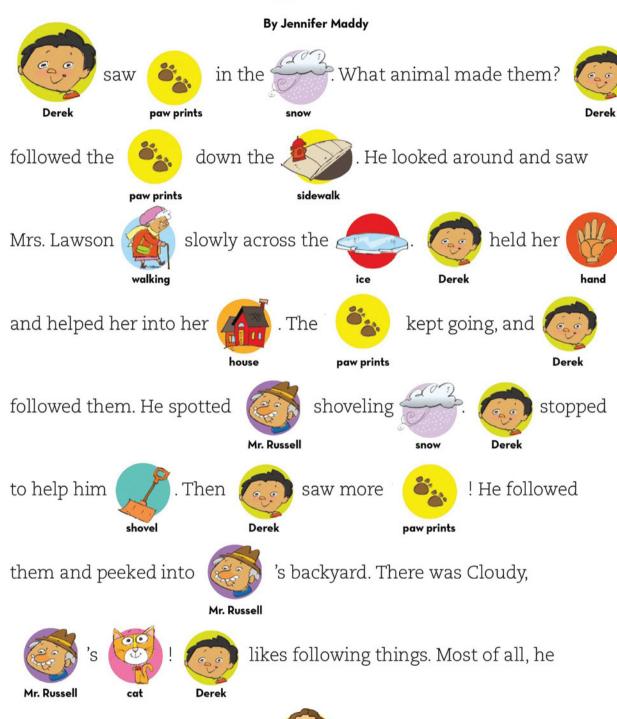
Well, when we decide to believe in Jesus and follow him, we become his disciples. A disciple is someone who follows a teacher and for us christians, our teacher is Jesus. It means we should put Jesus first in our lives and act and behave in a way that people will know we follow Jesus and that they will also want to follow Jesus.

A part of following him, is to tell others about Jesus and how he loves them. That's how we 'catch' onew followers for Jesus. A good disciple is also a good fisherman! SO.... Can't help but ask...wanna go fishing?

Lots of love, Aunty Mandy



Following Paw Prints



likes following the example of



by helping others.

FJ2 Friend

Are You a Disciple?

Circle the words that describe how you would act if you were a disciple.

Faithfull

Obedient



kind

joyful

Jealous

understanding

Prayerfull

Teachable

wise

Loving

complainer

Can you think of any more?

Family / Parenting Are you a Coach for your Children?

By Marsha Navamanie

We believe we all know what is required to raise children. We have to provide food and shelter for them, teach them to talk, walk, share their toys. Eventually we send them to school. Maybe we help them with things like reading, or send them for tuition if they are having problems. Is there anything else?

The theme for this edition of the Herald is discipleship, and I would like to propose that if you have children, your primary disciples should be your children. Our children need to be trained to follow Jesus Christ, just as we teach them to talk. This is important for the future of the church and our children's eternity.

George Barna in his book, Revolutionary Parenting says there are three parenting models:

- 1. Default Parenting adopting the patterns and methods of our culture, or how we were brought up. Success is measured by our children being as good as or better than our friend's children.
- 2. Experimental Parenting derived from personal experiences and outcomes, trial and error, you might read a book on parenting or attend a class and then try that. Success is measured on outcomes which we pick from things we think are important.
- 3. Revolutionary Parenting or Biblical Parenting application of biblical commands, principles and narratives to raising children, making their relationship to God their highest priority in life. Guide the child in the principles and outcomes that honor God and advance His purposes. Success is measured by transformed lives.

Barna is a researcher. He did a study of successful Christian young people, who are making a difference in the world, and their parents. He found that most of these parents thought of themselves as a coach for their children.

What do coaches do? They have clear ideas of what they want to

achieve with the team and set out a plan to get there. Do we do that as parents?



Here are just a few coaching principles.

A sports coach is usually concerned with one aspect of your life. We need to be concerned with all aspects of our children' lives, physical, social, mental and spiritual.

- 1. Your impact on your children's lives is proportional to the depth of your own relationship. You build trust by showing unconditional love, complete integrity, and total commitment to the ways of God and their best interests. This implies devoting substantial amounts of time to building your relationship with each child.
- 2. You must wholeheartedly embrace the outcomes you are encouraging the child to
 - achieve. You have to own a detailed vision of what your child will blossom into as an adult. Lukewarm coach, lackluster performance. Do they see Christ is the most important thing in your life? Do they see integrity?
 - 3. Impact is derived by coaching "in the moment." Parenting takes place in real time, not days hours or even minutes after an event occurs. An effective coach continually addresses the developmental needs of the child when the feedback will have the greatest impact. Since we learn from our

experiences, providing insight as an experience unfolds is critical.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them

Proverbs 20:7 The godly

walk with integrity:

children who follow

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers,

children to anger by the

do not provoke your

way you treat them.

Rather, bring them up

with the discipline and

instruction that comes

from the Lord.

blessed are their

them.

when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

4. Great Coaches are great communicators.

Engage them in a dialogue related to where they are heading, how they will get there and how they could enhance the quality of their effort, with listening. Revolutionary parents spent 90-120 minutes a day in dialogue with each child, compared with 15 minutes in most families.

Proverbs 1: 8,9 - My child, listen when your father corrects you. Don't neglect your mother's instruction. What you learn from them will crown you with grace and be a chain of honor around your neck.

5. The coach must have a comprehensive plan for reaching the "promised land." Crafting a long-term schedule of what types of experiences, information and skills might be introduced.

Have you ever been river rafting? It is a good analogy of the family. The river represents the world we live in. The raft is your home. As kids get older the river gets rougher. How will you keep your kids safe on the river and what is your destination? When they leave your raft and start their own raft, what do they need to know and who will they be?

Psalm 127:3-5 Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him. Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior's hands How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them!

He will not be put to shame when he confronts his accusers at the city gates.

Do we think of our children in that way? They have a purpose in God's kingdom. Are we raising them to understand that?

Let me close with a few quotes from books I used for this article:

"I have lived as if the world is God's gift to my children, instead of living like my children are God's gift to the world." 1

"I have become convinced that the spiritual war

occurring in individual lives is pretty much won or lost by the age of thirteen. What parents do with the youngsters prior to the teen years is of paramount importance to the Kingdom of God on earth." ²

Action steps to take as Parents:

1. Think about the relationship you have with

each of your children. Write down one or two things you will commit to do during the next thirty days that will improve your relationship with them.

2. Consider the lessons your children learn from watching you. Write down one or two things that you will change in your behavior during the next thirty days in order

to have a more positive and biblical influence on the lives of your children.

- 3. Examine your real priorities in life—not those to which you give lip service, but those demonstrated by your calendar, your checkbook, and your emotions. What stands in the way of making your children a top priority in your life?
- 4. Have a talk with your kids about how they perceive God. As their spiritual mentor, realize that if they do not have a healthy perspective of God they will not build a healthy faith.
- 5. Make a list of critical principles you want your children to adopt from Scripture. Plan how you will study the Bible together to get those principles before them. Family devotions are great, but do you have a plan for how they will impact your child? What do you want the outcomes to be?

¹ One Million Arrows, Julie Ferwerda, P.145

coach
/kohch/-noun.

1. a passionate, dedicated individual who unlocks

/kohch / -noun.

1. a passionate, dedicated individual who unlocks hidden potential and maximizes a team's performance by believing, encouraging and developing [See also: 'teacher', 'leader']

Revolutionary Parenting, Raising your Kids to Become Spiritual Champions. George Barna, 2007. page xxi

Marsha Navamanie and her husband Ron worked with the CRCSL in Sri Lanka for the 23 years. They are currently living in the U.S.A.

+ + + CHURCH NEWS+ + +

❖ THE SEASONAL WORSHIP SERVICES...

Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Services were held in all the local churches. The Palm Sunday services saw the participation of the children who were part of the local Sunday Schools. The United Profession of faith Service on Good Friday, took place at Wolvendhal with the participation of Pastors Andrew Cottling, Ananda Jayawardena, Revd: Shirley Faber and Theological Student Christian Jeshuran. Revd: Charles Jansz preached the Sermon. A time of fellowship over Coffee followed.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered in all Churches on Easter Sunday. The traditional Maundy Thursday Service took place the CRC Dehiwela, on the theme, "The Call Of A Maundy Thursday." The "Little Lambs" Montessori held is traditional Easter Service with the active participation of the Children and parents on the 20th of March, 2024.

❖ PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH...

The United Profession of faith service on Good Friday at Wolvendhal, saw the following make Public Profession of faith - From the Wolvendhal Congregation, Anjana Prabath Wanniarchchi, From the Bambalapiitya Congregation, Matthew Dane Perera. From the Wellawatte Congregation, Adeleine Gianna Duckworth. From the Dehiwela Congregation, Shenura



Devanshe Ariaratnam, Sarah Rozanne Shamalka Nonis, From the Rukmalgama congregation, Udan Ratnayake. Aakshya

Thaarani Ruguneshwaran of the Dehiwela con-

gregation, received adult baptism.



❖ A SPECIAL TIME WITH THE MOTH-ERS...

The Dehiwela Sunday School hosted a special Mother's day morning, celebrating the Mothers of the Congregation, on Saturday the 17th of May, 2025.



The program was well attended by Mothers and children of the Sunday School. The day began with the Mothers and childen being welcomed with Tea and Coffee, and the opening prayer by Revd: Jansz. Ice breaker games and a Bible Quiz followed.



Guest Speaker, Roma Ranasinghe of the Baptist Church, shared her journey of Parenting with the Ups and downs of "Bringing Up Children of Faith." Refreshments, take home gifts, blood pressure checks and a mini hand and nail spa helped in making the day productive and inspirational.

❖ CHURCH REGISTER

Diamond Wedding Anniversary.

"Great is Thy faithfulness..."

Winston and Elsie Lewis on the 24th of April, 2025, of the Dehiwela Congregation.

Deaths.

"for fver with the ford"

NIHAL WIJESEKERA – on Sunday 20th April, 2025, of the Wellawatte Congregation.

YVETTE DUCKWORTH – on Wednesday 28th May, 2025, of the Wellawatte Congregation.

ADULT BAPTISM

"As you have received Christ, so walk..."

Aakshya Thaarani Ruguneshwaran on the 18th of April, 2025, at the CRC of the CRC Wolvendhal, of the Dehiwela Congregation.

❖ IN MEMORIAM

Nihal Wijesekera.

Nihal Wijesekera went to his Heavenly Home on the day the Church throughout the world commemorated the Victory of Jesus over death and the grave – Easter or Resurrection Sunday. It was no secret that Nihal believed in the Resurrection truth and it was no coincidence that the Lord took him to His Heavenly Home when that hope was being celebrated.

Transferring his membership to the then DRC, Nihal got involved together with his family with the Wellawatte Congregation where he served initially, as a Deacon, then as an Elder through many years. He also served as the President of the Local Consistory, in addition to serving the General Consistory as well, being its Vice President for Administration some years ago.

Nihal was passionate about the Missionary endeavours of the Denomination and gave exemplary leadership and commitment to develop and sustain the Mission efforts especially at Balana and Ulapane, which came under the jurisdiction of the Wellawatte Local Consistory.

He faithfully worshipped at the CRC Wellawatte until health issues prevented it and was devoted to the growth and care of the members of that congregation. He also demonstrated a concern for the Sinhala language ministries. Nihal served as a Lay Preacher within the English and Sinhala congregations. The Church recognizing his giftedness in preaching and teaching, together with his commitment to the Church, offered him the Position Lay Pastor within the Denomination, which after careful thought and prayer he respectfully declined.

Like everyone else Nihal had his strengths and weaknesses, but we can thank God for His faith and faithfulness that was very evident and demonstrated in many ways to family and to our part of God's Church and to God be all the glory.

Yvette Duckworth

A stalwart of yesteryear, especially of the Well-awatte Congregation, Yvette, went to be with the Lord on Wednesday the 28th of May, 2025. It was part of the Lord's providential timing and mercy, after the challenges of the last few years where limitations were part of her physical life.

Yvette was part of the Van Hoff family, who were very much involved with the CRC Wellawatte congregation. Her father, the late George Van Hoff, was an Elder of the Wellawatte Consistory and together with his dear wife were faithful in worship and service, sustaining the work and ministry in different ways.

That legacy continued with Yvette. I am aware that she was one of the pioneer members of the then DRC Youth Choir. She was also involved with the Leadership of the Sunday School, and if my memory serves me well, she also served musically. Following the landmark decision the Denomination made, she was ordained a Deaconess within the Wellawatte Local Consistory and continued to give her time and energy to minister to the poor and needy.

Yvette was very much part of the Youth Conferences of the Denomination as well as the Evangelistic and Missionary activities of the Wellawatte Congregation and the Denomination.

Many of the DRC folk, who are now domiciled in other parts of the World, would have many a vivid memory of this lady of faith and good works. So we thank God for the long life she was blessed with and for her faith that stayed strong during the storms of the last few years when limitations and health issues took its toll. We can also thank God for the care and love showered upon through those changing scenes in her life, by Alex, Gayathrie and family. And we can be grateful to God, that her legacy of faith, works and faithfulness, not forgetting that of her parents, lives on in Alex and Gayathrie, who continue to faithfully sustain that legacy through involvement at Wellawatte and the CRC SL.

(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.).

(Pics by Lakshan Hirumal and Josh Aldons)





Eyes to See: Witnessing Christ in Unexpected Places

I've prayed a good number of prayers asking God to grant me eyes to see God's presence all around me. I ATTEND A CHURCH that meets right in the heart of downtown Vancouver. It's about a 40-minute bus ride from my place, and a good part of the route goes through Vancouver's notorious Downtown Eastside, a neighborhood with disproportionately high levels of homelessness, drug use, and mental illness. When our bus drives through early Sunday mornings, the sidewalks are lined with makeshift tents from the night before. Men and women stumble across sidewalks. Broken crack pipes litter the pavement like autumn leaves. It's a sight that sometimes feels better left unseen.

One rainy Sunday in late September, a thin, young figure trudged onto the bus with a bright-red blanket wrapped around his shoulders. An older man stumbled on close behind him. The pair sat down across from me, their movements mimicking one another. After a few moments, I realized they were father and son.

I could smell the rain on them—not fresh rain, but the kind that must have soaked their clothes a day or two before, now carrying the smell of mold and rot. The older of the two had his arm slung around his son's huddled shoulders, drawing him close. The boy's body rose and fell with heavy breaths. Soft sniffles made their way from the cave he created around himself. The older man rocked the two slowly, whispering calm, quiet words. For a few moments, I glanced back and forth between them, trying to understand what it was about the smelly, rain-soaked men sitting across from me that felt familiar.

Then, quite suddenly, I caught a glimpse of Jesus within the man in front of me, his arm stretched out to embrace the young man next to him.

There was the image of Christ, reflected in God's creation of man.

There was Jesus, comforting the brokenhearted.

Jesus, weeping with them, and me, and you.

I've prayed a good number of prayers asking God to grant me eyes to see God's presence all around me. God has answered this prayer in some beautiful, incomprehensible ways, showing himself in sky-spanning sunrises and freshly freed butterflies. But the image of Christ, though fractured, is also reflected in those living in dirty tent cities and cardboard boxes under highways. Regretfully, I think it is often my fear of brokenness that stops me from seeing Jesus, as though he himself wasn't broken and rejected. I turn my face from the cross before he has the chance to redeem it.

There used to be a tent city in the heart of my hometown's downtown. It wasn't a pretty sight; there is a deep ugliness that lingers amidst heartbreak, continual suffering, and ongoing trauma. Yet beneath the tarps and tents, there was a beauty I have seen in few other places. Our unhoused neighbors are walking, breathing reflections of Christ. They can have deep, unconditional love for one another and often express it audaciously. They mourn in the face of death and suffering, weeping just as Christ did 2,000 years ago.

Witnessing Christ in this way is heavy. It opens my eyes to things that are sometimes easier left unseen, leading to heartbreak that's sometimes easier left unfelt. Yet I find myself praying for eyes to see regardless, eyes to recognize the image of Christ in men pushing shopping carts and women gripping tightly to cardboard signs, eyes to notice the image of Christ in every bus driver, university professor, and construction worker, in my classmates, teammates, and friends.

Christ in all the unexpected places.

In a manger, on a cross, and maybe even in smelly, rain-soaked men.



Madelyn Vandermeer, 19, is a student at the University of British Columbia, where she studies addiction science. She has spent her past two summers working in downtown Guelph, Ont., particularly with Royal City Mission. She is a member of Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Acton, Ont.

(Reprinted from "The Banner," Publication of the Christian Reformed Church of North America, May 2025)



PRAYER Clobbering!!

The other day I came across an article that focused on the caption of this Tail light! The author began with a story about him and his brother when one of them was asked to close in prayer following the family meal.



So the brother prayed, "God help Jim to be nice to me" and then Jim interrupted, "God help Jon to be nice to me first!"

The author concluded that those prayers were really not meant for God to hear but to jab one another! They were kids of course then! But perhaps we adults especially must take that lesson to heart. Prayer should not be weapons against one another and if so, then we are operating outside the parameters of true prayer, as mandated by Jesus.

I have sat through a few of such prayers, where the one praying was either trying to straighten me out or some one else! Prayer clobbering takes place both in the pulpit and in the pew – make no mistake about it.

Two important points of instruction by Jesus should be part of our DNA when it comes to prayer. He warned against praying like the hypocrites, who pray to be seen by others (St Mat 6:5) He also warned us not be like the self righteous Pharisees.(St Lk 18: 9ff). Prayer clobbering was surely one of their ways – but it is certainly not the Jesus way nor should it be ours!

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