

THE MORNING STAR

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Subscription
Inland: Rs. 50/- per year.

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The Manager
Morning Star,
Vaddukoddi.

Registered as a Newspaper at the General Post Office, Sri Lanka
under No. Q/J/104/News/89

Established: 1841: A Christian Weekly: Published Every Friday
Vol. 149 Jaffna, Friday, 17 March 1989 No. 11

RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION BUT SIN IS A REPROACH TO ANY PEOPLE

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The 42nd Annual Sessions of the Jaffna Diocesan Council of the C. S. I.

The following were elected to vacant places in the various Boards and Committees or as delegates of the Diocese for various organisations.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Rev. D. S. Thiagarajah
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The Bishop
Dr. S. Jebanesan

C. S. I. (SYNOD):

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Rev. D. S. Thiagarajah
Mr. Noel A. Vimalendran
Mr. Milroy R. Selvarajah
Dr. S. Jebanesan
Miss C. V. Selliah

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MANAGER:

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THE MORNING STAR

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Tamil Editor:

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(Associate Editor):

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Mr. N. S. Rajah

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REV. PAUL CLAYTON'S ADDRESS.

Rev. Clayton addressed the Assembly on "Mission - New Concepts and Realities". He said that since the time of the founding of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, way back in 1810, there has been a new concept of 'mission'. Paternalism and colonialism were no longer ingredients of mission. Mission in the deeper sense was god's mission in Jesus Christ. Christianity was a world faith and not merely a sect of Judaism.

It was Martin Luther King who shot the Church with this new concept - the church in your backyard. The amazing transformation brought about by Liberation Theology and by the Civil Rights Movement can be traced to this inspiration that came from Asia.

Rev. Clayton, in the course of his address referred to his visit to areas South of Elephant Pass in Sri Lanka where the J. D. C. S. I. had spread its tentacles in recent years. He said that he was really unable to squeeze within his address all that he saw during this brief visit. But the work carried on in these areas increasingly underlined the new understanding of Mission - of partnership and sharing. It is not decisions made at Boston that mattered but decisions made in the local situations on a grass-roots basis.

The Easter Event, the speaker reminded the Assembly was a gift to the disciples. It was not intended to give them solace. It was an event on the other hand that brought with it a challenge for more work and dedication. "Be my sheep; tend my lambs". This is the origin of the church. This mission is still ours.

J. D. C. S. I. CHURCH,
CHAVAKACHCHERI.

New Office - Bearers 1989.

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Deacon: Mr. S. Satkunasingham.
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Mrs. Jeyadevi Sinniah

ELAIATHAMBY THEVARAJAH -AN APPRECIATION-

It came as a rude shock to all his kith and kin, his numerous friends and colleagues when they were told that Mr. Elaiathamby Thevarajah (Department of Fisheries) had passed away in Australia, on Monday 13th February 1989, hardly four months since he set foot there to spend a well-earned rest with his eldest daughter Raji and Son-in-law Wesley and their little kids whom he adored.

Death has snatched from our midst a loving and devoted father, a doting grandpa, a dedicated Methodist Church activist, an indefatigable and conscientious worker and above all, a sociable and benevolent friend and relative. Such noble traits are seldom found in many a mortal. But Thevarajah was an exception. He was a jewel among men. A great benefactor, he never grudged helping the poor and the needy. He took a great delight in alleviating the suffering of the 'have-nots' and the down-trodden. From his comparatively meagre fountain of worldly wealth and possession, he, blessed with that divine grace, channelled a steady and even course to enrich the lives and gladden the hearts of all those around him. His children too have picked up appah's noble traits, and may the good Lord help them to continue the good work of their righteous and benevolent father. For such indulgence, would, surely cheer up their broken hearts.

AMERICAN CEYLON MISSION 175th ANNIVERSARY.

The Rev. James Richards
(1784 - 1822)
Missionary of the ABCFM.

Mr. Richards was a child of prayer, consecrated to the service of God from his earliest infancy; and so serious and unexceptionable was his deportment in childhood and early youth that many of his christian friends were ready to believe he had in the first years of his life been sanctified by the Holy Spirit. But it was not till the age of thirteen, as he believed that he embraced the saviour by a living faith. And so great was his sense of his own unworthiness, and his fear of obtruding himself among the friends of christ that he delayed for many years to make a public profession of religion. Subsequent events have shown however that while his religious character was unknown except to his more intimate acquaintance, he was making rapid advances in the divine life. For a long period, he sacredly consecrated one entire day in each month to fasting a prayer and a delightful grove, at a little distance from his father's house, became almost daily the place of his retirement and witnessed, there can be no doubt, his meditations and his fervent prayers.

When Mr. Richards first entered on a course of study preparatory to preaching the Gospel, he contemplated no extensive field of labour. To be useful in some small destitute parish, like a few which he knew in the vicinity of the town in which he resided appears to have been the extent of his most ardent hopes. The idea of his preaching the gospel to distant Heathen, had then probably never entered his own mind, or the minds of his parents. But when in Williams College, he began to converse with Mills and others of a kindred spirit on the deplorable condition of pagan nations: when they prayed and contemplated the dying command of christ to preach his gospel to every creature in all the world his vision began to enlarge: and before the end of his third year in college he had come to the fixed purpose of spending his life among the heathen - a purpose from which he was never afterwards known for one moment to swerve, and which was formed with only the condition if the Lord will

He returned to his parents in the ensuing vacation which was in the fall of 1808, revealed to them his unalterable determination and with great earnestness pleaded before them the cause of the heathen. Happily for him, after the subject had come fully

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EDITORIAL

THE CHURCH AND MISSION: — NEW FRONTIERS —

Two highlights marked the 42nd Sessions of the Jaffna Diocesan Council, held at Vaddukoddai from the 9th to the 11th of March, 1989.

One was the Address of Rev. Paul Clayton, the Guest Speaker at the Council Sessions, from the United Church Board of World Missions, Boston, who also brought greetings from his own church, the United Church of Christ and from the WCBWM, the successor of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (founded 1810), a body which sent us our pioneer bands of American Missionaries, to Jaffna in 1816.

As partners in mission, the WCBWM has now very close links with Jaffna College and with other diocesan institutions. Rev. Clayton's address on "Church and Mission" had an authentic ring, having been delivered immediately after his visit to some of the areas in which the JDCSI had now spread its tentacles.

By a significant coincidence, Rev. Paul Clayton's visit to Jaffna followed important political events both in us and in Sri Lanka. The distinguished visitor came to us after the election of his own President, George Bush, the 41st President of the United States, who took a pledge on 20.01.1989, to lead "a Kinder, gentler nation."

At Lincoln Memorial, on the 25th of January, 1989, the first 40,000 spectators lighted tiny flashlights, according to news reports, to dramatise the new President's concept of "a thousand points of light" create "a Kinder gentler nation."

In Sri Lanka, President Premadasa in a similar mood of buoyancy threw open to the people the stately portals of the Janadipathi Mandiraya for three days consecutively (January 13 to 16, 1989), lavishly entertaining his guests, some of them from rural areas with sweatmeats and tea, served at the 'Pirith' ceremony held within the premises in a specially erected pandol. President Premadasa was soon to take over the new portfolio of Buddha Sasana in addition to his other ministries.

The frontier today in which the Church in mission in Sri Lanka has to gird itself for special action in the political sphere where the rising spiral of crime in the land is a serious impediment to people settling down to their daily routines of existence. For that reason the voice of the church needs to sound as the ancient voices of Amos and Isaiah in the high places of the nation. In plain words, it must be made clear to rulers that governments are servants of the people to achieve earthly justice.

The Second highlight of the Diocesan Council this year was the observance, in a humble way on 11-3-89 of the Tenth Anniversary of our work, South of Elephant pass.

In a clergy - thin Diocese, four of the young fully Ordained Ministers of the church have been sent to the new frontiers at Kilinochi, Mankulam, Murikandi, Shalomnagar, Vavuniya, Cheddikulam, Konavil, Bharathipuram and other far-flung outposts — "to make in the desert, a living well" — where children are ill-fed and naked, where human life is at an all time low, and where there is mirky mingling of politics and crime. The Tenth Anniversary of the Mission, South of Elephant Pass was marked by four minute addresses by the Presbyters involved in the work, on what had been accomplished by them and what remained still undone.

The decade (1978 — 1988) was a period of unprecedented political turbulence in the land. The year 1979 was the year of the Prevention of Terrorism (Special Provisions) act, and the creation of the New Ministry of National Security, with the concomitant drop in optimism in the minds of people, for a peaceful settlement of Sri Lanka's festering political issues. The government of the day had 141 members of whom 91 held Ministerial portfolios. The Act, one of a kind, was haltingly passed in Parliament laying the seeds, as many believed for a full blown national crisis.

It was in this backdrop of insecurity, vulnerability and a threatening military posture that the mission South of Elephant Pass was conceived and undertaken. The young 'missionary' pioneers approached their tasks with dedication, though they did not have the 'field' all for themselves. They could not be monarchs of all that they surveyed. They had to constantly have their ears to the ground. They had to confront a civilian population angry and in many cases hungry. They were in a situation, like the lady - motorist of the U.S. who claimed the 'right of way' from a cab driver only to be told "Lady, the right of way is not something you have. It is something somebody gives you."

But all the same, the missionary had a hidden strength which he could always derive from his imperatives. If he could

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before him, they were as ready to give him to the heathen, as he had been to consecrate himself; and thus the parents and the child enjoyed, whenever they were together till his final departure, the enviable pleasure of uniting in almost noble sacrifice to the cause of that saviour who died for them. There were no misgivings. No difficulties or dangers discouraged or disheartened them. In a familiar conversation his father, now an aged officer in the congregational church in Plainfield, Mass., once said to him

"James when you think of leaving your father's house and all your connexions and friends and your trials and hardships to which you will be exposed; do you not sometimes feel like giving back — does not your heart recoil "No Sir" was the reply "Never for a moment."

From the time of this conversation till he left the country says one of his most intimate friends, "his mind appeared to be as constantly fixed on its beloved object, as the needle to its pole."

The time of Mr. Richard's departure from this country was delayed far beyond his expectation by war with Great Britain. After finishing his course of study at the Theological Seminary in September 1812 he had spent nearly two years at Philadelphia in connexion with the Medical School and Hospital, when he found that it required a strong exercise of submission, to meet the obstacles which so long debarred him from entering on the benevolent labours to which he had for years looked forward with ardent anticipations.

"Nothing new" writes he in September 1814 "as to the time when I shall leave the country. I fear our patience will long be tired. I fear that war will continue and that thousands and thousands of heathen will perish before we shall be able to offer them a crucified Saviour." Not far from this time as he was leading in the worship of his father's family, and praying with affecting earnestness, that the obstacles which prevented his going to the heathen might be removed, he used these words of wails.

*"How long dear Saviour how long
Shall this bright hour delay
He was preaching at Dering, New Hampshire, when in February 1815 the glad news of peace with Great Britain arrived.*

(to be continued next week)

act in such a manner as to make the people see in him one who appears to have "the right of way" that would be his crowning moment:-

*"To me 'twas not the truth you taught
To you so clear, to me still dim
But when you came to me you brought
A sense of Him*

The functions of these new "missionaries" were, therefore, not to be little lords in their manner, but to be little servants loving, serving, caring and praying and to learn through their labours in Day Care Centres, Vocational Training Schools, Creches, and Medical clinic, in farms and fields and in their daily encounter with people in a ravaged community, something of the meaning of the cross. Christian love, is not a sentimental feeling. In order to reconcile, Christ had to die.

"The eventual outcome of an accepted mission is a re-enacted Passion" said Douglas Webster, a former Professor of Mission at the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham. It is the highest and most worthwhile role of the Missionary, South of Elephant Pass".

Empty.

*The Cross of Christ lies empty
With the hollow hearts and word
And faith of those once faithful
Who had their hopes interred.*

*But stealing in with morning
New hope falls fresh as dew
The Cross of Christ lies empty
But the tomb is empty too.*

— Benjamin William —