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

THE EDITOR,

The Morning Star,
Diocesan office,
Vaddukodai.

175th Anniversary of the A. C. M. (1816 - 1991) A leaf from the past

Rev. James Richards

Rev. James Richards belonged to the famous hay-stack group, of Williams College.

He came to Jaffna in 1816 with his wife and five other missionaries. He served in Jaffna for six years and died in August 1822. After his death his wife SARAH married Rev. Joseph Knight of the C. M. S.

The following is the notice given in the Missionary Herald about the demise of Rev. James Richards.

"Since our letter of May last but few things of an interesting nature have transpired. Our prospects generally are encouraging. While as a mission, we have received much at the hand of God, which demands our gratitude and praise. We have also received much to teach us to be humble and watchful. Last year Mrs. Poor was taken from our number. Now Mr. Richards!

Another voice speaks to us from the grave. Our elder brother is no more. Brother Richards who was so long burdened with sickness & pain has gone to his heavenly rest. It was not till June last that our fears concerning him were more than usually excited. At that time his disorder began to prey upon him with increased violence and continued to do so till the day of his death, which was on the 3rd of August. (1822). Some time previous to this last violent attack he seemed to have an impression that the time of his departure was at hand. His mind was led much to self examination, and to a review of the past, that he might if it were possible to find every false ground, upon which he rested for acceptance with God. This self-examination resulted in a confidence of his good estate. This confidence appeared to attend him to the hour of his dissolution. Certainly death was to him disarmed of its terrors. He hoped for a release from pain only in death and in the enjoyment of his Saviour. His sufferings were long and several. But we doubt not that the voice which by disease was so long forbidden to join us in prayer and praise, now bears a part in the song of Moses and the lamb. With the company of those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises.

(Continued on page 8)

The Relevance of Christmas

★ D. J. A. ★

Christmas was an event of nearly 2000 years ago. We live in an age when we always go for the latest editions of a book ask for the latest news, and look for the latest model of a gadget. We believe that somehow the latest is more up-to-date, more adequate and relevant to our present needs. The question therefore can legitimately be asked of what relevance can Christmas be for our age and time. This is an age of space flights and computers and not of angels or of shepherds in the field or of men riding on camels. Of what relevance can Christmas be for this last decade of the 20th century? The Oxford dictionary in defining the word "relevance" illustrates its use by a writer in the Spectator of 1890 exactly a century ago. "What relevance had such a fact to the duty of the hour?" It goes on to then give the meaning of the word, "Bearing upon, Connected with, pertinent to, the matter in hand." "The duty of the hour" or "the matter in hand" is something we can all understand although we may differ in identifying the duty or the matter in hand. If relevance means pertaining to the matter in hand, we must ask what has Christmas to do with "the matter in hand." For all of us trying to face up to the challenges and opportunities, the disappointments, and despairs of our time "the matter in hand" is surely issues of life and death, of sickness and health, of poverty and wealth, of law and order, of oppression and justice, of war and peace.

"Give peace in our time O Lord," are the words in the order of Morning Prayer in our Book of Common Worship, and "give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give," are again words from the order of Evening Prayer. Morning and Evening the Church has prayed for peace and continues to pray for it. For millions in Sri Lanka today their hearts sincere longing and prayer must be "give peace in our time O Lord," in the midst of death and destruction, in the midst of the disappearances and imprisonments, in the midst of the helpless refugees and the injured and the bereaved. Surely peace has everything to do with "the matter in hand," it has something to tell us about "the duty of the hour."

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Peace," of the one who brought "the peace which the world cannot give." It was the peace that comes from above, from beyond, not a peace of man's contriving compromises or of his designs and diplomacies or of man's pacts and agreements. It is the peace that becomes a reality only in relation to God's purpose for the human race and for all life on earth. "Does it seem strange to you" asks T. S. Eliot in his Murder in the Cathedral, "that the angels should have announced Peace, when ceaselessly the world has been stricken with war and the fear of war." It may seem strange but it is to a world stricken with war and the fear of war that Christmas is as relevant today as when the angels first declared their praise to God "on earth peace to all in whom he delights" (Lk 2:14 REB).

Soren Kierkegaard has this to say of the other message of the angels to the shepherds, "unto you is born this day a Saviour," yet it was night when the Saviour was born, and it becomes day in the middle of the night when the Saviour is born. "Christmas is the birth of the Saviour, the deliverer, the liberator, the breaking in of day in the middle of the night of the light that shineth in darkness, of Peace in the midst of war and the fear of war. Day in the middle of the night, and yet we live in times when it seems truer to speak of "Darkness at Noon," as reflecting more accurately the reality of the world in which we live. What then can the relevance of Christmas be to this world of darkness, to this world of war and the fear of war?

The Prince of Peace who brought to us the peace from above, the peace from beyond, the peace which the world cannot give gathered a group of disciples to him and commissioned them "Blessed are the peacemakers," and to those whom he called to be "peacemakers," he assured "Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such as the world cannot give." To share that parting gift of the Prince of Peace, the Saviour Christ is the Church's "duty of the hour." The Saviour Christ was able to give his parting gift only through entering into unity and solidarity with the world of strife and suffering, of torture and death itself, and the

FEDERAL SOLUTION RECOMMENDED NIHAL JEYAWICKRAMA

Mr. Nihal Jeyawickrama, formerly Secretary of the Ministry of Justice in the S L F P government and now a law lecturer at the University of Hong Kong has in a leading article in the South China Morning Post written on the Sri Lankan problem under the title "Death is Way of Life on Paradise Island".

After thirteen years of U N P government the basic issues in Sri Lanka he claims remain unsolved. In seeking a solution Sri Lanka's greatest asset is not its soldiers or its terrorists or even its politicians. It is its people.

Over a 60 year period of self-government, they have utilised to their advantage unfamiliar devices such as universal adult franchise and a Westminster Whitehall parliamentary system. But in the last decade, they have been excluded from the decision-making process.

It is now time to bring them back into the mainstream of political activity. In the south, this would require restoration of democratic parliamentary government. In the north, the realities of the current situation suggest that nothing short of a federal system of government is capable of securing the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka.

But the continuing tragedy of Sri Lanka is that in the bustling capital of Colombo, where today's decision makers are safely enclosed in comfort and security, where hotels are again brimming with tourists, where supper clubs are crowded and noisy and there is music, laughter and plenty of liquor, there appears to be an almost eerie insensitivity to the agony and the misery that continues unabated in the killing fields.

Even if it does exist in some quarters, the political will to solve national problems by means other than fire-power is hardly discernible.

Church can fulfil its "duty of the hour" only through such unity and solidarity with him who came as the Prince of Peace and with the world of strifes, suffering and death. The Relevance of Christmas is that there is hope for a world with which God has entered into solidarity.

AT REST

Mr. J. J. Niles

The death occurred in Toronto in Canada on the 12th of November of Mr. J. J. Niles, a former Director of the Jaffna College Institute of Agriculture Maruthanadam and earlier of the Government Agriculture Department.

Mr. Niles was the first national to take charge of the Institute after a period during its fledgling days when the new Project was managed in succession by three short term missionaries of the American Board of Trustees.

During his tenure, Mr. Niles sought zealously to keep before him the objectives of the Institute as a Training Centre for middle grade agriculturalists who would benefit by the short term course either to seek employment or engage themselves in fruitful self-employment enterprises.

With rumblings louder each year since his assumption of an impending 'crisis' in the country, he faithfully discharged his duties and kept the Institute running on an even keel.

Mr. Niles was a churchman whose talents in western music (vocal) was availed of, by the church at all important church services, particularly during Lent and Christmas.

Jebam, as he was known in his family circle, was an old boy of Jaffna Central and had the stamp on him of a good Christian training imparted to him by his father Mr. W. D. Niles, former District Judge, Jaffna, an ardent Methodist and by his brother Dr. D. T. Niles, ecumenical leader of world stature.

The funeral took place in Toronto on the 14th of November. He leaves behind his wife Esmey (nee Chinniah, Proctor, S. C. of Uduvil) his daughter, Thelma Williams, Attorney-at-law, his son Elmo and a brother and sister, Marcus Niles (U. K.) and Bimla Sharma (Madras). His two sisters-Mangalam Thambiah and Raneer Ratnasingham predeceased him in recent years.

LTTE SOLE REPRESENTATIVES OF TAMILS IN THE NORTH & EAST SAYS THONDAMAN

Mr. S. Thondaman, minister in the U. N. P. government and leader of the upcountry Tamil community, recently expressed his opinion that if the government is to enter into any meaningful dialogue with the Tamil people with a view to permanent settlement, it should speak with the L. T. T. E. who alone could speak for the Tamil people in the North and East.

He also confirmed as his opinion that both within the Government and among the opposition, there is a growing conviction that a negotiated settlement is the only solution for the present ethnic crisis.

OBITUARY



George Thurairatnam Everts

Mr. G. T. Everts retired Public Health Inspector and member of the C.S.I. Church Chavakachcheri passed away on Wednesday the 5th December. The funeral service was conducted at his residence at Chavakachcheri on Thursday the 6th December at 4.00 p. m.

Mr. Everts leaves behind besides his wife Annaluxmy, his daughters Thevakumari, Chandravathana, Nalini and Chitrani and his son Anandarajan. One of his sons Kavirajan died a few years ago.

Mr. Everts was the father in Law of Mr. J. Thevaanathan of the Jaffna College Technical Institute.

OBITUARY



George Arudpragasam

Mr. George Arudpragasam of the staff of Velayutham Maha-Vidyalayam, Point Pedro died as a result of Aerial Bombing on Thursday the 6th December. According to reports Mr. Arudpragasam was teaching in his class when the bombers were hovering over Point Pedro. He ran to the road for safety and was killed as the bomb fell near him.

Mr. George Arudpragasam was the son of Mr. & Mrs. J. Arudpragasam of Chavakachcheri. He married Lydia Gnanasothy daughter of the late Mr. & Mrs. Muttaiah of Katkivalam and teacher M. G. H. S. Point Pedro. The funeral took place on Friday the 7th December at 2.00 p.m. at Point Pedro.

APPRECIATION

Dr. SUPRAMANIAM JEYASEELAN passed away peacefully in Adelaide, Australia, on 29th November 1989, after a brief illness, bravely borne. Hailing from a respected christian family from the North of Sri Lanka, "Seelan" in his native land and "Jay" in his adopted home, had his secondary education at Jaffna College where he was English Editor of the student Magazine - The Young Idea, President of the Literary Association - the Academy, and a School Counsellor; he was also closely associated with several christian associations and activities. During his school days he was full of life and clean fun and always won the respect and affection of his teachers and colleagues alike. Naturally gifted, he enjoyed turning his talents to wide and varied interests in life and always excelled in any of his pursuits. As a student, it was his gifted intellect rather than industry that assured him a

place in the medical faculty of the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya, in Kandy.

He qualified in 1969 as a medical practitioner, married Padmini in 1970 and migrated to Australia in 1974. He served initially in Alice Springs, then in Adelaide and Tasmania. Finally, he entered private practice as a Specialist Anaesthetist in Adelaide, where he remained until his untimely death. Deepa, his daughter, is already following in her father's footsteps and Sam, his son, would probably do so in due course.

Unassuming, yet always lively, with malice towards none, charity to all, he was truly affectionate and concerned about all around him. His charm and fun were contagious - a ready wit, a permanent smile and a blend of diverse gifts and talents combined in this one wonderful person, makes it hard to believe that all we are left with now are memories; memories pleasant of a wonderful friend with fine qualities of head and heart, of a caring and affectionate husband and father and memories painful that death should cruelly rob him from his near and dear ones in this untimely manner.

It is perhaps some consolation to Padmini, Deepa, Sam, his brothers and sister, that their personal tragedy is shared by all who were fortunate to have been associated with him during his life. Seelan leaves behind an indelible memory in all of us - a memory encrusted with sublime and pleasing thoughts of an exemplary life led by example. In the words of the Bard of Avon he was gentle and the elements so mixed in him that nature might stand up and say to all "this was a man".

C. Chakradaran

MOVING WITH CHRIST INTO GOD'S TOMORROW

The National Christian Council of India has organised a five days conference for church leaders in that country at the end of February and early March in 1991 to consider the challenges and opportunities for the Church in India as it moves into the 21st century. Outstanding leaders from many parts of the world will participate at this conference. There will also be a day of special celebration and witness in New Delhi. The new General Secretary of the N. C. C. of India The Rev. Dr. Lung Muana is organising the conference.

M. M. Thomas - Governor of Nagaland Institute

Dr. M. M. Thomas, well known Theologian and Scholar is now serving as the Governor of the North Eastern Hill State of Nagaland.

VADDUKODDAI CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

★ Robert Porter ★

This year, when we have sorely missed the seasonal preparations of the Christian colleges for the All-School Christmas Carol Service, we are humbly thankful for the efforts of Mrs. Vimala Jebanesan in training the older boys and girls of Jaffna College for their Advent offering, "A Mystery for Christmas," held on a rainy Sunday evening, November 25, at the Vaddukoddai Cathedral Church.

Combined with the traditional tableau, prepared under the direction of Miss S. Selvadurai, it was a simple service of Christmas carols. After the choir processed to the stately rhythms of "Once in Royal David's City," the congregation's attention was directed to the expectation of the Birth with the Besancon tune, "Peoples Look East!"

Some unfamiliar as well as some familiar carols then formed the hour's program - rather haunting, the tune "We shepherds Watch Were Keeping;" happy and joyful the sixteenth-century French melody "Ding Dong! Merrily on High!"

The candles held by the beautiful angels of the tableau lent the occasion the intimate warmth and radiance of the Gospel narrative. The Sussex Carol gave the improved men's section a chance to shine while the girls provided the obligatory My favorite piece of the evening was another lovely minor French tune of the sixteenth century, called simply "The Huron Carol." It set the mood of cool moonlit wintertime in the fields, where hunters come to worship Jesus with fox and beaver pelts.

We were immediately thereupon whirled away to other lonely plains in the Far West of the U. S. A. through the "Cowboy Carol" and the horseman's cheerful hope of a "new world beginning from tonight."

Centering on Mary, this year portrayed by Geetanjali Jebanesan, the choir sang a setting of the Magnificat, arranged in 1962 to a Maluku popular tune (from the Moluccas, Indonesian islands that have also suffered ethnic violence). A moment of humour occurred when one of our otherwise garrulous Littlest Angels who were to come up and bless the Baby refused to go on stage.

A Polish hymn celebrating the "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" quietly concentrated our attention again on the sleeping Child. This was followed by the ringing news bulletin, "Masters in This Hall/Hear ye (Continued on page 8)

தாரகை ஒளி

“பேதைகளின் தவறுகள் அவர்களையே கொன்றுவிடும்;
சிறுமதியோரின் தற்பெருமை அவர்களை அழித்துவிடும்”
— நீதிமொழிகள், 1:32



எங்கள் கருத்து



ஆண்டவர் நல்லவர்

இன்று நமது சூழலில் நடை பெறும் பயங்கரமான சம்பவங்கள், கலவரங்கள் அனைத்தையும் கவனிக்கும் போது, “ஆண்டவர் நல்லவர்” என்று சொல்வது எப்படி? நாம் நாள் தோறும் அனுபவிக்கும் வேதனைகள் இதற்கு முரண் பாடாயிருக்கிறதல்லவா? என நாம் வினவலாம்.

‘ஆண்டவர் நல்லவர்’ என்றால் நமது நாட்டில் ஏன் சீர்கேடான சம்பவங்கள் தொடர்ந்து நடைபெறுகின்றன? இனக் கலவரங்களின் விளைவாக இலட்சக்கணக்கான மக்கள், வீடுகளை இழந்து, அன்பானவர்களை இழந்து, அகதிகளாக இடம் பெயர்ந்து அல்லற்படுகின்றனரே! ஏன்? ‘ஆண்டவர் நல்லவர்’ என்றால், பெருந்தொகையான தமிழ் மக்கள் அநியாயமாகக் கொல்லப்படுகின்றனரே! ஏன்? உலகின் பல நாடுகளில், குறிப்பாக மூன்றாவது உலகில் பல மக்கள் பட்டினியினால் வாடுகின்றனர். பல குழந்தைகள் அநாதைகளாக்கப்படுகின்றனர். ஏழை எளியவர்கள் ஈன இரக்கமின்றி அடக்கி ஒடுக்கப்படுகின்றனர் - ஏன்?

இந்நாட்டில் வாழும் தமிழ் மக்கள், கடந்த முப்பது ஆண்டுகட்கு மேலாக, மனித உரிமைகள் மறுக்கப்பட்டு பல துன்பங்களை அனுபவித்து வருகின்றனர். குறிப்பாகக் கடந்த பத்து ஆண்டுகளாக சகிக்க முடியாத வேதனைகளை அடைந்து வருகின்றனர். துன்பங்கள் குறையவேயில்லை. இவ்விதமான சூழ்நிலையில் இருப்போர், ‘ஆண்டவர் நல்லவர்’, என எப்படிச் கூற முடியும்? அவர் துன்பத்தைக் கண்டு இரங்காதவரா? தீமையை அகற்றும் ஆற்றல் அற்றவரா? அவர் வல்லமையற்றவரெனின் அவர் ஆண்டவராய் இருக்க முடியாதே! அப்படியானால் ‘ஆண்டவர் இல்லை’ என்று தானே பொருள்படும், என்பது ஒரு சாராரின் கருத்தாகும்.

இந்த இக்கட்டான நிலையில் விசுவாசிகள் கூட தடுமாறுகின்றனர். ஆண்டவர் தாம் நல்லவர் என்பதை ஏன் வெளிப்படையாகக் காட்டாதிருக்கிறார்? - “யாராவது நலமானதை எங்களுக்கு அருளமாட்டாரா?” என்று பலர் கேட்கின்றனர்; ஆண்டவரே, எங்கள் மீது உமது முகத்தின் ஒளி வீசும்படி செய்தருளும்”
—(சங். 4:6)

இக்கருத்தை மனதிற்கொண்டு, இவ்வாண்டைத் திரும்பிப் பாருங்கள். இவ்வாண்டில், நாம் எதிர்பார்த்ததற்கு மாறாகப் பல துன்பங்கள் நம்மைத் தாக்கிய போதிலும், ஆண்டவர் ஒரு நன்மையையும் செய்யவில்லையா? துயர் நிறைந்த இருளுக்குள் தத்தளித்த போது, அவரின் ஒளியை நாம் பெறவில்லையா? சிந்தித்துப் பாருங்கள்! அப்பொழுது, “என் ஆத்துமாவே, ஆண்டவரைப் போற்று; அவர் செய்த நன்மைகளுள் ஒன்றையும் மறவாதே” (சங். 103:2) என்று தான் மன நிறைவோடு சொல்லத் தூண்டப்படுவீர்கள். ஒரு முறை சங்கீதகாரன், தன் சொந்த ஜனத்தின் பழைய வரலாற்றைப் பின்னோக்கிப் பார்த்து - “விவேகமுள்ள யாவரும் இவற்றை எண்ணிப் பார்ப்பார்களாக; ஆண்டவரின் பேரருள் செய்தவற்றை உணர்ந்து கொள்வார்களாக” (சங். 107:43) என்று கூற முடிந்தது.

இன்றைய உலகில் நடைபெறும் காரியங்களை ஆராயும் போது, ஒரு ஞானமுள்ள மனிதன், ‘நல்ல ஆண்டவரையே’ காண்கிறான். அவர் கடின இதயமுள்ளவரல்ல, மன இரக்கமும் உருக்கமும் உடைய அன்புள்ள ஆண்டவர் என்பதையே காண்கிறான். இன்று நாம் காணும், அனுபவிக்கும் எல்லாக் காரியங்களும் அவரின் அன்பின் ஊற்றிலிருந்து வருகிற தென்ற உண்மையை நாம் காணலாம். அவர் ஜீவ ஒளியின் தந்தை. அவரிடமிருந்து தான் எல்லா நன்மையான காரியங்களும் வருகின்றன.

நமக்கு வேண்டிய பாதுகாப்புத் தரப்படுகிறது. ஆபத்து அணுகாமல் நம்மைக் காத்து வருகிறார். குடும்பத்திற்கு வேண்டியனவற்றை அன்புடன் அளித்து வருகிறார். கடவுள்

கடிதம் - 1.

அன்புத் தம்பி!

பல நாட்களுக்குப் பின் உனக்குக் கடிதம் எழுதும் வாய்ப்புக் கிடைத்தது. மகிழ்ச்சி! இப்பகுதியில் நடை பெறும் துன்பங்கள், கலவரங்கள் பற்றி எழுதும்படி கேட்டாய். அதனை விபரமாக வேறொரு கடிதத்தில் எழுதுவேன். இருந்தும், ஒன்று மட்டும் கூற விரும்புகிறேன் தமிழரின் சுதந்திரத்திற்காக, தந்தை செல்வா நடத்திய சாத்துவிர்ப் போராட்ட காலத்தின்பின், இப்பொழுதுதான் வட-கிழக்கு மாகாணத்தில் வாழும் தமிழ் மக்கள், அளவில்லாத துன்பங்கள் அடைந்தபோதிலும், ஒன்று திரண்டு சுதந்திரப் போராட்டத்தில் கலந்து வருவதாகத் தெரிகிறதா? “தமிழன் என்று சொல்லலா, தலை நிழர்ந்து நில்லலா” என்றார் ஒரு புரட்சிக் கவிஞன். எல்லோரும் ஒத்துழைத்தால், அந்த நிலை உருவாகும் என்பது நிச்சயம். இன்று சுதந்திரப் போராட்டத்தை நடத்திவரும் போராளிகள், தமிழ்ப் பகுதிகளின் எல்லைகளைப் பிடிப்பது மட்டுமல்ல, தமிழ்ச் சமுதாயத்தையே புதிதாக அமைக்கும் நடவடிக்கைகளில் ஈடுபட்டு வருகின்றனர். மாவீரர் நினைவு வாரத்தில் நடைபெற்ற கண்காட்சியில் இது தென்பட்டது. இது நிறைவேற மற்றவர்களின் ஒத்துழைப்புத் தேவை.

இப்போராட்டத்தின் விளைவுகளை இங்கு விவரிக்க முடியாது. நல்ல அறிவும், திடமனதும், தமிழ் மண்ணைக் காக்க வேண்டுமென்ற ஆர்வமும், உயர்ந்த இலட்சியமும் நிறைந்த பல தமிழ் இளைஞரும் யுவதிகளும் இச்சுதந்திரப் போராட்டத்தில் கலந்து வருகின்றனர். அவர்கள் சிந்தும் தமது உயிரைத் தியாகம் செய்து உயிர்ப்பலி கொடுக்கும் துன்பங்களை அளித்து வருவதாக அறிகிறோம். எங்கிருந்தாலும் ஈழத் தமிழினம் கூடிய விரைவில் ஒன்று சேரவேண்டும். இதுவே எமது விருப்பம்.

இந்தியாவில் சுதந்திரப் போராட்டம் நடைபெற்ற போது, அங்கிருந்த கிறிஸ்தவர்கள் அதில் ஈடுபடவில்லை. பிரிட்டிஷ் அரசாங்கத்திற்குப் பயந்து ஒதுங்கியிருந்தனர். ஒரு சிலர் மட்டும் முன்னின்று, ஆங்கிலேய ஆட்சிக்கு எதிராகக் குரல் எழுப்பினர். ஆனால் யாழ்ப்பாணத்தில் அப்படியிருக்கவில்லை. தமிழர் நடத்தி வந்த சுதந்திரப் போராட்டத்தில் சாத்துவிக முறையில் ஆதிதொட்டு தமிழ் கிறிஸ்தவர்கள் ஈடுபட்டு வந்தனர். இதற்குத் தந்தை செல்வாவே தக்க சான்றாகும். சமீப காலத்தில் வட-கிழக்கு மாகாணத்தில் உள்ள ரோமன் கத்தோலிக்க சபை, பல இடறல்சன் துன்பங்கள் வந்தபோதிலும் தளராது ஈடுபட்டு வந்தது. (தொடர்ச்சி 6-ம் பக்கம் பார்க்க)

நமக்கு அருளும் ஆசீர்வாதங்களை ஒவ்வொன்றாக நினைக்கும்போது, ‘ஆண்டவர் நல்லவர்’ என்று தான் நாம் கூறுவோம்! ஆனால், அடுத்தடுத்துத் துன்பம் வரும்போது வருமானம் குறையும் போது, குடும்பத்தில் கஷ்டங்கள் ஏற்படும் போது, சமாதானம் இல்லாத போது, நண்பர்கள் நம்மைக் கைவிடும் போது, அயலார் நம்மை விரோதிக்கும் போது, ‘ஆண்டவர் நல்லவர்’ என்று நம்மால் சொல்ல முடியுமா? உண்மையான விசுவாசியினால் முடியும்.

பல தடவைகளில் நாம் எதிர்பாராத வகையில் கடவுள் நமக்கு நல்ல காரியங்களைச் செய்து வருகிறார். துன்ப துயரத்தால் தள்ளாடி நொந்து இருந்த வேளைகளில் அவர் எங்களைத் தாங்கி வழி நடத்தினார். ஆண்டவரின் அருளுக்கு முடிவில்லை. ‘அவரை நேசிப்போர்க்கு விடுதலை அளிக்கிறார், பாதுகாப்பை அருளுகிறார். அவர் தம்மை நோக்கி மன்றாடுவோர்க்கு செவிசாய்த்து. அவர்களோடிருந்து அவர்களைத் தப்புவிப்பார்’ (சங். 91:14, 15). இந்த விசுவாசத்தில் உறுதியாய் நிலை நிற்பவர்கள், துன்பத்தின் மத்தியிலும் ‘ஆண்டவர் நல்லவர்’ என்று தான் சொல்லுவார்கள்.

ஆம், ஆண்டவர் நல்லவர். அடிமைகளாக ஒடுக்கி அடக்கப்பட்ட மக்களுக்கு விடுதலை அளிக்க வந்துதித்த எம் பொருமான் பிறந்த செய்தி - ‘மக்களுக்கெல்லாம் மாபெரும் மகிழ்ச்சியூட்டும் நற்செய்தி’ அவரே ஆண்டவராகிய கிறிஸ்து. ‘உன்னதங்களில் கடவுளுக்கு மகிமை. உலகிலே அவர் தயவு பெற்றோர்க்கு அமைதி’. (லூக். 2:11,14). நம்முடன் ‘என்றென்றும் இருக்க இப்பூவுலகிற்கு வந்த ‘இம்மானுவேல்’ இவரே நம்மைப் பாவத்திலிருந்து மீட்க வந்துள்ளார். நமக்காகப் பாடுபட்டு மரித்து உயிர்த்தெழுந்தார். இன்றும் நமக்காகச் செயலாற்றி வருகிறார். அவரின் அன்பின் கரங்கள் நம் அருகில் இருக்கின்றன. ‘கடவுள் நம் சார்பில் இருக்கும் போது, நம்மை எதிர்த்து நிற்பவர் யார்?’

‘கிறிஸ்தம்ஸ்’ விழாவைக் கொண்டாடும் நாம், பலவிதமான துன்பங்கள் மத்தியில் தத்தளிக்கும் தமிழ் மக்களுக்கு, ‘ஆண்டவர் நல்லவர்’ என்ற நற்செய்தியை வெறும் சொற்களினால் அறிவிாமல், செயலினால் காட்ட வேண்டும். நற்செய்தி நவிலும் விழா தான் நத்தார் திருவிழா!!

“ஆண்டவருக்கு நன்றி செலுத்துங்கள்; அவர் நல்லவர்”

OBITUARY

We regret to record the death of Mrs. Pushpam Arulanantham, wife of the late Rev. J. T. Arulanantham, former Principal of St. John's College, Jaffna, that occurred on the 15th of November this year at the home of her eldest son Dr. Pararasan Arulanantham, No. 3, St. John's Church Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5BQ, U. K. Mrs. Arulanantham leaves behind two other sons Vijayan (U. S. A.) and Dr. Karuniyan (U. S. A.) and daughter Kruba (Australia).

Mrs. Arulanantham was a life wire of the Chundikuli Church during her long residence at Chundikuli, both when her late husband was Principal of St. John's and also for many years later till she left for the U. K. She will be remembered for the key role she played for several years in providing leadership for the annual festival of carols of the schools in the north. Before she left for the U. K. She gifted her late husband's library of theological books to the Christian Theological Seminary & Institute for Lay People at Chuanakam.

W. C. C. TEAM VISITS SRI LANKA

A team of six church leaders sent by the World Council of Churches visited Sri Lanka between the 17th and 25th of November. This visit was primarily of a pastoral nature. The team was keen to learn of the situation prevailing in various parts of this country particularly as a result of the ethnic conflict and the present hostilities. The team also was keen to demonstrate the solidarity of Christians and churches in other parts of the world with the churches in Sri Lanka, a solidarity based in the fellowship of the body of Christ. The team met church leaders, politicians and other leading members of the community in Colombo, south of Sri Lanka and also in the north and east of the country. On Sunday the 18th of November, the members of the team visited various congregations and participated in the respective worship services. The Rev. Dr. Newton Thurber one of the team preached at the C. S. I. Church service in Wellawatte. From the 20th to the 23rd of November the team divided into two groups of three each and visited the north and the east of Sri Lanka. Dr. Newton Thurber of the N. C. C., U. S. A., Ms. Elizabeth Salter, Executive Secretary of the Churches commission on International Affairs of the W. C. C. and Dr. Kim Sung Eun, a lecturer in sociology from the N. C. C. in Korea, visited the north. Mr. Norman Richardson of the Irish Council of Churches, Mr. Simon Moglia of the Australian Council of Churches Youth Task Group and a representative of the Church of Norway, visited the east.

(Continued on page 8)

Jaffna College Prize Giving Extracts from the address delivered by the Chief Guest Rev. Dr. Francis Soundararaj

The New Education policy of India of 1986 has suggested some remedies to meet the changes in the educational scenario of the present century. The traditional affiliating university system has been rightly identified as the cause of the inability to change educational goals and services. The concept of autonomy for colleges to design curricula, to have their own systems of examination and to admit students and appoint teachers so as to fulfil the specific goals of the institution is advocated. The relationship to the university is described as one of "creative participation" and not control and uniformity of operation. In a limited way the reform will bring benefits. In as much as such a measure is only remedial and not conceptually evolved this may have only limited advantages of freedom, especially because state and university controls cannot be as helpfully flexible as one might desire. Nevertheless this is a step in the right direction. In our own country there are about 100 autonomous colleges with another 150 awaiting clearance to become autonomous. Our college has fared well during the last 12 years of autonomy. The New Educational policy also encourages educational reforms such as establishment of Academic Staff Colleges to facilitate updating of knowledge. Value education is another area attended to in the process of rethinking education so that the principle of equity may be accepted as an integral part of our value system. These are not enough as they are not commensurate with the rapidity and magnitude of changes which have come about in the educational scenario of our countries. We need to think and plan and do far more. Change we must, and change fast, to keep education an integral part of our life and work.

MANKULAM ROAD REOPENED FOR TRAFFIC

The Kandy Road from Vavuniya to Paranthan which remained virtually closed for the last six months from the commencement of the present offensive is now open to traffic. Vehicles from Vavuniya are able to use the Kandy Road up to the Paranthan junction.

JAFFNA METHODIST CHURCH RELIEF OPERATION

The Rev. K. P. Govindaraj and a team from the Methodist Church in Jaffna recently provided relief assistance to about 425 families in the Allaipiddy area. It was a village very badly affected during the Jaffna Fort operation.

In conclusion, we may legitimately take pride in the fact that the wisdom and ideals of institutions have helped to provide the education needed for our countries through the best part of this century and the last. We have the commission to carry the torch into the next century. The secret of our strength is that these ideals, upheld through selfless and dedicated service, are eternally human and spiritual. They value the person in you and me and attempt to raise the stature of that person even to match that of Christ, our Lord. They sought to perfect our character after Him; They used sound learning to build character so that an educated person can withstand the onslaught of the Evil One to bear witness to God through faithful service rendered steadfastly where "duty, right and honour lead". Our hearts are overjoyed when we watch the men and women who are sent out of our Colleges meeting victoriously all temptations and serving God and country fearlessly and cheerfully. Such character and spirituality are time tested ideals that can never go stale. Today I congratulate all the prize winners in the hope that you will join such ranks of the students of Jaffna College who are the honour of the human community wherever they are, and I take this opportunity to wish you all both a challenge-filled future and the courage to meet it. May the rich traditions of Jaffna College be reinforced by the sense of commitment to rebuild your strife-torn nation through the promotion of peace and goodwill to establish which our Lord came to the earth. My wife and I thank you all and especially Dr. Jebanesan and other officers of the College for the honour they have bestowed on us. Thank you, and may God bless you.

AN INTERESTING DATE OF BIRTH

Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, Minister who led the military operations against the Tamils during the Jayawardane government takes pride in the fact that he was born on the 26th of November, the very date on which the Sinhala freedom fighter Keppitipola was born. Because he shared the same birth date with Keppitipola, Mr. Athulathmudali was persuaded not to participate in the function when the Indo-Sri Lanka pact was signed in July 1987. He felt he had to dissociate himself with that event to safeguard the honour of his people.

It may be more than mere coincidence that November 26th which is also the date of birth of Mr. Veluppillai Prabhakaran was observed as Hero's Day by people in the north and east of Sri Lanka.

50 MILLION RUPEES DAMAGE TO BATTICALOA UNIVERSITY

The University of Batticaloa suffered heavy damages due to recent military operations and it is estimated that restoration and replacement of losses would cost about Rs. 50 million. The University remains closed and no date given for its reopening.

C. S. I. MANKULAM CENTRE FLATTENED

The Mankulam Church Centre, Day Care Centre and Vocational Training Centre which were constructed in recent years has been almost flattened due to the recent military operations in that area. Several bombs and shells hit the compound during air raids and apparently it has also been affected by the counter offensive of the militants in that area. It is estimated that restoration of the centre will cost more than 1.5 million rupees. The houses built for refugees in that area however have not been affected.

NEW DAY CARE CENTRE OPENED

On Wednesday the 5th of December, one more Day Care Centre was opened at Gandhijikiramam in Uyarapuram, Kokkuvil East at 10.00 a. m. at a simple function when the Rt. Rev. D. J. Ambalavanar, Bishop of the J. D., C. S. I. blessed the centre with prayer. The Diocese bought the land some time ago, and the Day Care Centre building, after long delays has just been completed. The initiative for this centre at the locality was taken by Mr. Stephen Ariyanayagam. The Rev. G. D. Anandarajan supervised the work at its earlier stages. At the function, the Rev. Christot. Robarts, the Manager of the Day Care Centre welcomed the gathering, consisting largely of children and parents of the locality. Mr. K. Thirunavukkarasu, Principal of the Methodist Mission Tamil Mixed School (now under Govt.) just next door to this centre was among the guests along with all the staff of his school. Mr. Thirunavukkarasu warmly welcomed the step taken by the Diocese to start this greatly needed service at the village. He hoped most of the children after their pre-school education at this Day Care Centre will be joining his school.

The Bishop in his brief remarks said that despite all the trouble and turbulence around us, the opening of this centre is a sign that God's work goes on. He assured the people of the village that this is but a small beginning and that with their co-operation, more programmes can be initiated for the uplift of the village. A fellowship tea followed the opening ceremony. About fifty children below the age of five are registered at this Day Care Centre.

Some Reflections on the Developing Crisis

The monotonous drone of a plane, scouring the countryside and the chatter of small arms fire at a distance, punctuated by the thump of artillery shells grimly remind us, as we write these notes, that the current offensives in the North have lost neither their sting nor their steam.

Hitting the news-stands with an undying momentum since June this year have been the disturbing dimensions of the Crisis the phlebotomous episodes in the Eastern Province and the aerial attacks in the Northern, which have made 1990, a year to remember and not to forget.

But what even a Diogenes with his day-time lantern cannot fail to discover amidst the scenes of desolation, is the stamp of vitality and vehemence in every face in the street, be that it of a farmer or industrialist battling against the crippling shortage of electric power or that of a refugee denied the consolations of his own dwelling and the quiet friendliness of his trees, farms and fields.

The most basic energy sources are today lacking in the North—fuel for cooking, light to read by, and power for the water-pump.

It is not easy to put a price tag on the legacy of changes in attitudes and practices which the Crisis leaves behind or the resurgence of the human spirit which it has generated. "Martyrs Day" in Jaffna was celebrated with a flare, unprecedented in her annals. Memories both vivid and painful were etched deeply in many hearths and homes.

But resilience and ability to absorb hardship notwithstanding, the blessings of political stability with its concomitant opportunities for a rhythmic life, free from anxiety and foreboding, are a far cry for the youth of the North.

Educationally, the G. C. E. (O, L) Examination which is currently being held in seven Provinces in the Island (as we write these notes) is not being held in the North and East. The External Examinations of the Peradeniya University for which some 1000 candidates have applied this year will not be held at the Jaffna Centre according to news reports.

The note of exhausted patience of the Jaffna University students would have been aggravated by the announcement appearing in the MURASOLI 8-12-1990 that the Second M. B., B. S. and the third M. B., B. S. Examinations have been postponed. They were due to be held in December this year.

It is a sad reflection that the neon-glow of Education which once bathed the Tamil areas of the North is now blinking off, with students unable to sit even for the basic school Examination as the fifth standard Scholarship Examination which serve as a useful yardstick in Educational standards as the end of the Primary School career whether the child makes the grade or not for the Scholarship and the G. C. E. (OL) Examination which opens the window on a student's career after his Secondary education, even if the student does not make the grade for pursuing higher education. Seventeen Schools in the Jaffna District have suffered considerable damage, according to news reports.

Above all, in the sphere of Higher Education at no time has a University Degree (General or Professional) been such a mirage for the Jaffna undergraduate as at the present time.

Holidays

The Diocesan office will be closed for Business during Christmas from the 23rd of December 1990 to the 1st of January 1991. (Both days inclusive)

175th Anniversary.....

On Sabbath August 4th we assembled at Tellippalai to pay the last tribute of affection to his remains. At the house we engaged in devotional exercises, and then followed the corpse which was borne by the native members of our Church to the grave, where an appropriate address was made to spectators. We cannot do justice to our own feelings without saying much more respecting our departed brother than the limits of this letter will admit. We shall therefore soon forward to the committee a detailed account of his last sickness and death. We cannot however close this account without saying of him, "the memory of the just is blessed"

Missionary Herald May 1823.

W. C. C.

The team which came to the north met the Jaffna Citizens Committee and the Roman Catholic Bishop the Rt. Rev. Deogupillai at the Catholic Bishop's residence. They also met a representative group at the Ottley Hall, Jaffna College, Vaddukoddi. They visited various parts of the peninsula seeing some of the damages and the refugee camps. They had an interview with the Government Agent of Jaffna and the Director and staff of the Jaffna Hospital. They also visited the Green Hospital, Manipay and the Christian Theological Seminary & Institute for Lay People at Chunnakam. The people in the north and east were particularly happy that impartial observers from outside the country were able to visit us and assess the situation for themselves. The team that came to the north also visited the Kilinochchi Paranthan area and the Shalom-nagar Farm. They had to

experience all the travails that travellers to Jaffna these days have to undergo.

The two teams on their return to Colombo met Church leaders and the N. C. C. Justice Commission members and shared their impressions and experiences. It is hoped that this visit would help the world church to understand the problems that have afflicted our peoples for the last so many years.

VADDUKODDAI.....

news today...," sung by the entire congregation, with its glorious "Nowell, Nowell, Nowell" sung loud and clear. A final note of quiet worship was the unusual Japanese carol "The Silent Night," composed in 1941 by Chugoro Torii: "The silent night of winter falls, / The stars gleam clear and chill" It left us with the mood of the world around us but with the "tidings brought of splendid joy / Which makes the sad heart sing."

Before the benediction the traditional Afro-American "Amen" closed the programme. With the really lovely carols, and the good work of the choir, this participant at the service would have liked more differentiation in volume in the choir's singing. Yet, all were delighted to have a real Christmas service in the midst of destruction and deprivation.



The Management of The Morning Star & A. C. M. Press wishes our readers a Merry X'mas and a Happy New Year.

With teen-agers and adults in their twenties riding the crest of a "reforms" surge, an EDUCATION COMMISSION is a necessary prerequisite to douse the flames of student unrest. But let's get one thing straight. The task of the Commission would be Sisyphean unless the New Educational framework is designed to FRAME eventually the Peace in Sri Lanka.

It was CHOU EN LAI of China who, waxing eloquent on the occasion of Henry Kissinger's first visit to his country, exclaimed "There is turmoil in the heavens and we have the opportunity to end it"

The overpowering presence of "crises areas" in the world today is not so tragic as the signs some of them show of moving on a long term time scale.

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