

Editor's Note

Please address all communication for the English pages to **The English Editor**, 'Morning Star' UDUVIL, CHUNNAKAM.

THE MORNING STAR

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

CENSORSHIP

All Editorial matter (including news) is subject to censorship by the Competent Authority from 13-7-79.

— Editor.

The Tamil Issues — Four main areas

The proposed Presidential Commission, which will consist of 9 members, will examine four main areas of grievances of the Tamil community — (1) University Admissions, (2) Government Employment, (3) Land Settlement and (4) Decentralisation or Devolution.

Only political parties now represented in Parliament could nominate members to the Commission. Other parties would be afforded opportunities to represent their views before the Commission.

Retired Chief Justice, Mr. Victor Tennekoon will head the Presidential Commission which is expected to submit its report before the end of August.

It is reliably learnt that the TULF will take part in the proceedings of the Commission. The TULF General Council is meeting at Vavuniya on Sunday (5-8-79). Mr. A. J. Wilson, son-in-law of Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam, who is now in the island on an assignment, has been persuaded to stay back and help to resolve the Tamil problem. He is the Co-Vice Chairman of the Presidential Commission, along with Mr. A. C. M. Ameer.

The Commission will also formulate a Scheme of Devolution of power to the District Councils of the 24 districts in Sri Lanka and define the functions of these Councils.

Tourism in Sri Lanka

A six hundred room *Five Star de Luxe Hotel* complex, in the shape of a horse shoe, will be built in stages on eleven acres of land adjacent to the Galle Face Green, by India's Taj Group, in collaboration with Government Corporations. It will be, when completed, one of the best ten hotels in the world.

In the meanwhile, the government ban on Lobster-fishing is causing concern in hotel management circles. The grilled lobster Menu, known by various names at the Star Class hotels, fetches a price ranging from Rs. 125/- to Rs. 200/-, a dish. "Not to have it, when requested by a tourist, would be", according to a hotel executive, "most detrimental to the tourist industry".

Examination Success

Miss Suganthy Karunanandhan has been successful at the B. Sc. Examination of the University of Madras, obtaining a First Class.

She is an Old Girl of Chundikuli Girls' College and Holy Cross College, Trichy, and is the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Karunanandhan of Rasavinthotam, Jaffna.

— Cor.

WCC: First Consultation

MONASTICISM, A NECESSITY FOR CHURCH RENEWAL

St. Bishop's Monastery in the desert between Cairo and Alexandria, the region from where the whole Christian monastic movement began in the Fourth Century, was the venue recently, of the *First Consultation* ever organised by the World Council of Churches on "the place of monastic life within the witness of the church today."

The participants at the Consultation, forty in number, agreed that although the Christian Church does not live through monasticism, it always grows, re-vitalises and perfects itself through its monastic roots.

On occasions, the monastic community has taken the role of "vigilantes" and has become a real and valid touchstone by which the Church can measure her actions and correct herself where necessary.

The participants of the *St. Bishop's Consultation* were the guests of the Egyptian Coptic Church. Patriarch Shenouda III, who is a monk and once a hermit before he became Patriarch of the five million Egyptian Copts, gave the Opening Address.

The Consultation constitutes an important contribution to the World Mission Conference scheduled to be held in Melbourne in May, 1980.

The Christa Seva Ashram, Chunnakam

The Christa Seva Ashram, Chunnakam, celebrates its Fortieth

Anniversary on August 21 this year. Through these forty years, the Ashram had preserved its spiritual dimension and the spiritual integrity of its community. Writing to a Publication issued on the 25th Anniversary of the Ashram in 1964, Dr. D. T. Niles said:—

"In a monastic community, the Order and the Institution take precedence over persons..... A Christian Ashram is primarily a fellowship built around an individual person. That it grows in terms of a "congregational" fellowship is what distinguishes it as Christian.

When the Revd. Selvaratnam founded the Christa Seva Ashram, he brought a new mode of Christian life and witness into the life of the Church. Nothing that has happened since, has changed that situation."

The Christa Seva Ashram at Chunnakam, has been used as a place of Retreat for both clergy and lay people, and has been an anchorage for individuals who came there in search of values they could not find in "a secular vacuum". The present Sevak is Rev. Sam Alfred, who counts over 30 years of association with the Ashram.

A book on the Life and Work of the Founder is being written and is nearing completion. The Ashram Board hopes to release the publication on August 21st, on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary.

IN BRIEF

- *Vembadi Girls' High School* emerged champions in the Jaffna Girls' Athletic Meet held recently, with 304½ points. Chundikuli Girls' College and Jaffna Hindu Ladies' College were joint runners-up with 254½ points.
- *The Diocesan Festival* of the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India will be held on September 8th this year. The Principal of the Arasarady Theological Seminary, Madurai will be the Chief Speaker.

Bishop enthroned in drought-stricken Botswana

The Rt. Rev. Walter Makulu, African Secretary of the W. C. C. in Geneva, was consecrated and enthroned Bishop of Botswana at a ceremony conducted by Archbishop Donald Arden from Malawi. Bishop Desmond Tutu, General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches preached the Sermon.

Following the enthronement, the Bishop moved outside the new Cathedral of the Holy Cross and repeated the blessings in the Setswana Language. The significance of the gesture is that the Setswana blessing is for rain.

JICCF Fetes

"Sports Ambassadors"

The American Sports Ambassadors were hosted by the Jaffna Intercollegiate Christian Fellowship at Chundikuli Girls' College on Wednesday, 18th of July. The fifteen members of the U.S. 'team', the Principals of schools connected with the JICCF and the Office Bearers of the Association participated at this Fellowship Dinner.

Mr. R. E. J. A. Setukavalar, President of the JICCF, welcomed the visitors and said that Jaffna had benefited enormously by their visit. He expressed his gratitude to the team, on behalf of the JICCF. Mr. Robin Cook replied on behalf of the visitors. —Cor.

Christianity in China

For the first time, the People's Republic of China has allowed a group of Chinese Christians from Hong Kong to visit the country and meets some Christian leaders.

Since the Cultural Revolution, most of the Church buildings were used as store-houses. There was one Church in Peking which had, all along, remained open and that was for foreign Diplomats.

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IN MEMORIAM



IN TREASURED MEMORY OF

THOMAS RAJADURAI

Called to Rest: August 8, 1975.

"Home to the chosen ones
who here
Serve their Lord faithfully
and well,
Who died in peace without a fear,
And there in peace forever dwell.

Remembered by his loved ones.
Atchvely.

The Exodus continues

According to a Survey by the Ministry of Plan Implementation, 14,241 Sri Lankans left the island for employment in West Asian oil rich countries between 1976 and 1978. This does not include those who were sent by Private employment agencies, not registered with the Labour Department.

The number of high level professionally qualified people who have taken up employment in West Asia is 266, of whom 113 are accountants. In the 'middle level' category, 1027 have left the country which included 229 foreman.

The largest drain was in the skilled worker and labour class level. 1643 carpenters and 1914 labourers left the country between 1976 and 1978, responding to the siren call of the oil rich countries.

Meanwhile, 36 Zambian Government Officials, including engineers, accountants and technicians were in the island to recruit professionally qualified Sri Lankans. They studied incentives for investment in the Free Trade Zone.

In Hangchow, a Church has now been "cleared" and is ready for repairs and re-painting.

Nanking Theological College

The Theological College in Nanking has now become part of the University. After 30 years, the new situation seems to provide for "concrete Christian witness in a specific situation".

EDITORIAL

A Meaningful Christian Life - Style

A Christian Punjabi lady writing to a recent issue of the *North India Churchman*, urges the need of a two-way communication between the Church and the community. So much is being done by the Church, she says, which needs to be known to the community in which the Church is set.

This idea came forcibly to her mind, she says, while she was recently engaged in conversation with an educated Punjabi lady on some of the problems that beset them as a community and as a nation. All of a sudden, her non-Christian friend turned to her and said, "You speak such good Punjabi." Startled at this unexpected compliment, she replied, "Why, I am a Punjabi." Her friend's next comment was more revealing, "But, aren't you a Christian."

We have come across in our reading in the past few weeks, similar instances where the educated non-Christian community has, often judged the Christian Church, not so much by what the Church has done or seeks to do for the community, but by the general life-style of the members of the Church.

In Singapore, according to the *CCA News* (15-6-79), there is a "Dharma Cakra Society" (comprising a group of young 'modernising' English educated Buddhists) which has a somewhat lofty ideal — 'to explore the contemporary meaning of Buddhism at greater depth'. In an interview with the *Strait's Times* on the celebration of Vesak Day, (a holiday for everyone throughout South-East Asia), the energetic Chairman of the *Dharma Cakra Society* indicated to the Pressmen, that this year, as far as their Society was concerned, the Vesak celebrations broke new ground; "even so far as to initiate recreational facilities such as picnics, just like the Christians do."

Our next example is related to a more sombre occasion. When Zulficar Ali Bhutto, one of Asia's most charismatic leaders, was executed in the pre-dawn hours of 4-4-79, the reaction in Kashmir was somewhat violent, according to a news reports. The Christian Church building at Srinagar was the first target.

All Saints Church, the most beautiful Church in Kashmir Valley was reduced to ashes, just three days before Palm Sunday. The Parsonage and an out-house of the Church were also consumed in the flames. The Priest-in-Charge, Rev. Y. Poljor, lost almost everything of his earthly possessions.

One day, after the sad incident, the Priest was walking in the Church compound, reminiscing on the devastation he saw around him, when a Senior Lecturer in Mathematics of one of the local colleges, walked up to him and told him, "You are weeping for your American dollars: we are mourning the death of a hero."

Various reasons have been attributed to the anti-Christian vendetta in Kashmir Valley on the wake of Bhutto's execution. It was the *Newsweek* (if we remember right), which reported that the Srinagar incidents were a revenge on the Christians because Bhutto's executioner belonged to the Christian faith.

Other journals, reporting on the incident, have attributed the violence to the alien and westernised character of the Christian Church in the Valley of Kashmir. They have said that it was the life-style of the Kashmir Christian community, (particularly their use of fork and spoon), which had provoked the wrath of the mob, resulting in the burning of the Church for the second time.

As a Christian community, our tidiness of organisation in planning recreational facilities, (including picnics), our ability to use the mother tongue in addition to having a good command of the English language and the ease and dexterity with which we handle forks and spoons at Dinner Parties cannot, of course, be pitted against the Christian Church as unacceptable or demoralising values. We should certainly not be ashamed of these skills, though we need not be unduly proud about them.

But, at the same time, it is a truism that our perspectives on Mission in an Asian context, should take into account a life-style commensurate with a commitment "to the poor and to justice". Robert McNamara, the President of the World Bank has recently pointed out the stark reality that by the end of the century, (that is within two decades), there would be 600 million people among the "Absolute Poor", that is, persons whose income is so low that they cannot afford to get a nutritional diet and other basic necessities. He has also revealed that there would be another 470 million, living literally on the margin of life.

In this dismal context, the simple and brief guideline formulated by *Nairobi 1975*, should serve as a motto for "Mission Year", 1980, as well as the International Consultation on Simple Life - Styles, appropriately scheduled for the same year: — "Nobody should increase his affluence, until everybody has his essentials."

It is in such a framework that a Christian life-style, or the life-style of any religious group, can become meaningful in a hungry world.

Appreciation

KIRUBAI ACCA

This is a tribute and a gesture of good bye to someone we loved and respected greatly.

Kirubai Saravanamuttu belonged to that distinguished hierarchy of "The Uduvil Accas". The personalities that dominated this period in the history of our school were very, very special indeed — Chinnapillai Acca, Flora Acca, Ariacca, Kirubai Acca, Gnanasekaran, Nallamah Acca, and Alice Acca to mention a few. They took their responsibilities seriously. They got themselves well and truly involved in people and in situations. Head-on involvement does lead to friction and rather embarrassing situations sometimes and yet thinking back after these many long years one realises it was a small price to pay for the infinitely precious awareness of belonging, that is a pre-requisite to this kind of involvement. A definite assurance that there were senior members in the Community who cared; cared enough to get involved. Norms and attitudes change with time. Today we preach non-involvement and champion personal freedom and privacy of the individual. The 'Acca' ideal is dying out. It's almost as if the curtain is coming down on one way of life.

"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in" To me this parable of our Lord acquired a sense of reality at the time Kirubai Acca left us. It was as if this scene was being staged again, in heaven. The smile of welcome on our Lord's face and Kirubai Acca's surprised inquiry, "Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? ?" And His smiling reply, "In as much as ye have done it unto one of these, the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Was it only my flight of fancy or could it have been true? Perhaps it was true.

Peter had great failings and yet our Master made him the rock on which He built His church. In our Lord's Vineyard there are many labourers. To some of them we pay homage and give our love not because they have no faults but in spite of their human frailties. That was St. Peter's victory. That was Kirubai Acca's victory. Her love and loyalty encompassed the whole of humanity that came within the circle of her acquaintance, irrespective of the rich or poor, the high or low. "Kirubai Acca and her three lists", was no figment of the fertile minds of her friends, but a reality. She served as a Job Bank, an indefatigable Match Maker and an enthusiastic Funds' Raiser, all rolled in one.

University Admissions

The subject of University Admissions is listed first in the four "areas" of examination by the Proposed Presidential Commission which is scheduled to start work early.

The results of the A. L. Examination of April, 1979 are expected to be released by the middle of the month.

In the meanwhile, "an Open University" has been established in Colombo, according to a gazette notification dated 26-7-79. Students who are admitted to this University, will be able to obtain degrees in certain fields.

Applications have also been called by the University Grants Commission, for a Director for the proposed University College to be established at Vantharamoolai, Batticaloa in October. This will be the eighth University in Sri Lanka.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Any person or individual involved in humanitarian work should undoubtedly be moved by the sentiments expressed in your Editorial in the "Morning Star" of the 20th July. It is commendable.

Your forthright observations and annotations should stimulate Christian workers in particular who sometimes orbit within a framework of charity, not always due to apathy but owing to a lack of understanding of the need for the under-privileged to be released into a "full maturity of their selfhood" as you so rightly put it.

I myself will certainly pass on the invaluable substance of this Editorial to all of those with whom I come into contact in the course of my work, and it is to be hoped that it receives as much publicity as possible, for none can remain mute in the light of such soul-stirring evidence.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. A. C. Thambyrajah.

"Navajeevanam",
25th July, 1979.

To Uduvil she was an old girl beyond compare. Her pride in and affection for her old school had a glowing quality about it. Her presence at the Committee meetings dwarfed difficulties, smoothed out problems and immovable obstacles miraculously removed themselves. She revelled in marshalling support and collecting money for good causes. Slammed doors and dark frowns were no dampers to her single mindedness of purpose. Her eyes looked above and beyond these at the final goal. To have known her was to have known one who gloried in her service to God's children. We thank God for her at every remembrance.

S. J. S.