

Editor's Note

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

THE MORNING STAR

Registered as a Newspaper at the General Post Office, Sri Lanka under No. QB/59/300/26/82

Established: 1841: A Christian Weekly : Published Every Friday

Vol. 144 JAFFNA, FRIDAY, 6th JANUARY, 1984 No. 1

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

Subscription

Inland: Rs. 35/- per year.

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Freedom day celebrations

The Independence celebrations on February 4, 1984, will be held at the old airport at Katukurunda.

School children from the Kalutara district will play a special role and it has been decided that schools will re-open early in the new year to enable rehearsals etc.

Christian marriage in 1,430 churches

There are 1,430 places of worship registered for the solemnisation of Christian marriages, according to a list published by the Registrar-General.

Most of them are in the Jaffna district where 226 churches are registered. Colombo follows with 218 and Gampaha runs third with 201.

The other districts have few churches — eg. Moneragala, which has only the Catholic Church of St. Anthony.

A large number of the registered churches are Roman Catholic.

At Rest

Mr. V. R. Selvarajah

We regret to record the death which occurred suddenly on 23-12-83 of Victor Rasiyah Selvarajah Regional Manager, National Salt Corporation (NR), the eldest son of the late Mr. S. K. Rasiyah (formerly Vice-Principal Union College, Tellippalai) and the late Mrs. S. K. Rasiyah of Tellippalai.

The Funeral Service was held at his residence at Pt. Pedro, at 4 p.m. on Christmas Day. Rev S. S. Karunairajah officiated at the service assisted by Rev. Sathian Kadirgamar.

The family mourners were: Inparany, (Teacher, Hartley College), four children: Thabitha (Law College), Suthaharan (University of Peradeniya), Sutharmini and Parmini, and three sisters: Selvaranee, Amirtharane Ratnasingham, and Thevaranee; and a brother, Mr. K. Kanagarajah (Zambia).

The deceased is a brother-in-law of Mr. A. Rajasingam, Vice-Principal, Jaffna College, Vaddukoddai.

V. S. A. Pullenayegum

Mr. V. S. A. Pullenayegum former Deputy Solicitor General died on Sunday (25-12-83) after a brief illness. He was 62 years old.

Mr. Pullenayegum spent a greater part of his time as a lawyer in the Attorney-General's Department which he joined in 1952 as acting Crown Counsel.

Mr. Pullenayegum reverted to the unofficial Bar in 1974

"Education and Human Rights in Sri Lanka"

by

Prof. Kunasekaram Nesiah pp 247

The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society of Jaffna is performing a valuable service to the Peninsula. It arranges lectures, and from time to time puts out books containing considerable thought and research. One of the recent publications it has put out is a volume entitled *Education and Human rights in Sri Lanka* by Mr. K. Nesiah. It was formally released at Trimmer Hall, Jaffna on the 26th of May 1983.

Mr. Nesiah is the person well qualified to write on these subjects. Having been a lecturer in Education at the University of Ceylon for a number of years he is well qualified to write on Educational subjects. Human-rights is a rather elastic term but the United Nations Organisation has defined these rights fairly cogently. Mr. Nesiah's peculiar qualification to write on this particular topic is that in the first place Human rights are interpreted in Sri Lanka in a peculiar fashion and in the second place though Mr. Nesiah has spent most of his time in the Educational field, he had not lived in an ivory tower, but has been associated with many movements in the Political, Social and Economic fields.

His introductory chapter running into twenty eight pages is of an Autobiographical nature and throws a valuable light on his background. He was educated in Jaffna, Madras and England and taught in one capacity or another in Jaffna, Colombo and Peradeniya.

soon after the changeover of the courts structure under the Administration of Justice Law.

He was known for his sturdy independence as a lawyer and for his forthrightness. He declined an offer to go on the Supreme Court bench in 1974 and recently declined an offer to apply for the title of senior attorney.

Since he reverted to the unofficial Bar, Mr. Pullenayegum has been handling mainly cases where an individual's fundamental rights were affected. He showed most concern for the need to preserve these rights without any inroads being made into them.

He is a brother of retired Civil Servant, Mr. A. B. S. N. Pullenayegum.

The funeral took place at Kanatte on Wednesday evening (28-12-83).

niya. He has taken an important part in the Co-operative Movement. He has contributed immensely for the propagation of the ideals of the Mahatma in Jaffna. He has also written a book on the teaching of Social Sciences in Ceylon which is more or less a required reading for those doing the Diploma in Education course at the University.

Education in Sri Lanka during the last fifty years has undergone considerable changes from being the monopoly of various religious organizations and private individuals. In the welfare state in which we are living now it has become a state industry. The process by which this has happened and the kind of education that is imparted under the state auspices gives rise to many issues. Mr. Nesiah's thoughts on the whole subject is well worthy of study.

His Chapter on the Proposals for Educational reform in Sri Lanka; the role of the Church related institutions which is a reproduction of articles he wrote in the *Ceylon Churchman* and *The Morning Star* in 1982 are worthy of consideration whether one agrees or not with everything he says. His Chapter on University and Society is written with expert knowledge behind it, is commended to everybody interested in Higher Education. The author is perfectly right in saying that here we are treading on hallowed grounds. Chapter Twenty entitled "Must Sri Lanka split?" Written in 1977 is being printed at a time when it is the one burning question of the day. What Mr. Nesiah says embodied the aspirations of all en-

lightened people of Sri Lanka. In the Chapter "The Public Library's Baptism of Fire". Mr. Nesiah rightly asserts,

"It is a deep dent in the country's intellectual system and loss too to the international community. So don't send to find for whom the bell tolls."

The last Chapter is a collection of personal tributes written on the demise of his associates and heroes. About his political Guru S. J. V., Mr. Nesiah says:

".....The greater has been our privilege in this per-country since God raised for us a leader in the person of Samuel James Velupillai Chelvanayagam who came to incarnate the mood and hopes of the Tamil people of Lanka almost in the manner Gandhiji incarnated the spirit of India, no less his feeble frame enshrined the dedication to Truth and Ahimsa that made for the strength of the Mahatma."

On the whole we must be grateful to Mr. Nesiah for giving us the benefit of his thoughts on these important subjects, as they arose in his mind during the last fifty years.

— S. Jebanesan.

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Manager

பணிவோம் ஏற்ற.

EDITORIAL

Hope Springs Eternal

If there is one word in the lips of every Sri Lankan as the new year 1984 dawns over the debris of the old in Sri Lanka, it is the word *Hope*.

The government, on its part, is looking forward with 'hope' to wipe out the blot of the incidents of July 1983 which according to the President has not merely caused 'untoward damage' to our land both at home and abroad but has also made an ugly stain on the pages of our history.

The refugees in the country are on their part full of hope that something may come out of the despair and gloom which surrounds their future at the moment.

The 1800 Tamil undergraduates (whose University career has been abruptly cut off by the riots) and the 350 new entrants selected for the Universities in the South are hopeful that the government which since its inception in 1977 has ventured on many ambitious economic enterprises would not turn its back on an enterprise in Higher Education which involves not merely the future of one generation of Tamil youth but generations yet unborn.

Strangely, there are also people who have not rated hope as an intelligent approach to life.

Charles Dickens was one of them. He said that hope was 'that very peculiar trust in flat things, coming out round' and E. W. Howe has quipped that every man knows better than he hopes. Robert Ingersoll went a step further and said that hope was 'the only universal liar who never loses his reputation for veracity'.

The Christian religion has however been always based firmly on hope that Dr. Radhakrishnan, the celebrated Indian Philosopher once quipped that "Christians are ordinary people making extra-ordinary claims."

While the July riots were reaching their peak in Sri Lanka with so much loss of life, the Sixth WCC Assembly at Vancouver was making an extra-ordinary claim that "Jesus Christ was the Life of the World".

St. Paul clarifies this 'extra-ordinary claim' of the Christians when he said that 'faith, hope, and love' were the things which 'remained'. These are qualities to be distilled as an essence from an experience of life and not qualities to be paraded as stock-in-trade of the Christians; and seen through "a glass darkly".

What the events of last year with all their despair and gloom has taught us as Christians is that real life is more than a survival. Life's parameters go far beyond bread. As a writer puts it 'life is not just *esse* (being): it is for *bene esse* (well being).

When Cicero, Rome's greatest orator, wrote to his friend Atticus the oft quoted words 'While there is life, there is hope', he was not expressing just a pious sentiment. He was the eloquent enemy of Mark Antony and was convinced that his hope was inextricably bound up with his struggle and that hope without an object cannot live.

To the Tamil Community, the Year 1984 marks the year when the people should move out of the dungeons of death into the light, space and freedom of their own life in Sri Lanka

In this 'exodus', the government of Sri Lanka, and our big neighbour India, have displayed and are displaying considerable concern.

A ravaged community thus lives in the hope of a not-too-distant dawn with the dawning recognition, nevertheless, that "mere resignation and submission do not constitute the spirituality of the God of the Exodus or of the gospel of Jesus Christ". (The words we quote are from Samuel Rayan, a member of the WCC Faith and Order Commission.)

(Continued from column 4)

levels between the political leaders of all parties to help in solving our communal problems;

(d) eliminating all elements of communalism and racism in our educational system and in text books and ensuring great care and impartiality in the presentation of news through the Media as these can either promote or allay the prejudices, fears, and resentments that are the bases of violence;

(e) renouncing all forms of violence on the settling of conflicts, including violence of attitude and speech; adopting methods of peaceful persuasion

and of disciplined democratic discussion; and providing all possible avenues for our young people to understand and adopt such a spirit and patterns of behaviour that will prevent them from being misled in their frustrations to the ways of violence.

The N. C. C. has already participated in the consultation of the Citizen's Committee for National Harmony and would warmly commend its statement both to the government and the people of Sri Lanka. We ask all our Constituent members to adopt the constructive suggestions made in it for practical action in each area to help our nation at this time of grave urgent need.

A Message to the Churches

(From The National Christian Council, Sri Lanka)

Since Sri Lanka gained its Independence the National Christian Council has stood for and pledged itself to work for its Unity with Freedom and Justice to all its citizens and have supported all our governments to this end. Through varied and joint policies and programmes of religious education and social action, through official statements, resolutions, memoranda and deputations to the government we have tried to build better understanding and enter avenues of cooperation with many different groups. We have also been concerned with promoting Fundamental Rights and interethnic relations, helping to solve problems of citizenship and language and in the matters of national concern; and we have worked against violence, racism, casteism and other divisions which prevent our country's unity. We have always been against all forms of separatism.

We are deeply saddened and shocked by the events of July 1983 and its terrible effects on Sri Lanka's unity and progress with its irreparable and tragic loss of life and property. A vast number of innocent people, many who had sought to help their fellow men and women in distress and even some responsible for the security of our people, have all suffered grievously. We express our deep sorrow to all who have suffered so deeply, and pray that everything possible will be done now by the Government and the people of Sri Lanka to allay fears and anxieties and to prevent such violence happening again. All our communities and groups within them need to create the spirit of peace and goodwill and strengthen all forces that can properly maintain the security of our people at all times enabling every person in this country to feel safe wherever she lives.

Whatever grievances any person or group may have, we believe that the spirit and methods of violence will never help to overcome them. No nation or people can build an integral, just and stable society on violence nor can it be an encouragement or inspiration to the young people in the land and to the generation yet unborn. The great religions professed in Sri Lanka clearly teach that violence promotes fear, anxiety, suspicion, anger and resentment, helps only to escalate problems and is self-destructive and suicidal. It is contrary to the spirit and structures of true democracy and hurts the nation as a whole and all efforts made to promote its Unity. We therefore join with those of every religious persuasion and all humanitarians who support true democracy in Sri Lanka in con-

demning all violence in whatever form it may be used, for whatever purpose and on whomsoever it is directed. This also applies to the invisible forms of violence hidden in administrative, social and economic structures which, we have no doubt, provoke the physical violence and suffering we easily see.

We support the government as it seeks to meet the grave situation it has had to face as an aftermath of the violence affecting its plans for national development and ask all our Constituent members to help in the complex and massive task of rehabilitation, reconciliation and reconstruction. The N. C. C. and its Constituent bodies have been able to help in various ways in refugee relief and rehabilitation through Churches, Schools and other institutions and through the personal services of our members. With the early and ready help of the World Council of Churches and other Christian agencies we have distributed nearly a million rupees through our Constituent bodies on the basis of human need and irrespective of religion. We are grateful to the W. C. C. and all others who have shown concern for our nation's need at this time. We also commend what the Government has been able to do with such speed and efficiency to restore food, transport and other essential services in the midst of many countervailing factors.

In our deep concern to prevent a recurrence of what has been a horrible experience and has caused such loss of esteem for our fair isle, we support the plea that an independent and impartial Commission be appointed to enquire into the cause, and character of the violence in July and to suggest what steps should be taken to solve the communal and other related problems and to promote an atmosphere of understanding, goodwill and peace which is so essential for the life of our country.

We believe that all citizens of every religion and race must pledge themselves now to do all we can to help in the difficult task of national reconciliation providing all the spiritual and material resources needed. This requires:—

(a) a massive act of cooperation from all persons and groups who are ready to place the Unity of Sri Lanka and its peace on a religious and humanitarian basis and above all ethnic and other political partisanship and to adopt a new spirit and structures of administration and organisation and organisation for so doing;

(b) the encouragement of inter-ethnic and inter-party activities for peace and goodwill under the auspices of religious and other local organisations in each area acting together to promote programmes of cooperation in the neighbourhood on a common religious basis;

(c) opening up and accepting all opportunities for honest dialogue at all possible

(Continued on column 1)