

**THE  
CEYLON  
METHODIST  
CHURCH  
RECORD**

**CONFERENCE AND JUBILEE  
SPECIAL ISSUE**

JULY-AUGUST 1964.



*"The best of all is  
God is with us"*

John Wesley's last words





293 226

# THE CEYLON METHODIST CHURCH RECORD

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# The Ceylon Methodist Church Record

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Vol. 108

JULY — AUGUST 1964

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## FREE TO BECOME . . .

ONE of the most significant moments in the history of Ceylon Methodism was on the 18th of June 1964, when the Rev. Dr. Frederic Greeves, as the President of the British Methodist Conference, declared that the Methodist Church, Ceylon "is now inaugurated for the purpose of witnessing to the Good News of Jesus Christ and for the spreading of Scriptural Holiness throughout the land and to the ends of the earth." From that moment the Ceylon Church was autonomous!

It has been said that freedom is not being able to do what you like but it is being able to become what you ought to be. Now that Ceylon Methodism is free she should seek above all else to become what God means her to be.

According to the declaration of the British President, the Methodist Church is to be an instrument in God's hands for the purpose of witnessing to the Good News of Jesus Christ. Right from the very beginning Methodism has stressed the fact that all men need to be saved and that all men may be saved. Consequently, she must always see evangelism as her primary task. The late Rev. Dr. J. E. Rattenbury said that "Methodism is constitutively an organization for evangelism." Evangelism, however, is not something that can be organized by Conference or Synods. Several Churches have arranged for evangelistic missions and that is good but that is not nearly enough. The call to witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ is a call to every individual member of the Methodist Church to be a witness for Christ every day. At the 1951 World Methodist Conference, one of the joint Presidents of the World Methodist Council

(Bishop Ivan Lee Holt) said that "the mission of Methodism is to see that no one misses the grace of God." That "no one" means the woman who lives next door, the man who works in the same office, the student who sits at the next desk. If any one of us refuses to take this task seriously it may mean that there will be those who will miss the opportunity of entering into a personal experience of Jesus Christ. It is as serious as that. The opportunity which Jesus Christ is offering to every Methodist is as glorious as that. The Ceylon Methodist Church is free—she is free to become what God wants her to be.

The Methodist Church has also been called for the spreading of Scriptural Holiness. On his death-bed John Wesley said, "Christian Perfection is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists." Then he added "and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appeared to have raised us up." Elsewhere he declared that the main mission of the Methodist Church was "to spread Scriptural holiness". When Wesley thought of holiness he liked to use the phrase "Perfect Love". Nothing is stressed more in the New Testament than the need for love—love for God, love for one another, love for the outsider. There is little use, however, talking about loving the outsider unless we have first learned to love one another. There are still far too many barriers dividing the Methodists one from another. Thank God the barriers of community and caste seem to be disappearing. Unfortunately barriers of pride, of prejudice, of injuries committed long ago but still remembered, of jealousy, and suspicion remain. "The trouble with the Church today is that

FIRST PRESIDENT  
OF  
CEYLON CONFERENCE



Rev. F. S. de Silva, M.A., B.D.

it is known for its faith rather than for its love". (*The late Professor John Baillie*). When the people called Methodists are known as people who really care, then God will be able to use the Methodist Church as He wants.

Methodists should rejoice in their new found freedom and it is right to thank God

for it—provided it is remembered that, so far as the Church is concerned, freedom is not being able to do what you want but it is being able to become what God wants you to be.

G. E. G.

## OUR PRESIDENT'S LETTER

My dear Friends,

"Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal...."

These words of St. Paul are most appropriate at this moment in the life of our Church. There is a sense in which we cannot forget so soon the events of the Jubilee. The inspiration of those gatherings will continue to live with us. But there is another sense in which we must leave those events behind, and press on towards the goal.

To most people the goal is just getting warmed up, and trying to stay warm, but as weeks and months go by they cool off and wait for another warming up. We have had our revival meetings, and the churches were packed. Do we now sit back singing our favourite hymns, and wait for the next spate of revival meetings to come round to revive us again? The Church that seeks to live by revival meetings alone is like a man who takes one step forward and two steps backward and talks about going forward. Not "come" and "get" but "go" and "do" ought to be our watchwords now. What exactly are we to do?

Be the leaven wherever you are;  
Be the salt wherever you are;  
Be the light wherever you are.

But no one can be the leaven, the salt, or the light in the present world without a deeper understanding of the revelation of God in Christ, contained in the Bible. We have set ourselves the task of studying the Epistle to the Romans this year. Where there is responsible leadership I see that this is being done. Where such responsible leadership is lacking there is a tendency to allow vital matters to drift.

A small book came into my hands last month. It is entitled "The Christian Community Within the Human Community."\* It is an E.A.C.C. document. If any minister or lay leader wishes to see that his Church really goes forward he will do well to read and digest this book which has only 84 pages and costs Rs. 2/- It has much creative thinking for the Church in Asia.

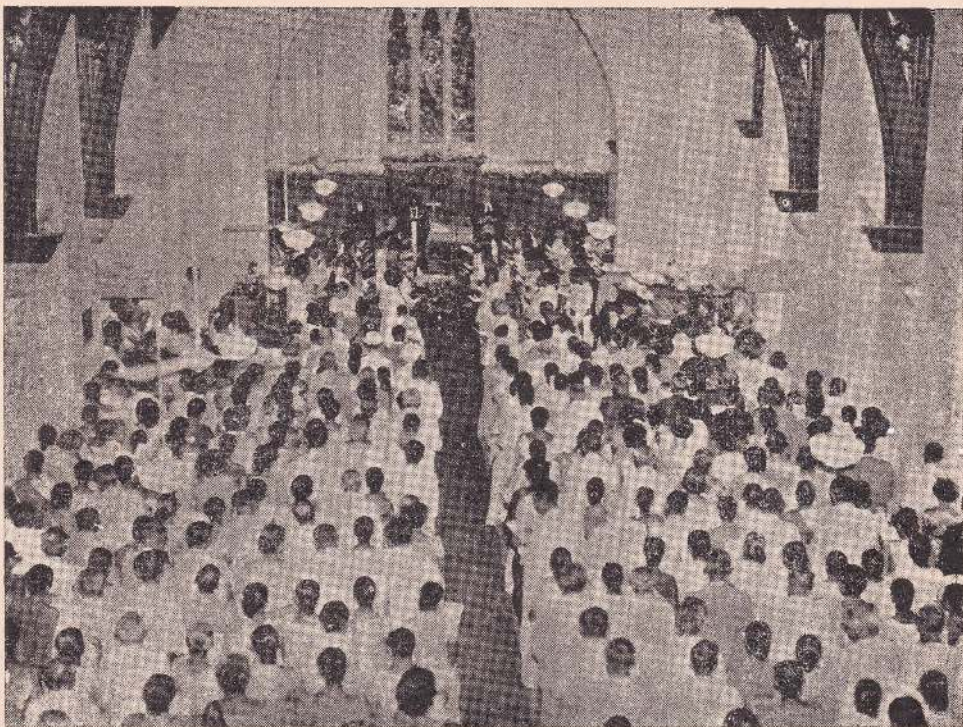
I send you my best wishes as you re-think your task in Lanka today.

Yours sincerely,

F. S. DE SILVA.

P.S.

\* This book can be ordered from Mr. M. M. Thomas, Post Box 1504, 19 Miller's Road, Bangalore, India. Our book Steward Rev. S. M. Jacob will help you to get it.



A section of the congregation at the Service of Inauguration in Kollupitiya Church



The British President inducts the First Ceylon President



## Service of Inauguration of the Ceylon Methodist Conference

LONG before five o'clock on the 18th of June, Kollupitiya Church was filled with those who had received tickets for admission to the Inauguration Service. The congregation was representative of Methodism from all over the country, and the heads of nearly all other branches of the Christian Church were also present. The Governor General of Ceylon, the Minister of Justice, and the heads of the diplomatic missions of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Ghana were also in the congregation.

The Service opened with the singing of the hymn "We come unto our Father's God". During the singing of this hymn the members of the Ceylon Conference and the delegates from the British Conference entered the Church in procession and took their seats in the Chancel. Even in this opening act of praise our minds were brought back in thought to the early missionaries and their successors, both Ceylonese and from overseas—"We bring Thee Lord the praise they brought, we seek Thee as Thy saints have sought in every generation." Already we felt not only the inspiration of the hour but also its challenge—"Ye saints to come, take up the strain, the same sweet theme endeavour; unbroken be the golden chain; keep on the song for ever." The British President (Rev. Dr. Frederic Greeves) led us in prayer and this was followed by a Lyric of Invocation in Tamil. Responsive prayers were led by the Rev. R. W. Pile and then a Lyric of Praise and Thanksgiving was sung in Sinhala.

The most historic moment in the service was when the President of the British Conference—who up to this point was also the President of the Methodist Church in Ceylon—called upon the persons who had been appointed by the British Conference and the Ceylon Synod, as signatories of the Deed of Foundation of the Ceylon Conference, to come forward and sign. Then he said—"Inasmuch as the Deed of Foundation of the Methodist Church, Ceylon, has now been duly signed by the persons designated by the Conference and Synod

for this purpose, I declare the Methodist Church, Ceylon, to be now inaugurated for the purpose of witnessing to the Good News of Jesus Christ and the spreading of Scriptural Holiness throughout the land, and to the ends of the earth."

Very appropriately the signing of the Deed of Foundation was followed by the singing of the Te Deum. After the reading of the Scripture Lesson by the Secretary of the Conference (the Rev. S. B. Saravanamuthu) the President of the British Conference inducted the Rev. Frederick Stanley de Silva as the first President of the Conference of the Methodist Church, Ceylon. The Rev. F. S. de Silva was asked: "Will you endeavour to lead the people called Methodists in the unceasing mission of Christ's Church and seek every opportunity to make the Church a channel for the outpouring of God's blessings upon the people of this country?" He replied: "I will so endeavour, God being my helper". There followed a question to the congregation—"...do you in this solemn moment of your new responsibility under God, pledge the Churches and Circuits you represent to search the Scriptures, to fall earnestly to prayer, and, by God's help, to build one another up in worship, and service to the country?" The people responded by saying—"We do, the Lord being our helper."

A very pleasing act followed when the new Ceylon President was robed by three former Chairmen—the Rev. G. B. Jackson, the Rev. George Mendis and the Rev. Dr. James Mather. Afterwards the British President handed the Rev. Fred S. de Silva a Bible and offered a prayer for God's blessing on him.

One of the most moving acts of worship was the singing of Charles Wesley's great hymn, "Behold the servant of the Lord!" Once more we were made aware of the rich heritage that is ours in the hymns of Charles Wesley.

After a brief service of Holy Communion and the singing of the hymn "Now let us see Thy beauty Lord" the President preached the sermon. (*The Sermon is printed in full in this edition.* There followed the hymn "Thy hand O God has guided Thy flock from age to age". In the words of the hymn we were assured of the grace that we would need for our new tasks and responsibilities—

"Thy mercy will not fail us nor leave  
Thy work undone;  
With Thy right hand to help us, the  
victory shall be won."

The new President pronounced the Benediction and the members of Conference moved out of the Church in procession during the singing of the hymn, "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord."



Three ex-Chairmen robe the New President  
(L to R.) The Rev. Dr. J. S. Mather, The Rev. G. B. Jackson  
and The Rev. S. G. Mendis

# 150th Anniversary and Autonomy Celebrations

by

REV. LEWIS J. JULIAN

A METHODIST minister and four elderly ladies—an unlikely drummer quintet, you might think—are sitting round a 'rabana'. Under their expert fingers the great drum speaks, exults. Other drums are sounding close by. It is night, and the flames from a pile of burning coconut fronds (for tuning the drums) cast shadow and lurid light upon the faces of an animated multitude. There is a troupe of Kandyan dancers, cavorting and stamping. Noise, colour, movements, joy. The night air is filled with a babel of voices speaking in Sinhalese, Tamil and English. Over there a great map of Ceylon is being outlined with a hundred and fifty candles lit by folk all over the island. The purple stock of the Anglican Bishop of Colombo, a tall and distinguished visitor, moves majestically above the heads of the throng. Goodwill. For the Conference of the autonomous Methodist Church, Ceylon, has just been inaugurated and its first President inducted. The Deed of Foundation duly signed and sealed, is laid up in its silver casket. It is the night of Thursday June 18th, 1964.

"We have to be rooted in Lanka in all the things that concern the life of all the people.... We have to be rooted in Christ if we want to know where the Lord of history is leading us.... The Church is in this land to bring the divine perspective to bear upon everything that happens here. Not because we want to save the Church, but because we want to save 'the Pearl of the Indian Ocean'. We are called to be saints in Christ in Lanka." It is the new President, the Rev. F. S. de Silva, preaching the inaugural sermon. The Governor General Mr. William Gopallawa, the British President and Vice President, and the Rev. R. W. Pile representing the Methodist Missionary Society, the leaders of the Protestant Churches in Ceylon, and upwards of nine hundred Methodist layfolk and ministers are present. The enlarged Kellupitiya church—the Cathedral of Ceylon Methodism—has been worked over from floor to roof for the occasion. And flowers!

Say it with a thousand anthuriums, with roses grown in Ceylon from imported Irish stock, and with orchids of seventy different colours and shades! Autonomy!

**Friday, June 19th:** Four thousand Methodists take train from Colombo to Galle, seventy miles to the south. (High-spirited passengers will please confine themselves to the singing of appropriate hymns and lyrics and refrain from such ditties as "Ay hooey babbi archigay bicycle eka"). Another thousand travelled by road. The national press, which gave good coverage to the week's celebrations, called it a 'pilgrimage'. Methodists, however, had been carefully instructed to call it a "commemoration visit". A civic reception had been prepared for them by the Special Commissioner, Galle, Mr. L. G. Siriwardena, at the Town Hall. The M. P. for Galle, Dr. W. Dahanayake, who is a former Prime Minister of Ceylon and an old boy of Richmond College, Galle, said in his speech that the Methodists of Ceylon have played a prominent part in the island's national and political struggles. He named two ministers and a layman who, in bygone days, were in the forefront of the fight against colonial rule. From the Town Hall the great company made its way to the historic Galle Fort. Monsoon rains lashed down from a leaden sky and there was little shelter to be had. Inside the mighty wall of the fort the procession fanned out, dividing itself among the Dutch Reformed, Methodist and Anglican churches where thanksgiving services were held in English, Sinhalese and Tamil respectively. A hundred and fifty years ago the first Wesleyan Methodist missionaries in Ceylon arrived in Galle. They were a band of five men whose leader, Dr. Thomas Coke, had died at sea. On the first Sunday after their arrival in Ceylon the hospitality of the Dutch church was extended to the missionaries. One of them the Rev. Thomas Squance, spoke for all when he preached from the text: "For we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ" (2 Cor. 10-14b).

The tablets commemorating the arrival of these pioneer missionaries were unveiled at the thanksgiving services at the Dutch church and the Methodist church by the President of the British Conference and Rev. R. W. Pile.

**Saturday, June 20th:** In the morning the Foundation Conference (50 ministers and 50 laymen) got to work in the enlarged and renovated Scott Hall at Kollupitiya. The Ceylon Vice President, Mr. H. Watson Peiris, O.B.E., who is well known in banking and business circles in Ceylon, was inducted by his British counterpart and invested with the insignia of his office. Conference went on to adopt the Deed of Church Order wherein is set forth the constitution of the new-born Methodist Church, Ceylon. In small but significant ways the Conference showed its determination to retain what is useful and to reject whatever is irrelevant or unsuited to the Ceylonese temperament and Asian Christianity. Methodists in Britain, by the way, need have no fears as regards future relations between the mother-Church there and the daughter-Church in Ceylon. A Covenant of Co-operation has been gladly entered into by the Methodist Churches in Ceylon and Britain. That afternoon Conference was let off the leash for a Garden Party at which the British visitors moved freely among the guests. Thence, in the evening, to the modern and capacious hall of Ladies' College for a two-hour pageant, produced by Miss Barbara Atkins, wherein Ceylonese, British and Australian Methodists re-enacted the unfolding of Ceylon Methodism from the Liverpool Conference of 1813, which authorized the mission to Ceylon, to the present day. There were humour and pathos, triumph and seeming defeat. The hall was packed. Three hundred people, alas, had to be turned away.

**Sunday, June 21st:** Conference Sunday and for some a day of rest. But not for Dr. Greeves who preached to a capacity congregation at Kollupitiya in the evening.

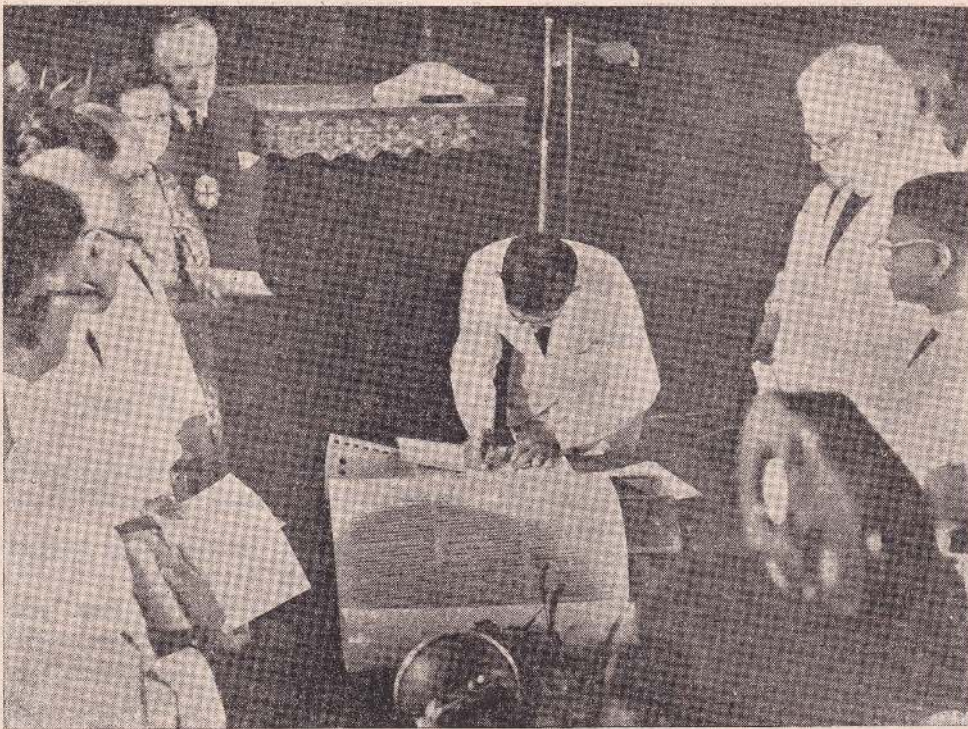
**Monday, June 22nd:** Conference is reviving up its engines. It reviews the working of the Church during the interim period November, 1963, to March, 1964. The Minutes of the last District Synod, which hitherto have been submitted to the British Conference, now come before the Ceylon Conference. Conference approves, in substance, the Methodist Trust Association (Amendment) Bill which must soon come before the Ceylon Parliament. For the Methodist Church, Ceylon, must now be given legal title to the properties which it holds. Finally, two ministerial probationers were approved for ordination later in the year.

There had to be a Conference Public Meeting, of course. And it was used as the occasion for the presentation of silver trays, in the shape of Ceylon, to the British delegates. The delegates were visibly moved by this act of affection and generosity.

That night the Ceylon Vice President gave a dinner. A pandal, or ceremonial shed, had been erected in the garden of his residence. All had been arranged in meticulous detail. The pandal was decorated with the Ceylonese motifs of the elephant and the lotus. The seating-plan for 250 guests, with its hair-line diagrams and exquisite penmanship appeared to have been executed by a surveyor! The food and, not unnaturally, the speeches, were of the best.

And what more shall we say? With Caliban we might shout "Freedom, hey-day! hey-day, freedom!" but our ties with the Church in Britain go far too deep for that. It is a time for great thankfulness and re-dedication. As we sang in the last verse of the last hymn at the last official Conference meeting:

"Our souls and bodies we resign;  
With joy we render Thee  
Our all, no longer ours, but Thine  
To all eternity".



The Ceylon President signs the Deed of Foundation



The President leads the Conference Procession into Scott Hall

# 'IN' CHRIST 'IN' LANKA

by

REV. F. S. DE SILVA

(*President of Conference*)

(Sermon preached on the occasion of the Foundation of the  
Methodist Conference, Ceylon)

*Philippians I. I.— "To all the Saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi."*

## I. Religion and the secular world

There is a group of people in the world saying, "Be religious and all will be well." There is another group saying, "Bring about an economic revolution and all will be well." Both aim at the well being of society. But both have tended to make mutually exclusive claims. One group finds all secular modes of thought and life irrelevant. The other group finds all religions, including Christianity, irrelevant.

Religion has been pitted against the world and the world against religion. In the midst of this tension, simple human nature, common to the African, the Chinaman, the Sinhalese, the Tamil and everybody else, is struggling for better conditions of living and equality of status. On the one hand we are striving to break down old forms of segregation, on the other hand we are creating new forms of segregation. The religions of the world have tended to become segregating factors. Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam are trying to carve out as large a portion of the world's population as possible for themselves.

Paradoxically, it is true that while Christianity in some respects has tended to segregate people, in other respects it has been a powerful unifying factor. Racial groups and religious groups try to build walls round themselves to save their cultures and their religious traditions, but before the wall is completed it is being breached. Science

and technology are making every kind of segregation impossible in this world.

What happens in this world depends on men and women with minds and wills and feelings and souls of their own, and not primarily on rulers, millionaires, saints and villains; and we are a small fraction of the people on whom the blessedness or otherwise of this world depends.

Sometimes Christian people have thought that God is active only in and through the Church and that the rest of the world is without God. This is a conception of God we can no longer hold. The Lord of history may realize His purposes either through the Church or in spite of the Church. You remember Jesus' parable about the vineyard. When one lot of husbandmen proved unfaithful the owner let it out to others. May it be that God will not allow the Church to convert the world unless the Church is adequate to the needs of the world?

## II. Paul and Silas encounter the secular world

What is the purpose of God in history for all mankind? How can the Church move with the Lord of history? These questions sent me to search the Scriptures again. The answer is written throughout the Bible. I found it crystallized in four words of St. Paul. They are found in his letter to the Philippians chapter I verse 1. He addressed the Christian people there as

those who are in Christ, *in Philippi*. "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi." In Christ, yet in the secular world. How can this be?

Paul had been beckoned to this Macedonian city in a vision. Philippi was a place noted for its gold mines and springs of water. It is there that a business woman called Lydia became a follower of Christ. It is there that a slave girl who was supposed to have a gift for oracular utterances was cured of her psychic condition. This led to an uproar. Paul and Silas were jailed. An earthquake opened the gates of the jail and the jailor nearly committed suicide thinking that the prisoners had escaped. Paul assured him that they had not escaped. The jailor, who had never met that kind of prisoner, was so moved that he too became a follower of Christ. There arose a community of Christian people in Philippi around a business woman, a slave girl and a jailor. Paul seems to have been very fond of this Church and in his letter he calls them his 'joy and crown'. Philippians was written from prison in Rome and was probably the last of Paul's letters.

### III. What it is to be in Christ

In our day the word saint has gained a specialised meaning. But in Paul's day it just meant Christian people—people who were still liable to sin but had come to be in Christ. What does it mean to be *in Christ*? That is what we do not fully understand. We know what it is to be in London or Tokyo. If somebody says that he is "in a mess", that also we understand. The idioms "be in trouble", "be in hot water", we understand. But "be in Christ"—how can we be in Christ? Just as we are in the air, breathing it constantly, so we can be in Christ. When we go into the presence of some great person, we are in the atmosphere of his personality. There are certain things we dare not do or say in his presence. Jesus Christ created an atmosphere which brought healing and reconciliation to some but was suffocating to others. In that atmosphere Matthew the public servant and Mary the fallen woman could become saints. But it was suffocating to the Jewish hierarchy because they loved their temple ceremonies more than they loved their God. It was suffocating to the scribes and Pharisees because they had equated reli-

gion with the observing of rules and regulations. In short, the atmosphere of Christ was suffocating to all who were out of gear with the purposes of the Lord of history.

Jesus was concerned with men and women just as He found them. He may have picked them up from the scum of society, or from its élite, or from anywhere. They were all God's children to Him. His judgement fell heavily on all who did not care or care enough for simple human beings as God created them. If they were hungry they had to be fed, if they were ill they had to be healed, if they were outcast they had to be restored to their proper status. Down through the centuries where the spirit of Christ went the atmosphere He created proved suffocating to every form of narrow nationalism, to every clannish attitude, to every form of exploitation, and to all who seek to make religion an escape from the responsibilities of secular life.

But also it was in the atmosphere of Christ that Paul could reconcile the Jew and the Gentile, the master and the slave.

To be in Christ, therefore, carries with it the responsibility to challenge everything in the existing order of things that limits the full development of man's personality.

Man's spirit cannot any longer be tied down even to this planet. It could burst the barrier of national cultures and create a world culture of its own. It could discard every religion that has no relevance to the march of history and the developments of science. In all this upsurge of man's spirit, with its concomitant dangers, I can also see the hand of God bringing about His new creation. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation." To be in Christ is to be caught up in God's purposes to bring about His new creation.

When the jailor in charge of the prison in Philippi was confronted with two prisoners who sang hymns throughout the night of the earthquake, and did not escape when they had the chance to do so, he was confronted with a new creation. He never thought that there could be that kind of people in the world. That is what the Church is summoned to do—confront those who belong to the old creation with the

distinguishing marks of the new creation. The Church in its anxiety to increase its numbers seems to have gathered into its fold many who still belong to the old creation and do not know that they belong there. This has meant that the Church's distinguishing mark as being a witness to the new creation—to the new kind of humanity—has almost ceased to be visible.

#### IV. What it is to be in the secular world

The Church has to be the new creation within the old creation. This truth is expressed in St. Paul's play on the word 'in'. Saints in Christ and in Philippi. Many translations miss this point, by translating 'at' Philippi. In the Greek it is the same word "en Christo—en Philippois." To be *at* a place is one thing. To be *in* a place is another thing. You can be at a place merely as a spectator. To be in a place is to be involved in everything that happens in that place. If this letter was addressed to us St. Paul might have written "to Christians in Christ in Lanka." The Philippian Christians were to live in the atmosphere of Christ in the atmosphere of Philippi. Paul does not think of the Church as a community gathered out of the secular world and secluded, but rather as a community scattered and involved in the world.

The finest flower of the Christian life is not only the life of the priest, the sevaka and the sister, but also the life of the parent bringing up his family, the farmer producing food, the clerk and statesman keeping the wheels of society going while they are in Christ.

To call people in ecclesiastical robes 'religious' in a kind of technical sense is not true to the New Testament teaching. The difference between the man in Christ and the man not in Christ has to be expressed not in any detachment from life but in an increasing involvement and identification with life.

The world is "the theatre of God's glory" said Calvin. It is possible to think materially about God and spiritually about food. Being Christian does not mean thinking about spiritual things but thinking about everything in the light of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

#### V. This responsibility can be evaded.

This double responsibility of being in Christ and in the world can be evaded.

Secular society can put a wall round the Church and say, "Now you stay there. Do not interfere with us and we will leave you in peace." The Church may accept this position. If it does it will certainly live in peace and die in peace.

Or again the Church may tie itself up uncritically with all the national sentiments and feel that that is the way to save the world and save itself. It is as foolish as a drifting ship tying itself to an iceberg which is also slowly drifting to warmer waters where it will melt away. There are points at which the Gospel can be accommodating to national sentiment. There are other points at which the Gospel has to be challenging to national sentiment. St. Paul challenged the basic national sentiment of the Jews when he said that circumcision, the hall-mark of being a Jew, was of no avail when one comes to be in Christ.

To follow the Lord of history does not mean to follow the popular fashions of the day. Sometimes those who are in Christ are called to challenge the fashions of the day and suffer for it. Philippi was an affluent city. People had plenty of money and some of the surplus money went into the consulting of oracles. Oracular consultation had become a flourishing trade. Paul came into conflict with it and was cast into prison. Those who are in Christ on the one hand are a means of healing and reconciling the world; on the other hand they are a means of challenging and transforming the world.

The Church may become so intoxicated with its piety that it may cease to be sensitive to the groaning of the secular world as it bursts forth into new life. How fond we have become of our ecclesiastical traditions and forms of worship which have ceased to be meaningful to the world outside? How far removed the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper today is from that simple fellowship meal Jesus had with His disciples in the upper room on the night He was betrayed. Down through the centuries it has been overlaid with ecclesiastical regulations and endowed with mythical signi-



fiance by some, so that it has become the dividing factor in Christendom. Will the Lord of history permit such a Church to convert the world? There is hope in that the Churches have become conscious of this sin and are moving towards union. There is evidence of a new vitality stirring the Churches.

People who are in Christ cannot create the stream of time, they can only navigate upon it. When we hear the garments of God rustling through the events of our time, we must be ready for the take off, and the take off is always against the current of the wind.

## VI. Man's Predicament

The end of history is the production of fully developed personalities. The purpose of history is not something that lies a thousand years from now. It is continually being realised now. If we expect history to dish out happiness on a plate, we expect the wrong thing. The very vicissitudes of history produce the finer texture of personality.

It is in the light of God's purpose in history that the Church can speak a relevant word to the people today. What is God trying to do with the marvels of science? That is a religious question. What is He trying to do with the rise of apparently conflicting ideologies? What is He trying to do with a rapidly increasing world population for whom food has to be found? In our own land what is God's purpose for ten million people split up into a few minor communities, each trying to save its language, its culture and its religion? We may not be able to fathom the mind of God. But these are questions with which the Christian Church must grapple if the Gospel is to become meaningful for today. It is good to remember that Christianity was never meant to be saved by its adherents. It was meant to save the people—all.

If we believe in God, then God has a purpose in history. The life of the people in this land has at least a small place in that total plan. The problem of living together is created by our self-centredness, and all solutions we offer are also tainted with the same self-centredness, concentrated in powerful groups or in powerful personalities.

Every trade union, every political party and every power group has developed its own self-centredness. Therefore, before a harmonious society can be formed, man has to be delivered from himself. Man, in a sense, is his own devil and the salvation that Christianity speaks about is basically from this devil.

When "Radio Times" was first published in London the front page carried the caption, "Nation shall speak peace to nation." That was the hope we had when we first began to speak across the continents. But what has happened today? The Radio has often been the means of nations speaking lies to other nations. That is what man, left to himself, has done with the God given ability to speak to his distant neighbour.

When the Wright brothers first flew their clumsy aeroplane from a mountain top, one of them wrote, "I would have no pleasure in inventing the aeroplane unless I thought it would help to abolish war." But that very instrument made war a more dreadful thing. That is what man did with the God given ability to fly.

God gave the secret of atomic energy to this generation having hidden it from all the generations from Adam. With that secret, they tell us, that the increasing world population could be fed and disease controlled if not abolished. But what have we done with it? All the way down the line man has been like the prodigal son. He asks for his portion from the father and takes the road to the pigsty. If by his skill and effort man builds an affluent society, the leisure won thereby seems to be devoted to an unlimited satisfaction of his sex instinct. Nations cry out for freedom and when they get it they tend to use it for new forms of enslavement. We are governed more by our hates than by our loves. If we propound a social theory in favour of the poor, the springs of our social passion may lie more in the hatred of the capitalist than in the love of the poor.

Wherein lies salvation from this vicious circle? Man with all his wealth and power if he has his back to the Lord of history, keeps going down the precipice. The choice before us is, either we walk with the Lord of history to blessedness or against the Lord of history to our ruin.

## VII. What it means to be in Christ and in Lanka

In Christ, in Philippi. We have to be rooted in Lanka in all the things that concern the life of all the people. But if we are rooted only in Lanka then we are liable to all the evils of ignoring the Lord of history. We have to be rooted in Christ if we want to know where the Lord of history is leading us.

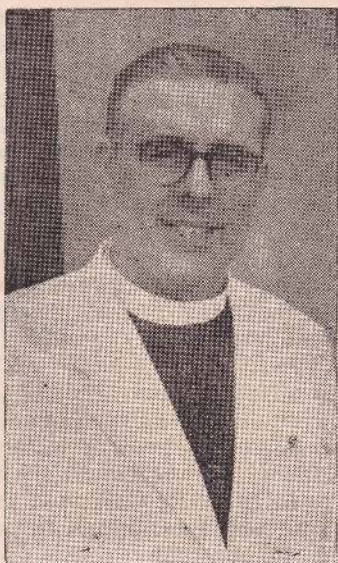
Let us think of ourselves as being on a ship. Its name is, "The Pearl of the Indian Ocean." We have to be conscious of the fact that we are in water—water that sometimes becomes turbulent. We have to be conscious that there are under-currents. We have to be concerned about the crew that mans the ship and the condition of its engine. To be concerned about these things is to be *in* Lanka. But we have also to be conscious of what that small instrument called the compass tells us.

The compass is something that the captain or anybody else ought not to manipulate. It is controlled by an invisible magnetic pole which is independent of any human agency. Nobody inside the ship has any control over the action of the compass. The direction which the compass

gives is the same to all ships no matter under what national flags they are sailing. The indications of the compass are universally valid and no Parliament has any authority over the swinging of that needle. If we want the ship to reach its destination we can do nothing but accept the direction of the compass.

"The Pearl of the Indian Ocean" has great traditions on board. It may have a good skipper, engineer, and radio operator, but unless it takes direction from the compass it may never reach its destination. To be in Lanka is to be involved in everything that goes on in and around our ship. To be in Christ is to have our eyes on the compass. If the compass at anytime shows that we are so many degrees off the course, we cannot argue about it or adjust the compass. We have to change the course of our ship. The term the Bible uses for changing the course is, "repent".

The Church is in this land to bring the divine perspective to bear upon everything that happens here. Not because we want to save the Church, but because we want to save "The Pearl of the Indian Ocean". We are called to be saints *in* Lanka. Let us go forth into the life of our country with our eyes on the Divine compass.




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### PRESIDENT DESIGNATE OF IRISH CONFERENCE

#### REV. ROBERT A. NELSON

We offer our heartiest congratulations to the Rev. Robert A. Nelson on his election as President-designate of the Irish Methodist Conference.

Rev. Nelson who served in Ceylon for thirty years, twelve of which as Superintendent of the Colombo South Circuit returned to Ireland in 1961, and succeeded Rev. George E. Good, in the University Methodist Church, Belfast, N. Ireland.



His Excellency The Governor General of Ceylon (Mr. William Gopallawa) being escorted to his seat at the Inaugural Service of Conference by the Minister of the Church (The Rev. George E. Good)



A typical Sinhalese Dance in the open-air after the Inauguration

## FOUNDATION CONFERENCE

Address of the Vice-President (H. W. Peiris Esqr.)



MR. PRESIDENT, Representatives of the British Methodist Conference, Members of Conference, if you will pardon a personal note, I acknowledge my own personal insufficiency for the task to which you have appointed me. But God calls, we obey. If He has called, He will provide. So, I face whatever tasks and responsibilities this new appointment implies, in the full confidence of your prayers for me and of the bestowal on me of His Grace and Strength.

Ever since the dawn of society, independence has been one of the aims of human development. This urge towards freedom has never been more powerful than today. In every department of life we find the demand for freedom; the insistence on the rights of the individual; political nationalism; the democratic way of life as a whole.

The immaturity of this spirit of independence is evident, however, in every department. Insistence on independence,

by itself, is lop-sided to the point of being pernicious. The counterbalance to liberty is or should be, obligation: the freedom to serve is the full expression of human aspiration.

To us therefore, who, in our Church affairs, have just entered into Autonomy, it is very pertinent to understand how we are to achieve this aspiration. We do so, by acknowledging our dependence on God. To understand how we may do so, we would do well to understand the nature of the Church and the nature of our functions in it.

The Christian is likened to a living stone; and the Church is likened unto a living edifice, into which he is built. The individual Christian only finds his true place when he is built into the edifice of the Church. So long as a brick lies by itself, it is useless; it becomes of use only when it is built into a building. That is why it was made; and it is in being built into a building that it realises its function and the reason for

its existence. So it is with the individual Christian. To realise his destiny he must not remain alone; he must be built into the fabric and edifice of the Church. "Solitary religion" is ruled out as an impossibility. Christianity is—community within the Fellowship of the Church.

What then has the Christian to do, in the Church? What a Christian is and what he has to do is well summed up in St. Peter's First Epistle, Second Chapter and the ninth verse, in what is described as the doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praise of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light".

Methodism would claim that the Priesthood of all Believers in its fulness is part and parcel of the reason for its existence) In the Deed of Union (1929—Section 30, passed by an Act of the British Parliament, there are the following: "Christ's Ministers in the Church are stewards in the household of God and shepherds of His flock. Some are called and ordained to this sole occupation and have a principal and directing part in these great duties; but they hold no priesthood differing in kind from that which is common to the Lord's people and they have no exclusive title to the preaching of the Gospel or the care of souls. These Ministries are shared with them by others, to whom also the Spirit divides His gifts severally as He wills... The Methodist Church holds the doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers and consequently believes that no priesthood exists which belongs exclusively to a particular Order or Class of men; but in the exercise of its corporate life and worship, special qualifications for the discharge of special duties are required and thus the principle of Representative Selection is recognised". In our own Deed of Foundation, too, the same doctrine is recorded, as part of our doctrinal standards.

We find here no distinction between clergy and laity. They are associated by reason of their calling and their common new life. They are a great company of many kinds of people, bound together by cohesive ties and set apart to become a world-unifying and world-comprehending society in which humanity will realise its true ideals in the fulness of its life. The

doctrine does not refer to sacerdotal acts but to the amazing fact that every believer can mediate to others the Grace of Jesus Christ. When the weakest believer intercedes on his knees for his fellows, he is fulfilling the true function of Priesthood.

What then are the implications of an acceptance of this doctrine? If there are rights and privileges, there are also responsibilities:

(1) It means just what it says: that it is a Priesthood of—Believers. If you believe, you put your faith in something as true. It is much more than assenting to something. The early Christians believed that they were God's own peculiar people and they went out confident. The members of the early Church believed that the Holy Spirit would use them and work through them. They believed—and so theirs was an experience that transformed them into men and women who devoted each day of every week to ONE who was known to them as a loving Lord.

To do that, we must ascertain the Will of God for each one of us, through Bible Study. Christian people are woefully ignorant of the Bible and cannot know the Faith without the Bible. The Bible is the Bread of Life for the Christian and unless our daily lives are nourished with it, we will be impoverished.

Just as the early Methodists met in Class Meetings, so that their belief might be made real—that they might know their Faith and their Bible—so, today, it is the re-discovery of the Bible and an increasing number of Groups meeting together to understand the deep truths, which can alone give us any hope for the future.

(2) The next implication is sacrifice. This is the basic fundamental of Priesthood. For sacrifice there must be a total entering into communion with God. Jesus did just that. He gave Himself wholly and in service to men. In the words of the Pauline Epistle, "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, wholly and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship". It means absolute obedience to God, absolute love and compassion to men; it is

the carrying on of the Ministry of Christ. When we claim the privileges of the Priesthood of all Believers, are we satisfied that we come near these standards? What sacrifices have we made—in time, in money, in service? Have we been good stewards by giving of our time, our abilities and of our material resources?

(3) The third implication is: living out the Christian experience in the world. The early Christians understood that they were in the world for a purpose. This was God's world and they were to find it in every part of it, serve Him in every part of it; bring every part of it into full subjection to him. They looked upon men and women as brethren for whom Christ had died and therefore they loved them.

Similarly the Faith of the early Methodists was lived out in this world. John Wesley began educational experiments, work and help for the unemployed, service for the sick and support for the helpless. John Calvin wrote: "The Gospel is not a doctrine to be recited but to be lived." Where the Church is alive to the Priesthood of all Believers, this happens even now.

I would here like to illustrate this from an event which took place recently in the eastern Province and is testified to by our own Minister at Amparai. There is a child about six years old, the daughter of non-Christian parents, who has been afflicted from birth with that much dreaded disease—cerebral palsy. A chance visit of our Minister to the neighbourhood of that child's home led him to hear of the sad plight the parents of that child were in and to visit them. Through a third party, our Minister was put in contact with a Christian doctor at Batticaloa. The Minister took the family by car to that doctor who, true Christian that he was, gave his time unstintingly to elicit the facts of the case. I am told that he spent over two hours in doing so but—did he give any message of hope to the parents? Unfortunately, his verdict was—no hope of recovery whatsoever! Still, that verdict, that sentence of death, became the turning point in the life of the family. The loving care of the Methodist Minister and the unstinted sympathy and advice of a Christian doctor have made the parents to be genuine en-

quirers after the Christian Faith and today, they are well within sight of accepting Christ as their Lord and Saviour. It is indeed true that far more people are loved and cared into the Church than are ever preached into it.

The three essentials that I have stated as being necessary for practising the doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers are: Bible Study, Sacrifice (implying Obedience); and Living Out the Christian Experience in the world or witnessing and serving.

There is yet however, another essential above all those three essentials: for a layman will certainly fail without the Inner Fellowship, that is by Prayer. The early Christians knew that the Power of the Spirit was constantly being renewed within them, as they met together for the Breaking of Bread. Preaching can never replace Meditation; and the silent prayers of a Group of men and women met in the Holy Spirit for Spiritual Fellowship can generate the force which can make Worship a converting medium. The Holy Spirit can break through when a united, loving and joyous Group is met together in the Fellowship of Prayer. A well-ordered Group of men and women at the heart of every Church provides trained and disciplined laymen. Have we such a Group in every Society or even one in every Circuit?

So, I conclude, that the need for all of us is to have a real understanding of the doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers and to accept that. For living out that doctrine, there are four absolute essentials, viz. Bible Study, Service, Fellowship and Prayer. These four essentials, I might observe, are the four objectives set out before its members by The Methodist Laymen's Movement of Ceylon. So, whether you are a member of that Movement or perhaps, of a Women's Fellowship or Wesley Guild; or any Young People's Fellowship; or merely an adherent of the Church; if you accept the Bible, you accept the teaching of Peter: "Ye are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." You thereby accept the doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers. If you accept that doctrine, you must accept the four-fold Path involved by its acceptance; Bible Study, Service, Fellowship and Prayer. Thereby alone can we fulfil the high destiny to which we have been called.

May God grant us His Grace and Strength that you and I may fulfil this task faithfully in this Era of Autonomy that we have just entered into. May we declare the wonderful deeds of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light!

#### Acknowledgement

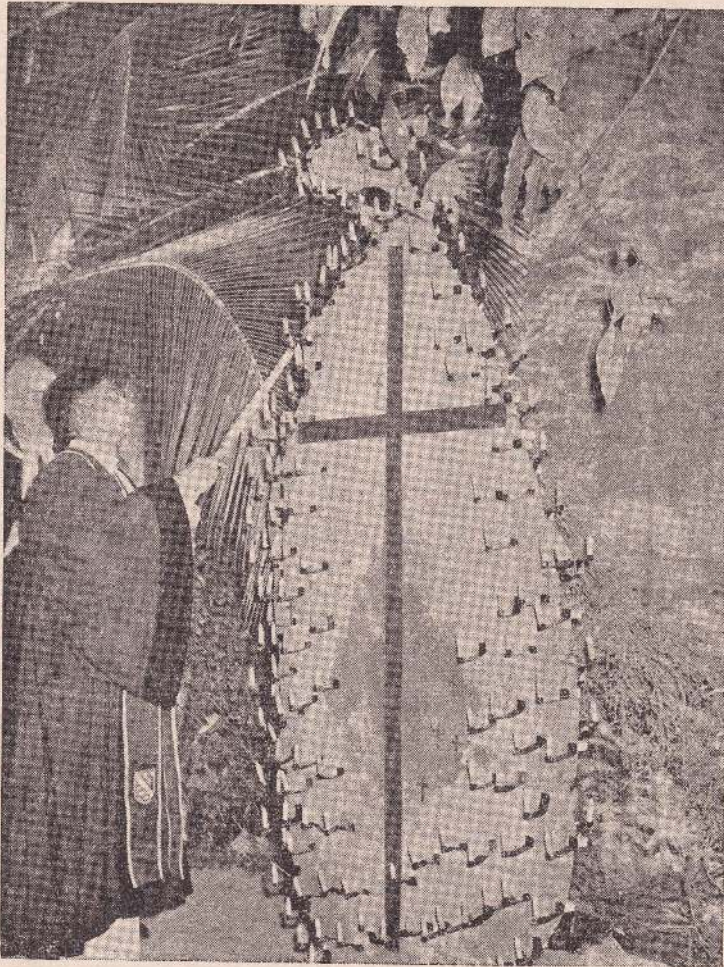
Much is due to the under-described publications to which recourse was freely made:

A Layman Speaks by *Douglas P. Blatherwick*

To be a Layman by *Jack Mole*

Essence of Christianity by *Anders Nygren*  
(Translated by Philip S. Watson)

The Letters of James and Peter by *William Barclay*.



The President lights the first candle of 150, in Scott Hall, amidst a large gathering.

# CONFERENCE JOTTINGS

by

THE REV. DONALD BARLOW

## Thursday, 18th of June

A FINE, hot, dry evening—and at last the day of Inauguration. Ticket holders crowd our beloved mother church in Kollupitiya, and await in uncomfortable but solemn and expectant silence the arrival of the Conference in procession. Yes, a Methodist procession, not only on time—but held up at the Church doors for being a couple of minutes early! The organ sets the pace; and “We come unto our Father’s God” is raised by hundreds of voices. And they have come, from all the parts of the country; many whose lives owed much to the Mother church era, and many who because of their youth thrill the more this day to the birth of the Methodist Church, Ceylon. It is a straggling walk to the chancel, but soon the seats are filled. We spy bishops, clergy, and distinguished visitors of state among the congregation, and we regret deeply the absence of our Roman Catholic friends. Amid persistent publicity the Service proceeds to its climax. Our first President—looking very like our Chairman—is commended in prayer to God. These are moments of genuine emotion, and we are moved as we sing Charles Wesley’s tremendous personal words, “Behold the servant of the Lord”—for we realise this is what each of us is to be, simply a servant. We are reminded by the President for what God has claimed us, and we are charged lay and cleric alike to be saints in Christ in Lanka.

We are out at last in the fresh air. And to a time of warm reunion as friendship overrides all barriers and carries us, not without a struggle, into the already over-packed Scott Hall. Dr. Greeves and his companions pause for “Magul Bera” and the “Raban playing” and looking rather mystified and slightly deafened, bravely and perspiringly press on to take their turn in lighting one of the 150 candles on the model map of Ceylon. Thanks to those who arranged the scenic background, and especially to those who acted whilst others queued to light their candles. Did we all guess how much work went into the preparation of the hall?

Then to the main compound to be refreshed with what to some is milk rice and to others kiribath—and to all a more than welcome cup of coffee. (The happy presence of young helpers in traditional Sinhalese dress made the absence of Tamil national costume all the more marked; it is still not an “open secret” why at other times, Conference appeared to overlook its gift of three tongues!) After what seems a long wait, giving ample opportunity for the monsoon clouds to gather, the dancing displays begin. Informality appears to take precedence over interest and attention, but a loud round of applause (Conference has not yet begun business—so the sound is of hand-clapping!) assures the dancers that their colourful costumes and skilful movements are at heart appreciated. But not for long—rain closes the celebrations and sends us home to gather strength for the morrow’s not-to-be-called pilgrimage.

## Friday, 19th of June

A word of congratulation to the young people for so readily accepting the injunction “Only Hymns and Lyrics”! Perhaps—thought some—a spontaneous bailsa with suitable words would not have been too scandalous, had there physically been room to perform. But hymns and lyrics it is—both going and returning, with great singing, and now and then a pleasant blending of the separate efforts of different compartments. We were told “over 4000”—what an invasion for Galle, whose voice could have told us the tale of the early dedicated beginnings of Ceylon Methodism. The procession through the town is too long, and some of us never get near to the Civic Reception—and are therefore perhaps the more fortunate—for when the rain descends we are first to gain the shelter of the churches. With Paul we are quite “pressed down” but not at all cheerless—and manfully pack the three buildings to offer respective praises in three tongues. The visitors from England bring us God’s word for the day; the new Chairmen fulfil their first official duties; and the President ensures that Methodism retains an itinerant



Ministry by being present at each Service! Packed lunches are opened and shared—and to the accompaniment of more rain the “pilgrims” storm the station, anxious to be back home.

### Saturday, 20th of June

Conference convenes at 9 a.m. in a rather unusual setting—but we are seated facing West, so we feel safe! An extended platform contains the English delegation, who fit into the homely atmosphere with dignity and humour. We rise to “And are we yet alive”—are reminded of Paul’s words in Romans chapter 12—and after united prayers turn to the business of the First Conference of the Methodist Church, Ceylon. Is it imagination or does a holiday atmosphere persist? Our business is important but brief and within less than 75 minutes the President is trying to force a tea-interval—but we resist strongly. And how right we are—for our devotion to duty brings us to a grand finale before 12-30. and wins us a half holiday. The conference remains standing for the signing of the Deed of Church Order. Our thoughts this morning are very much with our first Vice-President. Mr. Foot Nash tells us he envies the insignia!...and with well chosen words he inducts Mr. Watson Peiris to his office. It is not a surprise to us that his brief is a layman’s charter—but a right royal one, and we are grateful to be reminded that we all possess one priesthood.

Greetings are a most worthy replacement for the annual letter of the Missionary Society; they are personal, simple, and blatantly sincere. Dr. Greeves regards Conference paternally and sounds the note of rejoicing, reinforced by Mr. Nash’s accent on our belonging to the community of the resurrection. By the Mother-Church we are released—says Mr. Pile—with rejoicing; and he explains himself! Miss Ridge, looking anything but on the eve of retirement, tells us she doesn’t know which side she is on. But for her pains, and because of Ceylon’s regard she is seated on high.

Business sits lightly on us: we come of age—and charitably insist on showing our maturity by applauding in our own way: it really is a happy morning. Only the scrutineers display Oman’s “flurry and worry”, and are consigned to a late lunch!

All are welcome, says the Programme, at the Conference Garden Party: and all come. Perhaps not all; for the helpers tell us they are not as busy (mercifully) as at Synod. . . . But we guess where the wise absentees are. Taking their cue from the dance of the Ten Virgins they are already in their seats for the Pageant, “By Faith”, a truly outstanding feast to celebrate that which God has done, and to which men have responded. The tense moments of Coke’s plea, the burial of that veteran at sea—the arrival, stationing, and beginnings of the work—such scenes laid the foundation for present opportunities and challenge, closing tribute, and the open proclamation of the Good News.

Sincerest thanks to Miss Atkins and all her most energetic workers for bringing us what—in many ways—was the highlight of Conference.

Dare we tell here of our enjoyment of the perfect ending to a memorable day?—the Layman’s Dinner. A happy affair indeed, with a “no-bones-about-his” speech from the Laymen’s President, a word which will stay when others are forgotten. We are delighted, however, to know that Karl Barth made Dr. Greeves read Romans! We are already doing it at the President’s direction.

### Sunday, 21st of June

Full house again—this time for the Conference official Service. People arriving after 5 p.m. are shown to the gallery: after 5-15 p.m.—to the fresh air! Dr. Greeves enters the pulpit—a Call to Worship—and “Ye servants of God”. It’s a very Methodist Service, less liturgical than its English counterpart; and we are glad. Dr. Greeves, who has much to say about the place of preaching in the 20th Century world, bids us seek the gifts of the Spirit—those which edify and build up. He asks if we have “rows” in our Church meetings. Judging from the immediate reaction on hundreds of faces, he guesses he may rightly put in a word about love and fellowship! So we come, and keep on coming to the Lord’s Table, where our own President joins us, and where we are all one in Christ Jesus.

### Monday, 22nd of June

Though nothing outstanding excites us today, we pass through both Representative

and Ministerial Sessions in a way which proves we heeded yesterday's sermon! The Conference Public Meeting is a "success"; valuable messages are brought by Dr. Greeves and Mr. Foot Nash, under the unhurried and safe guidance of our Vice-President. For Church workers and wives—and for the unmarried—the day was drawn to an unprecedented close by—what seems—the unlimitable hospitality of Mr. Watson Peiris. How we enjoyed having time to relax with our many friends, to be fed, and to be amused by apt and witty speeches. We joined unanimously in the spirit which prompted spicy gifts to all our visitors.

### Tuesday, 23rd of June

There are no empty seats at the City Mission Anniversary; and we rejoice that

some friends must stand! After the promise of much needed work in a new Harvard Rest, and Boys' Hostel, we praise God for the constant work in the Pettah—where Miss Ridge reminds us we cannot escape the demands of loneliness, poverty, and over-crowding, or the challenges of evil. It is an enthusiastic service. Mr. Pile points out the layman—active throughout history—as the key man in witness and service; and places the burden of demonstrating the Gospel right down on our door-step! We do not need to ask if Miss Ridge loves the Mission... she is listened to with great attention, because she has learnt the lesson of loving **people**. Mr. Rajasingam is so obviously pleased with the attendance; and we ourselves would not have missed pausing in such a sacred place, and recalling yet again the faith and zeal of early missionaries and eager converts.



Section of the Audience at the Festival Pageant

## Addresses to the Opening Session of the Ceylon Conference

(1)

by MISS EDITH RIDGE



When I was in England on furlough in 1957, one of my greatest experiences was to be sent as a delegate to the British Conference. I shall always be grateful for that experience when the Church became so much more real to me. It is, therefore, a very great pleasure to bring to you greetings from the British Conference, but, in doing so, I find myself in a difficult position, and only hope I shall make no mistakes! It is rather like watching a match between two schools, when you have taught in both schools, and you are not sure which side you are on. When I am on the ocean, I unconsciously talk about "going home", whichever way I am going, whether it is to England or to Ceylon.

In bringing you greetings from the British Conference I bring greetings from the women of the Church in particular. During my

last furlough I had the joy and privilege of visiting many groups of women of the Church while on deputation work. Never before have I felt the bond of fellowship between us so deeply. I found women intent on facing up to problems and opportunities, and I realised how much we in Ceylon have in common with them. There was a new sense of being interdependent, a drawing together, a searching for new insights. Some people showed a keenness in studying others' background and problems. I sometimes felt ashamed when I found how much some knew about Ceylon, even though they had never visited the Island. (What a slow learner I was in comparison!)

Some of you will remember Rev. and Mrs. Thorpe who were Missionaries in Ceylon some years ago, and are now in Southern Rhodesia. A short time ago I received a letter from Mrs. Thorpe in which she said that the Women's Association of Southern Rhodesia was planning its Annual Conference and wanted the Methodist women of Ceylon to help it by sharing with it their interests and their tasks in the Church life here. The challenge to work together comes from other parts of the world, too.

Recently the Methodist Church in Ceylon has become conscious of its need to reconsider the place of women in the Church, and Synod has shown its genuine concern. In other parts of the world, too, this is a subject which challenges the Church, and on which much thinking is being done. In bringing greetings to the Ceylon Conference one prays that the Conference may continue to be challenged to seek new insights on the place of women in the Church, and to share its thinking with others so that together we may make our contribution to God's Kingdom.

(2)

by THE REV. R. W. PILE



My message could be summed up in the phrase, 'The British Conference was reluctant to begin work in Ceylon and is now delighted to hand it over'. However, this is a statement that needs qualification, and the qualification which follows forms the subject of my address.

Certainly the British Conference was reluctant to begin. In 1809 Dr. Adam Clarke presented a proposal for work in Ceylon to the Conference, as a result of the conversations which he had had with Sir Alexander Johnston, the Chief Justice of Ceylon, and with William Wilberforce. The Conference refused, but Thomas Coke was on the job. In the years which followed he carefully prepared the way, securing support wherever he was able to secure it, recruiting workers ready for the day when Conference would one day agree. The year 1813 tells the story of a reluctant British Conference. Earlier in the year Dr. Coke had gone across to Ireland to preside in his usual way over the Irish Conference. He took Clough with him and in Ireland had a splendid reception. The Conference agreed with enthusiasm and three preachers offered for the work.

Back at the British Conference in Liverpool, the debate continued for a day and at

the end of the day it seemed clear to all who were present that even though the decision was delayed, the morrow would bring another contrary vote.

Coke spent the night in prayer, and the next day prayer did its work. The Conference came to see the working of God in the chain of events which had led to the proposal, agreed to his mission and agreed to the appointment of the missionaries who were to sail with him.

A similar pattern can be traced in the development of the work across the world. The Church in the West Indies began in 1760 and began from that date to ask for the support of the Church in Great Britain. It was 1786 before the first missionary was sent. The Church in West Africa began when a company of freed slaves were taken back across the Atlantic to found a colony of freed men in Sierra Leone. Two hundred and twenty of them were Methodists, a few of them were Local Preachers, a few were Class Leaders. The Church was there. During the years 1792—1811 the cry was—"Send us a preacher; send us a teacher! Come and help us." And the Church took nineteen years to respond.

Coke himself had nursed his scheme for a mission to Asia for almost 20 years from the day when he published his plan for the establishment of missions in 1784 until the Conference of 1813. I stress this point because it is often thought that the Missionary Society in planning its strategy, looks at a map of the world and decides to do more here and more there. This has never been the pattern. Always the task is that of quickening the conscience and awareness of the Church at home so that it may be able to keep up with the Lord of the Church and respond to the calls that He has already made. It is not a question of making our plans but of learning the will of God and obeying it. This I am sure will be your continuing experience as you set forth in this new day of the Church in Ceylon to do the will of God in this land. Always you will be called, not to make your own plans, but to learn the will of the Lord who delights to make the impossible possible, to hear His command and to go forth in confidence to obey it.

Next, I am glad that the President of the British Conference in his greetings has already stressed that autonomy is not something new for Ceylon. The present Conference marks the culmination of a process. Indeed it goes back to the very beginnings of our story. In 1816 a group of laymen in Madras, who had got together and formed a Society meeting, wrote to London asking for the appointment of a missionary. London wrote to Ceylon saying that Harvard should go to Madras. The Governor of Ceylon protested because Harvard was then busy putting the Government Printing Press in order. The Bible Society protested because Harvard's work was important in the process of producing the Sinhala Bible.

The missionaries met together and decided to reverse the decision of a distant London and make their own plan. They decided to keep Harvard in Colombo and to send Lynch to Madras. This marks the beginning of a sign of a lively independence on the part of the missionaries in Ceylon, which has been very readily taken over by the leadership of the Church, as the Church became truly indigenous. In 1939 a new Constitution was worked out in agreement with the Missionary Society which then conferred virtual autonomy.

Only the legal fiction remained in that all decisions of the Synod needed the confirmation of the Conference in Great Britain. You have appointed your own Chairman, you have stationed your own ministers, no missionary has come to you unless you have invited him, no missionary has returned to you unless you have asked for him to return. A group of us meeting together last night tried to remember whether there was any decision of the Ceylon Synod which had been reversed by the British Conference during this period, and we could not remember one. If therefore we are to see the significance of this Foundation Conference in a proper perspective, we will of course rejoice in this completion of a process. But we will think of it as a completion and look with thanksgiving on what the Lord has done in His Church over the whole story of 150 years. As in other lands, so here, we can trace the three stages of missionary development. First, the day of the pioneer; second, the stage of devolution as the Church has grown and the time has come for the Church to be the Church of the land, rooted and grounded in the life and culture of the people, so that

Jesus may be seen and known as the Lord and Saviour of that life and culture; third—for the past 25 years, the process of autonomy which now reaches its climax and culmination. This means that the fourth stage of the missionary enterprise lies before us, the stage of total interdependence in mission with the whole Church of God. There has always been a sense in which it is inappropriate to speak of independence concerning the life of any Church. The only kind of dependence proper to the Church of God in any place is a total and complete dependence upon the Lord of the Church Himself. For the rest there can only be the sharing which belongs to those who, because they depend on Him are members one of another, glad to share all that He has given, so that His whole will may be done in every place. This means that we are today called to experiment, to discover new ways of expressing this relationship. As we work out this way, those of us who represent the British Conference would ask you to help us to receive from you all the good things that the Lord has given you in your story and continues to give to you today.

To come back among you, to feel myself part of the life of this Church once again, and to come straight from the life of the Church at home, is to realize just how much we may receive, if you will make this possible. I plead with you to keep the channels of communication open. You do not now have to send us news, you need not share your needs with us, you need not give us your accounts. These are the very materials by which understanding prayer, true partnership, true sharing become possible. They are not less necessary than before but more necessary, and just as we would receive from you, so we would hope that you will enable us to continue to give the good things which the Lord in His mercy has given to us and continues to give to us. I am thankful that in this year of the autonomous Conference when the Church in Ceylon becomes self-supporting in respect of its established work and ministry, we have been able to make token grants for the support of advance work in Gal Oya and the City Mission: for these grants symbolize the fact that we would go forward with you, sharing together in new ventures. With joyous anticipation we look to express the relationship that now becomes possible in a covenant of cooperation, and to practise it to the glory of God in this land, in our home land, and in other lands.

# The Conference Public Meeting

Address of

MR. DAVID FOOT NASH

(Vice President of the British Conference)



This visit to your Foundation Conference in Ceylon will be not only one of the great memories of my years as Vice President of the British Conference, but one of the great memories of my life.

I shall never forget you Methodists in Ceylon.

I shall never forget your courage.

I shall never forget your endurance.

The story of the last 150 years, so vividly presented to us in the Pageant on Saturday night, was, in the first few weeks a story of excitement.

But after that came the long hard pull.

And, down over these seven or eight generations, that has been the price of progress:

Hard work  
Faithful service  
Total sacrifice.

But now you have reached the point of greatest temptation—the point at which we Methodists also find ourselves in Great Britain:

The temptation to accept ourselves as a self-contained Methodist community within the greater community—

The temptation to live in a ghetto!

Coming from England, I would not have dared to say this about you, if you had not first said it about yourselves.

Your President, in his last address as the Chairman of the Ceylon Synod, spoke these courageous words:—

We seem to be living in a ghetto. The term ghetto was originally applied to a Jewish quarter in a large city. They carved out a portion of a city and lived happily in it, unmindful of the rest of the city.....

More and more meetings are organised for people within the Church. The well fed continue to be fed. The hungry sheep are outside.

That was your President's estimate of you—and I sensed the truth of it when I went to your wonderful Churches at Moratumulla on Sunday. A wonderful Methodist Community—but all second and third generation Christians. They came and spoke to us about their Methodist fathers and grandfathers.

Where were the First Generation Methodists in Moratumulla?

Do not think that I am scolding you.

My chief, Dr. Greeves, in his address to the British Conference, called upon the British Methodist people to **repent** for the same reason. We, too, are living in our ghetto.

I want to say this, to you here in Ceylon and to my own Church in Great Britain:—

If we do not get out of our ghetto, we shall come under the judgement of God.

He sent His Son, not for the Methodist people, but for all the world.

When Jesus was born, the Herald Angel proclaimed that these were "tidings of great joy which shall be unto **all** people". Not just to **some** people. Or to the **lucky** people who happen to be born in the right homes. But to **all** people.

Paul was able to write to the Romans in Italy and say "It's all right. You're in this."

Charles Wesley, in his turn wrote  
 "Come, **Sinner**, to the Gospel Feast  
 Let every soul be Jesu's guest  
 Ye need not **one** be left behind  
 For God hath bidden all mankind."

Instead of three trains to Galle on Friday,  
 how wonderful if there has been 500 trains!

Charles Wesley again:

"O that the **World** might taste and see  
 The riches of His Grace  
 The arms of Love that compass me  
 Would all mankind embrace".

Now I want to call to you, in the words  
 of your President—"In this Jubilee Year let  
 us come out of our ghetto". I am sure  
 that this is the urgent command of Christ.

I know this because, in the Second Chapter  
 of the Book of Revelation, we have a letter  
 which Jesus wrote to a Third Generation  
 Church. He was writing to the Church at  
**Ephesus** but it might well have been to the  
 Methodist Church in Ceylon. Listen :

"I know thy works, and thy labour, and  
 thy patience, and how thou canst not bear  
 them which are evil, and thou hast **tried** them  
 which **say** they are apostles and are not,  
 and hast found them liars, and has borne,  
 and hast patience, and for my name's sake  
 has laboured and hast not fainted."

What a commendation from the Lord of  
 the Church !

And Jesus says it to Methodists in Ceylon  
 after these 150 years.

Wonderful—I know thy **works**  
 And thy **labour**  
 And thy **patience**

And you have been careful about the  
 purity of the Church—  
 And the rightness of the doctrines—  
 And you have kept going.

It would have been easy to give up, again  
 and again, but you've **stuck it**, you've kept  
**on**, and you've done it for My sake.

You have laboured and you haven't  
 fainted.

Jesus says all that to you to-night—re-  
 presenting the great Methodist Church of

25000 people in Ceylon. But that is not  
 the end of the letter. Listen to the next  
 paragraph :

"Nevertheless, I have somewhat against  
 thee, because thou hast **left thy first love**".

What was the first love of the Ephesian  
 Church?

You can read the story in the 18th, 19th  
 and 20th Chapters of the Acts of the  
 Apostles.

It is the story of the birth of a great First  
 Generation Church in three years. Starting  
 with a group of twelve Spirit-filled laymen,  
 Paul built up, in the space of three years,  
 one of the finest of the Early Churches, and  
 when he said goodbye to them, down at the  
 docks, he left behind him a church which  
 had not only evangelised the city of Ephesus  
 —a great sea-port like Colombo—but the  
 whole of Asia Minor.

This is incredible, but Luke, a careful  
 historian, is quite positive about it. "All  
 they which dwelt in Asia (Asia Minor)  
 heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both  
 Jews and Greeks." Acts 19. 10.

Wonderful things happened. The intelli-  
 gentsia of the place were affected. They  
 brought their books, fifty thousand pieces  
 of silver worth! They heaped them to-  
 gether in the market place, and set fire to  
 the lot, to demonstrate that their old philo-  
 sophers and teachers had been blind leaders  
 of the blind, and that now they had found  
 the truth.

There were riots. The whole place was  
 turned upside down.

One of the most amusing and significant  
 things that happened was the meeting of  
 the Trade Unionists of the city. They got  
 together to consider what they could do to  
 avoid the ruin of their trade in little silver  
 goddesses. (The City was famous for the  
 worship of the heaven goddess Diana.)

"What on earth are we going to do?"  
 said Demetrius.

"Not only can we now no longer sell our  
 little tin gods to our old customers in Ep-

Jesus, but when the country people come in to market, and we say to them, "Will you buy a little silver Diana?" they say to us, "No thanks. They be no gods which are made with hands!" "And this our craft is in danger!"

It certainly was.

But what I want you to see is that this great First Generation Church sprang into existence from utter heathenism, in three years. How did this happen?

It happened in one way: Every member of that Church was a missionary. Every home in that Church was a mission station.

Doctors on their rounds were missionaries. They talked to their patients not only about their bodies but their souls.

Servant girls were missionaries. They went home to their mistresses, and mistresses to their maids. They were all missionaries, spreading the news about Paul and explaining the new and happy "Way" by which men could now live "in Christ".

Commercial travellers, going out into the country villages far and wide, collected not only new orders for their merchandise, but new converts for their church.

"So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed."

It was a church without buildings; but every home was a meeting place. It was a church without ministers; but Christ could count on every man, every woman, every child, to be His minister to the next man, the next woman, the next child, outside in 'the dark.'

How these Ephesus Christians would have scorned the idea of refraining from presenting their Christian witness to a neighbour because he belonged to another faith. Why, that would have been the very reason for **telling** him about Jesus? It was no reason at all for **not** telling him!

Four years after leaving them, Paul wrote to the Ephesians. We have his Letter here in the New Testament. It is full of the

highest spiritual teaching. It is clear that, within one single decade, this First Generation Church in Ephesus had sprung from infancy to full adult "manhood in Christ".

What a First Generation!

Every Church member a missionary.

Every Christian home a mission station.

How delighted Paul was, as he thought about them! (Ephesians 1:15,16).

But now the years had passed away. Paul had long since seen Rome and had followed his Master into the sky.

The first generation of Ephesian Christians had long ago "crossed the flood" and had joined the martyr throng in heaven.

The Christians in Ephesus were now all Second Generation and Third Generation Christians.

They were carrying on the work with courage and patience and persistence.

Jesus, the glorious Head of the Church, could, in the first paragraph of His 'letter', commend them for their labour, their endurance and their devotion. He could praise them for their concern for the purity of the Church, and for the soundness of the Church's doctrines.

"And you have done it all for My Name's sake", He said, "and you haven't fainted."

What a glorious Third Generation Church, to get from Jesus a commendation like this!

But wait!

"Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

Ah! That First Generation! Their love for the lost! Their yearning desire to rope-in their neighbours! To win their friends! To convert their slaves! To witness to their masters! To evangelise their cities and villages! To "make **all** men see!" (Ephesians 3:9) This was the First Love of the Ephesian Church. It was a love like unto the Love of Jesus Himself. It was the sort of love which had brought Him down from heaven, seeking and saving them that were lost.



This 'First Love' had rejoiced the heart of Jesus; it had made all the bells in Heaven ring; it had kept the angels singing!

"Now," said Jesus, in this 'letter', "Think from what a height you have fallen!" (Rev. 2:5. N.E.B) "Repent, and do as you once did."

The First Love, then, is the proper business of the Church: the "making of disciples of all the nations". (Matt. 28:19).

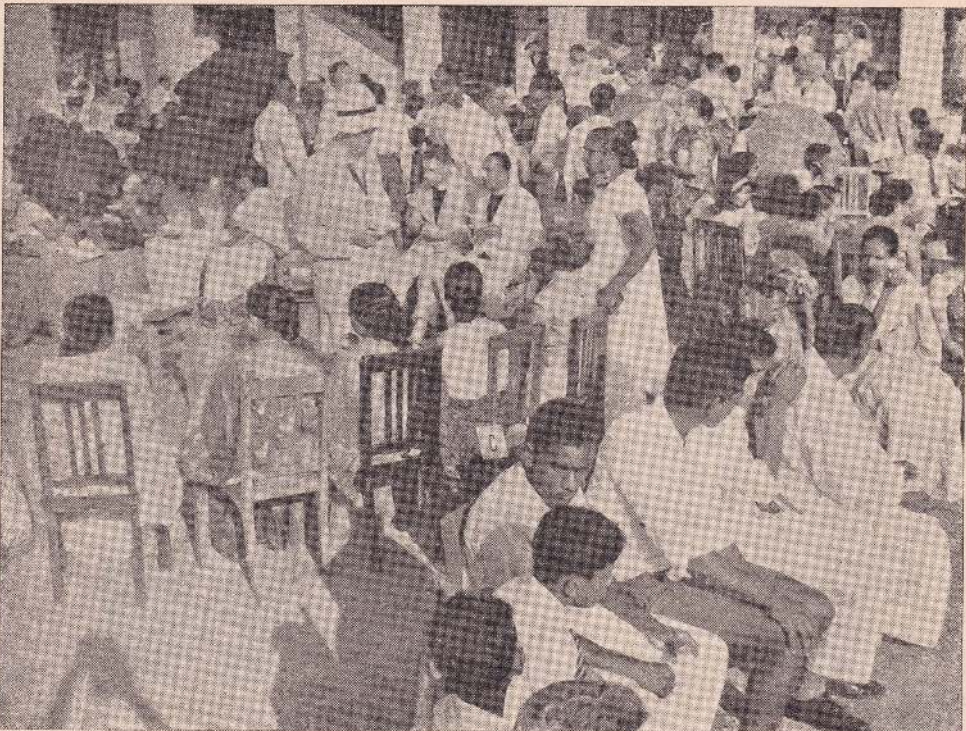
And if a Third Generation Church does not listen to its Lord and stop existing just for itself, and if it does not get back to its First Generation job, then, faithful as it may have been to 'those within', it has failed those that are 'without', and is therefore a disappointment and frustration to the One Who came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.

The 'letter' ends, therefore, with a terrible last paragraph.

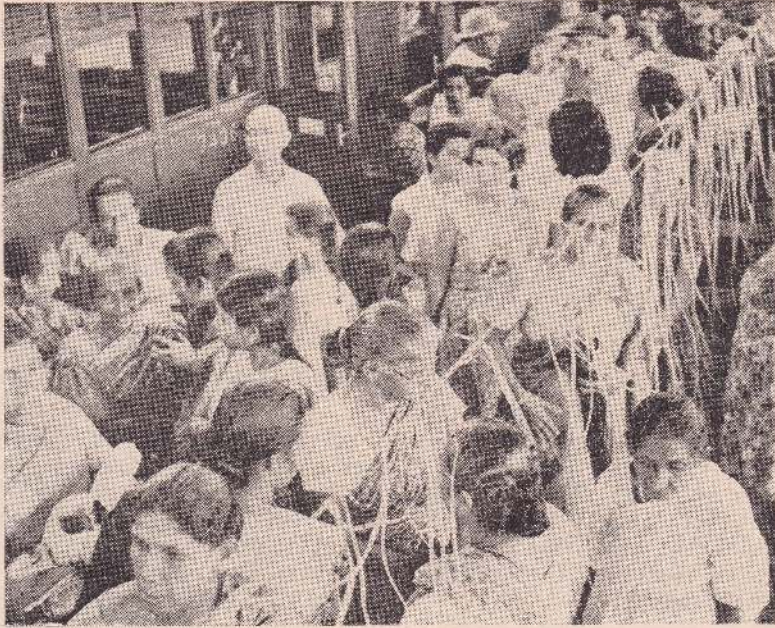
"Repent, and do as you once did. Otherwise, if you do not repent, I shall come to you and remove your lamp from its place." (Rev. 2:5. N.E.B.)

A lamp-holder without a lamp! An electric light socket from which the bulb has been removed! This is the fate that awaits a Third Generation Church which does not return to its First Generation Job.

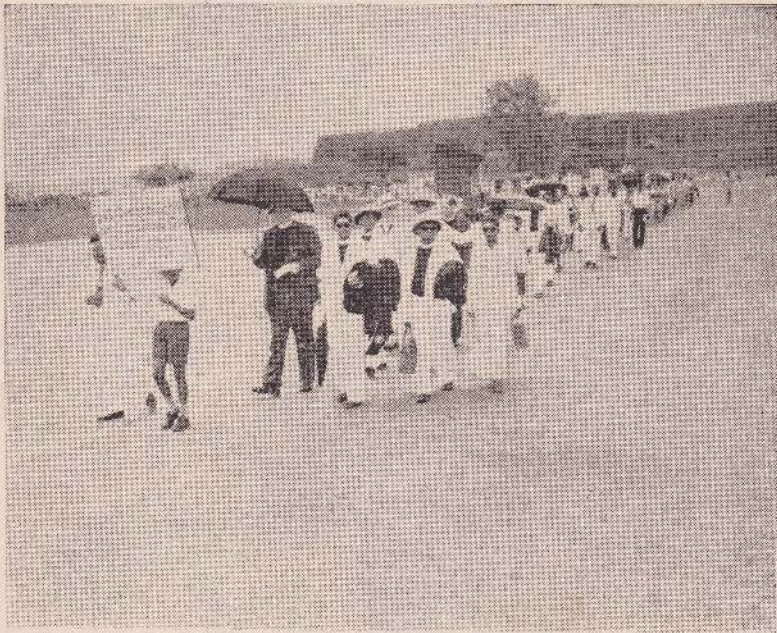
May the great Lord of the Church have mercy upon us, and come upon us again by His Spirit, so that you in Ceylon and we in Great Britain shall not fail Him in His urgent outreach to all who are still outside, and who have never yet been given the chance of responding to His love.



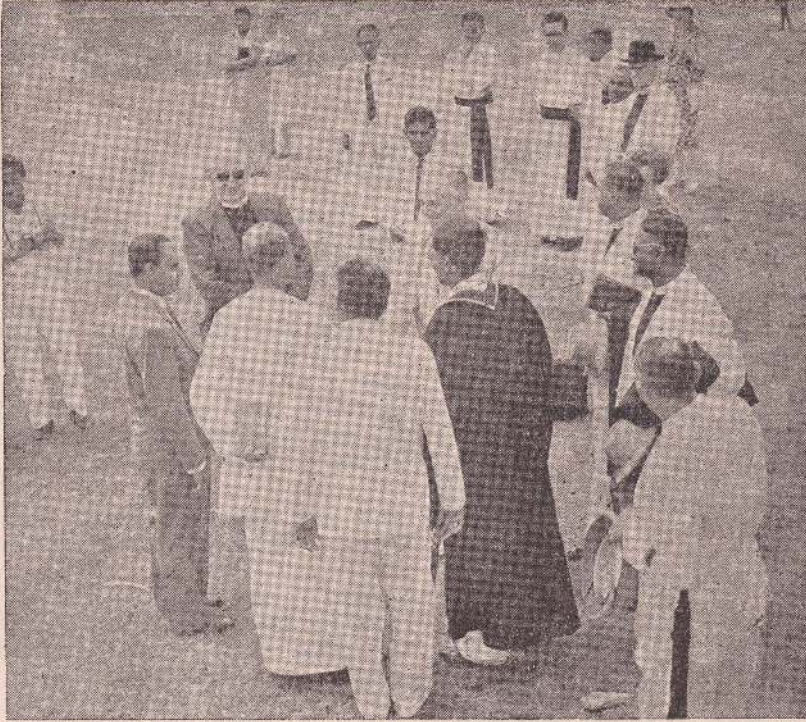
Section of the Conference Garden Party



Arrival at Galle Station which was decorated  
for the occasion



The Presidents lead the Procession at Galle



The distinguished visitors are greeted by Mr. Siriwardene, Special Commissioner, Galle and Dr. W. Dahanayake M. P. at the Civic Reception



Our President speaks at the Civic Reception at Galle.

# The arrival of the first Methodist Missionaries

by

THE REV. JOHN H. GRICE

*(The story of June 29th 1814 is well known to us all, but it is worth re-telling, especially this year. One of the most striking features of the story is that, at every stage of their journey, the missionaries found unexpected friends ready to help them in their difficulties and to give them all possible encouragement and approval. Without such support it is doubtful whether Methodism would have been established so securely in the first few weeks and months.)*

DR. THOMAS COKE'S unforeseen death at sea on May 3rd 1814 was a grievous personal loss to the six missionaries travelling with him to Ceylon. It took their leader away, and also deprived them of all financial resources. The funds of the Mission were in Dr. Coke's name, and although Harvard and Clough searched for three days through the papers in his cabin, they could find no document which authorised them to draw on any of his money. The outlook for the beginning of the Mission was dark indeed. "Now," said Clough, when they realised the gravity of their predicament, "it is all TRUST!"

The Captain of the "Cabalva", John Birch, was the first of many true friends who helped the young missionaries both before and after they landed in Ceylon. When the ships at last reached Bombay on May 21st, after a voyage of twenty weeks, Captain Birch described their situation to Mr. Thomas Money, a British merchant. Harvard and the others were not hopeful, but they were overcome with gratitude when Mr. Money said he would be very happy to advance them money—without securities—to the credit of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in London. He assured them that he was a firm friend to the cause of Christianity in Asia.

Captain Birch also introduced them to Sir Evan Nepean, the Governor of Bombay, who welcomed them no less warmly.

He entertained them at his residence, and wrote a special letter about them to the Governor of Ceylon, General Brownrigg.

Meanwhile Mr. Money was arranging for their voyage to Ceylon. Harvard was advised to remain in Bombay because of his wife's approaching confinement, and did not eventually leave Bombay till the following January.

On June 20th James Lynch, William Ault, George Erskine, Thomas Squance and Benjamin Clough set sail in the "Earl Spencer", a ship bound for China. It was a speedy voyage. In fact the gales were so strong that it might have been impossible to go ashore at Galle.

Wednesday June 29th 1814 was "a remarkably clear day". The master attendant of Galle harbour, Mr. W. C. Gibson, had received a letter from Mr. Money and was looking out for the arrival of the ship. When he sighted it lying to three miles off-shore, he sent two boats out to meet it. The first was for Mr. and Mrs. Harvard, who were to stay at his own country-house outside the town. The larger boats was for the other five and their baggage. As the Harvards had remained behind in Bombay, Lynch, Squance and Clough decided to go ahead at once in the small boat, leaving Ault and Erskine to follow with the luggage.

When the three of them stepped ashore in the evening twilight, Mr. Gibson was on the wharf to greet them. He drove them in his carriage to meet the Commandant of the Fort, Lord Molesworth, who, with his wife, received them "in the most affable and friendly manner".

At eight o'clock they became very uneasy, for Ault and Erskine had failed to appear, but Lord Molesworth affirmed that there was no need for alarm. The strong winds and tides often carried boats away from Galle towards Weligama Bay sixteen miles further east. This explanation turned

out to be correct. Next morning he sent two palanquins to Weligama which arrived back at 5 p.m. with the missing pair.

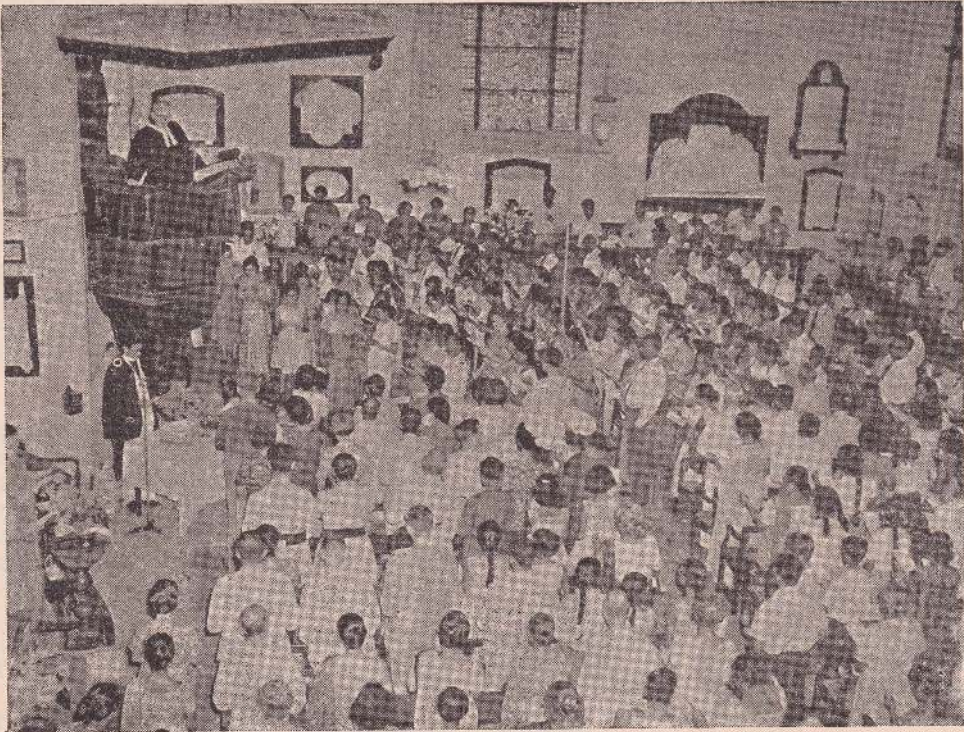
Ault and Erskine had been delayed on board the ship while the Captain wrote letters for people on shore. The tide was carrying the ship further away from the coast, so that, when the letters were finished, the boatmen could no longer steer towards Galle. After a most unpleasant six hours on the open sea in the darkness, when Ault feared that the boatmen might rob and murder them, they landed unhurt at Weligama at 2-30 a.m. Yet again an unknown friend was ready to help them. Even though they had to call him out of bed, the Dutch magistrate, Mr. Kunemann, welcomed them gladly and took their luggage to a safe place. On their departure he begged them to visit him again whenever they might pass that way.

For several days the missionaries took tea and dinner with Lord and Lady Molesworth. They resided at Government House

as guests of Governor Brownrigg, who had received the Governor of Bombay's letter and had sent orders saying that the House was to be made ready for them.

On the first Sunday, at the Commandant's request, they conducted morning worship in the Dutch church, and they were surprised when Lord Molesworth asked to join them in their evening prayers. This "pious nobleman", indeed, until his tragic death at sea a year later, proved to be one of their wisest guides and most constant supporters. He was one of many God-fearing men—both Ceylonese and European—who were deeply thankful to see the missionaries commencing their work in this island.

Dr. Coke's vision was now realised. After six hazardous and eventful months and a voyage which brought much illness and the deaths of Mrs. Ault and Dr. Coke, Methodists were at last preaching the Gospel in Ceylon, and the Mission to Asia was begun.



Thanksgiving Service in the church in Galle where the Missionaries first preached

# Personal Impressions of a Historic Occasion

by

SHELTON C. FERNANDO Esq., M.A. (Oxon), M.B.E.

*(Former Civil Servant and Permanent Secretary. Member of the Standing Committee of the Colombo Diocesan Council, of the Church of Ceylon).*

GREAT moments are the essence of History. One such was the Inauguration of the Conference of the Methodist Church and the Induction of the first President in Ceylon on June 18th, 1964.

The impressive ceremonial service at 5 p.m. at the Kollupitiya Church put the stamp of autonomy on the Methodist Church in Ceylon after an existence of exactly 150 years.

Through the ages ceremony has been an unflinching adjunct of momentous pre-planned occasions, whether spiritual or mundane. Other churches or institutions sometimes overdo ceremony to the point of submerging the content in the form. But this Methodist event was marked by great restraint and sobriety: the music was subdued, and the decorations chaste.

It was a privilege even for a Methodist to be present at this symbolic service. The organizers had endeavoured to make the attendance as representative as possible, and thereby the gathering truly mirrored an epitome or microcosm of the whole Methodist community in Ceylon. One saw a faithful cross-section of Ceylon Methodists of all walks of life and all races and places.

There were dignitaries from several other Christian Churches in Ceylon, among them 3 Bishops, other heads, and an Archdeacon. Many heads of diplomatic missions also came.

Perhaps the sole non-Christian there was the Governor-General. What struck me most about his presence was that, despite recent illness, he chose to stay on right through the proceedings of nearly two hours—standing punctiliously where to be seated appeared irreverent.

I was there by courtesy invitation, being a non-Methodist. But, quite apart from my constant affinity with Methodist worship, there were also many historical memories surging within me to instil a special and fervent thrill.

As a student of history I could recall the outstanding personality of John Wesley in English History, who regarded the whole world as his parish and the deep roots of the Methodist churches in 18th century England. I had heard in person a great French historian, Professor Elie Halevy prove conclusively in a lecture that the one single factor which saved England from as dreadful a cataclysm as the French Revolution of the same century was English Methodism with its "beliefs, emotions and opinions."

Then again another authority had thought fit to portray the best and most original political philosopher of the time, the Irishman Edmund Burke, as the "John Wesley of English Politics."

No dull moment intruded between the procession that brought the principal participants to the church and the recession that took them back for the next programme at Scott Hall.

The singing was superb throughout. Specially composed lyrics in Sinhalese and Tamil imparted the indigenous Oriental touch. The Sinhalese lyric was a rhythmic paean of Praise. The Tamil Thevaram struck a deep spiritual note with its enchanting invocatory vibrations.

Then came the climacteric of the signing of the Deed of Foundation. It was fitting that among the select signatories from Ceylon, with its first world's woman Prime Minister there should be a woman—an indefatigable lay worker.

A logical sequence was the Induction of the first President by the President of the British Conference, who had honoured the occasion with a special visit, and his robing by three former Chairmen of the now superseded all-Island Methodist Synod.

Incidentally at this point of autonomy this first President happened to be the fourth Ceylonese to hold the office of Chairman.

It then struck me as a non-Methodist how truly this Church was living up to its epithet by methodically electing as its first President a faithful and meritorious servant of the Lord who remarkably and perhaps uniquely for any part of the world, could also claim three ancestors, vertically, as ministers, and again three living collaterals horizontally, in the same holy calling.

The administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the Ceylon President was followed by a sermon from him as first pastoral function in the new office.

Nobody who heard this sermon on a moving theme "In' Christ 'In' Lanka" taking for its text the greeting of St. Paul to the faithful in Philippi will ever forget the soul-stirring experience.

For its aptness to the occasion, the excitation of its call to Christians and non-Christians alike, the depth of its spiritual message, the absolute topicality of its sentiments for both the religious and the secular sphere, and the supremely beautiful imagery of its peroration, I would un-

reservedly pay my warmest tribute, in all humility.

Even better judges than myself, with like experience abroad, will hardly gainsay that this sermon could rank with the best that one can hear in Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's Cathedral in England or the popular pulpits of America.

Thereafter, two well-known hymns usually sung at such services, and the first Benediction by the Ceylon President, brought a truly memorable and historic inauguration to its close.

The finale was yet to come. The principal participants in recession were escorted to the throbbing of Oriental drums and tom-toms to Scott Hall, where many who missed the Service were able to witness the spectacle of a lighting of 150 candles. This custom according to H. G. Wells in his famous 'Outline of History' is a feature of all religions and cults believing in salvation and immortality, and goes back over 5000 years to the great days of Egypt.

Later, still bigger crowds in the open-air watched representative Oriental dancing by artistes from all parts of the Island while girls dressed consonantly in cloth and jacket served the traditional native kiribath (Milk rice), jaggery, and coffee.

It was late evening when all returned to their homes, full of memories of an epochal event, and the sharing now of a new responsibility.

## METHODIST DRAMA SOCIETY

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A PASSION PLAY

( IN SINHALA )

Written and produced by Rev. T. H. Perera  
to be staged in Colombo, in April 1965

All those wishing to take part please contact the Secretary

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# SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

by

S. G. NIMAKO Esq.

*(High Commissioner for Ghana in Ceylon)*

I HAVE been asked to write a short note (within three or four days) giving my impressions of the Jubilee Celebrations last month, and I would, for brevity, like to confine myself to what seemed to me to be the highlight of the celebrations.

The service of the Inauguration of the Conference and the Induction of the President made the most profound impression on me. It was charged with quiet dignity, and there was a solemnity about it which gripped me. I find it difficult to give an exact description of the experience in a language not my own. One felt the presence of "a power beyond ourselves that maketh for righteousness". As "pardoned sinners exulting in their Saviour", we were, at the impulse of the Spirit, ushered, in a special sense, into the fellowship of the Saints and transported, as it were, into the very presence of God.

A diplomatic colleague, who had caught the contagion of Methodist fellowship (perhaps best described as Christian fellowship) at the service, said to me, as we went out of the church, "This is a very nice service; in the Methodist Church everyone really sings".

The service was a most fitting climax to what God in Christ has done in Ceylon through his devoted servants, the Missionaries, and I was personally deeply touched by it. It had a special significance for me, coming as I do from a church founded by Methodist Missionaries, and being myself a product of Missionary effort. I felt I could sincerely give thanks to God for

what He had enabled the Missionaries to do all through the world.

And the message of the President, I thought appropriate and relevant. The church of our time seems to me to be in danger of giving the world up for lost, in bewilderment, and withdrawing to itself to think solely on the things of the spirit. With the oratory, the vigour and the boldness which reminded one at once of St. Paul and of the writer of the Epistle to Diognetus whose world faced a similar situation, the President called upon the Church to come to grips, get involved, with its environment, the world in which it is set, and in the strength which her Lord supplies, season and transform it to the image of Christ which it was intended to be.

A pre-requisite of successful involvement, however, is making sure that one is well grounded in his faith, to use the President's words, ensuring that we fix "our eyes on the divine compass", which is Christ. This means knowing Him and the power of His resurrection, in short, experiencing to the full His saving grace.

As one who has been following the affairs of the church in Ceylon with interest, my prayer is that the Lord may continue to reveal more and more of Himself to all Christians in Ceylon, and shed abroad His love in their hearts, so that they may be enabled to achieve the task which autonomy lays on them. I have no doubt, of course, that He Who began the good work in them will Himself perfect it.



## LAYMEN'S DINNER

Address by

MR. B. E. FERNANDO

*(Leader of the Methodist Laymen's Movement)*

THE Methodist Laymen's Movement is honoured by the presence of the British delegates. We welcome Dr. Greeves the British President and Mr. Foot Nash, the British Vice-President and his wife. It is good to see Rev. Pile in our midst once again. We congratulate him on his new assignment in the Mission House. Miss Ridge mentioned earlier that she was not sure on which side she was. We are sure that she is on our side. We will not cease to want missionaries like Miss Ridge and we want more of them.

May I take this opportunity of congratulating Rev. F. S. de Silva on his appointment as President of the Ceylon Conference and Mr. Watson Peiris, the father of our Movement on being the first Vice-President. Mr. Labrooy's selection as Vice-President designate is well deserved and in recognition of a long and devoted service to the Church. We also congratulate Rev. S. B. Saravanamuthu, the first Secretary of Conference.

On my left is one who deals with the Law. On my right is one who deals with the Law and the Prophets. And here am I who deals with the Law and the Profits! On the only occasion I ventured into the realms of prophecy I was quite successful. It was at the farewell to Rev. R. A. Nelson (who incidentally is nominated President-Elect of the Irish Conference) that I said that his successor must not only be good but he must be very good. Several months later we heard that his successor was actually going to be a Rev. Good, who as time went on we found was very good!

The story is told of a conversation between a theologian and a philosopher during which the theologian said "A philosopher is a blind man in a dark room, looking for a black cat that isn't there!" The philosopher's reply was immediate "That may be so but a theologian would have found it!" You see, it is the task of the theologian to find things that others do not see, to show that there is a god to those who say there is no god.

The Methodist Church is now 150 years old. Even Churches do not grow automatically. In Tennent's "Christianity in Ceylon" it is stated that at the end of the Dutch era there were one-third of a million Protestants in Ceylon. Within the ten years 1801—1810 this number was reduced by half. Today there are just over 100,000. Some Non-Roman Catholic churches were built on inadequate foundations. The Dutch did not encourage local leadership and the result is that the largest Protestant church at that time is today the smallest. The Baptists came before the Methodists but today their number is about 4000. The Church of England was so closely connected with the governing power that since Independence their numbers are decreasing in an alarming way. The Methodist Church alone is still increasing its numbers—today it is 25,000 strong. This is because the early Methodist Missionaries built on sure foundations.

May I venture to propound a Methodist interpretation of recent history. In the 18th Century there was the great Evangelical Revival. In Wesley's words "I felt my heart strangely warmed". In the 19th century there was the great Missionary Enterprise. In Wesley's words "The world is my parish". In the 20th century there is the great Ecumenical Movement. In Wesley's words "If your heart is as my heart give me your hand." It is important to note the order—Revival first, Mission next, and then Ecumenism. That must invariably be the order. Today attempts are being made to reverse the order, and in those instances the Ecumenical Movement is tending to become an Ecumenical Monument!

The symbol of the World Council of Churches is significant—a ship with a cross in it on the waves of a turbulent sea. Do you not think this is inadequate for today? For it is time for men to get out of the boat and walk on the water—like Peter—so that others might realise that Christians live in a power other than their own.

We are now an autonomous Church. We have reached adulthood. Let our watchword be "Adulthood without Adultery." In our own land non-Christians want to know the difference between their religion and ours, but we strive to show them the similarities. They can see that in ourselves—how similar we are to them. We must proclaim constantly the words of our Master "Ye have heard that it hath been said....but Jesus says...." In Christendom during the last few decades theology has been dominated by the three B's—Brunner, Barth and Bultmann—instead of by the big B—The Bible—Just as in the time of Christ and of Constantine, there are still many Christians who prefer Gamaliel to Paul, who prefer Arius to Athanasius. There are times when we must prefer the purity of the Church to the peace of the Church. Adulthood without adultery.

Let me now come to the Methodist Laymen's Movement in Ceylon. The E.A.C.C.

recently organised a conference in Calcutta on Laymen's Work. The representatives from Ceylon was an Anglican and a Baptist. In their preparation they found that only in the Methodist Church is there a Laymen's Movement and I was glad to give them all our publications. One advantage of a Laymen's Movement is that we can increase our numbers without female intervention! The great advantage of the minister is that at one time he was a layman. The great advantage of the layman is that at no time was he a minister!.

My final word is in a much more serious strain. In our Lord's parable 99 were inside and only one was outside. Yet how concerned He was. In our land today it is literally true that 99 are outside and only one inside. How great must our concern be. This is no time for celebration. This is a time for dedication. May we, with the help of the greatest layman of all time—the Lord Jesus Christ—set ourselves to impossible tasks. For with Him all things are possible.



The leader of Laymen's Movement. (Mr. B. E. Fernando) addressing the guests at the Dinner.

## JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS AT THE COLOMBO CITY MISSION

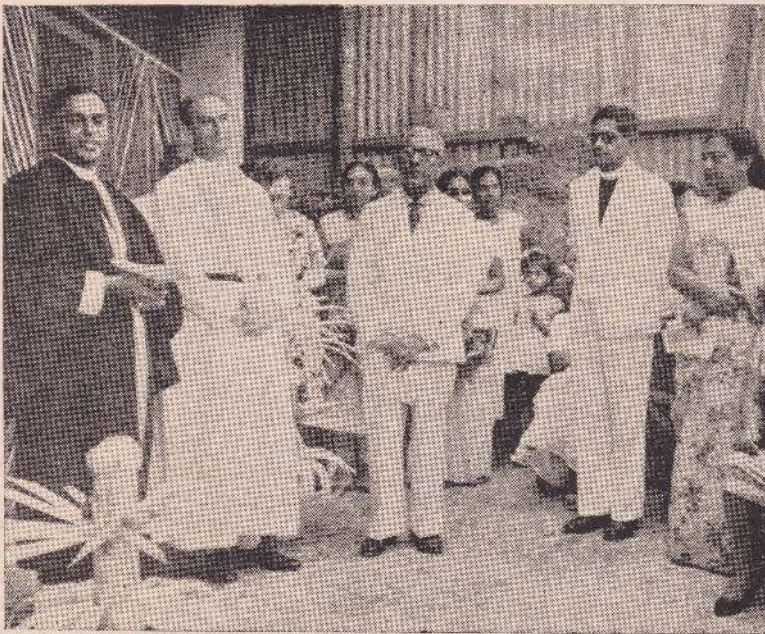
TUESDAY, 23rd June, was the 51st Anniversary of the Colombo City Mission. The various types of gokkola decorations both in the church and premises added beauty and colour to the festive occasion. Before the anniversary meeting in the Church, the opening of the Harvard Rest and the Boys' Club took place in the new building. After the singing of a hymn and the prayer of dedication by the Rev. Fred S. de Silva, the Harvard Rest was declared open by Mrs. F. S. de Silva and the Boys' Club by Mrs. H. W. Peiris.

The Rev. R. Wilfrid Pile unveiled a tablet to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Ceylon Methodism and the attainment of autonomy. Miss E. Ridge unveiled another tablet in the Boys' Club and lit the traditional brass lamps.

The gathering then proceeded to the Church where the anniversary meeting was held, presided over by Miss Ridge. It commenced with the singing of a hymn

followed by a prayer by Rev. Denzil de Silva, a former Superintendent of the Mission. Rev. P. B. Rajasingam, the present Superintendent, read the report in which he outlined the growth of the work in the City Mission during the past half century, to meet the needs of those living in the slums of Pettah. In closing he said "that there was a tremendous challenge ahead in the service to the community and that the Church accepted that challenge, as it would not be faithful to her Lord unless she reached out to all who are deprived and often unwanted."

Rev. Pile gave the address in which he referred to the early missionaries and the pioneer work that laymen had done, and urged that with the granting of autonomy we should labour with that same great zeal and devotion in the cause of the Lord. After an address by the Chairman, Miss Ridge, a vote of thanks was given by Mr. A. W. L. Kirupairetnam.



Opening of Harvard Rest and Boys' Club at Colombo City Mission  
(L to R.) Rev. P. B. Rajasingam, Rev. R. W. Pile,  
The Vice-President (Mr. H. W. Peiris) and  
The President (Rev. F. S. de Silva)

# 150th Anniversary of the Wesley Press

and

## 75th Anniversary of the Boys' Industrial Home & Orphanage, Wellawatte

THE Wesley Press, Wellawatte, and the Boys' Industrial Home & Orphanage situated in the same premises—jointly celebrated the anniversaries of their Institutions on Saturday, 27th June, 1964, at Wellawatte, according to a programme arranged by a Committee comprised of Old Boys and employees of the Wesley Press.

The day commenced with the serving of breakfast (Kiribath and coffee) by the Superintendent, Mr. E. A. de Silva and Mrs. de Silva, to all the employees of the Press.

At 9 a.m. a Service of Thanksgiving was held in the Chapel (situated on the premises) conducted by the Rev. D. S. Dharmapalan—an Old Boy of the Home—and attended by several Old Boys, the employees of the Press and their families. The Organist was Mr. W. E. Wijeratne, also an Old Boy of the Home.

Rev. Dharmapalan based his sermon on 1 Samuel 10. 26. He told us that the Scriptures tell us that when Saul was chosen as king of the Israelites “a band of men whose hearts God had touched” went with him. These men were different from the others because they allowed their hearts to be touched by God. All those who passed through the portals of these two Institutions were blessed by God, but only a few realised that strange touch of God to live that life of Love and Service—the marks of the followers of Christ.

The rest of the day's activities commenced at 10 a.m. with a softball cricket match between the Old Boys and the employees of the Press which ended at 12-15 p.m. The Superintendent's lunch, to all Old Boys present at the time and the employees of the Press, was served at 12-30 p.m. Those present for lunch numbered nearly 125.

A special lunch was also given to the present boys of the Home.

From 2 p.m. onwards the families of Old Boys, Press employees and the guests arrived when the Sportsmeet (mainly for the present boys, Old Boys and employees of the Press) commenced and worked off according to plan. The Chief Guests were Mr. J. J. Sarangapany, Manager Printing Department, Wesley Press and Mrs. Sarangapany. Mrs. Sarangapany distributed the prizes. The Superintendent, Old Boys and employees of the Press officiated at the meet.

The Garden Party which followed was fully representative of parents of the present boys, the Headmaster and Staff of the school, well-wishers of the Home, Church dignitaries and other distinguished guests.

The highlight of the event was the cutting of the “Birthday” cake by the oldest employee in the Press (Mr. J. Rulach) and the youngest boy (Master Lal Perera) in the hostel.

The last item for the day was the Public Meeting which followed soon after under the Chairmanship of Mr. Vincent T. Thammotheram, the Deputy Solicitor General of Ceylon. Before the proceedings began the Superintendent of the Institution Mr. E. A. de Silva welcomed those present. In doing so he paid a fitting tribute to the glorious vision and faith of the pioneer Missionaries who 75 years ago founded this Home and Orphanage for destitute children regardless of caste, creed and race. Their endeavour was to help the children in the Home with a simple sound education, a moral and religious training and some industrial skill that would equip them in their adjustment to the adult World. In conclusion he said that their aims no doubt have been fine and laudable and that we here are trying our very best to honour the intention of those great men.

Messages of good will were received from representatives of the Baptist Sangamaya, and the Dutch Reformed Church. Rev. Celestine Fernando, Secretary of the Bible Society of Ceylon delivered the main address for the day, after which the Chairman in a few well chosen words explained the principles for which the Press and the Industrial Home have stood for all these long years and wished that narrow views

of religion now prevalent in the country will not disturb the pleasant atmosphere of this Institution. His speech was translated into Sinhalese by Rev. E. W. Mendis.

The meeting concluded with the pronouncement of the benediction by the President of the Methodist Church in Ceylon, the Rev. F. S. de Silva.



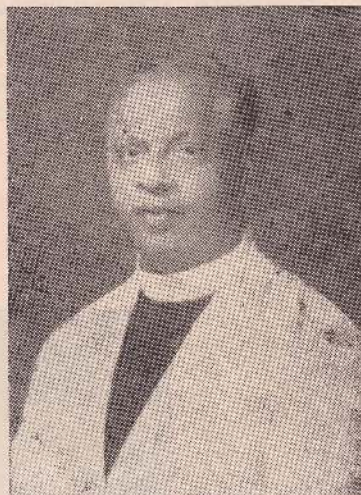
The oldest member of Wesley Press and the youngest boy in the Home cut the Birthday Cake while Mr. E. A. de Silva, the Superintendent looks on.

# Synod to Conference

The Secretary of Synod, Rev. S. B. Saravanamuthu and the two Asst. Secretaries, Rev. S. K. Perera and Mr. Verney G. B. Perera, were elected unanimously to the respective posts of Conference.

Rev. S. B. Saravanamuthu joined the ministry in 1939 and was Asst. Secretary of Synod from 1955—1958. He did his work so systematically and thoroughly that he was elected Secretary of Synod in 1959 and continued till he was appointed Secretary of Conference this year.

He is at present in Colombo Jampettah Circuit.



Rev. S. B. Saravanamuthu



Rev. S. K. Perera

Rev. S. K. Perera joined the Ministry in 1949. He has served in several Circuits and as chaplain to the University at Peradeniya. He went for special training to England in 1960.

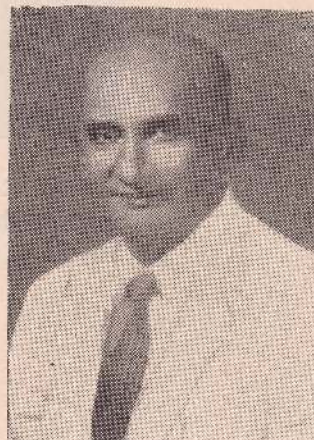
He is perhaps the most-sought-after young minister.

At present he is in charge of the Wellawatte Societies of the Colombo South Circuit.

Mr. Verney G. B. Perera has been the 'permanent' Asst. Lay Secretary of the All-Island Synod.

He is the Manager of the Church Record, Circuit Steward of the Colombo South Circuit, and member of the Standing, Property, Finance and Stationing Committees of Conference.

He was the Secretary of the Jubilee Committee and was mainly responsible for the very successful working of the Jubilee Programme.



Mr. Verney G. B. Perera

# CONFERENCE APPOINTMENTS — 1964

## *President of Conference*

Rev. Fred S. de Silva, M.A., B.D.,  
"Clough House", Colombo 3.  
Tel: 4599.

## *Vice-President of Conference*

Mr. H. Watson Peiris, O.B.E.,  
"Svasti", 33, Bagatelle Road,  
Colombo 3. Tel: 88218.

## *Secretary of Conference*

Rev. S. B. Saravanamuthu, B.D.,  
149, Pickerings Road,  
Colombo 13. Tel: 79665.

## *Secretary for Finance*

Mr. M. Arthur Fernando  
Methodist Headquarters,  
Colombo 3. Tel: 4599.

## *Assistant Secretaries of Conference*

Rev. S. K. Perera, B.D.,  
10, 1st Chapel Lane,  
Colombo 6. Tel: 85970.

## *Women's Work Secretary*

Sister Malar Chinniah,  
Methodist Church,  
Muttur, E.P.

Mr. Verney G. B. Perera,  
96, St. Michael's Road,  
Colombo 3. Tel: 2075.

## *Secretary for Property*

Rev. W. D. Jayasinghe,  
Wesley Manse,  
Minuwangoda.

## Chairmen of Districts

### *Northern District*

Rev. Daniel T. Niles, D.D., D.Th.,  
"Mercymere", Valalai,  
Atchuvvely, Jaffna.

### *Central District*

Rev. P. Basil Rajasingam, B.D.,  
91/1, Siri Dhamma Mawatta,  
Colombo 10. Tel: 9715.

### *Southern District*

Rev. G. Denzil de Silva, B.D.,  
Charles Place,  
Moratuwa, Tel:303.

## Treasurers

### *Central Stipends' Fund*

— Mr. E. A. de Silva

### *Ministers' Retirement Fund*

— Mr. E. W. Fernando

### *Annuitant Fund*

— Mr. A. J. M. de Mell

### *Orphans' Fund*

— Mr. A. G. Gunaratnam

### *Youth Department*

— Mr. A. J. M. de Mell

— Mrs. A. J. L. de Mel

— Mr. James T. Bernard.

## Statutory Committees

### STANDING COMMITTEE

President of Conference  
Secretary of Conference  
Three District Chairmen  
Rev. S. K. Perera  
Rev. G. B. Jackson  
Rev. David K. Wilson  
Rev. Harry L. Fernando  
Rev. George E. Good  
Rev. Moses A. Ratnarajah

Mr. H. Watson Peiris  
Secretary for Finance  
Women's Work Secretary  
Mr. F. V. H. La Brooy  
Mr. V. G. B. Perera  
Mr. V. T. Thamotheram  
Mr. B. E. Fernando  
Mr. C. B. Casinader  
Prof. A. A. Hoover  
Mr. A. J. L. de Mel

Convenor — Secretary of Conference

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

President of Conference  
 Secretary of Conference  
 Three District Chairmen  
 Rev. S. M. Jacob  
 Rev. P. E. Fernando

Secretary for Finance  
 Women's Work Secretary  
 Mr. H. Watson Peiris  
 Mr. B. E. Fernando  
 Mr. V. G. B. Perera  
 Mr. F. V. H. La Brooy  
 Mr. S. A. Selvanayagam

*Convenor* — Secretary for Finance

## PROPERTY COMMITTEE

President of Conference  
 Secretary of Conference  
 Three District Chairmen  
 Secretary for Property  
 Rev. M. S. Fernando  
 Rev. W. A. Rajadurai  
 Rev. M. A. Ratnarajah

Mr. H. Watson Peiris  
 Mr. F. V. H. La Brooy  
 Mr. V. T. Thamotheram  
 Mr. V. G. B. Perera  
 Mr. B. E. Fernando  
 Mr. H. R. Fernando  
 Mr. W. N. S. Samuel  
 Mr. C. B. Casinader  
 Mr. J. O. Mendis

*Convenor* — Secretary for Property

## STATIONING COMMITTEE

President of Conference  
 Secretary of Conference  
 Three District Chairmen  
 Rev. S. K. Perera  
 Rev. D. K. Wilson  
 Rev. P. E. Fernando  
 Rev. Harry L. Fernando

Mr. H. Watson Peiris  
 Mr. V. G. B. Perera  
 Mr. C. B. Casinader  
 Mr. W. N. S. Samuel  
 Sister Malar Chinniah  
 Mrs. Phoebe Jayewickreme  
 One Circuit Steward from each District.

*Convenor* — Secretary of Conference

## TRAINING COMMITTEE

President of Conference  
 Rev. G. B. Jackson  
 Rev. L. A. de Silva  
 Rev. L. V. Salgadoe  
 Rev. G. C. Jackson  
 Rev. D. K. Wilson  
 Rev. M. A. Ratnarajah  
 Rev. S. M. Jacob

Mr. R. E. J. A. Sethukavalar  
 Mr. A. P. Samarajiwa  
 Mrs. L. G. Loos  
 Mr. R. J. Fernando  
 Mr. J. O. Mendis  
 Sister Malar Chinniah

*Convenor* — Rev. S. M. Jacob

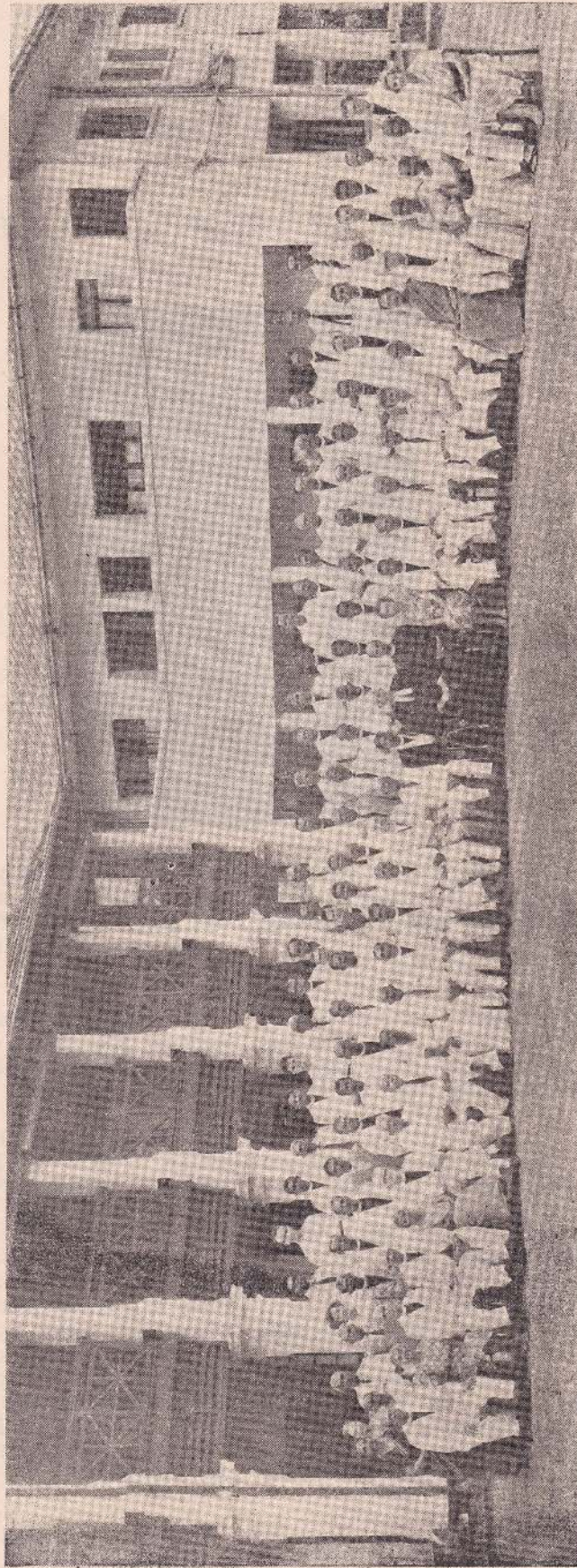
## METHODIST TRUST ASSOCIATION

President of Conference  
 Secretary of Conference  
 Three District Chairmen

Mr. H. Watson Peiris  
 Mr. F. V. H. La Brooy  
 Mr. V. T. Thamotheram  
 Mr. H. R. Fernando  
 Mr. D. F. de Silva



**MEMBERS  
OF  
FIRST CEYLON METHODIST CONFERENCE**

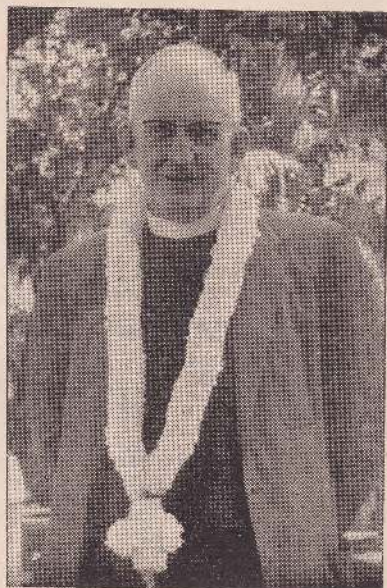


# Sermon Preached on Conference Sunday

by

The REV. DR. FREDERIC GREEVES

*The President of the British Conference*



*I Corinthians 14, 12: You are, I know, eager for gifts of the Spirit; then aspire above all to excell in those which build up the church.*

This letter was one of the first ever written to a Christian Church. St. Paul knew that the Christians to whom he wrote were eager for the gifts of the Spirit. They knew that it was the Holy Spirit who had brought the Church into existence and that they needed His gifts.

I know that I am now speaking to Christians who are also eager for His gifts. And the Word of God comes to us all that among all the many gifts of the Spirit—about which the Bible speaks—we should seek most of all those that build up the Church.

'The Church' means Christian people. The Church is not a building, made of bricks and stones; it is made of men and women and boys and girls. Just as a Church building needs to be cared for and improved, so the real Church needs to be renewed and built up. This was a truth very dear to the

heart of John Wesley who, in very many ways sought to fashion the life of the Methodist people so that they could "be built up in our most holy faith"—to quote his own words.

The New Testament shows us many different gifts which help to build up the Church. I wish to mention three which are specially important.

1. First there is **THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH CAN ENABLE US TO HEAR AND UNDERSTAND GOD'S WORD.**

This means that we must be a Church which closely attends to the Bible. The Bible is a book about the people of God, which was written by the people of God for the people of God. Church and Bible belong together. I was delighted to hear that throughout this country Methodists are going to study the Epistle to the Romans. This will not be an easy task, but it will be very rewarding. We must seek first to

understand what God had to say long ago to the Church in Corinth, in Ephesus and so on. And then we must seek to understand what He says THROUGH that word to us in Ceylon or in England today. In the British Methodist Church, one of the more encouraging things is that once again people are beginning to meet in small groups or classes to help each other to understand the meaning of the Bible for their lives today. In doing this we depend upon the work of the Holy Spirit who is called the Divine Interpreter.

2. Secondly, we need the gift of FELLOWSHIP. This word is one that Methodists use a great deal. We may be thankful for any Fellowship we have enjoyed. But sometimes we are too easily satisfied. If we do not actually quarrel, if we get on well with people who have the same ideas as ourselves we say we have 'fellowship'. But you do not need to be Christians to have good comradeship. Fellowship in the New Testament is something much more wonderful.

How was it that the early Church grew so quickly? It was because people could see something quite new happening. They could see Jews and Gentiles, free men and slaves, men and women—people separated by all kinds of barriers—being made one because they had the same Lord and were held together by the same Spirit.

I hope that in Ceylon you are not guilty of what we sometimes do in England: of making a joke of a row in a Church meeting. Nothing that the atheist or communist can do is so wicked as quarrels between Christians. For we have the same Lord; we share in the same Spirit. The Spirit is able to bind us together, not because we all think alike, not because we have the same ideas but simply because we are united in Him.

In England we are slowly beginning to find, as I hope you will, that this fellowship is possible between Christians of different denominations. We must find it also in our own Church. We need to strive for the gift of Fellowship.

3. There is no doubt what is the third gift we need. It is the one which Paul calls the greatest gift of all. It is LOVE.

The Church does not exist for itself, for its own members, but for all who are outside it. And it is brought into being in order that God's own love, shed abroad in our hearts, may reach other people.

A great Christian in my own country, Dr. John Baillie, once said that the trouble about the Church in our land is that it is better known for its faith than for its love. Is it possible that this is true for you also? Can it be that for 100 people in Colombo who know that Christians believe this and that, there is only one who knows that Christians love them? Do they know that we love them, not because they are good, not because we like them, not because we agree with them, not because they ask us to love them...but simply because we DO love them?

This is a supernatural love. Not just the love we all have for some people, but the love of Jesus which goes out to the undeserving and the ungrateful. We can only have this love if we know that He first loved us. This is the gift of the Spirit.

What a wonderful thing it would be if, all over the world, Christians were known by their neighbours as the people who care for others!

These, then, are some of the gifts of the Spirit. We must be eager for them; we must aspire—strive—for them. That means we must work hard at prayer and bible study; we must strive against the temptations which hinder us from receiving the gifts. But we must remember that they ARE gifts. They are given freely; we do not need to beg the Holy Spirit to help us, as though He were unwilling. He is waiting to give us these gifts, so that the Methodist Church in Ceylon, or in Great Britain—the Church in every place may be built up by Him.

# INAUGURAL DISTRICT SYNODS

## CHAIRMEN'S ADDRESSES

(1)

### *Northern District*



**Rev. Dr. D. T. Niles**

THE feast of the Passover was a feast of freedom. It commemorated the day when Israel, as a people and as a Church, were delivered from bondage to Egypt. God had said to Moses, "Go unto Pharaoh and say to him Thus saith the Lord, the God of the Hebrews—Let my people go that they may serve me". (Ex. 9. 1.) It was this command which Moses had obeyed, and it was to this command that the Pharaoh had ultimately yielded. That was the beginning.

Nearly two thousand years afterwards, we have the story of Jesus coming to participate in the celebration of the Passover. He went to the temple which was the centre of His people's life; and there found instead of freedom, bondage. Instead of being free to serve God, He found the people enmeshed in a religious system which had itself come to terms with the traffic of secular life. "My house is a house of prayer", He cried out, "but you have made it a den of thieves". (Matt. 21. 13) His act in cleaning out the temple courts was simply the prelude to His final act whereby, by His own death on Passover day, He destroyed

the temple with its ritual of sacrifices and replaced it with the sanctuary of His own body. (John 2. 21.) Of this body we are members.

A hundred and fifty years after the first Methodist Missionaries came to Ceylon, we are celebrating autonomy. In so doing, we cannot escape the deeper implications of what freedom means to a Church. The Church never does belong to its people; they themselves belong to the Lord of the Church, so that there is not the slightest resemblance between a nation finding freedom from a Colonial master and a Church in one land finding freedom from a Church in another. To a Church, freedom means that it has now accepted full responsibility for the ordering of its own life, and therefore stands before its Lord without the possibility of any kind of alibi.

What does it mean to accept that it is now our responsibility to be "in Christ in Lanka"? God's way of establishing His Kingdom, Jesus said, was similar to that of a woman who took leaven and mixed it in the meal. (Matt. 13. 33). It is not

difficult to see that this is precisely what God is doing with His Church in Ceylon. We are living at a time when in this country the Church is being destroyed as a communality and is finding its life as a community, a life to be lived within the wider community of the nation. However, this does not mean for the Church that it becomes undistinguishable. "A city set on a hill cannot be hid". (Matt. 5. 14). Where there was once a cross on a hill, there now stands a people who belong to Him Crucified. St. Paul, speaking to the Christians of his day, calls them, "those on whom the end of the ages has come". (1 Cor. 10.11). To them tomorrow has already happened. To belong to the Crucified is to stand on the other side of death, so that death and all that it stands for, its deprivation and its fear, are past. There can be no true discharge of the Church's responsibility in Ceylon for Ceylon, without the Church discovering how to live this life which belongs to tomorrow, now. It is this very challenge, which in God's mercy and wisdom, secular events are spelling out for us as a Church in Ceylon today. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it abides alone". (John 12. 24). For us, as a Church, Ceylon is the soil in which we must die.

It is inevitable that for us, in the North District of the Methodist Church, this day should have a peculiar significance. We were a Synod of our own for 130 years and now are a Synod again. But, in remembering this, we shall have lost true understanding of the moment in which we stand, should we forget that the years when we were one united Synod in Ceylon were a real preparation for our responsibilities now. In Ceylon we are one people and one nation, involved in one destiny and one history. On the day of Pentecost each people heard the Gospel in their own tongue, while those who spoke the Gospel were one people who spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2. 6). We are the North Synod of the Ceylon Conference.

The fact of freedom always spells out for the Church the theme of unity. This is because the Church is never free. It is His body, so that it is bound by the life He lives and the works in which He is engaged. Even in secular history, the nations have

ceased to be sovereign. The peoples of the world have increasingly to live a shared and common life. This experience in secular life is but an expression of the Lordship of Christ over the world, just as the unity of the Church is the expression of His Headship over the Church. It is not a simple coincidence that one of the first questions which we as an autonomous Methodist Church will have to face in the next years is the question of Church union.

The theme of unity, though, goes beyond the issue of Church union. It raises the whole question of the manner and form of the Christian community within the human community. As one turns to the political scene in Ceylon today, one finds the air filled with strident voices shouting that something or someone is in danger. Mr. Mettananda is crying out that Buddhism is in danger, Mr. Rajaratne thinks that the Sinhalese are in danger, Mr. Chelvanayagam argues that the Tamils are in danger, Mr. Philip Gunawardane and Mr. Pieter Keuneman say that the working classes are in danger, Mr. Shanmugadasan believes that revolution itself is in danger, while Mr. Dudley Senanayake tells us that in fact it is democracy which is in danger. In the midst of all this, our Prime Minister and her party would have us believe that nothing and no one is in danger as long as they hold the reins of government.

Why is it that danger signals and a false messianism are the major phenomena of the political scene in our country? Is it not because we are living in Ceylon today in the midst of an upheaval which is destroying all the established landmarks of social, political and religious life, so that everyone is filled with apprehension and anxiety; while those of every political party who seek power claim that they alone can ride the waves. But, should it be true that we who bear the name of Jesus are those to whom tomorrow has happened, we would rejoice with hope in the new day that is being born when the Gospel will have freer course in a society that has been shaken loose of its traditional cohesions. For those who are concerned purely with politics, the problem is not that their own political future depends on avoiding a settlement of the problems which provide the reason for their very existence, but that they are also unable to

discern the inner current which explains both the problems themselves and points the direction to their possible settlement. One of the costliest failures of the Church in Ceylon today has been its inability to make the Lord of history meaningful to the nation, apart from the fact that it has shown an equal inability to listen to the Lord of history concerning the things which He is saying about its own life.

An issue that is becoming increasingly important in discussion today in the West is the relation between the Church and the State. In the United States of America, the controversy turns on the meaning of state neutrality. In Catholic countries, the issue is concerning the scope and practice of religious liberty. On the continent of Europe, the problem has to be faced in terms of the relation between state Churches and free Churches in their respective countries as well as in the European Council of Churches. In Great Britain, this question is involved in Church Union discussions between the Church of England and the Methodist Church on the one hand and between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland on the other. It is an irony of history that, just at this time, one of the questions dominating the political and religious scene in Ceylon should be the form in which both the Buddhist and Hindu communities should receive state patronage. For the Church, it is an experience of real liberation to be set in a situation where it can neither dispense bread nor offer to people position in secular life, nor point to itself, as a protected community. It is written "Thou shalt worship the Lord Thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve". (Matt. 4. 10).

In this context, two footnotes can already be written. Christians in Ceylon are finding and experiencing a cordiality and friendship with men of other religions which they never had before—a cordiality devoid of suspicion, jealousy or fear. A Church clothed in weakness, like its Master, can do more to command the weakness of the Cross than a Church that is secularly strong. Secondly, in my own conversations with Roman Catholic leaders in this country, I have not found anywhere any sense of panic as a result of the sustained attack on their Church experienced under the form

of an attack on Catholic action. What seems to be actually happening is that many Buddhists are beginning to ask, "What is the source of strength of such a small community which needs to be attacked so violently?"

I have now got to the point where I can announce the Scripture which has controlled all that I have said so far. The Scripture is found in the 45th and 46th chapters of the Book of Isaiah:—

"I am the Lord and there is no other;  
I form light and create darkness,  
I make weal and create woe,  
I am the Lord, who do all these things". (Is. 45. 6-7).

"I am God, and there is no other,  
I am God, and there is none like Me;  
I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass;  
I have purposed, and I will do it".  
(Is. 46. 9-11).

What the prophet-poet is saying here is that the Creator God constantly remains in control. There may be chaos but the Spirit of God broods over it. There is darkness but it is darkness before the dawn. There will be woe but it is held within God's purposes. It may be that for years nothing seems to happen and nothing seems to come right, but all delay is still within the promise that what God has purposed will surely come to pass.

Nevertheless, right here where the word of God seems to quieten all anxiety, there is given also the word of ultimate warning. It can happen that, not through those who bear God's name but through others, God's purposes are fulfilled. It is to others that the word is spoken:

"I call you by your name,  
I surname you, though you do not know me,  
I am the Lord, and there is no other,  
Beside me there is no God". (Is. 45. 4-5).

It was the same warning which John the Baptist delivered when he said, "Out of stones, God can raise up children for Abraham". (Matt. 3. 9).

When Pandit Jawarharlal Nehru died, the Christian News Bulletin said that his life and service were a challenge to Christian faith. This is the exact opposite of the truth. It is men like Nehru who point to the greatness of our God whose grace is seen as it works through men who do not acknowledge His name. That they explain their own lives in other terms does not challenge the faith of the Christian. What is exposed is the failure of Christians so to communicate the faith that men see whom it is that they really serve and who it is to whom they really belong.

In the passage already quoted from Isaiah, the reason given for this way of God in the world is expressed with straight forward simplicity. It is, the prophet says,

"For the sake of my servant Jacob,  
And Israel my chosen". (Is. 45.4).

In its immediate context, the prophet's reference is to Cyrus through whom God will work to deliver His people from exile; but the insight to which the prophet gives expression is wider—ranging in its implications. It is because God maintains His Lordship over the world, that they who acknowledge Him are able to witness to Him as Lord. It is because the fulfilment of God's purposes in the world is not tied to the obedience of those who know and confess Him, that they are themselves not left at the mercy of their own works. It is because He remains Lord that they are able to point to Him without having to point to themselves also.

In the story of Jonah, we see how the disciple's disobedience caused distress and loss to those merchant-men in their ordinary course of business. A disobedient Church is a menace to the world. But, as Jonah's story points out, the world saves itself by casting the Church out and leaving it at the mercy of its Lord. But why must the Lord be so violent with Jonah? Is it not precisely because he is the bearer of the Gospel without which Niniveh will perish? "I only am God and there is no other". If that be true, then it is a truth which must be proclaimed and demonstrated, lest people lose their way in the worship of other gods. The loss of evan-

gelistic passion among Christians in Ceylon today is surely evidence both of the lack of conviction in the necessity of the Gospel of God in Christ for man's salvation, and of the lack of concern for men in their loss without Him. On a recovery of these in all our Churches everything else depends.

I do not know whether I have helped you to see what I have been seeking to convey. We must catch a vision of God in the greatness of His wisdom, the grandeur of His design, the universality of His purpose, the patience of His working and the freedom of His will. It is to this God that we must witness in life and service. We and our responsibilities must never occupy the centre of the stage. Only so shall we learn how to take our work seriously without taking ourselves seriously also.

May I now turn, in the last few minutes, to throw the spotlight on some immediate things which as a Church we must do if we are even to begin to be prepared for the tasks that lie ahead.

We need a new structure in our Church to express the nature of the Christian community as a pastoral community. We have grown a structure where members of the Christian Church do not mutually nurture one another, but have grown dependent on a paid pastoral ministry. The paid pastor rather must give time to train his people to be pastors one to another. "We are comforted together". (Rom. 1. 12). And this pastoral community needs to be effectively organized in terms of the fact that the Christian community today in Ceylon is a scattered community. By the very simple process of larger and larger segments of life becoming government controlled in our country and by the consequent effect of government transfers of personnel, there are Christians today in many a village and town in Ceylon where there were never Christians before. "The seed that is scattered", said Jesus, "are the children of the Kingdom". (Matt. 13. 38). Here is a new possibility hidden within a new source of weakness.

We also need a new strategy to give Christian people effective training to become Christianly involved in secular life.

God so loved the world, that is men and women in their several relationships in ordinary life, that He gave His Son to become part of this human history, so that those who believe in Him and become part of Him share the life He lives in the world. It is this life He lives which is eternal life. We have eternal life as we become part of that life in service and sacrifice. Otherwise we perish; and, like anything else that has perished, we become useless and have to be thrown away. (John 3. 16).

We need too a new discipline to keep open the channels of our renewal. It is increasingly true that God in Jesus Christ is not the determining reality in much of our home life. In our Churches, there are quarrels and rivalries which show contempt for the power of the Cross to forgive and reconcile. In public life, there is almost an utter inability to see current events in the light of the biblical revelation. Prayer life, in the case of so many, has become clogged with petitions concerning personal needs which Jesus said the Father, who sends the rain on the righteous and the unrighteous, will deal with anyhow. (Matt. 5. 45) Public worship is becoming less and less the central act of a Christian family, where every member of the family, feels obliged to be present, while participation in the Holy Communion is for many dislodged from the demand that they proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (1 Cor. 11. 26) Somehow the daily round of circuit and society life does not seem to meet

this situation. What more must we do? Does a solution lie in their being planted within the larger community in each place Christian cells, Christian Ashrams, Christian Communities which can demonstrate what needs to be done and how? I am myself convinced that a circuit life related to an itinerant ministry will not by itself do as the base for the kind of renewal that is needed.

A new structure, a new strategy, a new discipline,—but, undergirding them all, we need a new dedication. We need to give ourselves wholly to the tasks of our time and to Him who commands these tasks. Only weakness will result in having our emotions and longings marooned amidst our yesterdays. The madman of Gadara ran away from his responsibilities and lived in a graveyard. It was so much easier to live with the dead than with the living. Indeed, even when he was healed, he preferred to go with Jesus and devote himself to the religious life. Jesus rightly commanded him to go home, and to that secular life from which he had run away, which with its daily responsibilities still awaited him there. (Mk. 5. 1-20).

Here I must stop without attempting to round off what I have been trying to say. Indeed, no rounding off is possible, because it is not a question of what needs to be said but of what needs to be heard. "Can you not hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees". (2 Sam. 5. 24).

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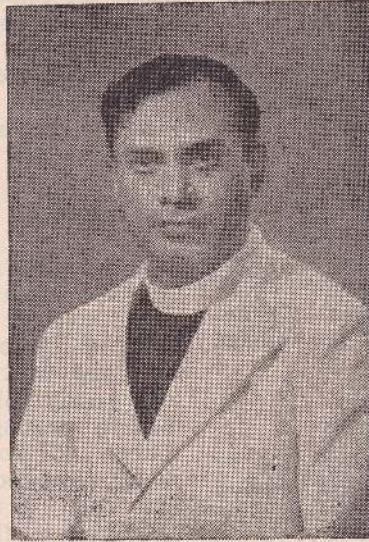
### SERMONS OF REV. G. E. GOOD

Early this year Rev. Good preached, to very large congregations, six Sermons on "Prayer". These were published in booklet form. The 1st edition of 750 was sold out so quickly that another 650 is now just off the press. Copies could be sent, while stocks last, on receipt of the cost—50 cts. plus postage 14 cents.

Another equally popular series preached by Rev. Good in June and July is entitled "The Characteristic Notes of Methodism". This booklet would be out shortly and would be available at the same price. B. E. Fernando, 32 Lauries Road, Colombo 4.



(2)

*Central District***Rev. P. B. Rajasingam, B.D.**

I am deeply conscious of my own unworthiness and insufficiency to fulfil that wider ministry to which the Church has appointed me, but I believe the Lord who has called me to be His servant will sustain and guide me. May I seek your prayers and whole-hearted co-operation to render the service which the Master and the Church expect of me.

We enter upon a new era in the life of our Church. God grant that we do so with faith and courage ever remembering that "We are not sufficient of ourselves but our sufficiency is of God." "Lo I am with you all the days" is the sure and certain promise of our Risen and Living Lord as we face a fresh chapter in our history.

In this day of opportunity and challenge we would do well to bear in mind the words of St. Paul to the Church at Corinth. "A great door and effectual is opened to me." Instead of therefore, bemoaning the fact that the good old days are past, or crying over whatever privileges we may have lost, let us grasp the new opportunities and avenues that God has opened to us to fulfil His will and purpose in New Lanka. St. Paul goes on to say in the same verse, "and there are many adversaries." Yes, there may be difficulties, and there may be even opposition; but the Church has always

been known for its suffering, and perhaps it is in that situation we shall discover the greatest opportunity for service and witness.

**The Call to Penitence**

If the Church is to effectively make that witness the first requisite is that our lives and that of the whole Church be quickened and revived by the Holy Spirit of God. There are many things in the life of our Church for which we may be truly grateful to God, but may He save us from the sin of complacency and self satisfaction. Let us not deceive ourselves that all is well. We have to constantly battle against indifference and luke-warmness which rather than persecution and opposition are the greatest enemies of the Church. We have to guard against the Spirit which says "I am rich and have need of nothing." It is only as we are penitent and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, we shall receive His mercy and power. In His message to the seven Churches in Asia the Risen Christ over and over again urges them to repent.

It has been said "The beginning of all true amendment is to see ourselves as we are"—Repentance helps us to do that very thing, for through repentance we see Christ in all His holiness and ourselves in our sin.

A penitent Church will continually depend on the Lord of the Church for its strength and sustenance. A penitent Church will be in constant communion with the Lord ever growing in His love and knowledge. A penitent Church because it has experienced the forgiving grace of God will be a home for every believer transcending all local and racial differences.

A penitent Church can never be a static Church for it will be prepared to be guided by the Holy Spirit. While it treasures its past traditions and heritage, it is never proud to make new ventures and experiments in the faith." A penitent Church will in short be filled with all the fullness of Christ.

### The Call to Service

We receive the fullness of Christ not for our-selves alone, for the blessings of God in Christ can never be enjoyed selfishly. As we receive them with one hand, we are committed with the other hand to share them with others. We have often failed to realize this and have been a community that has to a large extent lived to itself. We have built a wall around ourselves and there has been hardly a point of contact between us within the wall and the vast number of our countrymen without—so much so that we have been considered to be aliens and foreigners in our own land.

We have not confronted the world, and have not become sufficiently involved in the need and suffering, the trial and travail of our fellowmen. A Church that lives to itself, will sooner or later be a dead Church—a Church that will become extinct. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it" is the warning of our Master.

The Lord has called the Church into being not that it might strive for its own safety but for the World's salvation. We are called to be sent out. "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you" says our Lord. We are sent forth to be heralds or evangelists of the "Good News" of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus.

Evangelism is often thought to be part of the Church's mission or task along with

worship, social action or healing but Biblical theology has forced us to change our views on this wrong concept. We are now seeing the Church as not having a mission, but actually being a mission. The only reason for the existence of the Church is, that it might be the instrument of God for the salvation of the world—Evangelism therefore becomes the concern and the God-given task of the whole Church.

### The Individual Witness

If Evangelism be the task of the whole Church it means you and I and every member is involved in it. We are individually called to make our Christian Witness by word and deed. In the early Church, there were apostles like Peter and Paul who went forth as messengers of the gospel hither and thither and brought men and women to a saving experience of salvation; but over and over again we read of Churches that came into being by the Witness of ordinary men and women engaged in the normal tasks of life. The Church in Rome, in Colosse and in Great Britain were some such Churches. As we read our Jubilee Souvenir we discover this to be true of our land too. May I remind you of three instances mentioned in it—"At Wattegedera in the Minuwangoda Society, Methodism started with the Witness of a young Methodist woman from Kimbulapitiya, married to Buddhist at Wattegedera, leading to his conversion and that of the members of his family."

"In those early days, laymen played an important part and were responsible for the building of the Methodist Circuit in Kandy."

"The first Divine Service in Hatton was conducted in the Railway waiting room in the year 1884 by the Police Magistrate—Mr. John Northmore. This gentleman, together with the Station Master Mr. William Pate, was responsible for the beginning of Christian Worship in Hatton."

I might also relate the story of the beginnings of our work in a remote village in the North Western Province.

About 40 years ago, M. D. Aron, a Methodist from Kurana went to the distant village of Heenpannawa in what was an undeveloped area to better his conditions. Though

a poor man himself, he gifted to the Church an acre of land he had acquired, and with his own effort built a place of worship. It was only a humble structure with mud walls and a cadjan roof, but for a period of sixteen years it stood as a silent Witness to our faith in a predominantly non-Christian area. Our Church in that village came into being through the life, witness and labour of this brother.

If the Church of our time has men and women of such faith and devotion, vision and courage we can indeed look forward to a glorious future.

Whatever the Christian is, under whatever circumstances the call of the Master is—"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

### The Corporate Witness

While individual witness is a necessity, the whole Church, the whole community of believers as a corporate body must make witness to the saving act of God in Christ Jesus, in its life of fellowship and service. In an article I recently read on The Christian Mission the writer says, "God acts in and through community—The restoration of community is the whole plan of the Biblical drama of salvation. To be the reconciling fellowship, the Church must demonstrate the reality of the reconciliation, the actuality of the incarnation in flesh and blood situations."

In other words it would not do for the Christian to take a balcony view of life, for he is not a spectator from the balcony but is involved in the warfare of life. The Christian must be the salt of the Earth,

saving the community from corruption, preserving it in righteousness and giving it true character and life.

William Barclay in his book "Turning to God", speaking of the difference that Christ makes in the lives of men and women says—"The difference must be expressed not in any increasing detachment from life, but in an increasing involvement, and identification with life. The unconverted man may remain comfortably detached, and may leave the work to others; but the converted man will know that the very fact that he is a Christian necessarily involves Him in politics, in local government, in his trade union or professional association."

The Gospel which the Church has to proclaim, the salvation that God calls us to share has to do with the total being of man. Christian salvation is not merely the salvation of a man's soul but that of his total personality, and the total life of the community he is called to live in. That was the salvation that the Master offered. It is to fulfill that total ministry, He sent out the twelve and seventy disciples. That is the task He has committed to the Church today. Evangelism is really to proclaim the Lordship of Christ over all things—in our individual life, in the life of the Church in the life of our nation and country. May He give us Divine Grace and Strength to proclaim that Gospel throughout our land and bring all men in obedience to Him.

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church, and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever, Amen."

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### VICE-PRESIDENT DESIGNATE OF CEYLON CONFERENCE—1965

Mr. F. V. H. LaBrooy was appointed Vice-President designate of the Ceylon Methodist Conference for 1965.

Mr. LaBrooy has been the Circuit Steward of Hatton for many years and is a member of the Standing, Finance, and Property Committees of Conference and the Secretary of the Methodist Trust Association of Ceylon.

He is also the President of the Wesley College Welfare Board and Vice-President of Wesley College Old Boys' Union.

We offer him our heartiest congratulations.

*Southern District*

**Rev. G. Denzil de Silva, B.D.**

IN the history of the peoples and races of this world, one of the most inspiring and spectacular records is the march of the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt to freedom and nation-hood in the Promised Land. For nearly four hundred years they suffered as slaves under the Pharaohes of Egypt. At last the hour struck for them and the summons came when God sent Moses as their deliverer. Four hundred years of life in Egypt was sufficient to make a people lose their racial identity and make them become part and parcel of the land in which they dwelt. However, when the call came they rooted themselves out of all their holdings and marched out of the land of bondage as a free people.

The march of the Israelites to their promised land was through difficult country—in the face of many barriers and opposition. They faced their first great barrier when they reached the borders of the Red Sea. Behind them was the Egyptian Army pursuing them and in front of them was the impassable sea. At this point God intervened and spoke to the people through Moses saying—"Tell the people of Israel to go forward." They rose and went forward and the sea became a high-way into freedom and into the future.

#### **Marching Forward**

Every march forward is a difficult undertaking. In the first place it is difficult to tear up ourselves from the situations and conditions of life we have been used to

live in. In the second place it is difficult because the beyond—the future, is uncertain ground to travel in, and planning for the future is never easy. But, the people of Israel obeyed and marched forward into the unknown future; and their story tells us how stage by stage the future opened out to them under the hand of God. The great truth that emerges from the history of the people of Israel is that the future belongs to God—it is the territory in which he operates because he is the Lord of all history. He makes His history and we become part of that process as we obey Him.

We have already reminded ourselves these past days that Methodism in Ceylon has reached an important stage in its life in Lanka. At this juncture, God's word to us is the word he gave to Israel—"Tell the Methodist people to go forward."

Our forward march is into a new world and a new Lanka. Science and technology are building up a new and expanding universe. Sweeping changes are taking place in the lives of all the inhabitants of this world. In our Lanka of today as in the world at large, great changes are taking place in the mental, moral, social, political, economic and religious life of our people. It is in the face of such changes that our Church is summoned to go forward. If we are marching to gain a promised land, we cannot ignore nor dismiss these changes that are taking place all around us today. We have no Mission in our land unless we see

our Mission in and through them. Our biggest problem today is to know how we are to proclaim God's Unchanging Word in a changing Lanka. This is not what we can do, but what God promises to do with us as we go forward into the future

**Our District**—The Southern District extends from the N.W.P. to Tangalle. We comprise 11 Circuits with a community of 11,575 members, 43 Sunday Schools, 27 Women's Fellowships, 38 Wesley Guilds, 138 Local Preachers, 183 Class Leaders, 18 Evangelists and Deaconesses, 2 Sisters, and 19 Ministers. The N.W.P., Matara-Tangalle and Minuwangoda Circuits are Home Mission fields. We will have to ask ourselves how fruitfully these various institutions of our Church and the great army of workers are doing God's Work in this District. We shall have to think seriously what aspects of our work need to change, and what new tasks we need to undertake in the new situations we will find ourselves in.

**Primary Concerns**—We need to remind ourselves that our primary task as a Church is the proclamation of the Good News of God and not the setting up of a great big Methodist Church in Ceylon. Autonomy is not a status conferred upon us but a serious call to responsible Christian living. As a people of God we are responsible to God for the rest of our fellowmen in this land. What then is our task? In the first place we are called to *demonstrate "the nature of the coming Kingdom"*. God's Kingdom is not a theory but a stupendous experience. You remember the words of Jesus—He said, 'The Kingdom of God is come; enter into the Kingdom of God; the Kingdom of God is within you.' The Kingdom of God is dynamic living. As a people of God we have to demonstrate through our lives the truths and values of this Kingdom and not merely try to preach them.

We have to so live as to make the Kingdom of God understandable and acceptable by those who have not yet accepted His Kingdom. We have to show forth the relevance of this Kingdom to life today over against the Kingdoms of this world. Mere theorising and argument is not going to bring God's Kingdom in this land. It has

to be lived out that its power may be made manifest in the different spheres of life. How we are going to do this will engage our attention in the coming days.

Secondly, we have also to *show forth the "Character of the Coming King."* When the first Disciples went out into the world to preach the Gospel they preached 'Christ crucified and risen.' It was the person of the Living Christ that they preached. Here again it is the Living Christ that we have to proclaim. There is a tendency to-day to establish Christianity without Christ. Buddhism can exist without a living Buddha, but can there really be Christianity without the Living Christ? Jesus said "Apart from me you can do nothing; I am with you always; Abide in me, and I in you." The real glory and the strength of the Church is in the real presence of the living Christ, and it is in this that Christianity is marked out from other religions. We have to ask ourselves if the reality of His livingness has been lost in our organisational and other activities of Church life. It is not into an institution that we have to bring ourselves and our fellowmen, but to Christ the Living Head.

The evangelistic task of the Church is none other than this twofold responsibility that is laid upon us. Let us stop talking about converting people; for, there can be no conversion without conviction. Lanka is waiting to be convinced about Christ. Our task is to help her into this conviction, and the conversion is what the Lord Himself will do. It is because of our failure to realise this truth that evangelism has come to an almost dead stop, and we ourselves have grown weary and disappointed.

**Other Considerations**—If our task in Lanka is to be fruitful, we have also to give careful thought to the following matters that confront us.

(1) Lanka is on the march to nationhood. Efforts to quicken the soul of the nation are seen on all sides. The religious and the cultural revival that is taking place cannot be ignored or dismissed by us as of no importance. More and more the life of this nation will be drawn out on these patterns. This is a challenge to us to interpret our faith in

thought-patterns that will be more readily understood by our fellowmen; and the expression of our faith in worship that will more readily appeal to the soul of our people. The need to indigenize will be more increasingly felt by the whole Church in our land. While doing this we must not betray our fundamental beliefs nor destroy what is unique in Christianity.

(2) Our life in Lanka as the people of God should not drive our fellowmen to think of us as aliens in this land; nor should we as a 'peculiar people' seek to withdraw ourselves from the common life of the nation in order to preserve our identity or our distinctiveness. Like the Incarnation of our Lord, who threw Himself into the common life of all mankind, we are called to identify ourselves with the people of our country more closely. The leaven can never hope to leaven the lump without losing itself within the lump. We are called not to self-preservation but to self-giving. It is within the life of this nation that we are called to live and work for the Kingdom of God. We shall have to find out how we can get into closer identity with our nation, and how best we can give of ourselves for our nation.

(3) The Conference has accepted and approved the plans drawn up for the Stewardship Campaign to be launched next year. The remaining months of this year will be a time of preparation. It is hoped that all the Circuits of our District will make necessary preparations to launch this important campaign. Christian Stewardship will be a powerful means of revitalising the Church and

make it productive of what our Lord willed when He called the Church into being.

(4) The revised scheme for Church Union will be coming before us next year when the Conference has received it. If the Union of Churches in Lanka is the will of our Lord, then it is our sacred duty to see that all obstacles to union are removed and the way is paved for a union that will be the glory of the Church and the good of Lanka. In all our Societies and Circuits every effort should be made to provide all our people with every opportunity to study and understand the proposals as set out in the scheme so that when the time comes for our decision our people will be able to vote intelligently and with conviction.

**Conclusion**—As we plan and workout our plans as a District or as Circuits, let us not think only in terms of our own District or our own Circuit. Let us remind ourselves that we are only a part of the whole Church in Lanka, and bear in our minds and our hearts the interest of the whole Church.

The future into which we are stepping may look confused, bleak and difficult, but let us not forget that our Lord who is the Lord of History is there in the happenings that we will confront, and will bring out and fulfil His designs if we be obedient to Him. Let His promise to us fill us with such hope as will nerve us to take up our task in our land—"Fear not little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

*(Summarised from the Address given in Sinhala)*

#### THE THREE DISTRICTS

	Ministers in active service	Other fulltime workers in active service	Churches	Full Members	Methodist Community	Circuits
NORTHERN ..	13	23	33	2976	5800	7
CENTRAL ..	20	18	34	4190	7297	10
SOUTHERN ..	16	19	51	5824	11579	11
	49	60	118	12990	24676	28

# NEWS ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS

## PERSONAL

**Mr. Ranjit Fernando**, youngest son of the late Mr. J. D. Fernando and of Mrs. Fernando of Moratumulla, Moratuwa, has been successful in the M.B.B.S. Examination.

**Mr. Harvard Fernando**, B.A., of Moratuwa, has been appointed Principal of Sinhala Maha Vidyalaya, Jaffna.

**Mr. Ashley C. P. Fernando**, B.Sc., Staff Trainee of the Ceylon Tyre Corporation left for the U.S.S.R. for further training. He is a son of Mr. & Mrs. H. P. Collin Fernando of "Jaselda", Rawatawatte, Moratuwa.

**Mr. Tilney L. Peiris**, Examiner of Motor Vehicles, Bandarawela, has been transferred to Colombo.

**Mr. M. E. Piyasena** has been promoted to Special Grade and appointed Principal, Koslanda Maha Vidyalaya, in the Uva Province.

**Mr. Ivor J. Fernando** of Kehelwatte, Panadura has taken up duties as Sub-Collector and Asst. Preventive officer of H. M. Customs, Point Pedro.

**Mrs. George Good** and daughter **Joan**, left for Ireland on 29th June.

**Miss Barbara Atkins** left on furlough on 24th June.

**Rev. Lewis Julian** left on furlough in August.

## BIRTHS

**Peiris.** To Ninette, wife of Mr. Tilney Peiris, Examiner of Motor Vehicles, Colombo, the gift of a son on 14th July 1964.

**Fonseka.** To Priya, wife of Mr. Ashley B. Fonseka, of Galamuduna Group, Dolosbage, the gift of a daughter on 24th August 1964.

**Bhareti.** To Dilanganie and Keerthi Bhareti, of Dharmaratne Avenue, Moratuwa, the gift of a daughter on 19th August 1964.

## BAPTISMS

**Fernando.** Subhashana Heshanta, infant son of Mr. & Mrs. Harold A. Fernando, of Moratumulla, at the Methodist Church, Moratumulla, on 19th April 1964 by Rev. L. Victor Salgadoe.

**Fernando.** Chatura Piyawanth, infant son of Peter and Chandrika Fernando, of Moratumulla, Moratuwa, at the Methodist Church, Moratumulla, on 16th August 1964 by Rev. D. W. Peiris.

## ENGAGEMENTS

**Nonis—De Soysa.** The engagement is announced of Harilal, son of Mr. & Mrs. P. H. Nonis of Kohuwela, Nugegoda to Nilanthi, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. T. C. A. de Soysa of 25/6, Barnes Place, Colombo 7.

**Boteju—Hettiaratchi.** The engagement is announced and the marriage will take place shortly of Geoffrey, son of the late Mr. P. J. N. Boteju and of Mrs. Boteju of Dehiwela to Charlotte daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert Hettiaratchi of Talangama, North.

## WEDDING

**Fernando—De Silva.** The marriage of Mr. Quinton Ferdinando of Messrs. Marine Services Co., and Miss Viola de Silva of Wennappuwa took place at the Methodist Church, Kollupitiya on 19th August.

Revds. Fred S. de Silva, G. Denzil de Silva, Benson Manukulasuriya and Kenneth Fernando (Anglican) officiated.

## SILVER WEDDING

**Perera.** Mr. & Mrs. Verney G. B. Perera celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of their marriage, on 29th July 1964, with a Service of Thanksgiving, at the Kollupitiya Church, conducted by Revds. Fred S. de Silva, George E. Good, Samuel B. Saravanamuthu, S. George Mendis, P. Basil Rajasingam, Samuel L. B. Fernando, Somasiri K. Perera and George S. Weerasooriya.

## DEATH

**Fernando.** The death occurred on 9th August of Ranjith (Works Engineer Steuart Engineers Ltd., Colombo) only son of Mr. & Mrs. L. J. Shelton Fernando of 'White-hall', Katana.

The funeral took place on the following day

Revds. G. Denzil de Silva, David F. Peiris, M. S. Fernando and L. V. Salgadoe officiated.

## IN MEMORIAM

**De Silva.** In ever-treasured memory of Muhandiram Justin C. G. de Silva.

Called to rest on July, 15th, 1948.

*"Had you been with me, when my life is waning  
To comfort and cheer me, in life's eventide  
Our sorrows and joys and our work and play recalling  
Now we are apart, may death unite us soon."*

**Wickramaratne.** In memory of John Peter de Silva Wickramaratne, J.P.

Born—27th February 1864  
Called to rest—1st July 1958.

**De Silva.** In loving memory of Sarah Maria (Lizzie) of Idama, Moratuwa.

Called Home on September 6, 1955.

*"In Christ she lived in deeds of love  
In Christ she dwells in peace above".*

(Remembered by her loved ones).

**Fernando.** In ever-loving and treasured memory of our loved one Frederick Stanley

Called Home on 29th July 1957.

*"Sweeter far Thy face to see  
And in Thy presence rest."*

(Fondly remembered by his wife and son).



## JUBILEE COLLECTIONS

Collection at Galle Services .. .. .	Rs. 1,408 56
Special donation by Mrs. A. S. Goonewardene ..	,, 1,000 00
	<u>*Rs. 2,408 56</u>

\* This collection is a thank offering to the Methodist Missionary Society.

### Collection on Conference Sunday for Conference Funds:

Kollupitiya .. .. .	Rs. 579 42
Pettah .. .. .	,, 89 37
Moratumulla .. .. .	,, 236 82
Kurana .. .. .	,, 108 26
Special donation by Mrs. A. S. Goonewardene ..	,, 1,000 00
	<u>Rs. 2,013 87</u>

### Jubilee Thankofferings (Polythene Bags) from Circuits.

Colombo South .. .. .	Rs. 7,068 56	
Dehiwela-Mount Lavinia .. .. .	,, 1,354 55	
Rawatawatte .. .. .	,, 1,200 40	
Jampettah .. .. .	,, 1,187 93	
Panadura .. .. .	,, 1,124 40	
Kandy .. .. .	,, 1,046 07	
Moratumulla .. .. .	,, 1,032 00	
Batticaloa .. .. .	,, 970 55	
Colombo City Mission .. .. .	,, 887 51	
Kalmunai Kallar .. .. .	,, 875 00	
Jaffna .. .. .	,, 704 27	
Matara Tangalle .. .. .	,, 686 26	
Uva .. .. .	,, 614 79	
Kurana .. .. .	,, 557 49	
Galle .. .. .	,, 406 54	
Point Pedro .. .. .	,, 400 00	
Kalutara Estates .. .. .	,, 431 23	
Trincomallee .. .. .	,, 323 25	
Seeduwa .. .. .	,, 351 68	
Mannar-Murungan .. .. .	,, 217 00	
Minuwangoda .. .. .	,, 214 81	
N. W. P. .. .. .	,, 209 82	
Gal Oya .. .. .	,, 174 00	
Mutwal .. .. .	,, 150 00	
Kalutara .. .. .	,, 101 75	
Tirukovil .. .. .	,, 150 00	
Katana .. .. .	,, 84 00	
Muttur .. .. .	,, 46 52	
Hatton .. .. .	,, 372 31	Rs. 22,942 69

Donations sent to Headquarters ..

334 57

Rs. 23,277 26

### Special.

Mr. M. Ruskin Fernando for making film Rs. 1,500/-

After meeting the Jubilee expenses the balance will be paid to the Colombo City Mission Building Scheme.



## BADGE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT

(In view of the great interest evinced in this Badge, this detailed note of what the Badge portrays is published).

THE Badge is a cruciform device, measuring  $5\frac{1}{10}$ " long and  $4\frac{7}{10}$ " wide on which is placed centrally a large medallion  $3\frac{3}{10}$ " in diameter. The central feature of the medallion is a gilt profile of John Wesley worked in bas-relief on a rough surface, the figure being within a circle  $1\frac{2}{3}$ " in diameter. Around this central circle is a narrow silver panel wherein is engraved the words—BELIEVE LOVE OBEY—being words which are found on the personal Seal of John Wesley, sum up admirably the injunction to every Christian and form the core of the teaching and preaching of John Wesley. Around that silver panel is a larger circular serrated gilt space in the centre of which is placed three separated silver panels, all together forming a full circle in each of which panels are engraved the words, in English, in Sinhala and in Tamil—THE METHODIST CONFERENCE—The outer edging of the previously mentioned serrated gilt surface is a silver circle around which a gilt circle is the terminating circle of the medallion; the medallion itself being raised in the centre to give it a convex character, thereby emphasising the profile of the head placed in the centre.

The limbs of the cross left uncovered by the medallion are black-enamelled with gilt edging. The topmost limb has the cockle shell, which forms part of the family emblem of the Wesleys and is now the universal emblem of Methodism. On the left limb of the cross is a small silver circle in which is engraved—1814—on the right limb is similarly engraved—1964—

Running across the foot of the cross is a wavy silver panel, red-enamelled containing the words — VICE-PRESIDENT — embossed thereon. That panel is given the appear-

ance of being supported by two laureate leaves which also support the bottom of the medallion and terminate at the two side limbs of the cross. The two leaves are green-enamelled.

Underneath the panel containing the words—VICE PRESIDENT—is another panel across the bottom limb of the cross, left in silver with the word—CEYLON—engraved thereon.

The top limb of the cross contains a silver ring through which is passed a  $1\frac{2}{3}$ " wide, maroon velvet ribbon for suspending the emblem round the neck of the wearer.

The entire device is made of the best rupee silver and the central figure is intentionally gilt, with the relevant words in silver panels on the background of a roughened surface that is gilt, so that the alternation in colour of silver-gilt and silver brings out prominently the significant device of the emblem: viz. the head of John Wesley, the circle containing the words—BELIEVE LOVE OBEY; the outer circle containing the words—THE METHODIST CONFERENCE— with the words—VICE-PRESIDENT—standing out on a red background and the word—CEYLON—underneath the medallion. Again the top limb shows out prominently the universal mark of Methodism, the Cockle Shell; and on the two sides the dates that are of historic interest to Methodism in Ceylon.

The Badge was designed by Mr. Maurice Perera, (a Christian) Lecturer of the Government College of Fine Arts to whom we owe much for the production of the Badge; and the entire modelling and casting of the article was carried out by Mani, a famous Indian sculptor now in Ceylon. The order was placed on 12th May, the article delivered to us on the 18th June, necessitating the last stitch on the ribbon being sewn and the Badge completed only on the night of the 19th June.

# MEMBERS OF FOUNDATION CONFERENCE

Appointed by British Conference

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2. Rev. R. Wilfrid Pile

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2. Miss Edith Ridge

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10. Rev. D. W. Peiris
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15. Rev. H. L. Fernando
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19. Rev. L. V. Salgadoe
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44. Rev. J. H. Grice
45. Rev. D. N. Wilkes

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2. Sister Malar Chinniah, (*Secy. W.W.*)
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20. Mr. B. E. Fernando
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22. Mr. H. W. Peiris
23. Mrs. L. G. Loos
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25. Mr. A. P. Samarajiwa
26. Mr. J. O. Mendis
27. Mrs. Phoebe Jayewickreme
28. Mr. H. R. Fernando

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30. Mr. C. S. E. Fernando (*Evangelist*)
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33. Mr. D. E. S. Karunaratne
34. Mr. E. W. Fernando
35. Mr. Sam de Silva
36. Miss Engene Rodrigo
37. Mr. R. E. Samarasinghe
38. Miss E. W. Paranavitane
39. Mrs. L. C. Fernando
40. Mr. R. J. Fernando

**Appointed by the Standing Committee**

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 46. Rev. S. G. Mendis           | 41. Mr. E. A. de Silva, ( <i>Treasurer C.S.F.</i> )            |
| 47. Rev. J. S. Mather           | 42. Mr. A.J.M. de Mell, ( <i>Treasurer M.R.F.</i> )            |
| 48. Rev. A. S. Veerakathipillai | 43. Mr. V. T. Thamotheram<br>( <i>Standing Committee</i> )     |
| 49. Rev. W. J. T. Small         | 44. Miss G. Robins<br>( <i>Principal Methodist College</i> )   |
| 50. Rev. A. A. Gogerly          | 45. Mr. A. S. Wirasinha<br>( <i>Principal Wesley College</i> ) |
|                                 | 46. Mr. H. E. de Silva ( <i>Mt. Lavinia</i> )                  |
|                                 | 47. Mr. A. G. Gunaratnam ( <i>Jampettah</i> )                  |
|                                 | 48. Mr. G. A. de Silva ( <i>N.W.P.</i> )                       |
|                                 | 49. Mr. R. M. Pathmanathan ( <i>Gal-Oya</i> )                  |
|                                 | 50. Mr. Walter Tissera ( <i>Uva</i> )                          |

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**LIVERPOOL CELEBRATES OUR JUBILEE**

A Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving for the Methodist Church in Ceylon (the oldest church in Overseas Methodism) on the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the landing of the first Missionaries and the granting of Autonomy to the Church, was held at the Central Hall, Renshaw Street, Liverpool on Sunday, 28th June 1964.

The Service was conducted by Rev. Cyril E. Gwyther, M.A. and the sermon was preached by Rev. R. J. M. Wilkes (late of Ceylon) and Superintendent, Selly Circuit Yorks.

(This news has been sent by Mr. Christie S. Pieris).

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**SECRETARIES OF DISTRICT SYNODS**

- |                   |   |  |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Northern District | — | Rev. David K. Wilson<br>Mr. R. E. J. A. Sethukavalar |
| Central District  | — | Rev. P. Elvin Fernando<br>Mr. James T. Bernard       |
| Southern District | — | Rev. Milton S. Fernando<br>Mr. Richard J. Fernando   |





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