

Editor's Note

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

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

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Leave Cut for Public Servants

The President, Mr. J. R. Jeyawardene, met Trade Union Leaders on the subject of leave cut for public servants which came into effect this year according to Administrative Circular No. 156 which, according to the JTUAC was a serious threat to democratic rights of the working class.

The peaceful pickets were, according to Trade Union leaders, attacked inhumanly by the police and by organised thugs and that no action has been taken by the police against the attackers.

Seventeen Trade Unions attended the Conference with the President and requested the withdrawal of the circulars. No. 153 and 156. The President explained to the Trade Unions that the object of the New Scheme was to enable employees to go back home early. A high powered Committee has been appointed to review the whole matter.

Diocesan Appointments

The Executive Committee of the JDCSI has appointed Mr. J. C. Mather Assistant Worker at the Tellippalai Church as the Warden of the Boys Home, *Arulmanai Manipay*. He also will be responsible for conducting the worship services and Sunday School at Anaicottai Church.

Mr. Kirupairajah Chelliah, a retired teacher of Tellippalai, will be in charge of the Kankesanturai Church from February 1980.

Correction

○ In last issue under "Diocesan Calendar Changes" the date of the Evangelistic Festival should read as *May 29 Thursday*, not *May 30*.

○ "Randon Thoughts and Reflections on the CSI Synod of 1980" was written by the Rev. S. S. Arulampalam.

New Edition of the New Testament

INTERNATIONAL ECUMENICAL CO-OPERATION

The original text of the New Testament (which was originally written in Greek) is now available in a new scholarly edition.

This *Novum Testamentum Graece* published by Deutsche Bibelstiftung in Stuttgart has been welcomed as an example of ecumenical and international co-operation. Bishop Edward Lohse, Chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) said that it was a sign of the responsibility of theology all over the world for the church's message.

The *Novum Testamentum Graece* is the 26th edition of the "Nestle-Aland" which was first published in 1898. Since 1952 the expert work on the Greek Text has been supervised by Pro-

fessor Kurt Aland in Munster.

The new edition of the New Testament is used internationally and inter-confessionally as the homogenous basis for expert study on the New Testament. It is used by experts all over the world as the standard original text for translations into modern languages.

In addition to Professor Aland, the following biblical scholars have been associated with the work of editing this new edition:- Mathew Black (St. Andrews University, Edinburgh) Father Carlo Martin (Gregorian University, Rome) Bruce M. Metzger (Princeton Theological Seminary, USA) and Allan Wickgren (Chicago University, USA).

Arunachel Pradesh Christians

The Christians of Arunachel Pradesh have filed a Defamation case against Mr. Takar Techhi who has been harassing Christians on many occasions, even to the extent of torturing some of them.

Takar Techhi is accused of having sent a memorandum to the President of India which makes "false, baseless and malicious" allegations against Christian preachers.

The complainant, Mr. Nelam Taram who filed the case in the Sessions Court at Tiro, argues that the purpose and intention of these defamatory statements is to outrage the religious feelings of the people professing the Christian faith. The sentiments of the Christians in the Union Territory have been hurt by these statements.

Mr. Taram prays that adequate action be taken against Mr. Techhi and the publisher of the memorandum.

The NI Churchman

NCC of Sri Lanka

The National Council of Churches in Sri Lanka has now as its General Secretary Mr. Shirley Peiris who succeeds Mr. Sam Jegasothy, relinquishing his position as Principal of St. Mary's College, Dehiwela. The New Director of the Council's Development Commission is Mr. Shirley Candappa.

Mr. Peiris is an Anglican and member of the Standing Committee of the Church of Ceylon. He was earlier the organising Secretary of the ACUT.

Mr. Candappa is a young layman currently working in a project in Moneragaia.

The NCC has a long tradition of appointing laymen to executive positions.

Bishop Gnanadason Memorial

Shalom Gardens, situated at Thirunagar, 10 miles away from Madurai commemorates the life and work of Bishop I. R. H. Gnanadason whose cherished dream was to establish a Home for the Aged in Madurai.

This dream of the Bishop has now come true, due to the untiring efforts of a few committed Christians holding responsible positions in Madurai City, Dr Sam Amirtham was the Patron of the Association which piloted the project.

The Diokanal Bureau of the Reformed Church in Holland contributed largely towards the project. Help was also forthcoming from American friends through the United Church Board of World Ministries.

The Home designed for 40 residents was dedicated in October 7, 1979 by the Rt. Rev. D. Pothirajulu, Bishop of Madurai Ramnad. It is expected to get into full swing by March this year.

The residents of the Home will pay for their meals and medical expenses, though provision has been made for subsidy in the case of deserving inmates. A significant feature of the Home is that the residents will be engaged in purposeful programmes as adult education and giving tuition to children of the weaker sections of the neighbourhood.

Sited adjacent to the Grace Church of the CSI, members will have opportunities to participate in the life of congregation.

The late Bishop Gnanadason was a frequent visitor to Jaffna to address revival meetings. He was the Preacher and Celebrant at the Communion Service at the Consecration of the present Bishop of the JDCSI, the Rt. Rev. D. J. Ambalavanar on 30-6-71 at the Cathedral Church, Vaddukoddai.

IN MEMORIAM



IN MEMORY OF

Rev. R. C. P. WELCH

(Called Home: 31-1-42)

*When Christ puts his hand
Upon the fevered brow of our souls,
We know the meaning of that touch
And say from the inmost depths
"My Saviour you have come"*

CISRS Library Hours

The Study Institute Library in the Christa Seva Ashram, Chunnakam is open to friends and members on all week days including public holidays from 9 to 12 a. m. and from 3 to 6 p. m. It is closed on Sundays only.

Sevak Sam Alfred

Actg. Director

Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Ashram, Chunnakam.

Examination Success

Miss Romola Scott of Christian Medical College Vellore has passed the final MBBS examination. She now will proceed to do her internship at CMC, Vellore. Miss Scott is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. R. R. Scott of Colombo.

J. C. U. New Office-Bearers

The Annual General Meeting of the Jaffna Christian Union was held on Monday the 28th January 1980 in Trimmer Hall, Jaffna. The election of office-bearers which had been postponed for a number of years took place at last. The following were elected:

President:
Rt. Rev. D. J. Ambalavanar
Vice Presidents:
Mr. G. N. Edward
Mr. J. T. Chelliah
Secretary:
Rev. J. Sarvananthan
Asst. Secretary:
Rev. S. N. Sugunanathan
Treasurer:
Mr. W. G. Annappa (re-elected)
Ex-Officio members:
Rev. S. W. Ariarajah
Ven. S. D. Horshington

Four representatives were elected from each of the three Churches to serve on the Committee.

In the absence of the newly elected President, Vice President Mr. G. N. Edward proposed a vote of thanks to the outgoing President Mr. V. Canagasabai and Secretary Rev. K. T. Mutiah for their service to the J. C. U. in the past years.

EDITORIAL

Development and Human Rights

Three leading aid organisations in Britain — *War on Want*, *Christian Aid* and *Oxfam* — are reported to have recently run into trouble with the country's charity laws. The Charity Commissioner has charged the agencies with overstepping the mark and "engaging in political propaganda."

Oxfam was taken to task for an article on land reform in the Third World and *Christian Aid* for funding political action with a view to effecting changes in society.

The *War on Want* came under special scrutiny for publishing liberation struggles exposing vested interests of governments and rousing issues of oppression in many forms, prevalent both overtly and covertly in many countries of the world.

The former Secretary of the *War on Want* was quick to see through the surface of the legal wrangles. "The British Charity Commissioner does not" she said, "like reports on causes of poverty if they are other than natural causes."

In New Zealand, the government has withdrawn the right of tax concessions to CORSO, the country's long established Agency for International Relief because of the organisation's grant to an African liberation movement and its "campaigning publications."

Nearer home in the Philippines, 500 copies of "Iron Hand, Velvet Glove," a book detailing militarisation in the country, revealing hundreds of cases of serious misconduct of soldiers, previously "undocumented," were seized by the Marcos government, minutes after the copies left the gates of the Printing Press at Metro-Manila. It was the first publication of the infant Ecumenical Movement for Peace and Justice, an amalgam of 21 scattered justice and peace oriented Catholic and Protestant organisations in Manila.

The Foreword of the book describes a pattern of abduction and summary killings, military atrocities against civilian communities and organised government moves, to militarise civilians.

In this global perspective, it is not difficult to discern a similarity of tenor in government policy in many countries with regard to all activities and movements among the people which fail "to stay in line."

T. K. Thomas, the Editor of the *CCA News* puts the situation in very succinct words in an article he contributed some months ago to *One World*:

"We have freedom in many countries to preach the gospel, to speak in tongues, to conduct healing ministries and even to cast out evil spirits as long as the gospel does not disturb, the tongues do not make sense, the healing does not extend to the diseases of the body politic and the spirits are the ones with no visibility. We rejoice against Jesus's explicit injunction that the spirits submit to us and leave the principalities and powers alone.

That is why we are free and that is the measure of our bondage"

In this context, the *Development Educations' Workshop* held recently in Cuba on the theme "Education for Development, Action for Justice" is timely. We note that it is the first Inter-regional Workshop on *Development Education* organised by the Commission on the Churches Participation in Development (CCPD) of the World Council of Churches.

It is not without significance that one of the important places visited by the 30 participants from 23 countries of the World during the first week of the *Workshop* on *Development Education* was a psychiatric Hospital in Cuba.

Development in any country becomes meaningful only in the framework of a nation's commitment to the dignity of human life "in community" and the creation of social institutions that could serve this goal.

IN BRIEF

The Methodist Church

Death of President Emeritus

Rev. Fred S. de Silva, President Emeritus of the Methodist Church of Sri Lanka died in Colombo on Tuesday, 29-1-80. He was 75 years old.

He was Chairman of the Ceylon Methodist Synod from 1960 to 1964 and was the first President of the all Ceylon Methodist Conference,

The funeral took place on 31-1-80 at the Katunayake Methodist Church premises.

- *The Income Support Schemes* will be scrapped from June this year, by the government because of complaints regarding its abuse; The money saved would be utilised for development work in the respective electorates.
- *Sri Lanka's TV Viewers* — a rapidly mounting circle, complain of poor quality programme for the licence fee of Rs. 250/-
- *Sri Lanka's Oil Bill* will in 1980 exceed seven million rupees, according to the Minister of Finance. This represents about 45 percent of our Foreign Exchange earnings.

Letter to the Editor

THE JAFFNA CLERGY FELLOWSHIP ON "CHRISTMAS"

There appeared recently in the *Morning Star* the account of a meeting of the Jaffna Clergy Fellowship last November at which the meaning of Christmas for Church and Society was discussed. While some of the conclusions reached at the meeting are useful, others are somewhat ill-considered.

The Fellowship suggests that "the bogey of Christmas Father be banished from our celebration of Christmas". The reference is to Santa Claus who is really St. Nicholas, a fourth century bishop, who like his Master before him, had a great love of children, so much so that he is looked upon as their Patron Saint. It is sad, therefore, that the Fellowship met in the International Year of the Child and called for his banishment. It also chose to describe the Saint as a "bogey" which according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary means "devil" or "bugbear".

What Santa Claus means to Christian people in other countries may be seen from the following little story. A child called Virginia O'Hanlon once wrote to the *New York Sun* asking if Santa Claus really existed. Its editor, one F. P. Church, wrote a reply himself. This is what he said, "Yes, Virginia, there it a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist. He lives and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."

The Fellowship's attitude to Santa Claus is possibly coloured by the name by which it calls him. In the variant of English we speak in Ceylon "Uncle John" becomes "John Uncle" with no harm done to anyone. It is different when we turn "Father Christmas" (the correct English name of Santa Claus) into "Christmas Father". The former name suggests the very embodiment of those lovely associations of Christmas that F. P. Church wrote about. "Christmas Father" on the other hand has in our country degenerated into a Christmas clown who, not surprisingly, has roused the ire of the Clergy Fellowship.

The report also speaks of "the wrong idea that Christmas means getting and getting and not giving and giving." One can understand that here the Fellowship is very rightly decrying selfish enjoyment at Christmas, but one must be careful how one says this. Christmas is the celebration of God's culminating gift to mankind, the gift of His own Son, If, in the present context we use the word "Get", we may say that we who "get and get" so much from God, "got" his greatest gift in the Incarn-

ation of Christ. That is why particularly at Christmas time (but not at Christmas time only) we feel impelled to give and give. The getting and the giving thus go together. We must also remember that at Christmas we sing:

"Where meek souls will receive
Him still
The dear Christ enters in".

It needs meekness and humility to receive, that is, to "get" from God as well as from our fellow-men. Let us get with gratitude all that God and our friends give us out of their love; and let us give liberally to God, to our friends, and not least, to the needy.

Lastly there is the statement, "The Church needs to take its agenda from the world." I think this was first said by a prominent Christian organisation, but it is a half-truth for all that. The Church's agenda is work and prayer, even as our Lord's agenda was in His life on earth. As for prayer the world knows nothing of it. The Church's work (once again if it copies its Master), has four aspects. (1) Feeding the hungry which, in today's world, will include engagement in development. (2) Healing the sick which comprises many forms of compassionate service. (3) Proclaiming the Word. (4) Turning individuals to God. The world has no agenda to furnish for the third and fourth of these. All that we can say therefore is that the Church should have the world in mind as it gives practical shape from time to time to the agenda that Christ Himself has given it.

R. E. J. A. Setukavalar
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Jaffna.
26-1-80.

Unity Week Observed in Jaffna

The Rev. Fr. S. A. Michael Samy OMI the Vicar General of the Roman Catholic Church in Jaffna preached the Unity message at the united service held in Trimmer Hall, Jaffna on Unity Sunday 20 January 1980. Clergy and members of Methodist, Roman Catholic, Anglican and CSI churches participated in the service.

A Seminar on *the Churches' Understanding of the Sacraments* was held in St. Patrick's College, Jaffna on Saturday the 26th January when representative groups from all the four churches participated. The Seminar ended with a fellowship lunch.

Note by the Editor

The article on "Equality of sexes on the Basis of the Bible" will be continued in our issue 8-2-80.

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