

# THE MORNING STAR

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## Editor's Note

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

## Report on Kilinochi

A TULF Committee which was appointed to report on the feasibility of Kilinochi being demarcated as a separate district (an issue raised by Mr. V. Anandasangari M. P. for Kilinochi) will soon submit an interim report.

The Committee consists of Mr. V. N. Navaratnam, M. P. for Chavakachcheri, Mr. K. P. Ratnam, M. P. for Kayts, Mr. P. Ganesalingam M. P. for Paddiruppu (E. P.), Mr. T. Thirunavukarasu M. P. for Vaddukoddai and Mr. M. Thambimuttu, Member of the Development Council, Jaffna District.

The members of the Committee made an on-the-spot survey on 20-3-82 and listened to representations made on the subject by representatives of several organisations at Kilinochi.

Since Mr. Navaratnam is due to leave for Iraq shortly and also visit Saudi Arabia and Nigeria where he will attend the meeting of the Working Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Group, there is the possibility of an interim report which may be submitted on the subject to the General body of the TULF.

## Public Reception to Journalist

Mr. E. Sivagurunathan Editor of *Thinakaran* and newly elected President of the Journalists' Association of Sri Lanka, was accorded a Public Reception at the Jaffna Town Hall on Sunday (11-4-82).

Mr. S. Vithianathan, the Vice-Chancellor of the Jaffna University presided at the public meeting held at the Jaffna Town Hall.

Mr. Devanesan Nesiiah, the Government Agent Jaffna and District Secretary honoured the chief guest by putting on him the silken shawl (பொருத்தல்) (the oriental way of honouring an academician).

The speakers on the occasion included the Mayor of Jaffna TULF Members of Parliament, and the Chairman of the Development Council.

## New Head of Salvation Army

Jarl Wahstroem, a 63 year old Finn has been elected the 12th General of the Salvation Army. He received the required two-thirds majority in the third ballot of the Army's High Council, which met in London in December 1981.

He has succeeded Arnold Brown, a Canadian who retired in Mid-December 1981.

## Seminar at the Jaffna University

Professor Viswa Varnapala of the Peradeniya University led a Seminar on 6-4-82 at the Jaffna University on the subject "Will Parliamentary government survive in Sri Lanka?" Professor Vidyanathan, Vice-Chancellor of the Jaffna University presided.

The guest-speaker outlined the various disparaging trends in Sri Lanka that currently were not favourable to the strength of Parliamentary democracy in the country. Even the 'Home Guards' Scheme according to the speaker may serve as a tool in the hands of evil forces to assail the foundations of democracy in the country, if we are not watchful.

All lovers of democracy must join forces to fight all attempts that are being made to undermine democracy in this country, the speaker concluded.

[The Seminar was under the auspices of the South East Asia Study Institute.]

## Preparations for World Council Assembly

Plans for the next WCC Assembly at Vancouver in 1983 are moving closer to completion. Some 4000 people — delegates from the WCC's 300 members Churches, advisors, visitors, journalists and others are expected to attend the Assembly.

The 14-member International Committee has agreed on a 4-part framework in which to organise the major issues to be put before the Assembly. These broad categories include — new ways of witnessing in a pluralistic world, new imperatives for justice and peace, new insights by learning and communication and new steps towards Church unity and renewal.

Winner of the WCC International Poster competition based on the Assembly theme — "Jesus Christ, the Life of the World" is Heather Dau of Canada. She also shares a second prize with Neils Wamberg of Denmark.

## Mrs. Bandaranayake's Promises

Strikers in the Public Service who were deemed to have vacated their posts on 18-7-80 will be reinstated with back wages is the promise held out by Mrs. Bandaranayake when she addressed a meeting at Trincomalee on 4-4-82 representing her party, the SLFP (S).

She also said that she had during her regime, proclaimed a period of Emergency to save the country and the people when it was on the verge of civil war.

The Sri Lanka Freedom Party currently has split up into three factions.

## Church News from Abroad

### Problems of Mass Tourism

A Five-day International Conference with 40 conference participants was held recently at Stockholm, sponsored by agencies of the Church of Sweden and the World Council of Churches.

Ron O'Grady, former Associate General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia made a suggestion that "it is time we create tourist ghettos and keep tourists out of the way in a kind of Disneyland in each third world country". This he said would be better than hordes of tourists tramping round and interfering with the culture and way of life of the people of third-world societies.

Though there was general agreement with O'Grady that the 30 million tourists who visit the Third World annually are causing problems, not all agreed that setting up enclaves would be the best solution.

A Letter from the Conference to European Church Leaders has made the following points about tourism in its present form which encourages the tourist to:

- indulge in an extravagant life-style in ghettos created by the tourist trade.
- exploit those in a weaker economic position by enticing them away from the productive sector to the service sector which ultimately benefits the transnational corporations.
- impact the host culture in a negative way by showing a lack of respect for religious, local traditions.

Reflecting on the Conference, Carlos Sintado, WCC Secretary for renewal Centres and Movements said that its exposure of the "harsh realities" of tourism would help counter "excessive idealisation" of the phenomenon.

## Implementation of the National Language Policy of the Government

The Minister of Rural Development, Mr. S. Thondaman has suggested the following amendments to the Draft Circular on the Implementation of the National Language Policy of the government.

That if any official register, record, publication or other document (e.g. Birth Register, marriage Register or Land Register) is maintained in the Sinhala Language and if the Law recognises a person's right to inspect or obtain a copy or extract from it, then a copy or extract should be provided in the Tamil Language, or translation thereof in the Tamil Language in terms of Section 22 (B) of the Constitution.

The same amendment shall be applicable to a document exe-

## Muslim-Christian Dialogue

Forty-three nations met in Colombo for a historic Muslim-Christian Dialogue — the first International Dialogue to be held on March 30, 31 and April 1 at the BMICH in Colombo.

Geographical proximity between the places of origin of the religions and their common Abrahamic tradition were adduced as reasons for that common hope for the discovery of points of convergence.

The process of Dialogue historically commenced in 1974 when the Saudi Arabian King, Faisal, sent a high powered delegation to the Pope to get him to intervene in the Philippine Muslim problem.

Dr. T. B. Simatuparg, a President of the World Council of Churches (an Indonesian) was present at the Dialogue and also addressed the gathering.

The position of the Muslim minorities in the Philippines was one of the matters that came up for discussion at the "Dialogue". The World Muslim Congress President Dr. Marous Daonabibi said that anti-religionists creating religious trouble was one of the problems facing all religions of the world.

The scope of the dialogue was limited to Christians and Muslims living and working together.

## WSCF Standing Committee

The Asia — Pacific Regional Committee of the WSCF was held in Tokyo in August last year at the Asia Youth Centre.

It was resolved that August 6 of every year be observed as *Peace Day* in solidarity with the victims of Hiroshima and in protest against nuclearisation.

The following Standing Committee has been elected to guide the affairs of the Region until the next Regional Committee meets in Bangalore in 1983.

Rev. David Rodriguez (Philippines) Chair-Person.

Miss Linda Sunilat (Indonesia) Vice Chair-Person.

Mr. Marshal Fernando (Sri Lanka).

Miss Cho Young Ock (Korea).

Mr. Stephen Payton (New Zealand).

Miss Ishi (Japan).

Jaewoong Ahn (Korea) and Koshy Mathew (India) continue to be Regional Staff based in Hong Kong.

cut by an official in the Sinhala Language (e.g. Register of ownership of motor vehicles) in terms of Section 22 (C) of the Constitution.





## EDITORIAL

## The Christian Church and Politics

"What is truth?" asked Pilate when our Lord told him "For this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice".

A key issue today in the Christian Church, a question which brings up most of the difficulties that Pontius Pilate raised (but avoided) is the question "What is political?"

Appearing in sharp focus at Dresden, German Democratic Republic, where the Central Committee of the WCC met in August last year was the news of the withdrawal of the Salvation Army from the World Council on a "political" issue.

The Council had given \$5,000 dollars to Zimbabwe's Political Front to show its support for the strength it had displayed against the racist policies of the minority White regime.

Quickly reacting against this 'political' stance (as the Salvationists deemed it to be) of the WCC, General Brown, the Salvation Army Chief, withdrew the membership of the International body from the World Council on the ground that the essence of the Army's life and endeavour has been its refusal to identify with "political factions" as against "deep social concerns".

But what was not very much in focus at Dresden was the response of this "withdrawal" from the Salvationists in Zimbabwe, the country which had been the focal point in the decision of the Army to leave the Council.

Colonel Mayo, the Territorial Commander of the Salvation Army in Zimbabwe saw no conflict between the liberation movements that fight for human rights and "the gospel of love, charity, and the liberation of the total man"

Another Zimbabwe Salvationist when he heard of General Brown's letter to the WCC, exclaimed in language expressing naked emotion: "What do these people in London know about oppression"?

The WCC stand on the matter was clearly expressed in a reply to General Brown by Archbishop Edward Scott, Moderator of the WCC and Philip Potter, the General Secretary.

"The imperatives of the Christian gospel", they said "affect all realms of life". It includes in its scope the Programme to combat Racism over which the Salvation Army had particular difficulty.

In the turbulent context of the age we live in, can we as a Christian Church draw a definite line between 'political' issues and 'social' issues, between the practice of one's religious tenets and the recognition of human rights, between political blueprints and the economic welfare of the people, between poverty and power structures?

President Jeyawardena in an address he delivered on 7-4-82, after the unveiling of a pinnacle of the newly restored 'chaitya' of the Bambarkele Buddhist Vibare has pointed out how 'patriotism, religion and tolerance' were all entwined inextricably in the life and work of the early UNP leaders who banded themselves to form the Ceylon National Congress, the precursor of the modern national movement.

(Italics are ours)

No problem that affects people's lives at their bleeding points, should be considered "political" and dismissed as outside the purview of the practice of our religion.

The gravamen of most people in the island today is that the Christian Church with one voice has not made itself heard in Sri Lanka on many matters on which it should have been more vocal and articulate.

T. K. Thomas, former Editor of *One World* and currently Publication Editor for the World Council of Churches makes the following pungent comment on the Christian church in some Asian countries:—

"we have freedom in many Asian countries to preach the gospel, to speak in tongues, to conduct healing ministries and even to cast out evil spirits so 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 spirit are ones with no visibility..... That is why we are free and that is the measure of our bondage".

From "Well Bound Evangelism"

We cannot say, however, with any sense of responsibility that prophetic faith is suppressed in this country or that prophetic critics receive political retaliation.

It is good for us to remember that individual, theonomic faith has no relevance in the contemporary political scene in Asian countries.

## Creative Non-Violence

(Continued from 2-4-82 issue)

3. *Liberating change will require the appropriation of suffering rather than escape from it.* For 25 years, Cesar Chavez has been rallying farm workers around the principle that their suffering is the only thing they can truly call their own. They are painfully familiar with it and good at it. Hence, all they need to learn is how to claim it as their own and use it as a persuasive tool. Ironically, as he knows, liberation is discovered not through the escape from one's suffering but through one's own appropriation. Suffering exerts a far greater persuasive force than reason ever could alone. When it is made one's own, suffering can then become a powerful moral force.

His celebrated fast at Delano in 1968, therefore, came as a natural recourse to him. For 25 days he fasted, not to humiliate or threaten the growers who had refused negotiation, but rather to urge a commitment to non-violence within the United Farm Workers movement itself. His self-assumed suffering was directed towards those who could most be moved by it. Hence, the poignant story of the rough old campesino who came to Delano one night during the fast with a sackful of tacos, determined to force Cesar to eat because he was the only hope his people had.

4. *Liberating change will necessitate the initiation of tension, though without the usual recourse to violence.* Lanza del Vasto's writings on the technique of non-violence are appropriately entitled Warriors of Peace. Since his founding of the Community of the Ark in France a generation ago, this gentleman has been unrelenting in his resistance to injustice, not the least in his protest of the use of torture by the French Army in the Algerian war. Non-violent liberating action can never be the choice of those who are by nature weak and submissive. Gandhi insisted that soul force can be practised only by those who know themselves to be strong. "The clemency of a sheep or a rabbit mean nothing. One must possess power in order to renounce it," says Lanza del Vasto. Hence, *only the fearless are free to explore the energies of peace, whereas cowardice is necessarily the mother of violence.*

5. *Finally, liberating change will be made possible by a spiritual discipline, not simply a political ideology.* John Paul II at the CELAM conference in Puebla this year called for "a correct Christian idea of liberation" which would include "liberation from everything that oppresses man but ... above all liberation from sin and the evil one, in the joy of knowing God..." It is a spiritual discipline, rooted in the church's living tradition, he urges, that protects this social doctrine from "manipulation by ideological systems and political parties." This requires, therefore, not

## Private Transport Service — Talaimannar to Rameshwaram

A private transport service by ship will supplement the existing service from Talaimannar to Rameshwaram which now operates on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

The new service will operate on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

This Service will be a great boon to passengers travelling to India, especially the Sri Lankan students studying in various Indian Universities.

The new Service will operate from 26-4-82.

## World Buddhist Congress in Colombo

Sri Lanka will host representatives from 29 countries of the world at the World Buddhist Congress to be held at the BMICH from June 1 — 5, this year.

A commemorative stamp will be issued to mark the occasion. There will also an Exhibition depicting Sri Lanka's Buddhist culture. India, America, Malaysia, Bangladesh, France and Germany will be some of the countries which will be represented at this Congress which will be inaugurated by President Jeyawardena on 1-6-82.

simply a commitment to certain ends, but also to certain means. It is commitment with a particular content.

Gilbert Murray's tribute to Gandhi indicates the power of such a discipline:

"Be careful in dealing with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasures, nothing for comfort or praise or promotion, but is simply determined to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy because his body, which you can always conquer, gives you so little control over his soul."

Gandhi had a dream, like Martin Luther King, a political dream that emerged out of the dreams which filled his spiritual life. Whether it was a mere dream is something yet to be judged by ourselves in the world we will make. With all of its absurdity, the dream of non-violent liberation still lives today. There are people now living who lead us to ask if small may be not only beautiful, but powerful as well. Their very existence raises tough questions about the mystery of evil and the triumph of liberating grace. What keeps Helder Camara or Danilo Dolci or Cesar Chavez alive? That question alone demands a hearing for new solutions. It gives pause to those who find themselves within the deepest of impasses. "Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now, therefore, and let us slay him... and we shall see what will become of his dream."

— CCA News.