















THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

Bishop Harold de Soysa's address to the Diocesan Council.

The following is the concluding portion of the address delivered by the Rt. Rev. Harold de Soysa, Bishop of Colombo, at the annual sessions of the Colombo Diocesan Council.

It is not strange that the themes of both Lambeth and Uppsala were the same—the theme of Renewal, of the necessity, as our Lord pointed out, of new wineskins into which to put the new wine. This necessity is laid on the Church from generation to generation, and never do we see its importance more than we do today in a time when to describe our environment as one of rapid social change is a gross understatement. The other similarity between the two gatherings is discernible in the beginnings of the two messages. The second paragraph of the Message of the Lambeth Conference reads as follows: "Our gathering has been set against a background of grim events in Vietnam, West Africa and Czechoslovakia, and of mounting protest against social injustice. We live in a world which will no longer accept widespread want and poverty; a world in which inherited institutions and traditional ways of thought are increasingly questioned." The Message of Uppsala started thus, "The excitement of new scientific discoveries, the protest of student revolts, the shock of assassinations, the clash of wars: these mark the year 1968. In this climate the Uppsala Assembly met first of all to listen. We heard the cry of those who long for peace, of the hungry and exploited who demand bread and justice, of the victims of discrimination who claim human dignity; and of the increasing millions who seek for the meaning of life." We can see the similarity—both messages were primarily and seriously concerned with the world and its problems, and the world which the Christian Gospel has to offer the world for the alleviation of the world's need, and with the duty of the Church to be a servant Church serving the world.

This is the new note we must bring into the whole life of the Church and into the lives of every one of us as Christians. The Mission of the Church is to love the world—that is all men, and especially those who are not Christians, with the love with which God so loved and loves all men that He gave even His only begotten Son for us. We must cease to seek primarily, or as a priority, the worldly welfare or wealth or power of the Church, and begin to go out and get involved in what is happening around us in our towns and villages and join our fellow countrymen in improving our agriculture, our education, our health services, our political and economic life. We must stop being a community which is fearful about its own safety and security, and get completely involved in the life and well-being of the nation and of our fellow-countrymen, we must no longer look only inwards at our ecclesiastical life, but outwards at the life of the nation. And that at the cost of self sacrifice—not only the sacrifice of individual comfort in service, but also that of the prestige and status of the Church in identifying ourselves with the world. "Christ wants His Church," says the Message of Uppsala, "to foreshadow a renewed human community. Therefore, we Christians will manifest our unity in Christ by entering into full fellowship with those of other races, classes, age, religious and political convictions in the place where we live." And the Message of Lambeth says similarly, "The test of every penny we spend, of every meeting we attend, and of every Service we hold, is whether it makes it easier for the world to see the Church in her role as Servant."

Conclusion We have the privilege of being called by God at this time here in our country to three great tasks, which will demand all our love for Him and for men, all our determination, all our perseverance and all our faith and hope. Let us see these tasks in this light. None of them is to be sought for the good or glory of the Church, but all for the glory of God who is the God who created and loves the Buddhist and the Hindu as much as the Christian, and secondly

JAFFNA MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS—1968

by Muhandiram E. P. Rasiah, J. P.

The nominations to the Jaffna Municipal Council are over. The stage is set for the elections on 3-12-68. For 21 Wards (2 Wards having returned candidates unopposed) 72 contestants are in the field. Who says Jaffna Town is lacking in public-spirited citizens?

Type of Candidates

Is it the desire to render real civic service to the Town, or brazen self-seeking that has prompted this motley crowd—comprising mostly of professional politicians—to woo the voters in the 21 Wards? Examining the credentials of some of these aspirants to civic honours, their past records of genuine public-service, and their capacity to represent their respective wards, one is confronted with the perplexing question—Whither Jaffna?

Somehow, men eminently suited to serve as City Fathers—men of robust common-sense, men with back-bones, men of unimpeachable character and integrity—seem to shun the fray to enter the Council. Why? The voters must answer this question. "To an increasing extent Local Bodies, from the Municipal Council right down to humblest Institutions, have become the hunting ground of some people who enter the field not to do the country some service, but for the sole purpose of getting out of it as much as they can for themselves."

they are to be sought for the true welfare and well-being of our fellow countrymen.

The New Cathedral is not just to be magnificent building to draw attention to the importance of the Church. It is to be a sign of our creativeness and humility and sinfulness as we offer our worship to God; it is to be a power-house of prayer for our nation, a household of grace from which men and women will go forth with basin and towel to wash the wounds and serve the needs of our fellowmen. The unity we seek in the Church of Lanka is not merely for the sake of the Church, to repair the sin of disunion and remedy the waste of money and manpower. It is to make it more possible to fulfill even a little more adequately the mission to the nation to which God has called us. How can we Christians preach the Gospel of reconciliation between God and man, between Sinhalese and Tamil, between management and labour, as long as we are divided among ourselves and do not share together the Body of Christ which was broken for us on the Cross—and also as long as we Christians are divided from each other in our parishes, in our homes, in our families? And the year of Evangelism is not merely to get more members for the Church and count more heads—it is to express the love which we should have always for our fellow-countrymen by sharing with them the treasures of truth and forgiveness and Grace to which God of His mercy has called us, and which they as well as we need, that we may know "the glorious liberty of the children of God." For "evangelism is," as someone has said, "one beggar telling another where to find bread."

For God's glory and in service to our fellowmen—let that be our watchword. To fulfill such an aim we shall have to learn to live increasingly "with Christ in God." Let me end with one more passage from the Message of Lambeth: "The faith of the Church that God reigns and loves and speaks is sustained and renewed in its members by constant prayer. Its life is in Christ and its life is vigorous as its members try to live in and with Christ. We call all Christians to fresh efforts to deepen their prayer life, to search for those forms of prayer which are most relevant to them in their own situation, and to develop that talent for stillness in the presence of God which all possess in some degree. We seek in all things to follow the Lord's example. The Lord withdrew for prayer and took his disciples with him. From prayer He and they returned to their services in the world."

May God grant that by His grace we may increasingly become a Church of prayer, and a community of prayer, and a community of love.

Appreciation THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR

I am very glad that I saw the M. R. A. play, 'The Forgotten Factor', that was presented last Monday and Tuesday at the Town Hall, Jaffna, by the group of the M. R. A. who are just now in Ceylon. It was one of the best acted plays I have seen. It is no wonder, therefore, that it has been heartily received in the many countries of the world, where it was shown. The author, Alan Thornhill, and specially the producer, Miss Norah Canfield, and the cast made up of persons from India and Ceylon deserve high praise.

The stage arrangements were perfect. The two homes, one of the President of Fernando and Co., and the other of the Trade Union Leader in the same Company, were in striking contrast and very effectively portrayed. In representing the sitting-dining room of the Fernando family, one could have yielded to the temptation of cluttering the stage with a number of items of furniture and decorations often found in a home of people anxious to exhibit their luxury and prestige. That temptation was altogether resisted and with a few pieces of elegant furniture, table-ware, window mats and a batik wall carpet, the desired effect was produced. So with the home of the Trade Union Leader, which conveyed strikingly the drabness and poverty of the working class. Depth and spaciousness were conveyed by the proper siting of the various pieces of furniture. And the positioning of the characters made full use of the stage and avoided undue concentration at particular points except at climactic moments.

The second thing that impressed me strongly was the manner in which the various characters spoke their lines. They did that with a clarity and naturalness, so woefully rare in several dramatic performances in our country. The actors correctly refused to "declaim" the speeches as they had learned to the audience. They always kept in mind that they were a group of inter-related individuals on the stage and had to speak to each other. In doing this they also spoke loud and clear enough for the persons even in the rear of the hall to follow the happenings on the stage with understanding and interest.

The success of the play could not have been achieved only with such striking and adequate stage effects and fully satisfying speech. There had to be a proper representation of characters. This play had it. Not one of the actors, even the little son of Gaminji Jayasingha, the Trade Union Leader, failed to be completely the character he or she was called to portray. All of them were able to be so because they fully understood the feelings and experiences of the characters, felt and imbibed the spirit of the play, and responded to its challenging message. They themselves had undergone similar experiences in their own lives and gripped by the ideals of the M. R. A. had committed themselves to them.

The burden of carrying the play to success did not rest on one or two 'main' characters, but on all the members of the two families. And each one of them was alive to his or her responsibility. From beginning to end they remained true to life and played their roles effectively—Rohan Fernando, the President of his Company, insistent never to yield to the demands of his workers and anxious to maintain his authority and power; his wife, aware of the family prestige to be preserved and caught up in the tension between her husband and their 'converted' son, and in the bitter struggle between her husband and his workers; his son Ashok, a care-free, pleasure loving youth, converted in his college to the lofty ideals of justice, tolerance and love, and striving with all his might to bring in better understanding and harmony between his father and the Trade Union Leader; Ranees, his daughter, joyous, sprightly, and helping her brother in his plans; Gaminji Jayasingha, the Trade Union Leader, full of tension and suffering from the start struggling against entrenched power of the Management, in the midst of the poverty-stricken condition of his home; his wife, on whom the difficulty of finding the wherewithal to feed and clothe their children has taken heavy toll, losing her patience with her husband who can do little to ameliorate their living conditions; and his daughter Bina, hysterical, refusing to believe the bona fides of her friend Ranees and her brother, and fighting them bitterly all the time.

There was, however, one flaw in the drama. The theme as dramatically portrayed was too obviously moralistic. The conflict between the manager and the worker was not merely one between personalities but also interests—Management and Labour. But its resolution was achieved by rapid changes of heart, which the earlier characterisation did not lead us fully to expect. The author of the play, in a Message to the brochure published to mark its staging in India and Ceylon, said: "May the voice of Ceylon and India proclaim to East and West that Almighty God is the forgotten factor in all our affairs and the only sure guarantee for a just, free world." Such a proclamation was not loud and sure in this production. Perhaps the author and the producer were satisfied with only a suggestion leaving it to the imagination of the audience to take it in wholly!

Power of Vote

The most important person in an election is admittedly the voter himself armed by law with a most powerful weapon. It is in his power to determine whether the next Municipal Council shall be composed of the best persons available or whether it will be as bad as, or worse than, the worst of its predecessors. The forthcoming elections, therefore, will afford a fine opportunity to exercise the power that is his. By virtue of the system of secret balloting one can give expression to his point of view in a tangible way, without fear of molestations by thugs. It will also offer to the intelligent and educated voter an occasion to show the watching world the extent of his political maturity and sagacity.

Critical times are ahead of us. Our language, our culture, our self-respect and the future of our children seem to be at stake. On the sort of men we send up as our accredited Councillors will much depend the civic future of Jaffna, if not Lanka.

May God Almighty grant our brothers and sisters that strength and sense that are necessary to exercise correctly their voting rights without fear or favour and return the right type of men!

Prayer

"God give us men. A time like this demands Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands. Men whom the lust of office does not kill, Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy, Men who possess opinions Men who have honour, Men who will not lie..."

Letter to the Editor

BUDDHISM AND SOUTH INDIA

Dear Sir, Regarding letters that appeared in the press recently on the subject of famous Buddhist missionaries who came to Ceylon from South India, according to B. C. Law and Geiger, the following references to Kaveripattinam, one of the cities in the area where Buddhadatta lived, will, I think, interest your readers.

K. V. Raman in an article "Excavations at Pampubar" refers to this city as follows "Kaveripattinam or Pampubar, the celebrated port city of the Early Cholas show an insignificant fisherman's hamlet on the eastern coast of Tamilnad, where the River Kaveri joins the sea. Its flourishing commerce, its well-planned lay-out, beautiful mansions, the harbour area, the religious centres, etc., are all englobed in early Tamil works like the Silappadikaram, the Manimekalai and the Pattinappalai. The latter work gives graphic descriptions of the gay inhabitants of the area and their notable traits; the foreign merchants like the Yavanas (Greeco-Romans), who lived there for trade purposes; the artisans who from places like Avanti and Ujjain in upper India etc. The presence of temples for Siva, Vishnu, Bahararas, Murgas as well as the Jain and Buddhist monasteries is attested by the works". According to the Manimekalai, Goddess Champapati was the guardian deity of the city and indeed of the Jambudvipa as a whole (Jambudvipa-Kavaddaivam). She was venerated by all the people, as She was the "Grand Old Lady" or Thammadatti, as the epic mentions. There is now an old and dilapidated brick temple at Kaveripattinam dedicated to Champapati. The foreign notices on Kaveripattinam are illuminating. There is reference in the Periplus to the two capitals of the Cholas in the region inland called Argaru (Uraiyar) and the coast county which lies on a bay, the latter obviously referring to the port-city or the Pattinam. Ptolemy is more specific and he refers to the city as the 'Kaberis Emporion'."

Referring to recent excavations since 1962 he says "the most significant discovery was that of a Buddhist monastery in the Melaiyar portion of Kaveripattinam. An entire wing of a Vihara, consisting of seven rooms, each about 8 feet square, was used for the residence of the Buddhist monks. Adjacent to this was another ornamental structure, perhaps a part of a mandapa. The building walls were decorated with beautiful stucco figures and paintings. One such exquisite stucco head, full of artistic grace, was found in the excavations. A fine copper image of the Buddha in dhyana pose was found in one of the rooms. A large limestone slab, bearing the sacred feet of the Buddha (Buddhagaya) and other auspicious symbols like the Purnagata, Swastika etc. etc. is strikingly reminiscent of similar ones found at the famous Buddhist centres of Andhra, Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda with which Kaveripattinam was undoubtedly in live contact."

Yours faithfully, J. R. SINNAMAMY.

L. S. K.

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