

SEND IN YOUR NEWS TO
THE EDITOR
THE MORNING STAR
17, Frances Road,
Colombo - 06.
Sri Lanka.

THE MORNING STAR
உதயதாரகை
Uthayatharakai
Registered as a News paper at the General Post Office, Sri Lanka
Established 1841, A Christian Fortnightly Published Every other Friday
Vol. 181- Jaffna - Friday May 2011 No.02-04
Righteousness Exalteth A nation, But Sin is a Reproach to any people

The Morning Star
Local
Annual subscription Rs. 300.00
Life Subscription Rs. 2000.00
www.csijaffnadiocese.com
Editor
17, Frances Road,
Colombo -06
Sri Lanka.



61st Sessions of the Diocesan Council
May 16-18, 2011
"Journey Toward Wholeness"



**Jesus Christ, here among us, stay with us, go with us,
grant us your peace**



Remember Our Calling

Before we can even hope to grow our churches we have to remember who it was that started the church.
Jesus Christ is the one who said "On this rock I will build my church." We know Jesus is the rock that the builders rejected and yet the same one is head of the church.
He gave us many commands as individuals to love one another. Yet as a whole He issued only one decree that we must follow.

Bishop Thiagarajah's stirring call for journey toward wholeness.



The 61st sessions of the Jaffna Diocesan Council of the Church of South India took off to a stirring start May 16 powered by the dynamic theme "Journey toward wholeness" with an ordination service at the Cathedral Church at Vaddukoddai led by the Rt Rev Dr Daniel S Thiagarajah.

The Diocesan Council sessions that lasted three days were held at the Ottley Hall at Jaffna College with delegates attending from the north, south, east, west and the hill country, the JDCSI being a truly national church today.

The sessions commenced by the singing of Tamil Thai vaazthu. This was followed by a proposal for Vote of Condolences for the following who have passed beyond the veil: Mr C David Chinnakone, Mrs Ruth Bunker, Mr Stanley Emerson, Mrs Pavasingam, Rev Dr. Thinakaran, Mr Watson and Mrs Rajaratnam.

A great deal of formal matters and reports were considered on the first day following the official constitution of the council after roll call. On the second day morning Bishop Daniel Thiagarajah presented his onward charge, the Journey toward wholeness outlining how the JDCSI had marched from the journey together to building hope from the last two councils to the new confident and determined task towards wholeness.



The charge which is reported here in its entirety was well received and in fact was popularly acclaimed as the challenging inspiration in all our commitments especially during these crucial times.

As is the usual practice a good part of the third day's proceedings were focused on the accounts following two reports, one on the Centre for Holistic Healing and the other by the Varany Mission Farm.

The Rev Dr J G Thiagarajah presenting the report on the farm pointed out that their efforts will become fruitful on two fronts. Firstly the Varany Mission Farm will inspire an economic revolution among our people and secondly, it will give tremendous financial support to the diocese in all its undertakings.

Dr Thaya Thiagarajah outlined in particular the work of the Centre for Holistic Healing and described the importance of it in the Journey towards wholeness.

During the course of the second day's proceedings Bishop Thiagarajah introduced two visitors from the US, Dr and Dr Mrs Breckenridge one of whose ancestors was connected to the founding of Jaffna College.



Worker discipline was considered as a matter of crucial importance and the council was given ample time to discuss this at great length. It was a mark of immense responsibility that the council took a unanimous decision that three members of the clergy should be required to explain as to why disciplinary action should not be taken against them.

The 61st sessions came to an end with powerful call from Bishop Thiagarajah to embark on the journey towards wholeness and let the JDCSI be an example to the nation.



BISHOP'S CHARGE

+ Bishop Dr Daniel S. Thiagarajah -- Vaddukodai. May 17, 2011

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I welcome you to our 61st Diocesan Council Sessions. I sincerely appreciate the determination you had to attend this very important event in the life of this great Church. As you are well aware, participation at these sessions prepare all of us to view our greater calling and responsibilities in the life and mission of this historic church.

Most of you will recognize and remember that when I became the fourth bishop of the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India (JDCSI) on the 21st August 2006 and presided over the first Council as the bishop I brought to mind of the great significance of the Church of South India and the historic legacy the forerunners the American Missionaries left behind for us. There in the year 2007 I called upon all of you to "Journey Together."

After two years, in 2009, I challenged us to get together to rebuild communities of hope taking to heart the challenges of 'kairotic' moment.

Now, after two years since that Council, when we gather for our deliberations to discern the will of God for us for the next biennium 2011-2013, it is important to know that our situation is different than what was then. Few months after we assembled in this same Hall we went through a dark period. Our people have undergone untold hardship, tribulation, pain, anxiety and above all, unprecedented experience of separation, loss and death. The aftermath of the war has created an unprecedented crisis of large displacement affecting many hundred thousand of civilians. What shall we say then?

It may be of pertinence that those who were in the Internally Displaced Peoples' (IDP) camps have almost gone back to their own places after two years since the tragic happenings. Such people are returning. Some have been resettled in their own lands. Others still wait to be settled. Quite a large number wait in patience to go back to their places of abode.

Resettlement is not the end of the problems. Sometimes it may be the beginning of issues. Those who get back are those who have undergone stress, pain, loss and the like. They have suffered the loss of their loved ones as well as their own belongings and properties. We should never forget that they come back into our midst as "wounded people." It is important that we recognize what they really need. It may be more that resettlement.

While we give thanks to God for the ways in which God

motivated us to be of care-givers to such suffering people, we also take note of the heavy task that lies ahead of us. We are happy that we have stretched our hands in small ways to accept and embrace the 'wounded' people. At times we have been complacent of what we did. We were almost succumbed to the temptation of self-satisfaction, self-boasting and self-justification. The spirit of 'heroism' has crept into our attitude. On the other hand, there has often been a concern for truth and freedom. Truth about what has happened and what is still happening in the lives of these people. Freedom for these people at various levels including from the state of 'victimhood.' However we seldom realized that there is a third and important aspect connected to these two. And this third factor is – healing, or if you would like to look at it by the end result – wholeness. There is a strong connection between freedom, truth and wholeness. Healing makes the connection clearer. It's not enough to talk about freedom, as if this is a hurdle that is overcome once and for all. We are free to the extent that we are whole. And conversely, to the extent that our brokenness continues to be part of our present, then we lack something of the total freedom that comes with being whole. Looking at it this way, wholeness becomes a vision, something to own as well as to aim for. The pursuit of wholeness becomes an imperative. What is expected of the Church is to discern the 'woundedness' of the people at large. The ones who return do not return to a place filled with milk and honey.

They come back to a place full of 'ruins' and 'haunting memories.' Hence bringing back the people to their land or helping them with some relief will not in any way take them to a meaningful living because the resulting woundedness is so severe that there seems to be no end to the pain and suffering. There is meaning in their lives only if their haunted memories are helped with an experience of 'healing.' The movement from 'woundedness' to 'wholeness' needs to be complete. It is important that we become "wounded listeners." It is demanded of us that we who become 'wounded listeners' go a step further to become 'wounded healers.' The Church is called to see that her unobtrusive witness seeks only the dignity, healing and common good of those whose lives have been shattered and torn apart.

We, the JDCSI, are a movement. We have been moving ever since we understood our mission in a larger context. The first movement or journey took us into the areas South of Elephant pass in the year 1979, thirty two years since the formation of the CSI.

Then the Church stretched her arms into the greater parts of Vanni and Mannar, from Vavuniya to Uyilankulam via Cheddikulam. The third stage of this journey took us into the Eastern Province and then finally to the Central Hills. We felt a deep sense of satisfaction in this journey with such spreading out. However the fact remained that we were a parochial Church, serving the Tamil people with the Tamil Workers, Pastors and Evangelists. Then came the moment of “shaking of the foundations” when we journeyed together to the Southern parts of the country to embrace our Sinhalese brethren thus becoming a ‘National Church.’ While we are happy with this unprecedented movement we must admit that we are also confronted with the challenges that go with this journey. It is true that there has been a shift from ‘parochialism’ to ‘nationalism’ or to meaningful ecumenism about which we are happy. Hence we not only journey together in hope but also for a greater cause. Now, the challenging task that lies ahead of us is, as we always uphold, discerning the signs of the times. At one point it was to ‘reach out’ and ‘embrace’ those who were on the fringes of the society. Later it was to find and explore ways of meaningful ecumenism or to learn what the church is called for or even ‘Being the Church.’ But now the most difficult question facing suffering humanity has not been answered by this movement. It is the question of human solidarity and togetherness. We are confronted with the momentous question of re-ordering human inter-relationships at all levels in justice and peace. Those who return to their own soil face many burning issues, issues of non-acceptance, fear, trauma especially post-traumatic stress disorder(PTSD) and above all of ‘continued state of victimhood.’ For the ‘wounded people’ who experience exclusion or isolation, the important question is that of inclusion or creation of true communities where they will be equal partners, where they will have dignity and voice. The hope of the victims augments not merely by economic development and advancement of technology but by true signs of solidarity. Human solidarity is the most urgent question that needs to be answered. Any praxis or philosophy that goes against solidarity is one that jeopardizes the cause of the victims. The issue of ‘authentic community of equals’ remains the unanswered question of the victims.

The church is a community in itself, often called a community of faith, but it is also a community bearing witness and living out its faith in the larger context of a nation. Our concern then is with the *Missio Dei*, Mission of God which compels the mission of the church to those outside of its membership. This is the meaning of “its community”. The healing sought is not to be limited to the community of faith that meets in a particular assembly. It is a healing of the believers in a local assembly in such a way that they bear testimony to and reach outside themselves in order to bring that healing to others. The kingdom of God, both as a gift and as a task, stands forth as the most comprehensive biblical expression for the goal of *Missio Dei*. Properly understood, the church is an instrument of the kingdom and an eschatological foretaste of it. The Kingdom of God is not just a theological construct; it is seen living in such a context, a context where we see large number of widows, a context where we come across small children without parents, a situation where the infrastructure of the people is completely shattered, a context where people do not have any means of existence, a context where hundreds of limbless people struggle for their existence.

When we, the Church, struggle to renovate and reconstruct structures we are also confronted with the question if that was the

priority. However the ‘broken people’ look to worship the Lord to find some solace for their lives. It made us realize that the deep seated agony of hurt, destruction and nothingness should be overcome with meaningful and appropriate gestures of goodwill for the children and women. We felt the need to reconstruct the church centres in order to accommodate these needy ones with empowerment and self-awareness programmes. The young women are helped with training for alternate livelihood. The children are nurtured in many Day care and Child Care Centres. Health facilities and nutrition programmes are being initiated. Job opportunities are being given to support at least few families. We are happy that while we continue to do this we also focused our minds to the physically challenged people due to war. This gave us the vision to start the Centre for Holistic Healing (CHH). This is the utmost challenge of the times. Mission of wholism (holism) or community or shalom is that which motivates us. Mission, (or missions), has been rather preoccupied on the one hand with proclamation--whether in word or in power, and on the other hand with deed—or social action. We have tended to define discipleship as either a personal spiritual growth, or a collective movement toward some sociological or moral ideal. It is of pertinence to quote Bishop Leslie Newbegin, “First, It is absurd to set word and deed, preaching and action, against each other. The central reality is neither word nor act, but the total life of a community enabled by the Spirit to live in Christ... Second, it is clear that action for justice and peace in the world is not something, which is secondary, marginal to the central task of evangelism. It belongs to the heart of the matter.”

God’s imperative is that the church is to model and extend the reign and rule of Christ. It is a kingdom of Shalom. Peace as shalom is more than only the absence of war. Formulated negatively, it includes the absence of alienation, material need, and oppression in society. Formulated positively, it indicates a state of comprehensive social harmony and material wellbeing in society. When we focus our minds on the ‘wounded people’ we also need to look afresh of the task. It is with interest that we note the Greek term for wound is the same as our English usage for not only physical wounds, but wounds of the heart, soul, mind, and social relationships. Shalom, in its Hebrew meanings mirrors the categories such as completeness (in number), safety, soundness (in body) [i.e. physical]; welfare, health, prosperity; peace, quiet, tranquility, contentment [i.e. emotional]; peace, friendship of human relationships [i.e. social] and with God especially in covenant relationship [i.e. volitional]; peace (from war).

The third line of the blessing in Book of Numbers 6:26 brings the blessing to a crescendo. The goal of God’s blessing is summed up by the final word of the benediction, Hebrew shalom or “peace.” Shalom refers to more than simply the absence of conflict. It encompasses all of God’s good gifts of health, prosperity, well being, and salvation. This richly worded blessing comes at the end of the section in chapters 5-6 that is concerned about the holiness and well-being of the entire community. It highlights God’s ultimate will for all the people as one of blessing and peace. God is blessing the community, and the people are obediently and eagerly following his commands.

When we, the JDCSI, get involved in this aspect of mission in this important context we also realize that the mission has to be holistic in nature and character. Holism is a word derived from the Greek holos, meaning “whole, complete.” Whether we spell it holism, or wholism, the meaning remains the same. Since the word has been co-opted in recent years by new-age philosophy there is confusion in some minds as to whether the use of the term implies a certain philosophy. The term is used broadly in anthropology, cosmology, theology, philosophy, psychology, biology, medicine, and sociology. The term is so widely used that it is necessary to clarify what it does mean. In missions, development projects are seen to be a holistic expression of the gospel, but often it is simply the juxtaposition of another element. The church program therefore suffers because in attempting to deal with the whole person, it ends up so focusing upon one aspect or need and that aspect becomes the driving center of the program.

It is said that because human being is reduced to a one-dimensional creature instead of a multi-dimensional one, human being is treated in the same way. Development is accordingly reduced to economic development. Total human development (educational, social, psychological, cultural, physical etc.) is not part of the development program. Medical care is limited to the part of the “machine” (body) which is not functioning well. Herein I like to once again focus on the meaning of shalom. We need to understand how it has been seen and understood by those attempting to apply it to life. Shalom, as “the advent of the justice of God”, communicates the sense of “human welfare, health, and well-being, in both spiritual and material aspects. Shalom is a way of life that characterizes the covenant relationship between God and his people. It is the best description of what the reign of God will be like: a place of safety, justice, and truth; a place of trust, inclusion, and love; a place of joy, happiness, and well-being.”

Shalom occurs when people who are in a right relationship with God and each other, enjoy and share together the resources of the earth in ways that show Christ is Lord of all creation. The history

of God’s redemption in Christ starts with God’s activity in dealing with the effects of sin. God’s redemption in Christ is first about the relationship between God and His people. Redemption is also about God’s ownership and renewal of the whole world, or earth. God gives the world to His people so that they will be stewards of it. When the redemption triangle is seen, we can understand what Lordship means.

This structure can help us better understand not only God’s activity in redemption, but also man’s response to that redemption. Shalom occurs when people who are in a right relationship with God and each other enjoy and share together the resources of the earth in ways that show Christ is Lord of all creation. God loved His people with a redeeming love. Because of that love we are able to love God and others. Love is an action that controls our emotions. Love is an action that controls our social relationships. Love is an action that controls the choices we make in how we use our physical energy and resources. Through the Bible, all creation helps us understand who God is and who we are in Christ. It is the Holy Spirit who works in every aspect of mankind to bring a response of faith in God’s redeeming love...emotional, social, volitional, physical, and mental.

It is necessary that we internalize the vision of shalom which involves healing and recreation. It makes us active participants in the scheme of God to help people who are struggling with their state of victimhood to liberate them to the state of sovereignty. It helps people heal the festering of their wounds. Let the pursuit of wholeness become an imperative in our mission. Let our journey together this biennium be a movement from woundedness toward wholeness. Let this vision of wholeness guide our thinking and actions in this biennium 2011-2013.

The Masquerade
The masks fashioned
The dialogues rehearsed
Lights, camera.....

The soulless performance
Each role, an empty pretence
One lie merges into another
Till one wonders what happened to humanity

A fleeting moment of knowing tears
A faint cry for justice
Covered with the hideous mask of lies

An honest soul so dear to find
Even the white robes soiled deep inside
Justice, truth and trust, they too don their masks
And play their parts

How it must ache for the master to see
His creation turning aside from destiny
A masquerade! We live our lives in vain
Alas! We fail to see

Judgment will rise one day and will be for eternity
Gitanjali Thiagarajah

*Editor's Choice
Poem of the month*

Tribute by Bishop Thiagarajah

Mr. Stanley Jeyaratnam Emerson

I came to know Stanley Emerson in 1981 when I went to Colombo to begin my ministry as Assistant Pastor. His was an adorable little family: Stanley Uncle, Leela Aunty and Athisayacca (Leela Aunty's mother). I was then just beginning my ministry, a single, young person. This family gave me immense inspiration and all the support I needed.

My ties with his family were enhanced by several factors. Leela aunty taught my sisters at Vembadi Girls High School; my brother in law late Mahilrajan was connected to Stanley uncle.

Ever since I came to know him we became strongly bonded as good friends. He was indeed a true friend and we enjoyed in particular our chess sessions. His favorite of course was scrabbles.

His home was very much my own too. He was just like a son to his mother-in-law. I can't simply express in words how he wept when Athisayacca was suddenly called beyond in 1982. It will be no exaggeration if I say hundreds of people would come to 33rd Lane, Wellawatte where they lived for the simple reason they felt and experienced a rich and relaxed fellowship: eating together and sharing witty rejoinders. It was fellowship most intimate and we enjoyed every minute of it.

All the nieces and nephews calling him "kuddy mama" still rings in my ears. He was truly a lovable person. People would throng to listen to his jokes. When I was transferred in May 1982 to Nunavil, he gifted me his set of scrabbles which I still have as a very valuable piece of my collections

It was a major decision for him when Leela aunty received a call from the Anglican Church to be in-charge of Karuna Nilayam, Kilinochchi. He asked me of my opinion and I told him it would be of great sacrifice on their part but at the same time a great blessing to the less fortunate ones. I drove both of them to Kilinochchi. That was the time I was serving in Mankulam. Therefore, I had a home at Kilinochchi. I would spend time with them whenever I passed that way. Suddenly when the situation changed and they had to be displaced with the children and the mentally challenged adults they were taken aback, but took it on to their shoulders and stood by them in times of crisis. This only brought them back to Colombo and finally to Canada.

Recently I officiated a registration of marriage at Hotel Renuka in Colombo for his niece Jeyanthi's daughter. It was a time when I met most of his nephews after a long time who brought their sweet memories of their 'kuddy mama'.

Whenever I visited Canada I made it a point to visit Stanley Uncle. He took pride and joy in entertaining me and my family. He would have invaluable and memorable gifts for me. One of such that still hangs in my dining hall is Leonardo Davinci's "Last Supper" which was hanging in their Scarborough home. Even during my last visit for my mother-in-law's funeral, I would humbly admit that his was the only home I visited. He entertained my wife and me to a Leela aunty's famous hopper breakfast. As usual we exchanged few jokes and spent some time together in prayer.

Though time and place have separated us we would talk at least twice a year, his birthday and Leela Aunty's birthday. He would say "our kuddy pothagar", this was how he used to call me, would never miss this day to call to wish us. I am happy I did not miss October 12th last year lest I would be regretting today. Even on March 18th when I called to wish Leela Aunty on her birthday I was lucky to talk to him. It was the time, I think, he was getting ready to enter a home for the elderly.

Stanley Uncle is gone, gone to be with his Maker to enjoy that perpetual joy. When my sister-in-law Jebi Beadle called and conveyed this message I was sad but at the same time thanked God that this happened quietly, peacefully and without any suffering or ailment.

Let us take to heart that Stanley Uncle has gone to be with the Lord forever. We too will meet him face to face one day when we too complete our course on earth. I spoke to Leela Aunty and said, "Aunty, it is good that he has predeceased you. I know for sure how would not have taken it easy if it was your time to go. She fully agreed with me.

We have just concluded 61st Sessions of the Diocesan Council of the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India where we remembered so dearly our dear Stanley Uncle who was a stalwart of our church in Colombo where he served in the committee that was responsible to build a church down Frances Road.

Well done, great companion. You have been so simple, humble and lovable. You have been trustworthy. You have been true to your bonding with your darling wife (our Leela Aunty), to your nieces and nephews and all members of the extended family and to the greater family, the church. As Jesus has said, "enter into the joy of your Master." We will meet you in that beautiful shore. May God of Life and of Resurrection grant you life eternal?

Your "kuddy pothagar"

[Bishop Dr Daniel S. Thiagarajah along with wife Dr Thaya & daughter Gitanjali Thiagarajah]

Editors' Note : JDCSI Newsletter

We have been inundated with complaints and comments about the JDCSI Newsletter with the fears that it has been discontinued. In streamlining our communications efforts, we decided to incorporate it in the Morning Star which has a historic significance.

Please be assured we will value the best services to our readers marked by the spirit of the mission to which we are committed.

Uthayatharakai May 2011

building solidarity and unity ...

Melbourne, Australia

'Fundraising Dinner Multicultural Entertainment'

St. George's East St. Kilda Uniting Church and Creative Ministries Network to support the Jaffna Diocese,CSI



Golden Shawl of Gratitude was placed on David's shoulder by Christy Thiagarajah



Mr Christy Thiagarajah who plays a highly focused role in the affairs and interests of the disabled people, widows, orphans and homeless of the Vanni announced that the children of the Samuel Centre in Jaffna and Wannu children which receives support from Pastor Lucky Kanagasabai, Pastor Anto Samul, John Bottomly, Rev. Angela Tampiyappa and Mr David Hickey have saved money from their meager pocket expense to honor this evening with a Golden Shawl of Gratitude.

Mr. Thiagarajah said that he was delighted to make this presentation on their behalf. He also said most of the children at the Samuel Home were from the Vanni. Personally complimenting Anto Samuel, Mr. Thiagarajah said that Anto was one of the few people among the Diaspora who have given their hearts to the needs of the people of the Vanni.

The Vanni is a challenge for all of us. If we are going to weaken our people for a new hope, it has to begin in the Vanni said Mr.Christy Thiagarajah.

Opening Prayer: By Rev Corrie Symington

Lighting of the traditional Lamp by Guest of Honour Mr David Hickey

Our Mum Pastor Anto samuel (எங்கள் அம்மா)



Greetings from Nilani Vejayaratnam



Colours of Eastern Dance



Ms Revati Ilanko and Dance Group



Mrs Rathie Selvaratnam distributes the gift of the evening



Vote of Thanks by Mrs Sulochana Thavarajah



Closing Prayer by Rev John Bottomley

