



Varany Mission Farm, committed to spark an agricultural revolution



Jaffna Diocese

Sri Lanka faces many crisis situations. Among them, the dearth of professionals from doctors and engineers to specialists in agriculture, fisheries and the technically qualified of all types is deadening. Even the farmers who have tilled the soil, sown the seeds and harvested their yields for centuries employing environmentally friendly systems have become a dying breed; perhaps have even disappeared in places like Jaffna. Such a state in the traditional Tamil districts in the Northern and Eastern Provinces is pretty grim.

The long and protracted civil war has wrenched these regions of their human power from the professionals to the able-bodied. Agriculture, the primary industry of the two provinces that had enjoyed tank irrigation systems for centuries has been devastated. These areas especially in the north were well known for highly developed organic, companionate farming and livestock breeding traditions.

The livestock was mostly bred in backyards or as small herds and flocks and paddocked at nights in garden plots to enrich the soil especially in the red soil regions but the war years have ruined this industry.

The Varany Mission Farm of the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India (JDCSI), a successful venture launched during mid-1970s bear the disturbing marks of how it came to grief. Prior to the civil war when the farm was commandeered as a base for the armed forces, corruption was a factor too. Until then the farm had done well under the supervision of Mr A V Ponnu a retired teacher of unblemished integrity who had served on the Jaffna Diocesan Council for many years. The farm's products traded through a centre in the City of Jaffna were in popular demand. This activity also checked undue profiteering in poultry products effectively.



Rev Dr Joseph Gunalan Thiagarajah

When the Rev Dr Joseph Gunalan Thiagarajah took charge of the Varany Mission Farm once it was handed back to us, two parallel factors made a major impact on its re-development and the plans for its future. Its main focus was to generate a powerful force of economic activity of every form from the backyard to the wide open fields.

Firstly, the dream of the Rev Dr Joseph Gunalan Thiagarajah in line with the goals of the JDCSI was to set up and develop a multi-focused parental community development farm that is capable of sparking an organic system of agriculture and animal husbandry that would incorporate all farming activities from the backyard home barns and house gardens to fruit orchards, extensive vegetable farming, livestock breeding large and small, and the encouragement of natural and green manuring systems that have been traditional to these areas. The disciplined use of our water resources will be another factor.

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The Varany Mission Farm will also explore such sources of energy as biogas, solar power and windmill technology and put them to good use to popularize such assets that are environmentally sound and compatible.

Secondly the Rev Dr Joseph Gunalan Thiagarajah has applied his business acumen and management expertise to revive the potential of the Varany Mission farm within a short time.

He is confident that with his successful farming venture at Lindula in the Central Province, the JDCSI not only can give a leadership in creating an agricultural revolution in the country that is badly needed and long overdue but also become self-sufficient in meeting the needs of various JDCSI community programmers especially in the rehabilitation of the war devastated areas like the Wannu.

A recent visit to the Varany Mission Farm and a conducted tour organized by the hardworking farm manager M Pathmanathan revealed the commitment of the Rev Dr Gunalan Thiagarajah to ensure that his dreams, ideals and commitment to the JDCSI's socio-economic programmes are quite practical and full of promise for progress. In the world of the Rev Dr Thiagarajah corruption stands exorcised and only service to the community efficiently employed gathers strength and gives the desired results



The goats are penned in such a way that enables cleaner maintenance and easier removal of their droppings to the compost pit.

Known as the poor man's cow, goats breed fast, can be managed easily and their milk has properties that give relief to sufferers of asthma. The milk digests easily.

On our visit we were delighted to welcome the first batch of 1000 day-old chicks and were told another 9000 was to follow and many more later.

The chicken industry could also be expanded with community participation especially in the raising of free range chicken using kerosene-fired incubators.

Steadily the farm is arising after the extensive damages caused to it during the last several years.

Another community-based project that has been initiated is the farm's determination to develop the breeding of goats in the backyards of homes. The farm will soon be in a position to distribute goats to various families who will be obliged to give the farm a kid in return.



We have two popular varieties of goats, the Jamnapari and the Channel and the crossbreeds are the hardier ones and their meat much sought after. Apart from meat, goat skins are sought after for leather-based percussion instruments like the thavil. Among the new uses possible are to make fashionable winter coats out of them for the export market

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Various kinds of new products like goat milk soap, skin conditioners and foam baths have hit the malls of the west as extremely popular products. Research reveals that in olden times goat milk was used extensively to alleviate cretin skin problems.

The farm has coconut palms that are highly productive and several varieties of mango trees too.

The products and by-products of a farm are many and varied from nutritional breakfast items and healthy food including fresh vegetables, fruits, milk products like yogurt and buttermilk to pickles and skin conditioners and creams.

The farm has a very active coir industry section where young people from the neighbourhood are being trained to develop a network of home-based industries whereby the farm will supply coir extracted from coconut husks and distribute to the various homes and will take the responsibility to market the products.

Also in the proposal stage is the breeding of ducks using the farm's pool to advantage. The heavy meaters are the Muscovies that can be successfully raised in Jaffna.

A proper farm is an all composite institution and can become a major agro-industrial community serving asset that can help to bring agriculture not only back to its pristine glory but also open up new areas of multi-dimensional development focus. The Varany Mission Farm is committed to that goal in its service to the community.

Dr Tom Hirschfeld accompanied by his wife Caroline from Boston, Massachusetts,

Grass roots medical intervention crucial to community's health



When the American missionaries came to North Sri Lanka almost two hundred years ago they recognized two key elements vital for the development and progress of a community, health and education. Our people, who were quite literate, had a system of education that was basic and mostly nonformal which suited their economic needs and cultural activities of the time, namely farming and the arts.

It was referred to as "Thinnai Kalvi" imparted by an elder in the front portion of his mud-daubed and palm leaf roofed house. This was usually available to the upper castes of the community. Those from the lower rungs of the caste hierarchy had to learn their skills generationally imparted within the respective caste structures.

Politically our ancestors were stably parish-organized, the parish being the seat of the grass roots government. Culturally too they were quite versed in the arts like folk and classical music, dance, drama (Iyal-Isai-Natakam) and literature that were traditional to them and promoted widely in the temples of old.

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In the field of health they were served with systems of herbal medicine that have been in vogue for centuries and demanded a great degree of diet discipline among others. One could claim there was grass roots medical intervention at that time though without certain surgical skills widely known today, it had its limitations. However, our physicians of times past were experts in their various fields. We had the Ayurveda, Siththa and Unani systems of medicine; there were others as well and as anywhere else in the world, the charlatan medical practitioners too.

Manipay Green Memorial Hospital was founded more than one hundred and fifty years ago on the strength of modern medical inputs on the existing traditional system. This was headed by medical workers from the West who were hardly familiar with the local systems. This was why Dr Samuel Green, a man of visions who appreciated the effectiveness of the traditional systems, translated many medical books from Tamil to English and English to Tamil and made a tremendous contribution to medical science in Sri Lanka. This also helped him to found the first medical college in the country. It is possible that some of his students had grounding in traditional medical practice. Research has shown that a great deal of medical information inscribed on olas (palm leaves) were systematically destroyed by the Portuguese during the 16th century or removed to Lisbon.



During his recent visit to Sri Lanka Dr Tom Hirschfeld accompanied by his wife Caroline from Boston, Massachusetts, was greatly impressed by what people at the grass roots knew about vital medical intervention in cases of certain emergencies, however limited they may be.

Gowshalya a JDCSI day care teacher in the Wannu said how she would treat a case of suicide attempted by ingesting a poisonous substance. She and her colleagues could handle other emergencies too. Suicide is a major concern in the Wannu today.



We are now living in times of several major diseases that plague humanity and they demand modern medical treatment especially complicated surgeries and others that require intensive care. Certain illnesses also spread fast even across nations of the world for various reasons. These major illnesses can be checked to a great extent by awareness, early intervention and timely treatment especially the preventive types.

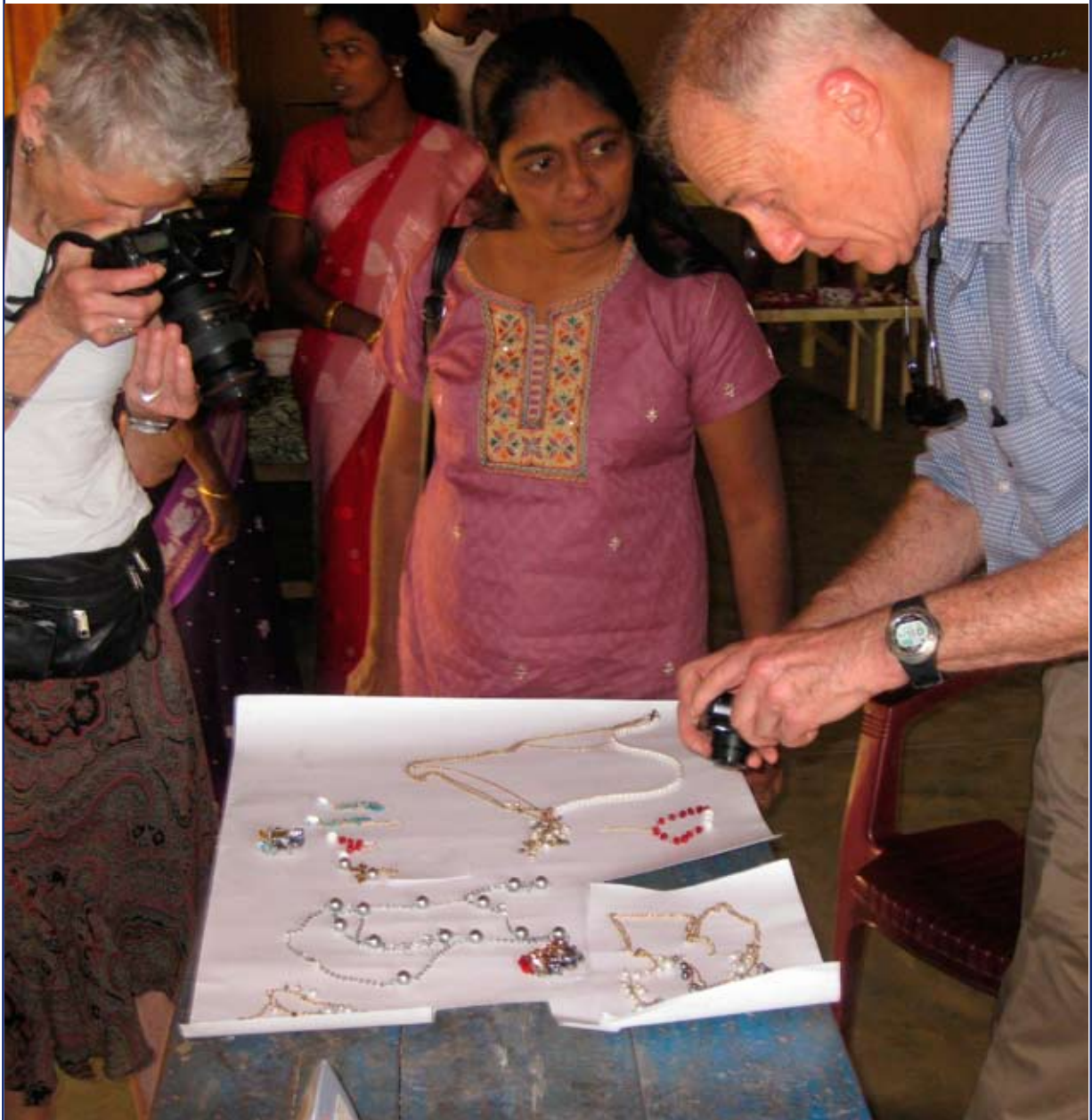
Dr Tom Hirschfeld who visited a number of places in the Wannu and Jaffna District shared his views that an extensive programme of awareness including techniques and methods of early intervention at the grass roots level were vital to the good health of a community.

Dr Hirschfeld who has worked among the native people of Nicaragua in the hills, was of the view that a team of health workers and rural volunteers engaged in work among children and needy people informed in health intervention programmes and techniques can contribute considerably to the good health of the nation.

He and his wife Carpline a professional photographer communicated freely with the workers of the JDCSI in the Wannu, at the Varany Mission Farm and also visited the Green Memorial and McLeod Hospitals during their stay in Sri Lanka.

They appreciated very much the plans of the JDCSI to provide full in-house treatment for the totally paralyzed from the war and visited the site location too.

They were particularly impressed by the Varany Mission Farm and its composite programme strictly conforming to the organic system and its ideal as a parental farm for multi-dimensional community activities. Such ideals, Dr Hirschfeld said will help transform a society and set it on a path of dynamic progress. He also presented Bishop Daniel Thiagarajah a selection of grass roots teaching aid material and promised his support to the vision that is being pursued by his diocese.



Committed international participation is not only for nations but also for individuals to dedicate a good part of their time and expertise in various fields to those in need especially in countries where such help is crucial to their well being.

“narrative news story”

Bishop Thiagarajah calls on war victim



Desperate for some help from a serious physical condition, 27-year old Sasimala of Pannangkaddi in Kilinochchi called at the Wannai JDCSI Holistic Healing Centre (HHC) March 26 seeking help

As is the case of thousands of people of the Wannai she too was a war victim. She has not only lost one of her legs but also a finger in each hand but much more than that, she suffers a serious medical condition that makes breathing extremely labored and painful and is in urgent need of surgical treatment.

During the war her entire family except her sister Kavitha 26 was wiped out. Kavitha too has lost a leg. They have sought refuge in the home of a near relative but the temporary nature of this facility was obvious. Sasimala had sought the help of a local convent but the sisters there advised her to seek medical help and that they would help with accommodation once she had the surgery done.

Sasimala has no means whatsoever to handle these matters and the need being urgent, she turned to the JDCSI Holistic Healing Centre for help.

Thereupon the centre's coordinator Dr Thaya Thiagarajah accompanied by Bishop Daniel Thiagarajah took Sasimala to the place where she is staying, ensured she was in some comforts and assured to help with assistance she needed.

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Wanni grandma and grandkids struggle to survive



Sixty year old Maruthayi of Kalmadu in Wanni's Waddakatchi is a grandmother of her daughter's four children who are now in her care. This is because their parents were killed in the horrendous civil war. They have no house of their own and have only a tarpaulin-covered temporary shed, one of those types distributed by the UNICEF as an emergency measure.

Even though the war was over for several months, there are no signs of state help in respect of rehabilitation and Maruthayi is not an exception.

Maruthayi tenders her grandchildren doing unskilled cooliewhich bring in very low income. She augments this by rearing free range chicken. However, this hardly meets the needs of four children, two girls and two boys, whose age's range seven to thirteen.

Recently volunteers from JDCSI's Holistic Healing Centre visited Maruthayi and the children and were concerned about their well being. They felt this family needed immediate assistance.

Care and education of children being the primary focus, it was suggested to the grandmother that the children Logini, Krishanthan, Suganthan and Dharsika be given full scholarship for education and free residential hostel faculties in the JDCSI homes. The Holistic Healing Centre (HHC) now awaits a response from the grandmother.

The Children are among the thousands in the Wanni whose pitiable state is a constant concern of the JDCSI.

எமது நிறைவாழ்வு மையத்தின் பணி



விசுவமடு குமாரசாமிபுரத்தை வசிப்பிடமாகக் கொண்ட திரு. சந்திரசெல்வம் அவர்கள், சந்திரசெல்வம் கனியன்பு, சந்திரசெல்வம் கனிவிழி, சந்திரசெல்வம் அகல்விழி ஆகியோரின் அன்பு தந்தையுமாவார்.

திரு. சந்திரசெல்வம் அவர்கள் இவர் கடந்த யுத்தத்தின்போது மிகவும் பாதிக்கப்பட்டு இரு கால்களையும் இழந்த நிலையில் எந்தவிதமான வேலையும் செய்ய முடியாத நிலையில் வாழ்ந்து வருகின்றார்.



ஆசிரியர் கிதா சாமுவேல்

தற்பொழுது இவர் பாவித்துவருகின்ற றூாநநட ஊாயசை மிகவும் பழுதடைந்த நிலையில் காணப்படுகின்றது.

எனவே நாம் நிறைவாழ்வு மையத்தினூடாக இவருக்கு புதிய றூாநநட ஊாயசை ஒன்றினை வழங்குவதற்கு எண்ணியுள்ளோம்.

அத்துடன் இவர்களுடைய வாழ்வாதாரம் பற்றி நாம் அவர்களிடம் வினவியபோது மிகவும் கஸ்டமான நிலையில் இருப்பதாகக் கூறினார்.

எனவே இவர்களின் வாழ்வாதார முன்னேற்றத்திற்காக நாம் இவர்களுக்கு கோழிகளை அன்பளிப்பாகக் கொடுத்து அதனை எவ்வாறு பராமரிப்பது பற்றிய விளக்கத்தினையும் அவர்களுக்கு வழங்க உள்ளோம்.

அதன் பின்னர் எமது நிறைவாழ்வு மையத்தினூடாக கிளிநொச்சி அலுவலக திறப்பு விழாவிற்கு திரு.சந்திரசெல்வம் அவர்களையும் அழைத்திருந்தோம். அந்த நேரத்தில் எமது விழாவிற்கு சிறப்பு விருந்தினராக வருகை தந்திருந்த சமுதநஉவ ஊழி □ முசனையெவழச ஆ.ளு.கு அவர்களாலும் எமது தென்னிந்தியத் திருச்சபையின் பேராயர் அவர்களாலும் மற்றும் பேராயர் அம்மா அவர்களாலும் திரு. சந்திரசெல்வம் அவர்களுக்கு புதிய ஊழஅநன றூாநநட ஊாயசை ஒன்றினையும் வழங்கியிருந்தோம்.

இவ்வாறு எமது பணியானது அவருடைய குடும்பத்தின் உறவுகளுக்கு எமது நிறைவாழ்வு மையத்தினூடாகத் தொடரும்.

World JDCSI Topics
Australian news

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Friends of JDCSI



A boost to our farm projects

Dr Ratnesar and his family in Australia have come forward to be supportive to our farm projects leasing their coconut estate in Pallai for our use. Pallai is one of the areas badly affected by the civil war and the need to recover and reconstruct is also great. During her recent visit to Australia, Dr ThayaThiagarajah visited the Ratnesars and their friends.

Gift of bicycle

The people of the Wannu especially students and more particularly those who have suffered injuries of various kinds need the means of movement to schools, hospitals, markets, farms etc. In the conditions and circumstances existing in the Wannu bicycles are needed in their hundreds and also the 3-wheeler handicap tricycles.

We gratefully acknowledge the offer of 28 bicycles by Peter Canagasingam from Melbourne who will be visiting at the end of the month to personally hand over the bicycles during his homeland stay. He is the grandson of Mr Carpenter Canagasingam who served the JDCSI as a catechist. He was a popular priest.



Peter Canagasingam

Fundraising Dinner in Melbourne

'Fundraising Dinner Multicultural Entertainment'

"help for Sri Lanka's civil war victims: displaced people, widows, orphans, disabled and homeless"

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

Saturday

21st May 2011 @ 6:30pm

St Scholastica's Community Centre
348 Burwood Highway, Burwood
Mel Way Ref 61 D 6



HELP for **WANNI**

Donation of \$25

Multicultural Night

Proudly sponsored by Indo Ceylon Spices, Dandenong

If you have any queries, please call Christy Thiagarajah.

Editorial

A folly gone too foolish! Nuclear stupidity endangers humanity.



The creation story is quite specific about what God intended the heavens and earth to be; they were created beautifully and He was glad.

Man was set amidst this to enjoy His handiwork but there was a discipline expected of him in relation to his habitation and its use. All creations are inter-related and interdependent on each other; man and all forms of life in nature. As such they are inter-committed to the best interests of each other. This is compatibility both sacrosanct and divine and man cannot overstep it.

The welfare of one contributes to the welfare of another immaterial whether one is human, animal, plant or any others.

This demands a strict balance on how we employ our activities and also in our concerns about the health of our environment.

God forbade that we do not go further than necessary and upset the balance of nature.

But greed and avarice and the striving for power over others and even nature has led to a great deal of devastation of many life forms and also rendered the envi-

ronment unclean and even toxic in many countries.

The recent tragedy in Japan shows how insensitive man has been in respect of the environment; in fact God's choicest creation.

By itself nuclear plants pose a great deal of risk and for those who wish peace and development these are not needed at all. There are many natural sources of energy from the humble cow dung to the highly technical ocean currents that can be freely tapped. Those bent on profits by abusing nature may

But when nuclear plants are planned and launched in countries that are susceptible to earthquakes and volcanic activities we dare God and state that man can go for the Forbidden Fruit whatever the consequences are.

It is time, the Multinational Companies and the powerful nations of the world understand that people want peace universally and not quick profits at any cost and Japan, in this respect had gone too far.

Is there no end of a lesson to man in pursuit of his folly?

Jaffna Diocese