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UDUPPIDDY CHURCH focus of the Month BISHOP'S VISIT TO UDUPPIDDY CHURCH



Evangelistic work in Uduppiddy was started in 1827 and the Church in Uduppiddy was recognized in 1847

Bishop with other Officers (Rev. I. Rajkumar, Secretary, JDCSI and Mr. Arul Joseph, Treasurer), Mr. S.R. Jesupalan, Pension Fund Treasurer cum Property Officer accompanied by the new Pastor the Rev. K.S. Joseph visited the JDCSI Church in Uduppiddy on Monday, 26th May 2008 following the retirement of the Rev. V.N. Tharmakulasingham on 21st May 2008.

He had a meeting with the leaders of the church and explained to them the plans he has for the church. As a token of his goodwill gesture Bishop pledged to do the painting of the Church on behalf of his family in remembrance of his mother Lydia Chellammah Thiagarajah who was born in Uduppiddy.

Among those present for discussion were Mrs. R. Kuddithamby (nee Ranjitham Paul), Principal of American Mission Girls' School and Ms. Rajaratnam (daughter of late Rev. & Mrs. E.D. Rajaratnam), Vice-Principal.

Historic event hails JDCSI as a national church



The founding of the Church of South India in 1947 marking the historic union of several churches in southern India should have inspired a similar union in Sri Lanka. But for sixty one years, the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India (JDCSI) with congregations largely in the north remained the sole hope for such a union. But on Sunday June 8, 2008 an Ordination Worship Service not only became a historic turning point for this church, but thanks to the leadership of the new Bishop in Jaffna, the Rt Rev Dr Daniel Thiagarajah, the JDCSI has assumed the status of a national church with churches in the south, west, east and the central hills apart from those in the north. These include a Sinhalese congregation in Galle, a new language community within the Church of South India family.

The event that hailed this landmark was an Ordination Worship Service that took place yesterday at the Colombo Church of the JDCSI led by the celebrant, Bishop Daniel Thiagarajah during which three deacons and two presbyters were ordained including three who have now returned to the mother church. A fifth candidate for deacon ordination from Wannai, could not reach Colombo due to transportation difficulties.

Our media persons report that a large number of participants at Sunday's event felt God's leader-

ship that has inspired the JDCSI to become a national church. This appears to have been brought about through challenging circumstances that demanded the church to march onwards with unquestionable faith. God's ways are amazing and are not always possible to comprehend easily but our faith will move mountains. This also gives a new hope to the people of Sri Lanka with the JDCSI now in a position to speak out for peace and amity in Sri Lanka as a national church.



Jaffna Diocese

The Poem - Thank God, they are home

By Victor Karunairajan

On Sunday June 9, 2008, the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India enshrining a landmark event of a unique celebration of ordination also signalled its status as a national church in Sri Lanka. This expression in verse appreciates the spirit of the occasion and God's guidance in tribute and gratitude.

Every dawn past few years
Without missing even a day
Farmer Ponnuru kept his vigil
Sure he was, one day soon
His boys will return home

Never did he lose his hope
The sons he so much loved
Forsake him for all the gold
An evil force tempted them
To earn its might and clout

Using sheer alluring charm
Sham, guile and trickery
Piteously pursuing power
To achieve its dominance
And trashed a generation
A home of generations
Given up for really what!
Dirty dollars filthy lucre
Cloudy images dreamt
And what a mess it is?

American dollars aplenty
Dutch guilders and shekels
Bit of Euros even the liras
Whatever could be had
The force coveted it all.
Enthralled by such a life
That this would ordain
Even if that really mean
Wearing a bogus garb
To defraud and deceive.

How long can one hold
A life of bamboozle bilk
When the dominators
Craft them suckers all
Of those they exploit?

Time for home said one
A home awaits yonder
Famished and hungry
Betrayed and swindled
What else can we do?

Agreed the other readily
Let's go to our own home
And our father awaits us
From dawn to the dusk
Sure his sons will return.

From the distant horizon
The excited father did see
What he had waited long
And sure will be realized
His boys were truly home.



Church focuses on educational needs of needy children

The Hatton Church which functions under the auspices of the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India has two branches, one at Kotagalai Commercial and the other, Strathdon. The main commitment to the community of this church is a 150-children strong Nursery and Sunday School, the largest of this kind in Sri Lanka, thanks to the personal financial support of the Rev J G Thiagarajah. The children are provided with a fellowship lunch every Sunday after morning worship and are also helped with educational material.



Leadership Training Programme for the children in the Homes.

A training programme was held from the 18th to the 20th of May 2008 for forty children in the homes run by the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India. Mr. A. C. Frances, the manager of the homes, organized the workshop. The wardens of the homes also took part and helped in organizing the events. Dr. Mrs. Thiagarajah led the workshops and helped as the resource person.



Bishop Meets People from Kaluwanchikudy



People from Onthatchimadam, Kaluwanchikudy who came to support their Pastor who got ordained as Presbyter (Rev. James Shanthakumar Gnanapragasam)

Bishop is with this group after the fellowship breakfast



Retreat for Clergy and Spouses of Nandyal Diocese at Kodaikanal



A three day Retreat for the clergy, their spouses and the officers of CSI Nandyal Diocese was held in at the CSI Retreat Centre, Kodaikanal from 13-16 May 2008. It was organized by the

Rt. Rev. Dr P.J. Lawrence, Bishop of Nandyal. The Rt. rev. S. Vasanthakumar (Bishop of Karnataka Central Diocese) and the Rt. Rev. Dr Daniel Thiagarajah (Bishop of Jaffna Diocese) participated as leaders of the retreat.

The Rev. Dr. Ms. Evangeline Anderson of United Theological College, Bangalore, Rev Dr Daniel Premkuumar and Rev Dr Ravikumar (Prebyter of St. Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore) were special speakers during these days.



My Grandpa Bishop Kulendran

By Patrick Ratnaraja

He was indeed a Good Shepherd; I am very proud of him.

My mother must have conceived me at an auspicious hour to be richly blessed to have had two wonderful people in my life, my grandpa and grandma Sabapathy and Mathuram Kulendran. Little did my siblings and I realize during the early years of our childhood our grandpa's greatness in many facets of his life. We just recognized him as a man in the priestly garb who graduated from his white cassock to the maroon which we thought he wore with great dignity. We felt proud to see him walking down the aisle of the church on those special occasions in the company of his fellow priests and catechists with the crook of the Good Shepherd in his hand.

While at home, we would see many visitors regularly calling on him and felt he had a lot of important things to do. Very often we will hear him breaking into waves of whirling laughter and only in our older years we realized he was a great wit and loved breaking into reams of it in the right kind of company; more appropriately I could say beams of laughter. He was considered an excellent after dinner speaker but he was quite selective of the company where he could be relaxed and comfortable; indeed be his real self.

It has been my suspicion that there were quite a few people about whom he had his own views probably not quite complimentary but he never showed it out or made any one feel uncomfortable. In such situations he made very good use of his witty anecdotes and stories which I am sure was his way of not getting into serious discussions with such people. Yet, he made them feel at ease and this is one of the great traits of my grandpa.

During the 1950s I think when he spent some time at Chicago Theological Seminary in the US, he had occasion to take a friend from Sri Lanka to a restaurant one evening. Their arrival had a shock reaction from the staff and one of the waiters approached him and said very politely that the tables were all booked but he could find them a comfortable niche in the kitchen.

Suspecting something funny pertaining to racism, he happily agreed. There in the kitchen as the table was being quickly readied, he told a very apologetic manager that they feel extremely privileged to be entertained in the

kitchen because that was how the most favourite guests to a home are treated back home in Sri Lanka. The manager certainly got the message and quickly found them one of the best spots in the restaurant. This is a typical rejoinder of my grandpa in situations where most people would have raged or been quite upset.

Older friends of ours who have attended meetings of the Jaffna College Board of Directors and the Diocesan Council sessions where he presided have told me umpteen numbers of stories about how he would handle difficult situations with a touch of humour and a gentle pat of inspiring support to the most difficult of the participants.

Even though, I suspected he would suffer no fools, his suffering would have been deep within, never ever shown and with the kind of people he had to deal with at times, it must have been quite a stress to him. He was too humble a person to suffer that kind of stress because he was compassionate towards others.

His humility is best seen in respect of the several scholarly books he has written, published and widely used in universities, theological seminaries and places where such scholarship as he had was valued. Yet he hardly talked about them and many of his own ministers were quite ignorant of these achievements. There was only a handful that would even possess copies of his books.

A friend saw a copy of his book, Silence of the American Pulpit, in my home and spent the next three days taking notes from them copiously because he simply did not want to borrow a book that was very special to me; indeed precious. This was one of his earliest, and according to my friend, an extremely well presented material and very much the scholar my grandpa was, in his estimation.

Among his other books, the one that has been much read and talked about is Grace in Christianity and Hinduism which is virtually a recommended text book in several seminaries in various parts of the world. A man of immense grace himself, a nature he shared with my grandma most generously, his intimate understanding of both Christianity and Hinduism has made his book a classic of our times.

My grandma was a very worthy, understanding and supportive partner to my grandpa and together was a role model couple and an example to the community. While he was the

preaching partner, she was the singing companion fond of lyrics in particular and contributed a great deal to the revision of the Hymn Book once the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India came into being in 1947. She preceded grandpa in her passage to eternal life and we knew very well how he missed her companionship; more than a husband and wife, they were two great chums.

One of his great moments must have been interviewing the great Indian mystic Saint Sadhu Sundhar Singh February 1929 when he was a student of Serampore Theological Seminary at that time. During the interview to a question my grandpa asked, this great man said:

“The old habit of talking about ‘heathen’ should go. The worst ‘heathen’ are among us. We should love them as brothers, though we need not love all that they believed or did.” This interview was reported in The Morning Star.

My grandpa had a vision not just for the church alone but for the Tamil community in particular and the country as a whole. He believed strongly in a federal solution to Sri Lanka’s ethnic problems and was probably among the first people to sound such a resolution. It is my belief that this is the only way out for Sri Lanka out of this communal chaos unless there is a sinister intention among the majority community to condemn the Tamils history in Sri Lanka.

However, grandpa was certainly not a political activist like Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus. How I have wished at times that he had emulated the Cypriot Greek Orthodox eminence or that of the role Cardinal Sin played for the Republic of the Philippines especially ensuring the end of the rule of terror of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos. But my grandpa’s vision was widely known and he had a great deal of respect for the late S J V Chelvanayagam, the leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). I think he liked him more as the head of the Federal Party because in my view the TULF moved far away from the ideals based on ahimsa which was very much like what he believed and visualized as the

means for political action for the Tamils.

During the last years of his life he enjoyed the friendship of some of his trusted friends from among his peers like the former principals of Jaffna College, Union College and Uduvil Girls College K A Selliah, I P Thurairatnam and Ariam Paramasamy, Rev and Mrs A C Thambirajah of Navajeevanam where he often retreated, Albert and Leela Selliah whom he treated as his own blood, former Senator S R Kanaganayagam and his wife whom he regularly visited and several younger friends like Luther Selvarajah, Chuty Thurairatnam, Victor Karunairajan and a few others. Among those who preceded him, he missed most were his Christa Seva Ashram friends Sevaks Selvaratnam and Yesusagayam, affectionately to all Periyannai and Chinnanni.

Sans the ecclesiastical position he held probably as one among the most lettered of the bishops of the Church of South India, his depth and insights into the affairs of people and their communities, the trust and love he enjoyed and the influence he had for the mere asking to exert and serve him with material opportunities and splendours, a curse that seems endemic in Sri Lanka, my grandpa was a selfless, down to earth humble man and one to whom even a cheap pair of sandals is luxury. He had just one extra cassock for special occasions and will walk great distances and if they were longer to walk, will ride pillion on a cycle with one of his younger friends.

As a youngster I often felt angry that he never asserted his rights but now that I have a family of my own, I look back at the life of my grandpa, the First Bishop of the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India with a great deal of pride especially for the humility of this gentle giant of a scholar but spiritually and in many other ways strong, sure and most determined. His people mattered to him and that should not be a surprise. Because he was the Good Shepherd.