

VeAhavta Sri Lanka

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Facts About Sri Lanka:

- Sri Lanka gained independence from British rule in 1948; originally named "Ceylon," the name of the country was changed to "Sri Lanka" in 1972
- Form of Government: Republic with unicameral Parliament & president elected by popular vote
- Population: Sinhalese - 74%; Tamils - 18%; Moor - 8% (Source: CIA World Factbook)
- Religion: Buddhist - 70%; Hindu - 15%; Christian - 8%; Muslim - 7% (Source: CIA World Factbook) According to the Constitution of Sri Lanka the state is required to "protect and foster" Buddhism, "while giving adequate protection to all religions" (Const., Ch. 2, Art. 7)
- Since 1983, Sri Lanka has been plunged in a civil war with ethnic & religious dimensions that has left approximately 100,000 dead
- The warring groups are the Sinhalese, most of whom are Buddhists, and the Tamils, who are mostly Hindus
- It is estimated that there are approximately 70,000 orphaned children in Sri Lanka today

VeAhavta Partners With Church in Sri Lanka to Start New Orphanage in Trincomalee

VeAhavta has joined hands with the Church of South India, American Ceylon Mission, and Rev. S. Jeyanesan, the pastor of St. John's Church, Batticaloa, to help the church with its most ambitious support project yet for the orphans and widows of Sri Lanka – the "Grace Church Care Center" in Trincomalee. Trincomalee is a former beach resort town on the northeastern coast of Sri Lanka that is a five-hour drive from Batticaloa (see, FIGURE 1). An orphanage in Trincomalee has been a long-time goal of Rev. Jeyanesan because of the tremendous need in the region. According to government statistics, Trincomalee is home to approxi-

mately 16,000 refugees. Severe poverty, disease and a deep sense of hopelessness represent the living standards for the affected people in this area. The groundwork for a new orphanage began in April of 2001 when St. John's rented a small house in Trincomalee and converted it into a church, which Rev. Jeyanesan named "Grace Church." Grace Church started with just the pastor and his wife, but within six months had grown to 19 families. The growth of the church was seen as clear confirmation of the need to expand into Trincomalee, and Rev. Jeyanesan began looking



FIGURE 1: The Island of Sri Lanka

for property for a new orphanage confident that the Lord would provide the needed facilities. In late September 2001, one of the directors of VeAhavta traveled to Sri Lanka to view the possible locations for the new

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Rev. Jeyanesan & The Orphans of Sri Lanka

Known throughout Sri Lanka as "the Christian man who takes care of the children," Rev. Salvadorai Jeyanesan was born in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, in 1950. He received his seminary training



St. John's Church Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

between 1971 and 1975 in India and has been an ordained minister in the Church of South India, American Ceylon Mission, since 1978. Rev. Jeyanesan has been married to his wife Shantha since

1977, and they have two children – Dushy, age 22, and Niran, age 20. As a result of the war and his son's on-going medical needs (Niran lost a kidney in a landmine explosion in 1986), Shantha, Dushy and Niran left Sri Lanka for India as boat refugees in

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1995. Unfortunately, many members of the clergy had also fled Sri Lanka, but Rev. Jeyanesan stayed behind to continue to run the orphanages and programs that the Church had helped establish. After managing to get Niran to Toronto, Canada, to live with an uncle and obtain medical care, Shantha was finally able to re-join her husband in Batticaloa in 2001. Dushy remains in India where she is completing medical school in New Delhi. Rev. Jeyanesan started St.



Rev. S. Jeyanesan

Courtesy Lorraine Maksoudian Photography

John's Center in 1989 as a modest organization in Batticaloa, recognizing the urgent need for facilities through which the Church could rescue, protect and rehabilitate children and women suffering from the continuing ethnic violence and civil war. Since then, the ministry has continued to grow; Rev. Jeyanesan and his staff currently provide some form of daily assistance for close to

3,000 people in the war torn region of Batticaloa. Ask him how these programs are financed and managed and he is quick to admit that "it is nothing less than miraculous – the Lord somehow provides for all of our basic needs." In considering the difficult task of the Church in Sri Lanka, Rev. Jeyanesan is frequently reminded of the words of the Prophet Isaiah, which were repeated by Jesus in a synagogue in Nazareth: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19.) This "good news" must still be offered to our neighbors today. Rev. Jeyanesan: "Throughout the world people are suffering. Women are the victims of

domestic violence, forced marriages, and rape. Many peasants, migrant workers, and day laborers are being oppressed and exploited. Many old people and others with physical disabilities are being neglected. Children, too, are suffering. In East Asia, child prostitution is a

"The Church is the only organization in the world that should care more about its non-members than it does its members."

thriving business. Such people long for the day of 'release' and being 'set free.' They are longing to know about God's favor toward them. It is into these dark places that we must go. The Lord is calling us, 'Reflect my righteousness, my justice, my truth, my peace and my love. Dispel the darkness! Arise and Shine!'" In his 23 years as an ordained minister, Rev. Jeyanesan has not forgotten the Lord's commission, and he believes firmly that "the Church is the only organization in the world that should care more about its non-members than it does its members. We must learn to treat each other as brothers and sisters, and we must treat these orphaned children as though they were our own – the Lord expects this from each of us."

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orphanage that had been identified by Rev. Jeyanesan. Their modest hope was to find a small piece of property suitable for 40 children, but the Lord's plans were far greater: they were quickly led to a former resort hotel, abandoned since 1983, which sits on 7 acres of beachfront property with approximately 15,000 square feet of existing buildings. An agreement to purchase the property for 25 million Rupees (approximately \$270,000) was negotiated with the seller, who further agreed to allow the church to take immediate possession so that it could be transformed into the "Grace Church Care Center." When operational, the Center will

provide an orphanage to accommodate the needs of 120 children, a widows empowerment project, a church, a vocational training center & day care facilities, and a nutritional feeding center to provide food and clean water to potentially thousands of the refugees who live in a large fenced encampment located immediately adjacent to the property. The Grace Church Care Center is the most ambitious project yet for Rev. Jeyanesan and the Church of South India, American Ceylon Mission, and VeAhavta has joined hands with them to help. On October 6, 2001, VeAhavta paid \$11,175.00 toward the purchase of the property and provided St.

John's with an additional \$7,400 to repair the buildings and prepare them for the new orphans. The balance of the purchase price for the property must be paid by no later than April 6, 2002. We are confident that all of the funds necessary to complete the purchase and to maintain the orphanage will be collected, but we need your help. We need your prayers and financial support to complete the purchase of the property and to maintain the Grace Church Care Center once it becomes operational at a cost of just \$25 per child, per month. You can help by making tax-deductible contributions to VeAhavta and by pledging to sponsor one or more of the children who will live at the new Center.

The Vision of VeAhavta

The Hebrew verb “VeAhavta” (tbhau) appears in Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18. Its form is imperative and it means, “You shall love.” In Deut. 6:5 the direct object of “VeAhavta” is God, whereas in Lev. 19:18 it is one’s neighbor. The presence of “VeAhavta” in these two verses likely played a role in their juxtaposition; the verb provided the “thread” upon which these “pearls” of Scripture were “strung together.” According to Jesus, the entire Torah and all of the Prophets hang on the commandments to love God and one’s neighbor (Matt. 22:37-40). The directors, officers, volunteers and supporters of VeAhavta know that

as Christians we must regard the impoverished, suffering people who live in developing countries as our neighbors too. To love God necessarily implies that we love our neighbor, and loving our neighbor obligates us all to offer a hand of loving kindness to everyone – whether they be friend or foe, next-door or overseas – and particularly to the disenfranchised, those who cannot help themselves. Through the Sri Lanka Orphans and Widows Project, we seek to fulfill our privilege to love God and to love our

neighbors by assisting the Church of South India, American Ceylon Mission, in its efforts to provide orphaned children and widows with a safe place to live, nutritious food and fresh drinking water, medical care and – most importantly – a sustaining hope and a sense of purpose that only God can provide. Please join us as we seek to care for our neighbors in Sri Lanka in the name of the Lord.

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Grace Church Care Center Fundraising Update

VeAhavta is working to raise \$260,000 to complete the purchase of the property in Trincomalee that will be used for the new “Grace Church Care Center.” We have already paid \$11,175 toward the purchase of the property and another \$7,400 for the repair of the buildings. As of the date of this publication, we have received donations totaling \$10,000 and donation pledges totaling \$15,000. Accordingly, we are just \$235,000 away from our goal. For those of you who

have already sent in your donations, thank you. For those who have pledged to donate, please mail your tax deductible donations to VeAhavta as soon as possible. We need your help to complete



The Grace Church Care Center Property in Trincomalee

this important project — one that will enable us to provide safe housing, nutritious food and educational opportunities for 120 children and hundreds more widows and refugees. Thank you for your kind support!

Bertek Pharmaceuticals Donates Medication For Orphans

Bertek Pharmaceuticals, Inc. of Morgantown, West Virginia, donated approximately \$25,000 worth of the prescription medication “Acticin” to VeAhavta for the orphans of Sri Lanka. Acticin is the leading medication used to combat scabies, which infects



“Acticin” is received at St. John’s Center

most of the children in the orphanages. The donation was facilitated by Larry Hirsch, M.D., a director of VeAhavta and an obstetrician in

San Luis Obispo County. The medication was hand carried to St. John’s Center in Batticaloa by another director of VeAhavta. Both United Airlines and Singapore Airlines waived the extra baggage fees that would have normally been charged for the two large suitcases that were used to transport the medication. We thank God and the people at Bertek for this miracle!

VeAhavta

A Nonprofit Corporation

1190 Marsh St., Suite B
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Phone/Fax: 805.542.9357



**How You Can Help
(Please Cut Out This Form And Mail It With Your Donation)**

TO: VeAhavta, a Nonprofit Corporation
1190 Marsh Street, Suite B
San Luis Obispo, California 93401
U.S.A.

Dear VeAhavta:

I want to help my neighbors — the widows and orphans in Sri Lanka. Enclosed is my donation, payable to “**VeAhavta**,” which I understand is tax deductible

Please use the enclosed gift as indicated:

\$_____ *Sri Lanka Orphans & Widows Project – Property Acquisition Fund*

\$_____ *Sri Lanka Orphans & Widows Project – Child Sponsorship Fund*

\$_____ *Where needed most*

\$_____ **TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED**

Thank you for caring and giving so that others may know the love of the Lord. Should any fund be oversubscribed, excess funds will be channeled to an equally deserving need unless you indicate otherwise.

Thank you for your generous support.