

In 2001 Pastor Ranjith Fernando, first president of the Lutheran Church Lanka, copied to the Rev. & Mrs. John Temple a letter that Susil Priyantha had written to him. As Pat Temple says, "What a treasure to have in our possession such a beautiful description of his commitment to Confessional Lutheran Theology."

- - -

22nd October 2001.
Rev. Ranjith S. Fernando,
The Lutheran
church in Sri Lanka
No.06, Parakrama Road,
Gampaha.

My dear Rev. Ranjith,

I am writing this letter with regard to the three books that you I have purchased from you on Lutheranism. These three books namely

1. The Augsburg confession
2. The power of pope
3. The apology

That you have translated and published has spoken to me, into the depth of my heart and through me to my church congregation which has given a great light to all of us. First of all may I thank you and Lutheran heritage foundation for making these very important books for the entire Christian churches in Sri Lanka. please convey my appreciation to the Lutheran Heritage foundation.

It was 18 years back I got converted from Roman Catholicism and got baptized in a well known charismatic church. I was a person looking for the depths of christianity. But I found a very shallow faith, mostly emotional faith in this charismatic church. I could not see any difference between roman catholicism and the pentecostal churches. I was looking for an assurance of salvation and a very strong foundation to built my faith. But none of the churches I had attended could be able to provide with the treasures I was looking all my life. Aftwards I went to the seventh day Adventist, Jehovah Witness, many evangelical and mainline churches , But I could not find that solid faith I was looking. Only thing I found in those churches is man trying to build their own churches and shepherds flocking the sheep so that they could be able to grab fleeze to keep themselves warm or for the sake of eating the meat of the sheep. None of those churches run of the biblical principles but according to the personal fancies of the priest or the hierarchies of those denominations. But when I read the three books you had translated I at least found a strong biblical foundation where I could proudly stand for Jesus Christ. And buidup my faith. I have heard of Martin Luther as rebel who split the church. But here in these books I found him as a savior of the church in dark ages. Not even that a strong foundation where we could be able to build our faith and the churches and the ministry. I have asked many pastors about a statement of faith of their church but none could be able to provide it.

They say that Bible in general is their statement of faith. But when I asked to point out the doctrines they believe from the bible they could not provide it as you have provided the book of concord as the statement of faith of the Lutheran church. The book of concord is very clearly defining what we aught to believe as Christian believers. On this book we would be able to build a solid faith. If we believe and practise what the book of concord say, then we could be sure of our salvation. There is no doubt about it. For the frustrated people who is looking a way of salvation this is the ideal book I think.

Apart, when I met you personally I found your faith is too grounded on the teachings of Martin Luther. The few discussions I personally had with you was of a great benefit. I very honestly feel that teachings of Martin Luther is the solution for the deteriorating churches in Sri Lanka. Therefore I challenge you to give leadership for people like us and purify the churches in Sri Lanka. You have vision and therefore please carry on your vision with the grace of God.

Another thing which bothers me is this. Why no one has ever thought of introducing Lutheranism in Sri Lanka. We have never ever heard of any Lutheran church in Sri Lanka. We have very many imported Christian denominations and churches right round Sri Lanka. When we look at the history of salvation from Adam to the present age we have found at every 500 year period some great event has taken place a fact you taught us.

According to that fact Martin Luther stands equal with Adam, after 500 years Enoch, then Noah, Babel, Abraham, Moses, David, Ezra/Nehemiah, Jesus, church divided, Crusades, then Martin Luther, an event in the space of every 500 years. Now 500 years have gone with the dawn of the millennium. Now the question is what is the next. I am sure that will be the Lutheran church and her doctrinal foundation a new vision (it's an old vision sustained for 500 years in the midst of suppression) for the millennium. I tell you this as these Lutheran doctrines have penetrated my own faith and through me my entire church and the ministry. I have two congregations in two different places each place having more than one hundred members. To my great surprise they all come frustrated from other churches and have found refuge in my church because I teach and preach nothing but the doctrines of Martin Luther. I am very positive this Lutheranism will blow not even right round in Sri Lanka, but even shores beyond wiping the entire Asia. I am greatly encouraged when you mention that your goal is to plant very many vibrant Lutheran churches in Sri Lanka.

Herewith we very humbly apply myself and my entire two congregations at Kandana and Kalaniya that WE UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to join the Lutheran church in Sri Lanka. These two churches were planted by me and another brother. Then after you visiting the church at Kandana and after our congregations heard you preaching and teaching Lutheran doctrines and as a result of my Lutheran teachings to them we all decided to join the Lutheran flock and identify ourselves as Lutherans. Please be kind enough to enroll me as a Lutheran minister and issue a letter of appointment so I could go forward as a Lutheran minister officially without which as we are a pioneering mission there would be many problems we have to face regarding the burial of the dead, baptizing, solemnization of marriages etc, etc. I would like to attend the next Lutheran seminar with few of our Elders and please inform me whenever you fix the next. Can we display a board indicating that we are Lutherans in front of our two churches?

Further I would like to add since we started preaching and teaching the Lutheran doctrines we have found new faces in our congregation and the members have started reading the books that you have published. We hope that you provide couple of copies of Martin Luther's Catechism. Thank you and may God bless you!

Yours sincerely,
Pastor Susil Priyantha
Lutheran church, Kandana & Kalaniya
No.108, Rilawulla, KANDANA.