

## PEACE ON EARTH

*All Hail, Thou Noble Guest*

All hail, Thou noble Guest, this morn,  
Whose love did not the sinner scorn;  
In my distress Thou com'st to me;  
What thanks shall I return to Thee?

Were earth a thousand times as fair,  
Beset with gold and jewels rare,  
She yet were far too poor to Thee,  
A narrow cradle, Lord, for Thee.

Ah dearest Jesus, Holy Child,  
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,  
Within my heart, that it may be  
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.

*Martin Luther*

*The Child*

You little children, in whose eyes  
Undimmed the light of heaven glows,  
Whose dreams are bright with paradise,  
Whose souls are whiter than the snows,  
From holy lips and undefiled  
Breathe your soft prayer to Christ the Child!  
O saving hands! O Christ, that hears  
A mortal mother's lullabies;  
That feels our agony and tears,  
Whose bosom trembles with our sighs,  
Give us pure hearts and undefiled  
Make us like Thee, O Christ the child!

Leading Editorial,  
New York Sun,  
December 25, 1897.

## For Your Christmas Meditation

The angel said to the shepherds, "Fear not." It was a world of fear just as ours is a world of fear today. Recently the President of the United States said, "The world lives under a pall of fear." Despite our liberty and our scientific advancement and all our boasted civilization, human fear is unprecedented. Most of us fear everything but God, when it is God whom we should fear most of all. But if we are reconciled to God through Christ, we need not have any fear, for "perfect love casts out fear" (I John 4:18). The only freedom from fear at this Christmas season is in Christ. "Fear not" says the Christmas angel, "for unto you is born a Savior."

*Billy Graham*

## Mark Twain's Christmas Wish

It is my heart-warming and world-embracing Christmas hope that all of us — the high, the low, the rich, the poor; the admired, the despised; the loved, the hated; the civilized, the savage — may eventually be gathered together in a heaven of everlasting rest, peace and bliss . . . except the inventor of the telephone.

(On the door of the telephone closet in the Mark Twain House, Hartford, Connecticut.)

## MAGYAR MARTYRS OF MISSIONS IN MALAYA

There was a hushed silence in the Bible study group of Hódmezővásárhely, Old Kirk, as the appalling news was broken about the cruel death of Dr. and Mrs. Julius Csezkó in Indonesia. Mrs. Csezkó's mother, Mrs. Hadady was a faithful member of our prayer-group. The year was 1946, and the country, Hungary, was just getting adjusted to the grip of its new rulers.

Dr. Julius Csezkó and his wife, neé Emma Hadady de Eorhalma in the twenties were studying in Leyden, Holland and in 1931 they were sent by a Reformed Church Mission Board as medical missionaries to the islands dotting the South Pacific between the Philippines and Celebes. After further studies and training in tropical medicine on the Island of Java, finally on Christmas Eve, 1932 they arrived at their first mission station, the Island of Shanghai. The Dr. Csezkós were the first European-trained medical missionaries who organized the systematic medical care of the extensive insular mission field.

They both had a strong sense of divine calling and set themselves with full dedication to their task. They reorganized the so far amateurish medical stations, provided trained personnel and medical supplies and the doctor, according to a regular monthly timetable, paid regular visits to the clinics on the various islands. His usual vessel was a small outboard motor boat, a rather precarious means of transportation, but he adhered to his schedule with an almost fanatical sense of duty. The Rev. J.E.E. Scherrer, a Swiss missionary, says:

"Nothing could refrain him: neither the stormy weather,

nor the rough sea. With a stubborn sense of duty he adhered to his itinerary and even his crew looked at him with high admiration."

In his work, often without the proper medical equipment, he worked "with deft hands". He always considered his skill as a gift of God. When the patients, after their recovery, expressed their gratitude to him, he shied away from their praise and referred them to God, saying:

— Don't thank me for anything. Thank God who blessed me that I may be His instrument and minister to Him by healing you.

Dr. and Mrs. Czeszko's great adventure was the expansion and full development of the hospital on Taheona Island. The doctor's wife who studied architecture, was a talented and faithful helper. First the polyclinic was built, then the gynecology, the men's department, the infant and children's ward followed by the operating room and the pharmacy and finally the administration building, — "Mother's department" in the language of the Czeszko children. The doctor's wife who at the beginning was the housekeeper and the dietician, in the new, expanded hospital took over the administration and the finances. Her children describe the situation in these words:

"Father was the idealist, mother was the realist. If there was not enough medicine, father became nervous, but mother quietly said: "Let us wait for the next boat." She was also a wise woman according to the world. She usually sent high bills to the rich Chinese who did not mind it at all and gladly paid. But for the poor natives she wrote very small bills. They were able to pay one or two eggs at least, and everybody was happy.

"When father was angry... — recall the children, our parents spoke Hungarian. These were rare occasions, but under the increasing difficulties they became more and more frequent. The hospital personnel facetiously said to them: "You are talking Chinese." Of course they all knew that the doctor's "Chinese" was the Magyar language.

From the family's reminiscences we can gain some insight into their private life too. Although they had a comfortable home, the children usually spent their days in and around the hospital together with their parents. "We ate and drank medicine" — they say. They participated in the colorful social life of the community decorated with sultans and maharajas. They made observations regarding the everyday life of the islanders, their way of thinking and their superstitions. The natives believed that the soul returns in certain cases and like a firefly appears to the family here and there. They also heard about the black cat jumping on top of the coffin, and the belief attached to it. "These good people were formally all Christians, yet most of them were superstitious."

Japanese occupation arrived here only at a later phase of the war. First the invaders were friendly and the doctor and his family were able to maintain a good rapport with some of the English-speaking Japanese officers. The Czeszko children recall:

"We got along with them fine. Father never taught us to hate anyone. They (the Japanese) often put on parties and arranged programs for us presenting dramas, legends and pantomimes on the stage and after the program refreshments were served. This happy phase of the game lasted for about two years."

"Then," their story continues, "We had to get acquainted with the sad part of things too... When the Japanese fleet moved in, our islands were often bombed. Our only shelters

were bamboo-framed meager ditches. We were able to see the huge warships hit by bombs and the little people falling into the ocean. A fast tolling of the church bell was the alarm signal and the slow tolling marked the end of the attack. Father did not go into hiding from the bombardments. He stayed in the hospital and gave assistance to the wounded as they were brought in. When someone died, the church bells rang. And the bells kept ringing more and more often."

Medicine shortage became more and more acute. The boat traffic between the islands stopped. The doctor himself had to go in his tiny outboard motor sailboat to Celebes risking his life so that by his personal appearance he could bargain for some drugs. Usually his begging trips were successful and he always brought home a little medicine.

It was unavoidable, however, for Dr. Czeszko that his Christian humanism would come into conflict with the nationalistic militancy of the occupation forces. They did not like the doctor treating civilians and military personnel without any discrimination as to race or nationality. He made it clear to the Japanese authorities that he, according to the ethics of his profession, helped anybody and everybody in need of medical care whether they were white, yellow or black. He also committed a diplomatic blunder or two: e.g. he did not bow at a 45 degree angle for greetings as the Japanese etiquette required and, more over, he refused to display the Japanese flag. He provoked the anger of the invaders mostly, however, by smuggling medicine and food into the concentration camps where Europeans were interned. And this triggered the beginning of their indescribable agonies.

In the wee hours of a night in April, 1944 Dr. Czeszko was dragged out of his bed and, in his night clothes, he was taken to an unknown destination. In September of the same year we find him in Tomsen Lana, in a concentration camp of political criminals, who had to endure the most inhuman treatment. On one occasion during an air attack, Dr. Czeszko suffered severe injuries in his shoulders and neck from bombshell fragments. Although he lost much blood, in the camp hospital he was getting better until blood poisoning set in and he suffered lock-jaw. He asked for a tetanus-injection to treat himself but his request was refused. He died in March, 1945.

At home, in their own hospital, Mrs. Czeszko carried on, taking upon herself the burden of the whole work. She, as a "white", was regarded more and more an "enemy alien." At the market, when she went shopping for the hospital, she could not even get vegetables. From her the vendors asked outrageous prices or they simply said that it was all "sold." On the neighboring islands where she went shopping in desperation, the story was the same. Then she came under political suspicion. Her home was ransacked and one night, just like her husband, she was dragged away from her children. She was accused of having and operating a two-way radio which they never had. Once they had a receiver set, but that was taken away from them in the early days of occupation. However, she was subjected to drastic interrogations. With daily tortures they tried forcing her to confess the two-way radio. Under the severe beating of the interrogators she fainted daily several times. When she recovered consciousness, the beatings continued. In the prison, after the daily tortures, she continued working. In order to deprive her of this relief, her fingers were torn from her hands. Then followed a sadistic, special treatment: she was tied on a bench face-up and on her face covered with rags they kept pouring ocean water. Trying to breathe she could



not escape swallowing and sniffing the salty water. When her stomach and lungs were filled with water, the sadistic torturers sat on her swollen body and enjoyed her excruciating pain. At long last, on November 9th, 1944, her hour of liberation arrived: together with several leading dignitaries of Shanghi she was beheaded by the Japanese authorities.

Her grave is marked with a marble headstone erected by the faithful islanders. Dr. Cseszkó is buried in an unmarked grave in the cemetery of the prison-camp on the island of Celebes. Appalled as we all must be, we can only whisper our belated, but reverent tribute, in agreement

with the Dutch-language memorial article: "*Through suffering to glory!*"

*Dr. Kalman D. Tóth*

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