

Catholic Standard

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FAREWELL DR JAGAN

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In the BIBLE, it stated in ECCLESIASTES:

*"To everything there is a season
And a Time, to every purpose under heaven,
A Time to be born and a Time
to die.....*

*A Time to plant and a Time
To pluck up that which is planted.....
A Time to weep,
And a Time to laugh,
A Time to mourn.....*

For all Guyanese this is a Time to mourn.

We mourn the passing of one of the greatest sons of this land. One who dedicated most of his life to serving his people and his country.

We mourn the passing of **Dr Cheddi Jagan** who at the time of his death on Thursday - 6th March, 1997, was President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

I learnt with profound sadness of his passing. I join with the people of Guyana and the men and women around the world, in acknowledging **Dr Jagan's** significant contribution to human development, as we mourn.

HENRY VAN KYKE an American clergy claimed:

"Some people are so afraid to die that they never begin to live".

Dr Cheddi Jagan lived! **Cheddi Jagan** was never afraid!

He faced the challenges of life with confidence, courage and conviction.

His life touched the lives of the people of Guyana in different ways at different times.

My first glimpse of **Dr Cheddi Jagan** was decades ago when I stood at the side of the road, as he with other PPP Members of Parliament walked through the streets of Georgetown. He was bedecked, as his Comrades were, in white shark skin suit and red tie.

My first meeting with **Dr Jagan** face to face was at the Red House. **Dr Jagan**, then Premier, sent me an invitation to have tea with him.

With the phobia then prevailing in our country - British Guiana about communism, though, a young junior employee with Bookers, I sought permission from my employers to attend. I rode my bicycle to his official residence, and Premier **Dr Jagan** received me kindly with the courtesies.

He spoke about the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. He shared with me his deep concerns about poverty, the subjugation of people, human suffering, discrimination, exploitation, imperialism and such related topics.

His warmth, friendliness, sincerity, humility, commitment, determination and conviction were all very evident.

Over the many succeeding years those unique qualities never diminished.

My last meeting with **Dr Jagan** was at the Martin Luther King brunch on 12th January this year. At the end of that function I asked **Dr Jagan** to take pictures with some friends visiting Guyana, who expressed an interest to meet him.

In his usual accommodation manner, his unpretentious style and with his usual smile, he did so willingly.

When I assumed the office of Minister of Government (non-elected as a Technocrat, these days its called Civic) under the Hoyte Administration in 1986, **Dr Jagan** then Minority Leader, maintained his usual cordiality. In fact, he at times congratulated me on my presentation in Parliament and endorsed some of my points in his interventions.

In recent times the **good Doctor** whenever, we met socially, spent some time telling me of his appreciation of my weekly Viewpoints. He lauded my efforts on human values. He amplified on many of the points I made.

SHAKESPEARE observed:

*"All the world's a stage
And all the men and women
merely players;
They have their exits
And their entrances;
And one man in his time
Plays many parts."*

Dr Jagan who has taken his exit of this earthly life played many parts in his time.

Dr Jagan played the role of Freedom Fighter, Revolutionary, Teacher, Trade Unionist, Agitator, Defender, Prisoner, Survivor, Liberator, Parliamentarian, Premier, Commander-in-Chief, President and that of Husband, Father and Grandfather.

He was also recognised as a Writer, Historian, Economist and Dentist.

More importantly **Dr Jagan** will always be remembered as a humanist. He won the **respect** of people. With his magnetic and infectious smile, he also won the **admiration** of people.

He inspired others to higher levels of commitment and achievement.

The manipulations which kept him out of office over the many decades never changed his personality. He remained a warm, cheerful and caring person, committed to fighting poverty, exploitation, bondage and inequities which plague so many countries.

We will certainly miss him;

We will miss him;

He played his many parts

With sincerity and determination.

He will be remembered in different ways

But nothing can detract from his patriotism.

The best tribute we can pay to **Dr Jagan** is to pledge ourselves as Guyanese to serve our country and to work together in purposeful unity to build a better Guyana.

Dr Jagan's memory will forever be fondly enshrined in our hearts.

May God grant him eternal rest and let perpetual light shine upon him, and be merciful unto him.

May he rest in Peace.

Like some low and mournful spell

We whisper that sad word Farewell!

FAREWELL! FAREWELL! FAREWELL!