

“Behold I make all things New”
A Statement by the Rt. Revd. Duleep de Chickera, Bishop of Colombo

Today all Sri Lankans stand at a decisive point in the history of our beautiful and beloved country.

All Communities are undoubtedly relieved that the fighting is now over. For too long, too many lives have been lost. Many youth who were killed or injured in battle showed immense courage and sacrifice. They must be remembered with respect and honour. Many unarmed innocent civilians were also killed and injured. They too must be remembered with respect and honour. May we also never forget the tens of thousands of parents, spouses, children, brothers and sisters who grieve these deaths.

This is also the time, if we will recognize it, to look back and learn from the several mistakes of the past. These are lessons of peaceful co-existence, the strength in compromise that is essential for political dialogue, and the value of every single human life. We must begin with our children, and in our Schools, Temples, Kovils, Mosques and Churches. But adults too will have to re-learn these lessons and leaders in particular will be called upon to set new standards. It is this way mostly that we will set in place the appropriate values and attitudes that will lead our people away from war and violence.

Finally, now is the time if we will recognize it, to take prayerful, purposeful and collective steps towards an integrated, united and just Sri Lanka that has eluded us for decades. We must become a Nation in which every woman, man and child, regardless of religion or ethnicity, is made to feel equal, free and proud to call themselves Sri Lankan. For this to happen we will be required to address the grievances of all communities, eliminate social fear and suspicion, restore the people's confidence in Law and Order and Good Governance and respond to the current economic challenges with immediate attention to the needs of the poorest, the displaced, the helpless and the harassed amongst us.

May the God of creation and compassion raise us to a new life of mutual understanding, respect and loving kindness.

The Rt Revd Duleep de Chickera
Bishop of Colombo.

19th May 2009