

LATEST NEWS # 429, July 26, 2007

The following news concerns Sri Lanka

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Third edition of New Sinhala Bible launched to meet needs of younger generation

SRI LANKA — In 1982 came the New Version of the Sinhala Bible; in 1990 the Revised New Version was launched; and now Sri Lanka has the New Revised Sinhala Version.

Heads of all the Church denominations in the country were present at an impressive dedication ceremony, held in St Luke's Anglican church in Colombo in April.

The translation has taken more than 10 years to complete and was undertaken by an interconfessional team of experts and scholars.

Messages and greetings were brought to the dedication service by the Rev Fr Henry Silva, the Chairman of New Sinhala Bible Revision Committee, by Lakshani Fernando, General Secretary of the Ceylon Bible Society; they were also offered on behalf of Bishop Kumara Illangasinghe of the Church of Ceylon, representing the Protestant Churches, and by the United Bible Societies Program Consultant, the Rev Arun Sok Nhep, on behalf of David Thorne, the Secretary of the UBS Asia-Pacific Area.

Sinhala, one of Sri Lanka's two official languages, is spoken by more than 13 million people. It was felt that there was a long standing need for the new version as, although its predecessor, the Revised New Version, was published only 17 years ago, some words in it have already fallen out of use by the present generation.

The other Sinhala translation of the Bible, now known as the Old Version, was published in 1938 and a Revised Old Version was published in 1995.

Comparing the two series, Ravi Navaratnam, the Ceylon Bible Society's Media and Production Manager, said, "It is interesting to note that the newer Churches prefer to use the Old Version, and the Protestant Churches are encouraging the younger generation to use the New Version."

The dedication service, on April 16, was covered on the news of the state-owned television channel Rupavahini the following day.

Although the majority of Sinhala speakers are in Sri Lanka, the language is also spoken in Canada, Singapore, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.

For further information please contact comms@ubs-wsc.org