



## BEYOND BENEDICT

Sri Lankan politicians are noted for their propensity to quote the Buddha at every turn, but the current P.M. appears to have departed from the beaten track. His recent statement in Parliament praising the prelate for deciding to quit before it is too late comes as a shock to his countrymen.

What surprised me more was his uncan-

from his position at the last cabinet reshuffle. He did not budge, although he qualified by the standard set by the Pope. Why did he quote the Pope at all? Whom is he going to fool?

Politicians sticking to their positions even after they have passed the Use - by - date, is the common feature in Sri Lanka whereas in Australia many of

tise? Perhaps a couple of them including Sarath Wimalawansa

Leaving aside the politicians of our motherland for a moment, let us take a look at the local community leaders, who are at the forefront of all Sri Lankan activities. They are setting an example in the dubious exercise of 'Taking the Ladder up with You', an exercise one of my foreign colleagues used to admonish his trainees against, over and over again.

What is this funny exercise? one may ask. It is a practice followed by generations of leaders all over the world, irrespective of their race, age, ethnicity, religion, region, political affiliation, friendship or even blood relationships. In short, it is a weakness, an illness in a way, which has afflicted some of our men and women who have volunteered to do either social or religious work. What they do not want to admit or perhaps they are themselves unaware of, is that this voluntarism is a remedy for a bigger illness, undiagnosed and untreated.

To come back to our main theme, it is this unrecognized illness that Pope Benedict has offered the ideal solution for.

How the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka got this bright idea into his head is a, most a miracle, perhaps the masses of that beautiful island are not that unlucky to be left to the mercy of unscrupulous politicians and self-seeking individuals who are ready to jump at any opportunity to feather their own nests.

How many of Sri Lankans would remember the shock that Prince Charles is supposed to have got when he met the aging P. M. seated on a wheel chair. How many politicians are there, in the current parliament who are nothing but dead-wood,

Why don't they go? Why does not someone throw them out?

The biggest problem and the worst ailment for the country is that no one is prepared to bell the cat.

If that is not available, neither Pope Benedict nor Prime Minister D.M. Jayaratne will save Sri Lanka. Will God save the country?



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ny ability even to beat a veteran Australian Journalist of the calibre of Geraldine Dooge, who was planning a programme on ABC TV under the title 'Beyond Benedict'.

Similarities end there. Dooge was looking at the line up for the position of the next pope, and what D. M. Jayaratna was aiming at is anyone's guess. Any sensible man or woman in the island would be asking the question as to what he is going to do, now that the Pope has shown the way.

There was talk of him being removed

them go out well before reaching the age of fifty. There are a number of ex-Premiers now serving as CEOs of various organizations. Clair Martin of the NT, Gallego of ACT, and even the ex-Premier of NSW, is among them. She heads Basketball Australia, for which she qualifies as a former basketball player herself. Clair Martin is a lawyer. They are not enjoying highly paid jobs as one would find in Sri Lanka, but are doing really serious work, which calls for honesty, commitment and ability. Most important is that they have immense ability in the fields they handle. Can Sri Lankan politicians claim such wexper-

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