



Church of Bangladesh

# NEWSLETTER

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## Conveying thanks and gratitude on the 10th anniversary of the consecration of Rt Revd Paul S Sarker

On 5th January 2013 was the 10th anniversary of the installation of Rt Revd Paul S Sarker. Through a special service at St Thomas's Cathedral this day was observed with thanks and gratitude. A special service took place and the Holy Communion was offered by Rt Revd Paul S Sarker while he was assisted by the dean of Dhaka deanery Revd Hemen Halder and other priests. In the address of the day, the principal of St Andrew's Theological College, Revd Shourabh Pholia once again made him remembered the essence of the consecration. He mentioned, consecration means segregation or transformation to become a fellow of God. He added, the aim of the observance of the day is to recall the meaning of the consecration once again and refresh that in life.

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At the end of the service, the attendees greeted Bishop and his wife with wreaths of flowers and conveyed their thanks and gratitude. Bishop, in reply, reviewed his services since his installation and thanked the church members for their cooperation. The ceremony ended with a fellowship dinner.

The ceremony was arranged by Dhaka deanery and attended by deanery's priests, leaders and the staff members of Synod office.

It is to mention that in 2003, 5th January Rt Revd Paul S Sarker was consecrated at the Epiphany Church, Oxford Mission, Barisal as Bishop of the Church of Bangladesh.



## The youth seminar took place in Khagrachari

“If anyone remembers his or her Creator, he or she no way would be demolished. Who has no believe in religion, can do all the wrong doings. To build own life, serving and contributing to other people’s lives, youth time is the best period.”

On 21 November, 2012 a Youth Seminar was arranged at the New Evangelical Centre of the Church of Bangladesh at Matiranga of Baillachari in Khagrachari district.

The theme of the seminar was: **‘Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth’ - Ecclesiastes 12:1.**

A total of 75 young people attended this one day seminar. Revd Ashish Mondol spoke on the theme. He mentioned “if anyone remembers his or her Creator, he or she no way would be demolished. Who has no believe in religion, can do all the wrong doings. To build own life, serving and contributing to other people’s lives, youth time is the best period.

The secretary of the Youth Fellowship of Church of Bangladesh Mr Philip Mondol urged to create a decent environment and bring the people back from the drack world. He told, “With the effort of that, irrespective of religion, sect and class, a decent society can only be built.” Catechist James Baroi discussed on Christian marriage and family norms. Mr Joy Tripura with some games cheered the youth. The participations of the youths were very spontaneous.

From 2010, upon the call of the Heads of ethnic community including Chakma, Marma and Tripura from Balaichoro and Matiranga villages Church of Bangladesh started the evangelical activities. Presently around 2,000 members from 400 families are getting services from Church of Bangladesh. Here there are one primary school, a child care center and a Church. Catechist James Baroi is taking care of this new congregation.

## The Bible School Camp at Haluaghat Deanery held

*The first day of the camp included competition of paly based on the events from the Bible. Second day, many events were arranged including parade, exercise, display, action song, and completions on reciting rhyme, Bible quiz, and the Bible reading.*

A Bible School Camp of Haluaghat Deanery took place for the two days from 25 to 26 October, 2012 at St Thomas’s Church in Edilpur Parish. Dean of the deanery along with others inaugurated the camp with hoisting the National and Brigade flags. Before that the guests were received with a beautiful cultural programme by the local children of the Bible School. The first day of the camp included competition of paly based on the events from the Bible. Second day, many events were arranged including parade, drills, action songs; and completion on reciting rhyme and poem, rendering song, Bible quiz, and Bible reading. With distribution of prizes to participants the camp was closed. A total of 85 boys and girls of Bible School from Thanarbide, Dharati, Pirozpur, and Edilpur participated in the camp. The whole programme was supervised by Revd Shashi Baroi.

- Reporter : Revd. Vanu Chishim



## Women Fellowship Seminar at Paitapukur

*St Paul himself was transformed. Therefore St Paul wants all people to be transformed like him. All believers should conform to this through time as this is the will of Jesus Christ.*

A one day women fellowship seminar of Rajshahi Deanery was held on 24 August, 2012 at the Bernobas Church Community Center of Paitapukur. The theme of the seminar was: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your

mind..." - *Romans 12:2*. Rt Revd Samuel S Mankhin Deputy Moderator and Bishop of Kushtia Diocese spoke on the theme. He said, "Paul became transformed. Therefore we will have to be renewed and that is very necessary to combat the increased influences orchestrated by devil to derail us. And this is the desire of our Jesus.

The coordinator of WF Mrs Maria Bala talked on formation of an ideal Christian family.

Convener of Women Fellowship of Kushtia Diocese Mrs Monita Mankhin discussed on: 'Arise, shine, for your light has come.' - *Isaiah 60:1*. Dean of the Rajshahi Deanery Revd. Simson Mazumdar discussed on: 'Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.' - *Hebrews: 10:24*.

Convener of Women's Fellowship Mrs Elizabeth Keya Mondol talked about the awareness of basic health and HIV/AIDS.

From different parishes around 110 members attended the seminar. The women members from recently established 7 parishes participated in the seminar voluntarily. The whole programme was supervised by Convener of Women's Fellowship Mrs Elizabeth Keya Mondol.

## Inauguration of Emmanuel Church



On 23 December 2012, Rt Revd Paul S Sarker inaugurated the Emmanuel Church at Rajapur through a special service. In conducting the service, he was assisted by Revd Monindra Baidya – Dean of the Jobarpar Deanery, Revd Nirod Boron Biswas, Revd Santi Mondol. Around 700 people from different parishes attend the service.

After the service Bishop planted a Christmas tree on the Church yard through a ceremony. The ceremony was attended by a good number of people from different religions.

Church was a crying need for the Christian community of Rajapur, and by establishing it that desire has been fulfilled. It is to mention, Mr Bebek Halder of Rajapur has given the land and mobilized money to build the Church.



## Pre-Christmas Programme

On 19 December 2012, Pre-Christmas day was celebrated in participation of Synod staff. The day was started with Holy Communion Service at 9 am. After the service Rt Revd Paul S Sarker marked the day with cutting cake with the children. Later a cultural programme took place attending staff members and their children. The programme was concluded with giving gifts and by lunch.

# Agents of Change course started in Asia, Dhaka, Bangladesh

*Piloting of Agents of Change Distance Course of the Anglican Alliance in collaboration with Open University, UK launched in Dhaka, Bangladesh with four students.*



Piloting of Agents of Change Distance Course of the Anglican Alliance in collaboration with Open University, UK launched in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 29 January 2013. Four students were selected for the course and took part in the one day Orientation Session. The Session was divided into two parts. First part was inaugural session and that followed by the working session. Moderator and Bishop of Dhaka, Church of Bangladesh Rt Revd Paul S Sarker attended the session, blessed the students and formally inaugurated the course. He thanked the Anglican Alliance for introducing such course and found the course effective and need based. He commented "The course modules are very well arranged, practical, easy to understand, but academically rich. I am sure the students will enjoy the course and give effective placement of it in the community. It will make them closer to the community and the community will own the work that they desire for. And thereby development will be practical to them". A total of 20 people attended the inaugural session from different Ministers of the Church. In the working session along with the students few others, like Principal of St Andrew's Theological College of COB, Dean of Dhaka Deanery, local priest, official from

social development programme of COB attended as observers and to get familiar with the course with an interest to become Mentor of the course in future.

The orientation course introduced the workbook, the modules, the formation process and needs of the support group, and the roles of the Course Mentor to the students. In the working session the students selected their projects and defined the possible outcomes of that. At the end of the working session they send a message over email to their mentor informing their starting of the course. The students also worked on their course calendar and set the date of their next Support Group meeting for finalizing their course calendar.

The session was very interactive and the people attended the orientation session took much interest in the course. Church of Bangladesh is planning to tag this course to their mainstream theology course. In first piloting in Asia started with the participation of: Antony Bidhan Biswas, Mreethmandir Roy, Alvin Shouvik Sarker, and Isaac Dhruho Halder.



# Lent Appeal

*Every year during the lent we take the scope of becoming a worthy child of God through practicing austerity and disciplines. The Bishops of Church of Bangladesh have taken the decision to spend the lent collection of this year for the poorest of the poor and the patients suffering critically.*

There is hardly any scope of necessary health services at remote villages. Patients with critical diseases usually have to move to Dhaka for the treatments. For the poor patients it is very tough to bear the cost for better treatments. But with some assistance one life can be saved. They, being members of our Church, first come to Church for assistance. Presently, foreign assistance has largely decreased. From Church it is not now possible to provide support as it had been doing before. Therefore, from wealthy to general members, all are to come forward to take this responsibility to support the poor. Here the small penny of a widow is counted on with equal worth.

If we realize the essence of the lent, it would not be hard to sacrifice. Therefore, please come forward to take the scope of purifying us through sacrifice. It is not by gain; rather happiness is achieved by sacrifice. The inner heart is to be purified through physical sacrifice. We can make us proper Christian by manifesting love to God and the human beings.

**May God bless us more to become generous enough.**

*“...I was seek and you visited me... ... Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of least of these my brother, you did it to me.”*

*- Mathew 25:36-40.*



## Retreat of Synod staff

*In the Bible all works, earthly or spiritual, have been given values. We through works convey our thanks and gratitude to God. Through works, we witness our beliefs. Through works, we try to achieve spirituality and expose our grit.*

On 27 February, 2013 a one day retreat was held for the Synod staff. The theme of the retreat was:

*‘Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.’- Colossians 3:23. The Retreat was*

started with the Holy Communion service in morning. The service was administered by Rt Revd Paul S Sarker. He in his sermon spoke on the services and cares of Martha Mariam. In the afternoon session the subject was: ‘For we are God’s fellow workers.’ - *1 Corinthian*. The session was conducted by Catholic Father Dr Tapon Rozario. Father Dr Tapon discussed upon work and how we should assist others in the light of the Bible.

The total retreat was conducted by Taize Brother Guilliom. Brother Guilliom discussed on different objectives of our spiritual journey.

A total of 35 staff from Synod office of Church of Bangladesh, CBSDP and CMCY attended the retreat.



## The Executive Meeting of CWM and Reception by Church of Bangladesh

During 6 to 8 February 2013 CWM Executive meeting was held in Dhaka. On 8 February a reception was given by Church of Bangladesh to the committee members. After a special morning service at St Thomas' Cathedral the reception took place. The General Secretary of CWM Dr Collin Powel delivered sermon in the service.

Mr Joseph Shudhin Mondal, the Synod Secretary of Church of Bangladesh given the welcome address and after that they were honored with gift and crest given by the Rt Revd Paul S Sarker. At that time, Moderator Revd Shamuel Tealavia also gave a crest to Moderator of Church of Bangladesh Rt Revd Paul S Sarker.



The team visited the social activities of the Church of Bangladesh on the outskirts of old Dhaka city. After a brief cultural programme and lunch the programme was concluded.

## Consecration of Deacon



The servant who does not serve the people he/she is not servant of God.

On 24 February, 2013 three persons were consecrated as Deacon. Rt Revd Paul S Sarker conducted the ceremony through a service on the premises of St Peter's Church in Kaligram. The persons ordained as deacons were, James Baroi, Cornelius Mondol and Adhir Gathia. Revd Shourabh Pholia delivered sermon in the service. He said we all are servants of God. God exists in His greatest creation of humankind. The servant who does not serve the people he/she is not a servant of God. The servant who does not love the people he/she doesn't love God. For serving people, a good relationship with God is essential. We should not forget that we are servant of God over the whole span of life.

After the consecration the newly consecrated deacons were received with a mind-blowing cultural programme. The consecration programme was concluded with a fellowship lunch.



## The Yearly Spiritual Mass Revival Gathering held

Like every year, this year as well throughout the lent period Revival Mass Gatherings of Christian Religion took place at different parishes. This year, out of six, it was arranged at five deaneries. For each revival mass gathering there was separate theme. The uniqueness of this gathering is people from different faiths attend it with special prayers and convey gratitude to almighty God for His care and blessings.

**Bollovpur Deanery mass gathering :** During 19-20 February 2013 the 118<sup>th</sup> *Dhannyabudhbar* mass gathering was arranged at Ratonpur Church. The theme of the gathering was : 'I came that they may have life' - *John 10 : 10*. About 4000 devotees of Christ attended the gathering.

*It is to mention, Some 116 years ago, in a place called Maliapota, in the district of Nadia, West Bangal, India, some very simple and dedicated village people received the Holy Spirit, like the disciples received it on the day of Pentecost.*

**Rajshahi Deanery Helmhel mass gathering :** During 21-22 February 2013 the 55<sup>th</sup> *Helmhel* mass gathering was arranged at Ahtapukur Church. The theme of the gathering was : The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light'- *Romans 13:12*. About 2000 devotees of Christ attended the gathering. Maximum of them were ethnic Santali people.

*During the meeting, people from the whole of Rajshahi Deanery come together to hear the word of God and to sing together to rejoice in the Lord. 'Helmhel' is a Santali word, which means 'Fellowship.*

**Haluaghat Deanery Religious mass gathering :** During 14-16 February 2013 the 103<sup>th</sup> Religious mass gathering was arranged in Thanarbaid at St Paul's Parish Church. The theme of the gathering was : 'If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.'- *John 8.31*. About

2000 devotees of Christ attended the gathering. All the devotees of this deanery are from Garo ethnic community.

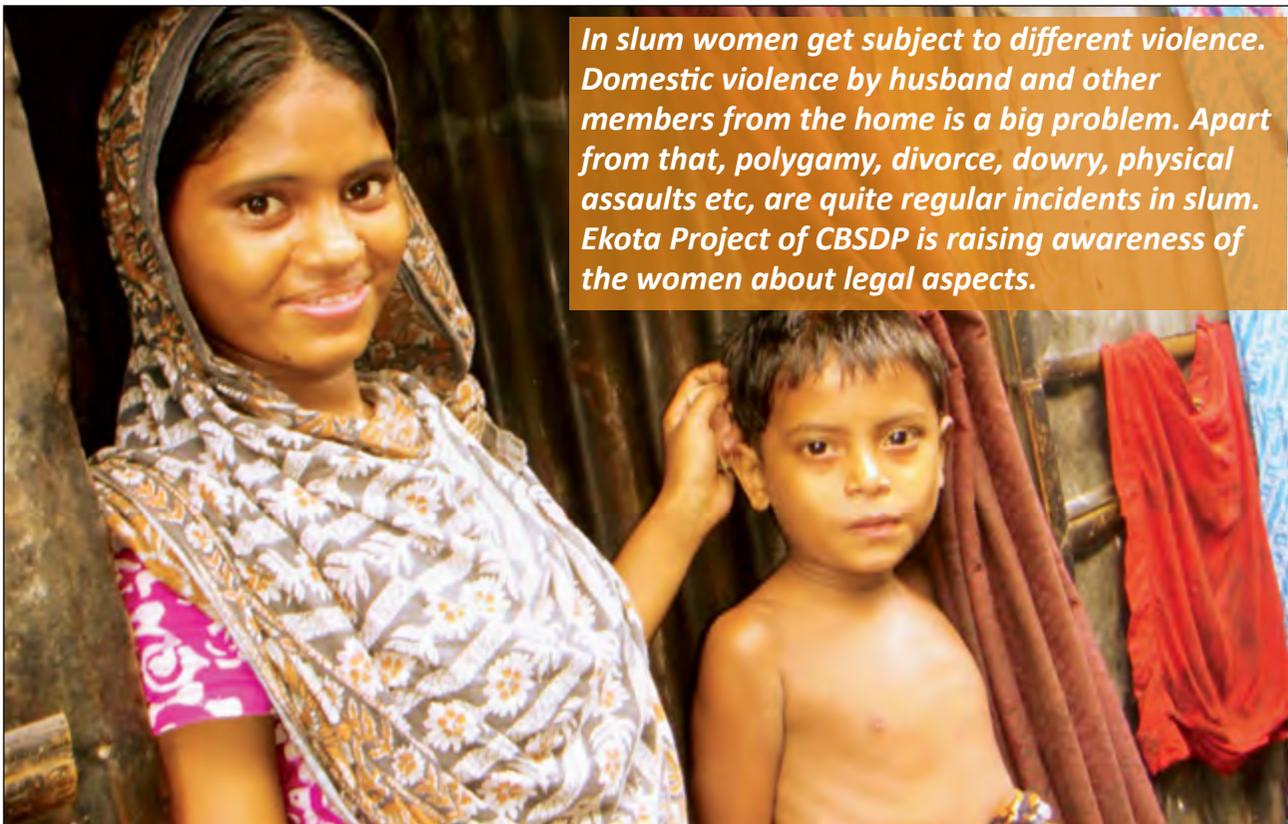
*The Brothers of St Andrew's Mission were the source of inspiration and they took the initiative to start this kind of gathering for a spiritual revival. It has become a major social and community event. Celebrations were first held in 1910*

**Jobarpar Deanery Christian Religion mass gathering:** During 21-24 February 2013 the 97<sup>th</sup> Christian Religion common mass gathering was arranged in Kaligram at St Peter's Church. The theme of the gathering was : 'You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.'- *Mathew 5: 48*. About 2500 devotees of Christ attended the gathering.

*About 104 years ago the Epiphany Brotherhood of Oxford Mission started the evangelical work among the people of these areas.*

**Khulna Deanery Christian Religion mass gathering:** During 1-2 March, 2013 the first Christian Religion mass gathering was arranged in Jessore at Christ Church. The theme of the gathering was : "Who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's"- *Psalms 103:5*. About 300 devotees of Christ attended the gathering.

It is to mention, on 13 April 2012 khulna Parish had been upgraded to deanery with 12 parishes.



*In slum women get subject to different violence. Domestic violence by husband and other members from the home is a big problem. Apart from that, polygamy, divorce, dowry, physical assaults etc, are quite regular incidents in slum. Ekota Project of CBSDP is raising awareness of the women about legal aspects.*

## Church of Bangladesh providing legal assistance ...

Church of Bangladesh through Ekota Project of Social Development Programme has been operating socio-economic development activities in slums of old Dhaka to empower the women since 1990.

From 1993 Ekota project in collaboration with Ain O Shalish Kendra (Laws and Arbitration Center) started the clinic to provide legal services to slum people. The activities of Akota are: contacting the victims, processing and registering (general diary) complain in police station, supporting physically assaulted victims to get admitted in hospital, arranging shelter, recovering victims from captured situation, Follow-up the cases and advising and arranging alternative income generating livelihoods activities. Ain O Shalish Kendra collect the complains from Akota every week, send legal notice, arrange arbitration or mediation, realize danmohar/maintenance, register cases in court, assist victim in admitting shelter, send to one-stop crisis center and so on.

### Activities status from 1993 to 2012

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total clients	No.	1553
Arbitration	No.	1017
Court cases	No.	102
Denmohar/Maintenance reclaimed	BDT.	4,897,270
Children recovered from accused	No.	51
Rehabilitated to safe shelter	No.	43

### A testimony of Aklima

*...through mediation Ripon understood his wrong doing and its aftermath. He took back Aklima to home and as reported they are living happily together with their children.*

Aklima (27) lives in Gandaria Rail Slum of Dhaka. He got married with Ripon a petty Chotpoty vendor. After marriage, Aklima's father gave BDTk. 10,000 to Ripon for initiating a business. He started selling fruit investing that money. In one year of marriage Aklima became mother of a boy child. After getting child, three years they passed quite good time. But later Ripon became irregular in maintaining the family and started to assault Aklima. At one stage, Aklima had to leave the Ripon's house and got back to her father's house.

Later Aklima contacted to Ekota Project and complained against her husband. Following that, a notice was served against Ripon. Ripon reported to the Ekota Office and through mediation he understood his wrong doing and its aftermath. He took back Aklima to home and as reported they are living happily together with their children.