



Church of Bangladesh

NEWSLETTER

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Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby Visited

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On 29th May 2014 the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, Mrs. Caroline Welby and Canon David Porter arrived in Bangladesh for a short visit to the Church of Bangladesh (CoB). Bishop Paul S. Sarker, Mrs. Janet Sarker and Rev. Shourabh Pholia welcomed them at the airport and from there they came to the Bishop's residence and all enjoyed lunch with the Bishop's family and spent time with Bishop and his wife.

That afternoon at 3pm the Archbishop of Canterbury met with all the Synod staff from CoB, Church of Bangladesh Social Development Program (CBSDP) and Christian Ministry of Children and Youth (CMCY) at the Synod meeting room where Bishop Paul S. Sarker the Moderator of the CoB, Mrs Caroline Welby, Mrs Janet Sarker and Canon David Porter were also present. Guests were welcomed by the staff of the various offices and a short presentation on the CoB and its various activities was presented by Mr. Michael A. Roy the Facilitator for Anglican Alliance.



After the presentation from CoB and its activities His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby expressed his feelings and shared with all staff. He was very much enthralled with Church's contributions to the people's need particularly in health and education. He informed everyone that the purpose of his visit is to meet all the primates personally and to understand their challenges. He also mentioned three major challenges which most of the countries are being confronted with, they are difficulty with Islam, climate change issues and extreme poverty.

He challenged everyone by asking how a church can show a new life to others. He mentioned the message of Christ is peace and reconciliation and stated the church should work for this. He also encouraged everyone by saying that he is amazed at how much the CoB being a small church is doing. He also mentioned that the CoB has great strength and could teach others in the Anglican Communion. The work the CoB is doing pleased people's hearts and God's heart.

On Friday 30th May the Archbishop attended Communion service and Reception at the Conference Centre, Savar. He celebrated Ascension Day Holy Communion Service where the archbishop preached on Ascension of Christ. He was assisted by Bishop Paul S. Sarker and Bishop Samuel S. Mankhin. It was followed by a short reception programme organised by the CoB. The Moderator the Most Rev. Paul S. Sarker presented a crest to His Grace Archbishop Justin Welby. The Archbishop delivered a short speech at the reception programme. The Deputy Moderator Bishop Samuel Sunil Mankhin and the Synod Secretary Mr. Joseph Sudhin Mondol also delivered speeches where they

The Archbishop of Canterbury emphasised about Christian unity and action to witness Christ. He also emphasised three issues, prayer, reconciliation and evangelism. He also reminded everyone that the church is not an NGO.

welcomed all and shared about the CoB. Rev. Shourabh Pholia the Mission Programme Secretary gave thanks to all who were involved to make the visit of the Archbishop a success. Archbishop very much moved by the cultural performances of the reception.

In the afternoon the Archbishop left for the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) in Savar and visited many victims of Rana Plaza still receiving treatment at CRP. There he also had an interview with Masranga Television. On his journey from Savar to Dhaka he visited the site of Rana Plaza and spent a few minutes there.

In the evening the Archbishop of Canterbury met the prominent leaders of Churches and Ecumenical Bodies in Bangladesh at Rupashi Bangla Reception Hall.

The Archbishop of Canterbury was happy to hear and see the ecumenical leaders, Christian MP and businessman. He emphasised Christian unity and action to witness Christ. He also emphasised on importance of three issues: prayer, reconciliation and evangelism. He added, we have to be different in our services to uphold the dignities of the humankind.

The Ecumenical Fellowship organised by the Moderator of CoB the Most Rev. Paul S. Sarker and participated by the Deputy Moderator Right Rev. Samuel S. Mankhin, Roman Catholic Archbishop Patrix D' Rozario, Bishop Theotonius Gomes, Advocate Promod Mankhin (MP), Mr. David Gibson the British High Commissioner, Mr. Tapon Chowdhury, Mr. Joyanto Adhikary, Mr Michael A Roy, Asia Facilitator of Anglican Alliance Mr. Joseph Sudhin Mondal the Synod Secretary and other leaders from different denominations. Rev. Shourabh Pholia welcomed all on behalf of CoB and respected Bishops.

Next morning on 31 May the Archbishop and his team left for India. Bishop Sarker and Mrs Janet Sarker went to the airport to see off them.





Us- visitors visited Rana Plaza victims

Three visitors Ms. Naomi Herbert, Director of International Programmes, Mrs. Fran Mate, International Programme Manager and Mrs. Carrie Myers, Volunteering Manager from United Society (Us), UK, formerly known as USPG came to the Church of Bangladesh to visit the Community Health and Hygiene Projects of CBSDP and activities of Bollovpur hospital from 24th May-1st June 2014.

The team visited the Rana Plaza site at Savar and met with many of the victims of the collapsed factory. They listened to their stories and tried to understand their sorrows and pain of not having their human rights upheld.

The victims were happy to be able to share their concerns with them and have hope they can build better lives in future.

The team visited Bollovpur Christian Mission Hospital and its Community Outreach Programmes, Kushtia Diocesan Office, Kushtia Junior High School, Jobarpar Integrated Community Health Project in Jobarpar and Dhamsor areas and Barisal Oxford Mission.

The team talked to community staff, got to know their real needs, existing challenges and the way to overcome those and learned about directions

towards achieving self-sustained development.

On the last day the team after a visit to Ekota and its projects met with Most Rev. P. S. Sarker, Moderator of the CoB, Mr. Michael A. Roy Director (hon) of CBSDP, Rev. Shourabh Pholia, Mission Programme Secretary, Sister Pat Jamison Community Health Advisor of CBSDP and others in the Dhaka Synod Office.

There they gave their valuable feedback as summarised below:

- Need to review Jobarpar project budget and proposal
- How can CBSDP expand the street children project in Old Dhaka?
- How can Community Health CBSDP work collaboratively with Community Health in Bollovpur hospital?
- Need to increase nurse hostel facilities in Bollovpur Mission Hospital

The staff also commented on and asked the question 'Are we reaching the most marginalized?'

There was also a good discussion about UMOJA and Fran reminded this meeting is a process not a project or a programme.

Reporter - John Torun Mondal.



The St Andrew's Theological College Opening Service held



The St Andrew's Theological College Opening Service was held on July 6th 2014 at St Thomas Cathedral Church Sadarghat with a Holy Communion service. Most Rev. Paul S Sarker officiated and preached a sermon using the gospel of St. Matthew 5:27-30, 33-37. Bishop elaborated on the theme 'The source of truth and purity is in the heart.' During the service, the staff and students also committed themselves afresh by saying a prayer of dedication together.

Present at the service were the student community, staff and faculty members along with regular worshippers of the Cathedral Church. There is now a total of 45 students (11 residential and 36 non-residential) in various years of study representing the Church of Bangladesh, Lutheran Church, Ishai Church of Bangladesh, Garo Baptist Convention and the Baptist Church.

For all who serve and support the college in many ways, the church is deeply grateful to them.

"Earthen Pot" Programme



The women's fellowship of St. Andrew's Church has distributed an earthen pot to every house so that all the families can save some money for the charity work of the church. At the end of the year they will collect all the pots and break it with prayer and devotion. The fund will be used for poor students who cannot bear the cost of their education and also for poor families in the community. It is a yearly programme for the fellowship which has been continuing for the past few years.

'Christo Dhormio Kirton Gan' book published

A spiritual hymn book 'Christo Dhormio Kirton Gan' book has been published for the first time. Around 250 members from the 12 Kirton groups of the parishes of Bollovpur Deanery and the invited guests were present in this auspicious occasion on the 6th of June 2014 at Meherpur St. Barnobas's Church. The Diocesan Bishop Samuel S. Mankhin taking help of some other staff members took this initiative to publish the hymn book aiming at that the devotees of the Bollovpur Deanery can continue to practice the Kirtons/Hymns.

These hymns are embedded in their spiritual lives and ritual. On behalf of Bishop Mankhin the Rev. Mark M. Mondol, Rev. Billiom Sarder and Mr. Immanuel Mondol opened the book and presided over the opening ceremony.

Hymn Practice Workshop held



From 25 -27 June 2014 a hymn practice and workshop was held at the retreat/conference centre at Savar. 32 Participants from all over Bangladesh attended the event. The theme of the workshop was 'Sing in His name, because that is worthy...' Ps. 135:3. Rev. Shourabh Pholia delivered his speech on the theme and he said that a hymn is the life of worship. Through hymns we praise, we thank, we pray, we adore and we ask forgiveness. Hymns help us to realise God, help us to be united with Him, help us to have reconciliation with Him and it helps us to feel Him in us. Therefore hymns are very important in the Christian life, which should be sung with proper tune, rhythm and discipline.

Through this workshop participants have learnt more than 50 hymns from the new hymn book of which there were several new hymns. Priests, Sisters and some renowned choir leaders were there to teach the hymns and Mr. Francis Bala was the key person leading the workshop and taught to sing the hymns.



Awareness programme for girls.

Recently the EKOTA Project of CBSDP organised a study tour for teenage girls with a total of 108 girls joining the tour. All the girls were from various faith communities. They visited the museum of Bangabandhu Shekh Muzibur Rahman. Through the tour CBSDP conducted an awareness sessions on various issues such as early marriage, education on adolescence period, basic health, self-development, immunisation, eve teasing, skill development training, human rights, family laws and personal hygiene. Through this programme they gained knowledge and enhanced their confidence to live better.

St. Thomas' Community School

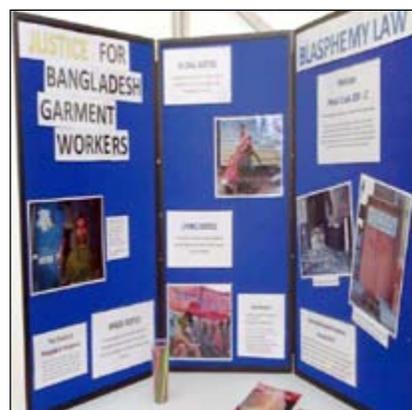


This school is mainly for the children of the poor families of Old Dhaka. Their mothers go for domestic work for earning leaving their children at home alone almost all the day with nobody to care for them. They did not have an opportunity to attend school. They were neglected and insecure as they moved around the streets. Bishop B.D. Mondal took initiative and started a day care centre for them on the veranda of the Cathedral. He started an education programme from pre-school to standard class two. Now the number of students has increased. Most of the children come from Hindu and Muslim faith communities.

From its beginning CMS-Switzerland has been supporting the school. From this school approximately 2000 have been benefited and many are now working in various places around Bangladesh. The mothers are very grateful to CoB for their initiative to provide education for their children. CoB appreciates the support of Mrs. Antony and others through CMS-Switzerland. Much prayer and support is needed to continue this good work. Now, Mrs Janet Sarker, Dhaka Diocesan Coordinator supervise the school.

Bishop Mankhin attended Bangladesh Group meeting

Bishop Samuel Sunil Mankhin represented and attended the Bangladesh Group meeting which was held in Edinburgh, Scotland on the 12th of May, 2014. Mr. Sandy Sneddon, the Asia Secretary of World Mission Council of the Church of Scotland hosted the event in the Church of Scotland's office.



Bishop Mankhin also attends the Church of Scotland Assembly-2014 in Edinburg. He was impressed by the programme organised by the World Mission Council with around 5000 people presented on the day. They all heard about the Rana Plaza disaster and about the rights of garment factory workers of Bangladesh at an exhibition stall. His Royal Highness Prince Edward, the youngest son Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Lord High Commissioner paid a visit and encouraged the people gathered.



Bishop Samuel Sunil Mankhin visited a primary school at Carlogie, where he spoke about Fair trade and about Bangladesh in general in two classes.

Seminar for SSC and HSC examinee held



Dhaka Diocesan Youth Fellowship organised a seminar for SSC and HSC students 16th-20th June 2014 at the retreat/ conference centre in Savar Dhaka. Students totaling 40 from Haluaghat and Dhaka Deaneries participated in the programme. The theme was, 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.' - Eph. 6:1. Most Rev. Paul S. Sarker spoke on the theme. He encouraged the youth to obey their parents as the Bible tells everyone to do the same. He also mentioned that obeying our parents helps us to build our life. Respect for parents is mandatory. After his speech he distributed a crest to those who have received GPA 5 in board exams and gave some gift to them.



'The role of youth in church' was presented by Rev. Shourabh Pholia the Mission Programme Secretary of CoB. He presented a power point presentation and explained it's effectively to all students. He also challenged them to be a good leader in their respective churches. Dr. Tejas S. Das spoke on 'Higher Education and Technical Education' which might help students get direction in their lives. Mr. Michael A. Roy the Facilitator of Anglican Alliance spoke on 'How to build your life in the present context'. Rev. Dr. Albert Walters presented a power point presentation on 'Global Warming and Awareness'. Rev. Hemen Halder and Rev. Mritunjoy Mondal also spoke on 'Love and Marriage' and the impact of it.

Rev. Jonarson Dio organised the seminar for the youth and he also arranged an exposure visit for them to the National Monument at Nabinagar in Savar.

HIV training for trainers held

A HIV training for trainers was organised by Church of Bangladesh Social Development Program (CBSDP) from 10th-13th August 2014 at Church of Bangladesh Retreat/ Conference Centre in Savar, Dhaka.

The trainers Mrs Mita Barua from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Ms Khaleda Afroz Manager of Keranigonj project conducted the training. Fifteen staff in total attended from three project areas Keranigonj, Meherpur and Tongi.



The projects have primarily been chosen for two areas, Meherpur and Keranigonj of Dhaka, due to having a very high instance of injecting drug users and blood donations by unsuitable people and a high instance of human trafficking, prostitution and HIV. This project is funded by Church of Scotland World Mission Council.

Sister Pat Jamison, Community Health Advisor coordinated the training.

World Environment Day Celebration

CoB and its development ministry CBSDP jointly celebrated World Environment Day on 5th June 2014. Different initiatives were taken by the Church and CBSDP. Seminar, rally and tree plantations were arranged at different parts of the country.

The Umoja group in Khagrachhari planted tree and they were encouraged for that by their Bible study. Mr. Santu Adhikary is leading the group in Khagrachhari. Through the CBSDP's projects trees were distributed to students to encourage them to take care of the creation.



Priest's Seminar 2014 held



A seminar for the priests of the Church of Bangladesh was held from 30 May – 1 June 2014. The theme of the seminar was, 'Faith without works is dead'- James 2:26.

The talk on James 2:26 was delivered by Rev. David Dipok Das, Secretary of National Council of Churches (NCCB). He emphasised on the challenges of today's pastoral ministries and also encouraged priests to do their roles more effectively which are their call from God.

Rev Shourabh Pholia spoke on Urban Ministry. He presented a power point presentation and explained the meaning of it and its importance

in developing country. He brought some statistics and tried to show the necessity of urban ministry. He also focused on the challenges of it and highlighted the way forward.

Mr. Michael Roy spoke on the issues of climate change. He also presented his speech through power point presentation and discussed with the priests on how the climate is changing. He also explained the status of present suffering and the future crisis due to climate change. He highlighted the way forward to take care of the world in light of the Bible, values and science.

Rev Dr A S Walters the Principal of St.

Andrews Theological College (SATC) presented a power point presentation on 'Church-related Ministries: The Pastor's Authority and Responsibility.' He clearly explained what the CoB is doing and what is the responsibilities of clergies in those ministries.

Priests had a chance to meet with the Bishops to share their challenges in a team. It was a good opportunity for the priests.

Rev John P Hira spoke on 'Interfaith Relations in Local Context' and he encouraged on having dialogue with other faith communities.

Most Rev. Paul S. Sarker spoke on 'Pre and Post-Marital Counselling' which is becoming a burning issue for the churches. He emphasised on this issue and expressed that the priests should be aware of the issue and should be involved in counselling.

There was a panel presentation on 'Issues and Challenges in the Parish and Deanery' by the Deans of the deaneries.

Brother Eric from Mymensingh Taize Community led the Bible Study on the theme of Urban Ministry.

The seminar was organised by Rev. Albert S. Walters and Rev. Hemen Halder.

Umoja Workshop held in Rajshahi and Haluaghat Deanery

Umoja workshops were held from 8 - 11 April, 2014 in Rajshahi Deanery at Nimghutu, Babuldong, Jhinafulbari, Babuldong and Dokkinsohor Parishes. About 317 participants attended the workshops from the local churches. The main theme of this workshop was 'Let us start rebuilding' (Nehemiah 2:18). Nine Umoja groups have so far been formed with approximately 20 -30 members in each group.

Another UMOJA workshop was held from 15th-18th June 2014 in Haluaghat Deanery at Katolmari, Kumuria and Dhorati Parishes. There were approximately 131 participants took part in the workshops from the local churches. There have three Umoja groups been formed at Katolmari and Kumuria parishes and two groups are in process at Dhorati. The Umoja local committee is usually being formed with five-seven members in each parish and they carry out the Umoja activities at the local level.

The vision, purpose and benefits of the Umoja process are brought to the participants through the sessions, multi-media presentation, drama, story-telling, Bible studies and the Umoja slogan (local languages) to understand the key concept of Umoja approach and also how to find the local resources and its solution within themselves in the local church.

The programmes were led by Mr. Torun Mondal, Mr. Philip Mondol and coordinated by Rev. Shourabh Pholia, Mission Programme Secretary of the CoB.





Social development programme's annual general meeting held

On 2 May 2014 CBSDP's Annual General Meeting was held at the retreat/conference centre at Savar Dhaka. The Chairman of CBSDP Most Rev. Paul S. Sarker chaired the AGM and welcomed every one.

Rev. Shourabh Pholia the Mission Programme Secretary of CoB and a member of the meeting led the devotion. In his devotion he said the church and its programme should be like 'we are for people and God; we are by the people and of the people. However the present situation is, we are far from God and people, we are off the people, we say bye to people or we buy the people.' He mentioned we should 'be good people.' 'Being good Christians only then we can do good to others. By just doing good things we cannot be good enough. To serve people we need to be humble like Christ. We need to be humble like a child. We should look at people with the eyes of God so that people can see God through us and our service.'

The Chairman Most Rev. Paul S. Sarker said, 'With new and neutral sights we need to go ahead for open discussions. Few days ago we celebrated Easter which helped us to understand that we have hope. We should come out from our old nature and limitations and weaknesses. It is possible when we transform ourselves. It happens through love of God and our loving work for others.'

Mr. Michael A. Roy presented a report. He emphasised that CBSDP is a wing of CoB. He also stated CBSDP is working

for the development of poor and vulnerable people and for their rights and justice as mandated by Christ.

In AGM, Vice-chairman of CBSDP, Deputy Moderator of CoB Right Rev. Samuel S. Mankhin was also present and delivered valuable development insights in the meeting.

A total of 30 members of the CBSDP's councilors were present in the meeting.

Deanery Councils Held

On 11 July the Haluaghat Deanery Council, 18 July the Dhaka Deanery Council, 6-8 August the Jobarpar Deanery Council and 9 August the Khulna Deanery Council were held. This year the theme for the councils was same for all Deaneries, 'But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.' -Matthew 6:33.

Most Rev. Paul S. Sarker led the council and in his message he urged Churches to grow spiritually and also to serve the community with love and care. He also emphasised on the three issues: prayer, reconciliation and evangelism which the Archbishop of Canterbury reiterated all the time during his recent visit in Bangladesh.

He also challenged the Dhaka deanery to care for the people who are coming from villages and doing hard work in cities and encouraged them to do urban ministry more effectively.

Confirmation Held

In recent months many young boys and girls have been confirmed in various churches of Church of Bangladesh. Most Rev. Paul S. Sarker and Bishop Samuel S. Mankhin led the sacrament services. On Sunday 15 June, 2014 Most Rev. Paul S. Sarker confirmed 36 candidates at Chourkhuli Parish. There he reminded the participants that the confirmation sacrament is to commit ourselves to God and should lead a new life with Jesus overcoming weaknesses.



On 4 May, 2014 Most Rev. Paul S. Sarker confirmed 28 candidates at Oxford Mission Epiphany Church Barisal and on the same day in the evening he confirmed 33 candidates at St. Joseph's Church, Kashipur in Barisal.

On 29 June, 2014 Bishop Samuel S. Mankhin confirmed 65 candidates in Christ Church Karpashdanga and on 30 June, 2014 he confirmed 46 in St. Peter's Church Ratnapur.

Much prayer is needed to ensure the youth can keep the promises which they have made to lead a Christian life.