



Church of Bangladesh

NEWSLETTER

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Bishop Consecration held

Rev. Shourabh Pholia had been consecrated as the first Bishop of the newly established Barisal diocese of Church of Bangladesh at Christ the King's Church of Khalishpur, Khulna on Sunday 30th of April 2017.

Honorable moderator of Church of Bangladesh, Rt. Rev. Paul S. Sarker led the consecration service with other four Bishops - the honorable Bishop of Kushtia diocese Rt. Rev. Samuel S. Mankhin, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bill Atwood (Anglican Church of North America), The Rt. Rev. Ashoke Biswas (Diocese of Calcutta), and The Most Rev. Philip P. Marandih (Bishop of Patna & Darjeeling) from Church of North India.

In that consecration service the honorable Rt. Rev. Subrata Howlader (Bishop of Barisal diocese of Catholic Church), Revd. Canon Richard Bartlett (Director for Mission Engagement in USPG), Canon Fred David (Chaplain to Archbishop of West Malaysian Diocese), Revd. John Kennady Thabaraj (Arch Deacon, West Malaysian Diocese), Revd. Paritosh Canning, (Vice President of Diocese of Calcutta, CNI, India), Rev. Julie Sim (South Asia and East Asia Mission Secretary, CWM) and all the Clergy of Church of Bangladesh, lay representatives of CoB parishes and other

denominations and organizations were present. There were a total of about 1200 participants in the worship. At 8.30am the service started with a procession and an invocation dance. The Most Rev. Philip P. Marandih preached the Word of God in the consecration service.

After the consecration service a warm welcome and reception programme took place. All the guests conveyed their greetings to Bishop of Barisal Diocese and a cultural programme was arranged where children and youth from different parishes took part. An address of honour was recited and given to Rt. Rev. Shourabh Pholia on behalf of all the elders and members of CoB. A souvenir on this special occasion was produced by publication section of Synod and that was unveiled by Moderator of Church of Bangladesh Rt. Rev. Paul S. Sarker.

After the programme a fellowship lunch was served. The newly created Barisal diocese of Church of Bangladesh is the third diocese and Bishop Shourabh Pholia is the first Bishop of this diocese. We thank God for His blessing on everything and for His Grace on Church of Bangladesh.

New diocese in CoB and its challenges

Barisal is a new diocese of CoB. It has been set up in a different geographical context and environment. The Epiphany Brother and Sisterhood of Oxford Mission nurtured the Anglican Church in this area with a great dedication to Gods' Mission. With that legacy it would be a new challenge for the new Bishop. When the publication department of CoB asked to Bishop on it.

He replied ...

‘ People of Barisal diocese had a dream to have a dynamic diocese which will bring aspiration in life. It is indeed a challenge of change and to usher a way towards Kingdom of God. We need new vision and mission for that, and with that desire the new diocese has started its journey.’



A new diocese at the southern part of Bangladesh was a much-awaited dream of the people of CoB. The foundation of the new diocese was laid in 2012 and the process has been completed on the 30th April 2017 with the consecration of the new Bishop.

Why this third diocese?

The main reason of the new diocese in the south is to provide spiritual care and to aid the folk. CoB is growing day by day and its people are in constant need of spiritual upkeep. It was a pressure on CoB to increase the social and spiritual services for its congregations,

and in that context it was a very timely decision to form another diocese.

However there are a few challenges for the new dioceses to realize its overarching mission:

- Geographically the new diocese is situated in a most vulnerable and disaster prone area. So most of the people here are economically poor and broken due to constant losing of their lands, forced internal migration, poor health and lack of scope for educational.
- Due to constant lack of proper education, scope of proper livelihoods, and for minority status, in general, Christian people are becoming a weaker section in the country and getting exposed to many risks in living.
- For the last few years CoB has been discussing on sustainability of the church. CoB planned to make the new diocese sustainable and an exemplary one in this aspect. Therefore it will have to suffer challenges both social and financial to achieve its goal.
- People of Barisal diocese had a dream to have a dynamic diocese, which will bring hope in life through bringing changes in the lifestyle of the people, and thereby it will strengthen the church and society. That change will be a rise that will make everything new and fresh. With that visionary challenge, in fact, the new diocese has started its journey.

In the midst of all these challenges we find God is vividly at His work for us. The Holy Spirit is constantly calling the Church to be the salt and light in these areas and to spread the good news to everyone. We seek your prayers and support as we began this journey in Christ name. Amen.

Yearly 'Spiritual Revival' gathering of Church of Bangladesh was held



need to focus on our past, need to analyze our life. Nowadays we are not eager to take rest, rather say, cannot take rest. We have lot of problems to solve; problems with children's education, problems in professions, problems in families, problems with neighbors, problems with property, many sort of problems around of us. We are becoming depressed day by day. We are becoming exhausted. However whenever we feel tired, then we need to take rest, we need to stop for a while, we need to take leave for refreshment. Taking rest in life is essential to live better.

Prophet Isaiah wanted to say, *in this time we need God's blessings, strength & rest, whenever the Jews faces many problems and pain they blamed God. We also whenever depressed by pain & problems we thought God is not in Earth, either He couldn't see anything or He couldn't hear. But God always hear us and see our all activities. He knows our every prayer. He never being passionless, else we always wanted to get result as we like to thought, but God want us to be passionate. He testified us by pain, sorrow, problems but we don't have right to justify Him.*

The core event of the congregation was praying for the sick. Worshipers from all religions took part in the prayers. They gave thanks to God for His mercy and kindness received over the last year and put requests and promises before Him for the coming year. Many gave witnesses of the miracles worked upon them by God. They offered prayers with full submission and tears to get recovery from critical diseases by the mercy of God. The Bishops, priests and senior people of the society placed hands on their heads and prayed for the blessings and mercy from God.

As usual February was the month of 'Spiritual Revival' gatherings and those took place in six deaneries. Every congregation selected separate themes and the speakers discussed on the themes. Around 1000 to 5000 people gathered from different villages and towns and many of them walked a long distance to attend the event. They ate ordinary food and endured the wraith of the cold winter nights with one aim - to attain mercy and blessings from God. At all the congregations the Bishops, Priests and guests delivered revival messages to attendees.

The 101st revival gathering of Jobarpar deanery was held on 9-12th February 2017 at St. Luke Church of Kandi Parish. The main theme was "—those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength."-Isaiah 40:31. The honorable Moderator of Church of Bangladesh Rt. Rev. Paul S. Sarkar proclaimed on the main theme. He started his proclaiming by a story, "After fishing a tired fisherman was taking rest beside a river. A man walked to him and asked the

fisherman, 'how many fishes have you caught?' 'Oh! a lot' – the fisher answered. 'Ok, fine catches more – replied the man.' 'Why should I catch more?' - reacted the fisher. The man replied again 'Will have a lot of money and property, will be happy more'. The fisherman replied, 'how do you thought that I am not enough happy now? I catch enough fishes, now I am taking rest with happiness'. Bishop Sarkar said, we all need to take rest, need to take leave. We

Ordained Five Deacons



On February 12, 2017 at the Helmel meeting Mr. Richard Mardy was ordained at Babuldang Church. Honorable Bishop Samuel S. Mankhin ordained him with the assistance of the Priests from Rajshahi Deanery. Brother Erick from Taize community was the preacher in the service. Later the Deacon Mandy was cordially welcomed by the Church members.

Mr. Richard Uttam Biswas and Mr. Manik Baroi also were ordained at 'BORO SOVHA' of Jobarpar Deanery on February 12, 2017 at Kandi. The ordination was conducted by the honorable Bishop Paul Shishir Sarker of Dhaka Diocese and was assisted by the priests. Rev. Shourabh Pholia preached from the Holy Bible, and later a warm reception was given to the newly ordained Deacons.



Mr. Dipok Ujjal Biswas and Mr. Peter Mondol were ordained at Christ Church, Karpasdanga on February 19, 2017. Honorable Moderator & Bishop of Dhaka Paul S. Sarker and deputy Moderator & Bishop of Kushtia, Bishop S. Mankhin jointly conducted the ordination service and other priests assisted them. Rev. Simson Mazumder preaches on the occasion. Later a reception was given to the ordained Deacons.

Lenten Pledge 2017, Church of Bangladesh



This year the Lenten pledge was devoted to the elderly, the golden age people. It is observed that our dedication and responsibility to elderly including the parents have largely declined. But our scripture teaches us to care and respect them with decency and loyalty. Church has the responsibility to think of them. CoB plans to do something for the elderly at each parish. Support from abroad in this area is not available as such as it was before and therefore we have to act on our own and make sure that God's will is with us to fulfill His words towards that end.

We are requested to contribute the Lenten pledge 2017 to this cause, and urged to expedite the efforts, individually and from parish, to care the elderly people as we are instructed by our God -

“Pay attention to your father, and don't neglect your mother when she grows old.” - Proverb, 23:22.

Earth is home for all - let us take care of it'

Church of Bangladesh celebrated the festival of Nature and Environment Protection in all its Dioceses, Deaneries, Parishes, and also by every Social

Development Projects during the Advent time.

Church of Bangladesh arranged special services on Friday and Sunday at all parish levels based on Bible verses. Prior to this publication department published booklet and poster on Climate Change.





Bishop's visit

On 19th Feb. 2017 Moderator Bishop Paul S. Sarker & Deputy Moderator Bishop Samuel S. Mankhin visited some families in Karpasdanga Parish. First, they visited newly ordained Deacon Peter Mondol's family and spend some time there and later they visited Rev. Santi Mondal's family. They prayed for the families. During the visit, Rev. Asish Mondol, Rev. Daniel Mondol & Mr. Jones Loton Roy, Information & Documentation Secretary CoB was with them.

On the same day Moderator Bishop Sarker visited Ratonpur Church and during his visit he talked to local Pastor Rev. Philip Biswas, and some elder members of the Parish. He also visited Compassion activities and spent some time with the Compassion workers.

Later Bishop Sarker arrived in Bollovpur and attended a reception by the trainee nurses of mission hospital. A cultural programme was organized there. Bishop Sarker in his message to the nurses said, "Nursing service is very noble work, because it is a service for the humans in their critical needs. By serving helpless,



poor and sick people, we serve the God - our creator".

During the reception, sister Jillian Rose, Mr. Ashok Mollick, Rev. Asish Mondol, rev. Daniel Mondol & Mr. Jones L. Roy was also present.

At evening, Bishop Sarker visited Bollovpur 'Home of Bethany'. There Bishop spent some joyful time with the children. Dean of Bollovpur deanery Rev. Simson Mazumder, Deanery secretary & the Parish committee members of

Bollovpur were there with Bishop Sarker.

Later Bishop Sarker went to visit retired Priest Rev. Mark Matob Mondol at Meherpur. Bishop spent some times with him and afterwards went to Nittyandanadapur. There the Church members & the elders welcomed him, and received him through a cultural program arranged by the congregation.



9th Synod Session of Church of Bangladesh Concluded

From 16th to 18th March 2017, the 9th Synod session of the Church of Bangladesh was held attending a total of 72 delegates, from Churches and all other institutions function under dioceses of Dhaka and Kushtia.

Theme of the Synod council was – Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it- 1st Corinthians 12:27. Moderator Bishop Paul S Sarkar presented a paper on this theme while deputy moderator Bishop Samuel S Mankhin presided over the session. 29 reports were presented in this council from different entities of the COB. In the Council a new Synod committee was elected for the next three years (2017 –



2019) and Dr. James Tejosh Das became the Honorary Secretary while Mr. Lawrence Mondol, the Honorary Treasurer.

Pastoral Team visit initiated by CCA



A Pastoral Solidarity team comprising Revd Dr Henny William Booth Sumakul Head of Christian Evangelical Church in Manahasa, Indonesia and Dr Reynaldo Recaza Ty, CCA Programme Coordinator for prophetic Diakonia and Advocacy made a visit to CoB. The visit was initiated by CCA and coordinated, in Bangladesh, by NCCB. The team took interest to learn the present crisis of minorities in Bangladesh along with the increasing terrorism and other crises in general that hampers the people to live in harmony and peace. The discussion underlined the growing trend and causes of terrorism; its link with religion and other political economy has been working behind of that. The growing trend of migration of the minority Hindu community to neighbouring country is making the Christian and other minorities more marginalized. Comprising all minorities it now stands at 10%, however in 1971 it was around 15%. The rate of out

migration of Hindu has been more than 1% per year (Read more: <http://ow.ly/Sox8100G7Og>). The crisis of migration is very critical, and this is an issue may only be solved politically with effective policy and due accountability.

Dr James Tejosh Das, Synod Secretary of CoB gave a brief presentation on the present state of terrorism in the country, its roots and implication. Moderator Bishop Paul S Sarker of CoB discussed on the growing trend of violence and the vulnerability of women. He mentioned the cause of that is mainly for the absence of governance in the system. In one discussion about the effective role of the church it is understood Church ministry should be more practical and tangibly present on the side of the people.

The participants agreed that global platform such as CCA is very necessary to promote and protect peace in the society by advocating for more accountable policy and its practice.

The meeting was attended by Rev. David A. Das, General Secretary, and Mr. Albert D. Biswas, Program Secretary from NCCB and Rt. Revd Paul S Sarker, Moderator & Bishop of Dhaka, Bishop Shourabh Pholia, Dr. James Tejosh Das, Synod Secretary, Mr. Michael A Roy, Asia Facilitator, Anglican Alliance, Mrs. Janet Sarker, Education Coordinator and Mr. Stephen Baroi from CoB.



Moderator in USA with PCUSA

Moderator, Bishop Paul S. Sarker made visit to USA in May. He was invited by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association to attend the World Summit on Persecuted Christians. It was held in Washington D.C. from 9th to 13th May. There were Bible studies on different passages related to persecution for faith in Jesus. These Bible studies were very much encouraging for the Christian in the world especially Christians in Middle East countries who are living in horrible situation in ever day of life in present time. There were few painful stories of persecution shared by few friends from different parts of the world. It is unbelievable that in this 21st century innocent people may face such barbarian persecution for their faith.

There were few great evangelical speakers who delivered their speeches including the vice president of USA Michael Pence. All together it was an expression of solidarity with the persecuted Christians and inspiration to work and pray for all the minorities in this world who are facing persecution for their faiths and believes. The event was concluded with a statement.

After this World Summit Moderator visited the central office of the Anglican Church of North America in Georgia, Atlanta. He met the Primate, Archbishop Foley Beach of ACNA and signed a statement on communion between ACNA and

COB. Both of them exchanged Crest to each other. Moderator also visited Louisville, Kentucky the head quarter of Presbyterian Church of USA.

This year is 25 years of Partnership between PCUSA and COB. He met the Stated Clerk (General Secretary) of PCUSA and key staff of Global Mission and enjoyed a great fellowship with them. Stated Clerk handed over Moderator Bishop Sarker a Crystal Logo of PCUSA. Bishop Sarker also gave him a crest with logo. The staff presented Bishop Sarker a Clock as a symbol of passing together for 25 years in partnership. Mission coordinator Mienda also took him to Louisville Presbyterian Seminary from where Bishop was graduated with M.Th. in 1998.

Finally Moderator came to New York and stayed with Mr. Theodore Ashit Barikder family and met some of the Church members. Among them there were Mr. Julian J. Malakar, Mr. Paul B. Bala and Mr. Mark R. Roy. He also talked to Mr. John Tapon Halder, Mr. Antony Biswas, Mrs. Pretty Pandey, Mr. Saikat Pandey, Mr. Paul Ranjan Baroi Mr. Mridul Mitra and Rev. Birbal Halder by phone. They expressed their willingness to support the new Barisal Diocese.

Moderator Bishop Sarker marked the visit very meaningful in the present context of crisis faced by the world and the Churches.



SHALOM - a new structure with new vision to ensure fullness in life



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SHALOM, the new structure of the development wing of the Church of Bangladesh, which was known by CBSDP

in recent past, is a result of a major institutional reformation in Church of Bangladesh. SHALOM has been set on three guiding principles – LOVE, JUSTICE and PEACE and reoriented to work for the Human Rights and Development with a shift from project to programme approach. The programmes chosen for that are thematic and strategic, which includes:

- Food and livelihoods security;
- Community health and nutrition;
- Rights and social security;
- Gender equality and development;
- Climate change adaptation and better disaster risk management;
- People's organisation development; and
- Ethnic community development.

Initially it is targeting at reaching 14,600 poor and marginalized families from 15 districts located at relatively vulnerable areas of the country.

The management of SHALOM has largely been revised to bring governance at center and for that constitution of the organisation and other policies have been critically reviewed and revised. More professional working force is being sought while a scope of internship has been introduced to encourage young Christian of CoB to join in the mission and make an effective entry to future career.

SHALOM desires to be a flagship in faith-based organisations to bring fullness in life as we have ensured by Jesus - 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10, Holy Bible)

It is a challenge, but that is our mandate to fulfil in the way we have been taught and encouraged by the Good News. We are not alone; the people are with us as our partners. Government has given the approval of its Comprehensive Development Programme and partners as well have agreed to support through a consortium. In a full transparent and accountable process staff are being recruited in collaboration with partners and guided by experts. By this time, in that process, a competent Director has been recruited.

It is a big change and SHALOM has just been formed and now is in shape of a tender shoot. It may take some time to get full growth, but all feel very encouraged with the change and enthusiastic to work together and give it a full shape towards the causes of the people.