



The Official Monthly Newsletter of CSI Church Toronto

Pilgrim

Volume 12 Issue 2

FEBRUARY 2012



2012 Motto

*See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.* Isaiah 43: 19



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Pilgrim

FEBRUARY 2012

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Editorial

Self-denial

We're entering into a season of Lent which begins on Ash Wednesday, culminating on Easter Sunday. Many Christians observe the forty day period in different ways based on their convictions. Lent season calls for prayer and self-denial. It seems so challenging; we're required to give up something that has been so dear to us. Daniel 9:3 says, 'So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.'

Though the idea of self-denial is good, we also need to consider the hidden intention behind it. When we abstain from some of the *dearest things* in our lives, it would be a good idea to consider the reason for doing so. Some may give-up their favorite food or keep away from one time meal as part of a slim down program. Though it is a sacrifice, the selfish motive reigns supreme. Though you may achieve your target, some studies have proved that people put on more weight during the Lent season. Self-denial doesn't become a sacrifice when compelled by external factors. It should be a natural stream that originates at the bottom of our hearts in glorious adoration to the God who loves us. It should be in remembrance of the greatest sacrifice. As we move out of our comfort zones, it should also be a time for self reflection. Praying and meditating on the word of God should empower us to complete our one step towards God. May the God of all blessing give you enough strength and insight to have a rewarding Lent season.

Samuel Anselm Samuel

Editor

Achen's Message



Dearly beloved in Christ,

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

I thank God Almighty for giving our parish and families a peaceful life in the opening of another year. It is by the grace of God we are receiving all the opportunities to create ripples of love in our church life. May God continue to steer us to the future.

This month the church gives emphasis on the theme- Ministry of Healing. The ministry done by Jesus in this world consisted of two things: teaching and healing. "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people." (Matthew 4:23) Jesus' ministry was holistic. He healed people physically, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. Jesus was concerned about the creation in its entirety. As a responsible community that following Jesus the healer, the church is assigned to take up the ministry of healing along with the ministry of teaching and preaching.

The significance of the healing ministry is that it is a way by which the church proclaims the kingdom of God. Jesus himself proclaimed the coming of the kingdom through his sayings, parables, prayer and healing. So today, the church needs to proclaim God's kingdom through the ministries of teaching, preaching, prayer and healing.

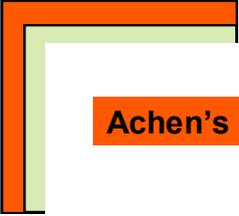
When we think about the healing ministry, we may sense that we need hospitals, Doctors and Para medical staff and all. But keep in mind that healing is about restoring and establishing pure relationship - with God and others, with ourselves and creation. It involves repentance and confession as we turn back to God and discover our identity as his children. It sometimes includes the healing of memories or restoring broken relationships with family or friends. In *this* relationship, you are expected to be a loving, patient, forgiving, and understanding person; and forgiveness, love and acceptance can be deemed as medicines.

Today, we are more aware of the need for a right relationship, and prayer and counseling can be ways of achieving a greater self-understanding and acceptance.

I appreciate you all for making our informal family get together a big success. Surely it was a real time to refresh our spirits and liven ourselves up in the company and fellowship of families and friends. I thank our Men's Fellowship for taking the fitting leadership to make it momentous. It was a night of fellowship, fun, music and play.

We are planning to hold our annual general body meeting and elections of the new executive committee by the end of this month. I seek your prayers and cooperation in accomplishing everything in a meaningful way.

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Achen's Message

Pilgrim

(Continued from page 3 - Achen's Message)

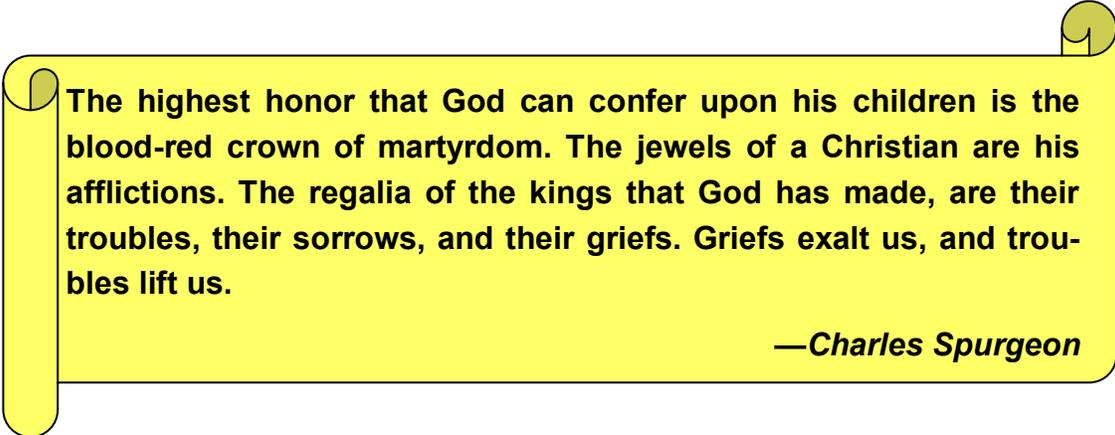
I am grateful to you all for giving your precious presence and support in all activities of our church and I'm sure that we are in the path of building up our church. But when we build a church without prayer, its growth will be numerical and it will be a weak church that lacks power. Jesus says that "My house will be called a house of prayer" (Matthew 21:12). We believe that prayer is a vital part of a healthy spiritual life, and so we encourage every member of the church to incorporate prayer into the fabric of their daily lives. I think it will be so useful if we form a prayer group to intercede for different needs and concerns. Our problems have to be solved, our lives have to be transformed, our hope is to be given and peace is to be restored. This will happen only through prayer! "Prayer is the power of the weak and the weakness of the powerful". I need your support and involvement in forming a prayer group.

This month we are entering into the period of Lent. Lent is the forty day period of fasting and prayer before Easter. The forty days represent the time Jesus spent in the wilderness overcoming temptation by Satan. The period of Lent is preparation for the yearly commemoration of the death and resurrection of Jesus, celebrated during Holy Week. Lent is the season for the experience of giving our lives over -- in each moment, bodily, deliberately, to Christ and to what the Spirit is showing us. God wants us to surrender ourselves, and let the Spirit work in us. In Lent, we take responsibility for our acts and thoughts, and treat certain of those as the killers they are. Lent is self-discovery of the parts of ourselves we don't want to discover, through prayer, fasting, and other disciplines. It is the opening up, the turning over to God, the repenting of our sins, the turning away from that which does not please God. Let us spend more time in meditating the word of God and prayer.

May God bless you all

Yours in Christ

Shajiachen



The highest honor that God can confer upon his children is the blood-red crown of martyrdom. The jewels of a Christian are his afflictions. The regalia of the kings that God has made, are their troubles, their sorrows, and their griefs. Griefs exalt us, and troubles lift us.

—Charles Spurgeon

February 05 Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	Praise		
	Old Testament	1 Samuel 2: 1-8	English Service
	Psalm	40: 1-10	Read by
	Epistle	Colossians 2: 1-7	Mr. Nibu Varguise & family
	Gospel	Luke 17: 11-19	
February 12 Healing Ministry Sunday	Healing: Wholeness in Christ		
	Old Testament	2 Kings 20: 1-11	Malayalam Service
	Psalm	63	Read by
	Epistle	Revelation 22: 1-5	Mr. Abraham P. George & family
	Gospel	John 9: 1-7	
February 19 Ninth Sunday before Easter	Creation: Sign of God's Providence		
	Old Testament	Job 38: 1-18	English Service
	Psalm	104	Read by
	Epistle	Ephesians 1: 3-14	Mr. Joy Abraham & family
	Gospel	Luke 12: 22-34	
February 22 Ash Wednesday	The Cross: Sign of Hope		
	Old Testament	Isaiah 58:1-8	Special Service
	Psalm	130	
	Epistle	1 Corinthians 9: 19-27	
	Gospel	Mark 8:34-38	
February 26 Eighth Sunday before Easter	Sin: Alienation from God and creation		
	Old Testament	Genesis 6: 1-13	Malayalam Service
	Psalm	51	Read by
	Epistle	Romans 3: 21-30	Mr. Christy Abraham & family
	Gospel	Luke 15: 1-7	

BIRTHDAYS

02	Shaji Levison Moothedom	19	Mariamamma Cherian
03	Santhosh Cherian	19	Mariamamma Thomas
03	P. J. Skariah	20	Abraham P. John
06	Pranoy Narayan	20	Rishvi Narayan
07	Sudeep Oommen	20	Philip Z. Mathai
12	Aaron Fredrick Simon	24	Savannah Thomas
15	Rahul John Oommen	25	Jinu Mary Jacob
16	Thomas C Joseph	25	Joy Chemmanoor
16	Binu Sajan	26	Christine E. Joseph
18	Thomas Mathai	26	Asha Abraham
18	Rohan Raj		



ANNIVERSARIES

02 Sajan Itty & Binu Sajan

Final Missions Report 2011

Mission Statement

To proclaim the Good news of the Kingdom of God, respond to human need by loving service thus engaging in this mission with humility.

To revive and renew structures which will awaken and challenge the people of God to work, pray and give for the spread of Gospel.

The Missions team 2011 collected \$6520 from May 2011 to December 2011.

(Continued on page 12)



Fasting Prayer

Our Monthly fasting prayer will be held on February 4th, Saturday at 10.00 AM at the Church

Sunday School

Sunday School Examination will be held on February 5th, 2012 and Anniversary will be held on February 12th, 2012 after the worship service. The unique talents of our children will be showcased on that day. All are cordially invited.

Cottage prayer meeting

Cottage prayer for Scarborough, Richmond Hill, and Markham Whitby area will be held on February 11th at Mr. & Mrs. Varghese Jacob's residence at 6.30 pm. All area members are requested to attend.

Cottage prayer for Mississauga, Brampton, Milton, Toronto, Stratford area will be held on February 25th at Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin Chacko's residence at 6.30 pm. All are invited.

Church Family get- together

This month's church family get-together will be held on February 17th starting at 7.00 pm at the Church basement. It will be a night of fun and frolic, laughter and liveliness.

The program plan:

- ◇ Aerobics & Work out session by Anand & Nisha
- ◇ Dinner (Naadan Malayali food)
- ◇ Table Tennis competition
- ◇ Caroms, checkers, chess and other board games
- ◇ Anthakshari
- ◇ Dumb Charades
- ◇ Discussions regarding topics of interest

Please come along with your families, and enjoy a night of fun, games and entertainment.

Ash Wednesday service

We will have a Holy Communion service on February 22nd Ash Wednesday at

7.30 PM. All are invited

Annual General Body meeting

Our church Annual General body meeting will be held on February 26th Sunday after the worship service.

For more news coverage, please visit: www.torontocsi.org

Missions Sunday

Missions Team

Jan 15, 2012 was set apart as Missions Sunday to remind us of the importance of Missions in our walk with Jesus Christ. The Missions Team took an active part in service led by our Achen, with Sarah John sharing the word of God.

The service started with a prayer invoking the Lord's blessings. After a soul stirring missions-focused song by Diani, a video titled "The man from George Street" was shown. It depicted a one-man mission team who passed Gospel tracts to an estimated 146,000 people, many of whom accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior & served as missionaries. The York University Power to Change Missionary Ms Sarah John shared the Good News. She highlighted the importance of both physical and spiritual missions, and the great commission of our Lord Jesus to go and spread the Good News, assuring us of His presence while we are in this world. Sarah also presented through a video presentation the work carried out by the Power to Change ministry at the York University and University of Toronto Scarborough campus; and the impact the ministry has made in the lives of students. The service continued with the Choir leading in Missions-flavored hymns. The communion service ended with a prayer, thanking the Lord for His guidance, presence & strength.



We need to praise God for answering our prayers in bringing 5 more members. Jesus said: the harvest is plenty, but the laborers are few. Let's pray that the Lord will bring more to the mission field, protect the Missions/Missionaries we support, and bless the missionaries worldwide.

Let's also ask the Lord to show us a deserving widow we can support in the days to come.

May God bless everyone!

Bishop's Visit

CSI North Kerala Diocese Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. K. P. Kuruvila visited our church on January 8, 2012.



It was a privilege to have Thirumeni and family in our Sunday service. His inspirational message was a blessing to the congregation. Our heartfelt thanks to Thirumeni.

Temptations, when we meet them at first, are as the lion that reared upon Samson; but if we overcome them, the next time we see them we shall find a nest of honey within them.

—John Bunyan

Christian Life amidst Persecution

Abraham P. George

I have always been inspired by the stories of persecuted Christians of the past and the present. They have given me a new depth to my walk of faith with the Lord Jesus.

“It's a beautiful thing to God when a Christian does battle with pain.”

“When he faces threats, punishments, and tortures by mocking death and treading underfoot the horror of the executioner; when he raises up his freedom in Christ as a standard before kings and princes; when he yields to God alone and, triumphant and victorious, he tramples upon the very man who has pronounced sentence upon him. God finds all these things beautiful.” [Minucius Felix, *The Octavius* 37]

Since we all belong to the heavenly kingdom, “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Eph. 6:12)

The Christianization of the island of Madagascar really began in the 19th century. The London Missionary society sent two missionaries in 1817. At first they were able to obtain the protection of King Radama I. King Radama I introduced European culture to the island of Madagascar and welcomed missionaries who opened schools and churches and developed a written form of the Malagasy language. The first act of the Missionaries was to open schools to teach writing, so that the Bible could be read and circulated. But these schools also served to train the modern officers which the King needed; to form an army capable of conquering the island. Soon, the people began to fear that the missionaries had been sent by the Queen of England to convert the island to Christianity and take over the country.

In 1836 the missionaries had to leave the kingdom and take refuge on the east coast, at Tamatave. They left behind them a small group of about fifty Christians. After many years, 18 of the remaining Christians were captured.

During the trial in March 1849, the officer in charge asked them some questions. One of them gave befitting replies. The conversation was as follows:

Q: Do you worship the sun, the moon or the earth?

A: I do not pray to them, because the hand of God made them.

Q: Do you pray to the idols which preside over the consecration of kings?

A: I do not pray to them, because they are manmade.

Q: Do you pray to the ancestors of the rulers?

A: Kings and governors are given to us by God so that we obey them and pay them homage, but they

are only men like us. When we pray, it is God alone whom we address.

Q: Do you distinguish other days and do you observe the Sabbath?

A: It is the day of the great God, for in six days the Lord made all his works, and then he rested on the seventh day and declared that day holy. That is why we rest and keep that day holy.

All the other Christians replied in the same way. They were condemned to death: four to be burned alive and fourteen to be hurled from a great rock and then burned to ashes.

When the sentences had been pronounced, the four Christians condemned to be burned, begged the officer to be put them to death before being burned. This request was not granted.

When the officers left, they took the eighteen condemned to death and led them to the place of execution. The fourteen who were to be hurled down were tied by hands and feet to long poles which men put on their shoulders. As they were being dragged in this way, these brothers prayed and spoke to the people, and those who saw them close by said that their faces were like the faces of angels. When they arrived at the summit of Mt. Amapamarinana, they were hurled down. Then their bodies were then dragged to the other side of the capital to be burned with the bodies of those who were to perish at the stake.

While the four Christians who were condemned to be burnt alive were on their way to the place of execution, they sang hymns. When they arrived at Taravihitra, firewood was fastened to the posts to burn them. At that moment there was a rainbow in the clouds, not far from the place of their execution. With their faces lifted up, they sang the following song.

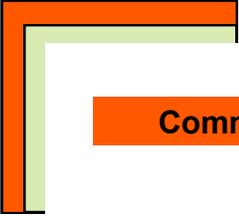
*There is a blessed land
Where we shall be happy
Our rest will never be disturbed
They know no sorrow here.*

They were still singing this hymn when they were in the fire. Then they prayed, saying 'Lord receive our spirits. It is because of your love that this is happening to us. Lord, lay not this sin to their charge'.

And they prayed like this as long as life remained in them. Onlookers marvelled at the supernatural peace displayed by these martyrs.

Such stories of steadfast faith even in the face of death teaches me that when I face heart rending trials and challenges, I too should depend totally on the Prince of Peace to turn confusion to peace and defeat to victory.

[Sources: <http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1570&C=1469> & <http://www.christian-history.org/early-christianity.html>]

**Committee****The Interim Executive Committee Members of the CSI Church, Toronto**

President	Rev. Shaji M. Johnson	Men's Fellowship Director	Mr. Zac Santhosh Koshy
Vice-President	Mr. Abraham P. George	Women's Fellowship Director	Mrs. Susan Joseph
Secretary	Mr. Christy Abraham	Youth Fellowship Director	Mr. T. Mathew Chacko
Joint Secretary	Mr. Thomas Mathai	Sunday School Director	Mrs. Raimole Joseph
Treasurer	Mr. Joseph P. Mathews	Choir Director	Mrs. Elizabeth Mathai
Joint Treasurer	Mr. Sanju Cherian	Entertainment Director	Mr. Joy Chemmanoor
Wardens	Mr. Daniel Thomas Mr. Prashanth T. Koshy	Trustees	Mr. Benjamin Chacko Mr. Sajan Itty

(Continued from page 6- Missions Report)

The amount collected was distributed in 2 installments, one in September and other in December.

Mr Shibu Mathew, IEM - \$ 1600

Ms Sarah John, Power to Change at York University - \$ 800

Kondapally extension, Parkal Mission - \$ 1600

Kuttanad Mission, MKD Kerala - \$1600

Bethel Ashram, MKD Kerala - \$ 500 A women's fellowship initiative

Total amount distributed - \$ 6100

Operation Christmas Child Shoe boxes collection by Sunday School.

Thanks to the Lord God Almighty for the successful completion in the year 2011. We gratefully acknowledge all the support rendered by Missions and Church Committee members. Our special thanks to all the Missions Team members for their monetary contribution.

Our prayer for the year 2012 is to continue supporting the above Missions and also to support a deserving widow.

We request your prayers and financial support to accomplish this.

Rev Shaji M Johnson & John Mathew

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