



St. Paul's Mar Thoma Church

THE EPISTLE

JANUARY, 2008

MESSAGE FROM VICAR



"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." (Isa.40: 31)

My dear sisters and brothers in the love of our Lord,

As it is usual the world welcomed the New Year 2008 in a carnival mood. Carousing and partying create a sense of merriment and joy for the world at large; yet celebrations do not guarantee a smooth sailing for the times ahead.

As I often remind, the perception of the New Year in its temporal dimension is only a relative reality; but seeing it as a granted future with immense opportunities in the light of the experiences of the past under the providence of the Lord of time and history is very vital for a meaningful human life. Thus a sailing into the future with the One to whom the future belongs, assures peaceful and joyous TODAYs that contribute to a meaningful history.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus reminds us the worth of life when he asks, "...Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ...Are you not much more valuable than they? ...will he not much more clothe you...?" (Mat. 6: 25-26, 30) Our New Year resolutions are many a time influenced by our worries and anxieties, and perhaps also being perturbed of the 'treasures' that we store. Jesus gives the timeless guide-

line for a positive resolution when he says, "... seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Mat. 6: 33)

Our New Year resolutions need to be something more than a list of mere 'DO's and DON'Ts' rather a resolution to look into oneself and invent the 'inner strength' that conquers all forces that smother the 'light that is within'. We live our lives within the limitations of time. Limitations should challenge us to radical involvement to enhance the quality of the processes and the experiences. A life span of 70 or 80 years is so limited that we need to live with a spirit of expediency to contribute to the good of the 3 or 4 generations with whom we share our destiny in the immediate sense. **It is our well lived TODAYs that make the past memorable for generations!** The challenge for us is to take vital and affirmative decisions TODAY and to commit our future to the Lord, and not to dwell on the failures of the past. Our lives opened up to the Lord makes the Kingdom of God a reality in among us.

Opening of new times press upon us the **demand to change in responsible ways;** our obstinacy will only lead to catastrophes of various levels and degrees. The Psalmist says "if he does not repent, he will sharpen his sword" (Ps. 7:12). For our St. Paul's Family the year 2008 is very important in several regards; we are completing 20 years of our life and witness, and we are to complete the construction of the new Temple of the Lord. We are radically challenged to reorient our lives in the spirit of love, forgiveness, and *koinonia*

(fellowship). I also suggested that the year 2008 should be separated as a year of the WORD OF GOD; every person and family (and our prayer fellowships too) should try to learn the scriptures and to be rooted in the truth of the WORD. Construction of the TEMPLE is not limited to a material structure; it is the renewal of our very beings and bodies as the abode of God.

We live in a society where the absolute right of 'free choice' is asserted pervasively. Values are conditioned and re-conditioned as 'market values'. NON-MARKET VALUES are considered impractical and obsolete. The question of the 'worth of the choices', and their impact on the sustainability of life as an interdependent reality is conveniently ignored. God's gift of life is an experience in continuity and mutual dependency within a larger reality of the creation. Let us earnestly desire, thrive and pray for a 'rebirth' experience at all levels our lives – personal, family and societal.

"Each day the world is born anew; Each moment a new beginning."

I earnestly wish and pray that in our life together as a FAMILY OF GOD we may experience this re-birth and the resulting experience of real JOY AND PEACE in the times set before us. May God bless us all!

Affectionately yours in the Lord,
Koshyachen

Poor of Spirit

One day a father and his rich family took his young son on a trip to the country side with the firm purpose to show him how poor people can be. They spent a day and a night in the farm of a very poor family. When they got back from their trip the father asked him son, "How was the trip?"

"Very good, Dad" said the son.

"Did you see how poor people can be?"

"Yes" replied the son.

"And what did you learn?"

The son answered, "I saw that we have a dog at home, and they have four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of the garden, and they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lamps in the garden, they have the stars. Our patio reaches to the front yard, they have a whole horizon."

When the little boy was finished, his father was speechless.

His son added, "Thanks, Dad, for showing me how poor we are!"

Isn't it true that it all depends on the way you look at things? If you have love, friends, family, health, good humor and a positive attitude towards life, you've got everything!

You can't buy these things. You can have all the material possessions you can imagine for the future, etc, but if you are poor of spirit you have nothing!

- Contributed by Aleena Thomas

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Mexico Mission

- by Charles Babu

The Christmas Mexico Mission trip, which took place from December 26-29th, was a very blessed experience for the five St. Paul's youths that attended: Subin John, Jojoy Koshy, Stanley Samuel, Justin Mathew, and Charles Babu. The best way to communicate with these children was through small tasks such as hugging them and singing songs in Spanish with them - simply sharing the love of Christ. There was a total of forty-one youths that attended this trip from Dallas, Houston, New York, New Jersey, and California. During this trip, many toys, candies and shoes for all the children were

handed out in the Christmas spirit. As a youth that had the privilege of experiencing this life changing trip, I recommend for all youth to come and participate in future mission trips to come. A Medical Mission Trip in late January and plans for trips in the future months are already underway. As a Christian, it is our responsibility as commissioned by Christ to spread his works and his teaching, sharing his love and his compassion. The money that is donated for this cause can be seen where it is put to use. A new land located on the mainland was purchased called "Colonia Marthoma" where the islanders will eventually move to

and completely change their life styles. Currently, there are ten houses on "Colonia Marthoma" and eighty more are being built. Another estate that was purchased for the Mexico Mission was a land that will be dormitories for the children so that they can focus and stay in school. Please continue supporting the Mexico Mission financially and more importantly through your prayers. For more information about future mission trips, please contact Justin Mathew.

I DON'T REJECT YOUR
CHRIST, I LOVE YOUR
CHRIST. IT'S JUST
THAT SO MANY OF
YOU CHRISTIANS ARE
SO UNLIKE YOUR
CHRIST.
- MOHANDAS GANDHI

New Church Building Update

-Edited by Jacob Abramam

Koshy Thomas and Soji Skariah met the lending bank along with the Contractor and Architect (per bank request) on Thursday, December 27, 2007 and went over all the necessary steps that will be taking place in the next two weeks. The conveners hope to be able to close the loan by the middle of January 2008.

The bank has already ordered environmental and appraisal

reports to speed up the process. The conveners have furnished all the documents to help make the process faster.

The next step is meet with the Contractor and Architect to work out the schedules of values, project schedules, and draw schedules. On the financial side, the focus will be on the immediate implementation of swat team action plan to close the gap of

the necessary amount to the building fund before the release of the first draw.
All are requested to pray for God's providence in each step of the construction process.

Be A Winner

- Contributed by Jaisy Raju

Losers let it happen; Winners make it happen.
Losers step on flowers in search of weeds; Winners pull up weeds while enjoying the fragrance of flowers.
Losers always have an excuse; Winners always have an idea.
Losers identify with problems; Winners identify with solutions.
Losers say, "It's not my fault"; Winners say, "Let me help you."
Losers see a problem for every answer; Winners see an answer for every problem.
Losers are down on life and high on drugs; Winners are down on drugs and high on life.
Losers fix the blame; Winners fix the situation.
Losers see the thunderstorms and icy streets; Winners see rainbows and ice skates.
Losers say, "Why don't they do something"; Winners say, "Here's something I'm going to do."
Losers are failure conscious; Winners are success conscious.
Losers do it to others and split; Winners do it for others.
Losers say, "It might be possible, but it's difficult"; Winners say, "It might be difficult, but with GOD all things are possible."



Church Activities

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Regular classes at 8.45am.
Sunday, January 27 - Annual Sunday School Day: Awards Ceremony

SEVIKA SANGHAM:

Saturday, January 5 at 10am - Ms. Grace Mathew, 620 Yosemite Dr, Mesquite, Tx.
Saturday, January 12 at 10am - Center Meeting, Hosted by Se-hion Mar Thoma Church at Spring Hill Retreat Center, 3501 Spring Hill Lane, Richardson, Tx 75082.
Saturday, January 19 at 10am - Ms. Molly Koshy, 3414 Chapelwood Dr, Sunnyvale, Tx.

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP:

Fridays, January 4, 11, 18, and 25 at 7pm - Regular meetings at the Church..

YUVAJANA SAKHYAM:

Sunday, January 13 at 6.30pm - Meeting at Mr. Liju Thomas, 1410 Havenway Dr, Garland, Tx.

PARISH MISSION:

Fridays, January 4, 11, 18 and 25 at 7pm - Bible Study/Prayer fellowships at the Church.

MALAYALAM CHOIR:

Sundays, January 6 & 20 at 9 am - Practice sessions at the Church.

ENGLISH CHOIR:

Saturdays, January 12 & 26 at 10 am - Practice session at the Church.

SPECIAL PRAYER:

Fridays, January 4, 11, 18 and 25 from 9.30 to 11.30am - The residence of Mr. Raju George, 922 Dandelion Dr, Mesquite, Tx.

Lectionary Information

Sunday, January 6, 2008 - (Malayalam Service)

Danha (Epiphany) Baptism of our Lord -Outside Kerala Mission

Lesson 1: 2 Kings 2:9-25 **Epistle:** 1 John 1:1-10

Lesson 2: 1 Peter 3:18-22 **Gospel:** Mark 1:9-15

Sunday, January 13, 2008 - (English Service)

Temperance Sunday - Enrichment of Life through Christ

Lesson 1: Ecclesiastes 6:1-12 **Epistle:** Romans 13:8-14

Lesson 2: 1 Peter 1:13-25 **Gospel:** Matthew 19:16-26

Sunday, January 20, 2008 - (Malayalam Service)

Ecumenical Sunday - Unity of all Creation - Divine Plan

Lesson 1: Isaiah 60:1-7 **Epistle:** Ephesians 4:1-7

Lesson 2: 2 Peter 1:1-11 **Gospel:** John 17:21-26

Sunday, January 27, 2008 - (English Service)

Stewardship to the Creation

Lesson 1: Isaiah 65:17-25 **Epistle:** Colossians 1:15-20

Lesson 2: Rev 21:1-8 **Gospel:** Matthew 6:25-34

Prayer Meetings

COMMON FELLOWSHIP MEETING - Saturday, January 12 @ 7pm, St. Paul's Mar Thoma Church

AGAPE

Saturday, Jan 26 @ 7pm
 Mr. Chacko T. Oommen
 5305 Brookport Dr.
 Garland, Tx

EMMANUEL

Sunday, Jan 6 @ 6:30pm
 Mr. Mathew P. Samuel
 3126 Centennial Dr, Garland, Tx

EBENEZER

Saturday, Jan 5 @ 7pm
 Mr. John K John
 526 Sumner Dr, Mesquite, Tx
Saturday, Jan 19 @ 7pm
 Mr. Mathewkutty Geevarghese
 927 Dandelion Drive, Mesquite, Tx
Saturday, Jan 26 @ 7pm
 Mr. K J Thomas
 1709 Chapman Dr. Mesquite, Tx

MANNA

Saturday, Jan 5 @ 7pm
 Mr. Philip Samuel
 279 Ashwood Ln, Sunnyvale, Tx
Saturday, Jan 19 @ 7pm
 Mr. Rajan Kunju
 3047 Cypress Way, Sunnyvale, Tx

SHALOM

Sunday, Jan 20 @ 6.30pm
 Mr. Thomas Mathew,
 2113 Catskill Dr, Mesquite, Tx.

BIRTHDAYS

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

| | | |
|--------|----------------------|-----------|
| 2-Jan | Mathew P. Samuel | Garland |
| 3-Jan | Ashish Thomas | Garland |
| 6-Jan | Christian Ninan Abey | Wylie |
| 8-Jan | Lydia Thomas | Garland |
| 10-Jan | Mini Abey | Wylie |
| 12-Jan | Ligy Skariah | Garland |
| 18-Jan | Anieamma Thomas | Rockwall |
| 18-Jan | Mathew Thomas | Garland |
| 18-Jan | Pearl Rajan | Sunnyvale |
| 21-Jan | Jeff Thomas | Plano |
| 22-Jan | Nirmala | Sunnyvale |
| 23-Jan | Jaimie Mathew | Sunnyvale |
| 24-Jan | Ivey Abraham | Mesquite |
| 26-Jan | Mariam Chacko | Mesquite |
| 26-Jan | Thomas Easo | Mesquite |

| | | |
|--------|---------------|-----------|
| 27-Jan | Andrew George | Sunnyvale |
| 28-Jan | Tiji Sunil | Garland |
| 30-Jan | Jerry James | Sunnyvale |
| 31-Jan | Mini Easo | Mesquite |

| | | |
|--------|----------------------------|------------|
| 6-Jan | Ms. & Mr. Babu John | Mesquite |
| 9-Jan | Ms. & Mr. Jeff Thomas | Plano |
| 13-Jan | Ms. & Mr. George Ipe | Garland |
| 13-Jan | Ms. & Mr. Philip P.S. | Greenville |
| 14-Jan | Ms. & Mr. Abraham N.V. | Mesquite |
| 15-Jan | Ms. & Mr. John K John | Mesquite |
| 20-Jan | Ms. & Mr. Sunny K John | Sunnyvale |
| 22-Jan | Ms. & Mr. M. M. Mathai | Sunnyvale |
| 22-Jan | Ms. & Mr. Rajan Kunju | Sunnyvale |
| 26-Jan | Ms. & Mr. Binu Tharian | Mesquite |
| 26-Jan | Ms. & Mr. Abraham Mepurath | Mesquite |
| 27-Jan | Ms. & Mr. Oommen Koshy | Sunnyvale |

ST. PAUL'S MAR THOMA CHURCH

2425 GUS THOMASSON RD.
MESQUITE, TX 75150

Phone: 972 613 9080

PARSONAGE ADDRESS
5906 BLUE OAK DRIVE.
GARLAND, TX 75043.
972 226 0976

Fun Bible Facts

"Bible" comes from Latin *biblia*, meaning "books"

The word "testament" means "covenant"

The Bible was written from about 1450 BC to 100 AD

The Bible was the first book to be printed in Latin, in 1454

Miles Coverdale published the first English translation of the entire Bible in 1535

The bible was divided into chapters by Stephen Langton in 1228. The Old Testament was divided into verses by Rabbi Nathan in 1488 and the New Testament by Robert Stephanus in 1551.

The Bible contains 1189 chapters. The Old Testament has 929 chapters and the New Testament has 260 chapters.

The longest chapter in the Bible is Psalm 119, and the shortest is Psalm 117.

The longest verse is Esther 8:9, and the shortest is John 11:35.

There are 8,674 different Hebrew words in the Bible, 5,624 different Greek words, and 12,143 different English words in the King James Version.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.STPAULSMTC.ORG

ARTICLES NEEDED!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO
SUBMIT ANY ARTICLES IN
ENGLISH OR
MALAYALAM, PLEASE
SEND IT TO:
JACOBKAB@HOTMAIL.COM

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MR. SOJI SKARIAH

Editorial

- Jacob Abraham

When we decided to revamp the current newsletter, it was suggested by Rev. C. K. Koshy Achen that we should give it a name. A name would make the newsletter interesting. It captures your eye because a name gives the newsletter a personality. Oh sure, we have published newsletter in the past for our youth league but I don't recall ever giving it a name. What kind of name would satisfy for a media that communicates the ideas, thoughts, and activities of a church and its members? My inclination was to think of the early Christian churches. Their method of communication was in the form of letters. Thus we see the letters of Paul to Roman, Corinthians, Thessalonians, and etc. These letters conveyed the thoughts, messages, and advices on church activities as well as the theological dogmas that a parish and it's members should adhere to. Hence, my conclusion was to name this newsletter, "The Epis-

tle."

The word "Epistle" means "letter" in Greek (επιστολη, *epistolē*). Although, this is a newsletter, it does not have news content such as the ones we see in mainstream media. This is simply a letter that provides information to a diaspora community similar to the epistles of Paul which provided information to a few lonely Christian communities. Thus the name "Epistle" seems appropriate.

Now that this newsletter has a name which gives it a personality, the question arises, "What kind of personality is it?" This can only be answered in examining the content of the newsletter. The content is the reflection of those who contribute to it. Therefore, this is an open-ended question. The personality will be determined by the people who contribute to its content.

So I am encouraging everyone to

give this newsletter a personality by contributing in anyway possible, even suggestions for a new name. Convey your ideas, messages, and feelings to others though the written words. In other words, I am pleading for your help! Thanks. May God be glorified through everything that we do!

