



The Midlands Prayer Group

News & Views

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December 2006
Volume 2, Issue 10



see if it accurately captures the true meaning of Christmas. Let's look at "peace.

As popularly understood, Christmas means the coming of peace between men. If we could simply imbibe the spirit of Christmas, there would be no more war or strife or hostility between us and other fellow-humans. If we could simply grasp the meaning of Jesus' life, Jesus would eliminate the hatred and cruelty that exists between people.

The angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those men who are the objects of God's choice." They did sing of peace, but they did not sing of peace between men; they sang of peace between a man and his creator. For those few who have been chosen to receive life in God's kingdom, the birth of Jesus brought about the end of their alienation from God. It brought about reconciliation. This reconciliation to God is the peace of which the angels sang.

But peace between men? Jesus did not come to bring that. He came to bring war. He came to wage a decisive battle in the war between good and evil, and he came to bring the hope of victory to those of us who are in the midst of that battle. Christmas invites us to celebrate the Lord's involvement with human history, with its most insignificant and poorest people. The Lord is neither intimidated by the hostile darkness nor by the fact that his own people do not accept him. His light is more powerful than all the shadows. Entering into the here and now of our own history, nourishing our hope with the will to live of our people.

Dearly beloved in Christ
Warm Greetings

In a few days we shall celebrate Christmas. Christmas is a time marked by hope that has become flesh in human history. This is what we are celebrating on that feast, what we Christians call the incarnation, it designate a very concrete event. The great Christmas Prophet reminds us "the people who walked in darkness have seen a light. (Isa.9: 2) Perhaps in our own time this darkness is found in the growing gap between nations and persons who use most of the world's resources. This situation is the out come of a deeper darkness. Life is light and darkness is the obstacle. In John's gospel Darkness is associated with the world. Darkness expresses sin, opposition and hostility. Light on the contrary, is the atmosphere of love.

The true meaning of Christmas is not about man loving man--or, if you were confused, human loving human. The true meaning of Christmas is about God loving man. It is about God giving the most amazing and spectacular gift to the world. It is about God giving us the promise of the coming Kingdom.

As I see it, three concepts are meant to capture the true meaning of Christmas as popularly understood: peace, joy, and love. It would be instructive to look at all three of these concepts, but I will look at only one to

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St. James Hill Church
Mere Green Road
Four Oaks, West Midlands
B75 5DD

Next Service 9th Dec 2006

The Midlands Mar Thoma Prayer Group

Through the light God sent at Christmas, through the child Jesus, we have a tunnel on to a distant light. That light shines in to the world, over coming all our darkness. And it points us to the father of all lights, the beginning and the end of all creation. That light is God's gift to us on this holiest of all nights.

May it shine in the depth of our hearts and eternity.

Wishing all of you a blessed Christmas filled with the joy and peace brought by our saviour's birth and a very prosperous New Year.

Yours in His Service

Gigy Achen

Jokes of the Month



A kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children while they drew. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's artwork. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, "I'm drawing God." The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like." Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the little girl replied, "They will in a minute."



A Sunday School teacher asked her little children, as they were on the way to church service, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."

A ten-year old, under the tutelage of her grandmother, was becoming quite knowledgeable about the Bible. Then one day she floored her grandmother by asking, "Which Virgin was the mother of Jesus? The Virgin Mary or the King James Virgin?"

Snacks for Christmas

- Mrs. K.M. Mathew



Maavunda

1. Rice Flour – 2 cups, thick coconut milk taken from 2 cups of scrapped coconut – 1 cup.
2. Powdered sugar – 1 cup
3. Ghee – 1/2 cup to 3/4 cup, Kismis soaked in ghee – 1/4 cup.

How to prepare

Heat a vessel and roast the rice flour in it. The coconut milk is poured slowly into the flour and stirred well till dry. Now the powdered sugar and kismis is added along with the ghee and the whole lot is mixed well, made to balls and rolled in dry flour.

Munthirikothu

1. Gram dal heated in a vessel and ground to the texture of rava – 1 cup,
2. Roasted rice ground to the consistency of rava – 1 cup
3. Jaggery – 1/4kg, water – 1/2 cup
4. Ghee – 2 teaspoons
5. Cardamom powder – 1/2 teaspoon
6. Roasted gingelly – 2 dessert spoons
7. Rice flour – 1/2 cup, water – to attain required consistency,
8. Salt – to taste

How to prepare

The jaggery is melted and strained. Ghee is added to it. It is then taken off the stove and gram dal, rice flour and cardamom powder are added to it followed by the roasted gingelly. This is then covered and kept aside for some time. The rice flour is then

mixed in water. The above prepared dal gram mix is rolled to small balls dipped in the rice flour batter and deep-fried. The "munthirikothu" so prepared is then cooled and stored in airtight bottles.

Arimurukku

1. Roasted rice flour – 3 cups
2. Roasted "uzhunnu" ground to a powder – 1 cup
3. Ghee – 3 dessertspoons
4. ginegelly – 1 dessert spoon, cumin – 1 teaspoon,
5. Powdered asafoetida – to taste,
6. Salt – 1 pinch

How to prepare

The two powders are mixed together and strained. Ghee or vanaspathi is poured and hand mixed. Enough water is added to make it to dough. The remaining ingredients are added. This is the strained through the murukku mould of required shape and deep-fried.

Cheeda

1. Roasted rice flour – 1 cup
2. Butter – 1 teaspoon, Soda powder – 1/2 teaspoon
3. Water – as required
4. Gingelly – 1 teaspoon,
5. Cumin – 1/4 teaspoon
6. Scrapped coconut – 1 cup

How to prepare

The scrapped coconut is heated in a vessel to remove all moisture and care is taken such that the coconut does not turn brown. Ghee and butter are taken in a flat vessel, the rice flour is added along with water added little by little at a time. This is kneaded like done for "puttu" until smooth dough is formed. The gingelly and cumin are added next. Finally the coconut is mixed with the dough, which is then rolled to balls and deep-fried in low flame in coconut oil.

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The entire story of the Bible in 50 words:

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Letter from the editorial desk

Dear friends in Christ,

Merry Xmas and Happy New Year to you all. I hope you have enjoyed the Newsletters so far. There will be no January edition due to the holiday season. However, it gives you a chance to pen your Christmas experience for the February edition.

My email id is nellikala@aol.com should you wish to send in your articles, or comment on any related matters

Regards
Sajini



Announcements



Christmas carol services

9th Dec 06: 3:00pm

- 16th Dec06 Manchester Prayer Group
- 17th Dec06 St. Johns, Hounslow
- 17th Dec06 St. James, London
- 23rd Dec06 Liverpool Prayer Group
- 30th Dec06 Bristol (Christmas Sangamam).

The next Services:

9th Dec 06
13th Jan 07



There will be refreshments after the service.

Subscription dues.

“Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, **not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**” (2Cor.9:7)

**This congregation can only survive on your generosity.
The Bible**

God made, Adam bit, Noah arked, Abraham split, Joseph ruled, Jacob fooled, bush talked, Moses balked, Pharaoh plagued, people walked, sea divided, tablets guided, Promise landed, Saul freaked, David peeked, Prophets warned, Jesus born, God walked, Love talked, anger crucified, hope died, Love rose, Spirit flamed, Word spread, God remained.

SAFE ????????

by Jinu Varghese

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How to stay safe in the world today

- Avoid riding in cars because they are responsible for 20% of all fatal accidents
- Do not stay at home because 17% of all accidents occur in the home
- Avoid walking on pavements because 14% of all accidents happen to pedestrians
- Avoid travelling by air, rail or water because 16% of all accidents involve these forms of transportation
- Of the remaining 33%, 32% of all deaths occur in hospitals, so above all else avoid hospitals
- Never go to bed because 95% of all people die in bed

BUT.....

You will be pleased to learn that only .001% of all deaths occur in church services and these are usually related to previous physical disorders.

Therefore logic tells us that the safest place for you to be at any given time is in CHURCH!!!!!!!



How to hire the right people

Put about 100 bricks in some particular order in a closed room with an open window. Then send 2 or 3 candidates in the room and close the door. Leave them alone and come back after 6 hours and then analyze the situation.

If they are counting the bricks,
Put them in the accounts department.

If they are recounting them..
Put them in auditing.

If they have messed up the whole place with the bricks,
Put them in engineering.

If they are arranging the bricks in some strange order,
Put them in planning.

If they are throwing the bricks at each other,
Put them in operations.

If they are sleeping,
Put them in security.

If they have broken the bricks into pieces,
Put them in information technology.

If they are sitting idle.
Put them in human resources.

If they say they have tried different combinations, yet not a brick has been moved. Put them in sales.

If they have already left for the day,
Put them in marketing.

If they are staring out of the window,
Put them on strategic planning.

And then last but not least.
If they are talking to each other and not a single brick has been moved,
Congratulate them and put them in top management.



Christingle

The Christingle has its origins in a Moravian children's service held in a castle in Germany on Christmas Eve in 1747.

The bishop conducting the informal service gave each child a lighted candle, tied with a red ribbon, in memory of the Saviour's coming which he said has kindled a flame in each heart, which keeps burning "to His joy, and our happiness".



Much later, a more elaborate Christingle replaced this simple candle, which is rich in symbolism.

- Our modern Christingle consists of:
- # An orange . . . representing the world
- # A red ribbon, tied round the orange . . . representing the blood of Jesus
- # Fruits and sweets, skewered on 4 cocktail sticks which are pushed into the orange . . . representing God's good gifts - the fruits of the earth and the four seasons
- # A lighted candle, pushed into the centre of the orange . . . representing Christ, the light of the world.

Quiz of a different kind

Q: Who was the greatest female financier in the Bible?
A: Pharaoh's Daughter - she went down to the bank of the Nile, and drew out a little prophet.

Q: What kind of man was Boaz before he got married?
A: Ruth-less.

Q: What kinds of motor vehicles are in the Bible?
A: Jehovah drove Adam and Eve out of the garden in a Fury.
A: David's Triumph was heard throughout the land.

A: A Honda, since the apostles all went about in one Accord.

Q: Where is the first baseball game in the Bible?
A: In the Big Inning.. Eve stole first, Adam stole second, Cain struck out Abel, and the Giants and the Angels were rained out.

Q: The ark was built with 3 stories and the top story had a window to let light in, but how did they get light to the bottom 2 stories?
A: They used Floodlights.

Q: Who was the greatest babysitter mentioned in the Bible?
A: David - he rocked Goliath to sleep.

Q: What do they call pastors in Germany?
A: German Shepard.

Q: What is the best way to get to Paradise?
A: Turn RIGHT and go STRAIGHT.

Q: Which servant of Jehovah was the biggest lawbreaker in the Bible?
A: Moses - because he broke all 10 Commandments at once!

CHRISTMAS

C is for the Christ Child and the child in all of us.

H is for the Heart of God, in whom we place our trust.

R is for our Redeemer, Who is finished with His chore.

I is for Isaiah, who had told it all before.

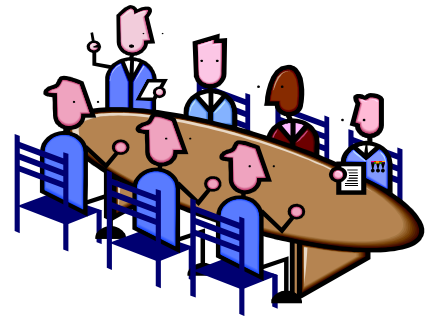
S is for the Shepherd lowly shepherds came to see.

T is for Three wise men, who were wise beyond degree.

M is for a Manger, a simple manger where He lay.

A is for bright Angels who were standing by that day.

S is for the Star that shone and still shines out today!



The 2006/7 managing committee of the Midlands Mar Thoma Prayer Group

- President** Rev Gigy Thomas
- Hon Vice President** Sunny Thomas
- Hon Secretary** Biji (Varghese V Abraham)
- Hon Trustee** Simon Idiculla

Area Representatives Birmingham

- Walsall & Wolverhampton** Sanu P Varghese
- Coventry, Leicester & Nottingham** Sajeev

Derby & Burton on Trent

- Lay leaders** Saji (Thomas Koshy) & Ranu Samuel
- Sunday School Co-ordinator** Biji (Varghese V Abraham)

Choir representative

- Giboy George**
- Editor** Elizabeth Thomas (Sajini)

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