

Metro Praiz News

“Looking Ahead With the Lord on Your Side”

February 2004 – Black History Month

From the Desk of Your Director...

I welcome the first issue of the Newsletter for 2004 and would like to personally thank Cherry Sorzano for taking the initiative to continue this effort.

I trust that all will provide relevant data so that the NewsLetter may be effective, informative and enjoyable to read for all. God Bless!

—Miguel Davis



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Metro Praiz: Music Ministers

As I drove by a church a message on its sign caught my attention: “To worship God is to experience God.” Should our worship be Holy Spirit motivated and Holy Spirit inspired we will indeed “experience God” when we come together in our church services.

Without doubt, music enhances worship to the degree that instruments and voices can lift us to heavenly places. Choirs and instrumentalists must, in rehearsals and in participation in worship service, have in the front of their minds the significance of their ministry. It is a ministry for God and it is a ministry to God.

A worship service assembles a congregation of people. Music played and music sung must be about bringing God to the congregation. That indeed is ministry

FOR GOD. Choirs and instrumentalists deliver to the senses of the worshipper the presence of God. The Holy Spirit will then do His thing, applying the music to our individual needs. What a ministry! Voices can sing joy, forgiveness, conversion, and salvation into the lives of worshippers.

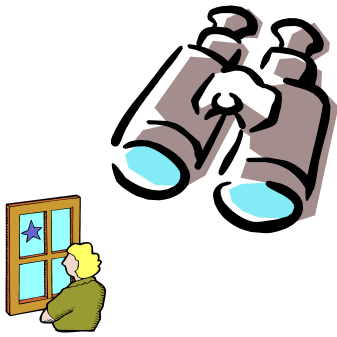
Let’s not leave God out! Music is a ministry TO GOD. Psalm 100 incredibly brings that statement to life with incredible expressions like, “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord...come before His presence with singing...” The Psalmist breaks it on down so we can understand free of confusion: “...with thanksgiving...with praise...be thankful unto Him, and bless His holy name. FOR THE LORD IS GOOD; HIS MERCY IS EVER-LASTING...”

Bringing your musical offerings of voices and instruments is an awesome contribution to worshippers “experiencing God” when they assemble together. In the book, *Worship Come To Its Senses*, Don E. Saliers, mentions a portion of a hymn written by Fred Pratt on page 89:

When in our music God is glorified, and adoration leaves no room for pride, it is as though the whole creation cried Alleluia.

MINISTER FOR GOD AND MINISTER TO GOD, METRO PRAIZ!

—Pastor Michael Bernard



Looking Ahead With The Lord on Your Side!

Well, it is the second month of the year 2004 and many of us still have our resolutions and goals for the New Year in sight and mind. This is commendable!

For those of us who have long forgotten your resolutions and goals, let us be encouraged to revisit them with a different attitude. An attitude knowing that we can always look ahead because the Lord is on our side.

As His followers we need to have the faith that God is in absolute control of every aspect of our lives.

It may seem basic to say that we need to allow the Lord to have first place in our life. If, however, we contemplate on what it means to give the Lord first priority in our life, we would realize that it is not that basic after all. If it was, we would all be doing the what we know we should. Putting God first may include the following - tithing when there are other pressing bills to pay; seeking His guidance every day through daily devotion, prayer and praise; loving our fellow man even when we have proof that he/she can't stand us; seeking to help others not only when it is convenient to us; coming to choir rehearsal even when we don't feel like it; showing up on time for Sabbath School and not just Divine Service; giving a visitor your seat in the main sanctuary; and the list goes on.

Many times we allow the cares of this world to cloud our minds, hence we are confused when the Lord is trying to get His message to us. Let us put our entire trust in God, not holding back anything and move forward in faith. You see, God would not force or trick us into doing His will, He gave us the freedom of choice. So, let us choose Him because, He has already chosen us.

Guess what? When we put God first in our lives we nurture a great partnership that give us the assurance that we can look ahead because the Lord is on our side. Try it and you will see for your self!

—Cherry Sorzano

Valentines Day SHOUT OUT!

Unlike many people at this time of year, I don't have just one Valentine. I actually have quite a few, because I feel like this is a special time of year to give love to those who have loved me. To Jesus, first of all, there is none other like him. To my parents, especially my mom, thanks, I love you both.

To, Aunty Lorna, you've done so much more than an aunt could do. Love you. For the rest of my family far and near who will not even see this, I love you all. To that person, in particular, you can say my "significant other," the only person that really asked me to be their valentine, I love you too. I have a lot of love to give, so to all those who are reading this, I love you too. (Smile!)

—Tania James

Happy Birthday!

Born in January

Bethany Anderson, Neitha Harris, Orley James, Tania James, Lavar Jones, Terri Joseph, Ijeoma Nwuju, and Arlette Thompson.

Born in February

Samantha Benjamin, Jeuelle Ottley, Lark Pile, and Michelle Saul.

"Many times we allow the cares of this world to cloud our minds..."

In Everything Give Thanks

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18
NKJ

In everything give thanks;
for this is the will of God
in Christ Jesus for you.

Are you giving thanks to
God today? You should. If
you want to be happy, you
must. For, without being
thankful, you will never be
happy.

Just because things are not
going the way you would
like is no excuse. The Bible
clearly says that God's will
for you is to be
thankful ~ always.

The Bible does NOT teach
that we're to thank God for
evil, because God is not
responsible for evil. No,
God is not guilty of any
wrongdoing.

What the Bible does teach,
is that we should always be
thankful ~ even when evil
happens. Being thankful is
part of an attitude of faith,
and faith will overcome

evil.

Although the Bible does
say we should give thanks
to God FOR all things,
that only means the things
for which God is responsi-
ble. For example, if a guest
at your home said, "Thank
you for everything," you
wouldn't think they were
thanking you for what
someone else did.

God doesn't do bad things
to people. He's not the one
who comes to steal, kill,
and destroy. That's the
devil, and people
motivated by selfishness
and demonic influence. So
you have the devil "to
thank" for the bad things
in life.

Yet, during the bad things
in life, we are to continue
thanking God, no matter
how we feel. This helps us
keep our eyes on God and
keep things in perspective.

No matter how dark and

hopeless the situation may
look - give thanks. This is
God's will for you.

Thank God for the oppor-
tunity to see His deliver-
ance. Thank Him for His
mercy and grace. Thank
Him for His faithfulness.
Thank Him for defeating
the devil and setting you
free in Christ. Thank Him
that Jesus is Lord. Thank
Him that your name is
written in Heaven. Thank
Him for loving you and
taking good care of you.
Thank Him!

SAY THIS: In everything I
will give thanks to God.

—list@ADevotion.org



*"We should always be
thankful - even when evil
happens"*

On THIS day in History (February 13th)

1818 - Absalom Jones, the
first African American
Episcopal priest, dies in
Philadelphia.

1892 - The World's Fair
Colored Opera Company
performs at Carnegie
Hall.

1920 - Baseball's National
Negro League is founded
in Kansas City.

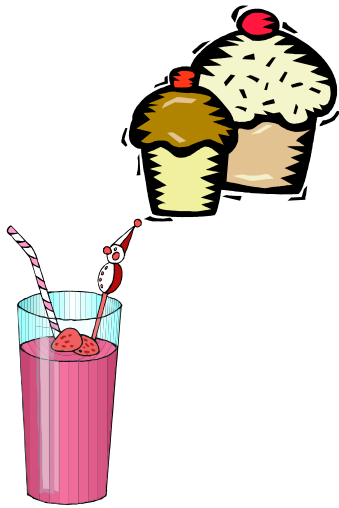
1923 - The first profes-
sional black basketball
team, The Renaissance is
organized. They will be
popularly known as The
Rens.

1947 - Atlanta hires its
first African American
police officers

1979 - The U.S. Civil
Rights Commission re-

ports that 46% of minor-
ity students are still at-
tending racially segregated
schools. This is 25 years
after the Supreme Court's
*Brown v. Board of Educa-
tion* decision mandating
integration.

—*Africana*



So We Are Your Social Leaders...

“O for a thousand tongues to sing
 My Great Redeemer’s Praise
 The Glories of My God and King,
 The Triumph of His Grace.

My Gracious Master and My God
 Assist me to proclaim
 To Spread thro’ all the earth abroad
 The honors of Thy name...”

This year, we are humbled to have been chosen to be your Social Leaders. As such, we have many exciting events which by God’s grace will not only draw us closer to each other but, also to our Savior. Our numbers may have dwindled and our sound may be a bit off at times. Just know that the devil would not be fighting us this much if we weren’t doing God’s work. Fight the good fight and be encouraged that our struggles would not be in vain.

As we look towards this New Year, our prayer for us (i.e. the choir) is that we evolve as a united body. We have been bestowed with the Great honor of proclaiming to the world of our Heavenly Father’s Love and Grace. There are so many things with which we are faced and somehow we manage to make it through...talk about Grace! May we always endeavor to do God’s bidding as He covers us.

—*Subrina Callwood & Dell Jones*

The Outsider’s View of Metro Praiz

“Metro Praiz has truly been a blessing to me. The group offers the best in traditional and contemporary gospel music, which has proven to be a useful tool in reaching young souls. My desire for Metro Praiz is that its members would remain in faithful service as they execute their commitment to spreading the good news of the gospel in song. Be blessed!”

—*Donna Mae Gibson*

“I see Metro Praiz as a very vibrant group of young people just enjoying themselves in praise; not necessarily songs for my age group though. I hope to see the choir expand their ministry by visiting nursing homes and the homeless. As a matter of fact, I attended a church in Gaithersburg a couple Sabbaths ago where the Pastor talked very highly of Metro Praiz as he invited the congregation to a concert that they were putting on. Continue in Ministry!”

—*Earl McLaren*

“I think that Metro Praiz is one of the most energetic

group of young people I have come across. One thing though, I hope to see them do some more “soft” music.”

—*LeLe*

“I think that Metro Praiz has matured over the years; the quality of music is of a high standard. I hope that they would continue to improve since there is always room for improvement.”

—*David N. Carr, Sr.*

“I think that Metro Praiz is another avenue that bring the young people together. During their performances, they appear very happy and excited serving the Lord. I hope to see the choir involve other young people in the church (others that seem to be left out), and to be more involved in community service. Also more involved in community service. Also more singing outside of SDA churches should be done.”

—*Chris King-David*

A Love Note Concerning God's Love For Us!

God loves us this very moment, just as we are. We don't have to change ourselves or perform some special task in order to earn divine love, for as God's children, We are loved freely and completely.

God's love for us is always present regardless of circumstances. Therefore, our actions in the past cannot deprive us of God's Love. Through God's infinite love for us, We are continually nourished and encouraged to do better.

The past is over, and God upholds us in doing our best right now.

God's love surrounds and enfolds us, uplifting us at times,
We are one with God's love, and it flows through us like a cleansing stream, healing past hurts and carrying us forward with great confidence.
Enfolded in God's love, we are to be at peace, we are loved. "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us".
Romans 5:5

Submitted by Terri Joseph

Hold These Dates...

February through June

The following dates are for tentative singing engagements. So please "hold the dates" until further notice.

March 20, Afternoon;
March 27, Morning;
May 1, Morning;
May 2, Afternoon.

The Origins of Valentines Day

There are several interpretations as to the origin of Valentine's Day. Below is one, but let the romantic in you decide!

St. Valentine's Day

As Christianity became prevalent, priests attempted to replace old heathen practices. To Christianize the ancient pagan celebration of the Feast of Lubercus, the church officials changed the name to St. Valentine's Day. To give the celebration further meaning and eliminate pagan traditions, priests substituted the drawing of Saints names for the names of the girls. On St. Valentine's Day the priest placed saint's names into an urn or box. The young people then drew a name from the container. In the following year, the youth was supposed to emulate the life of the saint whose name he had drawn.

By the fourteenth century they reverted back to the use of girl's names. In the sixteenth century they once again tried to have saintly valentines but it was as unsuccessful as the first attempt.

While it can't be proved historically, there were seven men named Valentine who were honored with feasts on February 14th. Of these men, two stories link incidents that could have given our present day meaning to St. Valentine's Day.

One of these men named Valentine was a priest during the reign of Emperor Claudius. Valentine was revered by the young and old, rich and poor, with people of all walks of life attending his services. At this time Emperor Claudius was heavily recruiting men to serve as soldiers for his wars without much success. The men preferred not to leave their wives, families and sweethearts to fight in foreign lands. Claudius became angry and declared that no more marriages could be performed and all engagements were cancelled.

Valentine thought this to be unfair and secretly married several couples. When Claudius found out, he threw Valentine in prison where he died. Friends of the priest retrieved his body and buried it in a churchyard in Rome.

Another version had St. Valentine jailed for helping Christians. While Valentine was in prison he cured a jailer's daughter of blindness. Claudius became enraged and had Valentine clubbed and beheaded on February 14, 269 A.D.

Yet another story claims that Valentine fell in love with the jailer's daughter and wrote her letters that were signed "From your Valentine."

All of the seven Valentines eventually evolved into one. In 496 Pope Gelasius declared the day in honor of St. Valentine. Through the centuries the Christian holiday became a time to exchange love messages and St. Valentine became the patron saint of lovers. Lovers' quarrels come under his jurisdiction and, naturally, he is the patron saint of engaged couples and of anyone wishing to marry.

Adapted



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"Sing For Jesus and Let the
Whole World Feel His Power!"

What is Love?

A few of our fellow choir members were asked, "What is Love?" Here are the responses -

"God is love, and humans can only express true love by showing respect, compassion, care, and having true honesty and communication with and for another person. God shows us all of these things, and He is the True example of love."

—*Arlette Thompson*

"Love is knowing when someone is in need offering support and not expecting anything in return."

—*Gillian Thomas*

"Love is when someone is caring, concerned and helpful to another."

—*Terri Joseph*

Announcements

Please submit birthday and or anniversaries so that we may acknowledge you.

Remember to bring in can and non-perishable foodstuff on second Sabbaths for the community box.

Coat distribution drive in conjunction with Elizabeth Seaton High School is underway. Please contact David Carr at davidjcarr@hotmail.com for further information. Let's embrace the community.

Let us know of any changes in your contact information especially your email address.

If you will be graduating this year let us know so that we can pray for your success.

Sister My Sister

Sister my Sister,
can I speak with you for a minute?
No, I don't want to hear your business,
cause I ain't trying to be in it.

I'd just like to talk with you
if I could and share my views
on the lack of "real" sisterhood.

You see I'm guilty and
maybe you are the same,
of judging my sisters
without even knowing their name.

I look at their shape,
comment on their hair
and talk about what they really should or
shouldn't wear.

I roll my big eyes,
I put my hands on my hips,
and not a kind word comes out of my "got
the nerve" lips.

Why can't I just smile, wave and say
"hey, I'm down with you sister, have a nice
day"

We need to stick together,
it would be great if we could,
To promote unity, understanding and "real"
sisterhood.

Without it we have nothing,
why not go for it all,
for sisters united we stand, divided we fall.

So let's seize the moment,
before the moment is gone.
Grasp this message Sister My Sister.

—*Anonymous*

So You're Graduating...

Michael Drakes
Selena Jones
Candice Sherwood
Dominic Stewart
Arlette Thompson
Kadina Thompson

Upcoming Issues of Metro Praiz News include...

April - Working for the Lord
Even When the Going Gets
Tough

June - Ministering in our Daily
Living

August - Enriching the Lives of
Others

October - Our Purpose In This
Life

December - Giving Thanks In
All Things

To make a submission,
send to Sorzanocc@yahoo.com