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Baptist News

A quarterly news letter of the
COUNCIL OF BAPTIST
CHURCHES IN NORTH EAST
INDIA

The Council comprises Assam Baptist Convention, Nagaland Baptist Church Council, Manipur Baptist Convention, Garo Baptist Convention, Arunachal Baptist Church Council and Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention.

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*For unto us a child is
born, unto us a son is
given, and the
government will be
upon his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor,
the Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.*

**CBCNEI family wishes all its readers a
Blessed Christmas
&
A Prosperous New Year**

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Editorial..... 



Dear friends,

In last two months, I have been blessed by reading two books. The first book is *Facing Your Goliath* by Max Lucado. It is a wonderful devotional book. I am just fascinated by Lucado's literary style of narrating the old story in a new way. Every chapter of the book challenged me afresh. The second book, which has been my travel companion, is *Truth and Transformation* by Vishal Mangalwadi. It is a book that persuades you to do something against corruption in our country. This is a must read book by all Christian leaders. After reading this I have begun to pray more fervently for a mass movement against corruption in our country. I am glad that this year Congress party sacked three of its top leaders. But that is not even the tip of the big iceberg, which embodies all political parties, social organizations, non-governmental organizations, bureaucrats, businessmen, professionals, religious leaders, and even those who are suppose to fight against corruptions in our country. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. How do our people begin to fear the Lord?

Relevance of Theological Education:

This issue of Baptist News is dedicated to highlight some of the issues related to theological education in northeast India. In August, I was invited to attend a gathering of 36 principals and board members of seminaries. It was hosted in Kandy, Sri Lanka by Oversea Council International. The purpose was to reflect on the seminary-Church relationship. I was given the privilege to present a response paper on behalf of the Church. Later, several leaders spoke to me personally that they too shared my concerns. Hence, this issue of Baptist News is set aside to address the concern further. I am glad that some authors have expressed their perspectives to underline the issues at stake. I hope these articles will stimulate more dialogue between Church leaders and seminary educators for making theological education more relevant to

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the Church. The intention is to initiate a reflection and introspection.

Biblical thinking and writing:

Other articles in this issue are intended to inform and provoke us to respond intelligently on matters that concern our Churches. The overall objective is to encourage biblical thinking and writing in order to engage with our society and environment we live in. We dream of a world where our Churches will be able to provide our society a noticeable number of Christian professionals who can articulate biblical principles in order to influence and transform every sphere of our society. If you feel like writing on any issues, pick up your Bible in one hand and the pen in the other and start it right away. Somewhere you must start.

Baptist family news:

The News Section gives you the highlights of the activities that were carried out by the CBCNEI staff. Actually, this Baptist News does not include comprehensively all the news of CBCNEI family members, as you may well imagine, we shall have to have a much larger team and several volumes of Baptist News to cover the news of a family that constitute members of 7000 churches, 79 associations, six conventions, and several institutions. I am glad that almost all of the CBCNEI family members do publish news letters to report their activities. At the same time, there are wonderful events within CBCNEI family which go unreported and unnoticed. However, our God, who is the ultimate judge and the giver of the reward, knows them all.

Training the leaders:

Equipping and training the leaders have been our emphasis this year. It will remain so in the days to come. This year, we hosted a series of trainings: Vacation Bible Teachers Training, Community Development Workers Training, Expository Preaching and Biblical Counseling Training, Finance and Treasurer's Training, Management and Administration Training. Many of these trainings are done for the first time. We are encouraged because we have received some good feed back. The Justice and Peace department has also conducted few seminars to make our members aware of Human Rights and Human trafficking issues.

You will read about them in this issue.

Lausanne Congress, Cape Town 2010

I am grateful to CBCNEI for enabling me to attend Lausanne Congress from Oct 15-26 in Cape Town. I was in the midst of a crowd of more than 4000 participants (more than 150 from India) representing 197 nations. I was privileged to be one among 750 small group leaders. The conference emphasized on Evangelism with special emphasis on Children and oral presentation of the gospel, Small group Bible study, Integrity, and building leaders for the future. The conference was very well managed and directed. The entire organizing team under the leadership of Doug Birdsall and Lindsay Brown deserve our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation. I pray that this will impact the Christians globally.

What did I miss? Examining critically, I wish this Lausanne Congress had invited more Church leaders who are regionally recognized and who can mobilize the local Churches. A majority of participants from India were from para-Church organizations. However, it was remarkable that the General Secretary of World Council of Churches (WCC) was invited to bring greetings. He briefly urged to reduce the distance between Geneva and Lausanne, perhaps a metaphor used to point out the existing distance of suspicion between the evangelical movements (primarily para-church movements) and the WCC (the Church, often perceived as liberal or as an institution that opposes peoples' movement). I am delighted to see the new movement of partnership and the growing desire to work together for the glory of God. When Christians unite in Love, they will be able to draw the world to the Love of Christ.

Baptist dream:

Our dream for CBCNEI Campus development is in progress. We now have the landscape and also the land utilization plan, but we shall need a master plan and Christian investors. The Campus Development Committee under the leadership of Mr. Amrit Goldsmith is on for this task.

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The consultation on the idea of Baptist University was a success. The leaders of NBCC and Shalom Bible School hosted the program sacrificially. We have formed a core group who will concretize the dream.

CLC ministries:

Christian Literature Center under CBCNEI has begun to improve in Dimapur and Guwahati. We have appointed two Assistant Directors for these centers. We desire to see that all CLC ministries (Imphal, Senapati, Ukhul, Dimapur, and Guwahati) may grow strong in making good Christian literatures available and in promoting indigenous publications in the region. I request you to extend all possible help to CLC ministries.

By the way, we have released the CBCNEI diary for 2011. Please rush for your copy to the nearest CLC. If you like it, then please convey your appreciation to Rev. K. Mahangthei, Director, CLC.

New partners:

Partnership is essential for serving our Churches effectively. Some ministries have consistently served our churches and have proved themselves worthy of being recognized as our partners. The leadership of CBCNEI have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Union of Evangelical Students of India (UESI), North East Centre for Training And Research (NECTAR), Asian Rural Life Development Foundation (ARLDF), and InterServe. Please extend a welcoming handshake and utilize their services for the benefit of your Church.

Finally, please accept our apology for the delay in publishing this issue. We tried hard to catch up with time, but we failed. Pray that we will have more volunteers to help us in editorial board. We owe you one more issue, and so we are extending your subscription by two issues.

We wish you very warm Christmas and very Happy New Year 2011.

Rev. Dr. A. K. Lama
General Secretary, CBCNEI



Introducing the New B.D Course

[By Rev. Dr. Akheto Sumi, Principal, Eastern Theological College, Jorhat]

The Senate of Serampore College (University) has revised its Bachelor of Divinity Programme and have started implementing the New BD Courses from 2010-2011 academic year. This was a long felt need for theological education in India, in particular. The curriculum revision committee started working on the matter since 2006 and today, the new BD curriculum is prepared in a uniform and structured manner for colleges affiliated to Senate of Serampore College/University.

The objectives of the new BD degree programme are to:

- i. Develop values of the “reign of God” and enhance the “New Creation” witness (with special reference to justice, peace and Integrity of all Creation) in society.
- ii. Create critical consciousness and openness, to analyze cultural, social, economic, political and ecclesiastical values.
- iii. Provide tools for interpreting the Word of God in different contexts in society.
- iv. Enable persons to become effective witnesses in the context of their varied and diversified vocations.
- v. Provide theological education as a transforming influence in personal, ecclesial and societal life.
- vi. Provide enough opportunity for the development of personal and community centered devotional and spiritual formation.

(Regulations and Syllabus, Related to the Degree of Bachelor of Divinity, 2010, page 15)

The new BD degree programme is structured in such a way that its approach is inter-disciplinary and integrated, giving enough space to the students to develop holistic and ecumenical approach to theological educational relevant to the given context. In order to complete the New BD programme, the required courses will be for 5 years duration for the 10+2 passed candidates, 4 years for the secular graduates and 2 or 3 years for B. Th. graduates of the senate of Serampore College/University. A total number of 52 courses/subjects with 4 assigned for practical work

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or field education will be offered to the candidates to complete 4 years BD under new course.



ADMISSION NOTICE

The Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, offers both B.D. and M.Th.

(i) **Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.):** Of the Senate of Serampore College/University

Duration	Qualification Requirement
4 years of General Graduates	B.A / B.Sc. & above
3 years for B.Th. Graduates	B.Th. degree with 3rd Division
2 years for B.Th. Graduates	B.Th. degree with 1st/2nd Division

ii) **Master of Theology (M.Th.)** in the following departments: Christian Theology, History of Christianity and Christian Ministry (specializing in either Counseling or Christian Education)

Cost of application form: RD. ₹150.00 M. Th. ₹200.00

Last date of RD. Form Submission : February 20, 2011

Last date of M.Th. Form Submission: November 30, 2010

The Academic Session begins in June every year and ends in April.

Entrance examinations: M. Th. on 18th and 19th Jan. 2011; RD. on 26th and 27th April 2011.

Admission form can be downloaded from ETC Website: ***www.etccollege.in*** or obtained from the given offices by paying the fee by Demand Draft in favour of Eastern Theological College.

The Principal
Eastern Theological College
Rajabari, Jorhat -785014 ASSAM

Serampore B.D Program Some Observations



[By Rev. Laiu Fachhai¹, Director, Serving in Mission North East India]

1. Introductory remarks

For years, “Serampore BD (Bachelor of Divinity)” was a highly esteemed degree both within religious and secular communities in India. True to its name, one could easily witness spiritual maturity as well as academic excellence in the life and ministry of those “Serampore BD” graduates. The question this article wants to ask is, is the “Serampore BD” maintaining its reputed tradition of spiritual maturity and academic excellence today? Do the life and testimony of “Serampore BD” graduates today continue to demonstrate spiritual maturity and academic excellence? Or are they just banking on the former glory and name of the “Serampore BD”? This writer does not belong to “the old is always better” school. However, a comparison is necessary for such a case like the present one – are the calibers of today’s “Serampore BD” graduates as high as those who graduated a few decades ago? In the following, this article will attempt to articulate these questions.

2. Nomenclature BD and Entry Level and Duration for IBD Program

In the olden days, “BD” was a common name adopted by many theological colleges and seminaries all over the world. And it was always a second degree (post-graduate degree). Things do change and so does learning systems. Today, in line with its level of studies, the overwhelming majority of theological colleges and seminaries in the world have changed the

¹ For the past 14 years, Laiu Fachhai (DTh Old Testament) has been teaching at different seminaries and theological colleges in Africa. In the beginning of 2008, he came back to India. He is now a visiting professor at John Roberts Theological Seminary, Shillong, and teaches Hebrew Grammar and Old Testament. He is also a Research Fellow of the Stellenbosch University, South Africa and the Director of Serving In Mission (SIM) North East India.

This article is based on his personal observation of the “Serampore BD” program during his more than 25 years of teaching, pastoral and missionary ministries both within India and abroad. The article does not represent the views of the above mentioned organizations he is associated with.

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nomenclature of their former Bachelor of Divinity (BD) program to a Master of Divinity (MDiv). In some systems, they call it a Master of Arts (MA) in theology. In other systems, for example Dallas Theological Seminary, it is a direct four years Master of Theology (MTh) program after a university degree. Entry requirement for MDiv/MA is strictly a minimum qualification of a degree holder from a recognized university, seminary, or theological college. For those who chose to continue to use the term “BD”, it is now used for a first degree, an equivalent of the old “Serampore BTh”. For this reason, our “Serampore BD” today is regarded as a first (bachelor) degree in many countries of the world.² This must have been the reason why some of our “Serampore BD” graduates have to do a remedial MDiv course for a year or so in order for them to be admitted to the MTh program at seminaries and universities in some of the western countries. We live in a global village. The globalization of theological education is no exception. Thus, the “Serampore BD” is no longer a self-explanatory post-graduate degree. It is regarded as a bachelor degree in many parts of the world, for bachelor is a bachelor and master is a master.

The program of the Integrated BD (IBD) or a five-year BD course does not help the situation either in projecting “Serampore BD” as a post-graduate degree. No university will admit a higher secondary school certificate holder to a post-graduate degree (master’s) course. But this seems to be what is happening with the “Serampore BD” system. It is projected as a post-graduate master level studies, but at the same time higher secondary school certificate holders are admitted to this so-called post-graduate program. What level of teaching a teacher would choose if secular MA/MSc/MPhil/PhD graduates are sitting together with higher secondary school passed students in the BD classes? The latter will surely pull down the standard of the BD course, even if it is meant to be a post-graduate degree.

Some argue to justify this kind of situation on the basis of categorizing BD as a professional degree. University graduates of other fields first

² *The following is a commonly practiced sequential levels of theological education in different parts of the world: Secular degree(s)/BTh/BA Theology/BD – MDiv/MA Theology – MTh – DTh/PhD.*

need to do a bachelor level professional course such as MBBS and BE if they want to shift to the latter. They must complete these bachelor courses before they could go for an MD and ME respectively. In the same way, it is argued, since BD is a professional degree, it is necessary for secular university degree holders to do BD first before they could go for MTh or DTh. But the question here is, is “Serampore BD” really a professional degree? If so, then, like any other professional courses in India, Serampore Senate affiliated seminaries and colleges must take the highest mark scorers (first class and high second class) of the higher secondary school passed *wallas* for its BD course. But in terms of requirements laid down for this particular professional degree, the opposite seems to be true. Even if “Serampore BD” is made a professional course/degree on par with MBBS, BE, etc, this again would become more self-explanatory that this BD is a bachelor degree, not a post graduate master level studies, exactly the same as MBBS and BE are bachelor (first) degrees.

Based on the above scenarios, for this writer, the present day Faculty of Theology of the Senate of Serampore seems to have virtually reduced the erstwhile post-graduate level BD program to a first degree level BD, equivalent of the old Serampore BTh. If this is a trajectory the Senate of Serampore wants to follow, that is, to make BD a pure bachelor degree, there is nothing wrong with the system. In fact this would be more logical, as bachelor is bachelor. If that is the case, it would be more appropriate if the former “Serampore BD” would now become “Serampore MDiv”. In this way, higher secondary school certificate holders would be admitted to a three year BD program. Secular university graduates would be admitted to a four-year MDiv program. No higher secondary school certificate holder shall be admitted to the MDiv program unless one is extra-ordinarily mature, qualified, and experienced (mature candidate). Qualified BD graduates would be admitted a three year MDiv program. This means that candidates with higher secondary school certificates will complete their MDiv programs in six years while university graduates will complete it in four years. For this system, the sequential levels of theological education under the Senate of Serampore would look like

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as follow: Higher Secondary School Certificate – BD/Secular Degree(s) – MDiv – MTh – DTh.

However, if the Senate of Serampore wants to maintain the nomenclature BD with all its post-graduate level components of studies (equivalent of MDiv in other countries), then it is important that it abolishes the five-year BD program for higher secondary school passed students. In order to cater for the need of higher secondary school certificate holders, a three years BTh program may be re-introduced. Thus sequence of the level of theological education under the Serampore Senate would be, like the olden days, as follow: BTh/Secular Degree(s) – BD – MTh – DTh. In this way, the global theological academic guild will recognize our “Serampore BD” as a post-graduate theological degree (second degree), howbeit, with much explanation, equivalent of that of the MDiv degree of the North American system and countries that follow this system. If the Serampore Senate wants to directly admit higher secondary school certificate holders to the BD degree, and still wants to maintain the post-graduate level studies of BD courses, then BD program needs to be seven or at least six years long for higher secondary passed candidates. This six to seven years transcripts would be a self-explanatory that their BD degree, even if attained after higher secondary passed, is a post-graduate level studies.

The mushrooming of seminaries and theological colleges since the last three decades could also be another factor for the seeming decline of the standard of theological education in India. Each region and denomination wants to have a seminary/college of their own. Positively, many people, who otherwise would not have access to the “Serampore BD”, now have attained this prestige degree. Negatively, number consciousness, which in many cases is driven by financial factor of the seminary/college as well as name, could compromise admission requirements for many a seminary and college, which in turn could result in such seminaries/colleges producing mediocre graduates.

In the final analysis, Serampore Senate needs to give a clear-cut answer concerning whether its BD is a first degree (bachelor) level course or a master (post-graduate) degree level. Based on the answer, admission

requirements and components of syllabi along with teaching-learning methods must be planned accordingly. This, then, would be a self-explanatory whether the “Serampore BD” is a first degree (bachelor) program or a master’s (post-graduate) level degree program.

3. Senate Exams and Teaching-Learning Method

Numerous researches have been undertaken concerning merits and demerits of following a final board exam system of education. During this writer’s time at the Union Biblical Seminary, Yavatmal/Pune, there were only five senate papers. Now there are twelve senate papers for BD. This kind of having many final board exams system could result in two extreme responses from the students. On the one hand, they could go under tremendous pressure, which could in turn lead to poor performance. On the other, they could push their studies to the last moment. Since exams come only at the end of the year and the subject teacher would not be the one who set questions and mark papers, students could take it easy by not taking classes seriously. They could end up studying a few days, if not weeks, before the exam mainly for passing exams. This kind of final board exam driven system could lead to a situation that we have BD exam passed individuals, but who are not up to the mark when it comes to spiritual maturity, comprehensive understanding of theology, as well as knowledge of the contents of the Bible. In fact, this writer once overheard an elder of a church saying how the present-day “Serampore BD” graduates’ knowledge about the Bible have gone down compare with those of the olden days’ graduates. In order to solve this problem of Bible knowledge deficiency, the Senate syllabi could include Bible contents courses and exams.

In some countries where seminaries and theological colleges are either affiliated to universities or accredited by accrediting agencies, students do not necessarily write university conducted final board exams, nor do they write accrediting agencies’ board exams. Seminaries/colleges autonomously conduct their own exams. In some cases, the university or accrediting agency participate in the process of evaluation by vetting question papers and evaluating the highest, middle, and lowest scoring papers. In this way, the seminary/college will own up the standard of

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graduates it produced. The United Theological College, Bangalore, seems to have been following this same system, although this writer has no knowledge if its question papers are vetted or its highest, middle, and lowest scoring papers evaluated by the Senate of Serampore or any other relevant authorities.

Seminaries under the Serampore Senate continue to largely follow the old deductive teaching-learning method. Tons of information are given to students through textbooks, handout notes and lectures. Students are expected to reproduce these information during final exams. And these information are soon forgotten after exams. Many developed countries today have adopted the inductive teaching-learning system. Seminaries are no exceptions. In the inductive system, teacher introduces the subject and students discover for themselves. Final exam system is not a must for this system. Final exam is replaced by daily, weekly or monthly evaluations. In the inductive system, as students are the ones who discover for themselves, they remember what they had discovered. This leads to a comprehensive understanding which in turn contributes students' maturity. It would not be a bad idea if Serampore could consider revising final exam systems and introducing an inductive teaching-learning method.

4. "Faith Seeking Understanding"

Recently, during a theological conference at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa, Professor Mercy Oduyoye narrated about what her seminary students in Ghana had to say. They told her that they left their faith at the gate of the seminary (outside the seminary), lest the seminary destroy their faith. At the same conference, this writer also warned about a dangerous phenomenon that is taking place in some quarters of the Christendom and theological education today – evangelists sowing the seed of the Gospel and bringing people to Christ and theologians destroying the faith of those Christians. The overwhelming majority of Christians in India embrace conservative Christian faith and practice. This means that these Christians continue to take the supernatural elements of the Bible very seriously. They believe in the uniqueness of Christianity and so continue to preach the Gospel to non-Christians. For this reason, our premier institution, Senate of Serampore, must continue to take the

belief of these faith communities very seriously if it wants to be continually relevant to its constituents. This would include making its curriculum towards the Christian “faith seeking understanding” – understanding the Bible, understanding Christian history, understanding missions, so on and so forth.

A great majority of the “Serampore BD” graduates will continue to be involved in Christian ministry in one way or the other. The emphases of seminaries/colleges will reflect in the life and ministries of its graduates. A seminary/college with a strong emphasis on Christian faith and practice for its students, which we may call spiritual (character) formation (development) of students, will produce graduates with strong Christian faith, ministry commitment and spiritual vitality. In the same way, a seminary/college with a strong emphasis on missions will produce

And there is no reason why these two bodies could not work together for the betterment of God’s kingdom in India and beyond.

graduates who will go out as missionaries and who will make their churches/congregations missional churches/congregations. A seminary/college with a combination of these two

components would be an ideal one.

Many of our seminaries/colleges are named after missionaries. But sad to say, these same seminaries/colleges do not embrace the missionary visions of those missionaries whose very names they bear. They teach very little, if not nothing, about missions in their seminaries/colleges, nor are they put emphases on missions by organizing missions programs. For example, laments are heard from among church members in some quarters of North East India concerning lack of commitment, seriousness, spiritual vitality and missionary vision on the part of the latter-day “Serampore BD” graduates. Churches see today’s “Serampore BD” graduates as having more interests in debates about human right issues than shepherding their congregations and leading their congregations in missional programs. Could it be that the present day Senate of Serampore’s syllabi are heavily geared towards justice and human right issues at the expenses of the Christian faith, life and ministry?

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If so, this phenomenon will surely reflect in its graduates.

This writer is not against the inclusion of the emphasis on justice and human right elements in different subjects of the Senate BD courses. This is an important component of the BD program, owing to human right abuses and injustices facing many a sector of our society today. The point, however, is this: there should be a balanced approach. Inasmuch as justice and human right issues are important, other subjects such as missions, too, are important. A seminary/college that ridicules the historical as well as experienced Christian faith and practice will have no future in these strong faith communities of us – India. A seminary/college that does not offer missions subjects and that does not put emphasis on missions will not be relevant to churches in India which are conspicuously missional in faith and character.

5. Relationship with ATA

This is a tricky topic. For decades, the Senate of Serampore was the one and only viable affiliating body for most Protestant seminaries and theological colleges. Thus, many so-called evangelical, not very evangelical, conservative, and liberal seminaries and colleges sought affiliation with the Senate. But today, there are alternatives. We have the Asian Theological Association (ATA) and others. We also have the prospects of seminaries affiliating to (secular) universities. The number of the ATA affiliated seminaries and colleges are increasing. Like some of the Serampore Senate affiliated seminaries and colleges, some of these ATA affiliated seminaries and colleges are one among the brightest seminaries/colleges in the world. Some seminaries and colleges in India maintain dual affiliation with both Serampore Senate and ATA.

Unfortunately, unwritten “laws” of the ATA seminaries/colleges brand Serampore Senate as a liberal institution, which in turns provides the former with a reason for its existence, that is, to provide an evangelical alternative. In the same token, the unwritten “laws” of the Senate of Serampore University affiliates seminaries/colleges brand the ATA affiliated seminaries and colleges as narrow evangelical/conservative ones, less academically sound, and somewhat “incomplete”. Some ATA affiliated seminaries/colleges are no more than “bush” schools at the eyes of

some of the Senate affiliates seminaries/colleges. These are unfortunate and unfounded allegations. This is another effect of the globalization of theological education – the liberal-evangelical divide, if not battle, of the West creeping into the Indian Christendom.

Whether one likes it or not, the ATA affiliated seminaries and colleges have become a force to reckon within the theological education scene in India. Their contribution towards theological education in India is an open book. When it comes to further studies at universities, seminaries and colleges abroad, there is little difference between the Senate of Serampore and ATA degrees. As older and more established institutions, the Senate of Serampore affiliated seminaries and colleges continue to have vital roles to play towards the betterment of theological education in India. And there is no reason why these two bodies could not work together for the betterment of God's kingdom in India and beyond. We could share resources – teaching personnel, library, and other facilities. We could establish a joint council, set reasonable common standards and move towards recognizing each other's degrees. After all, we all are Indians and we all want to contribute and do best for our churches and country.

6. Concluding Remarks

The "Serampore BD" men and women of the past and present have greatly contributed towards the betterment of God's kingdom in India and beyond. They had exhibited their spiritual maturity with academic excellence. In order to maintain this reputation, we must constantly review our system and evaluate the level of our graduates. We must not shy away from asking hard questions. If necessary, we must not be afraid of change, even changing the name "BD" for a more globally recognized nomenclature, changing entry requirements – making it higher than lower, or going back to the old system of BTh – BD – MTh – DTh sequence. The qualitative consciousness should come above the quantitative statistical demands and niceties. Above all, our churches deserve the bests.



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Re-envisioning Seminary-Church Relationships: A Response from the Baptist Churches in Northeast India

[Rev. Dr. A. K. Lama, General Secretary, CBCNEI presented this paper in Institute for Excellence, 2010 (Aug 09 - 13) held in Lanka Bible College, Kandy, Sri-Lanka]



Respected
Teachers,
Administrators,
Fund-raisers,
Visionaries,
and Church
Leaders, I bring

Christian greetings to you from a family of seven thousand Baptist Churches in Northeast India, known as the Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India (CBCNEI). The Council has eight seminaries and numerous small Bible schools catering to the needs of Churches in Northeast India.

I want to thank and congratulate OCI leaders for hosting this institute on a very relevant and important issue: Seminary-Church Relationships. I am humbled and honored to be invited in this august gathering to respond on behalf of the Northeast Baptist Churches: What does the church expect from the seminary?

I. Methodology

I must admit that my response is limited to my perspective and to the narrow sources of data that I have gathered. Earlier this month, I sent two sets of questionnaires. The first set of questionnaires was sent to a group of Church leaders who have seminary education. They were selected at random from various ministry experiences, such as: Cross cultural missionary, President of Seminary, Executive secretary of Church Association, General Secretary of Student Movement, Pastor of local Church, General Secretary of Convention, and Retired missionary. Some are from the Northeast others are from the United States.

The second set of questionnaires was sent to a group of lay leaders who hold important leadership position in the Churches in Northeast India. I have tried to be inclusive of as many perspectives as possible. However, this presentation is only an attempt to emphasize the importance of listening to the voice of Church leaders, not a comprehensive answer to the question raised here.

II. The Reality of Limitation

As I began to reflect on the question, “What does the church expect from seminary?”, I realized that I was limited in my survey by many factors. I wondered with some questions: Which Church? What tradition of Church? Even within the Baptist tradition of the Northeast India, we are catering the needs of more than one type, such as: American Baptist Churches, General Baptist Conference, Southern Baptist, Mid Baptist, Revival Baptist, Australian Baptist, and the British Baptist. The list goes on. Can a seminary be relevant to multiple traditions and the types within the same tradition that exist? The need of one tradition varies from another. The question has to be focused on **the** Church.

Likewise, we may need to ask the question: what kind of seminary we are talking about? What is its vision? Whether the seminary intends to serve certain denomination/tradition? What kind of accountability it has to Church or **the** Church?

[Case in point: A student from a Baptist Church goes to study in a Presbyterian Seminary in another state. He is persuaded that Presbyterian Church Polity is better than the Baptist. He returns to his state and establishes a Presbyterian Mission Center right across the Baptist Mission Center. In the next five years many Baptists are reconverted to establish Presbyterian Churches, leading to a series of conflict between Baptist and Presbyterian Churches.]

Similar problem still continues in the Northeast India. Certain seminaries fail to appreciate existing mainline Churches. Others believe in a new denomination called Interdenomination or Non-denomination. They promote the idea of establishing superior Churches such as the Believers Church, Or the Bible Church at the expense of the mainline existing Churches.]

The question, “What does the church expect from the seminary,” has to be considered in its historical context. Unlike the past, not all seminaries

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are born in a cradle of the Church. Some of them function like a para-Church organization or serve the need of a para-Church organization. Others are complete in themselves and hence do not see the need of connecting with the mainline Churches.

Some seminaries have come into existence through individual vision, the so called family-owned seminary. Others are sustained by the support of intermediary funding agencies rather than a local Church/Association/Convention. Still others are managed by a committee composed of individuals who may not have any accountability toward the Church. In most cases, the local Church is an outsider, whose voice may have often been ignored. Hence, the reason, the issue is being raised here today.

The limitation is also traditional. Unlike the past, most seminaries prefer to be non-denominational or interdenominational, and uncommitted to any particular tradition, but mostly committed to the accrediting agency for its academic recognition. However, Churches'

"The Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India sponsors around 14-16 students from its member Churches every year for theological studies. To my great dismay I discovered that most of them do not return back to their Churches."

need from seminary is not only the academia, but also the continuity of its history, tradition, and the legacy. The need of the church is also spiritual and training in its traditional values that she holds so dear.

The question, "What does the church expect from the seminary?," therefore, is a question which is Church as well as Seminary specific. Our research must first define the identity of the Church and the identity of a seminary and the nature of their relationship. Once they are defined, the answer would be more precise.

To address this important issue, this institute by the OCI is certainly a good beginning, but it is only a beginning. It is important that every seminary conducts a survey among their alumni who are working with the target Churches at a regular interval of time to assess the relevance of their existence. The process must involve the board members, faculty,

and the local Church leaders. The need is not only a robust spiritual retreat for the faculty but also a retreat that focuses on self-assessment, goal re-setting, vision re-mapping, and mission re-planning. Such a routine exercise would keep seminary relevant to the Church, it wants to serve.

III. The Relationship Ignored:

a. Priority set aright

There has been resurgence of need for the strengthening of Church-seminary relationship. Last year, the Senate of Serampore College in India called for an all Church leaders meeting to emphasize the importance of Churches involvement in owning the Senate. However, the need for Churches' involvement in Seminary must not be considered only for funding purposes but also for serving the need of the Church.

[Case in point: *Most Church leaders agree that the need has emerged because of the following reasons: (i) The older seminaries are having huge financial liability that they on their own are unable to meet so they are looking up to Church for help; (ii) Older seminaries are threatened of their existence as more and more Church owned Bible Schools or seminaries have begun to spring up; (iii) The new seminaries need more money for their building projects or they need more students to pay the faculty's salary.*]

The priority must be set aright. The motive and the purpose need introspection. Some seminary must give in to another in order to strengthen the cause of the Church. In a small town in the Northeast India, we have more than 30 seminaries. All are limited with their resources and struggling to prove one over the other. Resources of the churches are depleted into smaller ventures like this.

b. Sensitive to the shifting paradigm:

What is the ultimate purpose of our existence? Why are we doing what we are doing? In absence of such a reflection, a highly trained theologian might turn into a business manager, fund raiser, and a faculty and staff supervisor. However, the real danger would set in when ministry might subtly become a job, and a movement of life transforming education might subtly become an institution to exist for itself.

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[Case in point: This year, one of the challenges among others was reviving the dying Christian mission hospitals under CBCNEI. We have six mission hospitals, some of which were running in huge deficit, unable to pay the salaries of the doctors and staff. Most hospitals had less than 30% occupancy of beds. While in the same cities, many private hospitals which began in the last 10-15 years were drawing thousands of patients every day and earned enormous profit. We finally realized that we had failed to be relevant to the changing needs of the patients. Besides Christian love and care, they also needed modern technology and modern compatible expertise that the market is providing.]

If we are selling/serving then we must understand the buyers/recipient's need. The seller/server finds its relevance by being flexible to the shifting paradigm. We must be cautious of some stubborn, obsolete and traditional thinking that can stand in our way of progress.

[Case in point: In one of the seminaries, the worsening relationship between the Faculty, Principal, and Vice-principal, compelled the Church to appoint a senior Church leader as an Interim Principal. He had the experience of leading a Convention of more than one thousand Churches for 10 years, but he was neither a doctorate, nor had any teaching experience. Unfortunately, the Registrar of the University sent him a letter stating that the Church had caused an embarrassment for the college by appointing an unqualified person like him, that he should not represent the college but he should send a junior faculty member to the meeting. We called the Church leaders for a meeting to discuss what makes a person qualified to lead a seminary. How many principals really use their doctorate degree in handling the day to day business of the seminary? In fact, we found out that most principals do not teach any classes but their success as principal depends much on their skills in management, administration and Church relationship. Then why is there such a pre-requisite qualification set for the appointment of principal or, why their theological qualification is underutilized?

We finally appointed a qualified principal, but we reappointed the same Church Leader as the President of the Seminary, so that we do not underutilize the Principal's doctorate to liaison with the Church. I do not believe that a person can earn respect only through an earned degree, lest universities must stop conferring the degree on the distinguished people from the society.

Should a person be considered qualified only based on an academic degree?

The irony is that the same institution which rejected a well reputed Church leader went on to confer Doctorate of Divinity to few controversial political leaders whose services to the society was not widely endorsed. They never consulted the Church leaders for such an act but simply invited their displeasure.]

The task must be carried out in partnership, where mutual respect and mutual submission is crucial. Neither Church nor seminary exists for itself but for *the missions of God*.

I am glad that Seminary requires the Principal to have a degree of Doctor of Philosophy and a minimum teaching experience for five years. But it is surprising to me that it does not require any experience in the Church ministry. How can you expect someone teach *how to fish* when one has never been to fishing? The seminary need to think twice before recruiting a faculty about his mentoring ability in the trade that he would teach in the class room. A good seminary cannot allow any disconnect between theory and practice. They exist for each other.

[Case in point: An analogy may suffice here. My wife is a medical doctor. She went to Assam Medical College. When she reached third year, she began her clinical subjects. She had to undergo rigorous practical classes in the Medical College hospital. She attended Surgical, Gynaecological, and Medical wards where she was required to talk, touch, and treat patients. Then, she was required one year internship in the clinical ward. She graduated without any disconnection between the class room and clinical ward. The professors in that Medical College were also practicing doctors and so the graduating students were learning how to become practicing doctors. I am not sure, to what extent this analogy is applicable to Church-Seminary relationships but I want to emphasize the indispensability of practical ministry in and through Church in the training of the seminary students.]

c. Theology and Spirituality

We all know that most Seminaries, by virtue of its necessity, are required to give more attention to the academic excellence. Though spirituality is emphasized in some schools, through a curriculum called Spiritual Formation, an apparent disconnect between theology and spirituality continues to exist. Are they mutually exclusive? I do not think so.

We also see, on some occasions, tensions in the relationship between

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Church leaders and seminary educators. It is often about academic qualification and knowledge. Who should submit to whom? Who should listen to whom? Theologians are critical of the Church leaders as their spirituality and passion is often without knowledge, while the Church leaders are critical of the theologians as their knowledge lack the spirituality and passion. How often, on any Sunday, do you see a theologian invited to preach in your Church? Why do knowledge and spirituality have to be mutually exclusive? Does seminary have any role in bringing them together? Aren't they who have more knowledge more accountable in this regard?

IV. The Role of Seminary

a. Recruitment of faculty and students

For various genuine reasons, a seminary might compromise the quality of faculty as well students in their recruitment. Once it is done, the seminary has to live with the problem. It becomes very difficult to achieve the desired result.

[Case in point: I know a seminary where students are frustrated and embarrassed because one of their faculties is dating with a girl student publicly. In another seminary, one of their faculties has been accused of drinking wine.]

Seminary campus can become like any other secular college campus where politics thrive and romantic affairs between boys and girls captures the eyes of beholders, disturbing the sanctity and purity of mind. At times, one may find oneself in a very a depressive environment. How can we strike the balance between freedom and responsibility on a seminary campus? Do we need another curriculum?

About 38.5% of the respondents of my survey said that the 50% of students in his batch did not have any definite call for any ministry. In the Northeast India, most parents prefer to send their rebellious and unregenerate child to a seminary with a hope of spiritual transformation. In such a context, recruitment of quality student could be very difficult.

Can seminary set criteria to define the identity of their students: Who *could be* their students? Who *should not be* their students? Can they do it at the expense of risking their revenue? Personally, I recommend a

pre-requisite of at least two years of service in mission field for seminary education so that they can confirm their *vocatio*, lest seminaries may continue to train theologians who have nothing to do with the true essence of theological education. Seminary degrees are not meant for certifying one for a job but to equip those whose life is consecrated to the ministries of God.

b. Relevance of subjects taught

About 33.3 % of respondents of my survey said that less than 50% of what they learnt was useful while 22.2 % of respondents said less than 10% of what they learned in their seminary was useful. How to make the syllabus more focused on practical issues that confront our Churches as well as our Society? We want our seminary graduates to be qualified to interact with their surroundings. Hence, the subject like Dalit Theology, Tribal Theology, Feminist theology, Liberation theology, Theology of HIV/AIDS, and other contextual theologies justify its place in the curriculum. However, in my observation, I have found that, in spite of under girding some of these contextual theologies, a seminary may fail to be relevant to the Churches in their neighborhood.

[Case in point: A seminary affiliated to Serampore University existing in Assam for more than four decades does not have a curriculum developed in Assamese language. It does not have any curriculum that prepares a student for a Biblical response to the cultural, political, economical and religious issues faced by Assamese Christians who are shy to English language. This may be true in other part of India as well.]

Being relevant to the contemporary issue is important. However, unlike any secular school of fine arts, Seminaries are primarily a Bible school where the importance of Biblical studies gives the reason for its existence. Our response to the contemporary issues must emerge from our strong foundation in the scripture. The Seminary must find a way to keep this emphasis without any compromise.

Some subjects which have no common relevance must be made optional. For example, Indian Christian theology for students coming from Myanmar and Bhutan, or likewise three credit hours of American Church history for African or Asian students studying in USA does not

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make any sense.

In my survey, when asked, “*what subjects you really missed in your seminary training,*” most responded the following:

Practical training in management and administration of the Church, Pastoral ministry in the Northeast Church context, How to conduct funeral or wedding ceremony; Training on Exegetical Preaching, Training on how to contextualize a biblical text, how to take care of my spiritual formation and personal holiness.

Most respondent admitted that they did not get a comprehensive knowledge of the Bible but only bits and parts here and there.

c. Relationship with the local Church

Regarding nurturing the relationship of student with their home Church/ Association/Convention, some respondent said that their seminary did not have any program that encouraged their relationship with their Church [About 33% responded not at all and about 22% responded somewhat].

The Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India sponsors around 14-16 students from its member Churches every year for theological studies. To my great dismay I discovered that most of them do not return back to their Churches. The rural churches continue to remain without a qualified pastor. Three years is a long time to be forgotten. With new exposures to the seminary, other city ministries, and NGOs they tend to ignore the village Church. It is important that all seminaries must have a definite program for encouraging their students to serve the rural Churches for at least three years.

d. Required in the theological training

While all trainings are meant for good but there are some which are indispensable. *Theologia* without *Sapientia* is no good for the Church. In fact, the task of theological training is more than mere intellectual information. It is about building men and women in the Wisdom of God. The church is in need of men and women:

- who are endowed with spiritual wisdom from above,
- who knows how to live by faith in God,

- who have a clear sense of their destiny,
- who have the highest reverence for the Scripture, and
- who are committed to the cause of mission through the Church, which is the body of Christ.

When I asked few church leaders, *what did they miss most while undergoing their theological education*, most responded: (i) devotional program, (ii) spiritual mentoring, (iii) transformation of lives, and (iv) Christian fellowship.

When I asked the lay leaders, *what do they expect the seminary teachers to train future pastors*, they told me that they would expect them to:

- mentor future pastors to be godly,
- teach them to understand lay people's context,
- teach them be relevant in preaching,
- teach them how to practice servanthood,
- teach them how to sacrifice and live a life of commitment, and
- teach them how to expound the Word of God.

I know it sounds idealistic and difficult, but this is the voice of the Church. The vocation of a seminary faculty is certainly not less challenging than the vocation of a cross cultural missionary. It is our common call to deny one-self, to take up the cross, and love our Lord Jesus Christ so much that our love for anything else may seem like hate as we together pave the way for the coming of His Kingdom.

What can we take away from this presentation? An appeal to the seminary leaders to listen to the Churches they want to serve. If your seminary does not have a mechanism to listen to the voice of the church, then you must create one. Both Seminary and Church are partners in fulfilling the mandate of God. We must work hand in hand with delight and humility.

A Prayer:

Dear Lord, keep us humble as theologians and Church leaders. Help us to be faithful instruments in mentoring men and women for your Church and her mission. Soli Deo Gloria. Amen.

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The Relevance of Theological Education for the Churches in North East India.



*[By Dr. Sanyu Iralu, Principal, Shalom Bible Seminary.
He is blessed with a lovely wife Dr. Buno Iralu and two sons.
Dr. Buno also teaches in Shalom.]*

Introduction

The Church is the body of Christ. It is the visible institution consisting of all members within that body who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Through this body known as the church, individual members of the body practice and live out the doctrines and beliefs enshrined in their profession of faith in Jesus. The confession and practice of the creeds of this believing community is what is known as the theology of the community. As we can see, theology arises from the church and remains rooted within the belief system, life and practice of the church in all its fundamental essence.

The inter-relatedness of Theology and the Church:

Basic to the discussion in this paper is the assumption that theology and the church share a relationship that is inseparable. In fact, theology exists because a believing community, the church, exists. It is also imperative for us to note that the church is prior to theology and so, theology is subservient to the church. In fact, it has rightly been stated that theology's horizon is the church. If we look at the role of theology in the church from this perspective, this is, by far, the closest affirmation that can describe the relationship that theology shares with the church. The above understanding also answers the question why the church needs theologians: the church needs theologians to fulfill its mission to itself and the world.

As in any other institution that exists in this world, the church has its own goals and mission purposes. The following fundamental goals can be broadly stated – it is in these goals of the church that we find the active

cooperation between the church and theology. Herein, we find the best relevance of theological education for the church.

1. The church's mission to itself, to build itself up.

We recognize that the church has a significant role to play in building up its constituents. This role is carried over from the implications we gather in both the Old and New Testaments. The Israelites were God's covenant people in a unique relationship which bound them together to their God Yahweh. He alone had to have their loyalty: Israelite fathers had the obligations to pass on this knowledge of God to their children. From generation to generation, Israelite children were to be taught about their unique status (Deut. 6:4-9). Likewise, Paul instructs his younger friends in the faith their responsibilities to share the gospel message (2 Tim. 4:2). In the end, the goal was to build up the body of believers in Christ (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

In this way, in what is known as home evangelism, the church takes upon itself the task of educating its constituents. This is the task of revisiting each successive generation within the believing community with the gospel message. As long as life continues on this earth, it is incumbent on the church to propagate the gospel message in its entirety so that the body of Christ is built up in the faith. This is exactly the reason why the churches in North East India must continue to do this work with inputs from the theological community. Thus, theological education assumes its paramount significance in the crucial role it has to play in the church pertaining to this home assignment.

2. The church's mission for others, to share what it has received.

Christians are those who have embraced a living faith. This faith in Christ encompasses not just the aspects of present salvation, contentment, peace, and stability for the believer, but also holds promises for life in eternity with God. No wonder, Christians are constrained to share what they have received. Paul charges Christians to share the hope about their faith anytime, anywhere (2 Cor. 5:14). In other words, God has given us a sacred charge that we need to interact with the world around us. Christians cannot afford to sit idly or be complacent and passive.

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Real theology that arises from the heart of God must be characterized by a propensity for real action. It cannot be passive or static; it can only be active, dynamic and outwardly mobile. In the past, the church in North East India has taken up this task of sharing the gospel in big ways. It must continue to share what it has received freely from God. In this respect, theological education has a big role to play in this aspect of the mission of the church in spreading the message of salvation in Christ. Bible Colleges and Seminaries in the North East must rise and take up this great challenge to train more and more people for this task which is central to the mission of the church (Mat. 28:18-20).

3. The church's mission against others in defending itself and its interests.

Theology plays an important part in the life of the church by defending the gospel against all forms of destructive forces that attack the church. Paul tells us that the defense of the gospel truth is his way of life and calling (cf. Phil 1:7). Likewise, the history of the church is replete with colorful events where theologians like Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, among many others, have contended head-on with opposing, deviant heretical teachings.

The church not only counters heretical teachings, but also fights against falsehood manifesting itself through wrong ideologies and damaging teachings that distort the true gospel. Like never before, the church in North East India is under attack from different quarters; these forces are from without and within the church. The church must stand firm against these divisive forces. In this scenario, theologians have their work cut out for them. They must band together as one in the body of Christ and combat all falsehood that is slowly eating away at the roots of the historic, catholic church. Indeed, theology plays an indispensable role in the church because it speaks for God and his church.

Conclusion

A brief examination of the role of theology in the mission of the church has revealed that theology and theological education have a very crucial role to perform in the continuing mission of the church. We have seen that theology is a by-product of the believing community in Christ. And for

this reason, the work of theologians in the mission of the church is absolutely central and important. In fact, the two share such a symbiosis that we can only commend the relevance of theological education to the betterment and progress of the church in North East India to the greater glory of God.



Dimapur: A Town of Bible Colleges

1. Servanthood Bible College
2. Missiological Research Center
3. New Life Bible College
4. Miracle Bible College
5. Logos Bible College
6. Trinity Bible College
7. Nehemiah Bible College
8. Oriental Bible College
9. Timothy Bible College
10. Mission India Bible College
11. ACTS Bible College
12. Crown Bible College
13. Believer Bible College
14. Faith and Action Bible College
15. Discipleship Bible College
16. Reformation Bible College
17. Nagaland Baptist Bible College
18. Faith Theological College
19. Emmanuel Theological College
20. Mission International College
21. Agape Bible College
22. People's Working Bible College
23. Withee Bible College
24. North East Bible College

[P.S : The list is not exhaustive]

A Theological College of CBCNEI

Eastern Theological College was established in the year 1903 and is situated in Jorhat, Assam. The courses offered are B.D and M.Th. It has 21 faculty, 12 non-teaching fulltime staff and 12 maintenance staff with 263 students. The college has visiting professors and lecturers every academic year.



Eastern Theological College

Theological Colleges affiliated to CBCNEI



Manipur Theological College

Manipur Theological College was established in the year 1953 and situated in Kangpokpi. It offers B.Th & B.D courses. It has 10 faculty, 9 staff with 48 students. The Principal of the college is Rev. Dr. Kholi Mao.

Clark Theological College was established in the year 1972 and situated in Mokokchung, Nagaland. It offers courses like 5 yrs B.D after 10+2, 4 yrs B.D after graduation; M.Th, M.A in pastoral ministry for theological graduates with 5 yrs of ministerial experience. The college has 26 faculty and 19 staff with 286 students as of June 2010. The Principal of the college is Rev. Dr. Taka Temjen.



ClarkTheological College

The fear of the Lord is the begining of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 1 : 7



Baptist Theological College

Baptist Theological College was established on July 15, 1989 and is situated in Pfutsero, Nagaland. The college offers B.D course. It has 15 faculty and 4 staff with 114 students. The Principal of the college is Dr. Yiepetso Wezah.

Oriental Theological Seminary was established on May 19, 1991 and situated in Dimapur, Nagaland. It offers M.Div, M.Min & M.Th courses. It has 13 staff with 72 students. Rev. Wati Aier is the Principal of the Seminary.



Main Entrance of Oriental Theological Seminary

Trinity Theological College was established in the year 1992 and is situated in Dimapur, Nagaland. There are 15 staff and 215 students. It offers B.D (Senate of Serampore) course. The Principal of the College is Rev. Dr. Kavito Zhimo.



Trinity Theological College

Harding Theological College is under the leadership of Dr. Shallindra R. Marak. This college was established in the year 1919 and is located in Tura, Meghalaya. This college offers B.Th, I.B.D, B.D. There are 9 faculty and 2 staff.



Harding Theological College



Shalom Bible Seminary

Shalom Bible Seminary was established on October 8, 1996 and is located in Kohima, Nagaland. There are 15 faculty and 8 staff with 122 students enrolled for B.Th & M.Div courses. Dr. Sanyu Iralu is the Principal of the Seminary.

A REMINISCENCE OF THE...

YOUTH GOSPEL OLYMPIC

- YOUTH SECRETARY, NBCC

YOUTH GOSPEL OLYMPIC WHICH WAS ORGANIZED BY THE CBCEI, YOUTH IN COLLABORATION WITH KOHIMA BAPTIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP (KBYF) AND NAGALAND SPORTS COALITION (NSC)...

CONVENTIONS PARTICIPATED AT THE EVENT	
MANIPUR BAPTIST CONVENTION	43
KARBIANGLOM BAPTIST CONVENTION	28
ASSAM BAPTIST CONVENTION	18
OTHERS	
KOHIMA BAPTIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP	310
NAGALAND SPORTS COALITION	1
NBCC	309

...was held from September 7 to 10, 2010 in Kohima Nagaland, at Indira Gandhi Stadium.

All together 709 registered delegates participated in the Event. Apart from the hosting Convention (NBCC) three other conventions MBC, KABC and ABC joined to making the event a successful one.

From the hosting Convention side 20 associations participated.

KBYF with 310 members and NSC Officials made their presence felt in the event.

The event was held under the theme **UNITY & PEACE**.

Shi K. Ao (Minister, PHED, Nagaland) and the closing program was honored by Shri. P. Deiko Phom (Parliamentary Secretary, TPT, Mechanical, Na-



The opening ceremony was graced by Dr. Ngang...

RATIONALE BEHIND THE YOUTH GOSPEL OLYMPIC

NATURE OF OLYMPIC	
• Different games and sports.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To bridge young people of NE India region from different cultures and churches. • To fellowship and interact toward mutual understanding and closer relationship. • To facilitate peace and unity in the NE India region. • To celebrate the oneness in Christ through sports and recreational activities. • To witness Christ to the unreached/un-churched youth.
• Team building games.	
• Gospel meetings	
• Morning devotional activities	
• Generative sign	

Mission Work of Kuki Baptist Convention

The Kuki Baptist Convention (KBC) Manipur, began its mission



work ever since 1958. It had its operation area in various places. In Myanmar they had 3 missionaries, 7 in Manipur especially among the Nepalis; 13 missionaries among the Meites; 1 missionary among the Hindi speaking group; 7 missionaries in North Bengal and 10 missionaries in Nepal.

During the span of 25 years, there were 3000 converts and 6 Churches building planted so far. There are 6 Church buildings planted in Nepali area, 5 in Assam; 1 in Dehradun; and 1 in Jharkhand. KBC has 2 missionaries, 1 in Jharkhand and 1 in Dehradun.

The Kuki Baptist Convention had an MOU with Nepali Baptist Churches Council for 25 years and the year 2011 will be the completion of the MOU after which the project will be handed over to NBCC. Henceforth, NBCC will take up the project work in the long run.

The child is the father of man



[By Pabitra Kumar Achowe (Board Member, Christian Literature Centre, CBCNEI)]

Anyone who is familiar with the ways of the world knows that one must keep up with the ever-changing tide of time, lest he fades away. Even a most casual observer will agree that the hour is not one for idle contemplation. Job markets are saturating; competition is on the rise; and innovation and entrepreneurship are the cry of the moment. In such situation, the deplorable condition of the members of Christian Endeavour ('CE') in most of the Baptist Churches in Assam causes great concern.

The Young People's Society of CE was a nondenominational evangelical society founded in Portland, Maine, in 1881 by Francis Edward Clark. Its professed object was "to promote an earnest Christian life among its members, to increase their mutual acquaintanceship, and to make them more useful in the service of God." This begs the question, how do the members of this particular endeavor contribute to the interests of our community, state or country?

One does not dare question their desire to worship and glorify the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Be that as it may, facts cannot be ignored. Evangelism is the duty of every man and woman who has received the gospel and accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior, not CE alone.

Let us not forget that we have been sent into this world with a specific purpose. As residents of the world, each one of us has a particular task assigned to him or her, which must be accomplished according to the best of their ability. Shall we not sing praises to the Lord when our youth will emerge as winners in the worldly arena? Why must we always look to others for role models? Can we not have Amartya Sens, Kiran Mazumdar Shaws, Ratan Tatas, Narayana Krishnamoorthys from our midst? Does it not glorify God when an accomplished man, endowed with riches and honour and wisdom, bows his head in humble prayer

before the Kings of Kings, our Lord Jesus?

Undoubtedly, members of CE are not just members of the local Church. They are students, employees, citizens of India too and they share the burden of uplifting the nation through their collective efforts. One finds it hard to believe that the members of CE have not been gifted by God to achieve the above mentioned goal. However the absence of proper counseling is evident. In this fast paced world, CE should not be left behind. They must wake up to this realization and struggle to survive in this vastly competitive atmosphere.

Let us be practical for a moment and consider this. It is one thing to proclaim the name of Jesus within the four walls of Church; in front of believers and it is quite another to take the name of Jesus to the streets of the town or city where one lives in. The former needs a mere membership, the latter needs intellect, awareness and relevance. It demands of a man who is worth his salt, someone who has excelled both inside and outside of the Church. It cannot be achieved by singing songs alone.

The Bible tells us that there is a time for everything. The Christian youth of today must endeavor to strive for perfection in their respective schools, colleges and offices. In fact, as members of CE, it is more of their duty to display exemplary behavior in all aspects of their life; speech, mannerisms, choice of clothes, education is no exception.

Needless to say, the principal responsibility of every Pastor is to guide and counsel these young members of our society so that they are not swayed by doubt and insecurity. It is his responsibility to urge them to establish their own identity firmly before they embark upon any activity to glorify the name of Jesus Christ. As a responsible leader, he must help them understand that a sincere Christian makes a sincere man and not vice versa.

As elders of the Church, this scenario presents two issues of grave importance. Firstly, are these the kind of leaders we have molded for the future? Isn't self-reliance one of the primary requisites of a good leader? Secondly, if the youth are unable to look after themselves in a

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dignified manner today, how will they be able to support the Church tomorrow?

We have inherited a glorious legacy from the past and we must be able to hold on to it with dignity. Let us not by our inaction squander the blood and sweat of our forefathers. Time is fleeting and we must act now. This is an exhortation to the pastors and the elders of the Baptist community to look into this issue without any further delay and to save the youth from unproductive pursuits. Our future depends on how we nurture these young minds today.



Opportunity to Serve God

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Election Explained



[Agile Mathew, Research Scholar, Centre for Nanotechnology, IIT Guwahati]

What a sense of blessing we enjoy when we believe we are the chosen ones of God! Read Ps.65:4. This is significant because, for no reason in ourselves He was gracious toward us to not let us perish but to inherit salvation which is through faith in Christ Jesus. Eph.1:4 says we were chosen even before the foundation of the world was laid. Scripture gives ample references to the fact that it is God's choice and not man's that really matters and that God's choice is out of grace and not on the basis of man's works – see Ref. Rom.9:16, John 15:16, 2.Tim.1:9, Titus 3:5, 1.Pet.1:1-2 and Acts 13:48. Nevertheless, man's choices are indispensable at every juncture and he is expected to make them wisely each time and God is completely just in holding him responsible at every point of life. See Ps.51:4. How then should we understand these truths?

There is an instance in John chapter 6 where some people to whom Jesus was preaching began deserting Him. The context was Jesus affirming to them that He alone is the true bread for eternal life and believing in Him is the only way to be saved. But His hearers did not accept His testimony and therefore did not believe in Him. What was actually happening? We can answer this question after considering the case from two different perspectives- one from the work-of-God perspective and the other is from the response-of-man perspective. Notice the five verses from John 6:41 to John 6:45. Verse-41 says Jews were hostile and complaining because of Jesus' testimony about Himself. In verse-42, they gave reasons for responding in the way. In verse-43, Jesus asked them to stop their wrong response. In verse-44, Jesus gave the work-of-God perspective and in verse-45, He gave the response-of-man perspective. According to Jesus, the work of God is

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to draw people to Christ giving them revelation and conviction about the truth and the only right response from man is to hear, learn and to come to Christ.

Now, nothing is too difficult for God's grace to set things right is evident from the conversion stories of people like King Nebuchadnezzar and the Saul of Tarsus. Jesus also testified to this when He said, "With men it is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27). What does this say about the passage in John 6:41-45? Surely all of that group of people to whom Jesus was speaking can be brought to faith by the grace of God. There is no doubt concerning whether the grace of God is adequate for it or not, for it is enough and sufficient to bring any wicked or ungodly man to Christ. But on the other hand, it is up to God to determine how much grace He should distribute to each person. He does it accordingly to His sovereign will and not according to the wish of any person. This is clear when He said, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion" in Rom.9:15. We can never question God for the amount of grace He chooses to allot any person; otherwise grace is no longer grace. Rather our response should be to humble ourselves before Him and be thankful and work diligently with whatever He entrusted us with (See the Parable of Talents in Mt.25:14-30). Such response will surely please Him and will motivate Him to consider us for more grace.

Thus the doctrine of election not only gives us the blessedness of being chosen of God, but it also humbles us under the mighty hand of God. For, He is the Potter and we are the clay in His hand.

In summary, God gives grace to all and it is distributed in measures according to His will. God is right in holding every man responsible for the grace He offers him. God is just in bringing any man to Christ by offering him grace according to His will. Grace cannot be questioned as it is not given on the basis of man's merits. Through all of this, God's character that He is gracious and righteous is made known and is glorified in heaven and on earth. Praise the Lord.



TRAFFICKED CHILDREN RESCUE OPERATION FROM GOLAGHAT DISTRICT



Mr. Atungo Shitri, Hon. Secretary, Peace and Justice Department of CBCNEI, along with Mr. Monjyoti Smith, advocate, High Court, Guwahati assisted Esther Benjamin Trust (Esther Benjamin) of

Nepal, UK based Human Rights Organization; in rescuing trafficked children and some young adults from Nepal and other parts of India. On 13th September 2010, at around 6:00 P.M, Atungo received a phone call from the director of Esther Benjamin, Mr. Philip Holmes, requesting for legal assistance while conducting a rescue operation. Atungo along with Monjyoti went to the local police station where the rescue operation was conducted and waited for the police to bring the victims of trafficking to the Police Station. As victims were brought to the Police Station Atungo and Monjyoti took active initiative in assisting the police in taking down the victims statements and advised the police to follow the procedures as per the Indian Criminal Procedure. Finally, after the statements were taken from the victims, Atungo requested the Inspector in-charge who came from Guwahati CID branch, to take the victims to Guwahati for the reason that the victims need protection as trafficking in persons is an organized crime with connection with many criminal syndicates. The inspector obliged to the request and thus the victims were shifted to Guwahati that night at around 12:00 A.M.

Victims' confessions alleged that they were physically, mentally and sexually abused. They were forced to work and were threatened with serious consequences, even threat to life if they refuse to oblige. Some victims confessed that they were treated like animals and not given

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freedom to go out of the facility to attend to their basic need. Atungo also observed the helplessness as well as signs of Stockholm syndrome the victims have develop over the period of time being wholly dependent on and controlled by the perpetrators. A young lady who has now three kids from one of the perpetrators told a social worker that she has nowhere to go and that she is happy and wish to continue to live and work under her captors. One young man from Nepal who has been under captivity for long time said that the perpetrators were nice to him and that they give him food and clothes. Another minor girl (now 11 years old) who was 8 years old when she was brought to the facility told the investigators that she had come to the facility at her own will. These confessions indicate that there is threat to their life, possibly even their family members if they try to escape from the facility. There is fear as well as positive feelings towards the perpetrators.

As the matter is now under police investigation our only hope is justice for the victims and punishment to the perpetrator (s). Pray for those of us who will be assisting the prosecution.



Vungneiniang Gangte, wife of Lienkholal Gangte hails from Imphal, Manipur. She completed her hotel management. She worked as an Assistant Manager for House keeping in CBCNEI Conference Center for 8 months. She left CBCNEI to join her husband who works in State Bank of India, Hongkong.

The Council wishes her all the best in her future endeavor.

“We will send our children to learn.” The Ao Mission.



[Rev. O. Alem, Executive Secretary, ABAM
(republished from AIM Magazine, October 2010)]

The idea of evangelizing the hill people adjoining Assam was not an original plan of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. Their original objective was to establish a mission station at Shan state of Myanmar with the view to introduce the Gospel in South China. Besides, introduction of the Gospel to the Nagas was almost an impossible task for the reasons known at that time. History is clear that evangelization of the people of Nagaland was a direct intervention of God's grace.

When God opens the door for a particular purpose, in a particular period of time for His Gospel, the word of God says, 'nobody can shut it'. Missionaries, at that point of time did not envision that a casual talk between a couple of Nagas and Missionary teachers at the Mission School, Sivsagar, would turn their course of mission activities and surprisingly, spend the rest of their eighty years ministry, enjoying a bumper harvest, in the hills. It all began this way; one day, a couple of Nagas in great amazement, saw children talking with the black dotted spots in a white sheet. One of the teachers, sensing what was happening to these visitors, casually asked, as Mary Mead wrote, "*Wouldn't you like us to come up to your village and teach your children as you see these being taught?*" A chief replied, "*yes, and we will send our children to learn.*" That was how historic mission to the Nagas began. Christ was already up in the hills and calling missionaries to come and work with Him.

Ever since that brief conversation, one of the missionaries Rev. E. W. Clark (Clark), and his wife Mary Mead (Mary), committed the rest of their lives for the evangelization of the Hill people. Upon returning from his first miraculous trip to the Naga village, Clark confidently reported "I

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believe I have found my life-work."

God provided Clark with two persons for the evangelization of the Nagas, namely, Godhula an Assamese school teacher, 'full of tact and courage' who later volunteered to make the first venture to the hills, and Subongmeren, an Ao of Molongkimong village, who was temporarily residing at Sivsagar. From him they learned Ao customs and dialect and he became the first ambassador between his villagers and the missionaries. Like Serampore trio, Clark, Godhula, and Supongmeren were Naga Mission Trio.

With the help of Supongmeren, Clark, and Godhula obtained permission from the village chief to visit their village. Those days, going from one village to another was like going to an enemy's camp. It was a costly deal. To invite a foreigner to the village would mean inviting trouble because people were suspicious of English administrators, (then called 'company men').

Godhula, a gifted singer, and a sage made the first trip to Naga Village, Molongkimong. At first he was not allowed to stay inside the village. For two or three days he was kept in a makeshift house outside the village with guards, day and night. People feared to go near him initially. But when with his melodious voice, he poured out sweet gospel hymns people flock around him and listened. He told them the story of Jesus. Song have played an important role in the lives of the Aos since time immemorial. No history or event is complete without a song. To the Aos, a song composed for the event was important and through songs, deep feelings of love are exchange between lovers and friends. Songs speak deeper than speeches as an old saying goes. Against this background, song became the best tool to communicate the Gospel to the Nagas and Aos in particular. Did Godhula realize this?

Yes, but not until, men, women and children flocked to hear his song. And when he proposed to return home, women and children cried and 'to do him a proper honour an escort of forty men was sent by the authorities of the village to accompany him to the door of the mission bungalow in Sivsagar.' After this Godhula made several trips to Molongkimong village. They build a small bamboo chapel even before anyone was converted. There religious services and instructions about

the 'new religion' were given. He was blessed with nine 'converts' who were brought down to Sivsagar and Rev. Clark baptized them on November 11, 1872.

Braved by what had happened to Godhula's life and ministry in the hill, the desire of the villagers to take Clark to their village, together with the assurance of God's promised presence Clark decided to plunge into 'living sacrifice'. Against the law of the British Government, he obtained permission to go on his own risk. With no expectation of protection from the British, Clark decided to go to Molongkimong village.

The villagers, as a gesture of welcoming their friend, prepared sixty chosen young warriors to escort Clark both ways between their village and Amguri station. Clark's living sacrifice for the Lord was amply rewarded. Within one week of ministry in the village, 15 people accepted the 'new religion'. On the following Sunday morning, December 22, 1872, they were baptized before a large number of villagers. A solemn devotional service was conducted, together with the sharing of the Lord's Supper. That was the beginning of the church in Nagaland.

Mary Mead wrote of her experience during her husband's week long silence thus, "*I was asked by the chief magistrate of Sibsagar (Sivsagar) Station, 'when have you last heard from Mr. Clark?' 'Do you ever expect to see your husband back with his head on his shoulders?' I need not say I was solicitous, yet from the heart there ever came the answer: 'Yes, Colonel Cambell, I expect him back with his head on; I trust to higher power than English government to keep my husband's head on his shoulders.'*" It is more than enough to let us know that the introduction of Jesus Christ to the Nagas was not an easy task; it cost living sacrifice. It was a clear testimony that 'the cross of Jesus is the power of God for those who are saved.' More importantly, the same power is available even today.

Interest for evangelism has been one of the legacies the Ao Baptist Churches received from God through the testimony of the Missionaries. Thus love for church planting ministry has been a dominant ministry from her inception. This is clearly evident from the Mission history of the Ao Baptist Church Association (ABAM). For example, the ABAM on its first session in 1876 resolved, "We will proclaim the Gospel in all the Ao

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Villages". At that time there were 47 Ao Villages and 5 Churches. The following year, the second ABAM annual session resolved to proclaim the Gospel to all the neighboring tribes. During this conference, delegates voted to start Mission to the neighboring tribes. And the amount collected was Rs.3 and 3 annas.

The message of forgiveness is absent in the Ao Naga Religion. As a result, an air of fear remained in the hearts of the people. On the other hand, the teaching of judgment seat of God after death was very prominent at that time. Sickness was looked upon as almost a judgment. In the absence of the message of forgiveness from God, they understood that none would be truthful before God in life. Therefore not willing to die, for death would lead to God's judgment, they invented all kinds of expensive healing sacrifices, even to the extent of incurring huge debts and eventually becoming slaves.

In fact there were two vital reasons, on the basis of which most of the Aos turned to Christ from their traditional faith; they are, healing the sick in the name of Jesus Christ and the immediate assurance of forgiveness upon confession of one's sin while on earth. The message of forgiveness and justification before the judgment of God and eternal joy of life after death have been the answers to the age old quest for eternal liberation. The message of forgiveness was sufficient to drive believers' heart to salvage fellow villagers from their future hopelessness.

The Ao Baptist churches' Jubilee history records show that almost all the Churches in the Ao and neighboring areas were established as a result of lay Christian witness. Every believer became a missionary. As missionaries, wherever they went, they testified Christ through their lives, singing gospel songs, telling about Jesus and inviting them to receive Jesus Christ. Living testimonies of their kith and kin were irresistible to the hearers.

Establishment of the Impur Mission center in 1894 was a significant event in the history of the Naga Mission. The newly selected site was a more suitable and central place for the propagation of the Gospel. Mission to the Nagas was broadly divided into two fields for practical reasons; Impur field in the east, and the Kohima field in the west. F. S. Downs, in his book, "*The Mighty Works of God*", states that, 'Impur center served

about 70% of the population... By 1950 more than three fourths of the Christians in the Naga Hills lived in this field... With exception of the Ao area the Church grew very slowly before 1920s. After that by 1950 there were 50,000 Christians distributed among all the tribes. By 1926 there were Churches or small Christian communities in every Ao village... Christianity had come to be identified with the progress of the tribe as a whole. Ao Christians travelled everywhere through eastern Nagaland preaching. Almost all of them went voluntarily; very few were employed by church or mission.'

The year 1900 and following years marked the period of intense persecutions from the non-believers and the Administration supporting them. However in the midst of the persecution God sent revivals. The third major revival which took place in 1913-14 among the Aos, resulted in many independent evangelistic work by the churches. And by 1930 the Ao churches were almost entirely self-supporting. By 1950 the statement made by J. E. Tanquist in 1836 proved to be prophetic, remarked F. S. Downs - "*Perhaps the Ao field is destined to become an outstanding example in Assam of a Christian community able and willing to assume more and more responsibility for educational as well as evangelistic and medical missionary work.*"(Conference report).

The method of forming Associations along the line of tribal community was adopted in Nagaland. First a single association is formed and the mother association helps in forming new almost independent association. These are the associations formed with the assistance of mother association, the Ao Baptist Church Association, Impur Mission center. Lotha, 1923, Eastern Sema, 1929; Sangtam, 1946; Chang, 1948; Konyak 1950; Phom, 1950; Yimchungru, 1960; and Khamnugan, 1964. The Impur training school played an important role in church planting.

By 1954 the last of foreign missionaries left Nagaland. Their departure was almost too sudden that the Tuensang area so called, 'border tribes' consisting of 6 tribes, was left to the care of Ao Baptist Church Association. During British times, that area was not only unadministered but also sealed off from outside contacts. Evangelistic workers were not permitted in that area. Head hunting was still practiced openly and people were 'notoriously hostile'. The first full time evangelist, assigned for these

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tribes was Onenlepden. He started his ministry from the year 1945. The administrator at Mokokchung refused permit to go beyond Dikhu river. After persistent request, he was allowed to go at his own risk and was asked to report to the authority upon his return. Amidst head hunting practice he labored for the Lord and shared in the blessing of forming six associations in Tuensang area. There were no Ao Churches that did not take share in evangelizing the 'border tribes'. In fact budget for the mission fund was more than the Association and local churches budget. Departure of missionaries from Nagaland was a mixture of sadness and a blessing in disguise. The Naga churches learned to stand on their own and evangelism of neighboring tribes.

The Ao Baptist Church Association in her Centenary Celebration in 1972, passed two resolutions in expression of gratitude to God's love for the Nagas. First, to establish Clark Theological College, to produce many Clarks. Second, to adopt Arunachal Pradesh as mission field, a restricted area then. So far three associations are formed in Arunachal Pradesh according to the pattern of Naga mission. One of them, Tangsa, formed into independent association in 1997, Wanchu will be formed likewise this December 2010 and the other Nocti, after few years.

The Ao Baptist Church Association in her annual session voted to launch out ABAM International Ministries (AIM). The original purpose of the American Baptist Foreign Society, was to evangelize the Shan tribe of northern Myanmar and the southern China. Though they could not go to Shan, their mission was not a failure. They looked to God that through the establishment of churches in Nagaland the way may be opened. E. W. Clark and his friends prayed and conveyed that the Ao Christians may lead to fulfill their original goal. In continuance to the vision of the early missionaries and the Lord's call for world evangelization AIM came into being. The first AIM missionary was commissioned in August 29, 2010. ABAM is ready to make a long journey with the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.



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RELIGIONS AND NATION BUILDING



[Aziz-ul Haque, Pastor, Guwahati Baptist Church]

During the World Parliament of Religions held from 11-27 September 1893 in Chicago IL, Swami Vivekananda said, "I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance". The main thrust of his address was 'harmony of religions'. This parliament was an attempt to create a global dialogue of faiths. The event was celebrated by another conference on its centenary in 1993. Subsequently parliaments are held in different countries after every five years aiming for making peace and communal harmony among and within the nations. As an outcome of this parliament, many interfaith dialogues are now being held at regional and national level.

Religion plays a significant role in every sphere of human life and in shaping a nation. The Indian society has been religiously and culturally pluralistic since a long time, than any other country in the world. Neither the influence of western liberalization and materialism nor the growth of science and technology has been able to wipe out religious fervor from modern life. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism originated and grew on the Indian soil. The Semitic religions of Christianity and Islam came to this country through missionary movements. The tribal and primal religious traditions have their own unique features expressed through oral traditions and distinctive cultural life. Not only religions, there are also people of secular visions and ideologies. People of different faiths and cultural traditions have been living together since the millennium. Pluralism has its own beauty and gifts. But religions also have been modes of separation rather than bridges of understanding and unity among the communities. Then, how can people committed to different faiths and ideologies peacefully live together and contribute towards

making the nation? This has been a persistent question for secular India.

Paradoxically, religions have played an ambiguous role throughout history. Religions with conflicting truth-claims have posed barriers to community rather than bearers of peace. Very often religions have hindered social and scientific progress by clinging on to outmoded beliefs and practices, such as the ideas of fate and predestination, thereby making people lazy for which Karl Marx termed religion as 'opium of the people'. Religions have justified and legitimized structures of injustice and oppression such as caste discrimination and patriarchal system of society. Moreover, religions allied with political power have caused communal tensions and conflicts.

Considering the positive elements of religions- they provide us visions, values and spiritual resources for purposeful living. They offer spiritual and cultural resources for survival of different people in their search for identity and dignity. Religions cater for strength and resources to fight against injustice in society and propose different solutions to human problems. The plurality of religions introduces an element of choice by providing alternative visions of reality and alternative ways of life. Another great advantage of plurality of religions, cultures, ethnic groups and languages is that it can be a guarantee against fascism, because it will refuse to accept any 'one and only' imposition of a religious or political ideology on all people. Therefore, the negative elements may be reduced by reformation and even if they persist will be outweighed; and if religions are properly understood and practiced can become great strength and resource for national reconstruction.

National integration and integrity is of primary concern for maintaining peace and harmony. This was felt since the partition of our country. Our epoch is characterized by astounding advances in science and technology on the one hand, and escalating social conflict and disruption on the other. There is a constant fear of terrorism, communalism, militancy and other divisive forces operating within and across the borders. Of late, religious fundamentalism has posed an alarming phenomenon and no country or religion has succeeded in making itself an exception.

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Indian experience with fundamentalism has been bloody and traumatic since the independence.

The inflexible slogan like, 'one people, one faith, one language, one culture and one religion' must be abandoned. In order to live in peace and harmony, communities must learn and practice not only religious tolerance but also mutual respect and acceptance in a pluralistic society. Religion is a powerful factor in Indian society and the value of spirituality in a society of increasingly beset by violence and terror is of paramount need today. However, religions should not be taken superficially. Many people merely talk about religion and promising to provide shortcuts to paradise live in fantasy. When battles have to be fought against entrenched injustice and institutionalized oppression here and now, why should people waste time in debating about the climate of heaven and temperature of hell? Moreover, the way to peace is not merely through prayers or mantras and rituals like animal sacrifices. There are peace potentialities, liberative streams or prophetic voices in every religion. Therefore, it is important to come together for dialogue and collaboration to evolve common action plan for tapping peace potentialities to reduce tensions, to resolve conflicts and to tame political passions before conflagrations set in.

It is important to have a wider outlook for each religion, lest narrow dogmatism with exclusivist view which Vivekananda termed as 'frog in the well' will lead to religious intolerance and fanaticism. Nobody can fully comprehend the infinite divine with finite human knowledge and understanding. This envisions allowing the religions above our horizon in a spirit of mutual love which alone can bind us together.

All religions can play important role in the process of national integration: by teaching each community to practice what is professed; to be tolerant and respectful toward other religions; to avoid fanaticism and fundamentalism; and to collaborate with other communities in matters of social and humanitarian concerns towards making of the nation. Moreover, interfaith relations and cooperation can foster communal harmony and remove distrust, misconceptions and prejudices of one community against other communities, and thus building trust and fraternity

among all people. The great advantage of religions playing significant role in our country lies in our secular democracy. Our secular democracy provides perspectives and challenges where people can enjoy religious freedom and equality and can come together for dialogue and collaboration to tap religious resources in bringing about peace and communal harmony, to generate common action to correct social evils, and to work together for building the nation.



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Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Philippians 4 : 4

Letters from Students



My name is
J a m e s
Rongpi, from
Karbi Anglong.
I am an active
member of
B e t h a n y

Baptist Church (Saphapani) Nihang Karbi Baptist Association, under Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention. Presently, I am studying at Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, Assam. I am sponsored by CBCNEI and my close families and friends. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to CBCNEI, families and friends from KBES Wokha, Nagaland, for their financial and prayer support which makes it possible for me to study theology. I am happy to take part in various activities in the college and to work alongside many friends of different tribes and cultures, which also affirms me to equip and explore my ministry. Getting to study theology is a vibrant and a rigorous experience for me. I am hoping that the same spirit and the same faith in our Almighty God will lead and guide

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me until I finish my B.D course. God's blessing to those who are reading this testimony. Thank you.

James Rongpi, B.D I year, ETC.



I thank our Almighty God for His merciful grace and wondrous works during these 3 (three) years of my study at Eastern Theological College (ETC). Life at ETC community is a challenge. Trials and temptations come but so far they have only strengthened my faith in Jesus Christ. I have been living under His tender care and guidance which is helping me not to stray away from His presence for even a single minute of my life. During these years He has not once left me alone through the thousands of trials and temptations. Instead when I fell down He lifted me up. From this experience I could learn that God really loves me and wants me to be His servant.

Retrospectively, before coming to ETC for my B.D course I did not know the purpose of my life and also the

purpose of His 'calling'. It is only after my coming to ETC that I am beginning to realize the real purpose of my life and 'calling'.

I want to thank CBCNEI for sponsoring me to study at ETC and given this opportunity to know God and to equip myself to become His faithful servant.

**Jyotish R. Marak, B.D III Year,
ETC**



I had a dream since my childhood to work in God's ministry. My father is a missionary and I am inspired by his commitment to the ministry of God. Coupled with my childhood dream and the inspiration I got from my father I decided to pursue theological studies to equip myself for the extension of the kingdom of our Lord and I enrolled myself at the Eastern Theological College (ETC).

I joined ETC on October 15, 2008. I have spent almost one and half years completing my Bachelor of Divinity 1st year and now I am a

student of B.D 2nd year. I have gone through many experiences within these days which I would like to share in this bulletin.

Firstly, let me humble myself to mention about my language problem that I faced. I did my past studies in Assamese medium and this has made my English very poor. I had a hard time adjusting to my friends and my teachers in the beginning. I am glad to mention that the effort that I have put towards learning the English language coupled with the grace of God have made a big difference today.

Secondly, I am from Sadiya (Assam) which is a Hindu dominated area. Although I am from a missionary family, I found it very difficult to understand real faith because of the environment I was in. However, ETC made a big difference in my understanding of the Christian faith after encountering my fellow students and the teachers. I would like to mention that I am going to be the first theological graduate from Sadiya. As I prepare myself for God's ministry, I believe that the different methods of learning that I acquire in ETC will become my tools and I will be confident to face any task.

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Finally, I would like to thank all the officials and staff of CBCNEI for helping me in my theological studies through financial support and prayer. I pray that God will continue to bless you all and make CBCNEI a means of extending the kingdom of God on earth.

**Mr. Budhin Mahanta, B.D 2nd year,
ETC**



Warm greetings to CBCNEI in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! I give all the glory and

honor to our Almighty God for giving me this opportunity to share and testify God's love in my life.

I am grateful to our living God for all the blessings I have received. I thank CBCNEI for the constant prayer support and concern in terms of financial support throughout my theological studies. Here in Eastern Theological College, I experienced God's continual unfailing love and truth. God loved me so much that He has blessed me each day of my life. From the day I met Christ, I

promised to serve Him till today. In spite of the many challenges, God has been faithful and blessed me with good health.

Out of the many blessings and experiences, I want to share how God answered my prayer in times of need. In one of our Church visit to Dimapur, I was undergoing financial crisis. It was difficult for my family members especially for my brother who is the only one employed to support me financially. So, I humbly prayed to God to meet my needs. To my utmost surprise, I got the needed amount from an anonymous friend. Even while on the way to Dimapur, I kept on receiving. I could not believe that it was He who provided. I am blessed here in ETC with so many good friends from different tribes and culture and wonderful teachers.

I was really disturbed and it gives me immense pain to learn about the division of Meitei Baptist Association into two groups. Churches were divided and there were also divisions among family members. I cried deep inside with the thought that we Christians could not set an example of love and oneness. Hence, from that day

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onwards, I along with some friends have been praying for the unity and for a seminar in order to bring oneness in the Lord. It is my prayer that anyone who read this testimony would have the same concern.

Once again I am grateful to CBCNEI for prayer and financial support because of which I am what I am today. I continue to covet your prayer support so that I may be well equipped in serving God.

God bless CBCNEI.

Phamjoubam Jenny Devi, B.D. III Year, ETC



A Letter from Mr. Arup Saikia, *Asst. Pastor, Dispur Baptist Church Christian Basti, Guwahati*, writes,



“I would like to state that I am enjoying the challenges and the satisfaction in serving His people through the ministry God has given to me. But it would not have been possible without the much needed support in the form of advises and prayers and mainly the contribution towards meeting the finances. I am grateful to CBCNEI for supporting me throughout the 4 years of my Bachelor of Divinity (B.D) studies at Union Biblical Seminary, Pune during the year 2005 – 2009 by providing me the BIM/CBCNEI Theological Education Scholarship for those years.

I would further like to state that the studies have helped me a lot in equipping myself to serve in His ministry and hope and pray that I would be able to bear the fruits with His grace to keep up to the expectations you had in granting me your support. I seek your prayers and blessings for my years of ministry ahead.”



Letters from the Convention Youth Secretaries

Mr. Amit Vockline Youth Secretary, ABC



First of all, it is a great pleasure to serve our Lord as the Youth Secretary of the Assam

Baptist Convention. As a football coach needs to push his team to perform better so as a youth Secretary I need to push our youth to be more committed & devoted to the Lord.

I got married to Ms Binita Vockline in April 2009. She works as Staff Nurse at Jorhat Medical Hospital. We have a two month old daughter name Sarah Vockline.

Since my joining as the Youth Secretary of Assam Baptist Convention in June, 2008 God has blessed me in organizing a couple of Annual Conferences (youth) & leadership Training/Programmes. During our training we had workshop and covered subject like: Global Warming, HIV-AIDS, Christian youth & Social Issues drugs, alcohol, Role of Christian

youth in challenging world, financial responsibility and first Aid so on. We try to sensitize our youth to be aware of & combat against the present Issues. Some of our youths are studying theology in North East India which will be very helpful for our future leadership. Praise God! Youths are gearing up for extension of the kingdom of God.

We also had the privilege to participate in the Gospel Olympic which was held at Kohima from 7 - 10 Sep, 2010 with 18 players. It was a good platform for us to interact & fellowship with one another. I like to take this challenge to encourage and motivate our youth to involve and give importance in sports. I also attended National Council of Churches in India Youth Assembly which was held in Kolkata from 6 - 10 January 2010 with 18 young people. The theme was "Let us be friends" & sub theme was: friendship with God, friendship with man, and friendship with nature.

We have forthcoming programmes - Assam Baptist C. E. & S.S. Union Silver Jubilee from

15 - 17 April, 2011 at Golaghat Baptist Church and Sunday School Teachers Training Association Level. I also plan to attend National Baptist youth Festival in January 2011 in Andhra Pradesh.



Mr. John Stanmark Borang, Youth Secretary, ABCC



Greetings in the wonderful name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am John. I was born in a very poor Christian family and studied in a very small village government school in Arunachal Pradesh. I knew for sure that God has chosen me even from the womb to serve him. In spite of all my weaknesses and limitations, God uses me in different ways to do His ministry. At present, I am serving as Pastor in Town Model Baptist Church in Pasighat. God is also using me as the Youth Secretary in Arunachal Baptist Churches under ABCC. As of now, I have been in the youth ministry for a year. We are trying

our best to work among the young people in Arunachal Pradesh.

Future Plan

So far we we have not been able to organize camps and conferences as such but we are planning to conduct a leadership seminar in the coming year, 2011. In order to promote unity among the Baptist brethren in Arunachal Pradesh, we are trying to have fellowship with one another.

Prayer points

Please pray for

- ABCC youth Department (ABCCYD), and unity among the Baptist churches in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The leaders in ABCCYD.
- That this organization will grow into maturity spiritually.
- The establishment of ABCC office.
- The financial need also as we are facing financial crises.

Looking forward for your prayer support as we take up steps to accomplish the plan ahead.

Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.

Psalm 127 : 1 (NIV)

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Bikash G. Momin, Youth Secretary, GBC



I am Bikash G. Momin born on 17th July, 1976. I did my Bachelor of Arts from Durama College

Tura and Bachelor of Divinity from Pune, Maharashtra. I am presently based in Achik Baptist Mission Compound, Chandmari, Tura, Meghalaya serving as the Youth Secretary of Garo Baptist Convention.

My Experience as a Youth Secretary of GBC

I joined the Convention as a Youth Secretary on May 1, 2006. This is my fifth year as a youth leader. Within these four and half years of my ministry and among the young people of GBC area had given me new experiences and the time to learn more about young people. The Lord has blessed me through this youth ministry.

Even though the job is tough I really enjoyed serving the young

people. Many young people have dedicated their lives for the Lord both as full time and part time. Even though they are part time they are devoted and sincere in their service to the Lord. But most of the bright and sincere young people of the rural areas have gone to towns and cities in pursuit of higher studies. Therefore, the rural areas do not have educated leaders in the church to lead the young people. Moreover, that leads to leadership crisis in many of the rural churches. Even within the church there are communication gaps between the elders which often led to misunderstanding among the young people and the elders. Nowadays there are many school drop outs. But there are also many young people who are excelling in their studies. Every year I received many prayer requests, requesting me to pray for their exams. Today we find many God fearing young people working in different government services as well as doing business. There is also the need to tackle alcoholic

You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it.

John 14 : 14

problems that are on the rise day by day along with some drug addicts. Many issues and problems are coming up such as academic, family, financial problems and so on. Many young people have dedicated themselves for mission works such as through prayer, finances, evangelists and missionaries etc.



Introducing Rev. Iringtie Kauring, Youth Secretary, NBCC



Rev. Iringtie is born to Late Mialak Kauring & Mrs. Kisuigam Kauring on August 4, 1969 at New Tesen Village under the Peren District, Nagaland. He is the fourth child of their parents. He attended Christ the King English School, Tesen and subsequently passed Class X in 1989 from Government High School Peren, under Nagaland Board of School Education (NBSE). He went on to complete his graduation from Peren College under North East Hill University (NEHU) in 1994. After graduation he

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Completed B.D from Eastern Theological College Jorhat, Assam in 1999.

Rev. Iringtie is married to Mrs. Pauziu Kauring, who serves the Lord in the Education Department (NBSE); Kohima and is blessed with children: Two sons- Izin (6 & half yrs) and Ikok (3 & half years). He is a member of Zeme Baptist Church Kohima under the Zeme Baptist Church Council (ZBCC). And he was ordained for the Lord's ministry by the ZBCC on December 2, 2007 at Zeme Baptist Church, Kohima.

Rev. Iringtie ministerial include: Assistant Teacher in Baptist High School, Peren (1991-92); Headmaster in Christian English School, Tesen (1994-1995 July); Youth Secretary in Zeme Baptist Church Council (1999 May-2002 February); and the Youth Secretary of Nagaland Baptist Church Council (2002 March till date).

Challenges:

1. The different level of Associations in term of leadership. For eg, some associations have full time youth ministers in local churches while others have no youth secretary even in the

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association level not to say of local churches. This gives practical problem to plan and implement ministerial programs and activities.

2. Lack of Communication: we are so used to the conventional practice to do/confirm things at the eleventh hour. No doubt we have internet, phones etc; however we do find difficulty in doing things on time.

3. Churches fail to understand the youth people's world and the challenges the world they are in. In some rare cases, Youth ministry is treated as second class ministry of the church.



Introducing Rev. Stephen Tauthang, Youth Secretary, MBC

[As reported by Mr. Adin Kamei, Office Assisant, MBC]



New-Birth: Born to God-fearing parents, Stephen is the second eldest among four siblings. A man with a past of 'Martial Arts' and macho posturing,

life would have taken a different turn but for Christ's redeeming love. In November 1986, the grace of God suddenly dawned on Stephen while he was in confinement of Assam Rifles that in tears of contrition, he accepted the Lord Jesus as his personal savior and surrendered himself to serve him the rest of his life.

Ministry experiences: After his graduation, Stephen undertook a course on Discipleship Training under YWAM in Kolkata in 1989 and following did a stint in YWAM as missionary till 1992. To fulfill his divine calling effectively, he joined Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, for his B.D. and completed in 1996. He joined Manipur Theological College as lecturer, whilst taking the charge of Pastor of Chongthu Baptist Association Centre Church from 1997 to 2000. He was ordained to fulltime ministry on June 24, 2000 by his Association. He, as invited, joined MBC as the Youth Secretary in 2001 and will be leaving MBC in January 2011 after 2 terms/10 years of service.

Family: Counting his blessings, family is a pillar of support to Rev. Stephen in his clerical obligations. For better, for worse, he was united in

Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.

Proverbs 27:1 (NIV)

God's Holy Ordinance with Dr. Kim on December 30, 1995. And, in God's good graces, they are faring better being blessed with a daughter, Grace Ching.

Accorded positions & responsibilities:

A part from his present post as Youth Secretary, MBC, the accorded positions and responsibilities of Rev. Stephen includes – Secretary, CBCNEI Youth (2001-2002), member, CBCNEI music committee (2003-2006), Music Secretary, CBCNEI Youth (2003-2006), Executive member, CBCNEI (2008-2010), President, CBCNEI Youth (2008-2010), Executive member, NEICC (2008-2010), Executive member, BYFI (2001-2010), General Council member, BWA (2005) etc.

Some initiatives: During his leadership, Rev. Stephen organized some important and remarkable events, such as, the First Manipur State Gospel Olympics, the First Manipur State Gospel Music Festival and the First Manipur State Revival Conference, etc. These have been huge-gatherings, being organized for all denominations. Apart from these, the recently concluded, the First Youth Gospel Olympic of CBCNENI 2010, held at Kohima, was historic and also a matter of impressive record in the history of CBCNEI Youth.

New Ministry: Rev. Stephen will be leaving MBC Ministry in January 2011 as his maximum term of service gets over.



At present, Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention does not have a youth secretary. Rev. Athang Sebu, Executive Secretary, KABC is currently acting as the convention youth secretary.



Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.
Romans 12:1 (NIV)

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Phungyo Baptist Church, Women Centennial Celebration, Ukhrol, Manipur



By Debbie Mulneix, BIM

April 7-10 was the date of the Centennial Celebration for the Women of Phungyo Baptist Church, Ukhrol, Manipur. It was not just a celebration for the beginning of the women's ministry, but was a tribute to the first 10 women who received Christ and were baptized in the area.

American Baptist missionaries, William and Alice Pettigrew came to Ukhrol in the late 1800's. Alice wanted to share Christ with the women of the village, and so she began a Bible study. Some of the women who attended worked with the Pettigrews; one was a cook's helper. When they were baptized in 1910, it was the beginning of a new life for the entire village.

The Celebration of 2010 had over 6,000 people in attendance during the four day event. Most could list their ancestors back to those original 10 women. Today, around 30% of the people in Manipur state are Christian, but the village of Ukhrol has a much higher rate. Most of the people are actually members of the Tangkhul tribe and are originally from the state of Nagaland.

An International flavor was added by guests from Crossroads Baptist Church, Denver, Colorado, USA. The Rev. Dr. Kim Skattum, Mr. Joe Zepeda, and the musical quartet, Destiny, featuring Kala Bennett, Kimberly Thompson, Mia Garneau, and Renee Seidel, added to the festivities with songs and messages that will remain with the people for many years to come. Former American Baptist Missionary, currently living in the US, Margaret Tegenfeldt spoke during the sessions. From Shillong, Meghalaya, Mr. Terrance Wanshong shared his amazing vocal talent with several songs throughout the weekend.

One of the final programs of the celebration began at the place where

the original 10 women were baptized. The Celebration attendees met there and marched to the sight of the Mission Grounds, where a monument to Alice Pettigrew and her ministry was unveiled.

As I participated in this Celebration, my thoughts often turned to those missionaries who came to lands in the middle of death and destruction and brought the peace of God to all who would accept it. The procedure has changed but that tradition continues around the world today.

Missionaries are no longer allowed to reside in India, but the need for short term volunteers is great. People like Margaret and Dr. Ed Tegenfeldt have “officially” retired, but they come to India annually to volunteer time with the ministry here. Their particular work is with the



Leishiphung Christian Hospital in Ukhul. There are so many things to be done. There are many workers here, but the need is nearly overwhelming, and the resources are very scarce.

The day after this wonderful celebration ended, there was a blockade set up to keep supplies from entering the state of Manipur. The reasons are political, and not as important to us as the results. Diesel is scarce, businesses are closed, there is no transportation, and hospitals are not receiving supplies. Some things are being flown in, but the country relies on its roads to deliver goods.

The Phungyo Baptist Church announced at the Celebration that they would be hosting a Youth Gathering the 17th-19th December, 2010. This gathering is now in jeopardy because of the blockade. Many people who would have helped to finance this project are struggling to help their own families. The repercussions of this blockade are mind-boggling. Manipur has one of the highest rates of HIV positive people in the area.

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The youth are under constant pressure to discard their Christian heritage. A Youth gathering has the potential to present the love and stability of the Lord to these young people.

Please pray for the situation in Manipur, that a PEACEFUL end might come about quickly. Keep the people of Ukhrol and the Baptist Church there in your prayers as they try to continue with their plans for the Youth Gathering this December.



**Dr. O. M Rao is felicitated with
“Henry Devadas Christian Book of
the Year Award**

During the Tercentary National Celebration, 15 - 17 October, 2010, Dr. O. M. Rao was chosen for the book prize “Henry Devadas Christian Book of the Year Award” for his title “Sermons for Special Occasion”. The award was given to him during the Civic Reception Schedules immediately after the thankgivings.

On October 13, 2010, Dr. Rao was also invited from the University of Edinburg Reception, Scotland to join the 2010 Common Wealth Games.

News Capsules

Exegetical Preaching Seminar, July 9-11, 2010

Pastor Donaldwood, Pastor of
Matchakol Baptist Church, New



three are recommended to study
abroad. We are grateful for the BIM
grants for Leadership
Development. We have a total of
30 students
w h o m
CBCNEI is
sponsoring.



Tura hosted a seminar on
Exegetical Preaching in his
Church. He invited 67 participants,
of whom majority were lay leaders.
In the Garo churches it is mostly
lay leaders who are assigned to
preach. The entire seminar was
fully sponsored by the Matchakol
Baptist Church. Please pray that
more CBCNEI churches shall
understand the importance of such
a seminar and volunteer to invest
in it.



Theological Scholarship

We are glad to inform that 14 new
students are sponsored for
theological studies in India and

CBCNEI Campus Development

Under the leadership of Mr. Amrit
Goldsmith, the CBCNEI Campus
Development Committee has
begun to act. They have obtained
a Contour Survey of the land. This
came as a gift from Mr. Nibu
Angami, a Christian businessman,
from Dimapur. The committee is
now working for a Master Plan.
They have decided that without
compromising the ownership of
the prime property, it shall invite
investments from individual and
corporate companies to build few
multipurpose mega structures that
will generate revenue for the
ministries of CBCNEI.

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City Lawyers & Judicial Officers Prayer Fellowship

The meeting was organized by the Justice and Peace Department of the Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India. It was held at Taste Budz (NCFG Café), Mission Compound, Panbazar, Guwahati on 20 August, 2010.

The meeting started with a welcome note by Mr. Atungo Shitri. Exhortation was done by Magistrate K. C. Boro. During the exhortation, Mr. K. C. Boro spoke on the importance of Law in day to day life. He stressed on the need that everybody in the society should be aware of the law of the land. It was followed by scripture reading by Mr. Monjyoti Smith. Dr. A. K. Lama, General Secretary, CBCNEI shared from the book of Isaiah explaining how God has entrusted us the responsibility to uphold the cause of the downtrodden and the less privileged.

Few students studying L.L.B from Guwahati University also attended the meeting along with the other invitees. The members present in the meeting resolved to start a Christian Lawyers Chapter in the city of Guwahati and nominated Advocate Monjyoti Smith as the first convener of the Chapter.

The meeting was closed with a word of prayer by Dr. Jolly Rimai. Mission Secretary, CBCNEI.



Community Development Workers' Training:

The Mission Department of CBCNEI, like any other years, conducted Missionary training this year in the month of August, 9-20, 2010 at CBCNEI Conference Centre. All together, there were 18 CDWs who attended the training on "Holistic Approach in Mission". This training was conducted in partnership with ARLDF, Honey Mission Government of Nagaland through SBAKAizuto, and Community Health Evangelism.

Basic concepts on incorporating Social action and Evangelism were taught to them.

Faced by oppositions in



Mission, especially among Muslim community and some pockets in Arunachal Pradesh, the concept of Community Development Workers came into being and this title was given to all the Evangelists working under CBCNEI. However, the motive of giving them this title and training them on some basic skills on Development is to let them use it as an entry to the community and build rapport among the people they are witnessing.

More in-depth training on Beekeeping was taught at Aizuto along with SBAK Aizuto in partnership with Honey Mission Nagaland. The life of the bees, the cooperation amongst themselves, the usefulness of them to the farmers, etc were the main focus. After the training, everyone was excited and decided to keep at least one Honey Bee box in their house.



Treasurers' & Finance Secretaries' Workshop

On 17th and 18th August, 2010, the Council conducted for the first time Finance Secretaries and

Treasurers' Workshop in CBCNEI Mission compound in the Conference Hall, New Block. Mr. Beryl B. Sangma took sessions on Managing God's Treasury, Mr. Nengjamang Tonsing on Banking



and Investments, Mr. Sharif Daniel, Mr. Nathaniel Basumatary and Mr. Rolland G. Momin on Biblical Principles of Financial Management, Rev. Dr. A.K. Lama on Integrity and Mr. Atungo Shitri gave sessions on Legal Matters for Registered Societies.

Altogether 24 participants attended the Seminar. *Some of them expressed that it was the first time in their life attending such workshop. Most of them suggested the Council to continue such type of workshop even in the future.*



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Peace Building Seminar

The Justice and Peace Department of CBCNEI, Hon. Secretary Mr. Atungo Shitri attended a seminar on Peace Building Seminar organized by the Garo Baptist Convention (GBC) held at Bible Bhavan, Khan Market, New Delhi from 6-8 September 2010. The seminar was attended by 30 Church Association Leaders from GBC. Mr. Shitri took up two sessions on Christian Peacemaking and Justice and Mr. Robin David Ratnakar of Dua & Dua Associates took up a session on Religious Rights and Indian Legal System. The participants expressed their view that such kind of seminar should be organized in the Garo areas in the near future. The resource persons also encouraged the participants to use the pulpit to speak the message of peace and justice which they have learned from seminar to their respective congregation.

VBS / Sunday School Teachers' Workshop

VBS/Sunday School Teachers Workshop was held on 9-11th September, 2010. There were 38 participants from different Conventions/Associations/Churches. The Resource persons include Rev. Bendang Toshi Longkumer, Evangeline Odyuo, Mr. Edechoi Rose, Dr. Asangla Ao, Mr. Rolland G. Momin and Miss Boinu Singson. Dr. A.K Lama led the morning Bible Study.

One of the participants commented "*It is really a very good programme to encourage the Sunday school teachers when nowadays they are*



mostly neglected and children are given less importance in God's ministry."



CMC Ludhiana Board Meeting

Dr. Jolly Rimai attended the Board meeting of the CMC Ludhiana on 15 - 18th September, 2010. They offer the following courses: Nursing Training, B.Sc. Nursing, MBBS, Post Graduate studies.



Southern Tangkhul Naga Baptist Association Mission Conference

The Southern Tangkhul Naga Baptist Association Mission Conference held a conference on 7-12th September, 2010. This conference was conducted by the STNBA at Riha Baptist Church for Pastors and society leaders of the churches in the Association. It was presented by over 400 delegates from 54 churches.



Seminar on Exegetical Preaching and Biblical Counseling:

Transforming Leaders in Asia (TLA) Ministries organized a week long seminar on "Exegetical Preaching and Biblical counseling", in partnership with Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI). The seminar was mainly for the Pastors and Church leaders who are engaged in the ministry of preaching the Word of God. TLA ministries started in the year 1998 with a burden to "equip", "encourage" and "empower" Christian Leaders. Since then TLA trained over 700 Leaders.

This seminars was participated by 40 delegates from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Bangladesh.

The seminar was focused on :



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Preaching the Word of God; Biblical Counseling & Leadership virtues.

The resource persons were Rev. Dr. A. K. Lama (Executive Director TLA Ministries / GS CBCNEI); Mr. Rolland G. Momin (Finance Secretary, CBCNEI) and Dr. Asangla Ao (Director of Women's Ministry, TLA).



Lewis Memorial Hostel Seminar On Problems Of Youth

On 17th of September, 2010 Lewis Memorial Hostel had a one day Seminar on the topic '**Problems of Youth**'. The main purpose was to give consideration to major problems being experienced by young people today. It was, indeed first of its kind, and all borders had a good time of learning.

The resource persons Rev. Dr. A. K. Lama and Dr. Asangla gave

profound teaching during this seminar. Senti Longkumer, Pastor, NCF assisted Mr. M. Talimoa, Hostel Superintendent in coordinating the programme. Special thanks to Nehemiah India Nagaland Region for the sponsorship.



Interfaith Religious Leaders' Seminar on HIV and AIDS

Sponsored by organizations such as UNAIDS and USAIDS, a two day seminar on Church's Response to HIV and AIDS, specially stigmatization and rights of the HIV+ people were conducted at "The Art of Living center" at Bangalore on the 26 - 28 September, 2010. It was attended by over 500 religious leaders from all over India. Dr. Jolly Rimai shared on what Baptist churches are doing in response to HIV and AIDS in North East India.



Inauguration of a new Christian Literature Center at Senapati, Manipur:

A new Christian Literature Centre (CLC) was inaugurated at



Tahamzam, Senapati by the General Secretary Rev. Dr. A. K. Lama on September 7, 2010.



The Golden Jubilee Celebration Of The Borok Baptists October 19 – 21, 2010. Agartala, Tripura. INDIA

The Boroks number a little over 1 million and are the indigenous people of the north-East Indian state of Tripura, which was once a princely State. The Borok originally are hinduised animists in religion. Until 1947 (year of Independence from British rule), the Borok people were the majority, but after the creation of India and Pakistan, the Hindus from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) crossed over into

Tripura and the locals became the minority. Now the Boroks are just 32 percent of the population!

Over the years, several mission groups attempted to work in Tripura but did not make much headway amongst the Boroks. In 1938, the New Zealand Baptist Mission started work in the person of Rev. M.J.Eade who providentially was able to receive formal permission from the King to start work. However, the few missionaries there, were all asked to leave Tripura in 1973. Then, there were less than 300 Christians among the Borok. In 1988 there were less than 2000 Borok Christians, today we have 82,530 of which 56,421 are Baptists worshipping in 626 local Baptist churches. They are part of the *Tripura Baptist Christian Union* which is a member of BWA & APBF.

It was encouraging to see the number of educated people, Engineers, Doctors and college and university teachers etc. who are now Christians.

This was evident during the Jubilee celebrations when many of these 'lay' people were involved. There are today some well trained

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pastors and evangelists amongst the Boroks, but there is still an acute shortage of pastors. A pastor is looking after more than 10 local



churches. The Borok are culturally rich and a talented lot composed of the following sub-tribes, whose languages are related – they are the Bru (Reang), Tigrasa (Debbarma), Jamatia, Koloy, Murasing, Noatia, Rupini, Tripura, and Uchoi.

The Jubilee which met under the theme – *The Lord is King, and He rules the nations*. Ps. 22:28, brought together a large gathering of 16,150 registered delegates which met under a huge tent. I had the privilege of preaching on both the two mornings – translated into the local Borok language. The gathering had a very festive look with a many choirs and cultural troupes from the various churches.

There was also a central choir with 500 members. The emphasis on their cultural expression of the gospel through songs and dance is to be lauded. There is also an evident charismatic movement going on in the churches too.

The New Zealand Baptists were represented by a pastor and his wife, Rev. John & Helen MacMullan. Helen was the child of a former missionary to Tripura – and was born in India.

We enjoyed good weather and only the night of the last day, after the conference had concluded did a heavy downpour come. It was symbolic of the pouring of God's blessing upon the gathering and on the Borok people. Do uphold the Borok church in Tripura, India.

Bonny Resu. APBF News.



CBCNEI Staff Retreat

The CBCNEI staff had a retreat on 28th - 30th October, 2010 at Siloam House, Barapani. The CBCNEI staff had a good and refreshing time after being away from office/paper works and different engagements. Siloam House, Barapani, is a



beautiful resort where one could reflect and ponder on the unique creation of God. Rev. Dr. A. K. Lama took the morning devotion and exposition of the Bible and led the evening fellowship. The evening fellowship was a blessed time where each one shared about the blessings and struggles in one's ministry and personal life. Mr. Tejdor led a meaningful time of devotion meditating on the word of God during the Bible Study. Dr. Asangla Ao took sessions on "Nurturing Relationships in the Family" and Mr. Rolland G. Momin took sessions on "Family Stewardship". The staff came back enriched and refreshed.



Please pray for the upcoming National Baptist Youth Festival, to be held on January 13 - 16, 2011 at Centenary Baptist Church, Hanamkonda, Andhra Pradesh. The Festival reflects on the theme "Grow Stronger". Kindly pray for the success and also for Baptist Youth Fellowship India as they organized the Festival.

Introducing the New CBCNEI Staff & Volunteers



Mr. Jinoy G. Sangma is originally from Hakkumari, Kamrup District, Assam. His interest is in singing and music. He served as the youth President in Hakkumari Baptist Church for 2 years. Presently, he is the driver for CBCNEI service.

Mr. Joseph Sarkar comes from Arunodhoi Path, Christian Basti in Guwahati. Previously he was in the Construction work (Building Division) under Assam Police Housing Corporation. At present, he is working as an assistant under Account Branch.



Mr. Keneizhatuo Kuotsu joined CBCNEI as a volunteer to assist the Property Secretary in supervising the repair and construction work. Keni hails from Kohima Village, Nagaland. He recently earned his Bachelor of Engineering from Assam Engineering College, Jalukbari.

Ms. Aparajita Rana is from Athgaon, Chabipul, Guwahati. She graduated with honors in History and currently doing her L.L.B. She was working as an intern under the Justice and Peace Secretary as well as in the Archive & Library of CBCNEI. She is also a volunteer of Young Womens Christian Association (Y.W.C.A).



Ms. Shingla Chitung comes from Lembakhul, Imphal East Manipur. She serves the Council as a receptionist in the Guest House and meanwhile doing her B.A final from Arya Vidya Peeth.

Ms. Sushmita Chakraborty is originally from William Nagar Bazar, East Garo Hills, Meghalaya. She graduated with B.Com, Accounts. Currently serves as a receptionist in Guest House in CBCNEI Conference Center.



New Assistant Directors for Christian Literature Centre

CBCNEI has appointed Mr. Moa Ao and Mr. Angam G. Chahong as the Assistant Directors for Christian Literature Centre Dimapur and Guwahati respectively.



Mr. Moa Ao was born and brought up in Arunachal Pradesh in a small town called Tezu where he did his schooling. He graduated from Union Christian College, Barapani with Geography (Honors) in 1998 and Master of Arts in Geography from North Eastern Hill University, Shillong way back in 2000. He is presently based in Chumukedima, Nagaland with his family serving as the Assistant Director for Christian Literature Center in Dimapur.



Mr. Angam G. Chahong is from Litan (S) Tangkhul Ngarum Baptist Church, Ukhrul, Manipur. In the year 1993, he surrendered his life for His Kingdom service. Ever since, he began his active ministry journey through teaching at a Christian school run by Baptist Church in Ukhrul District, Manipur. He was involved in youth mission and OM Books ministry for 12 long years. He completed his MA, B.Th, B.D, M.Th, D.Div and Missionary cross-cultural Training and Research through NECTAR, Shillong. He married Varewon Shimray (Awon), who was also in Christian ministry of Operation Mobilization, India Ministry and DOULOS (Ship) OM International Ministry in Asia, Africa and Europe. They are blessed with two kids Alicia and Eldean Chahong. Presently, Angam is actively serving through Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati as the Assistant Director.



Baptist News

Children's Ministry - its importance in the 21st Century

[By Mr. Rolland G. Momin, Finance Secretary, CBCNEI]



Jesus has made no efforts to draw children to be his disciples or ask them to repent and believe. He has never been recorded in the Bible to have commanded his disciples to go and preach the gospel to the children. Then where is the need for the churches to have children's ministry in the 21st Century?

A leader's dilemma

As one in the leadership position in the Church or Association one certainly has a burden to transform the world with all its present day wretchedness and to set goals to change the situation in a number of years time starting now. But where would one start? Try as one might in tackling the insurgency problems, one also comes across rampant corruption to be looked into immediately. So even before arriving at a single negotiation with any one of the many insurgent groups around, the leader finds himself drawn into the environmental protection group who are trying to tackle the problem as crucial as climate change. While rampant destruction of forests are still going on unabated and the prospect of global warming looming large, he gets himself enlisted as a member of the peace committee of the recent communal riots where a number of innocent lives had just been lost and hundred odd families became refugees overnight.

It will be difficult to estimate the number of leaders who have spent their lifetimes since time immemorial in trying to bring transformation to the world by tackling the endless manifestations of countless afflictions plaguing the society but had had to contend with comparatively small cupfuls of their successes. Though there are well-meaning people who are concerned with the present day phenomena and try their best to create awareness of the many illnesses of the society, many of them

are successful in just creating new phenomena but miserably fail to give any healing touches. How then, is one to transform the humankind with all its afflictions? Can we find a better way of bringing transformation to the world? Is it possible for the Church to transform the society which is consumed with hatred and driven by rage?

Children at Crossroads

Let us look at the looming possibilities across the globe demographically, amongst the Christians. One often comes across a popular saying: "Christianity is only one generation away from extinction". While no one seemed to know the origin of the saying, everybody will agree that there is some truth in it. The vital point here is all about the legacy of faith being left by the parents to their children which, sadly, is not happening as it should be because of the reality being faced by Christian parents today and the reality is that presently there is a tremendous pressure on the parents to tilt towards the care of physical and intellectual welfare of their children to the utter neglect of the spiritual aspect. What is the result? Give all that a child needs – physical, intellectual, social but leave the spiritual area untouched and we are bound to get a new generation of unbelievers! That's already what is reportedly happening in some of the European countries.

Silent whirlpools

Let us also look at the possible risks we are taking without the children's ministry at the present age. It is estimated that almost 50% of the children are experiencing one occult activity or the other. Our children are exposed to what is known as the New Age lifestyle – tattooing; piercing of the lips, eyebrows, tongue and navel. Satanism, drugs and alcoholism, sexual revolution, same sex relationships, multiple sexual partners, etc. are also on the rise. Almost every child is exposed to video and computer games and movies which are violent in nature and also invariably sexual in content. Add to that the easy availability of pornographic materials to corrupt their minds and soul. These are just some of the present day cultural whirlpools that are silently swallowing up our young ones.

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How would Jesus view Children's Ministry in the 21st Century? One thing is certain: nothing would be more hurting to Christ than not allowing children to be brought to and be touched by Him. We know from the Word of God that nothing is more distressing to Christ than hindering the children from coming to Him and nothing is so disgusting to him as "one who offends the little ones."¹ Without the Children's Ministry, a leader in any Church could be missing a chance of a lifetime in making a big difference for Christ.

4-14 Window – Children's Transformational Approach

In our eagerness to transform the world, we often overlook the simple solution as found in the Bible. What would the Bible say about transforming the world? One of the strategies, solely based on the Word of God is propounded by Luis Bush in his booklet entitled: "Raising up a whole new generation – through the life's season comprising the ten years between the ages of 4 – 14."² It was Dr Dan Brewster who introduced the term 4 - 14 window to refer to the children between these ages, based on the research by Bryant Meyers which shows that in the USA, nearly 85 percent of people who make decisions for Christ, do so between the ages of 4 and 14!³ Earlier, Dr Bush unveiled the now famous strategic mission opening called "10/40 window" where there remained a concentration of unreached people groups. That, he termed "a geographical frame." The new window, introduced by Dr Dan Brewster and christened "4/14 Window," is a demographic frame. This, Dr Bush says, is now the Core of the Core, as far as the Mission strategy is concerned.

"4/14 Window should be the new Mission Focus," says Luis Bush, the Mission Strategist. "Christian leaders need to reprioritise efforts to bring the Gospel to the 1.2 billion young people in the "4/14 Window," he continues. Why? Because children between the ages of 4 and 14 are the people in the world most open to the Gospel. There is a marvelous window of opportunity in the lifetime of most people to reach them with the Gospel and the Word of God. And that opportunity is open while they are young, mouldable and teachable.

A Call for action

It is of paramount importance for us to change our attitudes towards our children and that will lead us to commit ourselves afresh to work for the holistic development of our children. Training children during Jesus' time was a 24x7 job for the parents.⁵ So, as the Disciples of Christ, are we facilitators or stumbling blocks?⁴ Are we able to discern the need to care for children? As we become more concerned about the children's ministry, may we be able to understand the heart of God for children.

Any member in the church can bring impact in the children but the one person in any Church who is in a position to be a catalyst for Children's Ministry is the Pastor of that church. Even so, the Pastor should be a leader who focuses on the future. He should also be a leader who is a change agent. We know that any ministry in order to be vibrant should create positive changes. Here are a few reasons which should motivate anyone to be a catalyst as far as children's ministry is concerned:

- Children's Ministry is on preparing our children for life and so it links one's ministry to the future;
- Children's Ministry itself is proactive and creative;
- Children's Ministry can create positive changes;
- It also transcends the ritualistic, mundane and the status quo in one's ministry;
- Children's ministry can give a sense of purpose and meaning to one's life and the lives of those who are involved in it.

A leader is also focused in whatever he does. He leaves aside what is not important and instead focuses on what are urgent and important. "Perhaps the most valuable result of education is the ability to make yourself do the things you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like or not..." says John C. Maxwell.⁶ As we start focusing more on Children's Ministry, may God raise-up a transformed new generation from amongst our children for His glory through the Children's ministries of seven thousand churches under the CBCNEI.

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Notes:

1. Mark 10:14 "When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."
2. Raising Up a **New Generation** from the **4/14 Window** to **Transform the World**
– Pamphlet written by **LUIS BUSH**
3. The "4/14 WINDOW" Child Ministries and Mission Strategies - by Dr. Dan Brewster
4. Mark 9:42 "And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck."
5. Deut 6:6-9 "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."
6. John C. Maxwell - *Developing the Leader in You* - Magna Books pp 164



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CBCNEI Library & Archives

By Pallavi Neog, MLSc, a Volunteer Archivist working in the CBCNEI Archive & Library



The word “*archives*” can refer to any organized body of records fixed on media. The management of archives is essential for effective day-to-day

Organizational decision making, and even for the survival of organizations. Archives were well developed by the ancient Chinese, the ancient Greeks, and ancient Romans. In general, archives consist of records which have been selected for permanent or long-term preservation, due to their enduring research value. This means that archives (the places) are quite distinct from libraries with regard to their functions and organization, although archival collections can often be found within library buildings. Archives are sometimes described as information generated as the “by-product” of normal human activities, while libraries hold specifically authored information “products”.

Council Of Baptist Churches Of North-east India Archive & Library

1. History of the Archive & Library:

The members of CBCNEI have taken the responsibility to document the history of the Council and establishing and sustaining an archival program. The Archive and Library has undertaken a project to collect and preserve historically significant records of the council so that its history will be known to the future generations. Since 1982, the Organization has started the Archive & Library in an organized form with the help of skilled persons. The Archive & Library has collected organized and preserved manuscripts and archival records for the purpose of scholarly research, mission studies and above all for the future generations. The most immediate concern of the Archive and Library is Digitization of the official records of the council and materials relating to Baptist missionaries. Under the project, we are to create a Digital Library

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which can collect, organize, arrange and preserve the documents in electronic format.

2. Nature of Collection:

* Number of holdings of the library: Approximately 1000

* Rare collection of manuscripts of pioneer, vernacular Newspapers like Arunodoi (Assamese), Birta (Mikir), etc. Prose, Missionary Reports, Journals, Autobiographies, Assorted literature of Assamese and other language including Anglo-Assamese, Garo, Khasi, Naga(Ao), Tangkhul, Nepali, Mizo etc Primers, Bible and their commentaries, Hymns, etc.

* Donated books and journals from various institutions and organizations worldwide.



The first Assamese Newspaper "ARUNODOI" dating 1846, published from Sibsagar.



Picture of early Baptist missionary Nathan Brown taken by a Japanese photographer in 1883

As the Archive and Library has very rare and significant collections, it need more care and maintenance so as to keep the history of the work and contribution of the early baptist alive.

What Kind of Parent are You? and How will that Affect your Children? Part-1



Part 2 will come next issue.

Dr Beulah Wood, lecturer in Pastoral Studies and Counselling, SAIACS, Bangalore, first reached India 42 years ago. As a mother and grandmother she longs for people to reach a Gospel understanding of family life.

We can describe four kinds of parent and the kind of children they may produce through their methods.

I The Policeman (or Policewoman) Parent

This parent demands obedience. He or she is a strong disciplinarian, makes many rules, and strongly controls the children. For some, punishment is high on the agenda. These parents beat their children often or severely. Some only love their children if they obey. Some shout, insult their son or daughter in front of others, and blame them if things go wrong.

This parent preaches **at** the child, demands obedience, and uses threats. Probably we all know parents like this. It may even describe our own father or mother at times.

Resulting Children or Teen-agers

The child of the Policeman Parent obeys. They have to. They try to please people. But they may feel shame and repressed anger. Sometimes this son or daughter has low self esteem and a broken will. Many do not know how to make good decisions, because their parents made all the decisions. Some lack a sense of self, which leaves them easily led by their friends.

Because their parents seem to be cold, they long for warmth. Later they may rebel and reject their parents' values. When they grow, they may abuse their own children.

II The Worm Parent

This father or mother is weak and gives in. They think they have no

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power. They may say concerning a six-year-old, "Raju is forcing me to take him to the park." A six-year-old cannot force his parent. His parent is weak.

If the son or daughter makes a mistake, this mother or father fixes everything for them. They take the child to school when they often miss the bus. Instead they should train the child to be on time. They indulge their child, and let the child control them.

These parents, the opposite of the policeman parent, do not have rules, or do not keep rules. This leads to chaos. They want to be a child's friend. They plead with the child, bribe the child and ignore genuine problems. Some of us know mothers or fathers like this too.

Resulting Children or Teen-agers

Having a Worm for a parent makes children confused. They do not know what the rules are, or whether anyone will keep them. Underneath, they long for consistency because they are afraid. They are easily led by their friends. They are spoilt because they get their own way. Some act unpleasantly to others, some are reckless, and some join a gang or cult.

The law written on human hearts

Neither the Policeman Parent nor the Worm Parent have understood that the first goal must be to train the child to become a good and wise adult, able to cope well and lovingly in work demands and family life.

The operative word is "train", rather than punish. We parents know we sometimes punish a child because we are angry. That is not fair. We should focus rather on what the child must learn. When Christians want their child to follow the Lord Jesus, they need to train more than punish, train for good decisions, starting right from pre-school age.

God's method with us humans is to give the laws for clarity, and then offer to train us so that the laws are then in our hearts. He did this for humans with the Ten Commandments. The people of Israel did not keep them so he also offered to write them on his people's hearts, so that they would own them as their own rules for behaviour. With these inside us, we humans find power to avoid sinful failure. "The law of the Lord is

in their hearts; their feet do not slip” (Psalm 37:31).

Psalm 1 gives a similar explanation. They “delight in the law of the Lord and meditate on it day and night... and whatever they do prospers.” As parents, we want to train our children so that they own God’s laws, and therefore the ability to make wise decisions, as their own.

.....to be continued

C o r r i g e n d a

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Vol. - 61, Issue-02

March – June 2010

Corrigenda

1. Report from the General Secretary, CBCNEI Under sub-heading:
D. Theological Institutions
Page – 39

The fifth sentence (11th line) should read

I am very grateful. – instead of - I am very helpful.

2. Report from the Assam Baptist Convention
Excerpt from the report presented by R. K. Raychawdhuri, General Secretary, ABC

Page – 44

Under Paragraph 1: 2009-2010 Census Report by the Associations:

Associations	:	5
Churches	:	227
Baptized Member	:	21976
Baptism during 2009-2010	:	642
Baptism (other faith)	:	212

Should be replaced by, and read:

Associations	No. Of Churches	Baptized Members	Baptism during the Year	Baptism other Faiths
KABS	33	4746	77	43
NDBA	23	1983	79	22
MABA	97	8980	150	30
SBA	95	8104	230	71
SDBA	85	4892	262	111
Total	333	28,705	721	277
HOUSE CHURCH				
2009 – 2010	135	646	240	924

A brief report of Rev. Vumthang Sitlhou, General Secretary of Manipur Baptist Convention (MBC)



(This will be the last tenure for Rev. Vumthang Sitlhou as the General Secretary of MBC. Rev. Dr. W. Konghar will succeed him as the new General Secretary of MBC. Dr. Konghar, D. Miss. from R.T.S. Jackson Mississippi, U.S.A has pastoral ministry experiences; served as the Executive Secretary of TBC for 2 terms; and worked as director for Trinity Missionary Training Center, Imphal).

Ministerial involvement: Rev. Vumthang Sitlhou hails from a small village, Taloulong in Tamenglong district, Manipur. He is the youngest son of Pastor Pakho Sitlhou and Mrs. Jalhai(Namgakliu) Sitlhou. His father was one of the pioneer Christians in Manipur and worked among the Zeliangrong Nagas in the Western part of Manipur. Pastor Pakho Sitlhou married Mrs. Jalhai(namgkliu) Sitlhou from Sempang Village. Rev. Vumthang Sitlhou accepted and committed his life to the Lord in the year 1975. He married Mrs. Kimcha on 7th April 1975. They are blessed with six children, Boisi, Pineng, Helun, Janny, Tina and Monkim. When Rev. Vumthang Sitlhou received his call from the Lord he left his government teaching job and entered in the Lord's full-time ministry in 1985. He was ordained for full time ministry at Taloulong Baptist Church in 1990. He served in Thadou Baptist Association for 14 years from 1985 to 2000 and served as General Secretary of Manipur Baptist Convention for 10 years (two terms) from 2001 to 2010.

Education: Rev. Vumthang Sitlhou earned his B. Th. from Eastern Theological College, Jorhat in 1983. After one year in the ministry he went to ETC, Jorhat as in service training and completed his B.D. in 1988. While serving as the Executive Secretary of Thadou Baptist Association he took another study leave and completed his Th. M from ACTS, Korea in 1998. He also took one month course of Summer Peace building Institute from Eastern Mennonite University in 2008. Besides his theological studies, Rev. Sitlhou also attended various seminars and workshops to improve his leadership skills.

As he writes, "The main focus of my ministry in Manipur Baptist Convention is to promote peace and harmony between different communities and individuals through the reconciliation ministry given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ". He works towards social peace and peaceful co-existence in Manipur. He is known as a peace making leader.

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Financial Resources are required by the Ministries of CBCNEI. But CBCNEI, on its own, does not have all the required resources. As in the past this year also the Ministries of CBCNEI received blessings from the sacrificial giving of some individual members, member Churches, Associations and Organizations. We deeply appreciate the valuable contributions, by way of financial, prayer and moral support of the well-wishers of CBCNEI and would like to acknowledge their contributions through the pages of Baptist News:

Sln.	Names of Donors	Purpose	Amount
1.	Kohima Lotha Baptist Church	Relief	₹ 20,000/-
2.	Naga Christian Fellowship, Shilong	Mission	₹ 27,600/-
3.	Mr Mhonchand Kikon, Wokha	Mission	₹ 21,000/-
4.	Offerings on CBCNEI Sunday	General Fund	₹ 15,001/-
5.	SBAK, Aizuto	Projects	₹ 200,000/-
6.	CLC, Ukhrul	Mission	₹ 50,000/-
7.	CLC, Imphal	Mission	₹ 50,000/-
8.	Rongkhon Songgital Baptist Church	Mission	₹ 15,000/-
9.	Rongkhon Songgital Baptist Church	Mission	₹ 15,000/-
10.	SBAK, Aizuto	Mission	₹ 90,000/-
11.	SBAK, Aizuto	Projects	₹ 200,000/-
12.	Mr. Robin Basumatary	General Fund	₹ 3,000/-
13.	Mr. Nengzamang Tonsing	General Fund	₹ 1,000/-
	Total		₹ 7,07,601/-

Finance Secretary
CBCNEI, Panbazar, Guwahati

*And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with
such sacrifices God is pleased.*

Hebrews 13:16 (NIV)

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Challenges Facing Women Today and The Passion to Excel Beyond The Ordinary



Khetoli Sumi, Women Secretary, Nagaland Police Baptist Church Association

I am glad that you are reading this. We know Life is indeed exciting, vibrant and lively, and on top of it all, life can be very interesting if we know how to use our creativity in its full potentiality and capability.

The most exciting news at the moment is in knowing the fact that women are in the forefront of all activities. As we look around at our advanced world, we can see that men and women are advancing equally. There is no area where women are not seen. It is really amazing to see the progression of women. NOW is indeed a blessed time for women. Women are daring to go forward and venture out in faith by exhibiting courage, confidence and accepting challenges to transform our society in spite of the present generation hurdles. No doubt, Women can indeed impact without guns and can be more reliable and effective, thus more responsibility should be given. Women are indeed the pivots of family life so in all societies and communities the role of women needs to be recognized.

The challenges that women face today are immense. In this digital age, it is not enough for men work alone. It is essential to give equal knowledge to women so that side by side, we can work together for betterment. Women need to be ambitious and nurture dreams and if we pursue these dreams by faith and work hard towards achieving them, God will honour our faith and fulfill these dreams.

Some of the challenges we need to take into consideration are:

* **Women Empowerment:** This is the most talked topic and emphasis is given in order to balance the gender imbalance; as women all over feel they share a common bond of being subjugated to discrimination in one way or the other.

* **Social Perspective:** It implies that it has to do with the status of women, the urge to considered equality with men and not to be underestimated.

* **Economical Perspective:** Women need to be economically stable through enterprise and entrepreneurship in order to be self-reliant.

* **Psychological Perspective:** Change the mindset of women as deepest impact is made in the mind of the women that women are being treated as 2nd class citizen thus resulting in low self-esteem. So redefinition of women's true worth is essential.

* **Christian Perspective:** Finding fulfilment is finding oneself in Christ Jesus. There is a need to develop and built a positive identity, recognize the dignity of womanhood and accept, encourage and recognize the spiritual gifts of women.

In order to excel beyond the ordinary, there are certain areas that we need to improve, such as:

· **Physical Aspect:** A healthy body results in a sound mind. Everything depends on our health so we need to keep fit and take time-out to take care for oneself by eating a well balanced diet, exercising, and keeping our body in the best possible shape. 1st Corinth 6:19 says "Your body is the temple of God" so we need to keep it healthy.

· **Spiritual Aspect:** It is really true that "failure to establish good spiritual habit will lead to poor spiritual health." Spiritual health is very important. We need to read the word of God daily, think over what the word of God has to say to us, read and refer to self and not read through randomly for the sake of reading.

· **Intelligence Aspect:** Science and technology have greatly advanced and we live in a Digital Age so everything is just a mouse click away and everybody is obsessed with lifestyle. There is a competition to be better than others, it is indeed an advanced world, and people have high calibre too so one need to be mentally advanced. At least we must try to know or have some basic information of all the happenings around in every field and be informed. Jesus also grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and Men.

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(Luke 2:52).

· **Emotional Aspects:** Everybody has different temperament. Understand your temperament and the temperament of other's too. Everybody needs to possess the quality of patience and responding correctly. Be a balanced and controlled person. We need to be emotionally sound and understand each other better. Let us remember that saying, "a gloomy face is a poor signboard for Jesus Christ.

· **Social Aspect:** "Man is a social animal" so we cannot live alone, we depend on each other so one on one relationship is very important. Everybody needs someone. Let us stretch out our compassionate hand and touch someone else's life that needs our help. Let us appreciate one another, see the good of other, be generous in our praise and be on the alert of evil doers as we find in 2 corn 16:13. "Be on your guard, stand firm".

It is rightly said "Change the consciousness of one woman and you have changed the consciousness of one men" "Therefore the role that women can play is through giftedness-identity, restore, affirm, and knowing one's gift. One need to be open to God's leading by being assertive and not aggressive, same but not equal, submissive but not subordinate.

Women have played an active role in eradicating social evils in our society. Their initiative and skill in bringing about a general awareness of these social evils in our society is commendable. We can see increasing number of women leaving the thresholds of their houses and working to earn their livelihood, which has resulted in more women becoming independent and having a sense of security and confidence. It has brought self respect and belief in one's own self and satisfaction and has created awareness that they can achieve. The sad part is that women who stay at home and do the household chores work go unnoticed. It is tragic that women's labour at home has been totally and absolutely neglected. Women's labour in these invisible household activities and several other related activities has been taken for granted. Thus reflecting the emerging awareness that women are responsible

credit worthy, citizen can go a long way. Let us take stock of the past and rejoice in what God has enabled us to achieve. Let us look forward to the future with renewed vision and commitment. The world is changing; there must be the passion to excel beyond the ordinary because the creation of women is not by accident but a wonderful incident as mentioned in Ps 139 : 13 - 14. Women, we are extraordinary and not ordinary. We have high potentials to be creatively and positively beautiful inwardly and outwardly.

Therefore let us make our life better. We all have hidden resources, we only have to search and discover it, tap it and put it to use in a world much in need of it. Let us be a source of inspiration because life is full of hope. Let us be that hope, be a leader of hope not a leader of fear. Let us learn to cultivate a cheerful, positive optimistic outlook of life to beat the people of gloom. Let us face the challenge and excel beyond the ordinary.



OBITUARY OF MR. CHONGJANG PHOM



Mr. Chongjang Phom, 21, died on 20 August 2010 at Dimapur, Nagaland. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Lanushiba Phom of Dimapur, originally from Yongyimchen village. He joined Lewis Memorial Hostel, (LMH) Mission Compound, Panbazar, Guwahati in 2008 as hosteller and enrolled to do Bachelor of Computer Application (B.C.A.) from Third Eye College, Guwahati (Sikkim Manipal University). He was a member of Signal Basti Phom Baptist Church, Dimapur.

The Superintendent and his fellow hostellers of LMH remember Mr. Chongjang Phom with this quote: *“He who has gone, so we but cherish his memory, abides with us, more potent, nay, more present than the living man.”* ~Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

Life's Harsh Realities and its Challenges

[Ms. Boinu singson, Asst. Editor / Program Co-ordinator, CBCNEI].



As a little girl I grew up in a God fearing family where my parents taught me the Word of God and how to worship in Church. I attended Church and Sunday school regularly. However, these programs did not contribute much to my spiritual growth. But God called me for His full time ministry when I was in the VI standard (*I had a deep conviction to serve the Lord*). Hence, from a very tender age, I committed my life to Him and decided to study in a Bible College.

Switching on to the past, I didn't enjoy much of my childhood days as I had a lot of unpleasant experiences. In spite of that, I always aspired to become a professional pianist. I dreamt of performing in big concerts, church and desired to be a music teacher as well. Thus, right after my matriculation, my parents put me in Patkai Christian College, where I enrolled myself as a vocational music student for piano lesson. In the meantime, my aunty who was in the Philippines doing her M.Th course promised to buy me a keyboard. So I waited patiently for one long year. However, to my utter dismay, she came back empty-handed for some reasons. Then, I felt my whole world collapsed. Later in fact, my parents tried to buy a keyboard for me. But I refused deliberately. I retorted to them saying all sorts of nasty words and being indifferent to them. In other words, I was bitter with everything. I began to bunk classes. I rarely read my Bible or prayed. God seemed a total stranger to me. I never concentrated on my studies either.

To cut the story short, I reaped what I sowed as I flunked the music exam in the music selection test. Having never experienced failure before in my life, I even thought of ending my life out of anger, shame and regret. Nevertheless, I am grateful to my parents who were very supportive to me during those crucial times. Adding

to that, it saddens me when I see people playing the keyboard in the church and on big occasions.

But over the years, all these struggles which I call the “harsh realities of life” turned out to be a great turning point in my life. Through these experiences, I began to have a closer walk with God. It helped me to have a good head start in life. I could identify the pain and struggles of others. I am glad, I realized the fact that God had a far better plan and purpose for me (as it says in Isaiah 55 : 8 - 9, “*For my thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways my ways,*”...). If I were a professional pianist, I might have been proud and I might forget the Almighty God. Besides, I won’t be what I am today.

God opened the way for me to do B.Th and M.Div courses in Kolkota. Right after that, our Association appointed me as the Project Director of ICT called **Institute of Community Transformation**, partnering with **Seva Bharat Mission India**. It was a two years project. I had 10 students under me and the main goal of the project was Church planting.

I thank God for paving the way for me to be equipped with His Word, to do my M.Th course in Counseling from SAIACS, Bangalore. I am glad with the fact that SAIACS has molded me and made a great impact in my life. I am grateful to all my professors for their contribution to my learning growth.

As of now, I thank God for opening the way for me to work in His Vineyard to be one of the CBCNEI staff. I praise God for sustaining me thus far. I covet your sincere prayers so that I could be instrumental in the task that is assigned to me. I am looking forward to your co-operation as we work together for the extension of His Kingdom.



For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Phillippians 1:21 (NIV)

AT YOUR SERVICE CBCNEI Guest House & Ground Staff



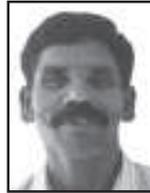
Mr. Joseph Lamkang
Manager House Keeping
& Maintenance CBCNEI
Conference Centre
Complex



Mr. Paukholun Gangte
Manager In-charge,
CBCNEI Conference
Centre Complex



Mr. April Sangma
Care-taker, CBCNEI
Conference Centre
Complex



Mr. Debadonam
Balanki, Janitor,
CBCNEI Conference
Centre Complex



Mr. Allen Iswary
Asst.. Care Taker,
Guest House



Mr. Piel Yusuf
Cleaner



Mrs. Kokila Singh
Cleaner



Mr. Musa Chutia
Driver



Mr. Chandra Masi
Gurung
Security Guard



Mr. Gunendro Rabha
Security Guard



Mr. Heditson Sangma
Ground Worker



Mr. Rajesh Giri
Ground Worker



Mr. Kiran Rabha
Ground Worker



Mr. Khairash K. Marak
Ground Worker



Conference Centre Complex Room Tariff			
A.C. ROOM <i>(Bath Attached)</i>		NON A.C. ROOM <i>(Bath Attached)</i>	
Single Delux	Rs. 900/-	Triple	Rs. 750/-
Single	Rs. 800/-	Double	Rs. 500/-
Double	Rs. 900/-	Shared	Rs. 250/-
		Dorm Bed	Rs. 200/-
NON A.C. ROOM <i>(Common Bath)</i>		CONFERENCE HALLS	
Double	Rs. 400/-	L. M. Auditorium	Rs. 3000/-
Shared	Rs. 200/-	A.C. New Block	Rs. 1500/-
Dorm Classic	Rs. 150/-	A.C. Training Centre	Rs. 800/-
Dorm Special	Rs. 120/-	A.C. Seminar Room	Rs. 500/-
Dorm Economy	Rs. 100/-		
Dorm Frugal	Rs. 90/-		
Manager, Mr. Paukholun Gangte (09435885378) Booking : 0361 - 2609475 / 2515829 e m a i l - c o n f c e n t e r @ c b c n e i . c o m			

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