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

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from the desk of editor



Dear friends,

The government of India has decided to do away with the 160 years old telegram services from July 15. There was a time when we considered telegram as the fastest means of communication, but now it is outdated.

We have seen some of the greatest technological changes in the last fifty years; however, when it comes to human nature on relationship, we have not changed much. We still live in a culture that is divided by different priorities and prejudices. Our definition for an ideal family, ideal relationship, and an ideal community is still old fashioned. We have too many social boundaries and our mindset is often cocooned. Christian teachings and ethos has not transformed some of traditional beliefs.

At the same time, changes are making inroads into every sphere of our lives. We fail to notice that the boundaries are gradually fading away. There is an emergence of a third culture: a culture of more than one language; more than one ethnic identity; more than one type of food habit; more than one religious tradition; and more than one nationality. There was a time when these were despised and seen as anomalies, but now such anomalies would be seen with surprise. Are we surprised when we see a youth from the northeast speaking Hindi fluently, singing Hindi songs as good as Bollywood singers; eat Roti and Dal like north Indians, married to south Indians, and settled as a citizen in far-far away land. We are living in world of Pizza, Subway, McDonald, and KFC. Youths of northeast tweet each other, date on FB, and kiss each other on Skype. Our churches have members from such a changing society. Are we prepared to face and address issues of such a fast changing society?

I believe that church has an important role to play in these changing scenarios more than ever before. Because, even in this fast changing world, two things have not changed—first, the need of LOVE and RESPECT for self; second, the crafty skill of the Satan who wants to exploit and hurt human beings for his own vested gains. We need to train our churches for good relationships and alert them about the scheme of Satan who wants to outwit us (2 Cor 2:11).

One of the three-fold mottos of the Council is **Unity**. However, unity without Love and a healthy relationship is not achievable. Is unity possible in a federated body of many differences? How can we connect with people who are from different tribes, cultures, or languages? Can the life and teachings of Jesus Christ beget unity in the northeast region? Though we have seen many good impact of the gospel in our region and yet some of our past and present experiences in this matter may cause doubts in our minds. Time and again fear, suspicion, distrusts, and possibilities of human biases hinder our relationships. We do not know how to deal with our differences. We often react and turn our differences into an ugly division.

The Council has continually upheld the theme of love for last three years. This year the theme was *Put on Love for Perfect Unity* (Col 3:14). In this issue of the Baptist News, we are focusing on cross-cultural relationships. We invited few authors to express their experiences, perspectives, and views. Dr Kavito Zhimo has expounded on the theme. He exhorts us to take intuitive for love. Dr Jolly Rimai emphasizes on the primacy of Christian identity over our tribal identity. Rev Jekheli, our Baptist missionary among Anglican brethren, takes the Word of God as *hammer* and breaks the barrier that separates. She speaks louder through her life. Dr Akheto Sema, who experienced cross-cultural relationship on the campuses of more than one theological institution, has much to say. My article *United in spite of Differences* is developed from a sermon that I preached some time ago. This is what a busy theologian, who is not located in an academic set up, can afford to do. Hope in spite of its sloppiness you will enjoy it. Rev Katie's article on the *Third*

Culture Kids is worth reading. The term TCK has been in use for some time, yet many are unaware of the challenges of TCKs. This is a must read for missionaries and all who are married cross-culturally. Dr Asangla, my wife, reveals some of our challenges from our 25 years' experience of intercultural relationship.

There is wealth of rich experiences and perspectives that has been compiled in this issue. I desire to see that this issue shall provoke our thinking and enable us to see our relationship from different angle so that relationships in the family, church, association, convention, and in the council may improve.

Human beings are created as relational beings. They need to be connected to the Creator as well as to each other. RELATIONSHIP of LOVE and RESPECT is the key in this connectedness. The Church must continue to inspire and motivate in achieving better ways and means to relate with each other.

This issue of the Baptist News also aims to update you on the progress and development of the Baptist churches and institutions under the Council. You may find reports and the news informative. Please uphold them in your prayers.

We welcome your insights, prayer requests, and even articles. Let's get connected through the Baptist News. Finally, let me request you to pray for the leaders of the Council, the Secretaries, the staffs and their families. These are the people whose tireless effort has enabled the Council to progress thus far.

Shalom!

Rev. Dr. A. K. Lama
General Secretary



**Presidential address at the 63rd CBCNEI
Annual General Meeting
Hosted by NBCC & WSBK, at Trinity
Theological College,
Dimapur, Nagaland. 26th -28th April 2013**



Theme: Put on Love for Perfect Unity

Rev Dr Kavito Zhimo, President, CBCNEI, Principal, Trinity Theological College, Thaheku

Living in a region which is marked as sensitive and conflicting zone, we begin to believe in what others think of us as divided people socially, culturally, politically and even religiously. Therefore our theme for this 63rd AGM *“Put on Love for Perfect Unity”* appears to be emotional statement implying that we still have not done enough to bridge our differences. It is natural and perhaps an undeniable fact for any human civilization to have an attachment with their clan, tribe and state which also determine their solidarity especially in times of conflict. The point for our deliberation is to have the spirit of being more tolerant, kind, patient, sympathetic, forgiving and see the glory of God being manifested in our diversity.

Exposition of Text:

The first thought that comes to our mind when we speak of love is feeling, romance and sacrifice. It all depends on who uses it and the context in which it is used. The kind of love Paul talks about in **Col 3:14** *“And over all this virtues put on love which binds them all together in perfect unity”* (NIV) which has been paraphrase as **“Put on love for perfect unity”** is clearly understood when we connect it to Col 2:19 where the word “bond/ binds” as expounded by Paul is the “ligaments” or “sinews” that hold the body together. We cannot gain unity by coming together or even by any formal creed. There must be harmony to gain conviviality.

In Paul’s term the demonstration of

perfect love is compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patient and forgiving heart, but over all these virtues, Paul puts love as ligament, Col 3:12-14. In other words, it is Love that binds together the virtues to produce unity. It is the supreme virtue upon which all the other virtues depend. There are certain virtues for every Christian to put on in order to gain perfect unity.

Qualification of Christian Virtue

Christian virtue greatly depends on how we live with others. Moral virtue not only involves right action but also the right motive and attitude. For the Jews strict observance of Sabbath is the right action but for Jesus, attitude of the people and their motives in observing Sabbath matters. In today's context, we take pride in being with the major groups, clan, tribe, denomination or a political party. Majority then becomes the determinant factor in any decision making. But it is dangerous to assume that God is on the side of the majority.

The quest for competent leaders in the churches, institutions, organizations and political field is voiced out, whereas, deficiency of

love by a competent leaders are often ignored. The danger of ungodly competency is clearly spelled out by Paul in 2 Cor 3: 5-6 where it said ungodly competency brings destruction but godly competency gives life. For instance; presidential election campaign in the United States greatly depends on the competency of the candidate. But Tylor and McClosky in *Christian Today* (2008) refutes that competency is the sole determinant for presidential selection; argue that "**competency without moral virtue is poisonous**". In other words, lack of love is a sign of incompetence and that itself is sufficient to disqualify a leader.

Love must seek and initiate:

To initiate means to be the first to act or do something different and new. Our God is a God who always initiate in and through us to fulfill His divine purpose for our generation. Likewise the Church of God must be willing to move out from their ark which they guard so well as sacrosanct missionary's tradition. Think about this: The rich man in Luke 16:19-31 was punished not for what he did to

Lazarus but the rich man in his callousness did not even notice poor Lazarus sitting at his gate. It is not what we do to the poor but whether or not we have ignored them. **Christian love (agape) cannot bear its fruit in social exclusion.** We are to bear witness in participation and not in isolation. Church cannot go on preaching Sunday after Sunday without recognizing the one lost soul in agony. Today, we see deficiency of love in the family, work place, church and society at large. If perfect unity is to be seen in its real form, then Love is the only antidote that can kill the germs of jealousy, hatred and division in our society.

Finally, we as Northeastern people are one fused by centuries of history, bounded together by a collective memory of shared

sorrows and joys and sharing the unity of purpose and vision. Our songs and ballads, our folk tales and children's stories, the dialects and our jokes, and even the images of poems, art, drama and songs, that has hint of melancholy, sadness and contradictions which colors even our happiest moments, are as important as the blood ties which link our family, clan and states. There is no reason why we should not accept others freedom unconditionally by becoming more tolerant and less judgmental, more loving and less prejudiced, more accommodative and less alienating and by doing so we put away our egocentric belief that we are perfect and superior than people we live with. Therefore, let us "Pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim 2:22).



“*For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. **Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.***”

Deut 10:17-19



Your identity: Which group do you belong to?

Rev Dr Jolly Rimai, Mission Secretary, CBCNEI

Introduction:

When it is so difficult to say that human beings are different from one to another in terms of physical structure, it is also equally difficult to say that they are same in their appearance and ways of life. By traveling from Eastern Asia to Middle East, to Europe, to Africa, America, and from America to Eastern Asia, one can see how different people are, in terms of color of the skin, stature, physical appearance, and their ways of life. One can only wonder how these differences could have happened when all are of the same human species. This simply proves that diversity in human race is beyond question.

However, there are some scholars who deny the existence of the so called, "Ethnicity." One of them is Gred Baumann who wrote, "We are

indeed surrounded by Apartheid logic of ethnicity, as if some god had created different colors, each with their own culture, on different days of the Creation Week" (Gred Baumann 1999, 60). He went on to say that our color of the skin changes according to our physical and mental state, as, "When you're ashamed, you go red. When you're cold, you go blue. When you're sick, you go yellow. When you're jealous, you go green."

He understands ethnicity as, "The product of people's action and identifications, not the product of nature working by itself." However, he did not deny the reality of the existence of diversity in humanity.

Ethnicity and Christian Theology

Scholars built their concept of diversity in humanity upon the story of the Tower of Babel. It was intended by God that there should

be various ethnic groups and diverse linguistic set-up when He confused the language of the people in the tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9). Many scholars may consider this story as the outcome or the unfortunate result of human-being's sinfulness whereby they desired to be like God and depend upon their strength for their security. There is truth in it in saying that the confusion was caused because people wanted to make a name for themselves; otherwise they shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth (Gen 11:4). They thought their security lies in their being together and building a fortified city, but God did not like that attitude from men. The story clearly tells us of God's power and authority over His creatures, and His desire for the creatures to depend on Him for their security, and also learn to live in Unity amidst Diversity. Whatever the reason and cause maybe, the diversity of humankind begins from there. Human-being strives to maintain unity, God's action effects diversity. Human-being seeks for a center, God counters with dispersion.

In the face of all these differences,

human beings are supposed to be living together in harmony. If we draw the lines of differences and give importance to them, it would not be possible to live in unity. Rather, our unity should be built upon the commonness we have as creatures of God, and especially among the Christians, as redeemed by the blood of Christ, acknowledging and respecting other's identity and the differences we have. We should seek to establish what is universally same, an identical basket of rights and immunities.

What is the primary identity of Christians? It may be necessary to redefine our identity in a new direction and orientation, a new sense of "who" we are defined by a relationship which has nothing to do with birth, language or culture, but with Christ.

After becoming Christian I have two identities; Naga and Christian. Here one need to understand which of these two is the primary and which is secondary. The Good News of Christ re-orientes the identity of an individual in the group providing one a new identity both vertically and horizontally as described by St Paul (Gal 6:15, Eph 2:15, 2 Cor

5:17).

The emphasis here is that we are all one in Christ (Gal 3:28-29), and if we belong to Christ, then we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. We are all members of the church, which is the body of Christ. Biblically, before one becomes a member of a particular people group, he/she is a descendant of Adam. The primary identity therefore, should be "new-found faith-based identity, which is Christianity." The crucified and the resurrected Christ is the "Seed" of Abraham in whom there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female (Gal 3:28). In Christ all families of the earth are blessed on equal terms by being brought into the promised single family of Abraham.

My being in the family of Christ does not necessarily eliminate me from my *Naganess*. I still remain to be a Naga, but, "We must abandon our ethnic loyalties in favor of Christ." The color of our skin may be different, but the blood that is flowing just beneath the skin is the same. All human-beings are co-creatures of the Almighty God.

Conclusion

The main purpose of our life here on this earth is to glorify God and experience "Christ reigning among his people and to establishing a people of God who are united in their diversity." Biblically, we are all co-offsprings of Abraham (Gal 3:29). The barriers between ethnic groups, and between God and human-beings has been broken through the death of Christ, and we are all, as a family, reconciled to Him (Eph 2:14-15, 19). As members of the family of God we are supposed to love each other (1 John 4:7). By becoming family members of God, we do not necessarily abandon completely our cultural identity. But one's attitudes, values, and ways of behaving must be changed. We are to follow the Excellencies of Christ and His attitudes, values, and conduct as revealed in the Scripture. When it comes to the people of other faiths, or, people outside church, they should be considered as "lost people whom God loves." The love of God that was shown to us while we were yet sinners and rebellious, should be shown to them as well. In so doing we share with Christ "In the

fellowship of His suffering and in the power of His resurrection.”

As beloved children of God, we are to “be imitators of God, ... and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (Eph 5:1-2).” Love and forgiveness should begin in us, and our attitude should be right with God and with others. We should not have suspicion in our mind. Suspicion leads to distrust, distrust leads to confusion and confusion leads to division.



WORD PUZZLE

O	P	D	R	E	L	A	T	I	O	N	S	H	I	P
T	E	G	E	T	A	B	Q	P	L	Z	S	X	I	A
C	O	M	P	L	E	X	F	X	M	R	L	O	J	R
I	P	P	T	R	I	B	A	L	E	S	U	Y	D	T
L	L	C	E	R	D	C	A	H	N	E	R	T	Y	N
F	E	N	B	N	H	R	T	O	W	T	C	E	N	E
N	T	H	U	J	U	O	I	P	B	A	A	Q	A	R
O	H	M	I	T	U	S	R	E	F	D	S	F	M	G
C	N	P	L	D	C	S	R	C	Y	O	O	S	I	K
B	I	U	T	G	R	O	U	P	F	M	C	W	C	L
K	C	B	O	E	N	M	E	B	J	O	I	N	S	Q
I	S	A	O	L	V	A	Z	O	G	C	E	O	H	P
U	L	M	V	O	C	O	N	N	E	C	T	C	N	T
V	A	I	U	E	S	J	A	D	K	A	Y	A	A	N

Accommodate	Dynamics	Others	Values
Bond	Ethnic	Partner	
Built	Fact	Peace	
Complex	Goal	People	
Conflict	Group	Relationship	
Connect	Hope	Shur	
Cross	Join	Society	
Cultural	Open	Tribal	

(C) Ms Kaholi Zhimomi



Cross Cultural Relationships

Rev Jekheli Kibami Singh with her family

Jekheli Kibami Singh¹

I am honoured to have been asked to contribute on the current issue of *The Baptist News*. I think it is very timely to talk about “*cross cultural relationships*.” As more and more people leave the confines of their own community, and also with the technological advancement the world is now smaller than it was ever before. When I was told that “Cross cultural issues and challenges” will be the focus of this current issue I was excited. I thought to myself, everything about my life is cross-cultural: my personal life as well as my faith journey. I am married to a man from outside of my Sümi Naga tribe. We live in New Zealand, and neither call ourselves Maori (the indigenous people of New Zealand) nor Pakeha (a Maori term for New

Zealanders who are of European descent), and we do not call ourselves Kiwis (people of NZ in general). In my faith journey, I have gone from being a born, bred, and born-again Christian (Baptist), to being a minister in the Anglican Church of New Zealand. I am blessed to have the opportunity to experience these beautiful varieties of life. I think that all the so called cross-cultural experiences that I might narrate are subjective and that the boundaries that we cling to are human made. It is God’s blessing to humanity to have variety, for everyone to look different and express their way of life differently. However first and foremost, I believe is our common identity as children of God. We can be grateful to the communities that we are part of, the community

in which we feel the sense of belonging, trace our roots from and draw our identity from. As God's people, however, we must be mindful that our sense of belonging and closeness should not be at the expense of openness and inclusive attitude that God would want us to have. I have entitled my article as "**Cross-cultural Relationships.**" My basic assumption that all relationships (personal, marriage, ministry networks, mission) pertain to a human being dealing with the other human being- some on a larger scale than the others.

In our own tribal contexts, every tribe has a term or terms that translates "**culture.**" The understanding of one's culture is intrinsically related to one's identity, traditions, practices, values, standards, and norms. It includes the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a certain people or society, and what they define as acceptable or not acceptable attitude and behaviour. Therefore what is culturally appropriate is subject to a specific context. David M Gunn defines culture as:

a language or set of codes spoken, written, acted, pic-

tured, manufactured through which people share values and beliefs, behave in certain approved ways... Culture lends people identity, helps them relate to each other, and provides the glue that sustains a society. Culture is transmitted through generations, by imitation and learning... involve notions of time and space, social roles and skills, property, sexuality, violence, conflict resolution, and the meaning of social symbols ...produces and governs thought, feelings, and actions, and is itself, over time, produced by these. ²

Perhaps to define what is culture, and what cross-cultural means might have been less rigid then than now. The phenomena of globalisation and the advancement of technology and the worldwide web are now our reality. In the virtual world, there are no tangible boundaries. The church is not immune to this reality where socialising might no longer mean a group of people meeting and having a yarn over cup of tea. It might mean people with common

interest making friends with each other and staying connected in the virtual world. As I engage with young people on these social media, I also sense their strong adherence to their tribal cultural identity. While they embrace the virtual world, they show their loyalty to their own culture and take pride in their tribal roots. **Cross cultural relationships** is necessary now as the boundaries become more fluid. However people's experiences of "culture shock" are very real. When human are removed (voluntarily or involuntarily) from their own way of life or set of attitudes to another, they experience not just "shock," but feeling of disorientation, disappointment, and even a level of judgemental attitude. Some find themselves in two extremes, either thinking that their culture is the best and the right way to life, or consider the others' as the best and the most superior one. However, it is not about one **versus** the other, it is one **with** the other. It is all about networking, partnership, and mutual enrichment.

One of the issues of cross cultural relationships is of marriage. Without taking into account the context

of the passage while reading and interpreting the Bible, many impose those references in our own context. Just like our own context influences our interaction with the word of God, so did the context of the writers. As God's chosen people, the Israelites were prohibited from marrying people from another culture eg., Canaanites (see Deut 7:1-3; Josh 23:12-13; also see 2 Cor 6:14-17). The books of Ezra and Nehemiah gives instructions against cross cultural marriages (Ezra 10:2; 6:21, chapters 9-10; Neh 10:28,30; 13:23-30). However, these passages must be read in the context of the people of Israel who had just returned from exile in Babylon. The Babylonian exile was seen as God's punishment to the people of Israel. All the tangible symbols that they had as God's chosen people- the monarchy, the temple, and the land itself, were all taken away from them. To them these terrible things happened because the people sinned against God. When they returned from exile, they took drastic steps of instructing men who married women of non-Israelite origin to send them back to their homelands. It was all about their racial

purity as God's chosen people. This example is specific to that cultural, historical, and religious context and therefore should not be taken out of its context to fit our own. Our common identity in Christ-one beyond any human made boundaries- culture, denomination, tribe, language.

The very definition of the world culture gives away the fact that culture is human made, and hence to cross-culture is also to cross our human made boundaries. There may be various ways of looking at it: cross cultural relationships may be seen as a threat to losing one's identity or as enhancing it, as moving out of our comfort zone or as following the lead of God's Holy Spirit, as a challenge or as a blessing, and as a risk or as an exciting adventure. Since the cultural boundaries are human-made, we must find ways to forge enriching cross-cultural relationships.

Some of the challenges in cross cultural relationships may include: **Language barrier**- there is something special about one's mother tongue. We think we can explain things better, express our feelings more intimately, and de-

fine reality in a more comprehensible way, if we do in our mother tongue. At times, I have those moments too, when I am lost for words because I just cannot find the correct translation of what I want to say. However we all know that, sometimes the best things in life are accomplished with few or no words spoken; **Food**- an essential part of our life- the associations we make with food; **Dress code**; **values and norms**, and **belief systems**. What is appropriate and acceptable in one culture may not be in another. When in another culture, we must learn about various cultures and perspective, trends, tastes, approaches; being able to adapt to living in other cultures; learning the skills of interacting with foreign colleagues as equals.

Christians in the North East India need to look very far, but remember the missionaries who came from the West- theirs was a cross cultural ministry venture. For them, the urgency of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ surpassed the inconveniences. Their partial insensitivity towards tribal spirituality and traditional world view is not to be condoned. Many of the tribal

traditions and practices were deemed pagan. With the advent of Christianity also came the eroding of various traditional practices and customs, because for our tribal ancestors, there was no dichotomy between sacred and secular. Having noted this, it is fair to say that CBCNEI family itself is a testimony to the life and work of faithful women and men who chose to follow God's leading beyond the comforts of their own culture. CBCNEI family- both its history and its present, is a testimony of cross cultural relationships. Irrespective of the various cultural backgrounds that we link ourselves to, our common identity in Christ is the binding factor for us as a body.

To continue **to forge an enriching cross cultural relationships** both within CBCNEI families, as well as with those beyond, let us remind ourselves of the following:

- Having a **Christ-like attitude** (Phil 2:5-11).³ In our relationships we are called to have a mindset like Christ Jesus. God's incarnation in Jesus Christ is the greatest cross cultural event- from being "fully God" to becoming "fully man."

The incarnation is, in the words of Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, "God's metaphor for ministry."⁴ We read in Luke's narrative of Jesus' life on earth that, Jesus was born of a woman, was wrapped in a swaddling cloth, carried and nursed by Mary his mother, nurtured by Joseph his father (Luke 2). Jesus did not appear to be a full grown human person. This very "incarnational attitude"⁵ is an important key to effective cross-cultural relationships.

- We also must learn to have an attitude of humility and servitude. To be humble and to be able to serve is possible if we are comfortable in our own skin. If we know who we are, and where God has placed us is where God would like us to minister, humility and service will automatically follow. These qualities transcend culture.
- **Self-denial:** Jesus says, "if any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (Matt 16:24; Luke 9:23). In the context of our own ministry or personal lives, what

would denying ourselves include? Perhaps the self-denial and self-deprivation of our comfortable zone, all things familiar, the luxuries of ministering in one's own mother tongue, security of being surrounded by close friends and family.

- **Keeping an open mind to adapt to differences.** This is not about compromising our values, but allowing God's Holy Spirit to teach us fresh ways of recognising God at work. In Luke 10:1-12, Jesus sends out the Seventy two and instructs them to go with nothing. When we take our own baggage we hang on to our comfortable zone, we cling to familiarity. This may hinder us from not only being open to what other cultures might have to teach us, but also from seeing what God's Holy Spirit is doing. God is at work in all places. When God sends us, we need to have the humility and grace to recognise what God is already doing and be part to that. The outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1 unlike the story of Babel in Gen 11), is a

witness to how the One truth of God's love and God's mighty works through Jesus Christ our Saviour can be manifested in many languages.

- **Communication:** Be open and honest enough to learn, unlearn, and relearn. Also remember what you bring in your relationship as valuable as what the other has to offer.
- **Respecting each other's unique histories, traditions, and cultures** irrespective of how it awkward or different it might appear to be.

We must become intentional about how we respond to our many cross-cultural opportunities. We can either choose to absorb the beauty in the various expressions as God's grand design and enrich our understanding of our own cultural heritage; or we can choose to criticize anything and everything that takes us beyond our comfortable and familiar zone. This applies to our individual lives as well as to our community life. Do we trust in God and initiate cross cultural ministry networks? How do we define unity in diversity if we are not up to what God might want us to be and

do? Certainly God's will and purpose for the church is to go beyond the confines of our monocultural outlook, attitudes, and lifestyles. As children of God, our common identity is in Christ. This does not mean uniformity (John 17:20-21; Acts 2:42-47; Rom 12:51; 1 Cor 1:10-13, 12:13; Eph 4:3-6; Gal 3:28; Col 3:15; Eph 1:22-23, 4:3-6). If our sense of identity as belonging to one specific people group, denomination, country, is hindering us to see the world as God would want us to, it is time we re-think. Whose purpose are we serving, our own or that of God? Do our cultural expressions and relationships reflect our common identity in Christ?

(End notes) _____

¹Rev'd Jekheli Kibami Singh is originally from Sumi Baptist Church, Akuluto town (SBAK). She is married to Rev'd Rajnish Singh and have two sons: Uday Vito (6) and Avika (2). They are both ordained ministers at the Waikato and Taranaki Diocese, of the Anglican Church of New Zealand. Jekheli is currently doing her Ph. D research at the University of Auckland, NZ.

² David M. Gunn, Cultural Criticism: Viewing the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter," in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, second edition, edited by Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) 202.

³ Phil 2:5-11 "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

⁴ Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*, second edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 13.

⁵Lingenfelter and Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 50.



Mission Department Upcoming Programs

1. Advanced Mission Leadership Training (July 2 - 5)

This is for Mission leaders City church pastors only. Here we will discuss Legal issues in Mission as this has become very important in our country. We shall also learn about Member care; how do we care for our missionaries and how this affect the mission work in the field. And we shall discuss on how to understand our challenges, the strength and the strategies of the opposing forces in order to develop a better strategy to succeed.

2. Missionary Training Program (August 12 - 22)

This is for Missionaries and evangelists only. They will be taught CDW concept of missionary. Please send your missionaries and evangelists.

3. Mission Leadership Training through exposure (September 7 - 21)

This is also for Mission leaders only. We will visit four Asian countries and study their mission strategies and also explore possibilities of partnering with them in Mission. Name of the leaders who want to go should reach the office latest by June. The participant will need Passport and ₹ 50,000 for travel, food and lodging from Kolkata and return to Kolkata.

4. Mission leaders Training through Exposure (November 10 - 21)

This is mission exposure in India visiting some mission fields and learning their strategies and see mission opportunities in other parts of India.

Ministry Opportunity:

1. **Church Overseer in Nepal:** Pastoral Ministry and leadership experience.
2. **Teacher in Bible School (Nepal):** at least BD or M.Div. with some teaching experience.
3. **Hostel Warden (Nepal):** Preferably female with some counseling experience.
4. **Training and Research Coordinator:** Lot of traveling in CBCNEI areas.
5. **Mission Promoters for CBCNEI Mission work.**
6. **Chaplain, White Memorial Hostel, Guwahati:** Female who wants to invest her potentials in younger women.



Cross-Cultural Relationship in the context of Theological Institution

Rev Dr Akheto Sema, Principal, Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, Assam

In any community life, members regardless of color, gender, class, culture, language and background try to live together. A community life in which we try to initiate and instill the sense of oneness and as equals, upholding human values through mutual living. A community life in which we try to enable the community members to recognize pluralism and diversity, respecting one's differences in order to live out a fulfilling community together.

And much is expected in a Christian community life with special reference to theological community in an institution. In my 30 years of involvement in theological education and staying in a residential

campuses all those years, I have had come across hundreds of theological students who come from different backgrounds, cultures, life-styles and so forth. And my experiences taught me that, in such a theological community, relationship plays an important role in terms of promoting mutual growth and development of spiritual, social, mental, emotional, physical and over-all healthy environment. The emphasis is placed on how community members - men, women and children, young and old are initiated and made to grow into that particular community life by being immersed in the rituals, traditions, symbols, and patterns of living which are normative and

expected from each member.

Community life in a theological college/seminary is very important for healthy growth and relationships. Community members are inter-related and inter-dependent on one another. Community members are called to build relationships between teachers and students, students and students, teachers and administrators, staff, and families. It is biblically essential that the Body of Christ, the Church or faith community is called to demonstrate Christian unity. And it is greater challenge to the theological community to demonstrate the Christian pattern of community to maintain a community that is shaped in the biblical teachings on love and unity.

As theological community, it is essential to build a positive community relationship in terms of support for one another physically, spiritually, emotionally and so and so forth. In a residential institution where students, faculty, staff and families live together as a family, it is a choice as well as a compulsion. As community we choose to be together and to live together day in and day out whether we like it or not. Sometimes the biggest

hurt or pain inflicted on the members come from the community itself. It can be a scary thing to be in a community where discord and unhealthy atmosphere prevails. But we will be called to take risk and share our deepest fears, hopes, desires, secrets as signs of caring for one another.

As mentioned above, members in the community come from different backgrounds, traditions, cultures, different interests, likes and dislikes and it is often difficult to coordinate them. But through understanding and support for one another we can create a healthy and positive relationship. And this is essential because it promotes/produces growth in the life of the community. It promotes sensitivity to people around us and motivates the community members to be loving and caring people.

Unfortunately, today we see an atmosphere of disunity, lack of understanding, back-biting, self-vested interests, jealousy, envy, complexes, attitude problems exists in any Christian community including theological institutions. Christian community is suppose to be a community of love, peace and unity in Christ Jesus and with

one another which is imperative. But this is often missing. As teachers and preachers we talk, preach and teach so much on God's love, peace and unity on the pulpits, classrooms and in any given opportunity but we fail to put into action. This is the tragic and downfall of any members in a Christian community especially the preachers and teachers. We are failing to be 'model' as exemplary life-styles and Christ-like character are missing in a community life. In fact, in any theological community and especially within the residential campus, growth in spiritual and healthy social community life must be expressed in words and deeds. There should be a relationship through shared-lives. This is a big challenge!

May we be reminded of the impor-

tance of Christian community life on earth that is shaped in the Biblical teachings on love and unity. It should be a sign of the Kingdom of God that is to come. God's people belong to different colors, races, ethnics, cultures and life-styles but we belong to the one body of Christ. Our effort should be how all members really know one another in fellowship and unity; how we build relationships through which faith is formed, shaped, nurtured and matured; how we develop a healthy community life through the change of the heart, the mind and attitude filled with empathy, acceptance and identification are important elements towards the kind of Christian community we look for. This is possible when we do not lose sight of our common ground in Christ who unites us all.



“ *There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* ”

Gal 3:28



United IN SPITE OF D i f f e r e n c e

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

[. . . they may all be one; . . . that they may be one, just as We are one; . . . that they may be perfected in unity . . . (John 17:21-23)]

Historically, the Baptists have enjoyed the freedom to interpret the scripture and act independently. They have always resisted external authority that undermined individual freedom. This has been the strength of Baptist for its growth and rapid expansion and yet this has also been the cause of division and isolation within the fold.

In the context of Northeast India, Baptists are the largest protestant denominations. The number of Churches may exceed ten thousand. Depending on their historical link with foreign mission agencies there are eight major groups, namely—the Council of Baptist

Churches in Northeast India (CBCNEI), North Bank Baptist Christian Association (NBBCA), Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM), Tripura Baptist Union (TBU), Lower Assam Baptist Union (LABU), Lairam Jesus Christ Baptist Church Assembly (LJCBCA), Evangelical Baptist Convention (EBC), and Mid Baptist. Each of these groups are functionally independent from each other.

Among the above, the CBCNEI is the largest group with six regional conventions, 7000 Churches, and 11 lacs of adult Baptist members. However, within this group, there are at least four groups of Baptists,

having more than 300 Churches, that are not affiliated to any of the conventions and have no opportunity to fellowship with other Baptists.

In last fifty years, several Baptist leaders have put much effort for unity, cooperation, and networking with some success but without much noticeable achievement. Presently, there is no any organized regional Baptist platform to unite the Baptists of Northeast India. In fact there is none at the national level that has support of all the Baptists. The only common link is the umbrella of Asia Pacific Baptist Federation (APBF) which is too broad in scope and too small in human resources to deal with a regional issue, or provide a platform for regional cooperation and network.

The challenge before the Baptist Church is not the absence of organizational unity, fellowship and cooperation, but division and isolation. On the one hand, individual aspiration and ambition swelter at the expense of the common good. Mutual respect and submission is often undermined by the spirit of dissidence and rebellion. Resent-

ment and hurt feeling prevails against such strong headed individual or group. On the other hand, unity is often understood as uniformity. Harmony within the fold is sought with an expectation of homogeneity. Creativity, innovative ideas, and differences are often seen as threat to the leadership. Submission without reasoning and maintenance of the status quo is considered as orderliness. Distinction between essentials and non-essentials of Christian beliefs are unclear. Hence the differences are often resolved with parting of ways and division. Indeed, Baptist grows into two by evangelism but multiplies itself into three by egoism.

How can the Baptist Church stop from further multiplications and improve its relations with each other? How can we become inclusive and cooperative within? Is it possible to co-exist in spite of differences?

To understand the whole problem of division among Baptist Churches, we need to answer two questions:

- A. Why differences exist?
- B. What turns differences into

ugly division?

A. Why differences exist?

Christians or non-Christians; religious or non-religious, differences are inevitable. Hence, we must not be taken by surprise; rather we need to prepare ourselves to deal with it.

In the creation of God, no two persons are created exactly alike; even identical twin have differences, which sometimes only their mother can tell. Some are tall others are short. Some are dark others are fair. Some are quiet others are talkative. They are born and raised in different location, language, culture, and food habits. Some can eat one chilli and burn their tongues and others can eat whole of RAJA chilli and have no problem. Some are high school graduate but others are post graduate. Some have travelled up to Guwahati only while others might have gone all the way to London. Their sources of information are different so is their understanding. They see things differently and also feel differently.

The Church leaders need to understand this dynamics of our Church

and must prepare ourselves to deal with it.

We read in the Bible that since the beginning of time, differences among human beings have existed and many a time these differences have resulted into division.

Let us examine a few of them:

1. Similar expectations with dissimilar offerings and attitude:

Gen 4:2-5

² And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. ³ So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. ⁴ And Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; ⁵ but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

Cain expected similar attention in spite of dissimilar offerings and attitude. As humans, no matter what our actions and attitude are, we desire for similar attention and love. When we do not get like others,

we envy, get hurt, and become angry. This can lead us to division.

2. Similar needs but limited provision:

Gen 13:5

⁵ Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.

⁶ And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together. ⁷ And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock.

Land is limited but the desire to use and own the land increases with the increase in number. God has blessed us to increase but the land remains the same. We can increase the produce and share it but selfish possession and unwillingness to share can only lead us to strife.

1 Kgs 1:11-13

Then Nathan spoke to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, "Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king, and David our lord does not know it?"

¹² "So now come, please let me give you counsel and save your life and the life of your son Solomon. ¹³ "Go at once to King David and say to him, 'Have you not, my lord, O king, sworn to your maidservant, saying, "Surely Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become king?"

Thrones are limited but its aspirants are many. Irrespective of qualification and ability most leaders desire the covetous position of leadership. Persuasion, canvassing, crafty manipulation have entered the Church. Satan has convinced its necessity even to ordained church leaders. As human beings, we all are naturally given to desires for power, position, and possessions. Some overcomes it by yielding to God's miraculous providence others may see the necessity of helping God with their piece of mind and effort. In either case, it brings division. Evil is infectious, it influences others to react and division prevails.

Luke 22:22

²⁴ And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.

3. Different standards of morality for others

Depending on the context and who they are dealing with, most people apply different standards of morality and spirituality: public self and private self; relatives and non-relatives; friends and strangers. Some are tolerant to hypocrisy and duplicity of life style. They may talk and demand from others but they may not see the necessity to practice them in their private life. They may have one standard of spirituality for themselves but another for others.

The Bible tells about such a person.

2 Sam 12:5

⁵ Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. ⁶ "And he must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion." ⁷ Nathan then said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul.

David responded with anger as he saw the injustice distinctly but he

ignored it in his action. Such people serve God for one moment and in another moment they are serving themselves because their view of God is very small. They are tough with others but easy and casual for themselves. Everybody must trust them but they would doubt others. Everybody must forgive them but they would not forgive any one. They enjoy the unconditional love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ but they find very difficult to do so for others. Divisions in the Church often exist because we have many of them.

4. Plurality of perspective and experience.

The recent thinking among evangelical scholars have drawn our attention to the plurality of orthodoxy in the Bible or the orthodoxy of the plurality.

We believe in the Bible as the inspired Word of God but we need to understand that even Bible allows variance in its accounts and in its inter-Testamental hermeneutics. There is no one set of principle of hermeneutics

We read in Ex 33:11:

11 Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

Now notice in the same chapter Ex 33:19-22

19 And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." 20 But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" 21 Then the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock;

22 and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. 23 "Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen.

In the first reference we read that Moses spoke to God face to face while

in the second reference we are informed that God refused to show him his face to Moses but he saw only the back.

Let us take another example. We read in 2 Sam 24:1:

Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

Again notice in 1 Chr 21:1

Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel. ² So David said to Joab and to the princes of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, and bring me word that I may know their number."

The first reference tell us that the Lord burned with anger and acted

upon but in the second reference we are informed that Satan took the action. In the New Testaments, Synoptic gospels give us more than one instance of differences. Numerous references can be quoted here to show the difference of perspectives. However, this is not to say that the Bible contradicts itself. Obviously these differences point us toward the richness of

perspectives of the human authors. The Bible tells us about the complexity of human life. It is not as simplistic as black and white but in the rainbow of humanity there are seven colors that need to be also taken into account.

We all know that God can heal all diseases when we pray to God. Out of his mercy, God can heal us. But it is too simplistic to suggest or promote an othropraxy by saying that if you pray and fast and you shall be healed.

Yes differences exist between individuals and there is more than one reason for our differences. Most of the time, the differences in themselves are not evil. They are just there as the part of our natural life, but what we do with them can cause division.

B. What turns differences into ugly division?

Even when the division is inevitable in our differences, we have the option to prevent it from becoming an ugly division. We can stop it from bad to worse by diffusing it with the power of godliness. We may not be able to eradicate the Earthquake or Tsunami

from coming. But we can certainly prepare ourselves adequately to face the Earthquake and Tsunami so as to reduce the number of casualty.

When the differences exist, prayer, patience, counsel of the older leaders, and postponement of decision is preferable. Avoid reacting with harsh and dogmatic statement.

We learn from the event in 2 Chr 10:3-11 that led a united nation to divide

⁶ Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying, "How do you counsel me to answer this people?" ⁷ And they spoke to him, saying, "If you will be kind to this people and please them and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever." ⁸ But he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him and served him.

⁹ So he said to them, "What counsel do you give that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke

which your father put on us?”¹⁰ And the young men who grew up with him spoke to him, saying, “Thus you shall say to the people who spoke to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter for us.’ Thus you shall say to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s loins!¹¹ ‘Whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.’”

King Rehoboam despised the wisdom of the old but heeded the young men who had no experience of managing human resources. Relationship is more important than resources. When we lose the former we also lose the latter. In anger and greed, we can act like a fool. We may live behind a legacy that will make people ashamed of our name. Instead of being a builder, our posterity shall remember us as a destroyer.

I have noticed that Church leaders act foolishly, when they:

- Emphasize too much on non-essential dogmas of the Church
- Major on minor issues and while

minor on the major

- Get caught into the forms at the expense of contents
- Emphasize on one method over the others (In fact no methods are perfect but only better than others for certain place and time. It is the spirit behind that method that actually matters).
- Become too serious on temporal issues at the expense of eternal issues

When we fail to understand the wisdom of flexibility and gentleness in dealing with others we become gods and goddesses over the Church. We begin deciding agendas for God and shut down the windows of heaven to pour any divine miracles.

In all these, it is often our attitude, our desire for revenge, our passion for justice and immediate vindication that needs to be guarded.

Remember, we can turn our differences into an ugly division:

- When we are disrespectful and demonize people who differ with us.
- When we begin to defend ourselves even at the expense of hu-

miliating others and applying unjust means

- When the issue of division becomes personal
- When our love fails to cover the sin with forgiveness
- When we are unwilling to listen to, reflect upon and repent for.

Arrogant, dogmatic, and overconfident leaders are heard of saying:

What I said I said, there is no turning back on that.

Not until I die

Such leaders need to hear, *Lo and behold thou art mortal and thou shall be remembered as stubborn, ungodly, destructive instrument of the evil.*

They must learn to say, *Well I understand your point of view. Would you please consider to give me some time to pray over it and seek others opinion. Let me educate my-*

self a bit more on it. Either of us may be wrong but we both need time to ponder over it so that Satan may not outwit us and spoil our relationship in Christ.

Jesus said:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

May God help us to be like Jesus.



Children Bible Ministry Auckland, New Zealand

January 4- May 6, 2013

Sarah Tayeng, Adi Baptist Union



I thank God for enabling me to go to New Zealand in order to equip myself for Children Ministry for four months. This trip was sponsored by CBCNEI. I was received by Aunty Gean and her husband Bill at the airport and was sent to stay with

Aunty Margaret Wright. Everything was new for me but I managed with the new system gradually. On 4th January I and my team members Botoholi, Rolland, Jeame Marak all from India and Reme a Nigerian along with Children Bible Ministry Auckland (CBM) staff went to Raglan for Children's camp for two weeks. The place was beside the Pacific Ocean. We enjoyed the scenic view and breeze of the Ocean but here began the hardest part of my training in CBM. When the children arrived I could not understand them and they could not understand me either therefore they began to isolate themselves from me and I felt so rejected and unwanted by the children. I was so down and depressed as I was unable to connect with them. I also had a cultural shock of my life. The way people talk, eat, live, dress are so different from my ways of life. After two weeks we came back to Auckland and began our





classes. The training was really enriching and insightful. The teachers were updated, practical and dynamic. After learning some theory we were sent to Owairaka Primary School schools for practical training every

Thursday from 9:00-9:30 am for seven weeks. We visited other ministries like Youth with a Mission (YWAM), and Elevate (Differently Able Children) Ministry. The last weeks of our training was spent in another Children Camp at Raglan. It was quite different from the previous camp because by now I could understand better and communicate with the children. I also felt so happy because four children in my group accepted Jesus. We returned to our place on 4th May and had our graduation on 6th May. On my graduation I was so happy because eight members from Assembly of God the Church which I attended during my stay in Auckland came for my graduation. I am really grateful to them for considering me and accepting my invitation. I returned to India on 8th May safely. I thank God for the help and blessing I received



and also grateful to CBCNEI for giving me this great opportunity of visiting NZ and train myself for Children Ministry. I believe I will be true to what I have learned and help my people in whatever way I could.





“PURPOSE: Three Would Be Followers” Luke 9:51-62

Rev Dr Danny Wood Sr. Pastor, Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Rev Dr Danny Wood led the bible studies during the **Lay Leaders & Pastors Conference** held at CBCNEI, Mission Compound on the theme, “**THE BOOK OF LUKE: Hope, Purpose, Redemption.**” We are delighted to publish the bible study materials in the *Baptist News* which we believe will enrich our readers. In this issue we are publishing the second bible study on the topic **Purpose** and the other material will be published in the following issue.

(Luke 9 vs. 51) – “to be taken up” – refers to the ascension. Jesus was nearing the consummation of his saving work in the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. He was moving towards the cross to his resurrection from the dead and the ascension and to the everlasting glory that would follow.

Jesus would reach this everlasting glory by way of Jerusalem. Jerusalem had to come first. No resurrection without the cross. No crown without the cross.

“set his face” – This expression

indicates firm resolution; completely fixed on purpose. Jesus was absolutely determined to go up to Jerusalem and do everything He was called to do for our salvation. Once he fixed his gaze in that direction, he would never look back.

Over the next 10 chapters Jesus is on the road towards Jerusalem. He does not take a direct route but all throughout these 10 chapters he is referred to as being on the road, along the way, as he was traveling.

Along the road he took this opportunity to educate his would-be followers on the demands of the road – on what it takes to effectively follow Jesus. The demands were radical, scary, and sometimes even discouraging.

To travel on the road with Jesus you must:

I. Extend MERCY (vs. 52-56)

The last thing a Samaritan wanted to do was help a Jew get to Jerusalem. They had a long standing feud with the Jews and believed the place to worship God was not Jerusalem but Mount Gerizim.

James and John thought of Jesus as a Elijah-like Messiah and thus Elijah's life was a precedent for what should happen now.

II Kings 1:1-14 – Apostate King Ahaziah twice sent men to take Elijah and twice Elijah called down fire from heaven and turned them into crispy critters! So let's call down fire again!

What they failed to understand was that the King was rejecting God but the Samaritans were not. They were simply returning the rejection of the Jews because of their hatred of them. The situation was not the same.

Jesus said to extend mercy to

them. Interesting in Acts 8:25 Peter and John go into Samaritan villages and share the gospel.

Acts 8:25, "Now when they (Peter and John) had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans."

A great reminder that we need more than a zeal for God; we need hearts filled with the compassion of Christ. Yes you should make a stand for the gospel and what is right but at the same time you need to be willing to serve with love those with whom you disagree.

Temper the sharp edge of your zeal with the compassion of Christ. Verses 57-61 the key word is "follow". All three of these people had every intention of following Jesus. But did they have what it took to follow Jesus all the way to Jerusalem?

II. Endure SACRIFICE and HARD-SHIPS (vs. 57-58)

Bold statement. Jesus's response says there are no guarantees of earthly rewards. It will be uncomfortable and will require sacrifice if you want to walk that road with Jesus. It will result in loving difficult people, of giving your life and resources until it hurts, of living a

life out of step with modern culture, of being disliked, of having nowhere to lay your head.

Jesus does not make following Him easy. Jesus never held back sharing the more difficult aspects of discipleship, rather He always announced them in advance. He never presented the Christian life as a life of ease, but always of sacrifice.

This is so different from what you hear with many of the preachers on television preaching health and wealth gospel. Jesus was not even close to that! Otherwise he would have told the man to come along and he would promise him riches beyond imagination. How ludicrous would that be?

Jesus on the road to the ultimate sacrifice why would He not ask the same of those who would follow Him on that road?

Jesus insisted that following Him does not mean merely imitating Him, but entering the very conditions of His life.

Luke 9:23

He is separating the pretenders from the genuine road walkers.

It is never promised to be an easy road and with our nation moving in this direction, we will be called to live a more authentic New Testa-

ment discipleship. We will see who the pretenders are versus those who want to walk the cross road with Jesus...those willing to endure sacrifice and hardship if need be.

III. Exercise URGENCY and PRIORITY (vs. 59-60)

Jesus approaches a follower and calls him. "But"- that is not good! "first" – there is a greater priority than your call to follow you.

"bury my father" – In all likelihood his father was not yet dead. In those days Jewish people buried their dead within 24 hours and family members sat with the body of the deceased until it was laid to rest. Actually he was asking Jesus to let him care for his father during his declining years, until finally he died. Probably this man means that after his father is dead and buried then he will be free to follow Jesus. He wanted to wait, maybe years, until his father.

He had a strong claim but he was using his family situation as an excuse for delaying his discipleship. Jesus responded by telling him to let the spiritually dead bury the naturally dead. There will be plenty of people around to bury him but your priority is to proclaim the KOG. The time is short and you

need to be about the Father's business.

Too often we give the "Let me first....." We can "let me first" Jesus for years. If someone kept doing that to you would you think they really were not interested?

Date: I would love to go out with you but let me first:

Business: First let me get through inventory, busy season, audit from headquarters, personnel matters, paperwork. (do you believe you are not a priority?)

Jesus always wants us to start following Him right away, and then for the rest of our lives and for all eternity.

"Let me first" excuses tell God that He is not a priority in your life.

IV. Employ FOCUS (vs. 61-62)

"Let me first" – here we have it again! He wanted enough time to go and say good-bye. Man wanted to go home and put his affairs in order for an extended time. There was a sense of reluctance; a sense that service for the Kingdom can be put off in pursuit of

other matters. Jesus saw that he had too much attachment to the things of the world and once he returned to his work and friends, he would renege on his commitment. Something else was first in his heart, and knowing this, Jesus told him not to go back, even for a moment, but to follow Him right away.

He wanted to follow Jesus but also cling to the past. He would be spending as much time looking back at the past with concern for what might have been instead of looking forward to what God had in store for him.

Those who keep looking back will not do well on Jesus' road. The call must come first and must remain the focus of one's life.

Jesus' reply is that you can't be plowing and keep looking back!

Questions:

1. Which of these four challenges do you struggle with the most?
2. How can you encourage your church to follow Jesus on this road?



FORTH-COMING CBCNEI TRAINING PROGRAMS

CBCNEI along with its partners will be organizing various training programs, seminars and workshops. These are mainly for the Churches within CBCNEI family to enhance its ministries. We welcome all of you to register well in advance in order to get low registration fee benefit.

Given below is the list of program and venue. If you would like to be a part of these programs, please email at siamliana@cbcnei.com or call 09859981628.

Sl. No.	Dates	Training/Workshop/-Seminar	Venue
1	July 2 - 5, 2013	Advance Mission Leaders Training	CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati
2	July 7 - 8, 2013	Training of Trainers in Peace Building	CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati
3	July 9 - 13, 2013	Peace Building Workshop	CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati
4	Aug 7 - 10, 2013	Writers Workshop	CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati
5	Aug 12 - 22, 2013	Missionary Training Program	CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati
6	Oct 1 - 4, 2013	Celebrate Recovery	CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati
7	Oct 10 - 13, 2013	Family Enrichment Seminar	CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati
8	Oct 21 - 25, 2013	Sunday School Teachers Training	CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati
9	Oct 29 - Nov 1, 2013	Youth Leaders Workshop	CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati
10	Nov 14 - 17, 2013	Holy Spirit Renewal Conference	Kohima Ao Baptist Church
11	Nov 14 - 17, 2013	Sunday School Teachers Training	CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati
12	Nov 20, 22, 2013	Church Music Seminar	CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati
13	Nov 26 - 30, 2013	Exegetical Preaching & Biblical Seminar	CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati
14	Feb 7 - 9, 2014	Finance Management & FCRA Training	L. M. Hostel Auditorium, Guwahati
15	Mar 11 - 14, 2014	Lay Leaders and Pastor's Conference	CBCNEI, Guwahati
16	Mar 26 - 29, 2014	Youth Leaders Conference	CBCNEI, Guwahati

Annual Report 2012-2013

A Report from the General Secretary to The 63rd Annual General Body Meeting of the Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India, April 26-28, 2013

Respected Chairman and the members of the House,

As a family of CBCNEI we have covered another milestone together. We are grateful to God for:

- the gift of life and health;
- the team of committed CBCNEI department Secretaries, Student Chaplains, heads of the CBCNEI institutions and the hard working staffs in CBCNEI office and its institutions;
- the faithful participation of the Executive Committee, the Board, and the sub-committees members under an able leadership of the President of CBCNEI; Dr. Kavito Zhimo;
- the partnership of BIM: Rev. Reid Trulson, Rev. Dr. SL Benchan, Rev. Taku and Katie Longkumer, Debbie Mulneix, and others
- the partnership of various national and international ministries

The year 2012-13 has passed with several remarkable events in the family of CBCNEI. Please note that my report would only highlight some of the achievements. I encourage you to read other reports that would give you a comprehensive picture of our growth.

I. Networking with Conventions and Associations:

Each department of CBCNEI has strived forward in serving our constituent members with its best of ability. In most of our meetings, we have often brainstormed the ways and means to connect with our member constituencies and understand their needs and concerns so that we can serve our family better.

We have constantly reminded ourselves of the three fold mottoes of CBCNEI: UNITY, WITNESS, and SERVICE. We have tried to bring a sense of togetherness in the CBCNEI family in more than one ways such as publishing Baptist News, hosting training programs and consultations for common benefits, promoting fellowship among the member constituent leaders during such programs, and insuring proper representation of constituents in all our committees and meetings. And of course, I have also visited (though not all as we would desire) to minister in programs where I was invited. These visits have strengthened our relationship within. Following are some of the events where I have ministered/participated in the period of 2012-13:

- i. Graduation Ceremony of Shalom Bible Seminary, Sechu-Zubza (May 11-12)
- ii. Deacons Retreat with Guwahati Baptist Church, Guwahati (June 3)
- iii. Family Enrichment Seminar with Evergreen Baptist Church, Itanagar (June 9-10)
- iv. Ministry at Kohima Science College and a visit to NBCC, Kohima (July 26-29)
- v. Leaders Training for Siang Adi Baptist Association, Pasighat (Sept 12-15)
- vi. Aruanchal Baptist Church Council Leaders Training Program, Guwahati (Sept 21-23)
- vii. Leaders Training for Metei Baptist Churches Association, Imphal (Sept 27-30)
- viii. Medical Board Meeting and Centenary Celebration of Impur Christian Hospital, Impur (Oct 2-6)
- ix. Celebrate Recovery Program for Pastors and leaders, Guwahati (Oct 8-10)
- x. ETC Board Meeting, Jorhat (Oct 12)
- xi. Dedication of Service of Tezu Baptist Church, Tezu (Oct 14)

- xii. CLC Board Meeting, Guwahati (Oct 16)
- xiii. The Special Consultation of the EC, Guwahati (Oct 17)
- xiv. Mising Baptist Kebang Mission Consultation, Kulajan (Nov 2)
- xv. Mising Baptist Kebang Pastors Training Program, Kulajan (Nov 3 - 4)
- xvi. Spiritual Renewal Conference, Guwahati (Nov 7-10)
- xvii. Silver Jubilee Celebration of Shillong Tyrranus Hostel, Shillong (Nov 10)
- xviii. Seminar on Expository Preaching and Biblical Counselling (Nov 12-16)
- xix. CBCNEI Global Mission Consultation, Guwahati (Nov 27-30)
- xx. Annual Conference of Evangelical Baptist Convention, Churachandpur (Dec 1-4)
- xxi. Silver Jubilee Celebration of Tangsa Baptist Churches Association Youth Department, Jairampur, (Dec 7-9)
- xxii. Annual Convention of the Council of Rengma Baptist Churches Association, Kandinu, (Dec 14-16)
- xxiii. Triennial Conference of UESI-NE, Patkai, (Jan 5-6)
- xxiv. Langham Preaching Seminar, Guwahati (Jan 14-18)
- xxv. Leaders Training Program, NBCA, Borduria (Jan 24-27)
- xxvi. Training on Financial Management, Guwahati (Feb 1-3)
- xxvii. CBCNEI Pastors and Lay Leaders Conference, Guwahati (March 13 -16)
- xxviii. The 46th Annual Conference of Assam Baptist Convention, Tinsukia, (April 12-14)

In spite of these, I have not been able to visit some of our constituent members personally. I express my apology to all those whom I could not visit. Hope I shall be able to cover few more this year. Your early invitation and a reminder would help me to plan better in 2013-14.

II. Networking with the National Bodies:

I am glad to inform you that the leadership of CBCNEI is well recognized at the national level. We are an affiliated member of the following organizations:

1. NCCI: In the 26th Quadrennial Assembly of NCCI at Bangalore from April 25-29, 2012, the CBCNEI family was represented by Rev. Dr. Mar Atsongchanger, Mr. A. K. Goldsmith, and Rev. Zhabu Imsong. Unfortunately, our representation in comparison to number of delegation entitled was less. However, I am glad to inform you that in the same meeting one of our own, Rev. Dr. Mar Atsongchanger, the Executive Secretary of ABAM was nominated as the Vice President of NCCI. Also, we have two representations on the Executive Committee of the NCCI: the General Secretary of CBCNEI and Mr. Neville N. Sangma of GBC from KRIMA VIII as the youth representative. We are grateful to Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad for his initiative in providing due recognition to the CBCNEI family in the NCCI. Our participation in NCCI from various conventions is yet to improve. The travel time and the cost of flying are two major hindrances in our participation in the national activities.

2. EFI: The CBCNEI is an affiliated member of Evangelical Fellowship of India. We do not have much participation as we do not have any representation in their Executive body. Last year we nominated few delegates to represent CBCNEI in their Annual Business Meeting in Chandigarh (May 9-11, 2012) but nobody could go. Please note all the Churches, Associations, and Conventions under CBCNEI are an affiliated member of EFI, hence there is no need of individual affiliation.

3. CASA: The CBCNEI is one of the 24 affiliated protestant and orthodox Churches that composes the Churches Auxiliary of Social Action. Baptist Churches of Mizoram has joined it recently. At present the General Secretary is on the Finance Committee and the Executive Committee. The Council has participated actively in furthering of the ministry of CASA through allowing leasing of the land for the offices of CASA in Guwahati and in Shillong. An effort is being made to involve local Churches more in the works of CASA as well as to expand the works of

CASA in Arunachal and Tripura.

4. AISSA: The All India Sunday School Association is a body under NCCI. Hence the CBCNEI is also an affiliated member of AISSA. Last year, AISSA organized a training (April 13-16, 2012) in Guwahati where CBCNEI members also participated. Rev. Awala Longkumer is currently the Regional Secretary of AISSA, based in Dimapur.

5. ECC: The Council is an affiliated member of the Ecumenical Christian Center, Bangalore. This center was established by the Late Dr. M. A. Thomas in 1963. Dr. Akheto Sema, the Principal of Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, is a member of the Board. Members are encouraged to take advantage of this center.

6. Defunct Relationship with some of the Ecumenical body: The council was affiliated to some of the national bodies in the south earlier however, currently, we are not aware of our role and status. Following are some of them

ICSA: The Inter Church Service Association is an ecumenical body affiliated to NCCI to which the Council was also affiliated earlier. Currently our relationship with this organization is defunct.

CISRS: Christian Institute for the Studies of Religion and Society, Bangalore.

In general, most national organizations prefer to have CBCNEI as their member as it represents a larger body of the Baptist but it is not clear how this participation would benefit the Churches or even give opportunity to Churches to participate at the national level. Distance and time is again another hindrance. However, I believe that our participation in the national program is an important avenue for the nation building as well for benefiting Church at large.

7. NEICC: The Council is the member of NEICC but our membership needs to be reconsidered as each convention is also a member of NEICC and our membership fee is duplicated, even our representation. A consultation is required in this matter so as to avoid duplication and to insure the participation of CBCNEI officers in NEICC forum. The NEICC

met for their 75th Annual Session and for the celebration of Platinum Jubilee in Rymbai, (Meghalaya) on May 16-20, 2012. Dr. Kavito Zhimo (President, CBCNEI) Dr. Jolly Rimai (Mission Secretary) represented the council. The NEICC has decided to meet biennially; hence their next conference would be in 2014.

8. CMC Vellore/Ludhiana: Currently we are an active member of the Christian Medical College, Vellore and Ludhiana. We have official representatives on their Board. Please read the Medical Secretary In charge's report for more information.

9. Mission Partnership with the National organizations: For the benefit of our constituent members, the Mission department of CBCNEI has carefully signed MOU of partnership with some organizations. The Mission Secretary, Dr. Jolly Rimai, facilitated a series of Consultations for a better understanding and coordination in our mission effort. He has also given a good leadership in managing the student ministry of the Council and the management of the CBCNEI Library & Archive. Please read the report of the Mission Secretary.

III. Representation of CBCNEI in the International forum:

1. Global Missions Conference of International Ministries (IM): I had a blessed opportunity to be invited as one of the main speakers in the Global Mission Conference of American Baptist Churches in Wisconsin (May 18-27). While bringing message twice in the plenary session, I was glad to represent CBCNEI family there. Many senior members of ABC and IM cherish their sweet memories of our hospitality and friendship. They continue to consider CBCNEI family as one of the most important global partners in missions.

2. ATA: The Council was not connected with one of the largest evangelical theological movement in Asia—Asia Theological Association—which claims 212 member theological institutions and in 27 countries. In fact some of the seminaries under CBCNEI are members of ATA. I am glad to inform you that I was invited as one of the main resource persons for the ATA Conference on Scripture in Malaysia (June 18-22). As I ministered and presented a paper in this conference and interacted

with the evangelical scholars from Asian countries, I had a privilege to represent CBCNEI. I was accompanied by Dr. Akheto Sema, the principal of ETC, who was able to develop some new connections for the benefit of ETC. Our participation in the ATA would bring greater benefit to our Churches and seminaries in the days to come. The ETC Board has approved to affiliate two of our MA programs with the ATA.

3. APBF: The Council is an associate member of Asia Pacific Baptist Federation. I am glad to inform you that we had the largest delegation to the APBF Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (Sept 2012). All the six conventions leaders and delegate could attend the program. I had the honour to speak in one of the plenary session.

4. BWA: As an associate member of the Baptist World Alliance, I had the pleasure to represent CBCNEI in the BWA Congress in Santiago, Chile (July 1-8). Dr. Anjo Keikung and Rev. Keivyiekielie Linyu represented NBCC. As a member of the theological Education and Leadership formation, I also presented two papers.

5. CCA: We are affiliated member of the Christian Conference of Asia. However, we are not sure what should be the level of our participation. Lately we have not received much information from them.

6. WCC: The Council is not yet a member of the World Council of Churches. As per the EC decision in 2011, I have initiated a process for membership.

IV. Partnership Achievements:

1. IM: Our partnership with International Ministries has been a blessing to all constituents members. We continue to receive the White Cross Funds for all the six hospitals, Vacation Bible school grants for smaller rural churches, and theological education grants for developing leaders. We receive two big grants for the leadership development. The first is meant for faculty development and the second is meant for the development of leaders for the Churches under weaker conventions (ABCC, ABC, and KABC). With the help of these grants there are 14 students continuing theological educations and we have selected 11

new this year. Out of these 18 (12+6) are at BD level while 7 (2+5) are at the post graduate level.

We are also blessed to have Rev. Taku Longkumer and his wife Rev. Katie Longkumer as Development Consultants to help our constituent members. IM is planning for India Mission Summit Celebration on Oct 2-5, 2014 to celebrate 200 years of BIM ministry in northeast India. All constituent members are requested to plan to participate in it.

2. TLA: We are grateful to the Board of Transforming Leaders in Asia which have given us funds to donate ten Bicycles and Four motorbikes to the rural workers of our constituent members and funds for hosting several training programs for the lay leaders and pastors at the Center as well as for some weaker associations. The TLA resource center, which is rented out to TLA, is utilized to host the guest of CBCNEI and CBCNEI programs.

3. Langham: With the help of Langham ministry, CBCNEI has been able to organize training program on expository preaching for pastors and leaders from Level I to III, procure ministry and theological books for pastors and seminaries for last three years. The partnership was for three years and so it has come to end this year.

V. Emphasis on Training:

We have considered hosting training programs for various needs of our constituent members as one of the most important ways to help our constituent members. Not only this informs and equips our members but also gives an opportunity for our members to meet, have fellowship and develop the family bonding within the Council. Moreover, this has generated revenue for the CBCENI Conference Centre and the Canteen. This year we have funded and hosted following programs:

- i. Writers' Workshop, Guwahati (June 5-8)
- ii. Neighbourhood Leadership Training, Guwahati (June 19-22)
- iii. Missionary Training Program, Guwahati (Aug 13-18)
- iv. Leaders Training for Siang Adi Baptist Association, Pasighat (Sept

12-15)

v. Aruanchal Baptist Church Council Leaders Training Program, Guwahati (Sept 21-23)

vi. Leaders Training for Meitei Baptist Churches Association, Imphal (Sept 27-30)

vii. Celebrate Recovery Program for Pastors and leaders, Guwahati (Oct 8-10)

viii. Mising Baptist Kebang Mission Consultation, Kulajan (Nov 2)

ix. Mising Baptist Kebang Pastors Training Program, Kulajan (Nov 3-4)

x. Sunday School Teachers' Training Program, Guwahati (Nov 5-10)

xi. Spiritual Renewal Conference, Guwahati (Nov 7-10)

xii. Seminar on Expository Preaching and Biblical Counselling, Guwahati (Nov 12-16)

xiii. CBCNEI Global Mission Consultation, Guwahati (Nov 27-30)

xiv. Langham Preaching Seminar, Guwahati (Jan 14-18)

xv. Leaders Training Program, NBKA, Borduria (Jan 24-27)

xvi. Training on Financial Management, Guwahati (Feb 1-3)

xvii. CBCNEI Pastors and Lay Leaders Conference, Guwahati (March 13-16)

VI. *The Progress on NECU:*

The idea of establishing the North East Christian University is still in process. I have written a letter to IM in this regard seeking partnership in raising funds for this humongous project, as it would be impossible for the Council to achieve by itself. We have not received any response till date. Since most of the Christian colleges are located in Nagaland and the government of Nagaland is more accessible, the EC has decided to locate the campus of NECU in the jurisdiction of NBCC. Thus far, with the initiative of Dr. Anjo Keikung and NBCC leaders, the bill in favour of

the NECU has been passed by the State Govt. of Nagaland. We are very grateful to the Legislative Body of Nagaland for this. Now we are searching for a suitable land. At present we also need Rs. 2 crores as a fund to start with. The work is enormous and we will need more dynamic leadership in this matter. Please continue to pray for it.

VII. *The Plan of CBCNEI Campus Development in Guwahati:*

We have gone through several rounds of consultations and proposals for developing the Campus of CBCNEI for a better return. In the last EC meeting held in October, a Trustee has been formed. This Trustee shall have not power to sell or lease any land of CBCNEI, but have special power for planning and execution and project that develops that land for better returns. This trustee has seven senior leaders CBCNEI: Mr. Pawan Bhuan, Rev. Dr. Anjo Keikung, Mr. R. K. Raychawdhuri, Mr. Atungo Shitiri, Dr. Jolly Rimai, Mr. Gromicko K Marak, and the General Secretary of CBCNEI.

VIII. *The ETC Ministry:*

The leadership of Rev. Zhabu Terhuja and Dr. Akheto Sema has brought good improvement in ETC. I have witnessed both physical and spiritual development on the campus. Rev. Zhabu Terhuja has travelled to the Churches under six conventions and has been able to mobilize Rs.12,40,496. Dr. Akheto Sema also has been able to mobilize some funds from abroad through his connections adding some developments on the campus. I am told that Dr. Fredrick Down has also mobilized funds from the friends of ETC. New faculty members have been added. New programs are added and of course new assets are also added, taking the ETC to a higher level. I believe that these are the answers of your prayers. The leaders of ETC are ambitious and they need your help. Please look forward to hear the report from the President of ETC. Please meet the Principal and encourage him. Make them feel that the council is grateful to the institution for making these progresses.

IX. *The Healing Ministry of CBCNEI:*

The Council is blessed with six hospitals. Five of them are directly man-

aged by us while one of them (SCH) is managed by the 4 B Health Care Pvt. Ltd under an agreed upon MOU. The Council is looking for a full time Medical Secretary. The work under the in-charge of the General Secretary is slowed down. There are greater opportunities to make the healing ministry profitable as well as charitable but there is need for more committed persons. The Council is grateful to God for few Christian doctors who are giving the leadership. However, there is need of more.

In the days of American missionaries, American Churches were involved in sending fund and volunteers to serve in these hospitals. I believe that the same model is still applicable. I want to challenge our pastors and association leaders to adopt one of these hospitals. Please consider to invest some portion of your resources in order to witness Christ through serving people in these hospitals. Currently we are in need of two good chaplains and one administrator.

For more details, please read the report of Medical Secretary In charge.

X. The Ministry of Christian Literature Center:

My deep appreciation goes to Rev. Mahangthei and the CLC Board who have accepted great challenges in bringing dramatic changes in CLC and in putting the CLC ministry back on the path of progress. We have only good news and you can read them in the CLC report. Credit also must be given to the Assistant Directors, Managers, and the CLC staffs who have worked hard day in and day out to earn good money and serve our churches. The CLC still needs some improvement in book keeping, stock updating, and in centralizing the system so as to be able to assess the profit and loss on monthly basis. They must move gradually toward computerizing the whole system.

XI. The Ministry of Justice and Peace:

This department, though new, has done well in providing leadership to the Council and its members in legal areas. His department is in need of your financial and physical support so as to impact the region in the

areas of Justice and Peace. Please read the report from Mr. Atungo Shitiri. I would like us to know that Mr. Atungo has, in addition to works in his department, also supervised the works of the Conference Center as General Manager, on full time basis.

XII. The Ministry of Baptist News Publication:

The ultimate purpose of the Publication of the Baptist News is to keep us united through information and right theological thinking. Our distribution, which is around 1500, is still far lower than our total membership. The Council has to fund the cost of publication greatly. We request every association and Church members to subscribe it, advertise your programs, and contribute news and articles. We have appointed a full time Assistant Editor, Ms. Kaholi Zhimomi. Please contact her for anything related to the Baptist News.

XIII. The Ministry of CBCNEI Conference Center and Canteen:

This is a significant part of our ministry which impacts a large number of people. In recent days we have made some structural development to make it better place to stay. However, we need efficient management system to provide professional hospitality. We are looking for a qualified leader to manage this ministry.

With the good leadership of the Property Secretary, Mr. Pawan Bhuayan, we have added New Dorm with 40 beds and have remodeled the Canteen with dining capacity of 100 persons. The present facility in the CCC is still limited to 116 beds. Hence, many of our members, who do not book in advance, are often declined. It's a painful feeling for some. There's sufficient space to increase the capacity, or to build a larger accommodation facility. The Council Trustee must look into it.

XIV. Finance and Property Management:

The greatest achievement of 2012-13 has been the streamlining of the financial management of the Council. The finance department underwent tremendous amount of pressure as it had new leadership and it had to clear the back log of two years of audit and face the new Income Tax Requirements. Mr. Pawan Bhuayan with the double responsibilities

as the in-charge Finance Secretary cum the Property Secretary gave an excellent leadership. Without undermining the hard work of several others, I would regard him as the man of the year 2012-13.

XV. The Future of CBCNEI:

The Council has very important role in facilitating the ministries of churches, associations and conventions. There is much wealth in the corporate ownership. There are more resources in coming together and more power in unity. The tendency, as human we are, is to look for self-centered immediate gain. The inclination is often to try something doable and something that goes along with the FLOW of the powerful current. And the things of common good & greater gain, that is often beyond a tribal interest, geographical interest, family interest, and of course of personal interest, is often against the FLOW. Hence they are not easily done. They are tough and the benefits are indirect, not direct—often SLOW and not immediate. The future of CBCNEI shall depend on the leadership who can understand this aspect of wisdom and would stand firm against the flow.

I am privileged to lead the Council in this unique time of history. I have completed four years and with God's blessings and your prayers I would like to finish my last year (2013-14) with CBCNEI with delight. I am grateful to God and to all of you. I shall continue to covet your prayers. Thanking you all.

Submitted humbly for your kind attention and prayers.



(Rev. Dr. A. K. Lama)

General Secretary



Activity Highlights of the Property Department, CBCNEI

Pawan Bhuyan, Property cum Finance Secretary, CBCNEI

The Christian Leprosy Clinic & Rehabilitation Centre Project at Jorhat Christian Medical Centre, Jorhat:

The Christian Leprosy Clinic & Rehabilitation Centre (CLCCRC) Project started few years back by the CBCNEI with expertise and help from Asian Rural Life Development Foundation (ARLDF). For decades the Leprosy Clinic activities slowed down and it was a matter of concern for the Council on how to utilize the vast plot of land. Many options were explored and even the local convention was requested to initiate some programs. But unfortunately nothing materialized for a long time and the Hospital was unable to take it further. However, the recent activity of the Council has started showing a positive result in the development of the Christian Leprosy Clinic (CLC) land. The following are the activities undertaken:

1. Goat farming
2. Poultry farming is almost done
3. FAITH (food always in the house) garden model started to provide techniques on how to do organic kitchen garden
4. Piggery in the process
5. Prototype Butter processing unit in pipeline
6. Other Horticulture projects in pipeline

The main objective of this project is to strengthen the CLC ministry of the Council under Jorhat Christian Medical Centre (JCMC) by utilizing the land to rehabilitate the ex-leprosy families settled in and around the locality. It also focuses on offering basic technical skills in agricultural

farming to our churches and communities in the villages in Assam and beyond.

Boundary Wall Construction in JCMC, Jorhat: The department is initiating the construction of boundary wall of the JCMC campus in phase manner. There are many vulnerable areas that are not fenced and are exposed to possible encroachment. Some part of the boundary will be fenced within few months. JCMC has a huge campus and total fencing is not possible as it involves lot of finance. Therefore it has to be done in bits and pieces as and when the fund is available.



Headquarter Campus Boundary Wall, Panbazar: The riverfront boundary wall is almost complete with new reinforced high wall. This construction completed in phase manner within a span of 3 years. There are still other sides of the campus that need high raised wall construction, as the existing walls are

almost tilting and collapsing.

Headquarter Campus Central Water Pump: The much needed replacement of the old centrifugal water pump has been carried out last month with a new submersible pump. Now the campus is getting uninterrupted water supply.



Conference Centre Complex Canteen extension: With the addition of a 40 bedded dormitory building last year to the complex, the catering service was found to be under capacity, especially during conferences & seminars. Recently, the capacity is increased

from 50 to 100 seating with a new state of the art kitchen for better service.



Self Reliance Project of the Council: The Council has fifteen (15) tenants in the main campus at Panbazar and 8 tenants in the Satribari Christian Hospital campus, apart from Churches Auxiliary For Social Action (CASA) lease land at Satribari. The Council has three (3) tenants at Shillong Vacation House

property and a plot leased to Shillong Baptist Church. This project has contributed much to the financial stability to the Council and at the same time proper utilization of the land. The Development Trust of the Council is in process of exploring further possibilities to develop & utilize the land at Panbazar & Shillong for its optimum efficiency and revenue generation.



T-Shirts to promote CBCNEI's Ministries.

To order, please contact:

**Atungo Shitri, Secretary, Justice & Peace Department
098540 24121 | ashitri@cbcnei.com**

Baptist News had the privilege to interview Walt E White, BIM consultant for Bangladesh

Baptist News: Thank you Rev Walt for sitting with us for a short interview. Could you please introduce yourself.



Walt: I am 63 years old and this summer I will be 64 and I am from the United States and I have worked with Board of International Ministries for now 37 years. I want to hang on for 40. I survived a terrible heart attack just about a year and half ago and God healed me completely and I am so

thankful to Him. I have three children two were born in Bangladesh. We have two birth daughters and one adopted daughter. About 18 years ago I co-founded a development organization in Bangladesh and so I am continuing to be involved there. I also work as a consultant there in Bangladesh in trying to help understand Cross-Cultural issues particularly working with people from the outside especially western people in trying to remind them that we are guest and ought to be respectful of other cultures, cross-cultures, Countries and governments. People from different parts may bring out some good things but they may also bring out some very bad things in their personality so I help them in Cross-Cultural relationship. It is a big area of interest of mine.

“a tendency to call everything evil that we do not understand and particularly in the area of religions.”

Baptist News: Why have you come to India? What is the purpose of your visit?

Walt: Well, I am actually glad to meet you although that was not my plan. I came to learn from India. During the years that I live in Bangladesh we did many vacations in India. We have travelled all over India except for Kerala. India is tremendously huge, it has everything, has modern has ancient. It has Hindu, Buddhist, Christians, Muslims, Jain, and Sikh. It's got jungles, its got desert; it's got beaches it's got mountains... everything. But primarily I have come to learn more about the religious background and culture of India. We Christians in the West particularly conservatives of whom I would count myself to be one have "a tendency to call everything evil that we do not understand and particularly in the area of religions." I have come to learn more on my own personal interest on this visit.

Baptist News: You say that our tendency is to call everything that we do not understand evil. Could you elaborate?

Walt: One of the problems why I want to come to India is because we have the tendency to call everything that we do not understand evil or maybe I would even dare to say that we are afraid of something like a dog barks at something that they do not understand like thunder, lightening because it makes them afraid. Sometimes we do that rather than taking the time to really understand and what is the understanding of other people. We need first to be students. It always offended me when I meet a westerner who says, "I came to India to teach religion." My goodness Indian people are so much more religious then we are in America. However, I would also say that when I speak of Jesus Christ I am not speaking about a religion. It's a relationship with God because it's a relationship it can be very individual and personal thing. That's also disturbing to some people who want everything to be similar or the same as their own experience and one of the lessons that I think I have discovered is, that the way that God meets me become normative in my thinking and so I somehow think that's how God should meet other people as well. But just like our own individual stories of how we came to know God through Jesus Christ or these individual stories of how we met the person that we

married each one is different. Each one is just rich and wonderful. I think that it's really important that we listen, we learn, and understand that another person's journey to meeting God may come on a very different kind of journey.

Baptist News: *Many a times we Christians while trying to bring people of other faith to Christ oblige them to change their cultural pattern and system. Could you comment on that?*

Walt: I think that there are several problems there. Basically we have an inadequate theology of culture. We do not recognize that every culture is a gift from God. And therefore good however what we focus on is the cultures are also human products and because humans are sinful it becomes corrupted. No culture is not what God intend it to be. Every culture is not only a gift of God but also corrupted by human beings. And therefore needs to be redeemed and needs to grow back in the direction of everything that God intended it to be. But our tendency I think as Westerners is that what we don't understand we automatically condemn as evil and that some many things that we say are superstitions may in fact only be social control. For instance we Westerners say, "don't walk under a leader its bad luck" well it's not bad luck its dangerous, you'll knock the person off the leader or the paint bucket might fall on your head. So it's actually a social control and nothing to do with evil or good spirits. But we tend to condemn such things of other cultures that we don't understand. That's why change that Jesus Christ brings to a person needs to be made by insiders and not by outsiders to a community or to a culture. And I think that has been a big mistake and particularly as we have come from a culture that is so different.

In America we have chosen freedom over security but many other cultures has chosen security over freedom

Baptist News: *What would you say other Cultural Misunderstands might be?*

Walt: Probably one of the biggest and it underlies many different problems that have manifested is that we come in the West, from an

extremely individualistic culture and we have come to group cultures, communal cultures and we completely fail to appreciate the dynamics of a person that is living in community. In the West we say, **“I think therefore I am”** by philosopher René Descartes but that is highly individualistic focused on me. There is an African proverb that says, **“I am because we are”** in other words a person gains significance only as who they are and within the family and within the wider group. This way of thinking is completely foreign to Westerners and yet when we have come to group cultures and societies we have imposed our individualistic ways. I think that we have been more tolerant of the group dynamic within tribal cultures than when we have come to the major historical religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism or Islam or some of the other religions that aren't so large but have been here for some time. They are very community based, very community oriented but we fail to recognize and completely failed to appreciate the dynamics of a person that is living in community. So we have tended to tear people out of their families and their communities. That's for me a tragedy. It's almost like saying **“well, the family that God called you to be born in, He was making mistake.”** Now I believe that God's intention for an individual to be redeemed, be transformed and then to be the means by which their family is redeemed and transformed and that their clan and their tribe and their nation. But so often we have not been so much blessing but we have been a bit of a problem and I repent of that. So I want to learn better what that is really like or the dynamics of living in a culture such as that. We don't appreciate for instance the issues of honor or shame in a family or culture. My own brother is a member of a very different religious group than me but that has not affected my life, who I married, or my job or anything but in many culture it would. So if you maybe shift your religion who will marry your sister when there is insanity in your family? If she comes from a bad family who would want to marry her? In the West we fail to recognize that one person's actions affect the group. In Bangladesh there is a beautiful principle in traditional society an individual is not allowed to make a decision that affects the welfare of the group without consulting the group. This is actually a very wise and good thing but we as Western-

ers, with our individualism run against that all the time and create a disharmony in families, and in villages that I think is unnecessary and sad. In America we have chosen freedom over security but many other cultures has chosen security over freedom. I think it's important for all culture to work out a bottom line for our having chosen freedom over security may in fact be an application of Jesus saying, **'do unto other what you would have them do unto you.'** In other words the freedom that I want for myself must grant that freedom to someone else even if I think they are wrong because I want that freedom granted to me when that person thinks I am wrong. So if I think you are wrong I still must give the freedom to be wrong because I want you to give me that freedom when you think I am wrong. And I suppose this brings to another major cultural difference. We in the West come from a culture of abundance, we also come from a culture in which at least recently have been a majority and so we carry that kind of majority mind set. We fail to appreciate the dynamics of being in a group in which we are the minority. So we are very judgmental of people who don't express their faith in the same way that we do but we forget our own history because where did the term Under Ground movement come from? It came from the Christians who met down in the catacomb, in the graves literally underground. They weren't secret but their wise and they turned the world upside down. But we from the West can be very judgmental of people who are more careful and wise in their witness then we are. Another problem of coming from the culture of abundance is that we fail to understand what it's like to be poor? What it's like to be powerless? Americans love to think of themselves as coming from the most powerful country in the world and that, **"we can do what we want when we want where we want."** We fail to understand what it is really like to be at the bottom of the social leader? The poor did not have choices but I think we failed completely in understanding which is also one of the major cultural misunderstandings of the West.



SENATE OF SERAMPORE COLLEGE (UNIVERSITY)
SERAMPORE WB 712201

Applications are invited for the post of *Dean of the Faculty of Research/SATHRI* of the Senate of Serampore College (University)

1. The Dean of Faculty of Research/SATHRI (hereafter, the Dean) shall be the principal academic and executive officer responsible for smooth and efficient functioning of the Research Programme in pursuit of the objectives of the Senate of Serampore College (University).
2. The term of headship shall normally be for a period of five years and extendable for one more term after suitable assessment.

3. Qualifications for the post are as follows:

i. Should be a recognized theological teacher, i.e., D.Th degree of Serampore or its recognized equivalent; 15 years of teaching with 5 years at M.Th level and preferably experience in supervising/evaluating/guiding research; Post-doctorate publication of books/research articles; 2 years of pastoral/ministerial experience.

ii. Should have reached a minimum of 50 years of age.

iii. Should be an Indian national.

iv. Should have served as the Principal/ Registrar/ Academic Dean/ Administrator of an affiliated college, or taught at a university for a minimum period of five years at the Post Graduate level.

v. Preferably an ordained minister of good standing in the Church.

vi. Should be able to work with others and maintain collegiality.

vii. Should have an ecumenical commitment.

4. Selected person will be placed on the salary Scale of 38050-1900-57050-2850-85550 and other allowances as permissible under the rules and provisions.

5. A partially furnished family accommodation is provided in Serampore.

Following documents shall be required:

i. Curriculum Vitae

ii. Copies of academic records

iii. Names and communication details of two referees

iv. No objection certificate from the present employer

Application should be sent by a registered post, on or before **July 10, 2013**, with the superscription- "Application for Dean of the Faculty of Research/SATHRI" addressed to: The Registrar, Senate of Serampore College (University), William Carey Road, Serampore, West Bengal 712201.



CROSS-CULTURAL PHENOMENA: THIRD CULTURE KIDS

Rev Katie Longkumer, Development Consultant, CBCNEI

Where is home? Where are you from?

Those are not questions generally considered difficult to answer. But for an ever-increasing number of people that simple enquiry can be a source of angst as they contemplate how to respond. Since the mid-twentieth century the world population has become increasingly mobile. With the advent of globalization we in North East India have rising numbers of individuals venturing beyond their borders for work or study. Consequently, there are many children being raised in varieties of cultural milieus. When considering issues related to cross-cultural careers, lifestyles or relationships, one often-overlooked aspect is that of children immersed in multi-culture contexts.

In the 1950's an American sociologist, Dr Ruth Hill Useem and her husband came to India to conduct research, accompanied by their three young sons. She began publishing her findings in the 1960's. Based on her research and family's cross-cultural experiences she coined the phrase "*Third Culture Kids*" (TCKs) to describe the cross-cultural phenomena of TCKs integrating aspects of their birth culture (the first culture) and the new culture (the second culture), to create a unique "third culture."

Who are TCKs?

TCKs have been described as:

"A person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership of any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experi-

ence the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of a similar background.”(Pollock & Van Reken, 1999)

Initial research considered children whose parents’ careers placed them in a culture different from their own. This traditionally included missionary families, foreign service personnel / diplomats, business persons and military families.

I have discovered many TCKs here in North East India in a different category. There are now several generations who have spent their childhood attending school in other parts of India, essentially a cross-cultural experience. Even if the institutions were not international in character, the children were immersed in a culture different than their parents. Especially children leaving home at an early age might have experienced a sense of being disconnected, finding difficulty relating to their “home” culture.

The Challenges of being a TCK

TCKs encounter unique challenges and issues including rootlessness, difficulty settling, attachment and basic identity struggles as noted by Leslie Lewis, a psychologist conducting research in this field.

- The elusive concept of Where is home? The sense of belonging everywhere and nowhere.
- Difficulty with commitment to people, places, schools, or school systems as these constantly change.
- Uncertain cultural identity.
- Problems with decision-making.
- Loss of relationships, loss of community/school = loss of their world.
- Feeling different from others, difficult in forming peer relationships;
 - Occurs more often at university level or when returning to “passport” country, where they are misunderstood by their fellow countrymen.
 - Occurs when completing studies in boarding school and returning home
- Rootlessness and restlessness. The frequent need to change countries and homes.
- Powerless - A feeling that they have no control over events and that these are often taken out of their hands anyway by the inevitability of the move.

- A crisis of identity - "Who am I?"

As the number of TCKs increase there is a growing awareness of these issues resulting in expanding avenues of resources available for TCKs & ATCKs (Adult TCKs) including literature (both academic & lay), online networks of TCKs and many websites offering varieties of materials and research opportunities.

INTER-CULTURAL FAMILIES

I had not heard of Dr. Useem or her research thirty years ago when my husband and I were prayerfully considering marriage. We were aware that we would encounter unique challenges in a cross-cultural marriage, as I was from the USA & he from Nagaland. As we contemplated our future we realized that our decision would not only affect our immediate family members, and us, but also that our children's journey to adulthood and quest for identity would be more intense and complex than the norm. We seriously considered whether it would be fair to bring children into the world facing these issues. As we determined to pursue this adventure of cross-cultural family, our prayer was that our chil-

dren would be able to glean the best attributes of both our cultures, while hopefully discarding the negative. In essence, before knowing the term, we were anticipating our kids creating their unique "Third Culture."

When my husband and I married, we were aware of only a few inter-cultural couples involving folks from NEI. The situation is so very different now! As the world becomes 'smaller' through the impact of social networking, media and communication, the incidents of inter-cultural marriages will become more frequent. There is even now a Facebook Group of NE Indians Married Abroad that has hundreds of members.

Parenting TCKs / ICKs

While there are many benefits and blessings, I would encourage those considering an inter-cultural marriage, as well as those already existing, to be aware of the distinctive challenges encountered in cross-cultural parenting. There are many issues that require discussion. Focus on the Family has provided an excellent set of questions regarding parenting for inter-cultural couples.

Intercultural Parenting Topics:

Thriving Family.com©2012

One TCK, a missionary kid (MK) describes her struggle with these issues creatively.

Colors by Whitney Thomas, MK (1991)

I grew up in a Yellow country

But my parents are Blue.

I'm Blue.

Or at least, that is what they told me.

But I play with the Yellows.

I went to school with the Yellows.

I spoke the Yellow language.

I even dressed and appeared to be Yellow.

Then I moved to the Blue land.

Now I go to school with the Blues.

I speak the Blue language.

I even dress and look Blue.

But deep down, inside me, something's Yellow.

I love the Blue country.

But my ways are tinted with Yellow.

When I am in the Blue land, I want to be Yellow.

When I am in the Yellow land, I want to be Blue.

Why can't I be both?

A place where I can be me.

A place where I can be green.

I just want to be green.

Discussion starters for parents of two-culture kids

If you're married to someone from a different culture, it's likely that you and your spouse have different assumptions about how to raise your children. And often, you won't be aware of those differences until you're in the middle of a parenting disagreement. Limit your conflicts and build solidarity as a couple by talking through a variety of parenting issues beforehand. Here are some questions to help you and your spouse examine your assumptions and strengthen your unity as a parenting team:

Childbirth

- Do our cultures have any unique customs regarding pregnancy and childbirth? Which of these customs are important to us?
- After the birth of a child, which family members will come to help? How will they help? How long will they stay?
- Where will the baby sleep?

Childcare

- What childcare responsibilities (feeding, bathing, changing diapers) will each of us take on?
- Who will be the primary caregiver—a nanny, parent,

grandparent or other relative?

- What potty-training methods will we use?
- How will we care for our children when they're sick?

Food & nutrition

- Will our baby drink formula or be breastfed? When should our baby be weaned?
- What kinds of food will our family eat?
- What are our nutritional standards?

Discipline & values

- What forms of discipline will we use?
- Will we treat boys and girls differently? If so, how?
- What values do we hope to instill?
- How will we teach our children about God?

Parenting philosophy

- What is our greatest responsibility as parents?
- What is the ultimate goal of our parenting?
- What kind of people do we hope our children will become?

Holidays & traditions

- What holidays will our family celebrate? How will We cel-

brate them?

- How will we celebrate birthdays and rites of passage?
- What other cultural traditions do we want to Observe as a family?

Education

- How will our children be educated?
- How will we be involved in our kids' education?
- What kinds of sports and extracurricular activities will we encourage?

Extended family

- What specific roles and responsibilities will extended family members have?
- What boundaries regarding childcare and parenting advice will we give our families?
- To which holidays are extended family invited? How are they expected to participate?

Cultural heritage

- What languages will we speak at home?
- Will our children attend a language school?
- What do we want our children to know about our cultures?
- How often, if at all, will we visit my country of origin?



N e w s C l i p p i n g s

The Platinum Jubilee Celebration of Women Society, Tamenglong Baptist Church (January 3 - 4)

The Tamenglong Baptist Church, Tamenglong district of Manipur, is one of the oldest Church among the Zeliangrong Tribe in Northeast India. The Platinum Jubilee of women society of the Church was celebrated under the theme “*March forth to Victory*” with Dr N.H.

Adui, General Secretary, ZBCCNEI and Rev K. C. Gaila, Pastor, Shillong Baptist Church as the main speakers of the celebration.

Highlights of the Celebration

More than 300 women sang the “*Hallelujah Chorus*” of G. F. Handel in unison glorifying for His unfailing grace through the 75 years of their organization. Their endeavor has secondary impact equipping

all the members of the church in singing the chorus in praising God Almighty.

The handwriting transcription of Rongmei Naga Holy Bible competition was conducted in order to promote and





enhanced studies of God's words. The competition was to complete within a period of 10 months. However, one woman completed the task within 3 months. About 40 women participated in the competition. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes of ₹10,000/-, ₹8,000/- & ₹50,00/- was awarded respectively. Copies of the winners are kept in the Church's library. The courage of busy mothers for taking interest in the words of God is a great challenge for all the Christian.

More than 5000 attended and had a warm fellowship in praising God with various items. The Platinum Jubilee Celebration Committee expresses heartfelt thanks to all the participants and well-wishers for the successful celebration of the Jubilee. Please continue to pray for the journey of the society in serving the Lord.



The 33rd Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention Annual General Meeting (March 7 – 10)

The 33rd Karbo Anglong Baptist Convention (KABC) Annual General Meeting was held on the theme "The Second Coming of Christ (Hebrews 9:28)." Akhoiphuta Jongpha Baptist Church is situated on a hillside with lush green, varied flora and fauna, surrounded by beautiful mountains, valleys and rivers – it is a blessed place. The local Church welcomed all the KABC officers, speakers and delegates with traditional Rengma scarf. Rev Athang Sebu (former General Secretary, KABC) and Rev Lawrence Ingti (Evangelist, AEF-NEI) were the speakers. The two speakers blessed everyone with their inspiring and challenging messages. About 200 official delegates attended from 13 member associations under KABC. Rev Davidson Ingti, the General Sec-



retary gave the keynote address during the inaugural service. The President, Dr Oriwel Kramsa hoisted the KABC flag before the Executive Committee began. Separate workshops were organized for men, women and youths – topics like *Second coming and the urgency of the gospel*, *Second coming and witnessing*, *Second coming and the role of women for its preparation*, *Women and evangelism at home*, *Youth in the world of turmoil*, and *Youth & evangelism in their context*. In all these, everyone was reminded of the fact that the Second coming of Christ is at hand and every believer in Christ ought to be prepared for Christ's return.

At the close, it was resolved that every believer in Christ ought to participate in proclaiming the Gospel in obedience to the Great Commission as urgent, because the second coming of Christ is at hand. Further, it was also resolved to preserve God's given natural beauty and protect from human insensitive deforestation and ecological imbalance. Finally, the house solemnly resolved to maintain peace, unity and goodwill among different tribes within the KABC.

The 34th KABC Annual General

Meeting will be held at Deithor Baptist Church under Nihang Karbi Baptist Association (NKBA) during the second week of March 2014.



Garo Baptist Convention Mission Consultation (April 11 - 14)



In partnership with the CBCNEI, the Garo Baptist Convention conducted its Mission Consultation basing on the theme "you are my Witnesses" at Rajasimla Baptist Church (The first established Church among the Garo Hills). Around 196 pastors and mission secretaries from various churches and Association participated in the Mission Consultation. Rev Dr Jolly Rimai Mission Secretary CBCNEI, Rev Rettiar G. Momin General Secretary GBC, Rev Frithing D. Sangma, Rev Dilseng M. Sangma were the resource persons.

Annual General Meeting, Assam Baptist Convention (April 11 - 14)



The Sadia Dibru Baptist Association (SDBA) hosted the 46th Annual General Meeting of the Assam Baptist Convention at the District Library, Tinsukia. The meeting started with the hosting of flags of all the six Associations by its Executive Secretaries. The theme was "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you" (John 14:27). The resource persons were Rev Dr A. K. Lama, General Secretary, CBCNEI; Rev K. Marak, Pastor, Adinggri Baptist Church; Arup Saikai, Assistant Pastor, Dispur Baptist Church.



Pastors & Mission Workers Conference (May 1-4)

The Southern Tangkhul Naga

Baptist Association (STNBA) organized the Pastors & Mission Workers Conference at Mount Horeb Pastoral Training cum Retreat Centre, Leingangching which stretches over acres of land surrounded by beautiful mountain ranges and landscapes. With life becoming more chaotic and places we live in overcrowding



and even the Churches we attend losing its serenity and calm, Mt Horeb Pastoral Training cum Retreat Centre come as a heavenly abode to reconnect with our soul. Leingangching is a small village around 34 km from its District Main City Ukhrul and approximately 41 km from the capital city Imphal, Manipur. Mt Horeb became a spiritual home for 60 pastors for three days. Powerful

and spirit anointed messages were delivered by our own dynamic CBCNEI leaders Rev. Dr. A.K.Lama, General Secretary and Rev. Dr. Jolly Rimai, Mission Secretary on the pertinent subjects *“Biblical Exposition”* and *“Christian Life and Commitment.”* It was a meeting place for many prominent Church leaders under STNBA and a time of fruitful discussion on ministry issues, challenges and as to how to go about in the future with commitment and zeal. The program came to a blessed closure with renewed passion for serving the Lord.



Silver Jubilee Celebration (May 4 - 6)

Under the theme *“Proclaim His Kingdom,”* the Union Baptist Church, (UBC) Ukhrul, which was established in 1988 celebrated the joyous occasion from . The Jubilee Monument was unveiled by Rev. Yarngam Muivah, Executive Secretary, Tangkhul Baptist Churches Association (TBCA). The speakers for the celebration were

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



Konghar, MBC. Rev Lama spoke on the topics, *“Proclaim His Kingdom”* and *“Proclaim His Unfailing Love”* and Rev. Konghar dealt on the topic, *“Proclaim His Faithfulness.”* This event was successfully organized by the members of UBC under the vibrant leadership of Rev. Remember Rimai, Pastor, UBC and the COLA Chairman Mr. Shimthee Ruivah. The celebration brought together Tangkhuls from all over Manipur to thank the Lord for His faithfulness over the last 25 years of UBC ministry. Over 5000 delegate attended the blissful Jubilee and the gathering was truly overwhelming. In analyzing the history of the UBC it is undeniable that the Lord has been gracious to the Tangkhul people in general and UBC in particular. May the Church

continue its ministry in reaching out to the people and experience yet other history.



The sufferings of Silent Khul Village near Imphal



On May 3, 36 houses and all the belongings of the families of this village are burned down to ashes by a mob from nearby village. The victims are sheltered in the local Church and in a makeshift camp. The pastor is doing a wonderful job. Our Christian brothers and sisters are in desperate need of help. The council has released a small amount of help for temporary relief but they would need more help. If you would like to donate any money for this cause you may earmark and send it to the Treasurer CBCNEI. Please uphold

them in prayers. Please also pray for peace and harmony.



Wild fire gutted the houses of Sinjol Village, Nagaland

Earlier on April 12 this year, in a forest fire accident, 11 Christian families lost everything. Rev. Minlien Singson, the Executive Secretary of Kuki Baptist Associations, Nagaland, has requested for relief. The Council has sent a small relief help but they



would not need more help. Any donations to help the families may be earmarked and be sent to the Treasurer, CBCNEI.



Dibang Lohit Baptist Churches Association

Around 100 pastors, deacons, and Church Secretaries of Dibang Lohit Baptist Churches Association (DLBCA) came together to reconsider the best options out of the system of centralization and the autonomy. Rev Lalmuanzuala Sailo, Field Director, presented the system and administrative structure of the Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM). Rev Banmbo Pertin, Executive Secretary of DLBCA, presented the present system of the DLBCA and its challenges. Rev Dr A. K. Lama, General Secretary of CBCNEI, led three group discussions to consider the possible options that might strengthen DLBCA Churches. He also led Bible Studies and preached in the evening sessions. On the Mother's Day He spoke in the Roing Town Baptist Church. Please uphold the DLBCA Churches' leaders in your prayers.

Christian Literature Centre gets new Director (April 26)



Rev T. P. Mordecai, the Executive Secretary of the Ronmei Naga Baptist Association (RNBA) is elected to be the new Director of the Christian Literature Centre (CLC) during the 63rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Council of Baptist Churches of North East India (CBCNEI). The General Secretary of CBCNEI along with the Regional Secretaries of the six conventions blessed with a prayer in the presence of all the delegates of the AGM. The Council would like to wish him a successful and fruitful ministry.



New Associate Member of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (April 26)



The Maraland Church was officially accepted to be an Associate Member of Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI) during the 63rd Annual Meeting. The Council along with the six conventions and three associate members welcome the Maraland Baptist Church to the CBCNEI family.



CBCNEI CONFERENCE CENTRE

A.C. ROOM

Single	- 4
Double	- 7
Triple	- 1

Common Bath

Double	- 4
Triple	- 2

NON A.C. ROOM (Bath Attached)

4 Beded	- 1
6 Beded	- 1
Double	- 6

Dormitory

19 Beded	- 1	7 Beded	- 1
21 Beded	- 1	5 Beded	- 1

CONFERENCE HALLS

Conference Room New Block (AC)	₹ 2000/-
L. M. Auditorium (Non AC)	₹ 3000/-
Training Centre (AC)	₹ 1000/-

Contact: 0361-2736874 | 9085322961 | confcentre@cbcnei.com

Relationship in Intercultural Marriage



Dr. Asangla Ao, Consultant, TLA Ministries

It is often assumed that there are more problems in intercultural marriages. But no marital relationship is without conflicts or challenges. Every marriage has its “highs” and “lows”, whether married within the same ethnic group/race/country or married in an intercultural/interracial setup. Our life experiences which weave through family and cultural background often influence who we become, what we do and why we do things in certain ways. Such teachings set our mindset and lifestyle. We all come from a different background, our mindset and behavior being informed and nurtured by the core values, beliefs, principles, prejudices, and experiences from our family of origin (FOO) and also the society

where we are born and raised. We carry a baggage decorated by our past experiences and value system. And as we enter into a marital relationship, we often don’t come alone but bring this “Baggage” with us. So, just imagine the complexity involved in the union of two persons coming from two different backgrounds, and to make the matter worse—don’t forget the role of each “baggage” that couples bring along with them! So, in marital relationship we must be sensitive about the impact of this “baggage.” Besides how we accept and treat each other, how we handle this “baggage” often determines the health (‘fall’ or ‘rise’) of a marital relationship.

In intercultural marriage one cannot disregard the impact of cultural differences. Certain things we do differently in different culture. What we learn growing up becomes part of us. We are comfortable with things we are familiar with. One of the most common areas of conflict for married couple is their “Assumptions and Expectations” in the backdrop of their respective life experiences. We all feel comfortable with familiarity. So, our natural tendency is to go for familiar things. In marriage when couples stick to their gun by saying: “my way is the right way; the way we do things in my family is the correct way” that marriage will lead to nowhere but disaster. Instead of love flowing, tension will grow. Soon the couple will forget their very objective of being married to each other and start majoring on minor issues like wet towel, toothpaste, conversation style, clothes, food habit etc. Slow and steady but surely such things will eventually create “roadblock” in marital relationship. Such minor problems are common in all marriages but they often get magnified in intercultural marriage, may be due to our ignorance about other culture or our unwillingness

to change or appreciate it. If you have intercultural marriage, face and accept the reality of cultural differences.

I have been married to my husband for 25 years now. I come from Ao Naga tribe while my husband hails from Khampa tribe, Tibetan origin. All these years the “merging” of ‘Ao-Khampa’ has been splendid, but not always. Over the years I have noticed that it’s not any major issue but most of the time it’s the minor things which becomes ‘roadblocks’ in our relationship. I don’t brag to have a “perfect marriage” but I do give all the credit to God for being so tolerant and gracious to two sinful human beings like me and my husband, teaching us and helping us mature through all our human follies. Over the years, God has taught us through His Word and our life experiences to focus on the major things and not make fuss of minor things. I would like to share with you few things from our life experiences so that as you read this article it might help or you might be able to help those who are facing challenges in their intercultural/interracial marital relationship.

There is no doubt that intercultural / interethnic marriages have lots of challenges but couples can cope and maintain a healthy relationship. Intercultural relationship widens the horizon of our mindset and offers us the benefit to see, learn, understand, and appreciate other culture from a different perspective. If you dig deeper you will find 'jewels' in intercultural relationship. However, in order to harvest the benefits couples should be willing to go through the learning process. And learning process is always time taking; 'miracle' doesn't happen overnight.

In our learning process we need to know that any close relationship like marital relationship needs constant love, care, and nurturing. Most of us suffer from "superiority complex" syndrome. We tend to think that our family/culture/tribe is better than others. We simply allow negative attitude toward other culture to grow. Maintaining a good and positive **Attitude** toward the culture or ethnic group of your spouse and willing to learn will help us build a strong relationship. No wonder the Bible rightly says: "*....in humility consider others better than yourselves.*" (Phil

2:3). Growing up I used to have prejudices toward certain people group/tribe. But being born and raised outside Nagaland, I have had an advantage of knowing, interacting, living and growing up with various other people group. Such life experience changed my mindset, my attitude, my perspective; teaching me to respect and appreciate other culture too. I learned that in every culture/tribe/people group there are both good and bad things and we can learn so much from others (even from the negative elements we can learn so much if we are willing).

Taking time to learn from our spouse's culture and background (FOO) helps us understand and love our spouse better, especially when we go through "rocky mountain." It provides the insight to discern 'why he/she said so or behaved in certain way' which helps us to 'respond' rather than 'react.' Such understanding motivates us to forgive and love our spouse (even when he/she doesn't deserve it). A positive attitude toward our spouses and their culture opens the door to listen, observe, learn, and appreciate.

I grew up in a “hunter’s” family where meat was served in every meal. Years later I got married with a man from Buddhist background who hardly ate meat in his family! What an irony! Surely there was conflict of ‘like-dislike’ in our daily menu. But gradually it dawned on me that God has given us not only meat to eat but other vegetables like pumpkin and brinjals too!! It took me almost 25 years to compromise with the fact that God provided only fruits and veggie as food in the Garden of Eden (Gen 1:29). Unfortunately (for meat lover like me) there will be no meat in New Jerusalem! Fruits and veggie will be served again! (Isa 65:21). Isn’t that interesting? On serious note, today I do appreciate the influence of my husband on me for converting me from ‘meat eater’ only to “veggie” lover too. This is only one example, but in life we have to make so many adjustments. **Adjustment** is the connecting bridge when two personalities/cultures are at war. One can never enjoy the beauty of other culture if he/she remains adamant, unwilling to change, holding on to the attitude of “my way is the right way.” Making effort from both the parties

to adjust with each other’s personality, family, and culture will certainly help couples to experience the true essence of intercultural relationship.

After marrying the “love of your life” have you ever entertained doubt like this in your mind: “OMG! Have I married the wrong person? I didn’t know that he/she was like this!” Couples discover each other gradually after marriage. Many new and unexpected things emerge. For instance, soon after our marriage I discovered that my husband and I are like two opposite poles—if he wants to go to north, I prefer going to south! After hospital work I preferred staying home and spend time with my husband, but he enjoyed going out, meeting and interacting with people. The day he couldn’t connect with other people, he gets ‘headache’ staying home! “Does he not enjoy spending time with me?”—surely that was the question pounding in my head. Similarly he had to struggle with me: “why don’t you socialize?” Eventually we realized that he got refreshed and energized by going out and interacting with others; while I did so by having some quiet moment and space

for myself. Accepting the fact that we were two individuals 'wired' differently and simple effort of converting our 'discomfort zone' into 'comfort zone' was the key that saved our marriage from disaster. Lesson learned: **Acceptance** of our differences and learning to appreciate them enhances our marital relationship.

Every relationship needs good nutrition to thrive and **Appreciation** is one of the key nutrients that helps keep marital relationship strong and vibrant. Couples must learn to accept and appreciate the differences. I used to expect my husband do certain thing in certain way (to be precise-'the way it was done in my family'). For instance, I used to fuss over the way he made our bed. I hardly appreciated him and was very quick in pointing out his mistakes (to be precise 'it wasn't made the way I wanted it!'). I have learned hard way that there are more than one right way of doing things. If a genuine appreciation precedes a gentle correction (when needed), moments of conflict may turn into moments of celebration as we engage in learn-

ing process as husband and wife.

Intercultural marriage adds an extra flavor to relationships. I don't deny the work of the Holy Spirit in my life in making me a better person today, but I also must admit that the experience of growing up in different culture and being married to a man from different ethnicity and also religious background has a rich input in my life. His 'here and now' approach in life; his sensitive heart compelling him to go extra mile in reaching out those in need; his unswerving faith in God, his core values and principles are some of the things which has influenced my life immensely. I can say that I am a different, rather a better person today because of the 'intercultural' experience. No two persons are alike or think alike or value the same thing alike. But allowing the thread of positive attitude, adjustment, acceptance, and appreciation run through the fabric of intercultural marriage can ignite our marital life to blossom. Challenging moments will come on our way, but together we can fight and win the battle.





FOOD CORNER

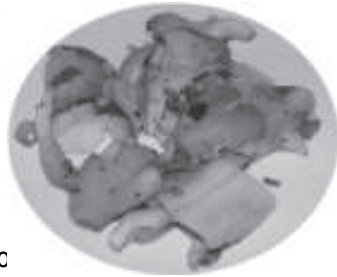
Bendangkumzuk, Faculty Member for Food Production under the Department of Hotel Management & Catering Technology, The Global Open University, Nagaland.

Oyster Mushroom Salad

Recipe:

Serving: 4 person

Ingredients	Quantity
1. Fresh oyster mushroom	500gm
2. Sliced onion	100gm
3. Spring onion batons	40gm
4. Raw tomato	80gm
For dressing:	
1. Green chilli	10gm
2. Chop garlic	10gm
3. Light soya sauce	8tbl spc
4. Lemon juice	6tbl spoon
5. Sugar syrup	3tbl spoon



Method:

1. Clean and wash mushroom, blanch in hot water for about 3mts and remove.
2. Shred mushroom into small pieces and keep it in a clean bowl.
3. Slice onion, wash, separate them and drain off excess water properly, and keep it aside.
4. Clean and wash spring onion, cut off whitish stem and cut the greens about 1 ½ inches long.
5. Deseed raw tomato, and cut it into small stripes.
6. Put all the ingredients in a clean bowl, add dressing, mix them nicely and serve.

Method dressing:

1. Add crushed green chilli and chop garlic in a bowl.
2. Add the remaining ingredients one after the other and mix well.

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