

Baptist News

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CHURCHES IN NORTH
EAST INDIA

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EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor: Rev Dr Solomon Rongpi
Asst Editor: Mrs Lichanbeni Tungoe Kithan

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Contact information:

CBCNEI, Mission Compound
Panbazar, Guwahati, Assam-781001
Phone: +91-361-2515 829
Fax: +91-361-2544 447
eMail: editor@cbcnei.in

website: www.cbcnei.in

Facebook: facebook.com/cbcnei

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Editorial



The theme of CBCNEI for this year is ***Together Towards Fullness of Life*** based on John 10:10. The sub-theme for this issue "***Building a Strong Christian Family***" is also one of the essential theme elements while we talk about togetherness towards fullness of life.

What is a Christian Home?

A Christian home is one in which God is alive and present in the lives of the family members. Building a Christian home is not just by name, but in reality it is the presence of Christ and His spirit in the lives of His followers who live together within the house. A house built without the foundation of Christ is merely a physically built house destined to fall at anytime during the harsh weather. Only a strong foundation based on the love of Jesus Christ creates a real and lasting home. Christians living in that home does not really mean that Christ is the foundation of that home.

A family is a divine institution and so if we build a God-

oriented foundation, and if we get our values, standards, directions from what God has revealed from the Bible, then only we will have a proper authority in our family. God must be the first and final authority upon which a family is built. The goal of marriage and family is unity; the goal is oneness and togetherness. Therefore, we must work towards oneness. In the Bible, we see the story of Noah and his families who were saved by God from the floods amidst the sinful neighbours. They built an altar to worship and thank God for protecting their lives from the floods. We know that the home we are living in now is temporary and that one day we all would be leaving for our eternal home but it can only be possible for those who live according to His will and purpose. A Christian home should be built on faith, love and forgiveness.

Let me leave this question for all of us to meditate and ponder whether our so called Christian home really portrays the family where Christ's Love is the centre of our relationship with each other. Let us ponder and think together towards building stronger Christian family even as we journey towards a better Home in heaven.



Rev Dr Solomon Ronpi
General Secretary, CBCNEI



Together towards building a strong Christian family

Eph.5:21-33

Mrs. Amenla Mar, *Chaplain, Impur Christian Hospital, ABAM*

All families and each person in it are unique, there's no magic, one-size-fits-all parenting plan and marriage relationship that guarantee to give you a healthy and happy family. And since nobody is perfect in this fallen world, there's no such thing as a perfect family. But there are some basic principles that will help you to create a family which, each member can grow spiritually, emotionally, and relationally - which will help you to develop a healthy, happy and strong family that God wants you to enjoy.

Foundation of Christian family

A physical house built without a foundation is destined to fall. Only a firm foundation creates a real and

lasting home. In the same way, we have only one solid foundation and that is Jesus Christ and His Word. He is the only foundation of a Christian home. Jesus ended his sermon on the mount with the parable of **"a wise man who build his house on the rock"** (Matthew 7:24-27). His house stood against the wind and flood, but the house built on sand fall. As a parent, we must choose to build our own house, our family, on the rock of Christ and His word, if you want to build a strong home that will stand for God. It is impossible to make a successful and happy family without God as the foundation of the house. The Scripture said: Psalm 127:1. Except the Lord builds the house,

they labor in vain. Sometimes we put so many efforts to build-up a strong family by materialism, fame, status and event to the extent of future insurance. Bible clearly says that family is not only an earthly institution but it is a divine institution established and ordained by God (Gen 1:28). This is an institution in which one prepares a life after dead eternity. When we talk about building a strong family we need to understand some of the fundamentals of strong marriage without which we can't have a strong family.

The fundamental of strong marriage ((Ephesians 5:22-33)

Most families or at least over 50% of all marriages in our nation fails. Many fall apart during the stormy times. Things like debt, lust, business of life, loss of interest in the partner, and a host of other things can bring marriages to the brink of disaster. Marriage is one of the greatest gifts, God ever gave to humanity. But, it is truly beautiful when it operates like God intended it to.

Marriage is regarded as the perfect joined of body, mind and spirit between a man and a woman. In

Ephesians 5:22-33, we find Paul's real thought on marriage. Here we find Apostle Paul sharing on the concern for the fundamental of strong marriage;

1. **Mutual love.** The husband is commanded to love his wife with every fiber of his being, Eph. 5:25; 28, 31. The wife is commanded to love her husband, Titus 2:4. A home filled with love is a home filled with the essence of Heaven!
2. **Loyalty** – Eph. 5:31 speak of the law of "*leaving and cleaving*". This was what God expected of the first married couple, Gen. 2:24, and it is what He expects of every other married couple. Their relationship with the parents is altered forever. It can still be strong, but the marriage relationship must have the pre-eminence over the parental relationship. Children need to let go and so do parents. Few things are more devastating to a marriage than a failure to "*leave and cleave*".
3. **The precious joined between Husband and wife:** The word

"joined" means "to be glued". It is the idea of two things being bonded together in such a way that they cannot be torn apart. It is a bond so strong and so deep that you cannot tell where one begins and the other ends. Marriage is a bonding together of two individuals in a relationship that can only be described as one flesh (Gen2:24). And if our mind and soul are not bonded together, the two will never become one flesh. It is a covenant. It is purely an interpersonal relationship, satisfaction, success, happiness, prosperity and love in a marriage will happen when right relationship build between husband and wife. Bonding brings a couple together intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially and spiritually. Husband and wife are one in everything they do. No one else can be a part of them the way they are part of each other. "Let man not sepa-

rate", (Mk 10:9) affirm to exclude all others in this union.

We all know how a house is build. In order to start building our house, we must collect loads of bricks, sand, iron, timber and a lot more. Then the house is gradually put together by skilled workers. A marriage is built in the same manner. Each couple bring big pile of materials, the habits, attitude, degrees, values, beliefs etc. gradually, all these have to be adjusted and fitted together into one. We don't need to hire experts but two of us should work hard at task of building a marriage. It is a joint task constantly building up day by day. Using the gospel for guidance it will strengthen them to last through eternity. "Marriage is sanctified when it is cherished and honored in holiness. That union is not merely between husband and wife; it embraces a partnership with God" In Christian marriage there are not two partners but three- and the third is Christ.



A Grace and a Calling

Mr. M. Tusuyiba Yimchunger, Dimapur, Nagaland currently ministering in Myanmar

My first true spiritual and personal encounter with Jesus happened during that phase of my life while I was struggling every day and was living with no hopes. I was working at a cemetery as caretaker where one fine evening, I met one old man who was an evangelist. After a brief conversation, he gave me one booklet titled as "Call to me and I will answer you", I still could remember it very clearly. Looking at that one sentence written on the cover of the book, something really touched me straight at heart. I began to read the book and continually prayed and meditated upon it. During which, I started thinking deeper about my spiritual life amidst hopelessness and despair and I could feel my heart changing daily as I continued to read the word of God more and more. It was in the first week of June in 2006, when I received Jesus Christ as my personal saviour and dedicated my

life to live according to His will. Eventually, God performed miracles in my life, one of which was the healing of Christ upon my body from my grave disease -appendix and ulcer and He proved me that He is My God and His grace healed me. During that same year, I was appointed as Public Information Secretary at Baptist Youth Fellowship Dimapur (BYFD) for a term of 2 years. It was during my training in DOMATA INDIA Bible School, in the month of October, 2007, through a vision in a dream where I saw a name, "BURMA". God spoke to me to which I understood it was a calling from Him. From that day on, I begin to pray for the Mission in Myanmar (BURMA).

I have been involved in Outreach Ministry in various places of Nagaland and Assam after my Ministerial Bible Studies. During the year from 2009 to 2013, I was work-

ing with Calvary Mission Ministry Dimapur as Youth Leader. In the year 2014, God allowed me to minister as a worship leader at City Harvest Church. All these past years I have had many opportunities and privileges and many times I made wrong choices which confused me in following the Vision God showed me several years ago. But when I realized, I turned from every worldly decisions based on my comfort, my conveniences and I chose to follow God's Will. For about four months during my meditation in the Word of God, I have been led to Pray for Yimchungru Baptist Boru Amukhungto (YBBA) Mission Leaders and during which God revealed to me through His Scripture from Joshua 4:6 to pray for YBBA Mission leaders. I was deeply convinced by that verse and from that moment on I started to confess the word of Truth in my prayers for YBBA Mission Leaders. One fine morning, my Mission Secretary called me and shared

his thoughts for Myanmar Mission. I was listening to him and the words which he spoke were the same as I was praying all this time. Then I shared my Vision to him which I had from the Lord and we both agreed and came to conclusion that this is God's plan. Therefore, I humbly accepted to serve and obey it as God fulfilling His will through the vision given to me and now giving me an opportunity to go as missionary to the unreached people with the gospel . But having been newly placed in a new country, I am struggling to overcome the language barrier as it is very difficult to communicate with the people without knowing their language and the only hope and solution is to learn their language and culture as fast as I can. Please pray for me and my ministry in this unknown land. Pray that God will give me the wisdom and knowledge to achieve my goal in winning souls and also in planting more churches.



The Kaisaris - Hind Medal

A Story of Missionary Recognition by the British Government

By William B Lip hard

*This is a re-publication of an article from "The Baptist" magazine which was founded in 1919 and was published every Saturday by the Northern Baptist Convention at 417 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois. The present article was written by William B Lip hard for **The Baptist**, Vol 1, No.22 (June 26,1920) acknowledging the works of the Ten missionaries from the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) who were the recipient the most prestigious medals.*

Many an American home, as a result of the war, holds a treasure whose value cannot be measured in silver or in gold. It is displayed on occasion with solemn pride, for it typifies readiness for supreme sacrifice and the highest dies-regard of self for the welfare of others. To thousands of young Americans, because of extraordinary heroism in action or conspicuous service beyond the claim of duty, a grateful government has awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Similarly the men of France have been decorated with the Croix de

Guerre, while here and there throughout the vast domain of the British Empire may be found thousands of Englishmen who are the proud possessors of the coveted Victoria Cross.

In these days of readjustment let us not forget that peace as well as wars present her opportunities for distinguished service beyond the call of ordinary duty. In Recognition of this principle, The British government by royal warrant in 1900 instituted the order of the Kaisaris-Hind Medal. This highly-prized honor is awarded to those men and women who

had contributed to the advancement of public interests in India along moral, educational, social and industrial lines. The medal represents to the civil service of India what the Victoria Cross represents to the military service. Baptists may well take pride in the fact that ten missionaries of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society

(ABFMS) have been awarded this medal for distinguished public service in India. There are two classes of the decoration- the silver medal which is awarded by the governor-general of India, and the gold medal which is awarded by the king- emperor himself upon the recommendation of his secretary of the state for India.

The accompanying photograph show the silver medal awarded to Rev. William Pettigrew in April,

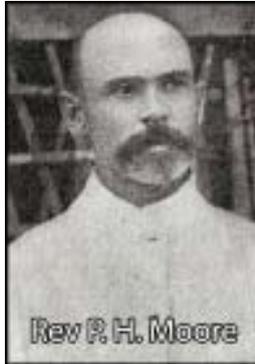


1919, for the distinguished educational and medical service which he rendered in the forbidden state of Manipur in Assam. Mr Pettigrew was appointed as a missionary to India in 1890 and reached the field in January, 1891. Shortly after his arrival the massacre of the chief commissioner of Assam and sev-

eral other officers turned his attention to the people of Assam. With another missionary he established headquarters near the border, and for two years they devoted themselves to the study of Manipuri and Bengali languages. In the latter part of 1893 his colleague left for another field and Mr. Pettigrew went alone and without official permission into the great state of Manipur- the first missionary to take up work among the people in this section of Assam. He opened a school



Ms. S. J. Higby



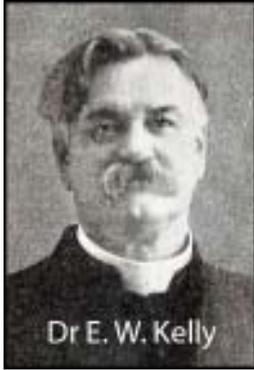
Rev. P. H. Moore



Dr. Ola Hanson

among the Manipuris, and the work was showing encouraging progress when the political agent informed him that he had no official right and insisted that he stop all evangelistic work and await orders from the government of India. Mr. Pettigrew utilized this period of waiting by translating the Gospel of Luke and John and the Acts of the Apostles into Manipuri. In due course of time he was given his choice of confining his evangelistic work to the Tangkhul Nagas in the northeast corner of the state or getting out of Manipur. He chose the former. In 1896 he became a missionary of the ABFMS, which accordingly took over the work among Tangkhul Naga tribe. While waiting to begin the Naga work, Mr. Pettigrew was asked by the polit-

ical agent to open village schools in the valley. The value of the educational work was soon recognized, and it was not long before he was appointed "honorary inspector of schools" in Manipur. He was permitted to carry on purely educational work in numerous parts of the state, but all evangelistic activities among the Hindus of the valley and among certain hill tribes were strictly forbidden. Yet in spite of these restrictions the gospel message is being carried into the dark corners of the state by the natives who have gone out from the Christian schools which he established. Near the palace of the ruler in the section of the state barred to the missionaries is a self-supporting native Christian church.



In 1918 Mr. Pettigrew was released for war service and left the mission field. He was com-

missioned captain with the labor corps of Assam. During one of his missionary furlough, Mr. Pettigrew took a medical course in London and was thus enabled to minister to the needy sufferers in the state of Manipur- the only man in that section of Assam who was doing such work. For this medical service and his activities in advancing education in Manipur, he was awarded the Kaisar-Hind Medal.

Another man similarly honored is Rev. Samuel D. Bawden, for his conspicuous service at Kavali, South India, among a criminal tribe known as the Erukalas. Mr. Bawden became manager of the Erukalas industrial settlement at Kavali in 1913, after eight years of missionary work at Ongole,

South India. A course in mechanical engineering at the University of Illinois in addition to his training at the Rochester Theological Seminary, from which he was graduated in 1897, peculiarly fitted him for the type of work in which he is engaged — a work which combines industrial training with evangelization.

The existence in India of a number of criminal tribes whose members secured their living by theft had long been a problem to the government, which finally attempted to solve the situation by assigning these tribes to established settlements where they were kept under strict supervision and discipline. It soon became evident that such a method, while it might eliminate some of the crime, could not bring about moral regeneration of the criminal. That was a task for the Christian missionary. Accordingly, Mr. Bawden in his work among the Erukalas has introduced industrial training. By earning an honest living they are transformed from ruthless murderers into useful citizens. The

transformation is made permanent through the teachings of Christianity which they receive at the settlement. Two villages in this district are made up entirely of these reformed criminals. The valuable service which Mr. Bawden has rendered the government in his work among the Erukals has thus been appropriately recognized.

In 1918 the Kaisaris-Hind Gold Medal was awarded to Dr E.W. Kelly in recognition of the splendid contribution which he made to the educational development of Burma as president of Rangoon Baptist College. Dr. Kelly became president of this college in 1911, succeeding Dr. L.E Hicks, after twenty-nine years of missionary work in Moulmein, Rangoon and Mandalay. He has thus been in missionary service for nearly forty years.

Rangoon Baptist College, which was renamed as Judson College in honour of Rev Adoniram Judson, was established in 1872. Since no college in Indian has the right to confer degree except as it is affiliated with some university

which possesses the degree conferring power, the Baptist institution became affiliated in 1882 with Calcutta University- first as a high school and later, from 1894 to 1909, as a first arts college. In 1909 it was granted affiliation as an A.B College. The two colleges in Burma- Rangoon College, a government institution, and Judson College, the only Christian college in the province, both affiliated in 1882 with Calcutta University- were thus dominated by the educational policies of a foreign rather than a local university. The advisability of having a purely Burman institution more vitally in touch with the educational interests and needs of the province had long been under consideration. The proposed plan for becoming a constituent college of this new university which would lead its financial aid in equipment and



maintenance offered a solution to the problem of inadequate resources which were confronting Judson College. Dr. Kelly took a most important part in the deliberations which resulted in making Judson College a constituent part of the new Burma University. It was singularly fortunate that Judson College should have at its head during this important development in its history a man of such exceptional ability as Dr. Kelly. His services have been of inestimable value to the denomination, and it is fitting that they should have received such distinguished recognition from the government.

Another American Baptist missionary honoured with the award of Kaisaris-Hind Gold Medal is Dr. Charles A. Nichols, who for over forty years has laboured among the Sgaw Karens at Bassein, Burma. It is appropri-



ate that his long missionary career among these people should receive public recognition. By carrying on the work of his predecessors in transforming this heart-en centre into a self-supporting Christian community, the members

of which are constantly being called upon to fill positions of trust and honour, Dr. Nichols has rendered a distinct service to the government. Consistent adherence to the principle of self-support has enabled him to develop a strong, ambitious class of people who are prepared to do efficient work for the churches and to become influential members of the business and professional circles into which they may be called.

The Bassein Sgaw Karen Mission is almost entirely self-supporting. The only buildings erected by American money on the compound of over twenty acres

are the houses occupied by the missionaries. Among the buildings erected with the money contributed by the Karens are the Ko Tha Byu Memorial Hall and auditorium, numerous dormitories for the students, a steam-cooking establishment, spacious dining halls, an electric-lighting plant, a food store-house, a fuel house, band stand and infirmary. Near the riverside are a steam saw mill, a rice mill and a machine shop in which motor launches and other marine craft have been built. These are all owned and operated by the Karens, the profits being used for the support of their school and other work. During the war Dr. Nichols was asked by government officials to take charge of the Karen recruiting, as a result of which a substantial number of recruits was furnished to every required unit. His greatest service to the government, however, lies in his contribution to the citizenship of the country- a contribution of strong, efficient men and women in whom Christianity has developed an integrity and trustworthiness which have been tried and

not found wanting. In 1913 a silver medal was conferred upon Dr. John E. Cummings of Henzada, Burma, in recognition of the valuable educational work which he had accomplished in the Henzada, and Maubin districts, where he has now labored for merely thirty-three years. In less than two years after his arrival in Burma Messenger in Burmese. His linguistic ability has enabled him to do much valuable work as a member of the committee for the revision of vernacular readers. He was able quickly to form a clear conception of the educational needs of the field, and during the following years he maintained the policy of co-ordination in the development of evangelistic and school work. He is always ready to assist the government in educational matters and has taken a prominent part in numerous educational conferences. The results of his work have been most encouraging, and the Kaisaris-Hind Medal was a deserved recognition of Dr. Cummings' long years of valuable service.



Another man whose work on the foreign field has attracted the attention of the government is Rev. George N. Thomssen, who was awarded the Kaisaris-Hind Medal in 1914 and was publicly decorated by Lord Pentland, who announced that the medal was given for the industrial work which Mr. Thomssen had introduced into the country, especially the palmyra fibre industry, and also for his cooperation in agricultural activities and for his work among the Yanadis criminal tribes. Mr. Thomssen sailed for India in 1882, having been designated to the station at Ongole. Two years later he opened a new station at Vinukonda. This strenuous pioneer work drain on his health and in 1886 he was obliged to sail for America. On his

return to India four years later he took up the work at Kurnool, where, in addition to his evangelistic activities, he did much valuable educational work, including the establishing of a boys' boarding school and a girls' school, besides many small village schools. In 1899 Mr. Thomssen took charge of the station at Bapatla. During the fifteen years of his work there, about 700 young men and few young women have been trained at the normal school for their life work as teachers of primary schools, and thousands of pupils, educated in the model school, are carrying Christian education into the outlying villages.

Soon after Mr. Thomssen reached Bapatla, a well equipped Palmyra fibre factory was estab-

lished in the Mission compound under his direction. In this factory many of the poor people of the village were able to earn a living and under Christian influences. The work was opened each day with prayer, the reading of the gospel and a short address. On Sunday the different caste people employed here gathered in the gospel hall to attend divine worship. Classes in carpentry and sewing and industrial training along various other lines have formed an important part of the activities at Bapatla, for Mr. Thomssen recognised the value of that threefold ideal in Christian education—the training of the head, the hand and the heart.

The splendid girls' school building at Nowgong, Assam, and the consecrated lives of the men and women whom he led to Christ bear witness to the noble work accomplished by Rev. Pitt Holland Moore during his thirty six years on the mission field of Assam. Public recognition of his long and faithful service, and especially of his work in the interests of the education of women,

was made by the government through the presentation of the Kaisaris-Hind Silver Metal shortly before his death on March 3rd 1916.

Mr. Moore was the son of Rev. Calvin E Moore, a Baptist missionary in Burma, and was born on the foreign field. He was a man whom little children loved, to whom older people went for advice, and upon who all relied in time of need. His mastery of the Assamese language made him a valuable assistant in the work of translating and revising the Bible and the preparation of text books and for a number of years he was chairman of committee on language examination. He was constantly called upon to serve as chairman of various committees. These included the Assam property committee, the Assam committee of reference, the managing committee of the Jorhat Christian schools, and numerous others appointed to deal with matters pertaining to the mission. He also served for many years as the treasurer of the mission, was for a time attorney for

the mission, and held the office of president of the Assam Baptist Missionary Conference for several terms. In addition to all this he was manager of the Nowgon girl's school, in the construction and maintenance of which he expended much thoughts and energy.



The Kaisaris-Hind Medal, which came at the culmination of his life work, was presented to Mr. Moore at his bungalow by the deputy commissioner at the time of the Missionary conference held at Nowgon in February, 1916. The commissioner paid a splendid tribute at this conference to Mr. Moore's "long and efficient service" for the people of India—a work which is perpetuated in the lives of the men and women who have come under the influence of his personality and teaching.

The most recent of Baptist missionaries to be honored by the British government is Dr. Ola Hanson, who has just received word from the lieutenant-gover-

nor of Burma that the Kaisaris-Hind Gold Medal has been awarded to service among the Kachins of Northern Burma. Dr. Hanson received his appointment from the Foreign Missionary

Society in 1890 and sailed for Burma, where he arrived in December of that year. His entire Missionary career of thirty years has been spent among the Kachin tribes who dwell in the hills of northern Burma. His work among these people constitutes one of the great stories of missionary endeavour.

In addition to his evangelistic work, Dr. Hanson has engaged in literary activities which have proved to be of incalculable value. The Kachin tribes had no written language when he arrived on the field. Indeed, they did not even possess an alphabet. Today they not only have their language reduced to writing, but also have available in their own language the new testament, sub-

stantial portions of the old testament, a grammar, a dictionary, hymns books, as well as elementary school text books. All this is due to the untiring and pains taking labor of love on the part Dr. Hanson. He spent sixteen years on the dictionary. In recognition of this remarkable literary achievement, the degree of doctor of laws was conferred upon him by Colgate University. During the war Dr, Hanson rendered a large service in promoting the Indian war loan and as a reward was presented with certificate of good service.

The work of two women missionaries in India has been publicly recognized by the government through the award of the Kaisaris-Hind Metal. The first missionary in all Burma to receive this decoration was Miss. Sarah J Higby of Tharrawaddy, upon whom it was conferred in 1902, in recognition of her work in the interests of education. Miss, Higby's first trip to the foreign



field began in 1867, when she left Boston in a sailing vessel, and after a voyage of six months, during which she travelled around the Cape of Good Hope, she arrived at Rangoon, Burma, in May, 1868. For a number of years she worked with the Woman's Union Missionary Society at Bassein, Burma, where she organized the Pwo Karen School. In 1876 she was appointed by the Woman's Baptist Foreign Mission Society of the West. From 1895 until her death on July 23th, 1917 Miss. Higby was stationed at Tharrawaddy, Burma, where she did her greatest work. On her arrival at the station, which was at that time newly opened, she found one school of about 20 pupils with one Karen teacher. At her death she left a fully equipped school with a faculty of twenty instructors and over 500 students. In the hearts of the hundreds of pupils who have gone out from her school and who are now occupying positions of honor and trust

throughout Burma there lingers the loving of this noble women who devoted nearly fifty years of her life to work among them.

In 1919 Miss. Lizbeth Hughes of the Morton Lane Girls Schools at Moulmein, Burma, was awarded the Kaiser-I-Hind Medal for her work at this institution. The school was women's Foreign Mission society for the Christian education of Burman girls and had both Vernacular and Anglo-vernacular normal departments. Its graduates are to be found in all parts of Burma. As a Missionary of the Woman's Foreign Mission Society, Miss. Hughes reached Moulmein in December, 1896, and two years later entered upon her duties at the Morton Lane School. One of the teachers, Ma Shwe Mei, who has been connected with the work for over thirty years, received a certificate of honor and a gold

watch from the government in recognition of her exceptionally fine service in educational work.

To those whose distinguished military achievements have helped to extend and maintain Britain's "far-flung battle line," a grateful empire awards the Victoria Cross. To the men and women whose loving service has aided in the betterment of Britain's subjects in the Indian Empire, the Kaiser-I-Hind Medal comes as an equally valued and deserved award.

When the work done by Baptist Missionaries is of such a character as to be of worthy of distinguished recognition from the British Government, we may well rest assured that the gifts from our Baptist Constituency which have gone into their work and the prayers which have been offered in their behalf have not been in vain.



Shillong Tyrannus Hall (STH)

Student Ministry of CBCNEI

The Shillong Tyrannus Hall is a boys' hostel situated at the Baptist Vacation House compound of the CBCNEI, Shillong. It was established in 1987 as a ministerial wing of the CBCNEI student's ministry in partnership with Tyrannus Hall International (THI). The name "Tyrannus Hall" is taken from the Bible (Acts 19:9) where Apostle Paul disciplined a few young men in the hall of Tyrannus.

Dr. Chuck Corwin, the founder Director of THI inaugurated the hall on 1st April 1987 with 11 students who were admitted. It was proven from the first batch that our young people were ready to be disciplined and molded.

STH is primarily a facility for training the young people in Christian discipleship. It is a home, rather, where young men are trained, disciplined, and nurtured to be effectively able to make a change wherever they may be. To foster Christian fellowship and unity with other Christian groups, 5% of the seats are being earmarked for students of other evangelical Churches than CBCNEI. Shillong Tyrannus hall has completed 29 years of mentoring and disciplining the young people.

Motto: The motto of the Hall is "STH on the Move". We want everyone who had the opportunity to resident in STH to keep on moving towards a greater height in life's great jour-





ney. We want them to grow in the knowledge and in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ through the various activities of the hall.

Aims: To provide an environment for your people to realize their Christian potential during their college years.

Objectives: The objectives of the hall are to:

To impart training in Christian Discipleship while students are yet pursuing their secular academic studies.

To enable students to raise testimony for Christ in their life style and studies.

To help students discover their gifts and talents, which in turn should help them in their seeking

God's will, for their life's profession and calling.

To promote a w a r e n e s s among students about their responsibilities toward the Church and its mission.

To promote a healthy awareness of pressing issues in this world today which demand a Christian response.

To develop a sense of belonging among the students by fostering a healthy relationship with one another.

To seek to promote and to maintain with other institutions bearing the same vision and goals both within and outside the CBCNEI area.

Room Extension Project: As the number of students is increasing each year we felt the need of expanding the hall. Therefore, we have taken a loan of Rupees ten lakh from South Asia Tyrannus Hall Association (SATHA) and the extension work is in progress. We are hopeful to complete the room

extension work by the end of this year 2017. At present 15 rooms are available where two students stay in each room. When the extension work is completed there will be an additional of 7 new rooms for the students. We will be able to raise the number of students from present strength of 30 to 45 when the work is completed.

Annual mission outreach: Every year we give an opportunity for the final year students to go for mission trip. This year they went to Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal from 7-14 December 2016. The total expenses for the annual mission outreach was Rs.45,000/- . The office sanctioned Rs. 15,000/- only from the outreach fund and the boys raised the rest of the amount through various projects, such as "Musical Evening", "Meat Project", etc plus their own contri-

bution.

Kathmandu Tyrannus hall hosted them throughout their stay there. They were able to visit many important tourist spots. They visited the Tibetan Outreach Mission centre where Mr. Chan Ngullie is working as a missionary. They attended the worship service at the First Baptist Church, Kathmandu on 10th December (Saturday).

The boys came back with a first hand experience of a missionary life, with a new challenges to be a witness for Jesus.

Academic year: The academic year starts from June to May. Prospectus can be obtained from the office from 1st April onward. And the last date for submission of duly filled form is 3rd June 2017. Normally the interview of the prospective boarders will be held on the second





Saturday of June at the office premises of STH.

To achieve the aims and objectives of the hall of imparting training in well-rounded Christian discipleship, three spheres of developmental activities are emphasized namely, physical, mental and spiritual. The students are kept fully busy with various activities which help them grow into maturity. There is a common maxim that "whoever has stayed in STH cannot be the same". They are being transformed into a matured young man ready to impact their peers for Christ.

For further information kindly contact at 094361-18801 or email to kcgaila@yahoo.com.





Jesus' Model of Discipleship Making

Mr Vikuo Rhi, Youth Secretary, Nagaland Baptist Church Council, Kohima.

Introduction: We hear about Jesus talk about Jesus and sing about Jesus. We go to church, we pray and profess that we are Christian simply because we do all of the above. But the question here is: "Are we worthy to be called as Disciples of Jesus Christ? Or are we truly following the footsteps of Jesus Christ in our daily lives?" Many Christian remain nominal, our worship inside the church and the day to day lifestyle outside the church is different. We do not make a difference as a Christian in our workplace and in the market place, and everywhere. People does not feel the difference of the presence of Christians, in other words, we fail to be salt and light, we don't produce the flavor of salt and light. Our society is filled with much corruption, ego-ism, hatred, division, killings, abortion, immorality,

crave for money and power. Simply being a Christian is not enough but we need to start making every Christian a true follower of Christ Jesus, a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

- 1. What is D1:2?** The concept is borrowed from Mark 1:16-20 where Jesus called his first two disciples, Simon and Andrew who were brothers and went on to called James and John (Jesus=Simon and Andrew; 1:2 and James and John, 1:2)
- 2. How will it work?** One person will disciple two persons. The two who are discipled will go out to disciple two (1:2). In this manner the multiplication will continue the work of discipleship will continue till the target group(s) are reached out!

3. **Vision:** To make disciples of young people in Nagaland.

4. **Target Group:** The youth group 15-25 (Senior High School to University Students). Age division: 15 – 19, and 20 – 25.

5. **How to go about:**

- i) TOT: Training of Trainers in State level.
- ii) TOT: Training of Trainers in Association level.
- iii) D1:2 could be operated at College & University level.
- iv) D1:2 could be operated in all Local Churches.

6. **Duration of D1:2 Training:**

The first D1:2 Training was launched in 2016 from May 17 – 22 in NBCC Office Kohima, and the full concept of D1:2 will become operative in 3 years. The D 1:2 model of Discipleship training could be condensed to Five days.

'Disciple' means follower of a leader, teacher, philosophy, etc. A learner or a student, and most of all a follower of Christ Jesus in the Bible. The twelve

Disciple or apostle and others. Luke 6:14-17.

Types of Disciple in the Bible

1. **Disciple 1 to 2:** In the case of Mark 1:16-20; Matthew 4: 18-22, Jesus Himself go straight to the work-place- Sea of Galilee where fishermen were fishing and mending of nets, and called Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, and also James and his brother John. Both of them straightaway leaved their nets and followed HIM. In today's context it could be a market place or business centre or sports/Music field or in any public places. Jesus model of discipleship was **ONE is to TWO** (1:2), therefore, the concept of D 1:2 is drawn from here.
2. **Disciple 1 to 1:** Jesus disciple Philip- and Philip disciple Nathanael - John 1: 43-45. In fact, Philip was the first Disciple who obeyed Jesus and Disciple other. Paul disciple the young Timothy – 2 Timothy 2: 1-6.
3. **Disciple 2 by 2:** Jesus sent the twelve out two by two – Mark

6:7; Also sent out the Seventy (70) two by two – Luke 10:1.

- 4. Multiplication:** Multiplication in disciple making happened in Jerusalem as found in **Acts 6: 1,7**. Even the priests in Jerusalem were disciple and a large people were multiplied. The D 1:2 model of Discipleship can multiply if we do sincerely in obedience to the Great Commission given by the Risen Lord.

Why Discipleship?

Why we need to train Youth Leaders for Discipleship in such an already Christian society is that many of us especially young people were born and brought up in a Christian family yet they haven't encounter with Christ. We are Christian by birth because our parents or grand parents were Christian. There are Churches running Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, Youth Bible Camp, Revival Crusades, etc. But there are still quite a lots of young people who were not properly understand who God /Jesus is, what if I believed in Jesus, what is meant by born again, do I need to get water

baptism, what is salvation, what is life after death, what is meant by faith, should I become a good Christian or lives a worldly life? Many young people were not taught properly about following Christ Jesus and remained as nominal Christian. The world changes so fast with all kinds of modern science and information technologies – gadgets, memory chips, digitals etc. Many young people were engaging in mobile phones, internets, websites, video/computer games, pornography, T.V., FB., Apps., etc. Many were involves in corruption, run after money and power, and easy life. Cults, heresy, false doctrines, satanic worship etc. were increasing. These are the few reasons that our members were not disciple properly and we take it for granted as a Christian state. Therefore, the Churches in Nagaland need to reason seriously and start making discipleship or else we may be too late. This is why the Youth Department, Nagaland Baptist Church Council has taken up the task to disciple young people by taking D 1:2 model of Discipleship in our land. Discipleship in other words is a multiplication of

followers of Christ Jesus.

Conclusion:

Discipleship is not just one time program but it's a continuous ministry through teaching and nurturing with the word of God. Home visitation and evangelism are effective yet without making discipleship one's faith in God would not

be rooted. Discipleship is necessary but we cannot disciple many people at one goal. Therefore, following Jesus' model and by using this D 1:2 model of discipleship would make easier and practicable. May the good Lord help us in making discipleship.



A NEW BOOK FROM NORTH EAST INDIA
Transform North East India: Revitalize the Church and Community



- This book - Transform North East India: Revitalize the Church and Community talks about all the origin of the Christianity in NE India states including Darjeeling.
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Ms Istrella Sangma and Mr Benson were united together in a Holy Matrimony on January 5, 2017.

The staff of CBCNEI wishes them happiness and blessings as they start their new life together.



Ms Tapsri Marak and Mr Bikas Momin were united together in a Holy Matrimony on February 24, 2017.

The staff of CBCNEI wishes them happiness and blessings as they start their new life together.

NEWS CAPSULE

Pre-Christmas Celebration (16 Dec, 2016)

CBCNEI staff and family celebrated advent-christmas today at the mission campus, Panbazar. The program was led by Mrs Mary Nongphlang, Mr Atungo Shitri, Secretary, Justice & Peace shared the Christmas message and the benediction was pronounced by Rev. Dr . Solomon Rongpi, General Secretary. The highlights of the event was Christmas special group songs presented by the Canteen staff and the Secretaries & family,

special dance presentation by campus children, gifts exchange followed by a sumptuous feast.



Pre-Christmas for Guwahati children (20 Dec, 2016)

On December 20, 2016 we had a wonderful Pre-Christmas program with 120 community children and 28 volunteers from within the Guwahati city. Sharing on "What is





Christmas?" was the main focus. Christmas carol songs were sung together with the children (though many don't know how to). They were given meals of rice with chicken and they all enjoyed to their fill. Games were also played and at the end of the program they were given gifts (Blankets) during this cold winter.



New Year's Eve at CBCNEI campus (31 Dec, 2016)

The staff and secretaries of CBCNEI along with their families welcomed the new year by celebrating the occasion with special programme arranged in the campus. There was an evening bon-fire fellowship where children were given gifts, mass prayer for new year dedication were offered and many

fun activities were played. The celebration ended with a dinner fellowship.



CBCNEI celebrated Indian Republic Day (26 Jan)

CBCNEI along with the rest of India celebrated the 68th Indian Republic Day as a mark of respect for the day. The short programme was led by Mr Vikato Shikhu, invocation offered by Mr Talimoa and special song by Mr Manchuk and John Marak. Rev T. P. Mordecai hosted the national flag and Rev Dr Solomon Rongpi offered the benediction and ended the programme.





Council of Baptist Churches in North East India observed “Unity Prayer Week” (Jan 18 - 25)

The Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI) together with the rest of the World’s Christian Community commemorated the anniversary of “The Reformation” from January 18-25, as Christians around the world come forward to dedicate a week of prayer for “Christian Unity” among fellow Christians and churches all over the world. The theme for this year is “Reconciliation-The Love of Christ compels us” (2 Corinthians 5: 14-20).

Today marked the last day of the

prayer week and the Rev Dr Solomon Rongpi, General Secretary, CBCNEI led the worship service which began with a hymn followed by responsive readings and meditation. Rev. Dr .Solomon Rongpi in his message exhorted that “Reconciliation and Love among ourselves as followers and as churches will strengthen us in overcoming trials and be united in our hearts for Christ. It is only through forgiveness and love of Christ that can help us destroy the divisions and disunity we have developed in our hearts.”

The offertory prayer was offered for NCCI by Mr Rabin Basumatary fol-



lowed by candle lighting to signify the acceptance of Christ's entrusting the reconciled to be ambassadors for Christ and pass on the light to others as we carry on the ministry of reconciliation through our thoughts, words and deeds. This is also to symbolise bearing the light into the dark places of our world or to any place where we are. The service concluded with prayer and benediction offered by the Rev T. P. Mordecai.



Asian consultation on Church responses to Human sexuality and Gender Identities

(7 - 9 Feb)

Justice and peace secretary designated Mr Malthys D. Sangma attended the programme which was held at Ecumenical Christian centre (ECC), white field, Bangalore, Karnataka on behalf of Council of Baptist Churches North East India (CBCNEI) it was convened by National Council of Churches India in support by Ecumenical partners. Participants from all across the globe came forward to this programme like Geneva, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Netherland, USA, South Africa and India took part. Most of the speakers talk about the response of churches towards the

sexually marginalised people and treating them equally with heterosexual. The main topic which was discussed is mostly on diverse sexual orientation, gender identities and gender expression. Topic like homophobia, stigmatisation and LGBTIQ group people were also discussed. At the end resolution was taken in the programme to support the marginalised people and to move forward.



Justice and Peace Committee Meeting (14 Feb)

Justice and Peace Committee Meeting was held at CBCNEI Mission Compound, Guwahati. Mr Benard K. Marak Chairman Justice and Peace Committee presided the meeting. CBCNEI Justice and Peace Secretary Atungo Shitri read the ministries reports to the committee members followed by reports from conventions. Some of the meeting agendas were reviewing of previous meeting actions and minutes, planning programs for the year 2017-18. Committee

also discussed about the partnership with Partera International and Christian Law Association (CLA) and Fundraising Committee formation.



ADF India meeting (1- to 4 Mar)

ADF India all team meeting was organised by ADF India at Blue Triangle, YWCA, New Delhi on 1st to 4th March 2017. Firstly in the meeting, reports were collected from all the team members and also reports were given from the project Helpline, Vanishing girl and Events. There is a discussion about the challenges facing in the work place and the strategies for allies mobilization. To make more interesting and quality in reports there is also discuss how to do effective reporting. Fund raising is also one of the main thing that why there is a discussion how to do it. Before the conclusion of the meeting there is gold setting for 2017 and the legal strategy.



CBCNEI Leadership Consultation on Mission (Feb 17-19, 2017)

Hosted by Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention at West Diphu Town Baptist Church, a historic consultation took place at Diphu. Over 110 church leaders from many Associations and Conventions attended the consultation. Important topics such as, "Making greater impact in Mission, Mission challenges and opportunities in North East India with special focus in Assam, Mission opportunities and challenges in India, East Asia, and Around the World" were presented by different speakers. Special mention can be made here the presence of Ms. Marilee Pierce Dunker, daughter of Dr. Bob Pierce, the founder of World Vision and Samaritan purse. Rev. Dr. Solomon Rongpi, General Secretary, CBCNEI led the devotion with insightful challenges on "Tending the signs of times." The leaders were encouraged and challenged by all the presentations. Findings from the group discussions gave much importance on Unity and more Focus in mission for greater impact. On the last day, different





Associations picked up different districts for adoption to prayer for, and for church planting.

This CBCNEI mission model of adopting districts by all Associations and not leaving behind any district, beginning from North East, was observed as one of the best models for other Indian churches by UCPI leaders. Therefore, this was presented during the UCPI national Conference at Hyderabad during 22-24 Feb.



North East Christian University Permanent Campus Dedication

The North East Christian University held a Dedication Ceremony of its Permanent Campus on Friday, March 10, 2017 at Medziphema Village which was attended by CBCNEI President, Governing Council Members, CBCNEI officials, Conventions Secretaries (ABC and KABC General Secretaries could not attend due to other engagements and ABCC General Secretary couldn't attend due to bandh), Executive Secretaries, Church Leaders, Government Officials and Medziphema Village Council Members. The programme was graced by Shri. Deo Nukhu, Parliamentary Secretary, Higher & Technical Education Government of Nagaland as Honoured Guest.

The programme started at 10:00 am, it was chaired by the Rev. Dr. Anjo Keikung, Honorary Chancellor/Chief Executive Director of NECU. President of CBCNEI Shri. K. C. Momin dedicated the Campus with a prayer and officially unveiled the Monolith. After the unveiling of the



monolith, opening prayer was pronounced by the Rev. Dr. Atsi Dolie, Executive Director, Angami Baptist Churches Council. After which the Rev. Dr. Solomon Rongpi, General Secretary CBCNEI, warmly welcomed each and every individual to the programme and introduced all the distinguish guests.

Rev. Dr. A. K. Lama, Pro Chancellor, NECU shared the vision of NECU and how it was first initiated. Then it was followed by short speeches from Mr. Neikhonyu Kuotsu, Chairman Medziphema Village Council and General Secretaries from NBCC, MBC & GBC. Melodious harmony as sung by Medziphema Village Baptist Church. Shri. Alemtemshi, IAS retired Chief Secretary of Nagaland shared the perspective on how to develop NECU Campus. After which Rev. Taku Lkr took his turn to read out the message sent from Friends of NECU (USA) and also handed over a cheque of 10,000 US Dollars to NECU Honorary Treasurer the Rev. Dr. Kavito Zhimo.

Shri. Deo Nukhu , Honoured Guest while delivering his speech said that he was so blessed to be in the midst of Christian leaders. He went on to say that the state general election is just around the corner but let's hope and pray that whoever comes to power will be man or woman of Christian principles.

Mr. Huzo Meru gave a note of appreciation and the programme ended with mass prayer and benediction as pronounced by the Rev. Kuzierang thou, State Chaplin, Nagaland. It was followed by good lunch ushered by the Medziphema Ao Baptist Church. The programme was also attended by SDO (Civil), SDPO, M.O. Medziphema, and the event was managed by Event Management group from Dimapur Fingerprint.



A BRIEF REPORT OF CBCNEI, BYFNEI, YOUTH SECRETARIES RETREAT to BANGKOK (1 – 6 Dec, 2016)

As reported by Mr Hriini Zho, Asst. to the Secretary of Justice and Peace Ministries

The Youth Secretaries of all Conventions under CBCNEI, BYFNEI toured Bangkok from 1st – 6th December 2016 as youth secretary's retreat and annual meet on strategic planning's for Baptist Youth Fellowship in North East India for the year 2017-2018. The tour team consisted of four youth secretaries from different conventions. Unfortunately, two secretaries were not able to come due to unavoidable circumstances and some program clashes in their conventions.

Apart from the meeting on strategies planning, we had daily devotion and other activities during our tour like; sightseeing, shopping and interacting people to strengthening for the youth ministries. We attended a special Sunday service on 4th December in an Evangelical Church of

Bangkok at 42 Sukhumvit Soi 10 Klong Toey, Bangkok.

On 5th December 2016, we had a special CBCNEI, BYFNEI executive seating at Alliance Mission Home, Bangkok in which agendas on strategy plans for the years 2017-2018 were discussed. The meeting started with a short devotion led by the President of CBCNEI, BYNEI and was presided over by Mr. Bikas G. Momin and Mr. Vikuo Rhi Secretary of CBCNEI, BYFNEI recorded the minutes. The meeting concluded with a short sharing by Mr. Hriini Zho, Asst. to the secretary of Justice and Peace Ministries CBCNEI, and a mass spoken prayer by the members.

We had a good fun time and blessed trip together at Bangkok. The team returned home on 6th

December 2016. After we landed at Guwahati Airport, we had a short prayer together as a thanks giving prayer led by Mr. Atungo Shitri, Secretary of Justice and Peace Ministries, CBCNEI. After which, we departed towards our own respective places.

Lastly but not the least, we thank

God for His protection and mercy upon us throughout our tour. Besides, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the supporters who made our journey successful through their prayer support and financial support. May God bless to each and every one of them.



Building A Christian Home

Psalm 127:1A : " Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it."

Mrs Lichanbeni Tungoe Kithan, Asst. Editor, Baptist News

There are many books written every year on how to have the perfect marriage or how to raise your children and how to build a perfect happy family but if they are not founded on Gods' principles and if it is not based on the spiritual values its only paper. Family at first place is the spiritual institution for every person, it in fact is the manifestation of the relationship between God and His people, Christ and the Church. A Christ-centric love between the husband and the wife is the most essential ideal in building a strong Christian family. We may have a house as big as a mansion but that isn't a home if the love of God does not abide in us and if there is no peace and

forbearance among the members of the family in speech and in action. It is the hearts of the people in it that makes it a home. It is the people in it that creates mutual kindness towards bearing each other's burdens, forgiving one another and tolerating each other's limitations and weakness, which exalt the soul and make the family life healthier and strong. Accordingly as this ideals are striven for, and attained, will the true home be realized.

Making God the anchor of our family:

As the bible tells us in Gen 1:27 "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He creat-

ed them". We are called the children of God. Thus, God has to be the architect of the family. The architect is the one that has the blue prints and lays everything out when we build a house and we fully entrust him until the completion of the structure of the house. Therefore, in order to complete our home we need to submit our plans to Him. Give Him our children, our marriage, our relationship and our burdens. We might have failed to change them but God is an able God who can change, stop trying to do it in your strength.

Building a strong spiritual family on the principles of God:

After submitting all the plans to the chief architect, the strongest foundation for a healthy family is "the word of God". Commending the home to God. We see it in Mat 7: 24-25 how a wise man builds a good foundation. It says, "*Whosoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him to a man who build his*

house on the rock. And the rains descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall because it was founded on the rock". If we establish our family and our home in the word of God, the problems of this world will not effect us the way it effect the world. Tell your children how important they are in the family. Teach them that they can do all things in Christ no matter how hard the circumstances may seem to be. The Bible has many instances of men, like that of Samuel, who have been trained for great parts in the world in a religious household. The old proverb has it, "Like father, like son." If God is honoured by the parents and the home commended to Him, the children will be quite sure to honour Him also. Bring up your children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Have them ready to meet Christ at any time (Mark 13:34-37).

Role of the Father and Moth-

er: The very beginning of every Christian home is in a supreme affection between the two, a man and a woman. In the various stage and transition of married life, and in the upbringing of children, in grounding of family life, the bond which needs to be strengthened, and the duty which needs to be fulfilled, is that of love. Love can alone carry husband and wife over the more difficult phases in life. Because a supreme love settles all troubles (1 Corinthians, chapter 13). Paul says, "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25-33; Colossians 3:18,19). "Let every one of you so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (Ephesians 5:33). Here, Paul urged both the husband and wife to love each other with a whole

heart, forgiving each other and reconciling and comprising through thick and thin in Christ alone.

Conclusion

Building a Christian home can be made easy only through God and it starts from our hearts. Even though we will face difficult times yet we need to keep moving through Him. It will take time in constructing but we should always remember that God himself is the designer and He alone will help us in building a Christian Home. Having Jesus Christ as our guest in our homes will make it complete and secure. He wants us to welcome him in our homes anytime. There can be no really deep and abiding love without Him. Jesus Christ came to earth with a purpose to save souls and build more Christian homes. Let Christ be our Special guest while building our home.



Commitment

Pastor Peter Thong, Naga Christian Fellowship, Guwahati, Assam

Commitment can be defined as the decision to do what needs to be done, whatever the cost. Such definition characterizes countless heroes throughout history.

Christian commitment however goes beyond any earthly strivings, obligations or mere sense of responsibility. It is a commitment in total, where Jesus Christ is Lord in every area of our lives. It is a commitment inspired and motivated by the love of God, our lord Jesus Christ.

Peter's mission was following Jesus, feeding His lambs and His sheep, and love inspired him to fulfill it. While Peter didn't quite understand the mission when he first became a disciple, he grew in love and became one of the founders of the Christian church—a commitment that, in the end cost him his life.

If we go back to the very beginning, Peter came a long way in his commitment. In Luke chapter 5, we see that Peter is on the beach washing his fishing nets. When we come to verse 11 we see that Peter has left his boat, his nets, and everything to follow the Lord. The miracle of the great catch of fish has resulted in a miracle, in the life of Peter.

1. Peter took the first step in the right direction by "getting involved." He turns his boat over to the Lord. As the first step in our commitment- we too must be willing to turn over what we own to the Lord for His use. Our time, talents, career possessions and all that we are.
2. The second step he took was to "push out a little." It is one thing to take what we own and make it available for the Lord's

use, but it is another thing to step out a little by faith from the "security of the land." Pushing out involve faith, courage, risk and sacrifice, but that's what pushing out from land is all about.

3. The third step toward total commitment is to "launch into the deep." Here is total dependence on the Lord. It is here where commitment is no longer a sideline. In many ways, it is the point of no return.

It is no longer a question of what field will give me the greatest return, security, peace, or chance for advancement in this world. It is now a matter of my education, my "career," my choice of life partner, my all being subject to the Lordship of Christ. Have you "launched out into the deep"?

It is in the deep that we experience the Lord's power. We learn that He really does provide in a miraculous way for the very needs that may have held us back from total commitment. We may "work all

night" to make it in this life and still "catch nothing" (verse 5). But the person who is totally committed to the Lord does not "sweat" the needs of this life. He knows that if he seeks first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, then all these things will be provided. (Matthew 6:33).

It is in the deep that we learn to worship. It is here that Jesus is no longer just "a friend invited into our lives." He is God!

When Peter experienced the Lord's power in the deep, he was not only amazed but fell down before Jesus and confessed, "I am a sinful man, O Lord." The more committed we are to Jesus Christ, the more we are aware of our sinfulness and His holiness. What a blessing to know that the Lord Jesus does not depart from us, but comforts us and transforms us. "Don't be afraid, from now on you will be catching men." (verse 10)

Total commitment does not mean perfection. It's a matter of taking self off every glory of life and enthroning Christ every day of our life. Amen.



Together Towards Life: WCC/CWME Mission Document

Dr Atola Longkumer¹, SAIACS, Bangalore

Introduction

Together Towards Life (TTL) is the new mission document produced by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the World Council of Churches (WCC). It was accepted at the 10th Assembly of WCC, at Busan, South Korea, 2013. Jooseop Keum, the Secretary of the CWME and Geevarghese Mor Coorilos, the Moderator of the CWME provided leadership in preparing the document. TTL is significant for many reasons: it is the first official mission statement since the 1982. Furthermore, it was prepared in consultation with the community of mission scholars and practitioners from around the world, relatively representational in denominational, gender, and regional perspectives. In true reflection of the shift of the epicentre of Christianity, it is significant that the leadership in preparing the document is from Asia (Republic of Korea and India), it must also be highlighted that the leadership includes a woman from Europe, Kirsteen Kim, the vice-moderator of the CWME and a leading woman professor of Mission and World Christianity.

Together Towards Life is a rich and concise text, deserving commentary on each section, if not on each numerical point of the 112 items, there are many insights and directions for the understanding and pursuit of Christian mission as a community called to witness to Christ. Drawing from the *Together Towards Life*, five areas of missiological significance are highlighted that continue to challenge and inform Christian mission. It is available online in this

link:

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/mission-and-evangelism/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes>

Mission and World Religions

"We acknowledge that there is inherent value and wisdom in diverse life-giving spiritualities. Therefore, authentic mission makes the "other" a partner in, not an "object" of mission." (TTL: 93)

It is significant that *Together Towards Life* has emphasised the realities of different faiths and life-giving spiritualities that present Christian mission with enormous challenge in its respectful and authentic witness to the transforming influence of the Gospel. The fundamental mandate of Christian mission need be expressed in cognizant of diverse religions and cultures which in themselves are life-giving spiritualities.

Together Towards Life provides a nuanced position, language, approach and code of conduct in relation Christian witness in the context of different world religions. Beginning with recognition that mission belongs to God and not "a project of expanding churches but of the church embodying God's salvation in this world" (TTL: 58), to dialogue as "a way of affirming our common life and goals in terms of the affirmation of life and the integrity of creation" (TTL: 94), the new mission document present the Church and the community of faithful to relate with people of other faiths, as neighbours and partners, yet with bold confidence to share the good news (TTL: 8, 83).

Together Towards Life affirms that Christian mission continue to engage with compassion and confidence the religions of the world undergirded by the conviction that God's infinite love and ever-giving act of grace embraces all creation and engenders the flourishing of

all creation (TTL: 9).

Advocacy as Mission

“A major common concern of people from the margins is the failure of societies, cultures, civilizations, nations, and even churches to honour the dignity and worth of all persons. Injustice is at the roots of all the inequalities that give rise to marginalization and oppression.” (TTL: 42)

The pronounced assertion against systems, structures and practices that produce brutal inequalities and exploitation of people is a marked distinction of the *Together Towards Life*, and expresses a prophetic witness of Christian mission that is inclusive. Indeed, there is apparently a devastating failure of cultures and civilizations when the gap between the powerful and the powerless, the wealthy and the poor, continue to widen and create victims and dehumanisation. The missiological significance of the *Together Towards Life* comprise in its explicit advocacy on behalf of the victims of greed and exploitative structures.

The section on the *Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins* makes *Together Towards Life* compelling. *Together Towards Life* is radical and explicitly denounces the powers that produce margins; and *Together Towards Life* brings to fore the dispossessed margins. Margins are the vulnerables who are excluded from justice and dignity, living in constant threat to their survival because of different powerful structures which define the centre. As Christian mission is understood as a “vocation from God’s Spirit who works for a world where the fullness of life is available for all” (TTL: 37), advocacy that counters the injustices in society, church forms defining mark of mission. *Together Towards Life* affirms this task and calls on Christian communities to include advocacy for justice as a form of witness (TTL: 77).

Gender Justice as Mission

"Inclusivity fosters just relationships in the community of humanity and creation, with mutual acknowledgement of persons and creation and mutual respect and sustenance of each one's sacred worth. It also facilitates each one's full participation in the life of the community." (TTL: 46)

The above point underscores a vision of inclusivity as a defining mark of Christian mission that is committed to flourishing of life for all. While the commitment to inclusivity is imperative, it is critically important to name the oppressive structures and exclusive practice that maintain status quo and sustain conventional and exclusive categories. Despite organised efforts and awareness programmes to ensure women and sexual minorities are accepted with equal respect and dignity, yet there remains rigid resistance and exclusion at every level of society and even within the Christian communities. Christian mission need to insist as part of its advocacy for justice, that the movement for women and sexual minorities' inclusion move beyond mere tokenism and rhetoric. Deliberate and radical policy of inclusivity is needed to be implemented to truly proclaim that all are equally accepted and welcome with their gifts.

Worship as Mission

"Liturgy in the sanctuary only has full integrity when we live out God's mission in our communities in our daily life." (TTL: 74)

Worship remains a central defining mark of the Christian community, wherein our conviction is affirmed, that we believe in the Triune God, creator, redeemer, and sustainer of all life, we believe in Jesus Christ, Life of the world, and we believe in the Holy spirit, who empowers and renews all creation (TTL: 1). Fundamental to Christian mission is the conviction that the Triune God is Lord of all creation, who in grace and compassion reconciled with a fallen humanity in the redemptive work of the Son Jesus Christ and who continues to renew

and transform the creation through the Holy Spirit.

Together Towards Life provides dual missiological opportunities in its affirmation of worship and liturgy: common witness and common prayer for Christian unity. Worship provides the space for common witness of the Christian community to the world that needs healing, peace, justice and compassion. And it remains a missional challenge for churches to provide meaningful worship that motivates and nurtures the members of the congregation to participate in the joyful and inclusive community.

Worship and liturgy also present the challenge to the global Christian community towards a missional commitment to Christian unity. TTL addresses this issue candidly under the topic: God's Mission and the Church's Unity (TTL: 59-66).

Evangelism and the proclamation of the Good News

"There is no greater gift we can offer to our fellow human beings than to share and/or introduce them to the love, grace, and mercy of God in Christ." (TTL: 83)

Evangelism strings together the cognates of Christian mission mentioned above, and it is significant that *Together Towards Life* has addressed evangelism substantially bringing it to fore as a core component of Christian mission. Christian mission and its variety of expressions: its engagement with other religions, its advocacy for human rights and inclusive justice, its solidarity and struggle with the marginalised, its commitment to vibrant inclusive worship among others, are all undergirded by the fundamental conviction that the Triune God desires life abundant for all, and invites us to bear witness to the life-giving good news of the Gospel (TTL: 1).

Together Towards Life defines, elaborates, critics and corrects misconceptions that have accompanied evangelism in the history and practice of Christian mission. Potent missiological significance is reclaimed as a Christian community with the clear definition of

evangelism *Together Towards Life* lays out: "Evangelism is mission activity which makes explicit and unambiguous the centrality of the incarnation, suffering, and resurrection of Jesus Christ without setting limits to the saving grace of God. It seeks to share this good news with all who have not yet heard it and invites them to an experience of life in Christ." (TTL: 80). The call and commitment to share the good news of the Gospel need be carried out in Christ's way, marked by humility and compassion. *Together Towards Life* clarifies that evangelism that embodies Christ-like values balances verbal proclamation and authentic action (TTL: 86). Hence, it is both sharing of one's faith in the Triune God leading to invitation to a transformed life in Jesus Christ, and deeds of compassion springing from the commitment to the vision of inclusive justice inherent in God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

Another important aspect of *Together Towards Life* is its candid critic and courageous corrective of actions of evangelism gone awry in the history of Christian mission. *Together Towards Life* recognises and names the ills of practice of evangelism that contradicts the Christ's way, which is one of sacrifice and obedience to the will of God. Practice of evangelism discredits the Gospel when it is carried out in thoughtless, selfish, and even employing consumerist ethos with paternalistic and superiority complex attitude (TTL: 41, 88). *Together Towards Life* asserts that evangelism is not human enterprise, but God's, not human goals but open to the working of the Holy Spirit, therefore, "Seeking numerical growth at all costs is incompatible with the respect for others required of Christian disciples. Jesus became our Christ not through power or money but through his self-emptying (kenosis) and death on the cross." (TTL: 62). Evangelism understood as proclamation of life abundant in Jesus Christ ensures that "Mission is not a project of expanding churches but of the church embodying God's salvation in the world." (TTL: 58).

Further, *Together Towards Life* highlights that evangelism also

provides the different Christian traditions to come together for partnership in common witness to Christ. In sharing a common call to witness to Christ, partnership in evangelism has significant potential to pave the way for greater unity and inclusive fellowship (TTL: 85, 86).

Together Towards Life articulation of Christian mission expressed in evangelism informs that practice of evangelism will define who we are and it is in our evangelism that Jesus Christ will be proclaimed as the Incarnation of God's love and welcome to the whole creation.

Conclusion

The missiological significance of *Together Towards Life* is indeed not limited to these five dimensions, rather they continue to provide the larger framework of Christian missions to include subtexts such as environmental concerns, discipleship, hospitality etc. Missional formation is crucial to ensure the faithful translation into lived practice the insights *Together Towards Life* provides for Christian mission. Writing as someone engaged in theological education, I reckon that theological education need to include missional formation that interprets the values of the Gospel in its engagement and witness to a broken, alienated and conflicting world. David J. Bosch, author of the classic book on mission, *Transforming Mission*, has wisely advised that the foundation of the mission is the "six Christological salvific events" and writes, "[t]he mission Dei purifies the church. It sets it under the cross – the only place where it is ever safe. The cross is the place of humiliation and judgment, but it is also the place of refreshment and new birth." In proclamation of the good life promised by God, the humility of the Cross and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit are imperatives.

¹Dr. Atola Longkumer, teaches Religions at the South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS), Bangalore.





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