

Baptist News

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Editorial



Greetings in the name of Christ to the CBCNEI fraternity. Let us be ever grateful to our Living Christ, who has Blessed us with every spiritual blessings in the heavenly realms because we are united with him (Ephesians 1:3). Living in the midst of insecurity, apprehension, doubt and uncertainty due to the socio, economic and political scenario in our country, the Lord continue to work in us giving us this assurance of hope, security and He is in control of every situation. Thanks be to God!

The just concluded “India Baptist Summit” held in Hyderabad on the theme, “*That all of them may be one*” is a good move by the Baptist Churches in India. It is a positive movement. The coordinator of the India Baptist Summit in his ‘Foreword’ has aptly said,

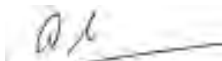
“Being the Summit Coordinator, I have come with deep feelings of responsibilities, dreams and visions for our future and a longing for ecclesiastical and spiritual unity. It has been a great joy and privilege to work together with diverse Baptist Communities in India with multitude of cultural, ethnic and lingual identities, understanding and practices in the midst of all diversities, the most important and unique binding force is our identity as Baptists of this Country”.

Council of Baptist Churches in North East India, as one of the partners and Planning Committee of the Summit, express our deep appreciation and thanks to everyone who could make it to the Summit. The experience of Oneness in Christ is essential for all Christians in general and the Baptists in particular and should be practiced within God’s family. As one family in the Body of Christ, let us continue to exercise Unity through preaching, teaching, encouragement, giving, leadership, service, fellowship, understanding and cooperation. Let the Unity be expressed

and shown both in words and action in our churches, society and family. The theme in this issue is, ***“Pressing Towards the Fullness of life in the Family”***, however, except an article on “Family”(Theological Basis for family ministry), no further reflections on the theme could be addressed in this issue. May the readers be motivated and enriched more from the readings of articles on Contextual Issues, Reports and News on CBCNEI activities reflected in this issue. Thanks to all the contributors. As part of continuing quest for theological education, may all the readers be blessed.

“We say to our children, ‘Act like grown-ups,’ but Jesus said to the grown-ups, ‘Be like children.’ — Billy Graham

Yours in Christ



Rev. Prof Akheto Sema
General Secretary, CBCNEI

Note: The opinion and thoughts expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the editor and the Council.





Towards - Envisioning and strategic Planning for Revival of Medical Mission, CBCNEI

At the very outset, I thank God for giving me an opportunity to serve Him. Secondly, my sincere thanks and high appreciation goes to all Executive Committee members for enabling me to join them in serving our Lord. At the invitation of search committee headed by Dr. (Rev.) Solomon Rongpi, then General Secretary and the team, sought the will of God and my family approval for the ministry. I felt, it was a clear call from God to help all six (6) hospitals and medical ministry under CBCNEI. With my long and diverse experiences in health services in various positions with the state government of Arunachal Pradesh and as well as with Central Government. I have joined CBCNEI as Medical Secretary on 8th May 2019.

A Brief Background

Healing Ministry, under the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI) is as old as the Christianity in the region itself. With the advent of American Baptist Missionaries, Rev. Nathan Brown and O.T. Cutter with their wives, they arrived at Sadiya in 1836. The primary objective of American Baptist Missionaries was to cross over to South China via Myanmar. However, they had to establish a temporary base at Sadiya. While at Sadiya, they realized the dire need of education and health care for the people around Sadiya namely Khampti, Singpho, Mishmis, Miri (Mishing) and Adi (Abhor).

The missionaries without wasting time begun to learn local languages like Khamti, Singpho, Mishmis, Mishing, Adi and Assamese. Next step was to establish Schools for the inhabitants. At the same time, the missionaries felt the urgent need of health care.

Usually all missionaries had to learn basic **First Aid** training, before going to their mission fields. The First Aid services, was part and parcel of missionary works. In 1908 Dr. H. W. Kirby started Dispensaries at Sadiya and Saikowa. Later on, dispensaries were established in other mission fields, spanned across Assam Valley and surrounding Hilly regions.

The missionaries treated various types of ailments in their dispensaries. They realized both physical healing and spiritual healing was wholesome method of evangelism. The hospitals were established by American Baptist Missionaries at Tura, Kangpokpi, Impur, Jorhat, Guwahati and Babupara. These Hospitals are now under CBCNEI.

Dr. G. G. Crozier, an American Baptist Missionary Doctor established Hospital at Tura in 1908. Dr. James R. Bailey went to Impur, Nagaland and there he established a Dispensary in 1912.

Dr. G. G. Crozier also went to Manipur, and Kangpokpi Christian Hospital was started in 1920. Dr. Herbert William Kirby went to Jorhat and started in 1924 at Jorhat Christian Medical Centre. Similarly, Satribari Christian Hospital was founded by none other than an American Baptist Missionary Nurse by name Miss Milli Marvin in 1926. Babupara Christian Hospitals, in Nishangram, East Garo Hills District, was established in 1949 by Dr. E. S. Downs.

The American Baptist Missionaries also established School of Nursing to train local women. The first School of Nursing at Satribari Christian Hospital was founded in 1926 by Miss Milli Marvin, an American Baptist Missionary Nurse. She also founded the two bedded hospital. In 1934, Miss Elna Gustile Forssel founded School of Nursing at Jorhat. Two Auxiliary Nurse Mid-wife (ANM) Schools were established, one at Tura in 1957 by Mrs. Gladys Dawn and other one at Kangpokpi in 1982 by Dr. Hrashal.

During sixties, missionaries serving in those hospitals had to leave India. They left behind a rich legacy of medical mission and faithful healing services both physical healing for sickness and spiritual healing for souls. They too witnessed Lord Jesus and healed sick people with compassion.

But their departure from India had left these hospitals almost like Orphans. The Hospitals had to face acute shortage of doctors, nurses and money.

The burden of taking care of these hospitals fallen into the hands of CBCNEI. At that juncture CBCNEI was not prepared to shoulder the responsibility. Today average age of the hospitals is 90 years. It is only because of God's grace these hospitals are surviving till this date.

The Medical Mission and healing ministry have been facing a serious setback, compounded with acute shortage of Christian doctors and resources. The CBCNEI mission strategies did not focus much on healing ministry. Over the year's hospitals have been growing at its own strength and by the mercy of God.

When Dr. A. K. Lama, was General Secretary of CBCNEI in 2010, the real issues of hospitals came up. Since then only the role of CBCNEI for hospitals began to realize. For some obscure reasons Satribari Christian Hospital Guwahati and its management went to **4B Group** from 2010 to 2015. During the transitional periods from 2010-2015, the Hospital undergone the system change. When 4B left Satribari Christian Hospital in 2015, they left a huge liability. The burden fallen into Satribari Christian Hospital and CBCNEI has to meet those liabilities. The Hospital is still struggling to bring back the original system, which is time taking and very difficult to bring back the original shape.

In the meantime, Mr. N. Lokho Mao was appointed as Medical Secretary in 2010 but he resigned in 2011. After Mr. N. Lokho Mao resigned Dr. A. K. Lama requested me to consider joining the CBCNEI and Satribari Christian Hospital. I did not accept the offer as I was still with Government of India, as Health Adviser for North Eastern Council Shillong.

In 2014 Dr. Lucita Momin was appointed as CBCNEI Medical Secretary. Dr. Lucita Momin with her long and rich experiences working with CBCNEI hospital joined in 2014 and worked till April, 2019. She was the first person with medical qualification to hold the post of Medical Secretary at CBCNEI.

As her term ends in April 2019, I was asked by CBCNEI search committee headed by Dr. Rev. Solomon Rongpi, General Secretary, CBCNEI to join as Medical Secretary. Accordingly, I was installed as Medical Secretary on 28th April 2019 during 69th CBCNEI, AGM at Diphu. I took over charge of Medical Secretary from Dr. Lucita on 8th May 2019.

I belonged to Apatani tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. I hail from non-Christian background. I came to know Lord Jesus, while studying MBBS in Bangalore Medical College. I accepted Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior in 1978. In 1979, all the way I came from Bangalore to Guwahati to take water baptism. I was baptized on 4th April 1979 in Guwahati Baptist Church. In the same year I got married to Cheryl Susan Dkhar a Christian Nurse from Meghalaya.

After marriage, we went to Arunachal Pradesh in 1980 and started to work at Pasighat General Hospital, my wife was appointed as Sister Tutor and I as Medical Officer. God opened the way for us to help a few local Christians at Pasighat to build a Church. The Church building was prohibited at that time. The church was built in 1981. It was God who really helped to build the Church which will be the first ever Church during the peak of Christian persecutions.

My wife and I had to face persecutions from Government and people. We were transferred to various places within short spun of time. Wherever, we went, took the opportunity to witness the Lord and built small prayer groups. We worked in Arunachal Pradesh for more than 34 years. During 34 years in Arunachal Pradesh as Medical Doctors and Nurse we have seen the power of God.

After 34 years of services in Arunachal Pradesh in various capacities, in 2013, I moved to North Eastern Council, Shillong as Adviser Health to Government of India (GOI). Getting such a big post was the blessing from God. As soon as I retired as Adviser Health NEC in December 2015, I was appointed as Director Regional Resource Centre under MoH & FW Government of India from 1st January 2016 - 2018. I was posted in Guwahati to look after National Health Mission in the whole of North East India. God has brought me back in the city to work with the Council of Baptist Churches of North East India as Medical Secretary.

Visits to Hospitals and findings

As Medical Secretary, my first duty was to visit all the hospitals at least one time to know the situation, find out the problems and interact with the hospital staffs. It prompted me to undertake a ***Situation and Gap analysis for each hospital***. I found the problems with hospitals are acute. Timely intervention of CBCNEI and Hospitals are the need of

the hour.

The solutions to the problems can be solved only through concerted efforts of all stakeholder—the hospitals, local associations and CBCNEI. It will be possible to bring back earlier reputations of the hospitals, if all stakeholders share the vision and own the Healing Ministry together. Together all must revisit the vision and mission of Medical Mission and healing ministry. The following are the few critical issues that have been identified during my visits-

Hospitals under CBCNEI

- 1) Acute shortage of qualified doctors, specialist, nurses and trained technicians.
- 2) Resource crunch, not able to upgrade medical facilities and equipment.
- 3) Committed Christian Leadership crisis.
- 4) Hired consultants are more than regular Christian doctors.
- 5) Healing ministry facing setback due to more numbers of non-believer doctors and nurses.
- 6) Lack of discipline and co-ordination in hospitals, hampering in work culture
- 7) Huge communication gap within hospitals and with CBCNEI and local churches.
- 8) Less Interest toward improvement of hospitals.
- 9) No master plans for further future development.
- 10) Lack of innovations.
- 11) Land related issues and interference on normal functioning of hospitals is visible.
- 12) Frequent resignations of doctors and nurses due to low pay and lack of incentives.

Relation between Hospitals and local Churches and Associations

- 1) In most cases the relation between Hospitals and Local associations are not cordial.

- 2) The Churches and Associations are not fully involved in planning for hospitals.
- 3) The churches and Associations are not fully able to capture the vision of Medical Mission and healing ministry.
- 3) The Churches and Associations not been able to co-own healing ministry.
- 4) General view is that Hospitals are profit making organization but actually it registered as **Non-profit organization under the Society Registration Act of 1860.**
- 5) Tendency to give more importance on hospital land related issues.

The CBCNEI and Hospitals

- 1) The CBCNEI have not been able to focus on Medical Mission and healing ministry
- 2) The CBCNEI has own limitations in giving technical and financial supports to the hospitals.
- 3) The hospitals do not fully rely on CBCNEI and Associations.
- 4) The hospitals are not able to share problems, progress and prospective with CBCNEI and Associations.
- 5) Poor communications between CBCNEI and Hospitals.
- 6) Hospitals also are not readily willing to share detail financial and progress reports with CBCNEI and Associations.

If the situations are to be analysed, there are huge gaps in terms of trust deficit in owning healing ministry together by Hospitals, local Churches and Associations. The hospitals are very old, the infrastructures are redundant, shortage of qualified and trained manpower. Under such circumstances, only by grace of Lord Jesus Christ, the hospitals are trying to survive. The greatest threat for Christian hospitals is not able to recruit mission minded Christians doctors and deployment of large number of consultants from other faiths. There is urgent need of sharing and owning healing ministry together by Hospitals, CBCNEI, local churches and associations. The development of better communications and sharing the values and ethos will help reviving aging CBCNEI hospitals.

Within 3 months of time, as Medical Secretary, I visited all the six CBCNEI

hospitals. More or less the issues are same in all the hospitals. Lack of strong leadership in the hospitals, issues of team work and co-ordination, breakdown of work culture, shortage of doctors and nurses, financial crisis and most of all petty politics in and within the hospitals and from outside the hospitals. The relationship between local churches or association not as cordial as it should have been. Only with Impur Christian Hospital and Babupara Christian Hospital there are visible signs, where local associations involving in the healing ministry as part of their mission strategy.

During my visit to those hospitals, invariably I was asked by at least some responsible persons from the hospitals “*What CBCNEI is doing for the Hospital*”. I used to feel such question asking me was too premature to answer their question, as I am still new comer to the CBCNEI as Medical Secretary.

The fact is, when American Baptist Missionary doctors and nurses left India during sixties, the hospitals became like orphans. The CBCNEI Hospitals neither had adequate manpower nor had resources to maintain the hospital. However, the hospital was running with its own resource availability. The burden of the ownership of these hospitals felt on CBCNEI, when CBCNEI itself was not in position to undertake huge responsibility. These hospitals were left at their mercy and due to God’s unfailing love the hospitals have been surviving till today. If not for God’s hand, some of the hospitals would have been closed down by now.

During my recent visit to Impur Christian Hospital, 9th August 2019, I found that under the leadership of ABAM (Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang) the face value of the Hospital has changed. The Hospital has come out with some good innovation. The role of ABAM is visible, in owning the Healing Ministry. Similar situation was observed during my visit to Babupara Christian Hospital in East Garo Hills District where a strong role of Krima No. 1, was praise worthy as they have not only donated the land but also appointed one ANM by them, who had conducted record number of deliveries more than 1000 in last few years. The Hospital healing ministry in such rural setting is exemplary which is owned by Krima No 1.

It is time for other hospitals also to emulate such good examples instead of petty politics among themselves and hindering the growth of the

hospitals. It is also for CBCNEI to give viable leadership and mentorship in making Medical Mission as part of CBCNEI strategic planning. The CBCNEI Churches and Associations irrespective of geographical location must come forward for taking part in Medical Mission ahead. The notions people have about Christian hospitals are merely for treating physical sickness and profit making like any other hospitals. But actually, it is not correct to read, Christian Hospitals are not only for treating physical sickness but also Christian hospitals are the temple of healing, physical sickness, spiritual sickness, emotional sickness and even social sickness, which aptly fits WHO definition of health.

The hospitals need to come out of the box, sitting in somehow to maintain and doing only routine works. I find lack of plan for improvement in the hospitals. The proactive plans and innovative measures and creating conducive atmosphere are lacking. The dynamism is missing with CBCNEI Hospitals. The hospitals need to have proper *Master Plans* as part of future growth planning. The hospitals also require time to time co-operations, guidance and suggestions from Churches, Associations and CBCNEI.

The Associations and Churches also should feel the importance of the healing ministry. The CBCNEI and Associations if show sensitivity towards Healing Ministry done by Hospitals with all their limitations, perhaps it will encourage doctors and nurses and will help in revitalizing the healing ministry of hospital for physical as well as spiritual healing.

Activities undertaken:

As a part of small initiatives to address the issues, today hospitals are facing the following activities are undertaken. **I really thank Rev. Dr. Akheto Sema, General Secretary CBCNEI for his dynamic leadership and guidance and under whose leadership I could take following activities in short spun of time.** Under ROP, CBCNEI fund for the annual activities in trainings and workshops is scanty. To tide out the financial crisis, I requested our Mission secretary, Rev. Jolly Rimai, to sponsor for workshop on 24th June 2019 from Mission budget. He was kind enough to enable me in conducting one day workshop on “Revisiting Hospital Evangelical works” involving Chaplains and Medical Superintendent of CBNCEI hospitals. With the backdrop of above facts, the following activities have been undertaken:

1) One day consultative meeting on “Drafting Policy Guideline for College of Nursing” on 21st June 2019 at CBCNEI Conference:

A meeting was conducted, in CBCNEI Conference Room, on 21st June 2019 under the Chairmanship of Rev. Dr. Akheto Sema, General Secretary, CBCNEI and the following experts participated:

- a) Rev. Dr. Akheto Sema General Secretary, CBCNEI
- b) Dr. Bamin Tada, Medical Secretary, CBCNEI
- c) Dr. (Mrs) Christy Simson, Principal College of Nursing, CIHSR Dimapur
- d) Mrs. C.S. Tada, Vice President TNAI North East India and former Dy DHS(N)
- e) Mrs. Sushila K Mao, Principal School of Nursing Satribari Christian Hospital
- f) Mrs. S. Tongpangkola, Ozukum, Principal School of Nursing JCMC Jorhat
- g) Mrs. Naomi Sangma, Vice Principal, School of Nursing, Satribari Christian Hospital
- h) Dr. Lucita Momin, former Medical Secretary CBCNEI
- i) Dr. John R. N. Sangma Medical Superintendent, Satribari Christian Hospital



After day long deliberations and trade bare discussion a sub committee was formed to bring out the Draft Policy Guideline, which is now under process.

2). One Day Consultative Meeting on Hospital Healing Ministry

The meeting started with devotion by Dr. Akheto Sema, General Secretary and welcome and brief background was given by Dr. Bamin Tada, Medical Secretary. The meeting was held in CBCNEI Conference Room on 24th June 2019. In the meeting it was discussed, the various issues faced by hospital chaplain and challenges faced by the hospitals and how to revive the Hospital healing ministry. After day long discussion the modalities were worked out to revive hospital chaplain ministry, and circulated to all hospital for implementation. The following were participated and took part in discussion:

- a) Rev. Dr. Akheto Sema General Secretary CBCNEI
- b) Dr. Bamin Tada, Medical Secretary, CBCNEI
- c) Dr. Jedidah N. Marak Medical Superintendent, Tura Baptist Hospital
- d) Dr. Editha Momin Tura Baptist Hospital
- e) Dr. John R.N. Sangma, Medical Superintendent Satribari Christian Hospital
- f) Rev. Thensem Singson, Chaplain, Satribari Christian Hospital
- g) Mr. Pawan Bhuyan Hospital Administrator JCMC Jorhat
- h) Rev. Bharat Keleng, Chaplian JCMC Jorhat



- i) Mr. Paominthang Hmar, CAO KCH
- j) Mr. Seilal Khongsai Accountant KCH

3. Two days Consultative Meeting on “Strategic Planning for Improvement of Medical Mission” from 25-26 July 2019:

The meeting was held on 25th and 26th July 2019 under the Chairmanship of Rev. Vumthang Sitlhou, Chairman Medical Board. Rev. Dr. Akheto Sema, General Secretary, CBCNEI while taking devotion welcome all participants.

- 1) Dr. Bamin Tada Medical Secretary highlighting the status and challenges faced by hospitals under CBCNEI.
- 2) Dr. Vijay Anand Ismavel Chief Executive Officer and noted Pediatrics surgeon of Mukunda Christian Hospital, who presented the profile of the Hospital, once it was closed down for more than 10 year. How he and his wife Ann who is also Anesthesiologist revive the hospital and serving there for last 27 years.
- 3) Mr. K. W. Marbaniang Rtd. IAS officer and now Hospital Administrator of Dr. H. Gordon Roberts Hospital Shillong who shared the experience how the Hospital faced almost shut down and within short time they have revived due to concerted efforts of all concern.
- 4) Dr. Asolie Chase, Director Tezpur Baptist Hospital presented Hospital profiles, how the Hospital was before EHA took over the charge of management and now it has been brought to the present status which one of the most well-functioning hospitals in North Bank of the Brahmaputra River.
- 5) Dr. Mareelio K of Satribari Christian Hospital shared his experiences in working in CBCNEI Hospital, as CBCNEI sponsored candidate and problem faced by young doctors. He also pointed out lack of strong leadership in the hospital, non-cooperation among the staffs and shortage of own doctors, how they face problems with consultants who runs after only money, no commitment for other hospital development and clinical sharing with junior doctors.

- 6) The closing prayers for lunch was done by Rev. Janang R. Sangma, General Secretary of Garo Baptist Council.
- 7) After lunch break, presentations were done from all the Medical Superintendents except Impur Christian Hospital. They all focused the need of more viable role played by CBCNEI, Churches and Associations, so that all can revisit the vision of Medical Mission and Hospital Ministry.
- 8) A short remark of day's deliberation was done by President of CBCNEI Mr. R. K Raychawdhuri, Rev.Dr. Akheto Sema, CBCNEI General Secretary and Rev. VumthangSithou Chairman of Medical Board.

9) On second day the participants took part in group works.

Two days Consultative Meeting on “Strategic Planning for improvement of Medical and Healing Ministry under CBCNEI” was conducted in CBCNEI Conference Room from 25-26, July, under the Chairmanship of Rev. Vumthang Sithlou, Chairman, Medical Board of CBCNEI and Rev. Dr. Akheto Sema, General Secretary, CBCNEI. The participants and facilitators were drawn from different places and two days deliberation came out in the form of recommendations to be taken to Medical Board for approved. The following participants were present:

1. Dr. Vijay Anand Ismavel, Senior Administrative Officer (CEO), Makunda Christian Leprosy & General Hospital
2. Mr. Klassterwell Marbaniang, IAS (Rtd), Administrative Officer, Dr. H. Gordon Roberts Hospital
3. Dr. Asolie Chase, Medical Director, Baptist Christian Hospital, Tezpur
4. Rev. Vumthang Sithlou, Chairman, Medical Board, CBCNEI
5. Dr. Bamin Tada, Medical Secretary, CBCNEI
6. Rev. Janang R. Sangma, General Secretary, Garo Baptist Convention
7. Rev. Dr.Changha Chipppo, General Secretary, Arunachal Baptist Church Council.

8. Rev. Benard K. Marak, General Secretary, Assam Baptist Convention
9. Dr. John Ritchi N. Sangma, Medical Superintendent, SCH & Medical Superintendent in Charge, BCH
10. Dr. Mareelio K., Assistant Medical Superintendent, SCH
11. Dr. (Mrs.) Seniorita N. Sangma Singh, Medical Superintendent, Jorhat Christian Medical Centre
12. Dr. Jedidah N. Marak, Medical Superintendent, Tura Christian Hospital
13. Mr. Paominthang Hmar, Chief Administrative Officer, Kangpokpi Christian Hospital
14. Mr. Madhurjya Rana Momin, Hospital Administrator, Satribari Christian Hospital
15. Mr. Rajendra K. Raychawdhuri, President, CBCNEI
16. Rev. Dr. Akheto Sema, General Secretary, CBCNEI
17. Rev. Dr. Jolly Rimai, Mission Secretary, CBCNEI
18. Dr. Lucita Momin, Former Medical Secretary, CBCNEI
19. Mr. Rajib Zillie, Property Secretary, CBCNEI

Group A-Led by Dr. Vijay Anand Ismavel, CEO & Medical Director of Mukunda Christian Leprosy and General Hospital.

Members:

1. Mr. R.K. Raychawdhuri, CBCNEI President
2. Mr. Rajib Zillie, Property Secretary CBCNEI
3. Mr. Vikato Shikhu, Finance Secretary CBCNEI
4. Rev. Dr. Changha Chippo, General Secretary, ABCC
5. Rev. Janang R. Sangma, General Secretary GBC
6. Dr. John R.N. Sangma, Medical Superintendent SCH
7. Dr. Marrelio K, Assistant Medical Superintendent, SCH
8. Mr. Paominthang Hmar CAO KCH

9. Mr. Madhurjya Rana Momin, Hospital Administrator SCH
10. Mrs. Naomi Sangam, Vice principal SoN SCH

The Group A- worked on improvement of existing infrastructure and policy drafting towards retaining of doctors and nurses. They came out with strong recommendation and these recommendations are to be placed in Medical Board Meeting during October 2019

Group B- The team was led by Dr. Asholie Chase, Medical Director, Tezpur Baptist Hospital and team members were:

1. Rev. Vumthang Sithhou, Chairman of Medical Board CBCNEI
2. Mr. Malthys D. Sangam, Justice and Peace Secretary CBCNEI
3. Rev. Benard K. Marak, General Secretary, (ABC) Assam Baptist Convention
4. Dr. Lucita Momin Former Medical Secretary, CBCNEI
5. Dr. Jedidah N. Marak, Medical Superintendent TCH (Tura Christian Hospitals)
6. Dr. Editha Momin, Associate Medical Superintendent TCH
7. Dr. Mrs. Senrita N Sangma Medical Superintendent JCMC (Jorhat Christian Medical College)
8. Dr. Bamin Tada, Medical Secretary CBCNEI



discussed on Ownership of healing ministry among CBCNEI Associations and Hospitals together, partnership in healing ministry. The recommendations have been submitted to be placed before Medical Board. The concluding remarks were given by Rev. Vumthang Silthou Chairman Medical Board, CBCNEI and Rev. Dr. Akheto Sema General Secretary CBCNEI, and appreciated for such initiatives taken by Dr. Bamin Tada Medical Secretary.

Attending of Governing Council Meetings of CMC Vellore and CMC Ludhiana:

As Medical Secretary CBCNEI I had the privileges to attend the Governing Council Meeting of CMC Vellore from 27, 28 June 2019. It gave me an opportunity to meet and interact with leaders of various Christians hospitals in the country and also to meet our sponsored students.

Similarly, I attended Governing Council and society meeting of CMC Ludhiana from 5th to 6th September 2019. It was other opportunities to meet the prominent health care personalities and share with them the vision of CBCNEI Medical Mission. I also met our CBCNEI sponsored two of BDS students for counselling session with them. Unfortunately, there is no candidate for MBBS and PG course in the college from CBCNEI this year.

CMC Ludhiana Mission Exposure Team visited Satribari Christian Hospital:

A four members team of MBBS students from CMC Ludhiana headed by Prof. Dr. Clarence James Samuel, the Vice Principal, who spent 7 days in Satribari Christian Hospital Guwahati. This is for the first time such collaborative initiative was taken.

Cancer Detection Camp organized by CBCNEI and B. Borooah Cancer Institute at Satribari Christian Hospital on 22nd July 2019:

One day cancer detection camp was being organized by CBCNEI, Satribari Hospital and B. Borooah Cancer Institute (BBCI), Guwahati, which was inaugurated by Dr. A. C. Katak, Director of BBCI, Guwahati at Satribari Christian Hospital. A large crowd from in and around the hospital came forward to avail opportunity out of which six suspected

cancer cases have been detected and subjected for further investigation of which 3 of them were found positive of cancer. The BBCI, Guwahati has agreed to collaborate with CBCNEI in future also to conduct such cancer detection camp in various hospitals of CBCNEI. This kind of collaborative efforts is for the first time ever initiated.

Proposal for eye-camp in CBCNEI hospitals in collaboration with Sri Sankaradeva Nethralaya Guwahati:

A meeting was organized at Sri Sankaradeva Nethralaya (SSN) Guwahati on 10th September 2019 under chairmanship of Dr. Harsha Bhattacharjee, Director of the Institute, were Dr. Bamin Tada, Medical Secretary, CBCNEI attended have agreed to collaborate in organizing eye camps



in various CBCNEI hospitals. To begin with, a two days eye-camp is going to be organized at Impur Christian Hospital, Mokokchung from 22nd – 23rd November, 2019 and a similar camp will be organized at Jorhat Christian Medical Centre on 25th of November, 2019. This is the beginning of such collaborative initiative taken by Dr. Bamin Tada after taking over as the Medical Secretary on 8th of May 2019.

Medical Officer for Kangpokpi Christian Hospital (KCH), Manipur:

After a long search, a committed and dedicated young Christian doctor from Manipur by name Doctor Momosone Tontanga, who has agreed to join as Medical Officer very soon. The KCH has been functioning without any qualified Medical Officer for nearly two years. His joining will give a new lift of the hospital and finally a CBCNEI appointed regular doctor will be placed. Kindly uphold for him and more qualified doctors to take over Medical Ministry in all the six CBCNEI hospitals.

CBCNEI sponsored candidate for MBBS, BDS & PG

For 2019 CBCNEI sponsored 36 candidates for MBBS & BDS both in CMC Vellore & CMC Ludhiana. Out of 36 candidates only 12 of them have cleared NEET Examination. Again, out of 12 candidates only 2 candidates have been selected from CBCNEI sponsored candidate. They are Miss Ninglumtur Khamrang for MBBS in CMC Vellore and Miss



Jema Ningshen for BDS in CMC Ludhiana. Dr. Niyon Dutta from BCH was sponsored for PG studies in CMC Vellore and got admission in MD Pathology course. Miss Joice Muchahary, CBCNEI sponsored candidate likely to complete her internship at CMC Vellore in October 2019. She may be posted at JCMC. She has to work for 5 years as agreement made in 2013.

One Day Office Procedure and Filing System Orientation Training Program for CBCNEI staff on 17th September 2019:

On 17th September 2019, One Day of Training and Orientation Program on Office Procedure and Filing System was concluded at CBCNEI Conference Room, which was declared opened by Rev. Dr. Akheto Sema, General Secretary CBCNEI with Prayers. The Orientation program was facilitated by 1. Mrs. Kuholi Chishi, Director, Higher Education Govt. of Nagaland (Rtd) and 2. Dr. Bamin Tada, Medical Secretary, CBCNEI.

All the staffs from different section of CBCNEI including Property Secretary, Justice and Peace Secretary, Director Christian Literature Centre (CLC) and Chaplain, Lewis Memorial, Manager, CCC attended the training which was which was conducted for the first time.

Conclusion-

The foundation of Medical Mission and healing ministry was laid by American Baptist Missionaries more than 100 years. The dispensaries and hospitals were established with faith in Lord Jesus Christ. The healing services were rendered with utmost dedications by early doctors and nurses. Their works were seen, with zeal passion and compassion. They



healed the physically sick people as well as they healed spiritual sickness. The glory of God was seen. The legacy left by them cannot be simply allowed to pass off. The Churches and associations under CBCNEI must share the vision of healing ministry. It's time for all of us to revisit the vision and mission of Healing Ministry. The Healing Ministry is as important as the Church based ministry and evangelism. Let us pray for CBCNEI healing ministry and share and own together as God given opportunity to witness the Lord Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN



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- 7) Interview will be conducted with the short-listed candidates. The date and the time will be intimated later.
- 8) The decision of the selection committee will be final.

Paradox Spirituality



Ajit Singh

Staff, UESI-Arunachal Pradesh

A well becomes a hope to a thirsty Man, A tree, a hope to a famished however futile is the well if there is no water and hopeless is the tree if there is no fruit to fill the empty.

Looks so beautiful from a far, gives a hope to the hopeless and feels refuge to see at it. Ambiguous is when comes near, awry is the way, it's an abomination and futile what seems so beauty from a far.

Christianity today are so much engulfed by many sluggard Philosophy so call Doctrines, and it is devouring Christianity. Seems like growing towards the Creator however, discord is seen in every family, frivolity is seen everywhere and no prudent is seen which led to contempt of who they are. Speech are no more pertinent, it's just like a noisy gong. We are in a verge of our spirituality, and many are receding from spirituality because of such Sluggard doctrines and some out of fear are hanging around it. Perversity in action is visible in every spirituality of us, even if we lurk it, they are still so visible. Our Prompt actions are invisible and invincible is our desires, that leads to a Paradox Spirituality. Discreet attitude is seeming to be vulnerable. Implore you to be upright before God nevertheless we might be away and entice to be Paradox. Christianity seems growing toward enigma and many are being

mesmerize by its principality. Vague is the spirituality that we are hunting for, the light is still within us which supposed to be seen and heard by our love and work. Is it not a Paradox Spirituality? Let us, forget every principle, the so called Spirituality speculate and heed CHRIST.

Does our love see by our neighbour?

Do we stand, becoming a hope to the hopeless?

Do our hearts ache when we feel paralysed seeing the poor and needy?

May Almighty helps us to “venture in faith to faith, and may we have, A FAITH that brings ALL GLORY TO HIM”



TESOL TRAINING AT NECTAR

NECTAR (NORTH EAST CENTRE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH) IS GOING TO RUN ITS 15TH BATCH TESOL TRAINING PROGRAM IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2020. IT IS A TWO MONTHS INTENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAM. THE COURSE IS RECOGNIZED BY THE MARTIN LUTHER CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY.

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SEMINAR ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES
KHUMULWNG BAPTIST CHURCH, TRIPURA
(22-23 MAY 2019)

As reported by Amrit Kumar Goldsmith



About 80 NEICC (North East India Christian Council) leaders participated in the Seminar and discussed on the following themes:

- 1. Partnership in mission in the context of NEI doing mission – Rev. Dr Vanlaldika, BCM and Rev. Dr Jolly Rimai, CBCNEI, under moderation of Rev. Dr. CK Debbarma, TBCU.**

“Partnership in Mission” was defined as – Churches and Mission Agencies share resources in different parts of globe. It pushes towards an intimate and reciprocal relationship between churches of different theological, economic and historical backgrounds. It pushes towards an intimate and reciprocal relationship between the OLD and the NEW churches as they were previously understood. It was a departure from West to East mission with Europe as the epicentre of mission to Africa, Asia, and Latin America as the new centres of mission.

Joseph H. Oldham first employed the term “Partnership” (considered business language) in Christian writings. Partnership referred to the British

Empire's practice of controlling the central artery of business relationships while also granting some autonomy to their colonies. It did not connote a notion of total equality.

After much deliberations in 1928 at Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council (IMC) the relationship between the "Older" and "Younger churches was reconsidered. The 1952 Willington Meeting developed a new model by recognizing that the church ought not to simply be the starting point or goal of mission. God's salvific work came before church and mission.

In 1958 Ghana Meeting Leslie New begin highlighted the consensus that they had reached with three points:

- ***The Church is the Mission***- The relationship between the two should always be put together and seen in its totality.
- ***The home base is everywhere*** – Implying that Christians everywhere are missionaries in their own rights.
- ***Mission in Partnership*** – Denotes that any relationship that took the form of custody of another is to be discarded.

Despite goodwill expressed and envisioned by different ecumenical groups and leaders, partnership remained a near empty catchword for years.

The World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) at Bangkok in 1973 observed that "Where even autonomy and equal partnership have been achieved in a formal sense, the actual dynamics are such as to perpetuate relationships of domination and dependence".

Different churches and church organization have adopted their mission strategies of partnership according to their contextual realities and need.

In NEI the Assam Christian Council (NEICC) have grown to take control of the Mission field and evolved its own strategy of partnership, purely focussed on local leadership. The spirit of COMITY played a vital role to respect the presence of several Mission and Church bod-

ies. By 1955 the Central Government of India took policy decision to disallow foreign missionaries to work in India. This change necessitated the emergence of local indigenous leaders to take charge of mission and evangelical programmes. The real test of partnership came when NEICC started the education project – Union Christian College, Barapani. It was a real challenge of Ecumenical Partnership and was a successful one to start with. Due to change in political structures and reorganization of States creating several State Governments posed new challenges to NEICC. We notice the gradual decline in control of UCC and it became complete when it went under the deficit scheme, affiliated to NEHU and placed under the education department of Government of Meghalaya. The College Board is now composed of Government representative, NEHU and local Syiem's nominee and NEICC. It has become very difficult to follow the Vision, Aims and Objectives of the College. UCC the Mission College had become a Secular College. It is projecting a weak ecumenical partnership of 35 Church organizations affiliated to NEICC.

The Joint Action Committee composed of the NEICC and Roman Catholic Churches, did very well to work together to raise voices against the Freedom of Religion Bill in 1977.

During Ethnic Conflict in 1996 in Kokrajhar brought the NEICC, CBCNEI, PCI, CNI, NELC and Resource Agencies, CASA, CRS, Caritas, WVI, LWS to work for Peace, Relief and Rehabilitation and proved once again the ecumenical spirit of Partnership.

The formation of United Christian Forum NEI, strongly supported by RBCNEI, NEICC, PCI, CBCNEI and CNI is a new opportunity to work in partnership on the Contemporary Issues in the region. The last five years of BJP rule had given a new twist to Indian democracy – an organized, centralized, authoritarian democracy, which is what Fascism is. The coming 5 years of BJP rule will consolidate the Fascist ideology and the Church is challenged to cope with the emerging political situation.

The challenges are:

- Strengthening NEICC structure along with its NEICC Women Assembly and NEICC Youth Assembly
- Deal with Ethnocentrism vs Nationalism
- Extremism as a means of demands and redresses
- Togetherness towards life – networking with e.g. “United Christian Prayer for India” UCPI
- Ecumenism
- SDG’s and development opportunities and Eco-Tourism.
- Climate Change
- Evangelism and new challenges.
- Policies on Gender (Transgender)

2. Responding as Christians to the Changing Socio-Political Scenario in India today – Rev. Dr. K. Lalrinkima, PCI, Rev. Hemkhomang Haokip, ECA, under moderation of Rev. Dr Roger Gaikwad, CNI.

The political development in India in recent years especially post 2014 General Election can be observed as a shift from a more inclusive moderate to an exclusive communal orientation that encapsulates changes in many ways. The 2019 General Election mandate to the Bharatya Janata Party in power will be the consolidation of the Hinduvta agenda.

The experience of the BJP rule since 2014 observed drastic change in governance as we knew under the Congress Rule.

- Change of Planning Commission to Niti Ayog
- Declining Rule of Law and Constitutional Democracy
- Demonetization
- Shift towards Presidential Type of ruling
- Changes in the prime institutions like, Supreme Court, CBI, RBI, Election Commission

Highlights of India Baptist Summit

October 4 - 6 2019

Venue: Leonia Holistic Destinations, Shameepet, Hyderabad, Telangana

THEME: "THAT THEY ALL MAYBE ONE" JOHN 17:21

The India Baptist Summit (IBS) 2019 is a follow up of Indian Baptist Summit 2014 (held at Kohima, Nagaland), organised to refresh the Vision and Address the changing socio-religious and political context of Indian society. The IBS 2019 is an ever-historic gathering of all Baptists in India. Around 25 Baptist Conventions and Church Councils and other Baptist Associations in India participated the mega event. Today Baptists family in India is 226 years.



In the Inaugural Program Members of each States marched towards the podium with their respective flags.

Greetings: "Go with Cherish memory and remain in Unity and Oneness",



The Summit theme song was sung by Eastern Theological College (ETC) choir, Jorhat, Assam. The theme song was composed by Rev Zhodi Angam, Asst Prof, ETC. There were choirs from Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC), Kuki Baptist Convention (KBC), Mizoram Choir.

Vision and Purpose of the Summit:

Rev Samarash Nayak, the General Secretary of Bengal-Orissa-Bihar Baptists' Churches Association and coordinator of the India Mission Coordination Committee (IMCC) emphasized on the Vision, Mission and Purpose of the Summit. India Baptist Summit 2019 is organized with an enlarged mission to empower Women, motivate Youth, Justice for all and fight against the Human Trafficking. He mentioned the Baptist family in India is the second largest Christian denomination. He urged the present leaders from different conventions, associations churches that, together we can do much more in great potentialities in the midst of diversities. He concluded with a message to continue to make a great opportunity in the summit.

Keynote address:

Rev Dr Wati Aier, Professor, Oriental Theological Seminary (OTS), Dimapur, Nagaland

“Oneness in God Head and Humanity”, John 17:21

The truth of Christ is, the nearer we come close to Christ, the nearer we are close to each other. We should be sure that not only in meetings but God invites to fellowship to experience the liberation of Christ in us. Baptist from all states and parts of nations are walking on parallel paths but never recognise each other and so this is the reason why India Baptist Summit 2019 was organized. Each one's identity have to be permeable because we are called to be permeable, to be expressive, recognized, and identify. The call for oneness comes from Jesus himself. The division, differences and disunity among the Baptist family is our cross that we ought to carry. We are justified by Christ's grace. The cross of Christ invites the divided brothers and sisters. Let us experience the invitation of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and feel the oneness.

interview

Mr. Mandilar Kumar and Mr. Joel Zimik
(Chair members)

Q: Zimik, Baptist summit is a historical event so as a chair member how do you feel singing in front of this big event-organizer?

A: It's been a great privilege for us to be a part of this historic event. It was indeed a great blessing from God that we could able to stand before Baptists from all over India coming together as one, different associations, different cultures and we are privilege to praise God together with all of them.

Q: What message would you give to the invited?

A: This historic event is such a blessing for every individual group and church all over India. We witness many good preachings, learned something new to us. Therefore, I would encourage them to join in such knowledge festing program, May 2024 Summit be very successful one.

Bible study

Rev. Dr. Marlene Marak, Asst. Prof of Communication, Eastern Theological college, Jorhat.

Text: 1 Corinthian 12: 1-11

1. Different Gifts, one Spirit (v. 1)

-None of us are here by accident

God has something for each one of us

This verse is very appropriate for the Summit

Corinthian church has different spiritual gifts. The same way in Christ community we will be different from each other but are one in Christ.

2. Issue of the gift of the spirit (v. 2-3)

We are close in spirit and our testimony is in Christ. There are differences amongst us. It is said that where there is three Baptists there is three issues. Nevertheless, regional differences are the sources of Baptists in India. There is different cultures & languages but bound by the same spirit.

3. Sources and purpose of spiritual gifts (v. 4-7)

Recognizing diverse gifts and acknowledgment of the same spirit. Various gifts and diverse ministries like personal evangelism, large gathering preaching and teaching, comforting counselling people etc. are God's gifts to individual which is for common good. Therefore, the gift of Holy Spirit is seen in all persons. Then, how can we know that the gift is from Holy Spirit? We know it when it benefits all (1 Peter 4:10)

4. Different gifts of the spirit to all (v. 8-10)

i. Wisdom: The spirit gives the message of wisdom. God given insight and revelation. It stands in contrast to human insights/wisdom. It enables to discover truth. It helps to know what God wants us to do each day. It is opposite to foolishness.

interview

Rev Dr A. K. Laha, Executive Director, Words of Hope

Q. What is this summit means to you and how is it going to help you?

A. This summit is a very significant in a sense that this is one of its kind that has brought and attracted so many Baptist leaders from all over India so it's certainly a great opportunity for me to reconnect with some of the friends and making some new friends and also it give me some hope of saying in future that the Baptist will in some way have a National Forum where we are all united together. More love for each other, unity, desire of having mission partnership together. I want to see how the churches learn from each other and have more partnership in mission. That's my hope and expectation in the days to come out of this.



ii. Knowledge: The spirit gives the message of knowledge- It is about knowing that Jesus is Lord and God. It is also the knowledge of perceiving. Who has the gift of knowledge? There is no boundaries. It is given to those who does not have enough education.

iii. Faith: The spirit gives the gift of faith. Faith is in us when we are with God, When things go wrong, we ask God why me Lord but faith can bring overwhelming changes in us. Paul talks about the faith that can save us from sin. We believe that, that faith can give us eternal life,

iv. Healing: The Spirit gives the gift of healing.

v. Miraculous Power: It is not a magic show but its is the miraculous works of the Holy Spirit.

vi. Prophecy: Message of encouragement from God through person. It can be from person to person. It is also for exhortation and consolation.

vii. Discernment: Distinguishing between the spirits. Menifestion of the Holy Spirit. Today the Church struggles with such message. It helps the churches to discern the gift.

viii. Speaking in different tongues: The spirit gives the gift of discernment: Distinguishing between the spirit Manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Today the church struggles with the messages. It helps the churches to discern the gift. The spirit gives the gift of speaking in tongues.

Romans 8:26-27; Messages of God to the people in unknown tongue this is the gift of powerful communication.

interview

Rev. Fr. Solomon Rongpl, Sr Pastor, Alpha Baptist Church

Q. Two forums of the India Baptist Summit are Women Forum and Youth Forum and the Two emmissions are Justice for all and Human Trafficking.

a. We talk about Human Trafficking because this is the biggest crime in the world. So many northeast people have been trafficked, not only northeast, the whole world is in this big business that is why the Baptist churches in India must raise the issue of human trafficking. It's not only women but even children even men are trafficked for different purposes. And basically 80% are trafficked for sexual purpose.



ix. Interpretation – Thought of message in person

The Corinthian church regarded themselves as superior to others. Today we see the same in different churches. Therefore, Paul is telling the same issue in this passage.

5. God's sovereign Control of spiritual gift. (V.11)

Human beings are not in control of the gifts, but God is in control. The possession of spiritual gifts is not a matter of worthiness. He did not give according to what we want. Remember we are the barrier of the gifts of the spirit we participate in the gift of Christ, manifestation of the gift because the gift of God is for the good of all. Gifts are essential for building the churches of God the world needs to see the manifestation of the gift of God. India need to see our lives today through the strength and justification by the true manifestation of the gift of God.

This submit should be our face to the multicultural country like in India. Take challenge rededicate and submit and support each other and let people all over India see Christ in our lives.

interview

Nishi, Centenary Baptist Church, Lakshgudi

Q. Basing on the Summit theme i.e. (Unity), how do you see unity in different aspects?.

A. Unity is when we all get together to have fellowship with one another because we are all one before God. No differences should be there between low to the upper level so before God we are all the same.

Q. Unity between the Baptist Churches and Women's Forum

A. Due to globalization we are seeing the differences in the Baptist Churches from low to the upper level of our leadership qualities are day by day getting down, there is no properly managed and organized system in the churches. Today, youth are deviating and church members are dividing. Therefore, leadership is not playing a vital role in the churches nowadays. Women plays a vital role in the family, the same way in our churches each and every woman should be actively involved in the vital role in the churches. They have to guide the youth, children and members of the church in order to build the kingdom of God.



Leaders from
North East India



CBCNEI Secretaries and Staff



Delegates from abroad

Rev Edwin Lam, President, Asia Pacific Baptist Federation (APBF) and Pastor of New Life Baptist Church, Singapore.

Topic: Oneness; to confess and to profess

In John 17, Jesus' prayer was for oneness. The Church is supposed to be the most important place on earth but sadly it has become the most divided on the earth. Unity is possible even when there is transcontinental trans-country, transcultural, trans-color, class and caste because we Christian have the love of Christ in our heart. God's utmost priority is unity. Unity demands humility yet it is a lost word in Christianity. Our utmost purpose is not growing more churches and missionaries rather to love Lord Jesus Christ not in any way but the way Jesus loves. He paid the greatest sacrifice for you and me because he always wanted to be number one in our lives.

Today hundreds of Christians worship on Sunday but 95% person's opinion are outside of the Church. Unity must be by walk, not talk. To be in unity we must have: Passion for souls, Strategy of unity, Sacrificial love and Spirit empowered lives and ministries.

interview

Edward Lim, President, Asia Pacific Baptist Federation

Q. What is summit mean to you and how is it going to help you?

A. I think this will help me to understand Indian Christian better Baptist especially, I am so impressed with the so many Baptist leaders and pastors willing to come together to study Gods work together to eat together to fellowship join partnership and networking together.

Q. What was your expectation before you come here?

A. Actually, I do not have much expectations because to me India is very vibrant Christian place especially in Hyderabad and also the northeast, so many Christians are here in these two places and I am so glad to be able to come and meet these brothers and sisters in Christ in flesh. There is a great work to be done that God has given to us but together. India is one of the countries that I would like to spent more time with because to me India and China are the most populated countries in the world so the potential to reach people for Jesus is great.





Delegates throngs the registration counter



India Baptist
Summit Praise and
Worship team



part of the
work force
behind the
scene...



Advocate Norbu Lama, President, ABCC chairing one of the worship service.



Rev Dr Solomon Rongpi administering the Holy Communion



Some serious discussion...



Delegates from Garo Baptist Convention presenting their folk dance

Text: John 17: 20-23

Jesus prayed for the unity of His Church the believers, his followers. Based on Jesus' unity with the Father, He desires that his followers would do the same. The word "May" – in His prayer suggests apprehension and doubt about the unity of his disciples and the future church. Perhaps Jesus could foresee that the disintegration of his followers in the coming course of history. True to this assumption, the history of Christianity reveals that, from one catholic church emerged different denomination, sect and sectarians. The whole development is not new to all of us. Unfortunately, and sadly the trend seems to be continuing till today. In spite of the talks on Christianity at different local and global churches and organizational level, disunity prevails unabated. There are instances where, two parties at a negotiating table part away even further, they simply agree to disagree. The more efforts we make to bring unity between two parties with differences, the wider the gap. They prefer sticking to their guns. Our slogan is: "No schism or division in the body of Christ", but in reality, we see and experience disintegration of churches even today. Let us be reminded of the divisive forces that surrounds us, the deep-rooted issues which cannot be uprooted easily.

Reading and interpreting Biblical teachings with self-vested interests and motives, perhaps in one's own way. We cannot deny that there are groups and isms adding to the division of the church, crave for leadership has led to further division and breakaways, the church politics is a divisive factor, the church leaders draw lines in terms of culture, language, community, region, locality and so on. Division could also be because of monetary reasons and benefits, Spirit amongst each other. Today, the church is going through untold crisis due to divisive forces mentioned. We see cracks and polarization in the body of Christ.

Let us ponder, have we given human elements too much space? Have we made human leadership the Head of Christ body? Have we reduced Christ by making Him one of the parts of the body and not the body itself?



2. The unifying Christ: Despite all the divisive factors, let us be reminded again that there is Christ, in whom we have the Hope for unity we long for. In Christ we can practice acceptance of each other, tolerate each other, recognize, forgive, make peace with each other, love and care for each other-to mention just a few, and coexist. To fulfill what Jesus wanted of us in His prayer, we have to allow the Holy Spirit to move and work in us as the main binding force. In Ephesians 4:3, Romans 12:15-16, We cannot afford to only read the Word but we must also apply the Word in action with the leading of the Spirit.

The challenge here is; Are we ready to shed off or combat the divisive forces, as people of God, through the power of the unifying spirit of God? Are we willing to resolve through this Summit, to confess, forgive and accept each other as equals and live in peace and unity? Have we resolved to hate every hatred, i.e., to hate hate and love one another unconditionally in the manner exemplified by Christ, so that we stay as one?

May God speak to each one of us. Amen

Respondent: Rev Dr Jolly Rimai
Mission Secretary, Council of Baptist Churches in North East India
(CBCNEI)

Church and Mission: Mission should be a movement of the church. We need to think of how mission organization and Church should go together. How mission organization can help the local churches to fulfil the commission. The churches are involved in sending mission like Seva Bharat is doing today. Developing leaders and equipping leaders, taking the responsibility to share the love of God together and Saturated group is important in the mission.

Mission strategy of CBCNEI – “Each one Catch one”

Appeal: If you please include Evangelism as the mission to the IMCC



Advocate Tehmina Arora

Q. "We need more awareness regarding religious freedom in justice in the case of Christian minorities in India". What do you suggest for this because information plays a vital role regarding our rights?

A. I think it would be very easy for Churches to think about justice because we know that God is biased for justice and the poor and the marginalized, so it should come very naturally to Church groups to have and think about justice issues and if we were to begin to read some parts of our constitution specifically on fundamental rights we find resonates with what God is telling us about the rights of people and protection that people are to be given. So, I think it should fairly come naturally. We can do this by either organizing monthly meetings where we look at a particular topic and we look at the laws surrounding it. Invite any lawyer, invite any senior government servant and talk about that particular issue. So those would be some of the ways to implement that.



Q. When a local Pastor feel threatened by the local communities around, what is the first step he or she should take?

A. If Christians are being targeted for their faith, we would encourage them especially if there has been violence or hostility to immediately file a complaint. The reason mob things can get away with violence because nobody is complaining against them, so we encourage people to file complaints to register these complaints. Please also call 1800 208 4545, it's a 24 hour helpline number where people can come and as lawyer and activist to come along side then help them file those complaints and ensure their rights are protected.

Q. How should the Church respond to such a threat against local churches and how can they be helpful?

A. I think the Church should definitely been praying more. We definitely need the nation to be covered in prayer, it's a difficult time for us as a nation. The rights of many are being put under pressure so the Church need to be praying more and the Church needs to be vocal also. This can start with small things like talking about these issues in social media. Why is it that even in Kashmir more than sixty days now and past and we are not outraged about it. Why is it we are not talking about it. How many millions of people are living under in an open-air prison and yet we are not talking so starts with small item just talking about it, helping people know that they are seen. That is the biggest problem that we are making the problem invisible by not talking about them so the Church should talk about it and definitely use whatever resources, whether it is by supporting them, by litigating cases, we must act, we cannot be silent anymore.

Merry Christmas!
& Happy New Year

Raave's

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Christmas Tree & Decoration

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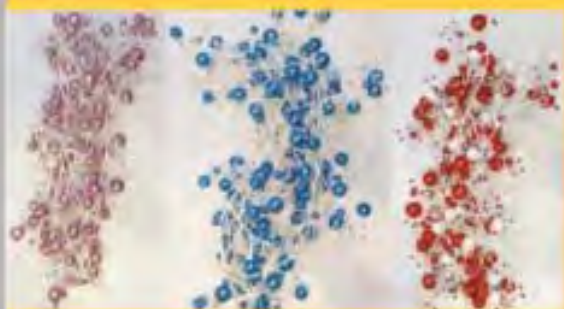
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TABLE CLOTH
MC LETTER
PILLOW COVER
TABLE RUNNER
LEAF DOWN
GRAPE BALL
GIFT BOX
STOCKINGS
CANDLE HOLD
NEEDLE PINE TREE
SNOW FLAKE
PINECONE

**Grand
sale**

CHRISTMAS TREE & DECORATION



- Safronization of the Universities
- New meaning of Patriotism, Nationalism
- More autonomy to Privatization and Corporate Sector

It was highlighted that the Church have to read the Constitution of India when we are discussing on the copying with Contemporary Issues.

Luke 4:18-19 – THE NAZARETH MANIFESTO – is the basis of Church Ecumenical Mission towards Social Gospel of Prayer and Action. Churches Integral Mission activities are more relevant and contextual – education, social service, medical ministry, gender justice, least of my brethren, accountability and transparency of resources, through Articles, 14, 15, 19, 21 and 25, may be amended to take away the rights and privileges will create a new situation to cope with. The Rules of Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) 1956/2010 had become very stringent in its application. The stewardship of 12AA and 80G certificate of Income Tax is very urgent. Payment of Income Tax, Sales Tax, GST have become urgent on the Incomes and Revenues generated. The Christian accountability and transparency to be witnessed by the church at all times.

The Traditional Rights of Minorities as guaranteed by the Constitution. Strategically it is time to strengthen the Ecumenical bodies like NCCI, NEICC, CBCNEI, PCI, CNI, Lutheran bodies, and other Church bodies. The Networking with Catholic Bishop's Conference in India, EFI, National United Christian Forum, United Christian Forum NEI, UCPI and other Regional Christian Forums and the States Christian Forums. The Alliance Defending Freedom - ADF (legal) is of tremendous help for legal protection and to secure JUSTICE.

Also, it is equally important to liaise with likeminded Civil Society bodies e.g. Axom Nagarik Samaj, Assam, and North East Regional Students Unions (NERSU) etc, the Civil Society Organizations (NGOs).

3. A Critical Approach to the recent Supreme Court Ruling on IPC 377 and IPC 497, and their implication for churches in NEI – Rev. Dr Sanyu Iralu, NBCC and Rev. Dr BJ

**Syiemlieh, KJPS, under moderation of AK Goldsmith,
CBCNEI/UCPI.**

IPC 377 - September 2018 The Supreme Court Ruled that Adult Gay sex between two consenting adults was not a crime. The Court further stated that sexual orientation is natural, and that people have no control over it. Though it was challenged yet a division bench comprising 5 learned Judges under Chief Justice Dipak Misra ruled that the homosexual practice which was earlier a crime requiring punishment is now approved and recognized by the highest court in India. This rule had shaken the church at its core because this was against the churches understanding on sex and the biblical mandate on sexual orientation.

Titus 2:11-15 – “You know that people like this are corrupt. They are sinners condemned by their own actions”.

IPC 377 judgement document states that;

“The overarching ideals of individual autonomy and liberty, for all sans discrimination of any kind, recognition of identity and privacy of human beings constitute the cardinal four corners of our monumental Constitution forming the concrete substratum of our fundamental rights that has eluded certain section of our society who are still living in the bondage of dogmatic social norms, prejudiced notions, rigid stereotype, parochial mindset and bigoted perceptions. Social exclusion, identity seclusion and isolation from social mainstream are still stark realities faced by individuals today and it is only when each and every individual is liberated from the shackles of such bondage and is able to work towards full development of his/her personality that we call ourselves a truly free society.

The IPC 377 judgement document further states that – The natural identity of an individual should be treated to be absolutely essential to his being. What nature gives is natural Thus, that part of the personality of a person has to be respected and not despised or looked down upon. The said inherent nature and the associated natural impulse in that regard are to be accepted.

Non acceptance of it by any social norm or notion and punishment by law on some obsolete idea and idealism affects the kernel of the identity of an individual. Destruction of individual identity would tantamount to crushing of intrinsic dignity that cumulatively encapsulates the values of privacy, choice, freedom of speech and other expressions”.

The arguments for and against continues and the Church cannot continue to be indecisive because the problem is here and now. Therefore, in the Church we definitely need to speak out against HOMOSEXUAL practices, that it is sinful and unacceptable. The Church should keep healthy dialogue open with the persons and encouraging him/her to understand that what they are doing is SINFUL, confess, repent and seek mercy of Jesus. **1st Cor, 6:9 – wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

IPC 497 – ADULTERY

On September 27, 2018, a land mark judgement was pronounced on IPC 497 whereby India’s controversial adultery law was struck off.

The Supreme Court declared – IPC Section 497 which criminalizes adultery, as unconstitutional as it violated Article 14 and 21 of the IPC and holding it as **MANIFESTLY ARBITRARY**. Any provision of the law affecting individual dignity and equality of women invites wrath of constitution. It is time to say that husband is not the master of wife. Legal sovereignty of one sex over other sex is wrong. Adultery will no longer be a criminal offence. But SC maintained that adultery would still be the reason for which marriage could be dissolved. Moreover, adultery will continue to be held as ground for divorce.

There are arguments for and against the judgment because it discriminates the man and also the women.

Christian marriage is very insightful: husband and wife are mutually to subject to one another in their mutual relationship with Jesus. In that ideal environment, their full personhood is achieved because it is achieved through mutual submission to Jesus. **For Christians God had ordained**

the marriage covenant only between a man and a woman: There is no accommodation for multiple partners. At the same time the marriage covenant is for life, till death does the couple apart.

In Christian marriage we do not let law court to interfere in our private lives. On the other hand, the Church try to explore all possible ways to settle disputes with the estranged couples to get back together, forgetting, forgiving each other for the sake of faith in Jesus.

Response of Church: The individual Churches need to adopt its own policies and its stand on the issues of Homosexuality, Sexual Orientation, Adultery and Transgender (LGBTQ) based on biblical mandate.

Example: *Proverb 31:8-9 – Speak up for those who have NO VOICE. Speak up and judge righteously for the DISPOSSED. Speak up to defend the cause of the OPPRESSED and NEEDY.*

After the promulgation of IPC 377 and IPC 497, the Assam Baptist Convention (ABC) adopted its Transgender Policy and practicing the same through its LOVE GUWAHATI (LG) project with the Transgender Community. To accommodate the Policy on Transgender ABC had amended its Constitution to accommodate the TG community as the third gender in the lives of the Churches. To work with the LGBTQ community towards their recognition and respectability as they are. ABC will work to rehabilitate them a transformed life with respect and dignity in the society.

The stand of ABC is very clear:

- 1. It will not support SAME SEX marriage**
- 2. It will discourage undergoing Sex Re-Assigned Therapy**



NEWS CAPSULES

Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention (KABC) Youth Leaders' seminar (22 - 24 May):

The Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention Youth Leaders' Seminar was held at Diphu. The theme of the seminar was **“Rise up and Build”** and sub-themes were, Authentic Life, Church at the Crossroads, Youth Challenges, Culture Makers-Go Mad (Make a Difference), Me and the Mission of God, Church-Whose Kind?, Media & Evangelism and Surviving the Digital Tsunami. The main resource persons were Mr. John Christopher, a media and evangelism cum youth specialist and Dr. Wilson Vinaya Kumar, Youth i/c,

India Mission Coordination Committee (IMCC) both from Hyderabad. Mr. John Christopher took most of the sessions where he challenged the participants selectively 37 from different associations under KABC with powerful and insightful exposition. During evening fellowships, leaders like Mr. Kamson Rongphar, Mission Secretary of KABC and Rev. Davidson Ingti, General Secretary of KABC took part as speakers respectively. Part of the seminar's required funds were provided from IMCC/CBCNEI in due time for which the KABC Youth Department expresses a note of gratefulness.



Through this seminar, with the sessions' interactions and fellowship messages, the participants were greatly edified and spiritually awakened to carry out their own tasks in their respective fields. The organizers believe, the objective of the seminar was served well with the competent resource persons in dealing with the modern and relevant topics.



Mission Possible Training at Jengjal Baptist Church:

As the churches are becoming more and more aware of the responsibility of involving in the Mission of God, needs are also felt by churches on how they can involve in mission and can make more impact. Therefore, a special training was conducted at Jengjal Baptist Church from 28 - 30 June to cater this needs. People were encouraged when they see the possibility of making greater impact in the mission. They were taught how they can make greater impact by involving in strategic engagement in mission.

Social Worker's Training:

Mr. Kaikiri Terang attended the **Social Worker's Training** organized by the **Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief (EFICOR)** held in Delhi from July 08–20, 2019 through the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI). EFICOR is a nonprofit organization working towards a Just, Responsible and Compassionate Society. It is headquartered in Janakpuri, Delhi and has a daughter organization in Shillong called NEICORD for the North East region. EFICOR is currently implementing direct projects in the Naxals dominant areas of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Telengana, and Tamil Nadu.

The primary objective of the training is to empower individuals to work in communities through the tools/techniques, principles/approaches integrated in the three phases training course. The training is scheduled for three phases to complete all the classroom teachings and practical exposure visits along with assignments at the end of every training period. The first phase was held on July 08-

20, 2019 and the second phase is scheduled for October 21-02 November, 2019 while the third phase is scheduled for January 27-31, 2020.

In this phase, the Biblical Basis on Social Work (Kingdom Work) and Societal Analysis was facilitated by Rev Kennedy Dhanabalan the Executive Director of EFICOR. Steps in Community Organization and Development – it's principles, values, creed etc was facilitated by Prem Livingstone. Creation Care (God's given responsibility to take care of our Environment) facilitated by Brother

Mang; Survey Methodology facilitated by Hoinu and Freddy. Survey and Participatory Rural/ Rapid Appraisal and Project Management Cycle were Identification. The later part namely Design, Implementation and Evaluation would be taught in the next phases. It is also important to note that all the classes and teachings were imparted with Biblical regards. There was an exam of 1 hour. Reverend Kennedy Dhanabalan conducted a test on training the serial order of the 66 books of The Holy Bible.



International Day against Trafficking:

On 30th July, at Don Bosco Institute of Leadership (DBIDL) Campus, **Miqlat Ministry**, Nagaland Baptist Church Council, Women Department (NBCCWD), organized ‘The International Day against Trafficking in Persons under the theme **‘Stronger Together’**. The primary aim of the program was to create a platform to bring together stakeholders, Civil Socie-

ties and Churches in order to seriously and honestly deliberate on the issues, share expectations of each other, strengthen partnership to cohesively work together in addressing the issue and collectively contribute in the prevention, protection and rehabilitation of Trafficking in Persons to reduce the invisibility of the exploitation.



Bhutan Mission Survey:

A close neighbor, yet we have no substantial engagement so far is Bhutan. Since it is a closed country, we are not able to establish our base though we have tried in the past. Therefore, after much prayer a group of us went there for survey and prayer walk from 15 - 19 July, visiting both **Thimphu and Paro**. Overlooking

the Palace and the Administrative buildings, we were able to raise our hands to God and pray for the King, Prime Minister and all the leaders of the country. We are praying so that God will open the doors for us to go there and share His love to those who don't know Him yet.

Flood water entered CBCNEI Campus:

Flood in Assam has wreaked havoc to many in the state due to heavy rainfall and exceeds of water level in Brahmaputra river which has crossed the danger mark even in Guwahati.

On 16th July 2019, CBCNEI lower compound was flooded affecting staff quarters and the quarters of the Secretary for Justice & Peace, Medical Secretary and Conference Centre

Manager. The office was closed on the very day. The General Secretary along with the Property Secretary were busy throughout the day ensuring all possible help to assist the staff effected by the flood. The ex General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Solomon Rongpi too came to show soladarity. The water however started to recede next day but it took over three day for the water to clear.



Reaching Guwahati City strategy Development meeting:

By the grace of God, in partnership with Garo Baptist Convention and Kamrup Asomia Baptist Sobha (KABS), we have started our focus in Guwahati city. Keeping the importance of developing Mission Strategy for any given mission field, a special meeting of leaders involved in this mission had a consultation to Develop strategy for the City 26th July. Leaders from Garo Baptist Convention, KABS and mission minded leaders attended the meeting.

Series of activities have been laid out, and with the support from partners, we hope we can make impact in the city.



Mao Baptist Association Missionary care Training:

As a follow up of the earlier Missionary care training program, the Mao Baptist Association invited all Pastors and Mission Board members and conducted Missionary Care Training at Chawainamai Baptist Church from 6 - 8 August where over hundred Pastors and

Mission Board members participated. Many of them said they have never thought about caring missionaries and how much they need our support and prayers.

At present they are sending 92 Missionaries and Evangelists, and they also realized that they have not cared enough for their missionaries. They came up with some guideline on how they need to care their missionaries. We were all blessed through the program.



Maram Naga Baptist Association (MRNBA) Youth Conference (16 - 18 Aug):

MRNBA conducted **Youth Conference** under the theme; ***Rethink, Reborn & Rebuild.*** Over 400 Maram youths attended the seminar. The resource persons were Rev. Karang Maram, Director, Peace and Development, Manipur Baptist Convention (MBC), Rev. Kaba Maram, General Secretary, MRNBA and Rev. Chris Maraiba, Mission Secretary, MRNBA. Today, many youths are facing challenges in their spiritual

life due to the advancement in the world and its materialistic development. Therefore, the theme was a great impact to the youth who participated in the programme.



Medical Sponsorship Form

CBCNEI MEDICAL SPONSORSHIP FORM COULD BE DOWNLOADED FROM OUR WEBSITE: WWW.CBCNEI.IN

- i) Last date for issue of this Application Form is: February 28, 2020.
- ii) Last date for submission of this Application Form is: March 05, 2020.

Farewell Program:

On 16th August **Rev. K. C. Gaila, Chaplain, Shillong Tyrannus Hall Shillong, Meghalaya** was given farewell at the CBCNEI office Conference Room. Rev. K.C. Gaila retired from active service after serving the Council for 22 years. The Shillong Tyrannus Hall has improved alot during his tenure.

His service has marked a tremendous impact on the life of the students who came to Shillong to persue higher studies. He will continue to look after the STH till December 2019. Our Prayers for him is that, as he continues to live and serve the living God, his presence will be a blessing to the people around.



Lewis Memorial & White Memorial combined Fresher’s Day:

The two students’ ministries of the Council, Lewis Memorial boys’ and White Memorial Girls’ student ministry of the Council conducted a combined **Fresher’s Day Program on 24th August at White Memorial, Satribari.** Mr. Yipu and Ms. Lima as a host led the program actively. Miss & Mr Freshers contest was conducted to encourage the students, see their capacity and capability individually. Pastor Aowapang, Pastor Ao Baptist Church, Guwahati, led the prayer of blessing for the new students.

Rev Jolly Rimai, (Secretary In-charge, students’ ministry) Mission Secretary, CBCNEI exhorts

the Freshers powerfully through the life of King Solomon - *King Solomon enjoyed his life to the fullest of all but he said at the end everything is in vanity...*

Ecclesiastes 1:2-4 “**Meaningless! Meaningless!**” says the Teacher. “**Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.**” What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun? **Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.**

Therefore, the students were encouraged to live a **holy** and **moral** life reflecting on the life of King Solomon.

WELL BEGAN IS HALF DONE



The 73rd Independence Day Celebration (15 August):

Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI), celebrated “**The 73rd Independence Day**” in commemoration of freedom India at the CBCNEI Mission Compound. Dr Bamin Tada led the event. The event started with an opening prayer by Pastor Aziz-ul Haque, Pastor, Guwahati Baptist Church. Boys from Lewis Memorial Hostel presented a special song. Ms Sanegrikchi read the Holy Word.

Rev. Dr. Akheto Sema, General Secretary, CBCNEI was the Chief Guest. There was a reflection on *Galatians 5:13-14* *You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flees; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

The program concluded with a word of prayer from Rev T. P. Mordecai.



A Visit:

Rev. Bawitlung Zazawna Lai, the General Secretary of Lairam Jesus Christ Baptist Church (*Head Office at Chandmari, L-IV, Lawngtlai, Mizoram, India-796891*)

visited the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India on August 27.



Migration and Witness of the Church in India

Atola Longkumer

Introduction

Migration is one of the major phenomena of the anthropocene period.¹ Rooted in the fundamental human instinct for survival and desire for a better life for oneself and those held as one's own, migration is probably as old as humanity.² While migration is not a phenomenon exclusive of the late modern era, migration of the present age is unique in its comprehensive reach of human communities forced to migrate and the tremendous multicultural encounters it engenders. The unequal economic realities exacerbated by environmental vagaries largely a by-product of the anthropocene activities is a major cause of contemporary global migration. The region of Northeast India also witnesses lead to migration and the inter-cultural opportunities intensify the impulse for mission and evangelism of the church. Migration brings home

¹For the statistics of migration from different countries and regions of the world, including data for women migration, see, <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/wallchart/docs/MigrationWallChart2017.pdf>

² Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 5th edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Immanuel Ness, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

directly missional witness to the flourish of life in the good news and therefore, as Gemma Cruz has argued, migration is rightly a fecund locus of theology.³

In the context of migration, this essay explores a central question: what are some of the missional vision and programs specific to migration that churches include in their witness to the good news? In conclusion, the paper concludes with observations and recommendations in the light of the mission of the church as called to witness to the joy of the gospel and flourish of life for all creation.

Migration and witness of the church: A mission of hospitality

Observations and studies on movement of people highlight the country's context as significant reality of context movement of migrants. India remains a region of complex socio-economic realities with debilitating poverty, labour fluidity, uneven development, consequently rendering many vulnerable and insecure. While India witness movement of migrants in high volume, crossing variety of borders: state, social, language and ethnic, there is very little attention and resources, particularly from a mission of the church perspective. The lacunae of resources and study related to the migration from a mission and evangelism of the church probably demonstrate a reality of the church in the region. The understanding of mission and evangelism, itself is needed to be explored. Is it a limited concept of mission, is mission not seen beyond making disciples, in the traditional sense of the term, is mission not understood as a praxis of justice and inclusive ethics that demands loving the stranger, the vulnerable, the poor and the migrant? Is mission and evangelism not witnessing in the public square? Therefore, with the civil societies and NGOs, can the churches in the country make migrants a central focus of the sharing of the good news that ensures the

³ Gemma Tulud Cruz, *Toward a Theology of Migration: Social Justice and Religious Experience* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Daniel G. Groody, eds., *A Promised Land, a Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008); Daniel G. Groody, "Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees" in *Theological Studies*, 70, 3, 2009, 638-6767.

flourishing of all, including the migrants, the stranger?

The following recommendations are proposals towards a mission of hospitality with the phenomenon of migration in the country:

1. Encounter a Migrant in the neighbourhood

If the phenomenon of migration and the existence of migrants as neighbours are not included as missional opportunity for the witness of the good news, it is critically important for the church to create awareness of the reality of migration in the contemporary society. The awareness of the presence of strangers in the form of migrants is grounded in the sacred text of the church. The liturgy of the worshipping community becomes the media for the awareness of the migrants in the midst and as neighbour of the worshipping community. The church can be encouraged to celebrate the World Migration Day, drawing biblical insights for hospitality towards the migrants, who often are the poor, vulnerable, the stranger and the other.

2. Collecting data towards knowledge of the migrant

Recognising the lacunae of study of migration, lack of data, and inadequate engagement with migrants, can be addressed through intentional programs by the local churches, it is important to recommend the value of data. Statistics and data can be the beginning of awareness and encourage encounter with a migrant. As a missional commitment, the church can employ its existing resources in collecting data in liaison with civil societies and other organisation. Knowledge about the diverse components of migrants' demographics in the area will instruct the church's mission and evangelism programs.

3. Providing local services: documents, counselling, language, helpline

Migration in the country is fed by desperate factors such as conflict, debilitating poverty, concentrated development and drastic climatic changes among other things. Generally, the high-

est percentage of migrants from the region is comprised of the most vulnerable: illiterate, low-skilled, women, landless, tribal/Adivasi, and children. These migrants are those who are most neglected and underprivileged, the ones who call for the intentional embrace of hospitality. Therefore, one of the missional tasks of the church can be making the church a space where the migrants can be assisted in acquiring necessary documents, local contacts, learn language skills, workshop for economic literacy, provide counselling services and provide a helpline or centre for the migrants.

4. Love the Stranger means sharing

Evangelism is living out the incarnational love of God manifested in Jesus Christ. Then the mission of the church includes loving the stranger, which is best expressed in the sharing of resources with the needs of the migrants and the migrant community. The church can be encouraged to build resources both fiscal and human resources such as volunteers to assist the migrants in their new environment. Funds could be allotted in the church missional budget to help migrants in emergency events.

5. Open the sanctuary

Despite a minority community, India has thousands of Christians in all its diverse church traditions. There are Christian migrants to the cities, and there is need for worship space. As migrants are usually the vulnerable and disadvantaged people, the worshipping community serves as an anchor for the migrants. By welcoming the migrant Christian into the sacred space, an ecumenical step is taken among the church traditions. Having a regular space for worship, contributes towards the migrants' faith identity in religiously diverse contexts such as India.

6. Welcome the Women Migrant

Mission with women remains an ambiguous issue, yet mission

has included welfare of the women. As migration includes and impact women, often in most exploited ways, such as trafficking and abuse at the hands of employers, mission of the church should intentionally attend to the women migrants and their flourish.

7. Ecumenical Collaboration

Migration and the challenges can be an opportune time for ecumenical, inter-religious collaboration in a common project of seeking justice and inclusion of the migrants. In addition to the welcome and opening of the sacred space for worship to migrants, mission to the migrants provides local churches to engage with the migrants in common fellowship. Collaboration at the levels of resource sharing, advocacy and service to the migrants are potential ecumenical fellowship and common witness.

8. Seek out the other: befriend

As part of mission and evangelism, the churches can adopt programs for the youth to seek out the other in terms of language, culture, religion, caste, region, and class. The intentional action of reaching out to the other in the form of migrants, engenders the crossing of social construct of borders that persist to feed the division and barriers in societies. In seeking the other and befriending them, the mission to be a neighbour is launched.

9. Advocate for justice for the alien

Another critical mission of the church in the context of migration is the advocacy for the justice of the alien and the other as migrants present. As awareness, knowledge and data of migrants and their circumstances are known, there is realisation of the need to advocate for justice for them. Their security, human rights, legal rights, salary, rents, and necessary documents continue to be a challenge for the migrants. Mission that

is prophetic seeks the justice for the poor and the alien.

10. Pray for the vulnerable

Mission of the church is undergirded by prayer. A spirituality of deep commune with God is a crucial aspect of mission and evangelism. In prayer for the migrants, acknowledgement of the church's mission as God's mission is expressed. In prayer for migrants and their flourish, the other components of mission praxis as recommended above are inspired, held and sustained. Therefore, a call to prayer for the vulnerable in the form of migrants among the local community, can be claim as the beginning of sharing the good news of God's incommensurable love.

Conclusion

An exploration of migration from a mission and evangelism perspective is an exploration of critical questions about the church and its witness to the most vulnerable, the strangers, and the other. It means thinking about the role and responsibilities of the church in a time when there is much scepticism and even resistance against the good news in Jesus Christ, the foundation of the church.



Gratitude from the Office

On behalf of the Relief and Development Department of the Council, we would like to thank all those who have responded positively to the appeal made for Assam Flood Relief. Some of you responded saying you were already working in some affected areas. We are grateful for your prompt initiative. Below is the list of some individuals and Association and Convention that has support the work through the Research & Development Department of the Council.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) | ₹. 1,00,000 |
| 2. Garo Baptist Convention
Krima No. 1 | ₹. 40,000 |
| 3. Mr. (Advocate) Norbu Lama
President ABCC and family | ₹. 4000 |
| 4. Rev Dr Jolly Rimai's & family
Mission Secretary, CBCNEI | ₹. 4000 |
| 5. Mr. (Advocate) Malthys D. Sangma
and family, Secretary for Justice & Peace | ₹. 3000 |

We are using it for rebuilding of 15 homes of our believers whose house were completely washed away by the flood.

Thank you once again. May the good Lord bless you all.

Relief and Development Team
CBCNEI.

THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR FAMILY MINISTRY



Rev Dr Phandenmo Kath

Associate Professor of Pastoral Counselling & Psychology, ETC, Jorhat

Introduction: Family ministry has become an important area of ministry in the contemporary society. Today, trying to define “family ministry” is as challenging as trying to define “family.” Churches all seem to have slightly different perspectives on this particular ministry area. But everyone agrees that family ministry is growing — in size, importance, and the magnitude. Family ministry is not a new concern, but churches have “a renewed awareness of the importance of the family unit,” says Reggie Joiner, founder and president of the rethink Group. The church, he adds, realizes it cannot be effective alone and needs the home.

As family ministry expands, it is also evolving. Just being family-friendly no longer counts. The old approach of keeping people of all ages busy with lots of family-specific programming is missing the mark. All the “random acts of ministry” that churches line up for families overload church and family schedules, ultimately “competing with the very families we are trying to help,” Joiner says. The problem is that the home is in desperate need of fulfilling what it is called to do. So we need to ask, How do we equip family ministry?'

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FAMILY MINISTRY

God intended the family to be the very foundation of the society. The Bible tells us that in the beginning God created the family. In His infinite wisdom He chose the family to serve as the cradle for personhood. In Deuteronomy 6, as well as in other biblical passages, it is clear that God designed the family as the crucible in which the reality of the person of the living God is to be both taught through formal education and by the example of the parental excellent lives.

The quality of family life influences every other part of our life. Surveys have found that a person's greatest source of happiness in life is the family. The survey has also found that the greatest source of frustration and disappointment in people's lives is dealing with family problems. The quality of family life also has a powerful impact on the believability of the gospel message. Joe Aldrich states: "The two greatest forces in evangelism are *a healthy church and a healthy marriage*. The two are interdependent. You can't have one without the other. It is the healthy marriage, however, which is the 'front lines weapon.' The Christian family in a community is the ultimate evangelistic tool, assuming the home circle is an open one in which the beauty of the gospel is readily available. It's the old story: When love is seen the message is heard."¹ It is also said 'A Family that pray together stays together.'

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAMILY MINISTRY

Although theology emerges out of ministry, its ultimate purpose is to organize and discipline the ministry. What follows are five theological principles that seem to me to be central in the formation of a theology of the family.²

1. Persons are created in the image of God and are of infinite value.

¹ Joseph C. Aldrich, *Life-Style Evangelism* (Portland, Oreg.: Multnomah Press, 1981), 20,21.

² Cf. Ray S. Anderson and Dennis B. Guernsey, *On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.

³ Cf. L. Von Bertalanffy. *General Systems Theory*, George Braziller, 1968; William Buckley. *Sociology and Modern Systems Theory*. Prentice-Hall, 1967; David Kantor and William Lehr. *Inside the Family: Toward a Theory of Family*

Thus, whatever defaces or destroys that image, whether persons, laws, or institutions, is not in the will of God and is to be resisted and/or changed.³ According to this principle, family ministry and theology must have an ethical center. The heart of a theology of the family comes out of an anthropology that is theologically centered in the *imago dei*. We are created in the image of God and have infinite value. Therefore, racism, sexism, and classism, etc. are antithetical to an ethically centered family theology.

2. Persons are created as relational beings to exist in co-humanity as male *and* female. “God created human in his image, male and female He created them” (Gen. 1:27). I add an emphasis upon the conjunction “and.” The conjunction is not merely a word linking two nouns. It is pregnant with meaning. The “and” is the nexus of family ministry. A theology of the family is the simple but profound exegesis of the conjunction.⁴

A consequence to this principle, if not a logical extension of it, is that both women and men are equally gifted and fitted by God to minister within the church and to the world. Few would disagree that universally women are those who are most sensitive to relationships.⁵ Therefore, whatever “family” means, those who are most sensitive to relationships, that is, women, become central to the mission of the church. Perhaps it is the chauvinism (*the tribal people are really familiar with this concept*) in the church that keeps and perpetuates the noun forms of the family, the same chauvinism that limits women from freely expressing their gifts in ministry.

3. The church as the body of Christ is the real presence of the incarnate Christ in the world. The body of Christ is more than a metaphor. It is a mystery. The Apostle Paul wrote, “Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it” (1 Cor. 12:27). Jesus Christ is alive in the

⁴ Cf. *A New Design for Family Ministry*, David C. Cook, 1982.

⁵ For an excellent discussion of the unique point of view women bring to society, cf. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.

world today, not in some ethereal, new-age sense of the term, but in the mystery of the church as the people of God, a people who live in relationship with one another as family and with those in the world around them. Jesus Christ is alive today because we are here. The only Christ some people will ever touch will be when they touch our lives, our hands, our compassion, our ministries.

A parallel example of this principle occurs in the social psychology of intimate psychosocial networks.⁶ Suffice it to say that the secular literature suggests strongly that something important happens when persons create and maintain intimate, caring relationships with one another. Both help and healing takes place. If this is true in human relationships in general, how much more so is it true when the people of God become family to one another.

Unfortunately, in the church's ministry, the portrait of our gathering together as the people of God is a portrait more bizarre than beautiful. In making the body of Christ a vacuous metaphor, we empty the image of its meaning and rob ourselves of a powerful truth.

In contrast, when we live together as the body of Christ to one another, we experience the vitality of the living Christ. The emphasis upon family in the New Testament went far beyond the maintenance of the nuclear family, or the extended family for that matter. The emphasis was intended to make the body of Christ relevant to real people. The people of God as the family of God was to be the ultimate litmus test as to the visage of Christ in the real world. Christianity, if it is going to work, must work in the most intimate of relationships: between husband and wife, between parents and children, between siblings, between believer and believer, and between believer and unbeliever. As the people of God we paint a family portrait as we demonstrate the real presence of Christ in the world through our love for one another.

4. The church is primarily the people of God and secondarily the place.

⁶ Cf. Uric Rueveni. *Networking Families in Crises*, (New York: Human Sciences Press), 1979.

This idea unsettles church finance committees who pay utility bills, salaries, and keep the “place” running. It is also a fact that the people of God both need and want a place to gather together. My suggestion has more to do with an emphasis.

The church exists wherever the people of God are. Thus, it is impossible by definition to sustain an incarnational ministry as the body of Christ if the emphasis is disproportionately placed upon where the people of God gather for a few hours per week. If the church is only the place, we will subsequently equate family ministry with content, presented to people on a Sunday morning, seated in metal folding chairs, arranged in rows, talking about family rather than *becoming* family to one another.

5. Family ministry takes place most naturally wherever and whenever people feel most natural. Consider this question: How likely are you to be the “real” you if you are sitting in a molded plastic chair in the church at 10 a.m. on a Sunday morning?

There is something innately artificial about how we are when we come to church as it is commonly constituted. “Church” too easily becomes the place where we dress ourselves up in all of our plumage and present ourselves as having our act together. Rarely do we talk about our failures and our problems in such a context. When I feel like a failure with my daughters, when she is being so disruptive that I am considering finding a place for her to live outside the home, it is almost impossible to raise these issues at church in the midst of a Sunday School study on the kings of Israel. The environment is too easily artificial; it is too easily manipulated.

I am suggesting that family ministry is most effective when the people of God as the family of God come together in more decentralized ways, around a kitchen table, or a backyard lawn. Accordingly, family ministry takes advantage of “natural events.” It takes advantage of family rituals and celebrations. The assumption is that we are more likely to deal with real life when we are safe and comfortable than when we are on stage and uncomfortable.

Part of the creativity required in family ministry is to take the opportunity

to influence the way the people of God and the family of God spend the hours of the week they are not at church. That is, family ministry is particularly relevant to the rest of the week, between Sundays.

Seven Reasons Why Family Ministry Matters

Have you ever had to convince a child that something is important? Let's say, for instance, your teen asks you why it was so important that they keep their room clean because, "Seriously, Mom, it's my stuff not yours. Why should you care that it's not perfect? No one else has to keep their room this clean!"

Have you ever just sat there thinking, "I have got to say something more than 'Because I said so!'" but the words just fail you in that moment so you end up saying... "*Because I told you to clean it, that is why!*" Yeah, so... may be that happened the other day in our house. Sometimes as parents it is hard to remember that these kids of ours don't put the same value on room cleanliness as we do.

Sometimes the same thing happens at church. If you are like most of the family ministers I know, you are passionate about what God says in His Word about families. You read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and all kinds of "Amens" and "That is right!" rise up in your heart. You see how God repeatedly puts spiritual instruction into the hands of parents and encourages the home to a place of active faith. *So when you walk into your church and say, "Let us do Family Ministry!" it can be hard to understand why the reactions are more quizzical than celebratory.*

So, Why Should a Church "Do" Family Ministry?

1. *Because the Bible tells Us so.* It is of utmost importance to base every action and proposed action of our ministry in theology, in the Word of God. For a list of Bible verses referring to God's plan for the family as the place of discipleship.

2. *Because studies tell Us so.* The Sticky Faith group at Fuller Youth Institute have studied the reasons young people walk away from the

church, looking for a “silver bullet” for churches and parents to use to keep that from happening. Their top finding was that time spent talking and living faith in the home was the biggest indicator of a faith that sticks in kids. According to [Jim Burns at HomeWord ministries](#), kids that talk about their faith at home with mom and dad have a 80% chance of remaining in church once they leave the home.

3. *Because the Kingdom of God grows from the Ground up.* Did you know that by the age of 9 a child has already formed his or her basic moral foundation and by age 13 they come to an understanding about God, His love, and eternity? Did you also know that according to [Barna research group](#), over half of people who come to accept Christ do so before age 12 and only 13% make commitments after the age of 21? So while kids are still at home, they are making the most important eternal choices of their life. The church needs to equip the home for these discussions and decisions.

4. *Because Time Says We Need To.* Studies show that on average, kids will spend about 24-40 hours a year at church. Contrast that with the estimated 2,000-3,000 hours they will spend at home or with their parents. If we want faith to be a significant part of their lives, it needs to take place where they spend most of their time.

5. *Because Parents Need Us To.* Most parents of elementary-aged kids today grew up in churches that had age-segregated, traditional models. Many times faith was compartmentalized and not talked about at home. Because of that, parents don't know how to talk about their faith or worship with their children. Children need help, they need support, and they need ministry.

6. *Because the Kids Need Us To.* An average child will be engaged in some kind of media (television, video games, social network, etc.) for 40 hours a week. Remember that statistic about church? At most, 40 hours a Year at church. The messages they receive all week long cannot be addressed in one hour on a Sunday morning. Kids need families engaged in their faith walk at home so that faith is not a “Sunday thing” but a life thing.

7. *Because God Calls Us To.* The final commission left to the church by Jesus was to “Go and make disciples.” Discipleship goes beyond church membership, service attendance, or biblical assent. Being a disciple means being a follower and imitator of Christ and making disciples means leading others to do the same. As Paul says, “Follow me as I follow Christ.” Our first mentors in life are our parents/caregivers, so if we are to make disciples, it starts at home.

Conclusion

Sharing these truths with members of our churches will not suddenly make implementing transition towards family ministry easier, but it will help begin to smooth the way as others begin to understand our heart and God’s heart towards families. As we continue to minister with a deep sense of burden to strengthen family ministry of the church, may we find joy and contentment as we would find Gods hand in our ministries saving many families for God’s Kingdom.



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