

PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW



Presbyterian Review is a quarterly news magazine concerning the Life and Witness of the Church in Mizoram and other related matters, published by the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod.

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**PRESBYTERIAN
REVIEW**

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The views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily represent the official position of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church; each contributor is solely responsible for the views expressed in his/her article.

**LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE MIZORAM
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH***Rev. Dr. K. Lallawmzuala & Ms. P.C. Lalitlani***The Lighting Ceremony of the Manipur Gospel Centenary Fire**

The Independent Church of India (ICI), Manipur, had chosen one of the hills in Mission veng, Aizawl, which was previously the location of the residence of their pioneer missionary, namely Mr. Watkin Roberts, but is now the location of the Mizoram Presbyterian Synod Conference Centre, to be the venue of the lighting ceremony of the fire of their Gospel Centenary celebration. The ceremony was held in Pi Zaii Hall of the Synod Conference Centre on 6th January 2010 (Wednesday) at 8:00 PM. The meeting was presided over by Rev. C. Chawnghiana, the Moderator of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church, and Elder Vanlalhuma, the Mizoram Presbyterian Synod Secretary, gave a short report. After the Moderator delivered a brief message, he lit the centenary fire and handed it over to Elder Dr. L.H. Liansanga, the vice Moderator of the ICI Manipur and the people present in the meeting lit their own candles from the centenary fire which was followed by a procession. The centenary fire was passed on to Mr. David Roberts, the grandson of Watkin Roberts, and then it was later brought to the different local Churches and mission fields of the ICI.

The celebration of the centenary jubilee of the ICI was held at Sielmat, Manipur during 4-7 February 2010 with a theme “The Power of the Gospel” which was addressed by Rev. Vanlalzuata, the Senior Executive Secretary of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church. The celebration would continue even in the month of May 2010 for all the churches in the southern part of Manipur.

Commissioning of Missionary Pastors

On 10th January 2010 in the Chaltlang Presbyterian Church, the Synod Mission Board commissioned thirteen ordained ministers of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church, who had been selected by the Synod 2009 to serve in different parts of India as missionaries. The service was chaired by Rev. Lalchhuanmawia, the Synod Mission Board Secretary, and a



commissioning message was delivered by Rev. C. Chawngliana, the Synod Moderator. On behalf of the missionary Pastors, Rev. Lallianmawia Pachuau delivered a short message. Out of the thirteen ministers, two were going to be the Field Secretaries and eleven of them would be serving as missionary Pastors.

Advent of the Gospel

The 116th anniversary of the advent of the Gospel in Mizoram was celebrated on 11th January 2010. This was the day the two pioneer missionaries first landed in Mizoram to preach the Gospel back in 1894. This year the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram had selected two themes for the morning and evening services of the day, namely “I am not ashamed of the Gospel” (Rom 1: 16) and “The Gospel of Peace” (2 Corinthians 5:18; Ephesians 6: 14,15), which were addressed in all the local churches.

Inauguration of the New Pastorates

Twelve new pastorates consisting of four within Mizoram and eight other in the different parts of India outside Mizoram, which are under the Mizoram Presbyterian Synod, had been inaugurated on 16th January 2010.

Induction Service for Pastors and Pro. Pastors

An induction service was conducted on 17th January 2010 for fourteen newly ordained Pastors and fifteen new Probationary Pastors. In addition to this, the same kind of service was conducted for those Pastors who had been transferred to different pastorates by the last Synod meeting in December 2009.

Pastorate Level Conferences of the Youth and Church Women

The Mizoram Presbyterian Youth Fellowship (locally known as K|P) had its pastorate level conference in the different pastorates during 22-24 January 2010. Certain pastorates that could not be able to organize their conference on 22-24 January due to unavoidable circumstance had their conference on 29-31 January. There are now 174 pastorates under the Mizoram Presbyterian Synod.

The Church Women Fellowship (locally known as Kohhran Hmeichhia) also had its pastorate level conference during 12-14 February 2010. The programmes of the Youth and Church Women conferences are normally a combination of singsong fellowship, Bible study, and worship service.



Each pastorate usually selects a particular theme for the conference which is addressed either by a local preacher or a speaker invited from other place.

Partnership Agreement with CRWM

The Synod Mission Board and the Christian Reformed World Mission (CRWM), North America, had signed their partnership agreement on 5th February 2010. Rev. Dr. Russel Palsrok and Rev. Jeffrey Bos, who are the in charges of the CRWM ministry in Asia, came to Mizoram. Rev. Dr. Palsrok signed the agreement on behalf of the CRWM while Rev. Lalchhuanmawia, the secretary of the Synod Mission Board, signed on behalf of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church.

The Synod Mission Board and the CRWM had started their partnership in 2008 and they had already worked together in various places. This new agreement would be meant for another three years partnership in mission ministry. In this partnership, they are now jointly sponsoring ten missionaries in Myanmar, two missionary teachers at Darjeeling Hills Bible School & College and four nurses in Nepal.

A Week for Healing Ministry

The Presbyterian Hospital, Durtlang, carried out its campaign for healing ministry during the week 8-13 February 2010 following the programme made by the Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI). The theme of the week was 'Relief of the suffering and burden' which was sub-divided into six sub-themes and they were addressed by different speakers.

Training for English Medium School Teachers

Training programme was organized for teachers who are working in the English Medium School under the Mizoram Presbyterian Synod during 23-26 February 2010 at the Synod Committee Room, Zosaphluia's building. Two trainers from the Light Education Ministry, Australia, namely Rev. Richard Wilson and Mrs. Evelyn Lorraine came to give training. 58 representatives from 76 different schools came to attend the training.

Synod Executive Committee

The Synod Executive Committee had its 228th committee meeting on 23-25 February 2010 in the Synod Committee Room. Out of 135



members of the committee 117 members could attend the meeting. They had discussed several important agendas including issues related to the emerging same-sex relationship in Mizoram. They left the matter to the Synod researchers for further investigation. They decided that a mass prayer of confession and a prayer for the state should be organized in all the local churches on 4th April 2010. They had also appointed Rev. Lalpiangthara, the Pastor of Tuikual pastorate, to be the leader of the Kristian |halai Pawl (Youth Fellowship of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church).

New Students of the Aizawl Theological College

On 29th January 2010, the Theological Education Board (TEB) of the Synod had selected 14 M.Th. students who would join the programme from the new academic session that will be started on 2nd June 2010. The students consist of 4 students for Christian Theology, 4 for Missiology, 3 for New Testament, 3 for History of Christianity. 22 new students were also selected for the B.D. programme on 19 February 2010.

General Conference of the Youth Fellowship

The youth fellowship of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church (K|P) had its 53rd General Conference during 4-7 March 2010 at Mamit town. The theme of the conference was “Get up, call on your God!” based on Jonah 1:6, which was addressed by Rev. Zosangliana Colney, one of the Executive Secretaries of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church. Other important issues concerning church mission and contemporary social realities were also addressed by different speakers.

Church Women Business Meeting

The Mizoram Presbyterian Church Women had its general business session on 11th March 2010 at the Electric veng Presbyterian church. The meeting was attended by 343 members consisting of 296 representatives from 151 pastorates, 37 Central Committee members, 4 Synod officers, 2 delegates from the Youth Fellowship and 4 from Association of Theologically Trained Women of India (ATTWI).



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 228th MIZORAM PPRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Ms. Lalrindiki Ralte

The 228th Executive Committee of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod met during February 23rd – 25th 2010 at Pi Zaii Hall, Mission Veng. The Synod Moderator, Rev. C. Chawngliana presided over the meeting. 125 committee members were present at the meeting, comprising Synod Officials, ex-officio members and representatives of different Presbyteries. Apology was received from three members.

Some of the important resolutions were:

1. **Matters concerning homosexual relationship** (*Synod 1983 Gen. 45; Synod 2009 Gen. 4*): *Nupa Thu* (Matrimonial) Sub-Committee was entrusted to conduct an in depth study of the relationship among homosexuals who live together as husband and wife and to present its findings in the next SEC to be held in June 2010.
2. **Development of Presbyterian Hospital, Durtlang** (*Synod 2008 Gen. 3; Synod 2009 Gen. 18*): In pursuance of the decision of the Synod the SEC entrusted Hospital Board to explore the possibilities of developing Presbyterian Hospital, Durtlang by employing Super Specialists and purchasing sophisticated technologies, such as CT Scan and others. It was also decided that the Hospital Board will submit its findings in the SEC to be held in June, 2010.
3. **Appointment of more Chaplains at Aizawl Civil Hospital** (*Synod 2007 Gen. 12; 2009 Gen. 21*): In pursuance of the decision of the Synod to appoint more Chaplains at Aizawl Civil Hospital, the Committee entrusted the OM to take up the matter.
4. **Clarification of list of Officials (Inkhawmpui Puipate) at the Synod, Presbytery and Pastorate Meetings** (*Synod 2009 Gen. 23*): The Committee decided to follow the Rules of Regulations of the Presbyterian Church of India in making the list of Officials at the synod, Presbytery and Pastorate meetings. Chairman/Moderator Elect should be included in the list of Officials at the Synod,



Presbytery and Pastorate meetings. The Statistician will not be included in the Official list at the Pastorate meeting while the two Treasurers, in charge of Pastorate Finance and Synod Finance respectively will be included in the Official list.

5. Consolidation of Synod Information & Publicity Department (Synod 2009 Gen. 38):

Matters regarding the consolidation and review of the Rules and Regulations of the Synod Information & Publicity Department were discussed under one agenda. It was decided that the Synod Information & Publicity Sub-Committee will conduct a more intensive study of the matters and submit its report in the SEC June 2010.

6. In depth study of the negative impact of media (Synod 2009 Gen. 40):

The Committee entrusted Synod Social Front Committee to conduct an in depth study of the negative impact of media and to submit its findings to the SEC.

7. Prayer for forgiveness of sins and for the welfare of the State (Synod 2009 Gen. 44):

It was decided that all the local congregations will observe a

prayer service for the forgiveness of sins and for the welfare of the State on the night of April 4th 2010. The OM will work out a guideline for the service.

8. Matters concerning establishment of Hospital at South Mizoram (Synod 2009 Gen. 82):

As per the resolution of the Synod, the Hospital Board submit its report concerning the establishment of Hospital at South Mizoram. The Committee made the following resolutions based on the report:

- (1) The house and the surrounding compound of Mrs. Lalthanmawii at Lunglei Chanmari will be used as Hospital for the time being. The funds needed for developing the place will be utilized from the budget allocated under South Mizoram Hospital Establishment.
- (2) The following members were appointed to work out the Rules and Regulations for the establishment of Hospital at South Mizoram. They can invite others to assist them if found necessary and to submit their proposal to the SEC:
 - (i) Rev. Zosangliana Colney, Executive Secretary i/c Hospital etc. – Convener
 - (ii) Upa J.H. Ramnghinglova
 - (iii) Dr. Lalremthanga, Director
 - (iv) Rev. H. Remthanga
 - (v) Rev. C. Vanlalhruaia



9. Bigger compound for Missionary Training Centre (Synod 2009 Gen. 74): Since the present Missionary Training Centre (MTC) will be upgraded to Degree College, the compound seems to be too small for accommodating a college. The Synod entrusted the SEC to pursue the matter. The Committee further entrusted the following members to find out suitable location:

- (1) Rev. Lalchhuanmawia,
Secretary, SMB – Convener
- (2) Rev. H.Lalchhanhima
- (3) Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad
- (4) Rev. Lalbiakvulmawia
- (5) Upa F. Laldailova

10. Proposals from Synod Finance Committee:

(1) Increase in Living Allowance (LA): To increase the Living Allowance (LA) of Synod workers, including Pensioners at the rate of 7 % annually. The proposal was approved with effect from April 2010.

(2) Financial assistance to cover the deficit in Synod Revival Budget: The proposal for giving financial assistance with the amount of Rs. 10,00,000 to cover the deficit in Synod Revival Budget was granted and

the Office was entrusted to do the needful.

(3) Wages and Mess fee at Salem Boarding School: The application to sanction Rs. 62,400 for the wages and mess fee at Salem Boarding School was discussed and it was decided that necessary arrangement should be made within the allocated budget.

11. Financial assistance for the celebration of Buhfaitham (Handful of Rice) Centenary:

The request from Central Kohhran Hmeichhia (Women's Fellowship) to sanction Rs. 7,00,000 for the celebration of *Buhfaitham* Centenary was approved and the Finance Committee was entrusted to do the needful.

12. Appointment of Central KTP Leader and General Secretary:

The Committee appointed Pastor K. Lalpiangthara, Tuikual as the new Central KTP Leader and Upa Lalrinmuana was reappointed as the General Secretary for the period of 2010-2012.

13. Request of Maraland Presbyterian Church (Synod 2009 Gen. 76): With regard to the desire expressed by the Maraland Presbyterian Church to join the Mizoram Presbyterian



Church, the Committee felt that it was not yet appropriate to entertain their wish. In future if new development takes place in connection with this matter, it will be discussed subsequently.

14. Request of the Evangelical Church of Maraland (ECM):

The OM was entrusted to pursue the matter regarding the desire of some members of the ECM to join Mizoram Presbyterian Church.

15. Partnership between Synod Mission Board and Presbyterian Church of Bangladesh (Synod 2008 Gen. 77):

The Committee entrusted the Partnership Committee to explore ways and means of working out a partnership with Presbyterian Church of Bangladesh and to submit its proposal to the SEC.

16. Matrimonial Guidelines for Bru Christians (SEC 224: 59; Synod 2009 Gen. 78):

The Committee entrusted *Nupa Thu* Sub-Committee to work out matrimonial guidelines for Bru Christians, particularly with regard to making the marriage vows and citation in the marriage certificate

more inclusive. The Sub-Committee will present its proposal to the SEC.

17. Bigger land for constructing Bookroom Building at Champhai:

The application submitted by the PRESCOM Board for buying bigger land for the construction of Bookroom Building at Champhai was approved.

18. Request of Bru Christian Church:

The Committee felt that it was not appropriate for the time being to comply to the request of Bru Christian Church (BCC) to come under the care of the Synod.

19. Invitation to take part in the Southern Manipur Gospel Centenary celebration:

The Committee decided to give a positive response to the invitation to take part in the celebration of Southern Manipur Gospel Centenary during May 4th – 7th 2010 at Churachandpur where our Synod Moderator and Rev. Zosangliana Colney and others were invited. The Synod Mission Board Committee which is going to meet during this period will be presided over by the ex-Moderator.

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FINANCIAL REPORT OF THE MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SYNOD FOR THE YEAR 2009-2010

- Rev. Rosiamliana Tochwawng

The financial year (2009-2010) of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod has come to an end in the month of March 2010. As financial transparency is one of the main characteristics of the church, the Finance Manager of the church has circulated the financial report and the same has been published in the Synod News Letter. We bring here the report, with some comments, for our English readers who are interested to know about the Mizoram Presbyterian Church.

FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR APRIL 2010 – MARCH 2010

Budget Head	2009-2010 Budget	Actual Receipt
	(all figures in Indian rupee)	
I. PASTORAL		
1. Kingdom of God¹		
1) Kingdom of God	16,36,02,000	23,81,17,793
2) Handful of Rice ²	5,60,00,000	6,73,58,648
3) Sacrament	17,00,000	21,83,791
4) Sunday School	21,00,000	24,04,770
5) Marriage Registration Fee	85,000	1,34,693
Total	22,34,87,000	31,01,99,695
2 Designated	25,00,000	21,92,924
3. Miscellaneous	1,31,75,500	1,76,68,855
Pastoral Grand Total	23,91,62,500	33,00,61,474

(Surplus of the pastoral budget is thus Rs 9,08,98,974)

II. MISSION

1. Mission

1) Mission	12,00,00,000	15,76,37,111
2) Missionary Support	9,59,04,500	9,76,70,286



Total	21, 59, 04,500	25, 53, 07, 397	
Miscellaneous	78,90,000	1,50,97,687	
Mission Grand Total	22, 37, 94,500	27, 04, 05,084	+ 4, 66, 10, 584
Grand Total	46, 29, 57,000	60, 04, 66,558	+13, 75, 09, 588

Comparing with last year:

	2008-2009	2009-2010	Surplus
Pastoral	28, 19, 96, 051	33, 00, 61, 474	4, 80, 65, 423
Mission	22, 21, 58, 850	27, 04, 05,084	4, 82, 46, 234
Total	50, 41, 54, 901	60, 04, 66,558	9, 63, 11, 657

From its inception the Mizoram Presbyterian Church was taught to be self supporting, self propagating and self governing. Indeed, one of the prides of the MPC is its financial self support, not depending on foreign funds. The main source of income is people's expression of their love and gratitude to God by giving tithe and other contributions to the church, only a small amount was received from outside.

From the figures above it is observable that the Synod Fund is divided broadly into two namely Pastoral and Mission. The previous is general fund and latter is solely for mission enterprise. One may notice that 48 % of the budget was allocated to Mission fund, this clearly shows the church serious concern for mission.

One of the main reasons for the financial strengths of the Synod is the willingness of each local church to unite in the central thereby

submitting a comparatively high percentage of their income to the central. Each local churches submitted more than two-third of their income to the headquarters.

Let us continue to pray that God will shower his blessing more and people in turn express their joy and love to God by giving freewill offering as 'God loves cheerful givers.'

End Notes :

¹ 'Kingdom of God' can be put as general fund. Originally it was 'for the extension of the kingdom of God'. In the Mizoram Presbyterian Church system, each family is given an envelope in which they will submit their tithe, normally there will be three columns in that envelope such as Kingdom of God, Mission and Local Church. Kingdom of God will go to general fund of the Synod, Mission to Mission and these two will be submitted to the Headquarters whereas the third, local church fund will be at the hand of the local church.

²Rice is the staple food of the Mizos, and whenever rice is going to be cooked for meal, a handful of rice will be dedicated and the women fellowship will collect and sale.



A TRIBUTE TO REV. E.F. LYNGDOH (1946-2010)



- *Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau*
Administrative Secretary
Presbyterian Church of India

Rev. Elrose Fredrick Lyngdoh was the eldest son of (Late) Mrs. Icynoris Lyngdoh, Mawphlang. He was born on 5th June, 1946, at Laitkynsew, Sohra. He was brought up by his mother in a simple but religious family. He did his primary education at Laitkynsew L.P. School, and completed matriculation from Mawkhar Christian High School, Shillong. He passed B.A. from Synod College, Shillong. After graduation he worked in the Forest Department for some years. In 1972, God called him to the ministry and enrolled himself as a student at Cherra Theological College, Cherrapunji. He passed B.Th. in 1976, and in the same year he was appointed as Probationary Pastor and was posted at Sub-District Nongtluh Mathan. He passed B.D as an external student of Serampore College. He was ordained as a Pastor in March, 1977, during the KJP Synod meeting at Laban Presbyterian Church. He was married to Mrs. Dr. Pissidis Nongrum on 26 May, 1976, and had three daughters and one son.

Rev. E.F. Lyngdoh was a unique Pastor with special gifts in various fields such as Church administration, politics, and social transformation. He was one of the architects and founders of the early while Ri Bhoi Presbytery, and later, Ri Bhoi Presbyterian Church Synod. He was always entrusted with many responsibilities at various levels of the Church from local Church to Synod to the General Assembly. He held the posts of Moderator and Executive Secre-

tary of the Synod. Presently he was the Treasurer of the Ri Bhoi Presbyterian Synod and Moderator of the General Assembly.

During his ministry, Rev. E.F. Lyngdoh had been serving at the Assembly level in various capacities.

1. He was appointed as Secretary (Jr.) of the Assembly for the biennium 1986-1988, and as Secretary (Sr.) for the biennium 1988-1990.
2. He was appointed as a member



- of the Executive Committee by the KJP Synod for the term 1990-1993; and by the Ri Bhoi Presbyterian Synod for the term 1999-2001, and again for the term 2002-2005.
3. He was also appointed as Treasurer of the Assembly for the term 1990-1992, and as Statistician for the biennium 1992-1994.
 4. Again he was appointed as member of the Executive Committee of the General Assembly for two consecutive terms during 2003-2006.
 5. Then he became the Moderator of the General Assembly from 2008 till date.

Rev. E.F. Lyngdoh had been suffering from ill-health such as diabetes and heart problem. Yet, he set a noble example of dedication and commitment to his ministry till his death.

On 19 March, 2010, Friday, he left for Haflong to grace the celebration of the Gospel Centenary among the Jeme Naga community. He was accompanied by Rev. Laldawngliana,

Administrative Secretary, General Assembly. They were received with great enthusiasm in the Bungalow of the Cachar Hill Tribes Synod, occupied by Rev. Joshua Jeme, Executive Secretary of the CHT Synod, where they were also accommodated. The next morning, 20 March, 2010, they found him lying unconscious in his bedroom. Even as medical assistance was sought immediately, a medical officer declared him dead at about 7:30 a.m. He left behind his beloved wife, four dear children and one grand daughter.

Rev. E.F. Lyngdoh was an able leader who made an untiring effort to enhance the credibility and the image of the Presbyterian Church of India. This sudden demise of our beloved Moderator leaves us with a vacuum which will be difficult to fill. The General Assembly stands in solidarity with the family he left in their sorrow and suffering. May God bless and comfort them and all the members of the Presbyterian Church of India he left.

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53rd KTP GENERAL CONFERENCE

- Pro. Pastor Lalhriatpuia Ralte

The Kristian Thalai Pawl (Christian Youth Fellowship – the youth fellowship of Mizoram Presbyterian Church) used to hold general conference biennially and it has been the biggest gathering in the state. This year the 53rd KTP general Conference was held during March 4 – 7, 2010 in Mamit town, 100 Kilometers west from the state capital Aizawl. It has a record of the highest number of delegates from various parts of India and from abroad. All together more than 15,000 delegate were registered (excluding the host members); there twenty two (22) fraternal delegates representing Presbyterian Youth Fellowship, North East India Christian Council Youth Assembly, National Council of Churches in India, Jingiaseng Samla (KJP Sepngi) Kristian Vanglai Pawl (Biate ram Synod), Kolkata Mission Field and Presbyterian Church in Taiwan Youth. The gathering was highly characterized by charismatic expressions of various kinds.

The effort of churches in Mamit to host this big gathering is worth mentioning. Soon after the previous General



Conference in 2008, Organizing Committee was formed under which fourteen different sub-committees, including prayer sub-committee, were formed. What is unique is the conference website www.ktp2010mamit.org for easy and quick information even for those who could not attend the conference. Map of Mamit town was made visible in all reception

counters and also in main streets and junctures which help delegates

A very beautiful and well decorated pandal was constructed moreover, the whole area of the field was decorated. Drinking water supply for everyone was remarkable as Mamit town had been known for its water scarcity. Medical duties did very well. Traffic management, which was thought to be very difficult in a town having such a congested road, was excellent and the disciplined and orderly ushering of more than fifteen thousand people by around hundred ushers is



highly commendable. A beautiful souvenir, *Mellung* was published and the selling was finished within just ten minutes

It was observable that all the churches in Mamit, not only the Presbyterian Churches but also other denominations joined hands together in hosting this conference. The various departments of the state government also did the best they could in their respective capacities. The conference unites all the churches, government departments and NGOs in the town and it was indeed the united efforts and services of all of us made the conference a grand success.

The theme of the Conference was 'Arise, call upon your god' (Jona 1:6)' and the speaker was Rev. Zosangliana Colney, Executive Secretary, Mizoram Presbyterian Church. The speaker is a well known church leader and an eloquent speaker and his sermons greatly moved the delegates. Apart from the main speaker, the Synod

Moderator Rev. C. Chawngliana and the outgoing Central KTP leader Rev. C. Lalsangliana also preached moving and challenging sermons.

Yet apart from the sermons important talks on issues of importance were delivered during the conference. Upa Zothanmawia



was speaking on Music, Rev. Vanlalbela on Mission and Dr. Robert S. Halliday on Media and Sex.

Besides important issues such as Christian vocation, Mobile phone and dress code were also addressed in the fellowship meetings.

All the worship services and fellowship programmes were well attended, the highest number of attendance during the conference was Sunday evening service attended by more than 23,000. The conference was graced by the officers of the Synod and by the Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla and Deputy Speaker John Rotluangliana on Sunday.

Mizos are fond of singing and singing has been one of the best means of community expressions of



spirituality. Hence, one of the best and most enjoying parts in the conference was 'singing' and music. Lively and joyful community singing with various kinds of music, traditional and western was enjoying and spiritually edifying; in most cases more than thousand people used to dance in the dancing ground. It is to be noted here that in every general Conference, a special song book was prepared and it has become an important way of learning together even new songs and thus unites youth in the different parts of the state.

Variety programme in which various talents were exhibited was an exciting programme. Drama, skits, musical displays etc were attractive and communicate in a very special way important messages.



According to the General Secretary report, there are 1, 21,415 KTP members out of which 75, 684 were male and 45, 731 are female.

There are 783 branches; A big amount of Rs.1, 82, 87,911.00 was contributed to the churches

The conference decided to observe the year 2011 as 'the year of obedience'. The next conference will be held at Thenzawl in 2012 and the conference elected a new set of leaders as follows for 2010 – 2012:

Leader - Rev.K.Lalpiangthara
 Asst.Leader - Pu Zohmingiana
 Secretary - Upa Lalrinmuana
 Asst.Secretary-T.Upa Dr.C.Zarzoliana
 Treasurer - Pu Lalmuanawma
 Fin.Secretary - Pu Vanlalfinga

It was by the grace of God that we could have the KTP General Conference in such a wonderful way. The unity and commitment of churches, government and NGOs in Mamit in hosting such a big gather was highly commendable. It was estimated that the total expenditure for hosting the conference amounted to Rs 20,00,000.00 however, we feel very worthy and beneficial to spend such amount as we compare to the blessings we received through the General Conference.

[Pro.Pastor Lalhriatpuia Ralte is the Chairman of the Organizing Committee, 53rd KTP General Conference, held at Mamit. The original Mizo version is rendered into English by Rev.Rosiamliana Tochwang]



PRESBYTERIAN BIBLE SCHOOL

- Rev.H.Biakthansanga

The Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod, in its business session in 2002, resolved to start a Bible School to facilitate for the members of the church to have a systematic study of Theology. The actual official resolution thus was: The Aizawl East Presbytery brought an agendum, "Let the Synod start a Bible School". After the concerned Presbytery moved its proposal, the Synod resolved thus: "After a proper discussion, it is agreed to start a Bible School as proposed. Let the Synod Executive Committee pursue the matter" (Synod 2002, Gen.31).

In pursuance of the matter, the SEC, in 2003 entrusted the following members with the needful: Rev.Vanlalfaka (Convener), Rev.Dr.H.Vanlalauva, Rev.S.Lalkhuma, Rev.Lalchhuanliana, Upa C.Thansiam (SEC. 190.10). The tentative resolutions brought by these member were accepted in principle by the SEC with a resolution that, in the light of the discussion, the same member would bring a final shape of it to the next session of the SEC in November, 2003 (SEC 191.53).

The need and importance of having a Bible School and proposal for its functioning were brought to the SEC which accepted them after careful scrutiny (SEC 192). It was then resolved to open the Bible School on May 15, 2004. It was also decided that matter relating to the Bible School be reviewed after three years of its inception. The Bible School was said to be held either at the top floor of the Synod Conference

Centre or at any suitable place of the Synod buildings or at any convenient Church Hall. After a careful search was made for its location, the Bible School was officially declared opened by the then Moderator, Rev.Thangdela on 18.05.2004, at the Family Guidance and Counseling Centre building (FG&CC).

Main Functions of the Presbyterian Bible School

1. This Bible School is called the **PRESBYTERIAN BIBLE SCHOOL** (abbreviated as PBS).

2. *Its Aims and Objects*

(1) To offer a facility to study Theology for those unable to go to Theological College.

(2) To impart and maintain sound Theological teachings of Scripture.

(3) That the Doctrines, Precepts, Traditional guidelines and Practices be properly inculcated.



(4) To help the students grow up to Christian maturity as faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. The PBS was planned to be a residential institution, however before it could function as a residential one, the PBS would be accommodated in the FG&CC building as day school. The Synod session of 2007 decided to make necessary improvements on FG&CC and entrusted the SEC on the matter (Synod 2007, Gen.54). According to the decision by SEC, the FG&CC building was no longer possible to accommodate the PBS as the functioning of the FG&CC was to begin in 2009 (SEC 218.26). For lack of suitable accommodation and land to purchase the PBS met with a difficulty and this was brought to the SEC by the PBS Board Committee (PBS Board 34.2). The SEC made a decision that until it could shift to another place, the PBS would continue in the FG&CC building, thus acceding to the request of the PBS. The PBS was all along on the look and for a suitable accommodation. As the PBS could not find such a suitable place, the PBS Board Committee asked the SEC as to how the PBS would continue as a residential School (PBS Board 35.C). The SEC then made a decision that even without having a separate campus necessarily, the students would be

given hostel facilities (SEC 219.49). However, there being no budget provisions for preparations of hostels (2009-2010 and 2010-2011 Synod budget), the matter is yet impossible to pursue. The PBS Board made a request to the SEC to construct the PBS building on the top floor of the FG&CC building (PBS Board 37.1). Agreeing to this proposal the SEC entrusted the matter to the Synod Officers' Meeting to pursue (SEC 222.56). The necessary budget provision was made for construction of the PBS building Synod budget 2010-2011). Necessary step are being taken in the matter.

4. *The Board* : There is a Board for the PBS which is the sub-committee of the SEC. The term of the members of the Board is three years. The members of the Board are as follows:

Chairman : Synod Moderator

Secretary : Principal, PBS

Members :

1) 7 appointed members

2) Ex-Officio:

a) Synod Secretary (Sr.)

b) Executive Secretary i/c PBS

The PBS Board will manage the necessary developments of the PBS. It will decide the number of students to admit, employing



teachers from Minister pensioners, and looking after its general affairs. The appointed members of the PBS Board may be drawn not necessarily from among the members of the SEC.

The Teachers of the PBS are those of the Synod senior ministers with good education and experience with theological degrees under the Senate of Serampore University. The Principal is appointed by the Synod Pastoral Committee from among the ministers in Synod service. The term of the principal is not specified, some of the teaching staff members are appointed by the PBS Board while the others are appointed by the Synod Pastoral Committee. Matters of academic studies and other relevant matters are looked after by the faculty meeting of the PBS. The staff consists of the following members at present:

Principal - 1
Teaching Staff - 3
Office Staff - 2

5. Courses of Study and Duration :

The course provided by PBS is Certificate in Theology (C.Th.). The duration of the course is three months with the following session:

1) January 15 - April 15
2) May 15 - August 15
3) September 15 - December 15

There will be two examinations in each of the sessions, namely : Mid-Term Examinations and Final Examinations.

The Text books are prepared by the PBS. Text books already available in Mizo language are well made used of. Teaching and examinations are in Mizo. There is a library facility for those who do not have that text books or who are desirous of doing a wider reading.

6. *Curriculum*: The course of the certificate in Theology consists of the following subject to necessary review by the PBS Board:

- 1) Bible-
 - a) Introduction to the Bible
 - b) Hermeneutic
- 2) Old Testament -
 - a) History of Israel
 - b) Prophets
- 3) New Testament-
 - a) Life and Teaching of Jesus
- 4) Theology -
 - Outlines of Christian Theology
- 5) History of Christianity -
 - Introduction to the History of Christianity
- 6) Religion -
 - Introduction to Major Religion
- 7) Ministry-
 - a) Church Organization and Administration
 - b) Homiletic



7. *Selection of students is based on the following criterions :*

- a) Class VII passed;
- b) not younger than 16 years of age;
- c) able to read and write in Mizo;
- d) a full (Communicant) member of the Church. The maximum number of student enrollment was at the outset 40, however as the demand for enrollment became greater it was extended to 60 (PBS Board 40.IV). The PBS Board entrusted the selection of students to the Teaching Staff of PBS.

There is fees payable by the selected students:

- 1) Admission fee - Rs. 100
- 2) Registration fee - Rs. 50
- 3) Tuition fee - Rs. 100
(per month)
- 4) Examination fee - Rs. 100

The SEC has since decided to exempt the student from payment of fees and grant a stipend of Rs. 300/- per month in consideration of the family conditions of student and also with a hope of drawing more students (SEC 214:56). This decision was given effect to practice since 2008.

8. *Graduation Service:* At the close of the Course of C.Th, there is a solemn function of offering the C.Th Certificate to those who successfully completed and passed the C.Th course. The C.Th .certificate was offered with other allied prizes.

9. General guidelines are made for students in the form of rules and regulations. Other necessary matters which may arise are taken care of by the Teaching staff, referring matters to the Board which deserve for its consideration. As the Institution is not yet functioning as a residential one, guiding rules and regulations for the students cannot yet be so detailed as such. However, these are so framed as to make them suitable for those who attend classes from their own homes or rented houses.

The teaching hours of the school are 9: 30 A.M.- 3: 15 P.M. On Wednesday at 2:30 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. the expert functionaries of the different departments are occasionally invited to explain the working of their respective departments which may be relevant to the students. Sometimes Government officials and leaders of NGO's are also invited. There is a sermon class on Friday at 2:30 P.M. from 4:00 P.M. Despite their feeling of diffidence in this, the student found this class quite beneficent. There is a morning devotion everyday at 9:30 - 10:00 A.M every teacher and student is required to attend the morning devotion. A retreat is conducted for one day following a Mid-Term examination. This retreat has been done every year since 2006



July 6 (PBS Board 16.4). After the final examination the students are taken around to visit the different important places of the Synod (PBS Board 6.7). Such places to visit are selected for every session by the Teaching Staff.

***Academic positions of Students
(May 2004 - April 2010)***

Since its inception the academic position of the students of PBS are as shown here:

Enrollment	- 633
Pass out	- 501
1st Div.	- 120
2nd Div.	- 272
3rd Div.	- 52
SP	- 58
Failed	- 121

Of the 501 successful students, 135 are female students who found themselves among the top- most successful one.

A rough estimate is that 80 % of the products of the PBS as leaving a presentable conduct of life being usefully employed in the Church activities such as teaching Sunday school, preaching, teaching the themes of wednesday night services, and church youth group activities, etc. Some of them work as missionaries in and outside Mizoram and also

helpful workers in the society. A number of them pursue higher secular or theological studies. Most of the Synod Revival Speakers have gone through the PBS course. Those of the Synod Revival Speakers who have not done so are prepared to do it in May - August 2010 session. Several of such speaker have submitted relevant applications thereof. In the Bible School, students are not from the Presbyterian churches, but also from other church denominations such as, Baptist, IKK, Salvation Army, UPC.

The students of the Bible School are of a variety of background prior to their study in the school. Some of them had just stopped using drugs and drinks, some may continue these while some are actively working in the church ministry as church elders or speakers and involving themselves in the KTP and church women activities. They are also of quite different educational standards. Some have just passed class seven years ago while some of them are graduates, MA's and BA's.

The church would do well to make proper and beneficial use of the PBS. It is a place where the healthy and useful social life can result from students for our society.

[Rev. Biakthansanga is a member of the teaching faculty at the Presbyterian Bible School]

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MISSION TO BIHAR

(Short History of Patna Mission Field)

- *Rev. Vanlalrova Khiangte*
Field Secretary,
Patna Mission Field.

Most Christian Missions started by doing some surveys as well as visiting and acquainting with the local people. But Christian Mission from Mizoram to Bihar is different. People from Bihar, particularly Santal tribes came to Mizoram and were converted into Christian. They were inspired by God to preach their new faith to their own community. With this zeal, Santal Christians returned to Bihar and started Mission with the help of some local Presbyterian Church, particularly Laipuitlang Presbyterian Church, Aizawl, Mizoram. They started Mission to Santal parganas now under Jharkhand state in 1992 and after seven years Mizoram Presbyterian Church established Patna Mission Field in 1999 to cover all Bihar state. The new Mission Field continued the ministry mainly to the Santal but has started to the mainland Bihar particularly Patna and Khagaria District.

When Patna Mission Field was existed Bihar is a big state and in 2000 Jharkhand got statehood so the Field covered both Jharkhand and Bihar. But when the mission was expanded and growing, Jharkhand Mission Field was inaugurated in 2008. Now Patna Mission Field covered only the state of Bihar. Not only its highly population Bihar has a rich heritages, these are still remarkable in modern times.

Bihar- A glorious past : humble present scenario: Though many people may not agree the peaceful life of Bihar in ancient times, Bihar

literally derives from Sanskrit word *vihara*, meaning peaceful garden or place. The modern state of Bihar was not a single geographical or administrative unit in the ancient period of Indian history. Numerous big and small states formed part of the Prachya or Eastern Division of the country variously called *Jambudvipa*, *Bharatavarsa* or *Kumaridvipa* in earlier times. A large number of states flourished in Bihar in ancient times. A few of them were regarded as important by the Buddhist writers and enumerated by them in the list of



sixteen *mahajanapadas* of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. One of the interesting record was civilizes type of republican state of the confederacy of different communities and tribes was found in ancient Bihar, modern Vaishali district.

One of the greatest contributions of Bihar to Indian polity is the huge Magadhan Empire, covering the Patna-Nalanda region with its capital originally at Girivraja about the site of modern Rajgir near Nalanda. During the time of Chandragupta Maurya, the king ruled over the vast empire with the help of Prime Minister, Kautilya. The system was great influenced to others. A new school of political thought was found after Kautilya which still have great impact in modern Indian political thought.

As early as third century BC, the Mauryan emperor Ashoka the great realized the futility of war and his policy of pacifism still encourage 20th century AD political thinkers. He stressed on improving relations between states through a policy of friendship and peace. His peaceful means of administration through non-violence is still remarkable.

In religion, Bihar was proud for Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains. Sitamarhi in North Bihar

is the birth place of Sita, wife of Lord Rama, Bodh Gaya is the place where Gautama Buddha got his enlightenment and found Buddhism, the tenth Guru of Sikh religion was born and the greatest leader of Jain religion, Vardhamana Mahavir was born and brought too.

In modern Indian politics, Bihar has its own significance, Mahatma Gandhi organized his first *ahimsa* movement in Bihar, and the first President Rajendra Prasad was from Patna, the great revolutionary in modern times Jaya Prakash Narayanan hails from Bihar.

Needless to say, modern Bihar may have less impact on today's lifestyle. Among the Indian states, Bihar is the 12th largest state in geographical size but 3rd largest in population, and 85 percent are rural people. About 58 per cent are below 25 years old; the highest in India. Total population in 2001 census was 8,29,98,509. Male literates are 60.32%, female are 33.57%, the lowest in India.

The capital Patna (originally Pataliputr) is one of the longest surviving city in the world, it began with the erection of a fort in Pataligrama on the bank of Ganga by Magadhan king Ajatshatru in 6th century BC. The name is derives



from a tree called '*patali*' (botanical name: *stereospermum*). Greek ambassador Megasthenese in 4th century BC has declared the beauty of cities like Susa and Ekbatana inferior to Pataliputra. Whereas Chinese traveler Fa Hian in 4th Century AD called it as built by some superhuman beings.

After the falls of Ashoka, Pataliputra witnessed several ups and downs. Facing invasions along with ravages of nature, the city came into rubbles by 6th century AD, Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang saw only the relics of past glory. Even though, however, it maintained its significance, which is authenticated by travelogues and royal charters. The city began to grow once again under the British from 1912 when after division of Bengal; it became capital of joint province of Bihar and Orissa.

Christian Mission to Bihar:

Though there are no proper written or published records of mission to Bihar, the first Protestant mission was the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), they came in 1792. Father of Modern Missionary Movement William Carey extended his mission work from Bengal and sent missionaries to Bihar.

The United Free Church of Scotland came in 1869; Vernieux was the missionary who started his mission at Munger. The Church was later merges with UCNI and then CNI in 1971. In 1880, E.Cornelius a missionary under Brethren Assembly from Sweden came to Bihar and worked in and around Bhagalpur. Methodist Church of Southern Asia was also come in 1884; the pioneering missionary was Henry Jackson from USA. He was followed by other groups of Methodist Church, they established Schools and orphanage as well as developed local leaders. In 1911, around Arra area about 1500 people had taken baptism. They also raised funds to start a Bible School.

The 20th Century is a mixed mission to Bihar. Assembly of God Mission from America came in 1910 and started mission at Samastipur, later shifted to Bettiah where the mission was expanded at north Bihar and joined by more missionaries even Presbyterian missionary name Miss Ana Tomaseck join them, they were more active ministry among women and children. Brethren in Christ Mission (BIC) too started mission in 1914 at Supaul, northern district and they were concentrated among the tribals. Norwegian Free Evangelical



Mission came in 1930 at Purnea and Katihar regions. In 1949 Free Will Baptist Mission came to northern regions and Finish Pentecostal Church came in 1952.

Over two decades from 1950 – 1970s, there was not much missionary work in Bihar, because most foreign missionaries left India and missions as well as Churches could not do mission works in these years. But in the early 1970s, south Indian missionaries came to Bihar particularly from Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Within three decades, Church as well as Mission organizations were started mission and in 2009 almost 50 different groups are working in Bihar.

Among these missionaries Pastor K.T.Eapen is well-known among mission groups, he came to Bihar in 1964 and planted Church and still active by establishing House of Prayer at Patna. Operation Mobilization also started in 1965 and still active in spreading the Gospel. Dr. K.Rajendran, the present General Secretary of IMA was worked under OM during 1970s. FMPB too began their ministry since 1972. India Every Home Crusade was active in Bihar during 1970s and 80s. Since 1990s these mission groups were aware to meeting together and have Conferences to

discuss about working together and share their experiences for the spreading the Gospel.

At this juncture Mizoram Presbyterian Church Mission Board enters in Bihar and starts our ministry, in the name of Patna Mission Field. Rev. B.Sangthanga was the first Field Secretary with Pastors and Evangelists to cover both Bihar and Santal Parganas now a new state called Jharkhand.

Mizoram Presbyterian Church-Patna Mission Field:

As mentioned earlier, in 1999 Patna Mission Field was established by the responses of the zeal of the local people which was blessed by God through the humble missionaries from Mizoram and local evangelists (known as *Mahashoi*). The Mission Field was rapidly growing, within five years the members became more than two thousand. Santal community was the main focus group where more than 80% of total members were Santal.

And after eight years new Jharkhand Mission Field was inaugurated on 1st April 2008. So Patna Mission Field covers Bihar state only and members are also only 300 in total at the time of inaugurating the Jharkhand Mission Field. From 2008, the working committee of the Mission Field took



a step by mission survey to fifteen selected districts, where only three districts have already covered.

Statistics as on 1st April 2010.

Pastorate	-	2
Station/Fellowship	-	15
Total members	-	380
Missionaries from Mizoram:		
F/S & Pastors	-	3
Others	-	13
Local Missionaries:		
Full time	-	14
Part time	-	10

Mission Survey:

Since 1999, Patna Mission Field conducted survey for initiating the mission works particularly in Bihar and have established four centers at Patna and one centre at Khagaria (one of the district in Bihar). From 2008, survey was conducted again to 15 districts and decided that 7 districts will cover within two years. By the grace of God during 2008, we have blessed by 8 centers within 6 districts. New Pastorate was inaugurated in 2009 and the Centers/Fellowships become 14 with a member of 350. At present total members were 380 with 15 Fellowship Centers.

Mission strategy under Patna Mission Field:

Mizoram Presbyterian Church Mission Board has clearly states the

objectives for Mission strategies for all Mission Fields as follows: Church planting, Evangelism and Pastoral Ministry. Besides these main objectives there are six clauses: Education (Formal school and Bible School), Medical ministry, Literature, Craft, Agriculture and Animal husbandry. Patna Mission Field follows these strategies among the different communities in Bihar.

To fulfill the main objectives, we are working both direct and indirect evangelism. For direct evangelism we use visiting intimidated family and preach the Gospel. Some times we conduct Gospel campaign within selected areas as well as selected people. Film Show is very useful for direct evangelism.

For indirect evangelism, we use many tools and methods such as Free Tuition Class for poor children, Tailoring Training for ladies, Free Medical Clinics and Medical camp and Mobile Library. School for illiterate adults was started from 2009 and Self help group for women was also under process.

To develop the local leaders we have sent some young people to Mizoram at Hindi Bible School, Bawngkawn, Aizawl, where they got immense Biblical knowledge as well as Christian faith. At the same



time, we conducted one or two days training for the leaders of local Fellowship Centers, teaching Biblical knowledge, Christian faith, Church practices and tradition, Committee system, etc.

Though we have less qualified persons for taking training, many local leaders have increased their abilities in looking their Centers.

Gospel for Bihar:

Some people may say that where Biharis are present, troubles and violent is almost compulsory, it may be true in some extend. From ancient times Bihar experienced many things such as religious movement, political reforms like Ashoka and before modern democratic rule was found some villages formed such type of governing body was practiced at Vaishali. During India struggle for independence, many remarkable movements were initiated and after

Indian independence too, cultural as well as political revolution was done under JP Narayanan. By intertwine with failure of political stability as well as economic problems, present people in Bihar need to survive. For this, they used to be violent or aggressive to others.

In these situations, Bihar needs salvation, peace and love, which will be found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Patna Mission Field from Mizoram is one of the tools to give peace, love and development through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We pray and expect the entire God's people to help and support for the people of Bihar.

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CHALLENGES TO CHURCHES' INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH AND MISSION IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

- Dr. C. Biakmawia

It is a great honour and a privilege for me to be asked to give the key note address for an important seminar like the one today aimed at the Church leaders in the North East India.

The seminar today is unique in that it is jointly organized by the National Council of Churches in India, Commission on Tribal and Adivasi (NCCI-COT), the Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI) and the Presbyterian Church of India, Mizoram Synod.

At the outset, let me make myself feel at home by saying that my medical education, namely Master in Tropical Pediatrics was completed with financial assistance from the Scholarship Board of the World Christian Council, Geneva, following recommendation from the National Council of Churches in India for which I am deeply grateful. I have had a long association with the Christian Medical Association of India, right from my student days in the mid-sixties at the Christian Medical College, Vellore and later on I have participated in many meetings as resource person in the National Conferences. I more or less grew up under the blessings of the Mizoram Synod who sponsored me for my medical education at Vellore, and allowed me to serve at the Presbyterian Hospital, Durtlang for

32 years till my retirement as the first Director in December, 2004.

One hundred years ago, Church leaders of the day were moved by the need for the Churches to be involved in Health and Mission. Accordingly, the movement was launched at Edinburgh in 1910. As the whole wide world Church is celebrating the centenary of the great historical mission event at Edinburgh in 1910 by organizing various programmes in the Local, National and International levels, it is most befitting and appropriate for the Churches in North-East India too, to have reflection on and to take stock of our mission works in the area of Health. We cannot deny the fact that in the North East India, due to poverty, lack of development, poor communications, geographical isolations, poor Government Health Care system, political unrest,



violation of Human Rights etc., we suffered a great set-back in health services in general and in communicable diseases in particular. For instance, malaria, cancer, pneumonia, tuberculosis, HIV & AIDS are some of the deadliest health problems in the North-East India.

During our two day workshop, we shall try to concentrate on certain areas of special concerns in order to challenge the Churches in North East India to review its mission works on health so that maximum impact may be achieved in the society for the control or eradication of these killer diseases.

In India, around one-fourth of these population are living below the poverty line according to the National Sample Survey Organisation, India Environment Portal's 55th Round Survey. In the North East Region about 13 million people live below the poverty line. Poverty has been associated with low income, unemployment, malnourishment, diseases, stigma and discrimination that in turn may create hurdles for HIV/AIDS interventions. The rising number of HIV and AIDS cases in Manipur and Mizoram are alarming. The majority of people living with HIV

and AIDS, (PLWHAs) live below the poverty line and they have difficulties in meeting their minimum medical expenses required to cover treatment, pay for prevention commodities like condoms or get treatment for opportunistic infections. They are unable to pay for the periodic check up and the tests needed for their treatment. In Mizoram, during the last ten years, 96,550 blood tests have been carried out with 4,169 HIV+, 356 AIDS cases and 168 AIDS deaths. The mode of transmission for majority of cases is sexual contact followed by Intravenous Drugs Users (IDUs). The highest incident is the age group of 25-35 years, consisting of more than one-third of all cases. (Source: Project Director, MSACS Oct 1990 January 2010).

Malaria remains one of the worst causes of death in the North East Area and it is estimated that 500 lives are lost every year. In Mizoram alone, 119 deaths were reported in 2009 (Source: SPO, Malaria, DHS, Mizoram). If we take into account deaths in the villages not confirmed and deaths due to clinical malaria where the parasite could not be isolated, the true figure may be even higher. We know that Malaria is preventable and the treatment is not too expensive but in the absence of proper medicines



and anti-malaria measures coupled with shortage of paramedics and nurses, we are still losing precious lives due to malaria every year.

Another study by the National Cancer registry program revealed that the incidence of Cancer is very high in the North Eastern region of India. There was a high incidence of Cancer following the Bhopal tragedy over 2 decades ago. This figure was surpassed by the incidence of cancers in Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur. Men of Mizoram, Assam and women of Meghalaya and Assam have the highest number of cancer of esophagus while on cancer of stomach, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim are high on the list. Mizoram tops the list of Cancer incidence of the food canal, which is attributed to heavy smoking, pan chewing and alcohol abuse, singly or in combination.

India accounts for one-third of the global burden of Tuberculosis and every year more than 1.8 million cases appear in the country. Approximately 4,00,000 people die from T.B. every year in India which means more than 1000 die every day and 100 million working days are lost (Directorate General of Health Services 2005). The situation in the remote tribal areas including North-

East India is even more grim. The prevalence of T.B. was found to be affected by socio-economic status, nutrition, family size, customs, beliefs and use of medical facility. Malnutrition together with socio-cultural and economic factor, poor sanitation and lack of awareness makes people more susceptible to diseases. Tuberculosis is re-emerging in the North East India. We all know that TB cases became less following early detection and effective medical treatment. Any healthy individual is supposed to have *tubercle bacilli* in his body but it will not manifest as a disease because the organisms are suppressed by the healthy body. Once the body defence mechanism is suppressed as a result of poor immunity following HIV infections, we are beginning to see more cases of TB, which will ultimately kill the people.

Among the children, pneumonia seems to be the number one killer in the North East India. In Mizoram, out of all deaths as a result of communicable diseases, more than half was due to pneumonia (147 out of 252), followed by gastro-enteritis. (Source: Statistics-DHS, Mizoram). Pneumonia in children is believed to be contributed by adults smoking in the same house. If we can refrain from smoking and if we can provide safe



drinking water for all, many precious young lives could be saved annually.

Mental health care is another area where Churches need to take a serious look into it. The high rate of depression among the youth and women and the suicidal behavioural pattern among the youths is a great concern. The numbers of youngsters who are into drugs and substance abuse are alarming in the whole of North-East, especially in Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland. Although the Church and the society take serious note of this concern yet the numbers are rising. The challenge for the Church in North East India is to present Jesus Christ to these people.

Following the 1910 Edinburgh event, there have been many medical missionaries sent out to start hospitals at different places. When the missionaries left India, many mission hospitals were closed down and some of them are still functioning at a much lesser capacity. I can only recollect two Christian hospitals in Manipur, two in Nagaland and three in Mizoram and three or four in Assam and two in Meghalaya. Whereas the need and the challenge for well-equipped modern Christian hospitals are great, we seem to be losing our foothold in the healing ministry. I

remember the Christians leader from Meghalaya commenting on the Presbyterian Hospital at Shillong saying, “50 years ago we were the leader in the healing ministry, but now we have lost our leadership”. The same may be true for many of the Christian hospitals in the North East India with inadequate buildings, poor equipments, with minimum doctors, nurses and other workers who are poorly paid with hardly any incentive for progress and improvement.

There is a unique example in Mizoram where the church and the government work in partnership. Marpara is an outlying village on the western side bordering Bangladesh where the government fails to make an impact on the health status of the community due to non-compliance by the staff posted there. The Mizoram government handed over the management of the health centre to the Presbyterian Hospital of Mizoram who posted their own staff and are paid from the budget allocation from the government. It is interesting to report that with better medical cover, illnesses and deaths in the area had gone down significantly. Can we have more of Marpara experience in other corners of Mizoram or will



the other sisters states of the North-East India take a clue from this so that our brothers and sisters in far flung villages may access to the health care they need badly.

If we really want to improve our health services as a church, are the churches willing to set aside more funds towards the medical work? To be at par with other hospitals are we willing to sponsor our doctors for higher training not just to Specialists but even to Super-Specialists? I would also challenge the doctors and nurses in all our mission hospitals to be more compassionate as we deal with our patients, to show our concern and to pray with them and for them knowing that it is the will of the Great Physician and

the Master Healer that not just the physical but also the mental and spiritual healing is imparted to our patients. Do we know that to be effective in the healing ministry we ourselves must be healed first?

“Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people”. (St. Matthew 9:35). As we celebrate the centenary of the great historical mission event at Edinburgh 1910, may we ponder whether we have progressed or fall far short of the great command to heal every sickness and every disease among our people.

[Dr.C.Biakmawia was serving at the Presbyterian Hospital, Durtlang for 32 years (1972-2004) and was its Director for the last four years of his service. At present he is the Director, Bethesda Hospital and Research Centre, Aizawl]

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JESUS CHRIST RECONCILES

-Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad



The theme for the 32nd session of the Synod of the Church of South India is a reiteration of an article of traditional Christian faith affirmation about the work of Jesus Christ: “He reconciles”. The term ‘reconcile’ is familiar to all of us. The Oxford Dictionary explicates it as “make friendly again after estrangement”; “settle (quarrel etc.)”; “harmonize”; “make compatible”. The Oxford Thesaurus presents the following alternates to the word ‘reconcile’: bring together; conciliate; reunite; settle differences between.

Popular Pauline Texts on Reconciliation

In the light of such descriptions, popular Pauline biblical passages on reconciliation come to our minds:

*But God proves God’s love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us...while we were sinners we were **reconciled** to God through the death of his Son...we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received **reconciliation**. (Rom.5: 8-11)*

So if any one is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see everything has become new! All this is from God, who

*reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of **reconciliation**; that is in Christ God was **reconciling** the world to God’s own self, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of **reconciliation** to us...For our sake God made Jesus Christ to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5: 17-21)*

*For in Christ the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to **reconcile** to God’s own self all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind,*



doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him.” (Col.1: 19-22)

But, now in Christ Jesus, you (Gentiles), who were once far off, have been brought near by the blood of Jesus Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups (the circumcised and the uncircumcised) into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. (Eph.2: 13-16)

Theological Facets of the Traditional Understanding about Reconciliation

The following theological insights can be discerned from the above Pauline texts:

1. There is a situation of estrangement of relationship between God and human beings. The latter, because of their self-centredness, have rejected God. This sin-characterized life has made them averse or hostile to God's ways and purposes. It has also resulted in the breaking of relationships between humans and humans, and between humans and the rest of God's creation.
2. Only God can effect reconciliation. Humans, being sinners and bound by the consequences of their sins, are unfit and incapable of being reconciled to God and therefore helpless. God, who is both righteous and gracious, loves all creation, and indeed takes the initiative in bringing about reconciliation.
3. Jesus Christ is the instrument, channel or agent of God's act of reconciliation. More particularly it is the atoning death of Jesus Christ that accomplishes this reconciliation. His death could be conceived of having an efficacy attributed to the blood of sacrificial victims, of exhausting the power of sin, of overcoming the demonic forces which cause sin and misery, of satisfying the demands of moral-ethical justice that the wages of sin should be "death", of releasing new potencies which could purify and strengthen humans, and of bridging the gulf between humans and God, humans and humans, and between humans and rest of creation.
4. The reconciliation wrought by Jesus in and through his life on



earth is not a process; it is an accomplished complete act. Jesus has borne the consequences of human sinfulness, and has emerged victorious over sin and death. He has bridged the gulf between human beings (along with the rest of creation) and God.

5. It is however significant that the theme of the Synod declares in the present tense that Jesus Christ reconciles. The implication therefore is that the healing, reconciling, spiritual significance of the life, work, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ could still be accessed and appropriated by us in the twenty-first century. Or to put it in a more pro-active way, Jesus Christ is still salvifically engaged in bringing the blessings of his reconciliatory work to humans and all creation in our times. Likewise Paul says that if anyone is in Christ, he or she is a new creation. There is an existential experience of reconciliation to God and God's creation whenever one turns to God embracing the salvific forgiving grace of the crucified, resurrected and ascended Jesus, and committing oneself to the discipleship of Jesus Christ and the reign of God.

Indeed one can elaborate this Jesus Christ centric salvation by asserting:

Jesus Christ reconciles every sinner to God!

Jesus Christ reconciles Christian communities to God!

Jesus Christ reconciles every society to God!

Jesus Christ reconciles all creation to God!

Jesus Christ reconciles humans to humans!

Jesus Christ reconciles humans to the rest of God's creation!

Towards Deeper and Wider Implications of "Reconciliation"

A Foundational Faith

Affirmation: Such Christological affirmations are important in the life of any church. They remind the church of the foundation on which she stands. Jesus Christ had to be both human and God at the same time. He had to be God because only a godly power could break the chains of human attachment to sin and evil. He had to be human because only a human being could fight this battle for humanity as a whole. To put it differently, Jesus Christ is recognized as the God-centred sinless one who through his commitment to the reign of God, even to the point of death on the cross, and who being experienced by the disciples as the resurrected one working in and through their lives, has become the



reconciling savior, reforming liberator, God's reign facilitator, and discipleship-deserving lord of all. However when as a Synod we have chosen the theme, "Jesus Christ reconciles" we are not merely affirming a faith statement. There ought to be something more to it rather than simply making a credal confession.

Traditional Soteriological Hermeneutics of the Cross: The soteriological interpretations of the affirmation, "Jesus Christ reconciles" have been presented in traditional images of sacrifice, atonement, justification, etc. These have spiritually nurtured and sustained the faith of believers down through the centuries. However some people have problems with such ways of conceptualizing reconciliation today. Firstly, words like 'hell' and 'devil' hardly mean anything anymore to them. Secondly, Christ's battle with the demonic powers is something that happens high above people somewhere, far away from this world. Don't these images and words belong to a mythical way of thinking that we have left behind? Thirdly, the idea that Christ conquered the demonic powers in this world for everyone once and for all is difficult to imagine, and this particularly in a pluralistic context. How

is it possible to derive juridical validity for the whole world from the death of Jesus? How could the death of one man forever pay (satisfy) the debts of humanity towards God? There ought to be something more to the confession, "Jesus Christ reconciles" rather than simply reiterating and absolutizing traditional soteriological images of the cross.

The Pastoral Significance of Jesus Christ's Reconciliation: The Christological statement, "Jesus Christ reconciles" has important salvific implications for individuals. In a society where individuals are struggling with problems of guilt and sin in their lives, Jesus comes as the reconciling one who compassionately forgives them and renews their lives. In contemporary times when some individuals are frustrated because they cannot keep up with the pressures of life or are not able to find fulfilling meaning and worth of human existence, Jesus Christ appears as the encourager who enables them to discover self-dignity, strength and companionship in life. In a world where personal relationships are becoming increasingly fragile and therefore can be easily broken, Jesus Christ comes with the message of reconciliation and of nurturing edifying



relationships. However as a Synod, are we content with merely affirming this dimension of individual salvation and the restoration of relationships in one's day to day circles when we say, "Jesus Christ reconciles"? There ought to be something more to it rather than simply pronouncing a pastoral counseling assurance.

A Caution about Romanticizing Jesus Christ's Reconciliation: The Christological slogan, "Jesus Christ reconciles" has important moral-ethical-social implications. There is a danger when charismatic expressions in the church tend to overemphasize Jesus as some kind of a magician or a miracle worker who through his power can heal, save, reconcile, etc. Some may emotionally or romantically eulogize the reconciling work of Jesus Christ by declaring:

The corrupt, unethical or sinful are forgiven and reconciled to God in Christ!

The Rich and the Poor are reconciled to God in Jesus Christ!
Caste Hindus and Dalits are reconciled to God in Jesus Christ!
The urbanized/industrialized people and the tribals are reconciled to God in Christ!

Women and Men are reconciled to God in Christ!

Hindus, Muslims, Christians, etc., are all reconciled to God in Jesus Christ!

The robust ones and people living with HIV/AIDS are reconciled to God in Christ!

While emotions are an important constituent of the human personality and of inter-personal relationships, hyped emotional repentance and 'happiness in the Lord' are not long lasting and do not produce maturity in relationships. When the corrupt, the unethical and the backslidden take the altar call in some evangelistic or charismatic programme they do not get truly reconciled to God in Christ if there is no Zacchaeus type restitution after repentance. Do the rich and the poor really get reconciled in Christ in the context of such emotional testimonial declarations? The poor still stand outside church gates waiting for Sunday doles, and the forces of globalization continue to widen the gap between the upper, middle and poor classes. Do Caste Hindus and Dalits really get reconciled? How can any reconciliation be possible within the unjust caste system and structure? Can women and men ever be justly reconciled within the patriarchal set-up? Therefore there ought to be



something more to the slogan, “Jesus reconciles” rather than articulating simply an emotional unrealistic utopian euphoria.

Contemporary Emphasis on Reconciliation in the Global Context: The Christological theme, “Jesus Christ reconciles” is an expression of contemporary worldwide concern and cooperation. This theme is perhaps chosen as a focus for this time’s Synod meeting to serve as a sort of culmination to UN’s observance of 2009 as the International Year of Reconciliation. The UN General Assembly, on November 20, 2006, proclaimed 2009 as the International Year of Reconciliation. The assembly wanted to pursue reconciliation processes in societies affected or divided by conflicts, with the goal of working towards firm and lasting peace. The assembly invited governments and non-governmental organizations to support reconciliation processes in these societies. It also invited them to implement cultural, educational and social programmes to promote reconciliation. The World Council of

Churches on its part welcomed the call of the UN to observe 2009 as the International Year of Reconciliation and encouraged its member churches and partners to actively participate in this global campaign. In fact 2010 marks the culmination of the WCC’s Decade to Overcome Violence, the celebration of which has also focused in one sense on reconciliation. A WCC statement in early 2009 said,

As a call, prayer and vision, reconciliation has always been a crucial concern in the work of the World Council of Churches, as much as it has been to Christian faith. “Reconciliation is the renewal of the relationship with the Triune God accomplished for us in Jesus Christ.” The reality of this reconciliation is what the church proclaims to the world in word and deed. This is the vision that inspires the ecumenical movement to relentlessly strive to uphold the beauty and integrity of God’s complex web of life.



The reality of the divided witness of the church in a divided world has challenged the WCC to encourage and enable the churches to heal divisions within and without. In fact, reconciliation has been the theme of some of WCC's major events and landmarks: the 7th Assembly in Canberra, the World Mission Conference in Athens in 2005, the Decade to Overcome Violence, etc., to mention a few. Whether in the Korean peninsula, South Africa, Sudan, the Balkans, Northern Ireland or elsewhere in the world, the WCC has accompanied the churches as they attempted to heal divisions and foster peace and reconciliation.

While it may be apt for the church to be part of any such gospel-related world-wide year long celebrations, we need to keep in mind that such programmes are meant to focus attention on certain contemporary issues and concerns in the world. Even special funds may be set aside by governmental and non-governmental organizations, including churches for organizing programmes on the particular concerns. However once the year is over and the allotted funds are

used up, will the particular concerns continue to be part of the church's mission and ministry? In fact now that 2009 has gone by, the UN has declared 2010 to be the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. 2010 is also the International Year of Reconciliation, the International Year of Rapprochement of Cultures and the International Year of Biodiversity. (In some ways the concern for reconciliation goes on). However, should the church keep on changing her focus in ministry every year according to world trends and global fashions? There ought to be something more to the theme "Jesus reconciles" rather than simply being a short term ecclesiastical meditational focus or a year long church programme.

Reconciliation and Inter-Personal Relationships: The Christological statement, "Jesus Christ reconciles" implies a call to Christians for mending broken interpersonal relationships. The above mentioned WCC Document does not quote the popular Pauline passages on reconciliation. It rather quotes a paraphrased version of Matthew 5:23-24: "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your sister or brother has something against you,



leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your sister or brother; then come and offer your gift.” The implication is that there could be a situation of injustice, grievance, hurt, or bitterness in one’s relationship with others. There is a need for forgiveness and being forgiven. It might entail a spirit of sacrifice or an act of restitution or a change in our systems, constitutions, structures and ethos. However we need to note that neither any Dictionary nor Thesaurus mentions “compromise” as the meaning of, or as the alternate to “reconcile”. The term “compromise” smacks of making concessions, negotiating a settlement, meeting half-way, striking a deal, reaching a formula, etc. Today compromise seems to be a convenient principle of relationships in our globalized world, church politics, and individual lives. There ought to be something more to the theme “Jesus Christ reconciles” rather than simply making agreements, contracts or a show of togetherness in the name of Christ.

Furthermore the words, “Jesus Christ reconciles” implies that faith and action have to go together. James 2:15-16 tells us, “If a brother

or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?” So also 1 John 3:16-18 declares, “We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us - and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need, and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” 1 John 4:20 goes on to emphatically declare, “Those who say, ‘I love God,’ and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen.” The sin of the rich man (who perhaps religiously read Moses and the prophets just like his brothers) was that he was insensitive to the basic needs of Lazarus at his gate (Lk. 16:19-31). His faith and his (in)action did not match. There is something more to the practical implications of the theme “Jesus



Christ reconciles” than simply being content with individual piety and communal religiosity.

A Caution about Reconciliation attempted through Human Efforts Alone: As indicated above, the statement, “Jesus Christ reconciles” has humanitarian implications. From a humanitarian perspective, human responsibility, initiative and action are essential for bringing about reconciliation. The framework is not only limited to the cross and the saving blood of Christ. Reconciliation here is not only and primarily connected to his death as a sacrifice, but to his life as a whole. This model is often called the ‘subjective’ way of thinking. How Jesus lived during his life calls for emulation of his example in the life of his followers. Some Christians have reservations about this approach. Is it not too subjective or too optimistic? There is a danger that reconciliation becomes something purely human, something that can be reached if we just follow Jesus’ example radically enough. Another difficulty appears when the whole presupposition is denied: the broken relationship between humankind and God. In the light of the caution found in Zechariah 4:6, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord”, there is something more to

the statement, “Jesus Christ reconciles” than being solely a human emulation of Jesus’ action.

Jesus Christ’s Reconciliation and Ecumenism: The theme, “Jesus Christ reconciles” has ecumenical implications. The very motto of the Church of South India “That they may be all one” affirms that the church is called to be one in Christ. This coming together is a reconciliation of Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist traditions. While we rejoice that the CSI serves as a model of oneness and of ecumenical togetherness, it is only one expression of the reconciling ecumenical vision found in John 17:21. There are other facets of reconciling oneness as indicated in Gal.3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. These are yet to be more responsibly realized by different ecumenical movements in India and the wider world. The Church has even to be open and frank enough to understand and accept the ecumenical vision of Jesus when he declared while respectfully praising the faith of the Roman centurion, “Truly I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you,



many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness.” (Matt. 8:11-12). There is much more to the assertion, “Jesus Christ reconciles” than simply being content with inter-denominational/confessional ecumenism.

Reconciliation and Ecological Integrity: The Synod theme, “Jesus Christ reconciles” also has ecological implications. The well known text from Romans 8:19-21 declares, “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God...because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Christians have done much harm to creation with their irresponsible hermeneutics of Gen. 1:28 “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over (all creation).” and of Matt. 6:26 “Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap...Are you not of more value than they?” As indicated in Col. 1:20 Jesus Christ is the reconciler of all things on earth and in heaven..” I am glad to hear

that the Church of South India was honored on November 3, 2009, with the International Environment Conservation Award for its ecological intervention as a faith based community. The church as a whole should realize that ecological concern should not be merely a programme but become a way of life. So also we need to go beyond conservation relationship to responsible relationship and integrity with nature.

Reconceiving and Reappropriating the Reconciliation Wrought by Jesus Christ

We have recently celebrated Christmas and we are now in the season of Epiphany which reminds us of the quest of the wise men from the East for a king. The words from Isaiah 9:6 are often romantically quoted at Christmas time: “For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Right from early times there was a deep seated longing of the people for the reign of God, for a ruler who will bring peace. Peace implies among other things a reconciliation between God and humans, humans and humans, humans and creation, and within



every human being. This peace or reconciliation is to be based on the principles of justice and righteousness. The passage from Isaiah is believed to be a part of a coronation hymn which was sung whenever a new king came to the throne of Jerusalem. However the hopes of the people of Judah were crushed everytime, as the kings failed to deliver peace.

One is also reminded of the song of the heavenly host at the time of Jesus' birth, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, good will among people." (Luke 2:14). Even at the time of Jesus' birth peace was still an elusive quest. People were looking for the Messiah who would establish peace. If all relationships were set right, life would indeed be fulfilling. People saw in Jesus the possibility of the establishment of such peace. However they thought that Jesus would bring it about through some expression of royal might, or super-human power, miracles of different kinds. Jesus however did not choose the above passage from Isaiah as his guiding force. He instead chose Isaiah 61:1-2a, as quoted in Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has

anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

As we are all aware the last few words "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" significantly pointed to the celebration of the Jubilee Year as envisioned in Leviticus 25. The celebration of the Jubilee Year was characterized by four reconciliations: (1) Reconciliation of humans with God by celebrating the Day of Atonement - Lev. 25:9; (2) Reconciliation between humans and Creation - Lev. 25:11-12; (3) Reconciliation between the rich and the poor by restoration of everyone's economic rights of inheritance - Lev. 25: 13-34; and (4) Social reconciliation between the free and the slaves by granting freedom to the latter - Lev. 25:39-55. While the four reconciliations in Lev. 25 were still communal (to be practised within the Jewish community), Jesus' commitment to these four reconciliations transcended communal boundaries as the Gospel according to Luke highlights. A selfish "status quoist" world however did not want such reconciliations and so it crucified him, hoping that the man and his



message would be done away with forever. However death was not the end of Jesus and his commitment to the reign of God. His death became a judgement on human sinfulness as well as a release of God's forgiving renewing grace.

Yet the life and work of Jesus alone cannot bring about the fulfillment of the needed reconciliation in all the world. Jesus requires disciples. The Church is supposed to constitute this body of disciples engaged in the ministry of reconciliation. Hence the exhortation of Paul in Phil.2:1-8 "If there is any encouragement in Christ... be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to his own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus,..."

Let us be frank: the reconciliation and peace that we romanticize about at Christmas time and on other occasions have not yet come to the world. Our gospel campaigns and crusades, our

social action movements and programmes have yet to see their fulfillment. And so we long for the breaking in of the impactful presence and reign of God in our midst. This is the eschatological vision which the Bible grants us: "See the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples,... he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more, mourning and crying and pain will be no more..." (Rev. 21:3-4) In that world will flow the river of the water of life. "On either side of the river, is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit... the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations." (Rev. 22:2-3).

If Jesus Christ's reconciliation has to have any lasting impact, it requires ongoing individual and ecclesial repentance, a recurring commitment to the principles and values of God's reign, a continuous yielding to the Spirit of God, an openness to discern ever widening and deeper facets of Christ's reconciliation, and a willing and courageous disposition to reform situations and structures of injustice and unrighteousness.

[This message was delivered by Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad, Principal Aizawl Theological College at the Church of South India Synod 2010 held at Courtallem, Tamilnadu. during 15th- 17th January 2010]



Sermon:**MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL****(Message on the 61st Indian Republic Day Celebration)***- Mr. Lal Thanzara**Parliamentary Secretary**Government of Mizoram*

Text: “Therefore, since it is by God’s mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart”. (2 Cor 4:1)

Paul was not an apostle appointed to minister a particular local congregation. However, as a founder and minister of many local churches there was no one more worthy to be called an apostle in the ministry of the Gospel. Paul’s designation could also be referred to as ‘deacon,’ whose role in the early church was of high standing and of great importance.

Even Paul never considered himself as an apostle to a single local church but he understood himself as a minister to all the so called ‘Pauline Churches’ within the Greco-Roman world. With this background, as we find in our text (2 Cor 4:1), Paul reminded the Corinthian congregation that he was the minister of the Gospel. Here, Paul did not talk about only his own ministry or that of the Corinthian church. But he was referring to the ministry of all. As we all belong to the Body of Christ, we all have the responsibly to serve as ministers of the Gospel. There is no one among us who can excuse himself or herself from this ministry. If we do so, we accuse God as, “Liar!”

We all are assigned to a common unified ministry, that is the ministry of the Gospel. While we all are assigned to various responsibilities in the wide spectrum of God’s ministry as the part of the Body of Christ, we may not fulfill all the responsibilities that have come our way. We may not do what we ought to do, but rather do what we ought not to do. But we all are given the ministry of preserving and proclaiming the Gospel.

While all those who have received the Gospel are called to witness the same, each one may not be called to personally go out and preach the Gospel to the unreached. We may not be called to be missionaries in a foreign land or



outside the boarder. Even then we are all given the responsibly of witnessing the Gospel in our own respective ways.

Students in a Theological College may not be necessarily called to be ordained ministers. But we ought to know that we all are called to be ministers of the Gospel in one way or the other. If a person with a BD or an M.Th. degree aims only at a pastoral ministry, that person could fail to respond to God's call. We have to keep in mind that, these days, there are also para-church organizations working along with the main line churches in witnessing the Gospel. There are many opportunities for devoted people to serve in these organizations. One has to seriously ponder upon whether he or she is called to work even in this type of ministry.

It is unfortunate to note that sometimes there arose dissensions among our own people working in the mission fields as they tried to distinctly represent the denominational churches they represent at home. It is even necessary that those who are assigned by their respective denominational churches to hold positions and responsibilities in inter-church relations and co-operation

should take care to see that they don't fall into the trap of denominationalism.

The ministry of the Gospel is not always an easy task. It is quite possible to get frustrated when our ministry has not been well accepted or our ministry seems bear no fruit. There have also been instances when the missionaries have been opposed and persecuted. At the same time, we also find time people readily accepting the Gospel and their lives changed by the latter. Here, let us remember that God has compassion and grace upon even those who have not yet ready to accept the Gospel now.

We have to acknowledge how blessed are we to have the privilege of being ministers of the Word of God! It is certainly the wisdom of God. The ministry of the Gospel is an honourable ministry and it is by the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord that we have been called into this ministry.

As we celebrate the 61st Indian Republic Day, let us thank God that we are placed in the multi-religious context of India without requiring a passport or visa where all the citizens are safeguarded by the Nation's Constitution which uphold Freedom of Religion. This basic



fundamental rights of the Indian citizens provides for us freedom to practice our Christian faith and to propagate the Gospel of Christ to the people of India which constitutes the second largest non-Christian population in the world. The field has

ripened and the harvest is ready. Let us affirm our commitment to God's call for the ministry of the Gospel. As the Apostle Paul exhorts the Corinthian believers: Let us not lose heart as we engage ourselves in the ministry of the Gospel. Amen

[This Sermon was delivered at the D. E. Jone's Hall, Aizawl Theological College in the morning (6:30 A.M.) devotion conducted by the College to commemorate the 61st Indian Republic Day on January 26, 2010. This is a translation from the original Mizo version. Ed.]

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**FELICITATION TO REV. DR. LALCHHUANLIANA
(HONORIS CAUSA)**



The Senate of Serampore College conferred the **Degree of Doctor of Divinity (Honoris Causa)** to Rev. Lalchhuanliana the former Moderator of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church and Principal of the Aizawl Theological College, in recognition of his services to the Church and society. This degree was awarded to him in the convocation of the Senate of Serampore College held on 6th February 2010 at the United Theological College Bangalore.

Lalchhuanliana was born on 20th August 1939 in Champhai, East Mizoram. His father, Rev. Chhawnvunga was a pastor in the Mizoram Presbyterian Church. Following his school education in Mizoram, he secured the B.A. (Hons.) degree from Guwahati University in 1964, the B.D. degree and the M.Th. (History of Christianity) degree from Senate of Serampore College in 1970 and 1973 respectively. From 1970 he was appointed as lecturer in Aizawl Theological College. Besides teaching, he served the college in different capacities: Editor of *Didakhe* (the first Mizo theological journal), Director of the Mobile Theological School, Warden of the

College Hostel, Registrar (1977-1980), and finally Principal of the College (1981-1986). By virtue of his position as Principal, he also served as Secretary of the Mizoram Synod Theological Education Board, and member of the Presbyterian Church of India Assembly Theological Education Committee. While at the college he brought out four books in Mizo. He thus made an edifying all-round contribution to the college during its first fifteen years as a B.Th. institution.

Lalchhuanliana also made substantial contribution to the Church. On fulfilling his four-year term from 1974 as a Probationary Pastor, he was ordained in



December 1977. For two years, 1980 and 1981, he served as Mizoram Synod Secretary and then as Moderator for the 1983 calendar year. After three years of pastoral ministry (including being the Leader of the Central Christian Youth Fellowship of the Synod during 1986-1988), he was made Executive Secretary of the Mizoram Synod from 1989 to 1991 and then Senior Executive Secretary from 1992-1994. During these six years the Church made significant progress in all departments, particularly in the Finance Department and the Social Front. He served as member of the Synod Executive Committee and other various important committees of the Synod for several terms and even now continues to do so. He again served as a pastor from 1995 to 1999. He also wrote several books and articles in Mizo for the benefit of the Church. He even made important contributions to the Presbyterian Church of India General Assembly serving as member of the Executive Committee for three terms including the position of Moderator during 1996-1998. During his moderator-ship, the PCI Secretariat Building was constructed in Shillong and two new synods were created in the Assembly.

As an ecumenical figure, Rev. Lalchhuanliana was actively associated with the North East India Christian Council from 1984 to 1994, serving on its Theological Education and Executive Committees, including being Vice President and President of the NEICC. He has served on several committees of the Board and Senate of Serampore College, of the Bible Society of India at Aizawl Auxiliary and Central levels, of CASA in Mizoram, and of other institutions and organizations, even after retirement. He has also participated, on different occasions, in the programmes of the WARC, WCC, and CWM.

The Senate and the Council of Serampore College heartily welcome Rev. Lalchhuanliana among the honored and distinguished fellowship of the graduates of the College.

I present to you Sir, **Lalchhuanliana**, for the distinction of the **Degree of Doctor of Divinity**.

The Editorial Board of the *Presbyterian Review* heartily congratulations Rev. Dr. Lalchhuanliana on receiving a degree of Doctor of Divinity (*Honoris Causa*)



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