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Baptist News

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

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

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from the desk of editor 



Dear friends,

The nature is crying for its final redemption. Sin in humanity has swelled to erupt. Self-centered greed for more money and power has pushed the blessed environment to the cliff only to fall back on us and smash all of us; including the innocents of today and tomorrow. From deforestation to illegal mining, from global warming to nuclear power disasters, from pesticide factory leakage to the use of chemical weapons, and of course the daily use of non-biodegradable plastics and building of roads and apartment without a proper planning for drainage system are the menace we all have witnessed. Last month, Guwahati saw the outrage of masses blaming the municipality for the epidemic breakout of Dengue fever. Several families lost their beloved due to mosquito bites—a disease that can be completely prevented in this century. We just need to maintain a clean environment around us. We cannot blame only the greedy exploiters but also perhaps lazy and laid back officials who fail to be good custodians of the environment.

This issue of Baptist News is focused on addressing the environment issues from Christian perspectives. The editorial team tried their best to collect as many perspectives as possible but due to limitation of space and time we have included only three articles. The objective of the authors is not only to inform us but also to motivate us for action. Hope you will enjoy reading them.

The News Clipping is a collection of brief information on events that are held in last quarter in the CBCNEI families. Please take time to give thanks to God for all that are achieved to strengthen His Church. We covet your participation in this

section. Please send us more information from your unit as prayer and praise items to be included in the next issue.

I had the privilege to participate in three international events in the last quarter: (1) Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Theological Conference on Pneumatology, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, June 28-30; (2) BWA Annual Gathering, July 1-6; and (3) Annual General Body Meeting Asia Theological Association (ATA), Jakarta, Indonesia, Sept 12-16. A brief report is included in this issue. At the ATA meeting I had the privilege of responding to a paper on the subject of “Communicating Gospel in Socio-Political Context of Asia”. It addresses the issue of environment indirectly. So I have developed it as an article and have included here for your reading and feedback.

Let me remind us that the ministries of CBCNEI are much bigger than the Baptist News portrays. As you hold this Baptist News in your hand, please remember the leaders and staffs of CBCNEI institutions who are working sincerely on a daily basis to witness the love and compassion of Jesus Christ on behalf of the 7000 CBCNEI churches. Please remember the CBCNEI institutions: six hospitals, four nursing schools, three hostels, five Christian literature centers, the Eastern Theological College at Jorhat, and the Conference Center in Guwahati. They all need your encouragement and prayer support.

On behalf of the Editorial team, I want to thank you for subscribing Baptist News and owning the CBCNEI ministries as your own.

Blessings

Rev Dr A. K. Lama
General Secretary, CBCNEI

Climate Change: Does it matter?



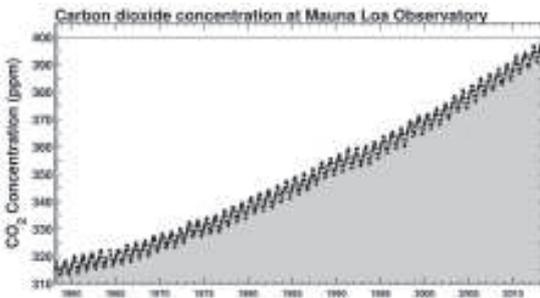
Mr Thangmang Doungel, Coordinator, Centre for Policy Studies and Advocacy, EFICOR, New Delhi

The issue of climate change has become a widely debated and discussed topic. The media reports of deaths caused by the drastic consequences of climate change have become common and regular news. Millions have already experienced the firsthand impact of climate change and according to the projection by the Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) the climatic conditions will only get worse if no immediate action is taken. What is shocking and disturbing to many climate scientists, environmentalists and civil society is the recent statement from the Earth System Research

laboratory, Hawaii on the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere crossing 400 ppm (parts per million). This article attempts to explain what it means for the CO₂ to cross 400 ppm and at the same time exhorting the Christian community for a more proactive and ethical response towards this crisis.

Ever since the record of CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere was first maintained in 1950, the present record of more than 400 ppm is by far the highest in human history. The pre-industrial concentration of greenhouse gas (CO₂) was 280 ppm and in 1958 the level was 317ppm.

The scientist community had not expected this rapid rise of 400ppm to occur so soon. This drastic increase is largely attributed to anthropogenic source or human induced climate change. The unexpected alarming rise has thereby prompted civil societies and negotiators in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to be more pro-active and also negotiate for a fast and fair deal.



Source:<http://keelingcurve.ucsd.edu/>

Why does it matter anyway?

Since the 1950s, scientists in the Mauna Loa Observatory Earth System Research laboratory, Hawaii, who have

been monitoring the Carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere found that there has been a steep increase in carbon concentration. The concentration has increased at the rate of 2.0 ppm per year in the 21st century. The safe level of carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere is 350 ppm and crossing 400 ppm would mean increase in temperature which would further scale up the number of (man-made) natural disaster. A press release by WWF¹ states:

“Crossing the 400 ppm threshold is more than a new data point about greenhouse gas levels in our atmosphere. It’s a sobering reminder

that the planet we know today will not be the planet we know tomorrow.”

In recent years, the world has been frequently witnessing the massive and disastrous effects of climate change in many different

forms - wind storms, hurricane, tornadoes, rising sea levels, erratic rainfall etc. and CO2 crossing 400 ppm is an ominous sign of more catastrophes to come in the future.

Why me?

We might easily brush off these facts about climate change, presuming that our faith and belief has got nothing to do with global warming or the increase in temperature. And for that matter, we may just fold our hands and sit back complacently going on with our 'normal' Christian life - saving prayers regularly, having bible studies and attending Sunday services. However, such stance does not conform to what the word of God lays out for us in this context.

The scripture clearly mentions how God values nature and the animals that He created. He derives immense joy from all His creation. "For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cat-

tle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine" (Ps 50:10-11). Therefore, God puts His trust on human beings to take care of his creation, an utmost responsibility given to someone who is close to His heart. "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to **work** it and **take care of it.**" (Gen 2:15). The Hebrew word for "work" in this passage is *abad* translated as "serve" and "take care of it" is *shammar* meaning "watching over something, guarding and preserving it." Drawing from this Hebrew translation of these two words, it may be concluded that the instruction given to the first couple to watch over and tend the Garden of Eden is crystal clear.

While Christian mission is multi-dimensional, many of our churches tend to emphasize and focus more on the spiritual and social dimension, leaving other dimensions such as the environ-

mental dimension or the care for God's creation largely neglected and ignored. In most cases, little or no initiative is taken on the part of the Church to the call to care for creation. Carbon concentration in the atmosphere crossing 400 ppm is a solemn reminder to all the believers that we have failed to perform our duty as stewards to care and protect creation from destruction. Throughout human history our greediness and reckless lifestyle has caused environmental degradation bringing injustice to creation on different fronts. We find it so hard to accept the fact that 'not caring for creation' is actually committing a sin against God. Dan Story wisely put it this way: "if disobeying God is sin then, environmental exploitation is disobeying God's Stewardship mandate. Therefore, environmental exploitation is a sin against God." If environmental exploitation is a sin then the church (called-out-ones) need to take pro-

active role in bringing awareness and caring for creation. That will be an act of justice for millions of people who will (and are already) suffering due to the impact of climate change and our accountability to the whole creation as well.

The temperature is rising and so are the disasters associated with it. Thousands have lost their lives and millions have become climate refugees. It is in this context that we need to respond to the call for the Church to step out from our comfort zone and begin to care for creation. In the past, the Church, as an institution, has failed to fully respond to this crisis. To develop an environmental ethic which is Biblically based, the Church needs to admit its failure to care for creation and for ravaging the things that is not justly owned by it. The word of God clearly says that the earth is the Lord's and everything in it (Psalm 24:1).

We may also pick out few thoughts from an old African proverb which says “Treat the Earth well: as it is not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.” May we always be reminded that the way we treat the earth today will have a huge impact on the next generation. At the end of the day, we are not only accountable to God but to our children as well.

¹ <http://worldwildlife.org/press-releases/record-global-co2-levels-impact-the-future-of-conservation>



Congratulations



We congratulate Miss Joice Muchahary on being admitted to Christian Medical College, Vellore. She is sponsored by CBCNEI to pursue MBBS. She is the daughter of Mr Lakshi Kanta Muchahary and Mrs Dipali Muchahary, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, Assam. May the Lord bless her and guide her throughout her studies and make her an instrument of CBCNEI healing ministry.

CONSUMERS *or* CARETAKERS? Christians and Ecology



Rev Katie Longkumer, Development Consultant, CBCNEI

“WOW! Listen to that bird!” I exclaimed to my husband the “Crr-crr-crr-crr- *phewu, phewu.*” The deep chuckle and shrill whistle of the mina brought a smile to my face and spurt of energy to my slowly wakening limbs slipping along the dewy hillside on our early morning walk. Recollecting our history of morning walks, we regretted the fact that our times in the village were void of the cheerful encouragement offered from these feathered friends. We found it ironic that we encounter and enjoy the blessings of the region’s rich wild life in the city of Guwahati more than in our jungle village!

I believe this sad testimony reveals an attitude towards the gift of creation God has bestowed upon us and the lack of awareness of environmental issues among the population. There is an increasing global awareness of ecological issues - the impact that we, humanity, have on our environment. It seems that we in North East India, who are privileged with an abundance of blessings in nature, may be among the last to begin to consider our responsibilities toward caring for these gifts. We all accept and apply the understanding that “Blessing Brings Responsibility” in other arenas of our lives - our Family

/ Finances / Ministry / Work, etc. But have we taken time to consider the vast richness of our environment and the responsibility we bear to be good stewards?

RECOGNIZE & APPRECIATE THE GIFT

We are privileged to live in one of the most diverse and unique locales in earth's biosphere. "Northeast India is the bio-geographical gateway to India's richest biodiversity zone and is unique for its genetic resources."¹ The WWF (World Wildlife Fund / now called the World Wide Fund for Nature) identifies NEI as "a priority Global 200 Ecoregion" and Conservation International includes NEI in the "Indo-Burma Hotspot," the world's second largest, (out of 34 global biodiversity hotspots)...² "In just 8 percent of the country's [India] geographical area the region also house 21 per cent of the important bird areas identified as per international criteria by the Bombay Natural History Society and

Birdlife International,"³ "...support[ing] some of the highest bird diversities in the orient with about 850 bird species, includ[ing] more than *two critically endangered species, three endangered species* and 14 *vulnerable species*."⁴ "The region is rich in biodiversity and is home to important populations of wild life species, such as the rhino, elephant, tiger, wild water buffalo, pigmy hog, and the Gangetic river dolphin."⁵

Treasures at our fingertips - what are we doing with them? We all know the world is changing around us - including our environment. Anecdotally, we hear 'old-timers' reminiscing about rivers full of fish just a decade or two ago...before DDT, bleach and lime became tools of fishermen. There is also research that documents the decline of multitudes of species of both plant and animal life. Do we want to continue this destructive trajectory? Will our grandchildren or our

grandchildren's children have the opportunity to experience the beauty of creation that exists for us today? As Christians, is it "ok" for us to sit on the sidelines and be indifferent to the condition of God's creation?

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Matters of ecology are not isolated. Environmental issues are interwoven with socio-economic issues. The degradation of our environment not only impacts future generations, depriving them of the privileges and joys we experience from nature, but also "... is a major factor in perpetuating poverty, particularly among the rural poor in the bio-rich north-eastern region of the country."⁶ A vicious cycle involving population growth, demand for natural resources, and economic development (changing lifestyles consuming more resources) perpetuates a spiral of destruction. These factors contribute to instability that also impacts the potential for peace in the region.⁷

It seems then, that simply as a conscientious citizen we should bear some degree of responsibility and involvement in maintaining and preserving the quality of our environment.

WHAT'S THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE?

Some reading this might be thinking, this is all true, but as Christian environmental issues are not my highest priorities. That sentiment was seen on a bumper-sticker produced and distributed by the Treasure Valley Baptist Church in the U. S state of Idaho that read: "*Forget 'Save the Earth;'* What about your soul? The earth is going to burn, What about you?"⁸ Of course, our Lord Jesus Christ gave His life so that we, the people made in His image could be forgiven and commune with Him in holiness. That was His ultimate priority. *But...Does God Care How We Treat His Creation?* Let's see what Scripture says.

"How long will the ground be dry and the pasturelands

parched? The birds and animals are dead and gone. And all of this happened because the people are so sinful. They even brag, “God can’t see the sins we commit.” (Jer. 12:4 NCV).

Bernard Zahela, former Vice-President of Sierra Club, when speaking in a church said, “This scripture gives us three lessons. First, if animals and birds are dying, God doesn’t think this is a good thing. Second, God knows who’s doing it: wicked humans. And final lesson, wicked humans who think, incorrectly, that God does not see what we are doing.”⁹ There are a host of other Scriptures that clearly portray the role that we, God’s ultimate creation, have been given to be caretakers of His creation.

Within the environmental movement Christians have a reputation of being “earth-hating” at worst and “indifferent” at best. This perception has been fueled by those who would claim, that since the earth is going to

pass away we should be concerned only with matters of eternity, i.e. soul winning. This view was further entrenched when UCLA historian Lynn White published his essay, *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis* in 1967. He contended that the traditional Christian view of humanity’s dominion over the earth was license to consume and abuse, thus creating environmental crisis. Christian author, Wendell Berry has attributed White’s essay in his observation that, “the culpability of Christianity in the destruction of the natural world and uselessness of Christianity in any effort to correct that destruction are now established clichés of the conservation movement.”¹⁰

Thankfully, that is beginning to change. A significant sign of the shifting understanding occurred in 1997 when the spiritual leader of the world’s 300 million Orthodox Christians, His All Holiness Bartholomew, declared that the degradation of the nat-

ural world is “sin.” He elaborated further, “For humans to cause species to become extinct and to destroy the biological diversity of God’s creation, for humans to degrade the integrity of the Earth by causing changes in its climate, stripping the Earth of its natural forests, or destroying its wetlands . . . for humans to contaminate the Earth’s waters, its land, its air, and its life with poisonous substances—these are sins.” At that time it was reported, “The remarks were believed to be the first time that a major international religious leader [had] explicitly linked environmental problems with sinful behavior.”¹¹ Bartholomew’s comments were viewed as a “watershed event” “point[ing] to a developing new alliance between environmental activists and religion.”¹²

There now are Christians of all denominations globally making efforts to be faithful to the call to be “Care-takers” not “Consumers” of

Creation. Many Christian Ecology/Environmental organizations have been formed to assist the church in living environmentally responsibly. These serve churches providing education, offering resources and facilitating connections to engage in opportunities to participate in projects.

Our Creator God has redeemed us through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. We see through history till today that redemption being experienced one life at time as individuals recognize their sin, repent and yield to the Lordship of Jesus. Has God not redeemed all creation? Paul tells us in Romans 8:19-20 that all creation groans - waits in expectation - also longing for the coming of the Lord, the return of the Creator. Can we not take it upon ourselves to minister to the Lord even through the care of His creation? Each of our individual actions to preserve and conserve the gift of this earth God has given can be

considered not only being responsible stewards, but bearers of redemption to the natural world.

I have been challenged writing this. What am I doing...or *not doing* to conserve the gifts of nature God has given? I'm being challenged to consider the issue seriously and ask myself how I can be most pleasing to my Lord.

Am I a Consumer or a Caretaker of Creation?

Which are you?

¹Environment degradation enhancing poverty in northeast'; TNN Sep 4, 2012, 06.13AM IST, http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-09-04/global-warming/33581072_1_natural-resources-population-growth-degradation

²http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northeast_India

³Pandey K.M. DebbarmaAjoy, Das Hirakjyoti, Roy Amitava and Nath. "Environmental Impact Assessment and Management: Protecting Ecology in Northeast Indian." *Journal of Environmental Research And Development*, Vol. 7 No. 4 April-June 2013: www.jerad.org/ppapers/download.php?vl=7&is=4&st=1459, 1462

⁴http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northeast_India

⁵(Pandey K.M.), 1461

⁶Environment degradation enhancing poverty in northeast,' TNN Sep 4, 2012.

IST, http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-09-04/global-warming/33581072_1_natural-resources-population-growth-degradation

⁷Refer to the Times of India article above and a blog on the New York Times website: "What Threatens Peace in India's Northeast?" by Samrat, <http://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/15/what-threatens-peace-in-indias-northeast/>

⁸Zaleha, Bernard Daley, "James Nash as Christian Deep Ecologist: Forging a New Eco-theology for the Third Millennium." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*. <https://www.equinoxpub.com/journals/index.php/JSRNC/article/view/6456>

⁹Zahela, Bernard Daley, "Hearing Creation's Cry." *Presentation at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church*, Boise, Idaho, June 11, 2006, available on-line: www.christianecology.org/HearingCreationsCry-2006-06-11.docx

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹Stammer, Larry B., L.A. Times Religion Writer, <http://www.christianecology.org/LATimes.html>

¹²*Ibid.*



Bible and the Ecological Crisis

Dr George Zachariah, Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics, United Theological College, Bangalore

Lynn White Jr., the American historian in his controversial essay, “The historical roots of our ecological crisis” observed that the Judeo-Christian tradition, particularly Bible as Scripture, bears a huge guilt for the ecological crisis that we face today. His observation was based on the analysis that the mechanistic worldview of the Industrial Revolution, which reduced the earth to the level of a resource for human consumption, was much older than the invention of machinery, and has its roots in medieval Christianity and its attitudes towards nature. “What people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation

to things in their environment,” Lynn White opined. Based on this observation, White argued that the Judeo-Christian theology is fundamentally exploitative of the earth because (1) The Bible asserts human dominion over nature and establishes a trend of anthropocentrism, and (2) Christianity makes a distinction between human beings as created in the image of God and the rest of the creation, which has no “soul” or “reason” and is thus inferior.

Even as we initiate different programs to help our faith communities to participate in ministries of earth-healing, we need to be self-reflexive and pay attention to White’s words of caution.

As he accuses, is Christianity, particularly our Scripture, responsible for our current ecological crisis? This question leads us to a critical engagement with the biblical teachings on human beings and our relationship with the environment. Anthropocentrism which we find in the biblical narratives of creation is alien to tribal cosmogonies and worldviews. “In its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen. Christianity not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends.” This article is an attempt to critically examine how the Bible contributes to our ecological bankruptcy and devaluation of the Earth, and to explore alternative hermeneutical practices to retrieve eco-justice resources from the Bible.

The distress of the earth and its children invites us to read the Bible afresh to examine

whether the Bible contributes to our ecological bankruptcy and devaluation of the earth. Such a critical engagement with the biblical texts will expose how the Christian Scripture functions as a sacred canopy that legitimizes the commodification and plunder of God’s beautiful creation. The creation narratives in Genesis present us with a vision about who we are in relation to the rest of the creation. This is the theological anthropology that guides us in our social and ecological engagements. The first creation narrative portrays human beings as the crown of creation. We are distinct from other created beings because we are created in the image of God. The creature that was created at the end of the creation process was given the right to name the rest of the creation. The right to name symbolizes a power relationship—the right to have dominion over others. This right is being made explicit in God’s command recorded in verse 28:

“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

The theological understanding that we are endowed with the right to have dominion over the created order and to subdue the earth lies at the very heart of the ethos of imperialism, capitalism, globalization, and our growth-oriented development paradigm. Human beings have got intrinsic worth; the rest of the creation has only instrumental value. So God created the natural world as a super market for human beings to plunder and exploit, in order to quench their unjustifiable thirst for more. Creation has no worth other than being useful to human greed. So an anthropocentric theological anthropology emerging from the Judeo-Christian tradition reduces non-human beings into commodities without intrinsic

worth. Such a theological anthropology legitimizes human exploitation and pillage of nature.

The concept of “Salvation History” developed by biblical scholars such as Gerhard von Rad and Oscar Cullmann further reduced creation to the level of a prologue to what they consider as the central story of the Bible: the salvation history of God’s people. As Norman Habel rightly observes, the effect of this thinking supports “perhaps inadvertently, the devaluation of nature as God’s domain in favor of history as the arena of God’s mighty acts of salvation.” Biblical texts in general and dominant biblical interpretations in particular tend to assume that hierarchical dualism such as spiritual and material, matter and body, heaven and earth, male and female are part of reality, and thereby continue to legitimize hierarchy as divinely ordered. This understanding has also resulted in the devaluation of earth.

It is also important to remember that Christianity with its missionary zeal, supported by exclusive claims, continues to reject and desecrate indigenous religious traditions and practices of earth care and the vision of the community of creation. Pantheistic religions and their ecological practices are condemned as nature worship. Panentheistic ethos of Christian faith has been sidelined fearing idolatry. The whole concept of sacred grove is alien to Christianity, and Christian missionaries have chopped down several sacred groves in India to destroy idolatry. Indonesian theologian Zakaria Ngelow, in his reflection on the groaning of the rivers of South and West Sulawesi observes how the panentheistic indigenous traditions inspired the local communities to protect and nurture their water bodies. "But Christian missionaries developed a strong rejection of indigenous religions and their values. Unfortunately

missionaries did not supply new, concrete Christian values of how to respect nature, but merely desacralized nature in order to reject native religions. Consequently, people lost their respect for nature; forests were damaged, land suffered erosion and rivers have been polluted." When our theology is incapable of stirring us to experience Divine in the terrestrial, nature is being perceived as creatures without intrinsic worth, created to serve the needs and greed of human beings. Once the intrinsic worth of the nature is theologically destroyed, then it is easy for the human beings to construct the destiny of the nature. Yes, Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt for the exploitation and colonization of nature.

In the face of the ecological crisis, a good number of devout Christians genuinely believe that natural calamities are God's punishment, and they use different biblical verses to substantiate it.

God has been considered as the agent causing floods, storms, droughts, and other “natural” catastrophes. Since human beings have forgotten God’s command to protect and take care of the creation, God is angry. And we see the wrath of God in the ecological crisis, and increased global warming and its fall out. So God is punishing us or abandoning us is the standard Christian response to the ecological crisis in many of our churches. This theological position stems from a fearful sense of apocalyptic doom that only waits for God’s inevitable judgment on planet earth and the sinful creatures. Why is God punishing us? Where is God in this crisis? These are some of the questions that we hear from communities affected by the environmental crisis.

The book of Revelation has been used to perpetuate the apocalyptic doom of God’s wrath and judgment. The “woe” sayings in Revelation

have generally been understood as God’s curse upon earth. Given the frequency of the “woe” sayings in Revelation, many people tend to think that “God has consigned the earth to suffer plagues of ecological disaster and destruction.” “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth” (Rev. 8:13). In another passage we read; “but woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you with great wrath, because he knows that his time is short.” (Rev. 12:12) Climate change and other ecological disasters are therefore explained as the consequence of God’s wrath and curse. The God whom we see in this theological and biblical project is a God who is angry with the sinfulness of human beings, and hence is cursing the earth.

Secondly, we see a strong sense of the impending end of the earth in the book of Revelation. “The nations raged, but your wrath has come, and the time of judg-

ing the dead, for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints and all who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying those who destroy the earth.” (Rev. 11:8) Many of us believe that the signs of the time reveal that the world is going to end soon. Here the signs of the time are global warming and other environmental destructions that we face today. So according to this theological and biblical interpretation, the ecological crisis is just an indication that the world is fast approaching its end. These are all signs of the end time. So the task of the faithful is to prepare themselves to meet the Lord. Differently said, rather than inspiring us to engage in the praxis of witness in the context of the ecological crisis, our theological and biblical reflections tend to indoctrinate us to focus our attention on our personal salvation leaving behind the sinful world to its inevitable doom and destruction. In spite of the fact that all of

us experience the impact of global warming in diverse forms, the theological and biblical reflections of the Christian community all over the world in general are geared up toward an other-worldly spirituality refusing our call to redeem the earth.

Thirdly, the book of Revelation speaks about the plagues of ecological destruction. These plagues have been interpreted as God’s wrath on earth. The destruction of rivers, scorching heat, burning of forests, waters turning to blood and similar ecological destructions are expressions of God’s determination to destroy the earth. Such an interpretation further strengthens a world denouncing spirituality and makes us heaven bound. Climate change and global warming are nothing but contemporary plagues that God has sent to teach the sinful humanity a lesson. The vision of God in our dominant theological and biblical reflections in the context of

the environmental crisis is a God who is distanced from God's creation. God is angry and hence, God has deserted us. God is cursing the earth, God is determined to destroy the earth, and God sends plagues to destroy the earth. This is the dominant God concept that we find among our Christian brothers and sisters in the context of the distress of earth.

Finally, if at all we are encouraged to engage in eco-justice ministries of creation care, it is not theologically articulated as an expression of our faith. Our eco-justice activities are considered as "social" involvement because we lack the theological imagination to understand our eco-justice ministries as part of the redemptive work of God initiated in Jesus. In our understanding, salvation and redemption are limited to human beings. Nature is soul-less, and hence it falls outside the redemptive work of Christ. As a result, nature cannot be redeemed. That means, our ecological

struggles to protect our planet from global warming is not a Christian struggle. Such a heaven-bound understanding of salvation does not inspire us to engage in eco-justice ministries. This calls for alternative re-imaginings of salvation informed by the biblical visions of cosmic reconciliation (Colossians) and redeemed earth (Revelation). This ecological soteriology is well articulated in one of the statements of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines: "Ecological justice, that is, the restoration to wholeness of creation, is at the heart of God's redemptive plan... Salvation is an ecological truth, a celebration of God's reign where the values of neighborly concern, love and kinship are extolled and made the norm—and not those of disconnectedness and subjugation and domination."

So far we have seen how our dominant theological interpretations distort the apocalyptic vision and depict God

as the cause for ecological destruction. In our alternative theological and biblical engagements we need to have a fresh look at the book of Revelation. According to Barbara Rossing, the “woe” sayings in the book of Revelation are not to pronounce God’s curse against the earth, rather they are God’s lament or cry over the conquest and devastation of the earth by the Roman Empire. So God is pained at the wanton wreckage of the earth by the sinful imperial power; and God is crying aloud in solidarity with the earth. Said differently, God, whose primary characteristic is relationality and communion, is wounded by the annihilation of the earth. Yes, God is affected by the groaning of the world.

We have also seen how the dominant biblical interpretation of the impending “end” of the earth is being used to legitimize the doom and destruction of the earth. As Rossing points out, the “end” that the book of Revelation

envisions is not the destruction of the earth or God’s creation, rather it is the end of the imperial regime that ravages the earth. So God of the Bible is not a God who is interested in the annulment of the earth. But God is committed to expedite the end of those evil and sinful systems which destroy the earth. God’s lament or cry is an expression of God’s resentment and outrage at the violence and abuse that we inflict upon the earth. God assures the victims of disasters and destruction that the economic and political systems which continue to create havoc are going to end pretty soon. This is the divine promise that inspires us in our ecological struggles. God is faithful in realizing God’s promises. To put it in Rossing’s words, “the God of Revelation does not seek to destroy the earth. Rather, God seeks to rescue the earth—the land, the seas and the creatures who inhabit them—from the sickness of empire that is devastating the world, so

that creation can be brought to fulfillment.”

As in the case of the plagues of the Exodus story, the purpose of the narratives about plagues in the book of Revelation is not to predict disaster or destruction, rather it is meant to invite the community to repent and change. The goal of the plague narratives is not doom saying; but encouraging the community to mend their ways to experience freedom and fullness. In our contemporary milieu we too confront the manifestation of the imperial power similar to that of in Egypt and Rome. Just like the biblical narratives of plagues invited the imperial powers to mend their ways, the contemporary plagues that we witness in our own communities are invitations to think critically about our carbon consumption and emissions and to observe Carbon Sabbath and Carbon Fasting to absolve our ecological sins. So the plague narratives do not show God’s wrath or an-

ger, but it reveals God’s everlasting love and commitment to save the earth. But it involves a response from us; a response to “come out” (Rev 18: 4) of the imperial world view and consumption patterns and protect and save the earth. This radical hope in the possibility of us to repent—to come out of the empire—is the foundation of our struggles to make climate change history.

In the context of the ecological crisis, the story of Jonah in the Bible is paradigmatic for us. The great imperial city of Nineveh was asked to repent and mend its ways. God had given the city forty days to do that. God did not want Nineveh to be destroyed. Rather God wanted Nineveh to turn and to repent. God wanted to save Nineveh. One can identify two insights in the story of Jonah which are relevant to the present scenario of the ecological crisis. First of all, God is not a God who intends to punish us for our iniquities. Rather God is a God

who loves God's creation. God does not want the creation to be destroyed. Secondly, God believes in the possibility of human beings to turn and repent.

The God indwelling world is the site of grace and healing. Nineveh is a paradigm for all of us. The unbelievable good news that we find in the story of Nineveh should inspire us to journey from a politics of cynicism and despair to a politics of hope. But it demands from us a costly commitment to undergo a social *metanoia*. Spirituality, for those who struggle for survival, is the spirit-filled energy that enables them to believe in alternatives as they continue to resist the idols of death. It is this belief in the utopia that sustains them in their struggles. It is an option for life; a confrontation with the logic of death, and the celebration of life.

What is the mission of the Church in this context? God is at work in our midst inviting our nations and com-

munities to turn and to repent. Fragmentary manifestations of this process of social *metanoia* are visible in our villages and small towns. Our responsibility in this historic moment is to enable and galvanize our faith communities to join this movement for enhancing life. This involves re-engagement with the Bible and tradition, and re-imagination of liturgy and *kerygma* so that our faith communities will discern the ecological crisis as a wakeup call to turn and repent. The Church is called to instil in our community the absurd faith to believe that if Nineveh can change, we too can change. When we become intentional communities forging alliances with the subaltern movements we can strive together for the realization of the vision of a future where we celebrate life in abundance and weave that vision into our creative resistance to the sway of death.



O' HEAVEN

O' Heaven have thou lost 'sight'
of a little heart?
thou' wounded with light and thunder—
so touched, and yet thou be afar

O' Heaven of 'Peace'! Why cease it too' fast?
coldness in limbs grown overnight
wakefulness which sunk pillow tight
Nevertheless,

O' how so true to find none that compares
Thee!

And yet why thou ail?
Let unrest, made pain and trial

O' there 'Light' in Heaven,
so dreamt!—
"will thou send a little 'light'
at the lone corner where he lie"?

The springs had long gone—
And the wind wild has blown away,
the withered leaves
when the sun too without a mercy
shone
with none to shade

O' 'King of Bliss' have thou 'kindness full'
awhile!
His unclothed and shame be, let apart from
love

O' Heaven! O Heaven! Great in love
What lies is my heart

Heaven and only my heart...

Jaffet Sumi

Student of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of
India, Guwahati

Mission Department upcoming programs

October 8: Neighborhood Ministry partnership meeting
Few churches and mission organizations working among the neighbors in Assam in partnership with CBCNEI shall come together for a meeting for planning future strategies for Ministry.

October 21 - 25 : VBS Teachers' Training

Our partner CBM from New Zealand will come and conduct VBS teachers' training in CBCNEI campus. Everyone, especially Sunday School teachers, are invited to this training program.

November 5 : Mission Partners Meeting

We are inviting all Mission partners to have a one-day mission consultation to find out the area of specializations of each partner and help each other work more effectively.

November 11 - 21 : Mission Leadership training through exposure

In order to explore mission possibilities and opportunities in other parts of India, a Mission Leadership Training will be organized in partnership with UP Mission. A team of leaders will visit UP Mission to learn their discipleship process and also explore mission opportunities.

Mission Hand Book: Data collection and research is going on to publish a hand book on mission especially for churches in North East India. In this hand book we are planning to include the following:

- Partners and their areas of specialization so that our churches will tap their potentials so that our churches will benefit from them.
- List of potential mission fields within North East and other parts of India.
- List of missionaries sponsored by our churches and their mission fields so that there wouldn't be any confusion in mission fields.
- Mission activities of different state Conventions and Councils under CBCNEI.

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

The Annual Gathering of Baptist World Alliance (July 1 - 6)

More than 400 Baptists from 40 countries came for the Annual Gathering of Baptist World Alliance in Ocho Rios from. The North East Baptists were represented by Rev Dr Anjo Keikung, General Secretary NBCC; Rev Keviyiekiele, the former President of NBCC, and Rev Dr A. K. Lama, General Secretary of CBCNEI. The host Baptist Convention of Jamaica organized a special event

with folk dance, contemporary music, and authentic Jamaican cuisine. The honorable Governor General, Sir Patrick Allen, Jamaica's head of state, welcomed the BWA delegation and commended Jamaican Baptists for their long history of commitment to freedom and nation building. Following are some of the highlights of the conference:

* the Baptist peace activist, Dr Glen Stassen, the Lewis B. Smedes Professor of Christian Ethics at Fuller

Theological Seminary in California in the United States, was presented with the 2013 Denton



and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award.

* the General Council welcomed five new member organizations. The BWA has 228 member organizations in 120 countries at present.

* the council ratified Principles and Guidelines for Intra-Baptist Relationships. This document was unanimously endorsed all delegates. The document emphasizes on fellowship, solidarity, togetherness, partnership and networking within the Christian church. This document can be downloaded from BWA web page and translated into the local language (<http://www.bwanet.org/images/pdf/Intra-Baptist/spc-intra.pdf>). The document takes into account the diversity of the BWA family. According to Dr Naville Calam, the General Secretary of BWA, "This diversity is God's gracious gift, but so is the unity among believers. The challenge is to negotiate the living out of these two gifts - diversity and unity - within the life of the

church."

* Council urged Baptist leaders for an urgent action to implement measures to protect children from abuse, support their physical and emotional welfare, and respond to allegations of abuse. All Baptist churches, conventions and unions are requested to take seriously every case of alleged child sexual abuse, to ensure that proper rules and processes are in place to protect children from harm and to promptly respond to allegations.

In the BWA Commission on Theological Educational and Leadership formation, Rev Dr A. K. Lama presented a paper on the, "Challenges of Theological Education in Asia and Northeast India in Particular."

It was decided that the 2014 Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Annual Gathering will be held in Izmir, Turkey, from July 6-12.



**Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC)
Participation at the World Environment Day and Green Sunday (June 5)**

Along with the rest of the world NBCC also participated in the celebration of the World Environment Day. Led by Rev. Dr. L. Anjo Keikung General Secretary, NBCC, the staff joined the World Environment Day program at the NBCC Convention Center, Kohima which was organized by the State Government under the theme “THINK.EAT.SAVE.” In line with the World Environment Day and Green Sunday which was observed on June

2, 2013, NBCC planted more than 1, 500 trees in and around the NBCC Convention centre.



Christian Conference of Asia’s (CCA) Human Rights Training (June 6-11)

Mr. Atungo Shitri, Secretary, Peace and Justice, CBCNEI, participated in a seminar: “In God’s Image: Human Rights and Human Dignity,” held at Bangkok Christian Guest House- Thailand organized by the Christian Conference of Asia. The training workshop is designed for human rights activists in the churches, or for church workers engaged in different types of work related to the protection of human dignity. The train-





year's selection represented a diverse cultural background comprising asso-

ing is concerned not only with providing a venue for discussing the theory, concept, and application of human rights laws and codes, but also in providing a much needed space for sharing stories, cultivating trust and confidence in one another, and community building.



Shillong Tyrannus Hall - On the Move

Fresher's Meet, (June 29)

The interview for admission to the Shillong Tyrannus Hall for the academic session, 2013-14 was conducted on 8th June. Out of 54 applicants, 14 boys were prayerfully selected. As always, this

ciate professor in the department of Theology and Ethics. 13 different tribes from all over the North East. The function was organized by the seniors under the guidance of Resident Staff. Along with the hostel boys, board members and friends, it was also attended by our neighbors and families residing in Baptist Vacation House compound, Shillong. The 14 new boys were in their best traditional attire which added a bit of color and also acted as symbolism for how young men from different tribes and cultures coming to live as brothers.

The first session was chaired by Mr Thejavitso Chase. Rev Malsawma Vanchchawng, the Pastor of Shillong Bap-



upon the new boys.

The speaker spoke from the book of Hebrews and was really a blessing. He shared that

tist Church brought the Word of God. The service began with praise and worship led by the worship team of the Hall. The resident staff, Rev. K. C. Gaila formally welcomed the new boys into the family of Tyrannus Hall. Mr. Timothy Rangry spoke on behalf of the new boys, which was followed by a special number from the freshers. As they introducing themselves, one of the boys said, "Acceptance in Tyrannus Hall was a dream come true." There was also a time of presentation for the new boys and also an appreciation to the speaker. Dr. Larkinson D. Sangma, Chairman of STH Managing Board prayed for heavenly blessings

Christianity is a religion of family not of individuals. He emphasized the boarders that there are so many things to learn and greater heights to be conquered and encouraged the boys to be patient and run the race with perseverance.

A delicious dinner followed. From there, the program continued with lots of fun and entertainment conducted by the seniors which was acted as an 'ice-breaker'. This kind of event has always helped the boys to become closer and warm into the atmosphere that they now call home - and this night was no different.



BWA Theological Conference (June 28-30)

Under the leadership of Rev Dr Fausto A. Vasconcelos, Director, Division on Mission, Evangelism & Theological Reflection of Baptist World Alliance, the 8th Baptist International Conference on the subject, “Holy Spirit” was held in Ocho Rios, Jamaica. He wrote, “The Lord blessed

us indeed with a great and significant event attended by 134 registered participants from 21 countries.” Six prominent Baptist Theologians from various countries presented papers and four scholars responded them. Important subjects such as “Baptist Contribution to understanding of the Holy Spirit,” “the Prosperity Gospel Problem,” “the Holy Spirit and Corporate Worship,” “the healing and atoning work of Jesus Christ,” and “The Holy Spirit and Justice” were deliberated. The participants from the glo-

bal east and south were very few. Dr A. K. Lama, General Secretary, CBCNEI had the privilege to chair the Asia Pacific Baptist Fellowship regional group.

The Conference ended with a



tour to the historical sites of Baptist heritage in Jamaica. Jamaican Baptists are proud of the Baptist heroes who fearlessly fought for the abolition of slavery and social justice. They emphasized on excellence in education and strong ecumenical relationship. The impact of their contribution is still enjoyed by the present generation. The government of Jamaica recognizes the contribution of the Baptist Churches with high regard.



KABC School Mission Rubber Plantation Project

(June 2011 to 2013)

Executive members of the Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention at the Project site.
The KABC School Mission

Baptist Churches from Dakota, altogether 2100 trees have been planted beginning from June 2011 to August 2012. The project goal is to plant 3000 trees. Now, the



Rubber Plantation Project Sponsored by American Baptist Churches of the Dakotas, USA, is an income generating program initiated by the Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention (KABC) in association with the Foundation for Integrated Community Development (FICOD), Diphu. The aim of the project is to generate long term funds for supporting the School Mission program of the Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention. Through the support of the American

main challenge will be to take proper care of the rubber trees for the next seven years.



Advanced Mission Leadership Training Program Report (AMLTP) (July 2-5)

The Advanced Mission Leadership Training Program was held at CBCNEI Mission Compound on the theme **“Making Greater Impact.”** There were eight sessions covering Legal issues in Mission,

Mission Strategy; challenges and strength of the opposing forces, and Member care. The resource persons were Mr. Atungo Shitiri, Secretary, Peace and Justice CBCNEI, Mr. Vivek Oriel Paul Advocate, Col. Arun UP Mission and Rev. Helien Singsit from Friends Missionary Prayer Band (FMPB).

All together 42 mission secretaries, pastors and leaders attended the training program. The training program was remarkable for its emphasis on the current issues like awareness of Constitutional Rights in doing mission, deep insights on Mission Strategies, and on the need of Caring the Missionaries. The delegates were divided into groups for dis-

ussion on case study and presentation.

In the session on “Legal issues and rights pertaining to the mission work,” Mr. Atungo and Mr. Vivek presented with an enormous range of applications on the use of constitutional Rights. The discussion also raises the possibilities of working together in legal matters rather than approaching as an individual in order to be effective in the mission field.

In the “Mission Strategy,” session, Col. Arun (UP Mission) gave a fascinating class on the need to establish a strong and defined mission strategy. Complete and useful information was presented on identifying the op-



ponent forces and stronghold.

Rev Helien Singsit (FMPB) in “Member care” session emphasized on the need to insure mission worker’s welfare by their agency, field leadership, and the sending church. This call for care underlies thrives for effective service and to set an exemplary life honored by God.

The three days training program challenged the delegates to work hand in hand so as to make a greater impact and came to its blessed closure.



Neighborhood Leadership Training Report (July 2-4)

Special Leadership Training for Neighborhood ministry was conducted at Barpeta Road. It was especially helpful for those House church leaders on how to lead a group and disciple them to



be a witness in their own work places. The training focuses on sharing stories from the Bible and its application in our daily life. The leaders were encouraged and blessed through the training. All together eighteen house church leaders participated in the training. Three new people were added in the group during the training.



The Peace Counts on Tour (PCoT) Training of Trainers (TO T) (July 9-13)

The Peace Counts on Tour 2013 North- East India Project of the Berghof Foundation/Zeitenspiegel Reportagen facilitated by

the Justice and Peace Ministries of the CBCNEI organized a Training of Trainers (TOT) for peace building with an aim to form a pool of qualified multipliers to foster peace education in universities and communities in Northeast India.

Altogether twenty-two participants from Northeast India attended the Training. Participants from Peace Studies Department of the Martin Luther Christian University (MLCU) Shillong; Teachers from Eastern Theological College (ETC) Jorhat and Clark Theological College (CTC) Mokokchung, Nagaland; Research scholars from Tezpur University, Assam and Manipur University; communities leaders from different parts of Northeast India; students from Northeast and from Lovely Professional University, Jalandar, Punjab participated. The main facilitators are Uli Jaeger; Anna Romund; Tilman Woertz from Germany and Leban Serto, the local organizer and also cer-

tified trainer of the Peace Counts on Tour from Northeast India.

The various theme of the TOT included the following:-

1. Basic principles of peace education
2. Peace: visions and definitions
3. Conflict escalation, conflict resolution and reconciliation
4. Violence and violence prevention
5. Good practice of peace-building
6. Peace Counts; How to be a peace-building

A manual was developed for the TOT and was tried out during the program. The method of the workshop included experiential methods; role play; and exhibitions. There were individual and group presentations on some of the emerging issues and took on for group deliberation. The participants were given certificate upon completion of the TOT. They will now move out into their

respective places with knowledge and skills about how to design workshops and program on the Peace Counts on Tour. Perhaps a new beginning has been made to inculcate learning in a unique way and add freshness and creativity in the field of Peace building in the region.



Pastors Retreat (Chang Baptist Lashong Thangyen) (July 22 - 28 & Aug 26 - 31)

The Chang Baptist Lashong Thangen (CBLT) under the leadership of Jonathan, Mission Secretary, CBLT had a week long Pastors' retreat at CBCNEI Mission Compound. The pastors travelled from all over Nagaland to Guwahati to refresh themselves. It was very encouraging to



see the pastors interacting with one another, sharing ministry experience and their joys. For many of them Guwahati was new and had apprehensions as to how to go about in a situation so different from their village set up. But they all went back with very rich experiences. The pastors also had the privilege of visiting different places in Guwahati. They were blessed by sharing from different speakers, Rev Taku Longkumer and Rev Katie Longkumer from BIM, Rev Dr A. K. Lama; Rev Dr

Jolly Rimai & Mr Atungo Shitri from CBCNEI.



Writers' Workshop- a workshop for Christian writers (August 7 - 10)

A Writers' Workshop under the theme **"SHARPENING THE SAW,"** was conducted from by Christian Literature Centre (CLC) at CBCNEI Mission Compound. It was an intensive workshop for aspiring Christian writers. The workshop was well attended



by eighteen (18) amateur writers varying from secular and theological background from all over the Northeast India. Julie Belding, an eminent editor from New Zealand and Rev Dr A. K. Lama, General Secretary, CBCNEI enlightened the young budding writer with their rich experiences and knowledge. It was a refreshing and insightful workshop. Some of the topics were, ***“Sussing your subject,”*** ***“Showcasing your style,”*** ***“Submitting your scoop,”*** ***“Strengthening your spirit,”*** and ***“Smartening your Scribble.”***



Fresher’s Day Celebration of the Lewis Memorial Hostel (LM) (August 9)

The Lewis Memorial Hostel celebrated its Fresher’s Day at Mission Compound. It was a day set aside for welcoming the new family members of the LM Hostel. There were altogether 35 boys who

joined the rest of the 22 old hostel mates. The 35 new brothers represented 25 communities from all over Northeast India. It was a well organized, warm and entertaining night with all the invitees, board members, girls from White Memorial Hostel, staff and families of CBCNEI blessing the occasion with their presence. A powerful exhortation by the General Secretary, Rev Dr A.K. Lama left the freshers and the audience encouraged and challenged. He shared from his own personal life experiences; his hopes and dreams, his failures and betrayals, his relationships and commitments which made him the person he is today. He challenged the boys to be prepared of life’s unexpected turns because life itself is cruel and one needs to brace oneself of what is to come. Mr. Molung Sunep from Ao community was unanimously selected as the new Mr. Fresher for the year 2013. The joyous night ended with a community



feast where all the guests and well wishers of the LM Hostel participated and enjoyed the various North east Cuisine. The CBCNEI family wishes all the new boys success and God's blessing in their stay at the Hostel. May they achieve all that they had planned for and accomplishment in their life's endeavor.



Cross Cultural Missionary Training Program (August 12-22)

The Mission Department, CBCNEI, successfully conducted "Cross Cultural Missionary Training Program" for the missionaries and the Community Development Workers (CDWs) under the

theme "Being His Salt to the Earth and Light to the World."

The training was conducted in three different places; CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati, Asian Rural Life Development Foundation office, (ARLDF) Guwahati and Jorhat Christian Medical Centre, Jorhat. It was carried out in partnership with ARLDF. A total of 23 missionaries from Arunachal, Nagaland, and Assam participated the training.

The training program was unique as it stressed on the holistic approach in doing cross-cultural mission. Various sessions were conducted on Cross-cultural Ministry, Community Transformation, Clean Water Awareness (Bio-



White memorial Fresher's Fiesta (August 17)

The Fresher's day of the White Memorial Hostel for girls was celebrated with much delight and joy in which the seniors accorded a homely welcome to the

sand filter technology), Hygiene and Tree of Life. The missionaries also visited JCMC site, Jorhat, for field exposure where they were introduced to various SAL Technologies, Faith Gardening, Goat Raising and Poultry Farming.

Freshers. It was a fun filled occasion along with exultation of the new talents of the new team who entered into the family of the White Memorial Hostel. Ms. Mansingla was crowned as the Miss Fresher. Rev Dr Jolly Ramai in charge of the Hostel Ministry, CBCNEI gave a valuable exhortation. On



this auspicious day many well wishers and invitees joined with us in the celebration.



A Brief Report on the Peace Building Curriculum Workshop (August 23)

A one-day workshop on Peace Building Curriculum was conducted at the Eastern Theological College, Jorhat. The workshop was organized specially to concretize the structure of the curriculum on peace building which was in seminal form and was taking shape over the years periodically. A group of academia: twenty faculty members from Eastern Theological College, the College Administrators and Mr Atungo Shitiri, Secretary for Justice and Peace, CBCNEI, were part of the curriculum building exercise.

On the whole, the syllabus comprising twenty subjects were minutely scrutinized and deliberated, changes deemed necessary were made and finally a workable academic curriculum was prepared. This exercise has brought the College Faculty to work cohesively for the Curriculum on Peace building for Master of Arts (MA) course targeted for 2014 session. The Workshop was sponsored by the Board of International Ministry (BIM) through the Justice and Peace Department of CBCNEI. The success of the curriculum drive for MA studies in Peace building is therefore credited to them and also to the hard work of the College faculty in working together in bringing out the curriculum successfully. Plans are now being made to



begin the M.A. degree program on Peace Studies (PS) with effect from 2014 academic session.



**Nagaland Baptist Church
Council Youth
Department: Students Meet
(September 7 - 8)**

A Students Meet with the theme ***“where everybody is somebody in Christ”*** was organized by the Nagaland

Baptist
Church
Council
Youth
Department
at State
Academy
hall,



Kohima. Rev. Kilang Jamir, Founder, Director of Youth Harvest Ministry, Dimapur was the speaker for the program. Rev. Dr. L. Anjo Keikung, General Secretary, NBCC also exhorted the gathering of young people. Power Faith Worship team and Stile Ministry lead the

praise and worship. There were special presentations from the Power Faith band and Cedar band. Nepali Baptist Church Kohima, Chang Baptist Church Kohima, Sangtam Baptist Church Kohima, City Church Kohima, Sumi Baptist Church Kohima, Konyak Baptist Church Kohima, Chakhesang Baptist Church Kohima and Eirene Choir participated in the program in various ways. Hundreds of students and young people attended the

program. The NBCCYD is grateful and thankful to all who have contributed financially, materially, physically and spiritually making this program successful.





Cook Spot

RAW MANGO SALAD

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

Recipe:

Serving: 4 person

Ingredients

Quantity

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Fresh raw mango (semi-sweet) | 600gm |
| 2. Onion (Sliced) | 100gm |
| 3. Spring onion (Chopped) | 40gm |
| 4. Deep fried cashew nut | 80gm |

For dressing:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| 1. Red chilli paste | 15gm |
| 2. Chopped garlic | 10gm |
| 3. Light soya sauce | 8 tbl spoon |
| 4. Lemon juice | 6 tbl spoon |
| 5. Sugar syrup | 3 tbl spoon |

Method:

1. Peel, slice and cut mango into small stripes.
2. Slice onion, wash, separate them and drain off excess moist properly, and keep it aside.
3. Clean and wash spring onion, and finely chop.
4. Immerse cashew nut in hot oil with the help of stainless steel strainer, and deep fry until it gets lightly brown in color.
5. Put all the ingredients in a clean bowl, add dressing, mix them nicely and serve.

Method dressing:

1. Add red chilli paste and chopped garlic in a clean bowl.
2. Add the remaining ingredients one after the other and mix well.



Communicating the Gospel Contextually: The Contemporary Socio-Political Context of Asia

Dr A. K. Lama, General Secretary, CBCNEI

Theological educators from ecumenical and evangelical schools are trying to make their training contextually relevant to the contemporary socio-political context of Asia. The intent is to train and equip youths adequately for their contemporary socio-political context. In the recent General Assembly of the Asia Theological Association at Jakarta, Indonesia, which drew more than 250 theologians from around 27 nations in Asia, the theme of the Conference was “**Communicating the Gospel Contextually in Contemporary Asia.**” On the first day, I had the privilege of responding to a paper presented by Dr. Joseph Tong.

This article is a redrafting of my response for our reading in the northeast context. I welcome your response for publication in the next issue of the Baptist News, so that we may be fully enriched.

In our effort to train our youths in communicating the gospel in our contemporary socio-political context, our primary challenge is to ascertain the definition of the gospel. I am attempting to draw our attention to the problem of the conflicting positions on what we mean by the gospel. The definition of the gospel is crucial because we need to be certain of what we want to communicate in our context.

I. Communicating the Whole Gospel with a Hole

In the times of Hitler's Germany, theologians differed in defining the gospel in relation to the Jews. In the times of Martin Luther King Jr, the theologians and Church leaders in America defined gospel differently with regards to rights of the African race. In our times, we have our differences in defining the gospel for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) individuals. Some affirm and welcome them as they are while others read gospel differently for them. The gospel is understood and practiced differently by Christians. One may see the hole in others gospel. Who has the whole gospel without a hole?

The former president of World Vision, Richard Stearns, admitted that for a long time he was a good evangelical Christian with a hole in his whole Gospel. He came to realize his problem only while listening to the story of an orphan in Uganda. With his newly found understanding of the whole Gospel, he writes:

“This gospel that we have

been given—the whole gospel—is God's vision for a new way of living. . . . The poor will be helped by the rich; the powerful will protect the powerless; the hated would be loved; the brokenhearted would be comforted; the oppressed would be liberated; the downtrodden would be lifted up. God's kingdom was going to begin on earth through the changed lives of His followers, and its hallmarks would be forgiveness, love, compassion, justice, and mercy. There would be no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female—all would be equal in God's eyes.”¹

Like Richard Stearns, there are others who are passionate to redefine the meaning of the gospel. We may agree with this elaborate definition of the gospel, but differences emerge in our pre-occupation and practical engagement with it. Some contemporary theologians have critiqued the preoccupation of western missionaries with the gospel in soul winning and conversion. In fact, such pre-occupation continues even today. Asian Christians with their vast unreached masses in the neigh-

borhood are compelled to prioritize evangelism, unintentionally discounting the social aspect of the gospel. Even today in some parts of Asia, the modern church planting movement, the massive healing crusades, and the winning of one denomination over another to ensure the salvation of perishing souls, goes on with sincerity and good intentions.

At the same time, there are evangelical leaders and institutions in India who might be accused of being pre-occupied with social action, charity, advocacy, social justice, fighting against human-trafficking, and helping the lepers, people living with HIV/Aids, substance abusers, and so on. They would deliberately ignore evangelism for fear of being branded proselytizers. In fact, one of the social action wings of the Protestant church in India employs mostly non-Christian expertise for its activities. So communicating the gospel in words is completely ignored. Yes, the pendulum can swing from one side to the other as the debate on the meaning of the gospel continues.

Probably for this reason, the

Lausanne Movement succinctly coined the slogan *the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world*. The Lausanne Theology Working Group worked hard to define what the word *whole gospel* actually meant. They had to use 4100 words over seven pages to explain it. I would particularly draw our attention to Part A, sections 2 and 3, which emphasizes *the whole gospel from the whole Bible*.² This means sixty-six books of the Bible including the obscure ones like Leviticus, Numbers and Song of Songs. I have often wondered if there was a Bible school that trained its students to preach from all sixty-six books of the Bible, including the obscure ones. Is that possible within a three-year theological program with other compulsory subjects on the curriculum? What percentage of the curriculum is aimed at communicating the whole gospel? Is it possible to fill the hole?

Our understanding of gospel defines our missiology. We were challenged with the concept of *holistic mission* for some time but these days evangelicals talk about *inte-*

gral mission. The Micah Network defines integral mission as follows:

Integral mission or holistic transformation is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ.³

Integral mission is easier said than done by any one group or church. In some parts of India, engaging in such integral mission *per se* would mean cleansing the society from corruption, illegal mining, deforestation, drug smuggling, and human trafficking. It would mean advocating for justice and defending the minorities and oppressed. It would mean exposing oneself to the dangers of life. It would mean confronting the power of darkness head on. It would mean truly carrying the cross and being ready to be cruci-

fied with Christ before establishing a mega-church.

What does it mean to communicate the gospel in our context? I believe this debate will continue. No individual, no single church and no para-church could be the whole church and hence no individual entity could communicate the whole gospel. I like John Stott's emphasis on the *particular calling*. He wrote the following in 1991:

The best way to avoid this, in my view, is not to deny that 'mission' is broader than evangelism, but rather to insist that each 'missionary' must be true to his or her particular calling.⁴

We are not to judge another's *particular calling* and we cannot define the gospel for others but only for ourselves. The hole that I see is in our understanding of the Body of Christ—the universal Church—and in our attitude. There is a lack of trust as well as cultural, national, racial and denominational divisions within the whole Church in certain quarters. We would prefer others to follow us. We many not want to walk alongside

others as equal partners, complementing others who are building the Church—the Whole Church. These are the areas where an exegesis of the gospel is needed.

In northeast India, we are celebrating 175th year of the coming of gospel. We are blessed with the richest history of missionary endeavor. Thousands of Churches, mission schools, hospitals, orphanages, and other philanthropic institutions have been established and are actively serving the community. The exertion to communicate the gospel has been there ever since the arrival of the first missionary in 1836. Yet, the reality of ecclesiastical politics and challenges are continually contemporaneous within. How can we address these challenges in our communication of gospel? What should be the goal of our communication?

II. Communicating to inform, or to convert or to transform

In 1963, Bishop Stephen Neill wrote:

In many areas where Protestant missions have been at work, Roman Catholic missionaries have later come in

and set themselves to ‘complete’ the imperfect Christianity of the Protestant converts. Where older churches have been at work, Christians of the Pentecostal groups have come in, and assured the converts that unless they speak with tongues, they can have no assurance that they have received the Holy Spirit. Anglicans have been known to convey the blessing of episcopacy to those who thought they were getting on very nicely without them.⁵

The scenarios have not changed much in the last fifty years. The competition and the division continue to exist amidst Christians and particularly among Protestant churches. The number of denominations in India has increased significantly in the last 40 years. Some organizations which started as para-church to empower the existing churches have themselves become a denominations and churches and are now competing with the existing ones. In a research survey, one of the leaders commented:

Often mission efforts are seen as fund motivated, conversion focused, and pursuing domi-

nance by number by one group over the others. The missionary venture often lacks respect, trust, and some effort to connect with other existing Christian witnesses in the mission field.

The mission field in Asia (the 10/40 window) remains under the influence of the financially powerful foreign mission agencies. Their understanding of the gospel mandates them to win Asia for Christ with their methodology which may not be culturally sensitive. Hence the ideas are imported and jobs are out-sourced. Large numbers of volunteers are mobilized with short mission adventures and experience. Quantitative results are achieved through highly programmed and mechanized methods for the benefit of continued funding. The top down patterns—from upper class to lower class execution—take place. Native workers, churches and mission agencies are trained and effectively used to produce the result.

We cannot deny the fact that Asian Christians are the fruit of western ecclesiastical mission and our historical circumstances compelled our pro-

spective leaders and theological educators to go to western nations for their theological training (myself included). That the Asian theological education and training modules are deeply rooted in a philosophy and methodology that is developed in foreign context. We are mostly dependent on text books, commentaries, journals and reference materials that may not be written in an Asian context. Even this format of presenting a paper and responding is somewhat foreign in some of our cultures in Asia. In the remote hills of the northeast India, village leaders argue their case with their oratory skills and with bamboo sticks as their footnotes, not with a good paper presentation.

In some Asian mission fields the mindset of monoculturalism, the attitude of self-righteousness and exclusivism, the dominance of certain methodologies, and the hierarchy of the economic upper missionary class still prevails. Money was, is, and always will be a powerful influence. I have been a member of the Baptist World Alliance Commission on Theological Education and

Leadership Formation for the last three years. We are expected to raise our own funds for travel for all Commission activities - which is economically and practically easier for our friends from the West. But the members from Asia and Africa struggle, and often they are unable to make any impact in the Commission. Some Asian churches have enormous human resources to impact global missions but they do not have adequate financial resources. With the current disparities in the global economy and the currency value of some Asian countries, some churches in Asia must remain dependent on Western partners.

The irony is that while attending a Conference on Contextualizing of the Gospel, a group of senior Indian leaders were invited for dinner in a luxurious hotel by few western leaders. They presented a package of manual on discipleship written by a group of western writers who may not have better understanding of diverse context and culture of India. The proposal was to invite 30 thousand Indian pastors in two different cities of

India and train them how to use the manual. It was a premeditated plan and the group of senior Indian leaders had already agreed to go ahead. Some of us just wondered: How are we different in planning our strategies after all the talk on contextualization? In north India there is popular sayings—*Jiski Lathi Usaki Bhains*—(buffalo belongs to the guy who has stick). Ultimately, the power of money prevails. How then, in the midst of all this, could Asian Churches remain free from any influence and be able to assert their own mandate for communicating the gospel contextually?

When would some western partners begin to understand their humble role of facilitating the leaders of the majority world rather leading? When would they begin to trust the ability and gifts of some native leaders to serve their context better than them? When would the colonial and imperialistic mindset be transformed into mindset of partners? Few years ago, I had someone call me from a funding agency to interview me on phone. I could sense his arro-

gance in his tone. The power of dollar was obvious. He wanted to test if I had right theology, right belief, and right testimony. I discovered that the guy had just begun his ministry as Director of Asia. There was absence of respect and trust. I told him that he was wasting his time because anyone could fake on a phone interview. In order to know me exactly for sure, he may have to come to India and stay with me and observe me and my context for few days. My suggestion put him off and he never called me back. I am sure he must have found someone else to get his project executed in Asia. Churches in the west are happy of getting things done but we do not ask how it is done and what are its implications?

The responsible Christian leaders must ask:

Why do we communicate the gospel?

Do we communicate it for the sake of information, or for the sake of conversion from one religion to another religion, or just to remain in the game?

Do we communicate it to have

our own way even if that may be contextually less relevant?

Is there something more than that? What is the purpose?

If the purpose is transformation—changing lives, values, ethics, equality and justice in social practices—then we must ask HOW we communicate.

Yes, we must communicate through actions and through words, but we also need to communicate through our lives. In some states in India where Christianity is almost like a state religion, corruption in government, crime in society, and crisis in churches and Christian homes show the urgent need of transformed lives. We have more Christians but fewer disciples of Jesus Christ. Probably our definition of the gospel as well the method of communication of the gospel needs a review. In ancient India, religious teachers shared their lives with their disciples in the setting of an ASHRAM (living together in a remote forest) because the emphasis was on replicating life rather than replicating the message. I am not suggesting we need to do that, but we do need to pause

and question the effectiveness of our method.

The result of the communication would depend on its method and content. Time Keller, the apologist and pastor, expresses some of the prevailing challenges in our communication. He writes:

If, for example, you stressed the social perspective to the exclusion of others, you might call loudly for social justice, but your ministry will not convert people and give them the changed lives they need to persevere in humbly serving the needs of the poor. If you stress the doctrinal perspective to the exclusion of the experiential and social, you might have a ministry that is doctrinally accurate but it will not produce changed lives, so why should anyone believe your doctrine? If you over-stress the personal perspective, you might ‘psychologize’ the gospel so that it is presented as strictly a way for an individual to overcome his or her guilt and unhappiness. But it will not get the person out of him or herself—which is what you need most to be happy. We were built by God for service. All three perspectives are nec-

essary. This full approach to the gospel creates a church that does not fit neatly into the traditional ‘conservative/sectarian’ nor ‘liberal/main-line’ categories. ⁶

How can we ensure the balance of the three perspectives—social, doctrinal, and experiential—in our communication? Is there a way to ensure that all pastors trained in our seminaries are good not only in their theological thinking but also in their theological articulation and oratory skills? Not only are they good in their oratory skills but what they say comes out of their life and personal experience. Most pastors I have met in preaching seminars in the last 20 years have expressed a sense of inadequacy either to write a good sermon or to preach one.

Communicating through oratory skills plays a vital role in shaping the theology of the Church. If we want to shape the wholesome theological thinking of our community, then the pulpit of the church must become biblically rich, clear, simple, and relevant to our context. I believe the pulpit must be anointed with the

kerygma of transformation. Finally, let us talk about Asia.

III. The Contemporary Socio-political context of Asia

By the word “Asia” perhaps we mean “non-western” or oriental. Is there such a thing as the Asian mind or the Asian culture or the Asian context? What do we mean by the word Asian?

Asia is the world’s largest (8.7% of earth) and most populous region (4.3 billion people; 60% population of the world). It comprises 49 countries with numerous languages (600 languages spoken in a country like Indonesia and around 800 in India alone) and of course numerous distinct cultures.⁷ In fact, the word Asia means different things to different people. While I was in the US, an American friend told me, “You don’t look like an Indian but you look more like an Asian.” Much of the theology developed in East Asia, which may not be known in countries like Pakistan or Nepal, is often introduced as Asian theology. Is there such a thing as Asian theology?⁸ We are all aware that the context of Asia is so diverse and com-

plex that using a term such as the Asian context is too vague and too broad to be precise in addressing any issue. While east Asia is different from south Asia, or the western region of Asia (part of Eurasia: say Turkey), the difference of contexts and the issues being faced within a region or within a nation, like India makes it too difficult for any one seminary to be relevant to the whole of Asia. In India itself, a fellow Indian from Kerala would be as alien to the issues my tribe faces as the one coming from the west. Similarly, Dalit theology or Tribal theology taught in an Indian seminary is just as alien and irrelevant to some Indian students in some parts of India. We must realize the challenges involved in the vastness of the region.

Although the causes or roots of the contemporary issues (cultural, religious, economic, social and political) faced in this vast region may be common (causes such as sin, selfishness, greed, pride, lust, insecurity, dominance, violence, and cruelty), certain issues are specific and unique to certain cultural practices and tra-

ditions, social norms, religious settings, state economies, governance and political systems. For example, the exploitation of Dalits by the upper caste community in certain parts of India is an issue; but where Dalits are the majority the issue is the exploitation of Dalits by the *Dalits* (upper in class and in economic status) that is the issue. Yet on a national level the issue for Dalits is not about exploitation but about religious biases. The constitution of India does not consider Christian and Muslim Dalits as belonging to the scheduled castes. So they are deprived of certain government privileges given to the scheduled castes.

Some pertinent issues that affect our socio-political context

Before I end my article on a negative note, especially to provoke us to think, I am obliged to give due credit to some good work going on in Asia and in particular in India.

We have certainly come a long way. We are blessed with more seminaries, more young theologians, and more volumes of

Asia Bible Commentaries, journals and other contextual Asian publications. We have witnessed a large church-planting movements, the mobilization of many Asian missionaries, especially Korean missionaries, the revival of interest by the western churches in Asia, an increase in parachurch organizations and non-governmental Christian organizations, better networking, and a willingness by these organizations to partner with local churches. In the last two decades we have seen good changes in India. We are certainly prepared better to communicate the gospel in our context today.

We must rejoice in our progress. But we must not be complacent. The challenges are still ahead of us. Let me point out some the issues that still stand tall in front of us.

1. Disaster Prone Asia

Asia is disaster prone. Disasters are natural because of our geographical topography but mostly they are man-made.⁹ A recent disaster in the northern part of India which claimed more than 20,000 lives is one example. The in-

cident took place on one of the most sacred religious grounds, endangering the lives of more than 50,000 pilgrims visiting the site.

In general, the staff and employees of parachurch organizations such as CASA, World Vision and other non-governmental organizations tackle disasters in India with relief materials, but the Church at large has yet to put its hand to the wheel. How many of our churches in Asia have leaders and volunteers who are trained to tackle such disasters? How many of our churches even have the funds to address the needs? What are the strategies of parachurch organizations for taking the churches into the disaster fields? Do we have any message to communicate in times such as these?

2. Moral Fabric of our Society

Although India is home to millions of gods and goddesses, the moral fabric of the country is on the verge of collapse. Greed, corruption, rape, murder, riots and violence fill the daily news. Individualism, divorce, abandonment and mur-

der of senior adults are on the rise in cities. The noblest professions such as those in medicine and education have become commercial ventures. Professional and ethical values have been compromised. Society is sick with evil and the value of life has been reduced. Where is the Church in this scenario?

In our world today we must recognize that the power of darkness is more real than ever. There is an evil nexus among the politicians, businessmen, and bureaucrats. They often serve the interests of a well-organized criminal syndicate that owns billion-dollar businesses. These may include illegal mining, drug trafficking, human-trafficking, land-grabbing, game-fixing, money laundering, counterfeiting currency, piracy, and of course financing political parties or terrorist groups for their own benefit. The law of the land is in their hands. They own the mafia and musclemen. To defend justice for the defenseless, to raise a voice expressing environmental concern, or to protest exploitation or corruption is life-threatening. Hence the task

of integral mission is enormous and dangerous. I am happy to see that the media are alert and that a good number of social activists are raising their voices at the risk of their lives, but the voices of the Church and the Christians are too gentle to be heard. How do we communicate?

What can we say about the Asian Church? The Church in India is well known for its internal fights over land and property, and of course for the corruption within.

How can we train future Church leaders to engage with all these issues? What do we communicate to them?

3. Resurgence of Religions

In recent times there has been a resurgence of Hinduism and Islam in India. There is an increased number of religious programs on TV, religious conferences, retreats, mission schools, hospitals, trusts and charitable activities. Copying the pattern of Christian missions, Hindus and Muslims are excelling and probably more organized in their movement against Christian evangelization. These days there are more Hindu gurus who are not

only very rich but also politically powerful. They have been systematically poisoning the minds of their devotees to hate Christians as well as Muslims. In the last two decades I had not seen so many young people in saffron going for pilgrimages as I saw this year in my city. Saffron used to be the colour of old people. There is a dangerous affiliation of politics with religion in India. Perhaps the worst is yet to come. In the midst of religious hatred the message of love is most needed. How do we communicate that?

4. Biblical Illiteracy

On top of the complexity of contemporary challenges, we despair of the biblical illiteracy among Christians. A majority of evangelical Christians, even those who have been faithfully listening to biblical sermons every Sunday, do not feel up to engaging with socio-political issues in the public square. In fact the situation is even more serious in rural areas.

I was personally alarmed by a recent incident. In an interview, I asked a student, who

was actively involved in his church's youth program, to narrate any brief story about Jesus that he would like to tell anybody. He told me that he loved the story of Jesus and his father Joseph.

"One day Jesus heard that his father was very sick and he was going to die," he narrated. "But Jesus did not come home and he went to preach good news to others and save others. So his father Joseph died and Jesus came after three days. His father was already buried and stinking in the coffin but Jesus called his father and his father came out of the grave.

When I heard the story I had the shock of my life. I had to interrupt him and ask if the name Lazarus sounded familiar to him. He hit himself on his head.

"Oh yes! That was Lazarus," he said. "Sorry, sorry!"

5. Biblical Education in the Church

I wouldn't be surprised if a majority of children and young people in our church had a similar problem when it came to the Old Testament narra-

tive. The Church at large is not familiar with the Bible. It seems like something from medieval times. Bible stories are like myths whose value has been reduced to personal religious interpretation and use. What might be the reason? Could it be that our preaching is less biblical, our storytelling irrelevant, and impractical? Could it be because a large number of pastors in our rural churches are bi-vocational? Could it be that a large number of seminary graduates are not willing to go and pastor a rural church, especially when a foreign-sponsored agency pays them a higher salary? Could it be that the training in our Bible schools is inadequate?

6. Cultural Dominance

Is it possible that we might have repeated the "mistakes of Western missionaries in adopting monoculturalism," and become "assertive," "self-righteous," "exclusive," and "hostile"? Mission is no longer only west to east; in fact it has become aggressively east to east these days. I was in Ulaanbaatar attending the Lausanne Congress. One of the Mongolian local church leaders

told me they had many problems because of Asian missionaries who were dominant and aggressive. In one of the Bible Schools in Mongolia learning Korean was compulsory because they wanted the students to be good interpreters of the Korean preachers and to be able to read Korean books.

Missionaries going out from one tribe of northeast India to another tribe carry with them a powerful cultural influence. Imagine a tribe that has received missionaries from two different tribes. Suddenly after twenty years they find themselves different from each other: they have different languages, different food habits, and different worship liturgies. So the Asian mission field may not only be orchestrated by “Western bosses”; we may also have “Asian Bosses” as well. How can we learn from the past and plan better for the present and the future?

I must admit I do not have answers to all the questions I have raised in this article. But I do believe that if we desire to communicate the gospel contextually in the socio-political context of Asia, then we shall need a paradigm shift in our methodology. I must congratulate those who are already daring to experiment changes. We are called to be a radical trend setter like Jesus himself was. Let us do it in our times.

Soli Deo Gloria!

¹ Richard Stearns, *The Hole in our Gospel: The Answer that Changed my Life and Might Just Change the World*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, p.276

² Excerpt taken from the report of the Lausanne Theological Working Group: *Section (2)* Paul’s definition of the gospel, then, includes both the central historical facts (Christ died for our sins, was buried and was raised on the third day), *and* their scriptural context and frame of meaning. Our understanding of “the whole gospel”, therefore, needs to include both also. We point to the centrality of the death and resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of sin, *and* we locate the full significance of that within the rest of all that God has said and done in *the Bible as a whole*. The Bible tells the whole story of what God has done

to save the world. *Section (3)* Drawing our understanding of the whole gospel from *the whole Bible* will protect us from a reductionism that shrinks the gospel to a few formulae for ease of communication and “marketing”. We should, of course, be clear about the central historical facts of the gospel (as Paul was), but we should not abstract them from the totality of God’s revelation and the richness and breadth of the scope of the gospel’s power and demand. Popular pressure to define and stick to “the essence of the gospel” can become an avoidance of the gospel’s full biblical challenge, and is like asking for a beating heart without the rest of the body. Source: <http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/all/twg/1177-twg-three-wholes.html>, dated Aug 5, 2013.

³ The Micah Declaration on Integral Mission. Source: <http://www.micahnetwork.org/integral-mission>, Dated Aug 7, 2013

⁴ John Stott, *Contemporary Christian: Applying God’s Word to Today’s World*. 1992, 342.

⁵ Stephen Neill, *Paul to the Colossians*, p.11, 1963

⁶ Source: http://extendingthekingdom.org/?page_id=17, Dated Aug 5, 2013.

⁷ Source: dated <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia> Aug 5, 2013.

⁸ Notice what a journalist from Turkey Mr. Kadir Ayhan writes: “The Asian identity has been discussed in East Asia since the 19th century, but it is usually limited to the East Asian countries – and yet there is still no definition of an East Asian identity. Indeed, in East Asia not many people can picture Arabs, Pakistanis, Indians and even Russians as “Asian.” On the other hand, the simple question “Asian or European” makes sense from a traditional Western point of view since it hints at “Oriental or Occidental?” However, the term Orient itself is very ignorant, because it implies a meaning of simply “non-West” in a “West vs. the rest” setting.” Source:<http://www.alarabiya.net/views/2009/03/31/69609.html> dated Aug 5, 2013

⁹ The Hindu, June 21. Arati Dhar reported, “The former Deputy Director-General of the Geological Survey of India, V.K. Raina, told The Hindu that natural calamities such as cloudbursts and flash floods could not be prevented, but deaths and damage could be contained if there were laws to regulate construction along the rivers, and authorities were equipped to deal with the situation. “Construction in Uttarakhand is not planned. The owners have taken a calculated risk and paid for it.””





Ashley Caycedo

I was born and raised in Miami, Florida, but of Colombian and German decent. In 7 grade I accepted Christ and despite my lack of understanding of the huge decision I had made, I knew that church was where I wanted to be. I begged and begged until my mom finally started taking me to youth group and started attending on Sundays with me. A few months later my mom accepted the Lord and our family was radically changed. In 8th grade I had the opportunity of going on my first missions trip to Matamoros, Mexico. It was during this trip that I first felt called by God to work with children and more specifically orphans. Throughout middle and high school I sought out experience through volunteering with different children ministries, but I didn't fully understand how my passion for orphans and children would play out. In 2011 I graduated from the University of Central Florida (UCF) with a Bachelors of Science in Business Administration, a minor in Nonprofit Management, and a minor in Sociology. For the past three years, while completing undergraduate and graduate school, I had the privilege of working at Frontline Outreach as their Business Operations Coordinator. Through this position I managed all volunteers, worked with partner and donor relations, and was responsible for the logistics of all our events. In August of 2012 I began working on an MBA in International Economic Development through Eastern University. Currently I am living in Guwahati and doing a 3-month internship at the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India through Baptist International Ministries. As an intern in the Justice and Peace department I am focusing on conflict transformation & peace building among tribes in the northeast, women's rights, and children's education. My desire is to continue to participate in work that transforms the lives of orphans and children by improving where they live and introducing them to Christ's love.

Testimonials

A Change of Heart

Nicali Yeputhomi, BD, Trinity Theological College, Dimapur

I committed a blunder not by deeds but in thoughts. For a particular phase in my life I simply could not accept other people just the way they were. I considered people's incapacibilities not as limitations but rather as weaknesses. As a result I became the most self-righteous and judgmental person I have ever known. I would taunt on anyone wearing colourful outfit; show my impatience to preachers who preached long sermon; or give a stern look to a waiter who failed to serve quickly. At that point of time it seems I alone was fighting to keep the world in order, and that was the state of my mindset at that time.

I soon realized the person most affected by my attitude was myself. I became a very angry and unsatisfied

person. Many people got hurt and wonderful relationships got strained.



As a result I felt guilty and struggled with inner unrest. Fortunately, at one point I realized I was the problem, and hence the process of reconciliation started.

The blunder I committed was a wonderful blessing. It taught me one very important lesson of life, i.e. acceptance. This was the solution to my problem. I learned to accept the realities of life. Firstly, everyone has a "weakness" which is not a "fault." Secondly, I cannot do all things right, and it is the same with other people. Hence I eventually also learned to forgive people and let go.

Testimonials

Life is more peaceful and meaningful for me now. A person who delivers the longest speech ever receives my applause for the effort. Also the waiter who accidentally spills water on me is forgiven. Life is less a blunder and more enjoyable as I learned to accept and let go. Finally, I have realized that my fight was not with the world but with myself, and now fortunately one battle is down.



Surrendering to the One Who Knows Best

Vinotoli, BD, Trinity Theological College, Dimapur

I grew up in a Christian family. As a child I was obedient and always had a feeling to go for theological studies. After completing my Bachelor of Arts I decided to step into the place which I have been dreaming for so

l o n g ,
hoping in
God that He
will help
me get
everything
right for
the things I



plan and wish for. After all, I am going to serve Him but never realize His will for me and the plan He had for me.

It was only when my name was wait listed to enter into the College for my theological studies. I was shocked because I was hoping so much that I will get admission in that College (Clerk Theological College.) Because I was so much into it, for one week I was frustrated and began to lose faith in God. I stopped praying and even began to complain to God, saying, "God, why did You do this to me? What have I done? I have been faithful to you and decided to serve you,

Testimonials



but now Why, God?" I did not know His best plan for me. That night my mom called me up, encouraging me to trust God, for He had a good plan for me. She asked me to get a form at Trinity Theological College, for she believed it would be the best for me. However, I told her I don't want to go for theological studies any more. I'll rather find a job some place. I even told her that if she wants she can pray but not to ask me to pray.

But at the end as my mother kept insisting, I went to TTC and got the form, and on 19th June 2010 I sat for entrance test. I got through the test and was given an admission. Nevertheless, I could not believe getting admission because I was not expecting it. I had not put any effort into it. Moreover, I was not happy to stay in TTC

because that was not my first choice.

I entered into the college on 1st July '10 with a heavy heart, thinking I will change the college next year. But slowly as I stay I begin to love the college, and my anger towards God slowly turn into trust. I realize God's immense love for me when I begin to involve in different kinds of college activities. I see His hand upon me guiding and leading me. I realize that God is molding me to stand firm in my faith in all kinds of circumstances.

From the moment I entered the college and till today I see God's goodness upon me. An introvert person who is shy and hardly talks, has changed tremendously.



The First Larger Consultation on North East Christian University (NECU), CBCNEI, Mission Compound

The First Larger Consultation on North East Christian University was held on August 2 at CBCNEI, Mission Compound. It was a historic gathering of more than 80 church leaders under CBCNEI led by our dynamic leader, the General Secretary, Rev Dr A.K. Lama. The leaders met for one day to deliberate on the NECU project. It was a fruitful gathering with leaders from all the conventions and associations uniting for one common purpose. It was a day long discussion and debate on various issues concerning the University. Rev Dr A. K. Lama presented a couple of insightful and informative papers on the development of the NECU project on the topics, **“Genesis and the Development of Concept,”** **“Setting the Stage for the Historical Consultation,”** **“A Summary of the Baptist Dream,”** and **“Corporate Ownership of NECU.”** Rev Dr L. Anjo Keikung presented a report on the topic, **“A Brief Report on the Development of the Northeast Christian University.”** He also brought some insightful proposals for the leaders to deliberate upon. Members of the core committee also gave a brief response. Rev Dr Kavito Zhimo, Principal, Trinity Theological College, the current President of the Council and also a member of the core committee gave a brief response beginning with a quote by Robert Schuler, **“Today’s Decision is tomorrow’s reality.”** He challenged the gathering as to whether the Baptist Churches under CBCNEI consider themselves as custodian of these great heritages left behind by the Missionaries? He further noted, **“What if we only eat the fruit with the seed**



and not plant? Successful leaders have the courage to take action while others hesitate.” He shared from his vast experiences as the first principal of Trinity Theological College, a college which developed from nothing to one of the most reputed colleges in India under Senate of Serampore under his able and dynamic leadership. Mr R. K. Raychawdhuri, General Secretary of ABC and a member of the core committee also made a brief response and observation. He commented that starting a Christian University will truly enlarge the vision of Baptist missionaries such as Miles Bronson, Pitt Holland Moore, Nathan Brown, E. W. Clarke and others. He emphasized that the participation of Conventions, Associations and Churches are paramount to start the university. He said, ***“God has laid a burden and responsibility to each one of us. If all of us join our hands, heart, mind and resources together, with the determination to make things happen, then NECU will see the light of day.”*** He concluded his response with a challenge, ***“Yes friends, the verdict is yours. What shall we choose?”*** The landmark progresses made by the core committee during the last few years were also presented to the audiences to be made known to their respective churches and associations. Some of the significant achievements of the NECU project are:

1. Passing of the Bill for the NECU: With the consent of the Honorable Chief Minister Shri Neiphiu Rio and Honorable Minister Higher Education Dr Shurhozielie Liezietsu the bill to this effect was passed in the September 2012 session of the State Legislative Assembly.

2. Exploring of Location for the Establishment of the University: The Honorable Chief Minister Shri Neiphiu Rio sanctioned to the appeal of the NECU core committee to aid in acquiring 100 acres of land by the State Government. Therefore a series of land survey was undertaken in Nagaland and finally on 28th December 2012 a land belonging to Medziphema Village earmarked for the establishment of Mahila Battalion Headquarters was surveyed. The committee considered this land as ideal and requested the Honorable Chief Minister to acquire the area of the NECU.

3. Meeting with the State Government Official: The Core Committee met at NBCC on 7th June 2013 to deliberate various needs of the University. Mr Deo Nukhu, Parliamentary Secretary of Higher Education, Government of Nagaland attended the meeting and discussed on how the Council and the State Government would co-operate to establish the University.

An offering as seed money was collected and a sum of Rs. 23,055 was collected from the leaders and kept as seed money for NECU. The consultation concluded with the framing of Resolutions and making few Recommendations to the Executive Committee. The Resolutions and Recommendations of the Consultation read as:

Resolutions:

We resolved to:

1. Reaffirm the project NECU.
2. Take up the leadership of ownership and support it all round.
3. Promote the project in our respective Churches, Associations and Convention.
4. Consider rising of funds in various ways as recommended by the steering committee/core committee.
5. Participate in the next NECU Consultation Meeting.

Recommendations

We recommend that:

1. The CBCNEI Day of Prayer on March 2014 (especially for NECU) be observed by all churches under CBCNEI family as a Prayer Sunday for NECU and the offering on that day be contributed towards the project. The Brochure of NECU will be printed by CBCNEI and distributed to all the churches through the associations (where translation in respective dialect is required the concerned association will be responsible to print out at its own expense.)
2. The Executive Committee of the CBCNEI to appoint person(s) to work as full time and head the NECU project as early as possible.
3. To form promotional committee from the conventions, associations to promote NECU project to the members.
4. To form finance committee, development committee, and academic committee to start with the work of the university as soon as possible.

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Come forth into the light of things, let nature be your teacher - William Wordsworth



“REDEMPTION: Pilate” Luke 23:1-25

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

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

(vs. 1) - “whole company” - chief priests, scribes, Sanhedrin. In 22:66-71 Jesus admitted that he was the Son of God, a blasphemous admission in their eyes, and this launched them into a rage. They could not inflict capital punishment so they took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor, who had the power to do this. “brought him before Pilate” - Pilate lived in Caesarea, about 70 miles away yet at Passover when pilgrims streamed to the temple and religious fervor ran high, he took residence there

in Jerusalem.

(vs. 2) - “began to accuse him”. The Romans did not consider blasphemy a crime at all. Thus these religious leaders tried to tell Pilate that Jesus was some kind of political subversive misleading the nation. Also:

opposes the payment of taxes to Caesar Claims to be Christ the king

(vs. 3) - “Are you the King of the Jews?”

Apparently this was the accu-

sation they leveled against Jesus. Pilate would not sentence Jesus to death on a religious issue, but would on a political one. The question he asked related to the official charge.

“You have said so” / “The statement is yours”

(vs. 4) - I find no guilt...case closed.

(vs. 5) - They continued to press and argue and mentioned Galilee.

(vs. 6-7) - Under Roman law a person could either be tried in the place where he was accused or in the province where he came from. Jesus was from Galilee and it just so happened that the ruler of Galilee, Herod, was in Jerusalem for Passover. Pilate can avoid taking responsibility and pass the buck to Herod!

(vs. 8) - Herod was thrilled to see Jesus because he wanted Jesus to put on an entertaining miracle show.

(vs. 9-11) - Interrogated Jesus at some length, made fun of him, ridiculed him yet Jesus said nothing. Put a king's robe

on him and sent him back to Pilate and said he could find no guilt in this man.

(vs. 13-15) - Now Pilate brings all the parties together and involves the crowd.

There is no private meeting, no back room deals. Everything is done in the open. Pilate tells the crowd that both he and Herod agree that Jesus was innocent. He certainly had not done anything to deserve the death penalty. Pilate declares Jesus innocent of all charges.

(vs. 16) - Pilate goes for a compromise: flog Jesus a little and send him on his way and warn him to be more careful in the future.

(vs. 17) - Some manuscripts - “Now he was obliged to release one man to them at the festival.” In Matthew 27:15 it is clearly stated.

In Mark 15:8 seems this is something Pilate has done in the past. “And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them.”

(vs. 18-19) - Barabbas - an insurrectionist and a mur-

derer.

(vs. 20) - Seemed Pilate was trying to save Jesus. Why? He knew Jesus was innocent and his innocence had been corroborated by Herod. Pilate feared what might happen if he gave in. Plus:

Matthew 27:19, “Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.”

(vs. 21-22) - Tries to save Jesus a third time.

(vs. 23) - “urgent and demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified” -

Why were the crowds so vehement about Jesus being crucified?

In Mark 15:11 - “chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead” - How did they stir up the crowd?

A pro-insurrectionist like Barabbas could be made to be the hero. With their power and influence they could whip up

the crowd to support the man who stood up against Rome. What a contrast to the Jesus who was viewed as this pacifist who said to turn the other cheek and to love your enemies.

John 19:12, “The Jews cried out, ‘If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.’ - political blackmail!

Pilate could not risk allowing a threat to Rome nor could he handle a riot. He had a blemished record in his dealings with Palestine and he did not need another incident.

So he did what so many politicians do, took a poll rather than stick to convictions. Though he had withstood the Sanhedrin two times, he gave in when the tide of popular opinion cried out for Jesus’ crucifixion.

“And their voices prevailed” - (vs. 24) - **“So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted.”** - Pilate decided to satisfy the crowd, so he rationalized in order to settle his conscience and had Jesus

flogged and then crucified.

(vs. 25) - Tragic irony is that a convicted murderer is set free and in his place, the innocent Son of God is condemned to death. In this prisoner exchange, there is a reflection of the substitutionary understanding of atonement. This is redemption.

Jesus died for Barabbas yet the purpose of Jesus' death is to take the place, not just of one condemned man, but of all who stand condemned before God's perfect standard of justice.

Everyone agrees that it is not fair for Barabbas, a murderer, to go free and Jesus to die. Take Barabbas away and put yourself in his place.

Understanding the holiness of God and his perfect standard of justice, who deserves punishment, to die? Me! However, Jesus went to the cross in our stead. He bore our sins, our penalty of separation from God, and provides a way to make us free from the shackles of sin.

I. "What shall I do with Jesus?"

What will you decide to do with Jesus? Pilate is not alone; we all have a decision to make about Jesus.

1. Affects your eternal destination (John 3:16; John 14:6)

Jesus' crucifixion is our justification; his condemnation is our pardon; his bondage is our release. This is the gospel: Jesus dying in your place, as your substitute, suffering the death that you deserved to die. As your substitute, He took all your sins upon himself, and then gave you his life and righteousness.

What then will you do with Jesus? Will you say, "Away with this man" as Pilate said? If so, then you will die in your sins.

You cannot delegate this one. No one else can make this decision for you. It is your choice.

2. Affects your life's direction

- Abundant, fulfilling life

- Light on a hill showing others the love of God

- Hunger and thirst for righteousness / Serving others

- Living to impact others for eternity

- Fulfilling the purpose for which you were created

- Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control

II. "And their voices prevailed"

1. Satisfying the crowd causes you to compromise convictions

Pilate was being torn with what decision to make. Whenever he would lean towards his conscience or convictions he would hear those two or three voices: Roman law, Herod, wife saying Jesus is innocent. But then that would be followed by a chorus of multiple voices (religious leaders and the crowd) telling him the opposite.

He had several opportunities to make the right decision but he failed.

Although Jesus was innocent according to Roman law, Pilate caved in to political pressure and the pressure of the crowd. He abandoned what he knew to be right. He had no good excuse to condemn Jesus, but

he was afraid of the crowd. So he decided to satisfy the crowd.

Many voices are calling out to us. Media, peers, culture, entertainment. If you are a follower of Jesus your conscience and convictions tell you these are wrong but the voices are so persistent.

You start with a compromise ("I will beat him and then let him go...that should satisfy them). But the voices will not be silenced until they have achieved total victory. And when the voices prevail in one situation, they then speak up in another situation. The voices cannot stand God's Word because it is not accepting of their lifestyles and their immoral choices. Not enough to get a few victories...there must be an all-out assault to remove any influence of the Word of God. Any remnants remaining of God's Word will always point out the wrongness of their position and the voices will not tolerate that.

When we lay aside God's clear statements of right and wrong and make decisions based on

the preferences of the unbelieving crowd and culture, we fall into compromise and lawlessness and fall farther from the principles we stand for.

God promises to honor those who do right, not those who make everyone happy.

2. Satisfying the crowd gives you a false sense of security

In Matthew's gospel, Pilate takes a basin of water washes his hands and says, "I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your responsibility."

Did not work!! Still his responsibility. Using the crowd as an excuse for your actions is not acceptable. Each one of us is accountable for whether we accept or reject Jesus and whether we follow Him or forsake Him.

As a pastor and leader God will hold you responsible for how you led your church. Did you stand on the Word of God or did you listen to the voices of those who have the most political influence or those who have the most financial re-

sources? Did you stay consistent with the truths of Scripture or did you listen to those who had personal agendas? You are the pastor, the leader, the shepherd of the church and God will hold you responsible and will not accept the excuse "the crowd pushed me to this decision." If God gives you a pass then He will have to give Pilate a pass.

3. Satisfying the crowd produces damaging results

For Pilate, he condemned an innocent man to death. For you it could be:

A loss of respect

A loss of integrity

A loss of a marriage

A loss of a relationship with your children

A loss of your ministry

A loss of life

So how will you answer life's most important question: What shall I do with Jesus?

Will you accept or will you reject? Will you follow or will you forsake?



The 16th Baptist Youth World Conference (July 17 - 21)

The Baptist Youth World Conference was held at the Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre, Singapore. A large number of Baptist members from CBCNEI family attended the Conference. Denise de Vasconcelos Araujo, the first female president of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Youth Department, 2008, extended her welcome to all the delegates, including Lawrence Wong, Singapore's Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth. Members from more than 60 countries represented their respective

churches. BWA General Secretary, Neville Callam, urged the youths "to defy the destructive secularism that seeks to push religious faith to the fringes of society" and to "let the world know the undeniable truth that faith in Jesus Christ is alive and well." Bible study presenter, Christian Rommert, encouraged the youth by noting that "life in Christ is not about rules or systems, but about relationships."

Rachael Tan, a conference Bible study leader, stooped on stage and washed the feet of one of the delegates. She



drew attention to the power behind Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet, recounted in John's gospel. Tan questioned as to, "Why would Jesus, the greatest of all, do such a lowly task?"

She then answered by saying that, "It is because Jesus loved them and showed them the full extent of his love." The remarkable thing, Tan pointed out, was that Jesus washed the feet of those who would deny and betray him. "Did he also wash the feet of Peter even if he knew that a few hours later this same Peter would deny him three times? Did he also wash the feet of Judas whom the Lord knew would eventually betray him with a kiss? Yes, every single one of them."

On July 20, the focus was on "Mission Outreach." A majority of the delegates helped pack more than 250,000 meals from supplies provided by Stop Hunger Now, to fill two 20ft containers for distribution in Asia.



The delegates gathered in the Global Village for interaction and cultural exchanges. The Village comprises exhibition booths, a "fringe stage" for youth to display their artistic talents, and a social media center where they can upload and share media content while conference events stream live.

The participation of some members from Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) was quite impressive. Vesekhoyi "Vee" Tetseo, led a four-minute set playing the theme song "REACH," an original composition by Tetseo. Joey Woch, a classical guitarist from Nagaland, enlightened the congregation with his delightful piece. Mr Colo Mero, director of Life Sports, Life Ministry, Kohima, Nagaland, presented a paper on 'Using Sports as a Ministry.'

OBITUARY



Rev Sellitha N. Sangma, passed away on 14th August at Dispur Polyclinic Hospital, Guwahati following an illness. She was the Women Secretary of the Garo Baptist Convention and also the President of the Baptist Women

Fellowship of NEI. Her body was brought to the CBCNEI, Mission Compound where a brief prayer was conducted, led by Rev Dr Jolly Rimai, Mission Secretary, in the presence of CBCNEI staff and families. She is survived by her husband Rev Krusbelt G. Momin and a son Jakindil N. Sangma.

The CBCNEI family mourns her sudden demise. It is indeed a great loss to CBCNEI family. We extend our



sincere condolences to the bereaved family.

FORTH-COMING CBCNEI TRAINING PROGRAMS

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

| Sl. No. | Dates | Training / Workshop / Seminar | Venue |
|---------|-------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Oct 1 - 4, 2013 | Celebrate Recovery | CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati |
| 2 | Oct 10 - 13, 2013 | Family Enrichment Seminar | CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati |
| 3 | Nov 14 - 17, 2013 | Sunday School Teachers Training | CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati |
| 4 | Nov 20, 22, 2013 | Church Music Seminar | CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati |
| 5 | Nov 26 - 29, 2013 | Exegetical Preaching & Biblical Seminar | CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati |
| 6 | Feb 7 - 9, 2014 | Finance Management & FCRA Training | CBCNEI Conference Centre, Guwahati |
| 7 | Mar 11 - 14, 2014 | Lay Leaders and Pastor's Conference | CBCNEI, Guwahati |
| 8 | Mar 26 - 29, 2014 | Youth Leaders Conference | CBCNEI, Guwahati |

New Appointment



CBCNEI welcomes Mr Biplap Gogoi, Mrs Sangeeta Paul Gogoi and their seven month old baby Master Gouravjuty to our family. Mr Biplap joined the Council as a campus electrician.



*An Abstract of the thesis on
the topic:*

“The Role of the Press in Communicating Climate Justice.”

T. Letkholal Haokip belongs to Thadou-Kuki tribe from T. Champhai Village, Manipur. He was sponsored by CBCNEI for M. Th Communication. He recently completed his studies from Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai. The CBCNEI family could like to extend our heartfelt congratulation for the successful completion of his studies. The Baptist News team is pleased to publish an abstract of his thesis.

The research focus mainly on the contemporary climate change, causes & its impacts in the world, especially in Manipur and the role played by the newspapers in communicating the message of climate justice to the people in Manipur. It also highlights the biblical and theological approaches for just and harmony of ecology in the society. The research is sub-divided into five areas.

Firstly, the beginnings of the World Press, Indian Press and Press in Manipur are described in the initial chapter of the research. The research also

summarizes the functions and roles undertaken by the Indian Press. Further, highlighting how the press began and how it constitutes to the communication of news to the people of the world and India particularly in Manipur. At the same time, the development of Journalism from the very beginning up to the present stage in Manipur is dealt with.

Secondly, the present changing ecological scenario in the world and the horrible climate situation happening in India are highlighted in the second chapter. The endless practiced culture of dependency on nat-

ural resources by human beings had seriously disturbed the peaceful co-existence of the environmental prosperity. In the meantime, the wave of globalization and the overuse of natural resources due to the increasing demands of people and the growth of the population too disturbed the integrity of ecosystems all over the world especially in India.

Thirdly, it deals briefly with the history of an environmental harmonious living. The people of Manipur once enjoyed the natural resources with an adequate food and water supply for livelihood but now it is in the position of starvation due to the introduction of modern technology and the subsequent rise of human interference to the ecology. It has brought serious discrimination among the poor rural people and rich valley people to a great extent. More importantly gender discrimination and segregation between men and women leaving behind thousands of people unemployment, poverty and migration from rural to metropolitan cities because of climate change is briefly illus-

trated in third chapter.

Fourthly, in this situation of ecological crisis and climate injustice in State, the research focus on the efforts made by the newspapers of the state for communicating and educating the message of climate justice to the people in Manipur. The research critically analyzed one month's newspaper circulation as to how far the concern and care of the ecology is shown in the local newspapers today.

Fifthly, the thesis looks at the Christian principles of upholding the integrity of God's creation and establishing healthy relationships with fellow beings of the earth aiming to promote green theology and uphold values of take care of the earth. It also deals with the role of the churches and Christian leaders in taking a proactive stand by promoting awareness about climate justice to the people in Manipur in line with the Biblical and theological approach to be taken by churches and newspapers.

Lastly, in the concluding re-

mark, some of the findings and suggestions are given in which the churches, society, the theological institutions and the newspapers should take up in the course of fighting for ecological crisis in the state.

Findings: a) The Newspapers is not dedicating their services properly in educating the people regarding issues of climate change and its problems.

b) The churches, civil societies, government and the elites are not yet fully aware of the impacts of climate change and not dedicated to their services for the welfare of climate justice and ecological harmony. Their mission towards eco-harmony is still not up to the requirement of the people in Manipur.

Suggestions: a) The newspapers need to communicate and include the issues of climate change in the news items regularly.

b) The churches and people are encouraged to start regular training programs and workshop on the issues of eco-justice to the entire congregation in the pastorate/dioceses in the state.

c) The churches are encouraged to use Green Bible translation version to increase awareness about eco-crisis and climate change to the church members to increase more care and concern to the environmental crisis.

d) The people are encouraged to use e-journal communication in the state.



Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better- Albert Einstein



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