

# Baptist News

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CHURCHES IN NORTH EAST  
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# Editorial



## Together Towards Creation Care.

Christmas comes again! The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. John 1:1-3 says, “In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” This is the resonant voice of Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Jesus was not only present at creation but he was the agent of creation. Everything that exists owes its existence to the Word. He is the creator. Apart from Him, there is no existence. He came down to become flesh and dwelt among His creation. This is to say that He became creation in order to save His creation, the world. Jesus came into this earth to save the world because he loves His creation. Thus God cares for His creation and He has commanded His children to care for the creation.

When we say “environment”, it is usually referred to the physical nature both living and non-living that surrounds us. To care about the balancing of ecology and everything that is on earth is thus a plain common sense. Therefore, when we speak of ecology, we are referring to the relationships between living organisms, and between those organisms and the environment in which they live. Reframing our concern in terms of ecology reminds us that we human beings are interdependent with other living beings on this planet. As Christians, we should care about the environment not simply because it is the place we dwell, but because it is the shared home of all God’s creation and we should express this care by as a responsible stewards of God’s creation on earth.

The theme for this issue “Together Towards Creation Care” particularly suggest why people, especially Christians, should be more concerned about caring mother earth and everything God had created. Why we as Christians should care about the environment any more or less than anyone on the planet? Creation is a gift from God and provides us with the basics for our lives, yet it can so easily and so often be taken for granted. We should remember that we all are stewards on earth. Being environmental stewards consists of discovering how properly we understand the relationship between cyclical processes and linear developments, present in both nature and human , so that they coexist harmoniously, and direct us toward the ultimate goal , which is God himself. At times while we greatly value the human and spiritual aspects we tend to ignore the

nonhuman and materials with which we live. Devaluing of it all has resulted in a legacy of disastrous ecological impact. Christians, therefore, should critically examine and study how we are living and see how it has influenced our relationship with the rest of Creation. When we read Genesis 1, we see how God lovingly created the heavens and the earth, filling them with all manner of plants and animals. God creates everything and puts Adam in the Garden to work it and to take care of it. It is clear that man was created to work and that work is the stewardship of all of the creation that God has given him. To humankind God gave the unique task of stewarding this wondrous creation. To see ourselves as stewards of God's creation implies that we know best what the creation needs to flourish. Although in this vocation of sharing in God's rule and creation, humankind is distinct from plants and other animals, God nevertheless created us as part of the community of creation. Sadly, we sought authority from God's providential care, and over powered the entire creation and the created order has suffered as a consequence.

We were entrusted by God to take care of the earth because mankind was made a steward but we have not done so. After creation "God saw everything he had made. And it was very good. There was evening, and there was morning. It was day six" (Gen 1:31) but today if you look around much of the earth it is anything but good. We are desecrating and destroying the earth to extract wealth in the form of minerals, gas, oil, and precious metals and gems, leaving behind a wake of devastation and ruin. God will hold us accountable for how we treat the earth because He created it good but evil has overrun the earth and "we know that the whole creation has been groaning together" (Rom 8:22) since then. Let us all re-assess our actions towards Mother nature and re-built our relation by strengthening our faith towards the great responsibility given to us all by God. Let us show our Love and respect to God through our stewardship of creation. Caring for the environment is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith.

We have a responsibility towards caring the ecological diversity, beauty and life-sustaining properties. Together, we must hold it in trust for future generations.

We the CBCNEI family extends our warmest Christmas greetings and wish you a very Happy 2017.



Rev Dr Solomon Rongpi  
General Secretary, CBCNEI

# CHRISTMAS:

## Window on forgiveness

One morning, as I browsed through my Facebook account, I came across a powerful story of forgiveness by Barbara Diamond. She wrote, *“In 1990, Ian Manuel was a 13-year-old boy who lived in a violent housing project in Tampa, Florida. One night, a mother-of-two named Debbie Baigrie was out with her girlfriends when Ian and his friends attempting to mug her. Ian shot Debbie in the mouth, knocking out her bottom teeth and gums, and ripping her tongue. Miraculously, she survived.*

*Days later, Ian was arrested in an unrelated case and admitted to shooting Debbie. Wanting to make an example out of Ian, the judge sentenced him to life without parole.*

*Nearly two years later, Ian mustered up the strength to call Debbie from prison during the holiday season. “Miss Baigrie, this is Ian,” he said. “I’m just calling to tell you I’m sorry for shooting you, and I wish you and your family a merry Christmas.”*

*Debbie was struck by the fact Ian was so young and troubled, yet he personally called her to apologize. Soon after their initial call, Ian began sending Debbie letters from behind bars. He wrote about his time in prison, his difficult upbringing, and his mom, dad and brother who all died while he was in jail.*

*Realizing Ian was an intelligent, articulate and remorseful child, Debbie began writing him back. “Let’s not waste this life,” she thought. “Let’s give him a chance.”*

*As the pair developed a friendship, Debbie realized she believed Ian didn’t actually deserve the severe punishment he received.*

*She even attended his court hearings and worked to lessen his sentence. On November 10, 2016, Ian was released from prison at the age of 39.”*

For me, this Christmas is all about forgiveness. I met many young people this year who were caught in the web of unforgiveness.

There are many families and individuals who might not have a happy and joyous Christmas this year due to lack of forgiveness from an offended spouse, family member, colleague or friend. Jesus said: *“In prayer there is a connection between what God does and what you do. You can’t get forgiveness from God, for instance, without also forgiving others. If you refuse to do your part, you cut yourself off from God’s part.”* (Matthew 6:14-15, MSG).

No matter what the offense maybe, it is a commandment that we forgive one another. Forgiveness is not easy. When someone hurts us, that pain can almost be overwhelming. It can feel as if the pain or the injustice is the most important thing in the world and that we have no choice but to seek vengeance. It can be very difficult to forgive someone, the harm they have done us, but when we forgive, we open ourselves up to a better future as it frees us to choose how we live our own lives. Forgiveness means that problems of the past no longer dictate our destinies. And we can focus on the future with God’s love in our hearts. The best part is that someone else’s wrong doing does not control our lives.

What better time would there be to give the gift of forgiveness to one who has wronged you than at Christmas time? What better time would there be for us to heal a family with forgiveness than at Christmas time—when it is so badly needed?

*“Forgiveness is a process, not an event. Unforgiveness - or lack of forgiveness - is nothing short of life threatening. So if you want to live a long and fulfilling life, I would encourage you to find forgiveness as a way of life. Forgiveness does not include a lack of consequence for the perpetrator, and forgiveness is not no longer*

*feeling pain. If a victim waits until the pain is gone before granting forgiveness, it might take a very long time to ever forgive a person. It is not about pretending that unacceptable behaviour is, in fact, acceptable. We do not condone the wrong. The wrong is a wrong, and we forgive in full knowledge that we have been wronged and that we deserve better treatment.”* (Dr. Frank Fincham)

Forgiving someone who has hurt you deeply will probably be one of the hardest things you will ever do. The freedom that you will feel when you finally forgive will be worth all the pain and effort it requires. This forgiveness can only come with the help of the Lord.

It was Gandhi who said, *“The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.”* The story of the Prodigal Son is a wonderful example of repentance from wrongdoing, forgiveness, and mercy, as the father welcomed home his son who *“was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.”* The miracle of forgiveness!

Jesus Christ, while spending His last hours on this earth, uttered those humble and powerful words of forgiveness on the cross that you and I will never forget: *“Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them; they don’t know what they’re doing.”* (Luke 23:34, MSG).

My prayer is that this Christmas you will be able to release forgiveness and find freedom.

*“Two friends were walking through the desert. During some point of the journey they had an argument; and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, wrote in the sand: “today my best friend slapped me in the face.”*

*They kept on walking until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning, but the friend saved him. After he recovered from the near drowning, he wrote on a stone: “today my best friend saved my life.”*

*The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him, “after I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now you write on a stone, why? The friend replied, when someone hurts us we should write it down in sand, where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it. ‘Learn to write your hurts in the sand and to carve your blessings in stone’.* (INTERNET, no author name mentioned)

As we celebrate the birth of our Saviour, let our focus be on Him, and may we pattern our lives after His.

May God bless us this Christmas time as we take the opportunity to extend to those who may have offended or hurt us in any way our gift of forgiveness. May we also seek the gift of forgiveness from those whom we may have hurt or offended. As we do this, families will heal, relationships will mend, and miracles will happen. Let us all lighten each other’s load by sharing our gifts of forgiveness to all those in need of it. May we also find peace that will come to us as we sincerely hand out our gifts this Christmas time!



*Mr Sentiningsang Longkumer, National Director, Beyond Border Initiative*



# Doing Eco-centred Mission in the Context of Development in North East India

*An excerpt from the paper “Development in North East India: A Missional Response from Ecology Perspective” presented by Dr Lovely James Awomi, Associate Professor, Eastern Theological College, Jorhat during the Mission Leadership Consultation ( Together Towards Life) jointly organized by CBCNEI & WCC.*

## **Integration of Biblical and Tribal Creation-centred Traditions for Ecological Mission**

Many tribal Christians today find it humorous if not ridiculous when we talk about the church’s role toward the natural environment and conservation of biodiversity in the region. Our revered ecological traditions have long been forgotten and even lost for many in this generation. What they know and believe in is the present world – with a consumeristic, human-centred view of the world. They find it a waste of their time as well as ours, in trying to create awareness about the urgent necessity to go back to our roots, to re-read the Bible from the perspective of the marginalized creation, to discover the God of all creation, God’s mission for the healing and redemption of all creation, and, the theological basis for the interconnectedness of all life forms. Seriously speaking, some even believe that the present theological teachers and students are trying to introduce a false teaching in the church and in the life of the faithful believers! They still hold on to the teaching that humans are the ‘crowned’ beings, the very ‘image’ of God and that there cannot be any compromise to that divinely-elevated position of the humans – the world of creation being there only for the service of

the humans (the arena or the platform created by God for His/Her beloved people). Many have still to be woken up, to take a really closer look around and to be helped to realize the intrinsic link that we have with one another – humans and the world of nature.

On the other hand still, few churches have been innovative in recognizing the link between the well being of humanity and the well being of the natural environment. They have begun to move ahead in participating in God’s mission for the whole creation – God’s mission toward the inclusion and care of creation. Efforts have already begun to sprout and give fruits. For example, the eco-centred mission of the Phom Baptist Christian Association (PBCA) initially set out as Peace Mission for and amongst the human communities but gradually expanded it to encompass the whole of creation – as peace mission to all creation. Under the umbrella of their peace mission to the entire creation, they engage sustainable development plans, strategies and their implementation. They give serious attention to the programmes of balanced human and ecological development.<sup>1</sup>

We should integrate the biblical and tribal principles in our mission toward the integrity of all creation. The Bible is very rich in its teaching concerning the intimate relation between human development and ecological development and their prosperity. The Old Testament in particular “gives us a clear vision about God and creation.”<sup>2</sup> Psalm 24 clearly states that the Earth and everything (everyone) who lives in it belong to God – that all, everyone is part of His/Her amazing, loving and therefore worthwhile creation. Psalm 148 likewise clearly directs us to ‘care for’ and look after the wellbeing of God’s whole creation and to see that all, in harmony and peace rejoice, celebrate and live together. Genesis 1:31 testifies to the truth that everything that God has created was ‘good’; Psalm 8:1-4 and Psalm 19:2 say that creation glorifies its Creator. It is on humans’ account that the creation was brought to its fallen state (Genesis 3:17-19). Romans 8:19-23 likewise

tells us that creation together with humanity await the healing and redemption of God - the final redemption from its bondage of sin and decay. Our mission toward the integrity of creation should also recognize and incorporate the Sabbath and Jubilee Laws wherein the Lord God commands his people to move away from human-centred confines of life to a creation-caring understanding of life or of reality (Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Exodus 23:10-12; Leviticus 25:1-7; Leviticus 25:8-17). This way our mission could become instrumental in promoting a balanced way of life, about justice in his land, about care and respect toward one another and about the importance of giving space for all creation to understand and respect the need to rest, conserve and promote life for themselves and for future prosperity.<sup>3</sup> All of these biblical principles could be meaningfully explored and integrated into our church's mission statement for the integrity of creation.

Next, our tribal culture with rich creation-centred traditions and values should be re-affirmed in our mission statement aimed for the whole of creation. In my understanding, tribals/indigenous communities and their world could serve as the most ideal model for humans-creation integrity mission. Tribals are deeply eco-centric communities – tribals need the world of creation and the world of creation needs the tribals. Call it preposterous on my part but that is how I view it (consider the of-late global interest and attention upon the tribal/indigenous peoples and cultures with a view to draw eco-restorative resources for the healing of entire world of creation). The Earth is our mother, the natural environment our home and her rich resources our sustenance and we derive and define our identity, our culture and our livelihood all from her. We cannot do or cannot be without the world of nature. Likewise, she cannot be, cannot thrive, sustain and prosper without us tribals. “Of course she can!” would be and should be our response but consider the world we are in today. Can she escape the onslaught and ever-increasing exploitation and destruction of her resources from the capitalist development demands, consumeristic and globalized market greed? Supposedly not! It is in this regard that mission in the indigenous communities perspective can help protect, preserve and conserve the life of

the world of creation.

## **Redefining Spirituality from the Margins Perspective: A Holistic Perspective**

Wati Longchar defines spirituality as “the deeper dimension of the socio-ethical principle that touches the life of a community and governs it.”<sup>4</sup> He beautifully drew out the cosmic-centric perception of spirituality of the indigenous communities, identifying and building upon the creation-centred essence and model of indigenous spirituality with the Mother Earth, the land as the central place or ground of defining spirituality. Spirituality should be re-defined in Christian mission if we want to participate and contribute toward God’s mission in the wider and holistic context. Working on a human-centred spirituality at the expense of the world of creation will not yield any meaningful impact upon anyone concerned for, our existence, our lives are all interconnected and interdependent, woven together in an intricate web of relationships. Indigenous spirituality is intimately woven around the holistic understanding of God-humans and the world of creation.<sup>5</sup> Such spirituality is transformative spirituality – a spirituality that “motivates us to serve the common good, embolden us to stand against all forms of marginalization, seeks the redemption of the whole earth, resists life-destroying values and inspires us to discover innovative alternatives.”<sup>6</sup> This can hugely contribute toward the development of creation-centred spirituality for today and tomorrow.

As such, spirituality from the margins would mean spirituality from the tribal and ecological perspective. This tribal-ecological spirituality is inclusive, encompassing, connecting, returning, uniting and celebrating spirituality. Tribals are known for their close relationship with the world of creation – they recognize and celebrate the spiritual essence of every member of God’s creation – the trees, the rivers, the rocks, the land and the creatures. They also see the divine manifest itself in all of the natural phenomena.<sup>7</sup> For them everything, every life form have meaning and value, having their spirit within and are all spiritually connected to one another. Their spirituality is holistic – built upon the con-

cept of cosmic oneness – in which all members of the world of creation (including humanity), form a complete whole. The spirituality of mission should be built upon this holistic concept, motivated and targeted toward the healing and restoration of all creation of God.

### **Mission toward Affirming Sustainable and Holistic Nature of Development**

Coming to the subject of sustainable development in the context of our region, the mission of the church has a very great role to contribute. Sustainable development covers a wide scope for the restoration, sustenance, survival and prosperity of the whole of God’s creation – humans and non-humans. Even school children have begun to learn the basic meaning of sustainable development as a development process that does not harm or damage the natural environment. The emphasis is upon the wellbeing of the natural world. This teaches us something about the seriousness of the life-threatening consequences of human-centred model of developments. Willis Jenkins defines sustainable development as “the emerging moral discourse for balancing commitments to promote human dignity, economic opportunity, and environmental protection.”<sup>8</sup> From an eco-centred missiological perspective, and according to the Anglican representatives of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, the term ‘development’ in the “sustainable development” has even been replaced by ‘community’ which is to be read as “sustainable community” instead of “sustainable development,” to note “that their commitments integrate sustainability not by reference to principles of economic growth but within the shape of authentic community.”<sup>9</sup> This is seen as an ideal path to integrate the ethics of sustainability and practices of reconciliation for purpose of God’s mission of uniting the whole of creation.

Mission toward promoting sustainable development in North East Indian context should mobilize people and their skills toward communal (read as community) participation in development work. The church should take initiative in supporting sustainable developmental processes that could benefit all participants – humans and non-human natural en-

vironment. However, for a sustainable development to take place, the mission of the church has to first address the issues of poverty, poor and corrupt governance, ethnic conflicts, social and economic disparities, unemployment, greed, bribery, exploitation of natural resources etc. The church could teach and encourage people to become agents of change and transformation – to live honest, corruption-free life, to respect honesty and simplicity, to check corruption, to access legal information and provisions for their safety and security etc. Above all, mission toward sustainable development in tribal context cannot be fruitful without the integration of some of the meaningful traditional values and practices. In this regard, the church should be a prophetic leader and teacher in taking initiative to help reclaim those aspects of traditional development model. In the words of Kavito Zhimo, the tribals had always been

*...willing to join hands to dig common wells, work together in the fields, maintain proper footpaths (to the fields and village links), construct houses together and clear and clean village surroundings. The communal life of equality, freedom of expression, respect of elders, collective decision-making and the spirit of work culture need to be revived. The traditional community bonds of CLF that are rooted in culture, religion and socio-economic development could aspire every individual to be committed to working for a better quality of life for all.<sup>10</sup>*

Developmental plans and strategies can never work to benefit the tribals without engaging themselves in the processes. They alone will know what their needs are and how best to go about it. Besides, any developmental plans that neglect or are devoid of people's cultures, traditions and their natural environment will not be meaningful or successful.

For our churches to be missional in our North East Indian context and within the struggle for socio-economic development, we have to shift our mission paradigm toward the integrity of the peoples and their natural environment – the entire world of creation of which humans (tribals)

form a part. We should allow the Holy Spirit to move our churches and us to work for the sustenance, protection and prosperity of the entire creation.<sup>11</sup> Our churches mission should encompass within its scope the plight of the tribals – their survival challenges, their identity crisis, their feelings of hopelessness and despair in the face of the dominant worldview and lifestyles and its incompatible scales of demands – and the plight of the ecological environment – the exploitation and senseless destruction of the environment and its life-giving and life-sustaining resources all in the name of development. For participating and fulfilling God’s holistic mission, the church should welcome the Spirit of God to empower, lead and guide its mission to reach out to the entire suffering household of God – Creation and its members. Mission that focuses only upon humanity or only upon the otherworldly aspect of salvation will never fulfil God’s mission simply because our God is the God of all creation and God’s salvation is meant for the whole likewise. In order to partake of, or in, ‘the feast of life’ the church must first commit its mission to actively become prophetic agents in eradicating the forces and structures of exploitation, destruction and division in the human society and in healing and restoring the natural world, which together forms the greater household of God.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Nuklu Phom, “Bio-Diversity Conservation in Longleng District,” in Takatemjen, ed., *Challenges of Land Development in Nagaland: Selected Papers, Essays and Columns* (Mokokchung: CCPRA, 2015), 251-267.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Evangeline Pua, “Barefoot Theology: Building a Theology of Climate Justice and Economy of Life,” in *The Ecumenical Review: Economy of Life*, a WCC publication, 67.2 (July 2015), 271.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Lovely Awomi James, “Church and Creation: Church’s Responsibility toward Creation,” an unpublished Bible Study presented at the 61st Annual General Meeting of CBCNEI at Imphal on 24 – 27 April 2016, 8.

<sup>4</sup>A. Wati Longchar, *Returning to Mother Earth: Theology, Christian Witness and Theological Education: An Indigenous Perspective* (Tainan, Taiwan: PTCA, 2012), 19.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Lovely Awomi James, “Indigenous Spirituality: Insights for a Life-Affirming and Life-Sustaining Economy of Life,” in *The Ecumenical Review: Economy of Life*, a WCC publication, 67.2 (July 2015), 203-207.

<sup>6</sup>Rogate R. Mshana and Athena Peralta, eds., *Economy of Life: Linking Poverty, Wealth and Economy* (Geneva: WCC, 2013), 3.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Ignacimuthu, SJ, *Environmental Spirituality* (Mumbai: ST PAULS, 2010), 44.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Willis Jenkins, "Missiology in Environmental Context: Task for an Ecology of Mission," in <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2008-04/2008-04-176-jenkins.pdf>, 7 (25.08.2016). (Hereafter cited as Jenkins, *Missiology in Environmental Context*).

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Jenkins, *Missiology in Environmental Context*, 8.

<sup>10</sup>Kavito Zhimo, *The Naga Communal Labour Force: An Alternative Model of Communication and Development* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2012), 183-184.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Stephen Bevans SVD, "Together Towards Life: Reflections on the Proposed WCC Mission Statement," in [http://www.cmsm.org/forum/pdf/forum\\_fall13\\_WCC\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.cmsm.org/forum/pdf/forum_fall13_WCC_Statement.pdf), 7 (17.08.2016), 2.



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Last date of Application submission: **February 10, 2017**

Interview date will be inform through the contact number / email address provided.

**Note :** Job Requirements and Application Forms can be downloaded from: [www.cbcnei.in](http://www.cbcnei.in)

# The Significance of Christmas

The basic significance of Christmas message is the announcement that God, the almighty creator of the universe, has come into the world in the form of a person whose birth name is Jesus. This is the news of God's incarnation in human flesh. The primary and most important gift is God's gift of "*his one and only Son*" (John 3:16) whom he sent into the world "*to save the world*" (John 3:17).

**The following points are some of the significance of Christmas**

- 1. To give Eternal Life** (John 3:16 & 1John 5:11)
- 2. To save the world** (John 3:17, Matthew 1: 21 & Luke 2:11)
- 3. To be with us, Immanuel** (Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23)
- 4. To Redeem and adopt to His son/daughter ship** ( Galatians 4:5)
- 5. To Forgive our sin** (Eph. 1:7)
- 6. To give Peace among us**(Isaiah 9:6 & Luke 2:13-14)
- 7. To give Joy and Happiness to the world**(Luke 1:14 & Zechariah 9:9)
- 8. As a Perfect Gift** (James 1:17)
- 9. To give Light into the World** (John 8:12 & John 1:9)

There can be no "*peace*" on earth or real "*joy*" in a human's heart, apart from the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The gifts of these blessings through the birth of Jesus Christ is worth celebrating and the sharing of God's love to the world is worth repeating over in gifts and contributions, but we Christians need to make sure that our Christmas celebrations are for the glory of God and nothing else; certainly not for the worship of worldly decoration, material gift, delicious food etc.

But what is the real meaning of Christmas? Is it the gifts under the tree, the lights in the windows, the cards in the mail, dinners with family and friends, decorations in the living room, and shouts of “Merry Christmas” to those who pass us in the streets? Is this really Christmas?

Yet, Christmas can be a season of great joy. It is a time of God showing His great love for us. It can be a time of healing and renewal of strength and our faith. Christmas is the celebration of the birth day of Christ. God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to be born. His birth brought great joy to the world. But, for many people, Christmas is a time of sorrow. They don’t have the extra money to buy presents for their children, family, and friends. Many are saddened at Christmas time when they think of their loved ones who will not be able to come home for various reasons.

Many who are excitedly preparing for their Christmas celebrations would prefer not knowing about the holiday’s real significance. “We are just having fun.” Therefore, let us prepare our heart and celebrate Christmas to receive Jesus Christ into our heart. Let us not celebrate Christmas just for fun and merry making.

**Wishing you a very Joyous Christmas 2016 and Happy New Year 2017**



*D. Hriini Zho, Asst. to the Secretary of Justice & Peace Ministries, CBCNEI, Guwahati*



# Claims Of Superiority Over Others Lead To Violence

*Bible reflection from Hebrews 2 & 3*

*Wati Longchar*

The whole world witnessed US election. Donald Trump won. Many people were shocked hearing Trump's victory. All predictions, opinions and exit polls analyses proved to be wrong. Trump's victory has not only stunned American political establishment, but also the entire world. Similar unexpected Brexit happened in UK in June this year. With the ideologies of hyper-nationalism, cultural and religious conservatism, we have seen the political power capturing in Eastern Europe, Philippines, Russia, India, China and some countries in Africa and Latin America by the right-wing populist politicians in recent years. One economist commended that the resurgence of right-wing populist political movement is due to failure of globalization and free market system. A vast majority of working class, farmers are not left to struggle for their survival while a few have become very rich. All those populist political leaders advocate ideology of protectionism. This is our country. Our race, culture, religion are superior. Some of them go up to the extension of branding some communities/nations as terrorists, killers, criminals, drug pushers and demonize other religions particularly Islam. India is a Hindu country, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, etc are Islamic countries, Thailand, Myanmar and so on are Buddhist countries and other are foreign religion. We hear them speaking racist, sexist and exclusivist language. In India, some politicians said, "Christians should go back to the West" and cows have made more valuable than human. Populist politicians try to project that people are poor because of immigration, corruption, and wrong policy of the government. People are jobless because immigrants have taken over the jobs denying the rights of locals. The populist right-wing political leaders project themselves and others

also project them as the “Messiah” for the sake of capturing power and claim that they will fix the problems exploiting, abusing religious sentiment of the poor. We see denial of diversity, freedom of speech and violation of human rights in many countries. Even in the democratic countries dictatorship is coming back. It is a threat for future humanity. The assertion that my religion is superior, my race and culture is superior or my interest first, have resulted terrible bloodshed in history. Catholic vs. Protestant, Christian vs. Muslim, Jewish vs. Christian has fought in the name of maintaining superiority of their religion. Asserting that Christianity is the only true religion and “superior”, Christians singing “Onward Christian Soldiers” and glorifying those killed in the HOLY WARS as martyrs, have killed millions of innocent Jewish, Muslims and others in the Holy Wars.

Claiming their racial superiority, Germans have slaughtered about 6 million Jews during the Holocaust under Hitler. Asserting the White race superiority about 80 million American Indians had killed and made thousands of people disabled. In Heroshima and Nagasaki it is said that about 209 thousands were killed in a single day when American dropped atom bomb. Japanese troops massacred 200,000 to 300,000 in Nanjing, China in December 1937. Taiwan still remembers the massacre of more than 30,000 Taiwanese on 29 February, 1947 by Koumintang-led Republic of China Government. US invasion of Iraq have claimed more than 180,000 innocent lives and more than 500,000 soldiers. Still civil wars are going on in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and many other countries. We can add many sad stories of genocide and mass destruction happened in the past and happening till today. The world is bleeding because of our claim that my religion and my race is superior to others. The denial of diversity and respect of others have caused much destruction all over the world.

I came across a post in social media, “If your religion requires you to hate someone, you need a new religion.” I feel that it contains fully loaded meaning for us today. The writer of the Hebrews wants to convey similar message to small Christian community in Rome who were thinking of going back to their former religion assuming that their former religion and practices are superior.

New Testament scholars are divided on the authorship of the book of Hebrews. The writer seems to be addressing to a small Jewish converts living in Rome. They were facing a religious identity crisis. Some of them were asking: Is it not Judaism more superior? Is it not Jewish religious practices superior? Is it not Jerusalem temple superior to others? Is it not Jerusalem holy city from where God will rule the world forever? Leaving our superior religion why should we worship God in a small tent in a foreign land? There were asserting their superiority over the others religious beliefs. They wanted to go back to their former religion. The author tries to convince them that there is no superior or inferior religion in the eyes of God. The place of worship is not confined to Jerusalem. You can worship the same God in Rome. Following Jesus is different from observing mere religious observances. The author reasoned that Jesus is superior to angels, Moses, Aaron and Melchizedek. Jesus is also greater than the prophets. We cannot compare their messages with the life and teaching of Jesus. Jesus teaching is true, the right way to live, the right way of love, the right way of doing what God wants, the right way of sacrifice and the true hope and promises. Even if you do not have an apostle or a chief priest in the foreign land, or even if you worship in a small tent, you should not feel inferior. God is the same and can be experienced everywhere. Following Jesus' teaching is more important. It is not the ritual observances, it is not the place of worship, nor laws, but sacrifice of oneself, practice of love and truth is the true worship of God.

Christian identity in Asia is expressed differently. In Indonesia and Malaysia, church buildings cannot be constructed bigger and higher than the mosque. In China, there are underground churches where about 1000 people worship on Sundays. In Bhutan, construction of church buildings is not allowed. The worship services take place only at homes. In Myanmar, I was advised not to mention liberation and warned not to mention anything negative about Government while preaching. I asked my friend, how can I preach about Jesus Christ without mentioning liberation and without relating to socio-political life? He replied, "I do not want you to be imprisoned." In Pakistan and some places in India,

Christian cannot freely worship fearing attack by religious fundamentalists. In Bangladesh, I was warned not to mention “**Only** Jesus Christ”. They said, I can be arrested on charges of blasphemy law. In India, freedom of religion is curtailed due to anti-conversion law. In Taiwan, Christians can pray in loud voice in restaurants before eating. In India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Indonesia and many countries people will look at you as if you are a strange animal and can be beaten up if you pray loudly in public places like restaurant. In Taiwan, there are three or four churches in a small locality though church members are less than 20. Christianity has grown in different contexts in Asia. In some countries, Christians are treated as second-class citizen, inferior and discriminated by the majority religious groups. All these are happening due to denial and respect of diversity.

The book of Hebrews is reminding us that following Jesus should transcend our narrow nationalism, regionalism, racism and protectionism. God loves diversity. God reveals God self in diversity. One cannot worship God by following mere rituals. Worship in a small or big building or place does not matter. It is following the teachings of Jesus in our practical life that matters. Exclusive attitude towards other religions is dangerous. Hinduism, Islam, Judaism is not my religion, they are not my race, not my culture and so I do not have to care for them. Such attitude and action will make our world, a world of hatred and mistrust. We must protect and respect diversity. To bring peace and justice, the writer of Hebrews reminds us to protect the richness of God’s diversity of creation and recognize God’s active presence in all realms of life, and uphold and practice the value of respect, openness, solidarity towards one another, caring and loving for others and for all of God’s creation. This is the foundation of peace.



**EASTERN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE,  
RAJABARI, JORHAT:: ASSAM**

**ADMISSION INFORMATION**

**Academic Programmes:** The College offers the following academic and other programmes-

**1. Bachelor of Divinity (BD)** course for four years studies. Candidates who have secured secular graduation are eligible for the course. It is a residential study program. BD is the basic theological education for any Christian ministry. The degree is conferred by the Senate of Serampore College/University.

**BD ENTRANCE EXAM – APRIL 13-14, 2017**

**2. Master of Theology (MTh)** course for two years of studies. It is a program geared towards higher theological education with a purpose to meet the need of the churches but at the same time it is specialization in theological education, which is necessary for certain ministries such as teaching and research. Today, the college offers MTh program in four areas: (i) History of Christianity; (ii) Christian Theology/Systematic Theology (iii) Christian Ministry or Practical Theology (iv) New Testament. The degree is conferred by the Senate of Serampore College/University.

**MTh ENTRANCE EXAM –JANUARY 19-20, 2017**

**3. Master of Arts in HCD & Peace Studies** course for two years of external studies. MA in Holistic Child Development is an intensive course geared towards men and women interested in children ministry in the local churches and specialized ministry like children ministry institution. MA in Peace studies in men and women interested in Peace building ministry especially in the context of one's community and in the North East Region. **ONE MONTH INTENSIVE CLASS COURSE: MONTH OF 'MAY' EVERY YEAR.**

4. Besides the formal degree programmes of the College, ETC also co-ordinates External Studies of **DIPLOMA IN CHRISTIAN STUDIES (Dip CS)** and **BACHELOR OF CHRISTIAN STUDIES (BCS)** of the Senate of Serampore College, and also Conducts entrance examinations for **DOCTOR MINISTRY (DMN)** Programme. The programmes are all under the Senate of Serampore College/University. Any candidate interested in the above programmes can contact the Dean, ETC and also directly contact Senate Office.

*For more information about us, please visit our website: [www.etccollege.in](http://www.etccollege.in)*

*E-mail: [etccollege@yahoo.co.in](mailto:etccollege@yahoo.co.in)*

*Mailing address: Principal*

*Eastern Theological College,*

*Rajabari, Jorhat – 785014*

*Assam, India Mobile: 98011117820*

# Living together with the non-living

We live in an age where value of non-living (animals) is taken as morally equivalent to human so much so that the animal right activities insist that medical research on live animals, factory farming, and other practices that cause animals intense suffering and death should be legally forbidden. Christians, on the other hand, generally agree that God created animals primarily for human consumption and for our benefits. How do we meaningfully engage in such issues?

The Bible is very clear in that God created the animals, and hence has value to Him independent of their benefits to humanity. Moreover, God had instructed the human race to be His caretakers over non-human life. What then should be the ethical responsibilities of Christians in our relationship with animals both wild and domestic?

On the very outset, Christians must reject any ideology that elevates animals to human status. However the question of how Christians must seriously grapple the issues of human right activities on what constitutes justifiable animal rights is a legitimate issue. The issue is both biblical and theological because Christians are obligated to treat animals according to divine precepts. God requires that His people respect and protect the natural environment. This is seen throughout the Holiness Code (Lev 17-26). The Code strictly prohibits the consumption of blood in any form which has ecological implications. The law prohibits mistreatment. Thus, the Holiness Code demands respect for animal life.<sup>1</sup> The Code not only protects the rights of the animals but it also talk about protecting trees too. These also suggest very clearly the idea of caring creations on the part of human being. Many great reformers like Calvin is anthropocentric and yet he was determine to protect the dignity of animals bestowed upon them in their divine origin. Though he agreed to proper use of animals including its consumption of the flesh, for him administrative dominion of human never entailed unjust domi-

nation of non-human.<sup>2</sup> I believe Calvin's idea that animal can teach people to be truly human<sup>3</sup> is an overstatement and over emphasis on the value of animals.

It is a fact that the world and its different creation receive its value from God, and everything in creation manifests the divine purpose. Saji Mathew quoted Stephen J. Pope as saying, "We must attend to boundaries, accept our limits, engage in self-restraint, respect natural finitude, and strive to conform to, or least cooperate with, the natural pattern of interdependence within which we are immersed."<sup>4</sup> The relationship between man and God is the core ground of His humanity. And because of his relationship, he becomes a responsible human being. God created man with the ability to live responsibly in society<sup>5</sup>. The attention and care which God gives to animals refutes the notion that they have value only to the degree they serve human needs and desires. The biblical fact is animals have value to God independent of the human race. This doesn't mean God values animals as much as He does people or that they deserve the same ethical considerations as do humans. But this doesn't diminish the fact that God values non-human life and desires that animals fulfill the purposes for which He created them. For this reason, I believe the animal rights movement is a legitimate cause—assuming it's carried out within a biblical moral framework. Proverbs 12:10 points out that "a righteous man cares for the needs of his animals." Jewish law includes provisions for the humane treatment of domesticated animals. For example on the Sabbath day, God instructed the Jews to allow their animals to rest (Ex. 23:12), and not to "muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain" (Deut. 25:4). Even the Ten Commandants have a provision to care for domesticated animals (Ex. 20:9-11).

A word study on what does God meant in Genesis 1:28 when He told Adam and Eve to have "dominion" (KJV) over the Earth's newly created animal life shed light to our understanding of how Christian should care animal kingdoms? It denotes mankind's caretaker role in creation; it doesn't give people a license to use animals any way they please. It doesn't make sense that God would give the Earth's animals to the

human race to abuse and exploit. God demands unconditional love, a love that involves God doing what is best for us, not necessarily what we desire. In a similar way, as God's caretakers in creation, we make stewardship decisions that may not be in our best interest, but will be in the best interest of threatened and endangered animals and that promote humane treatment for animals. The core of the Christian tradition is love; Christians are called to love all that God has created. Too often, too casually, we assume that our interests always come first, and if it's profitable or expedient that is all we need to know. We assume that all these other creatures with which we share the earth are here for us, and only for us. We assume, in effect, that we are everything and they are nothing.

Drawing from the biblical witness, we can make some important conclusions about how to think about animals<sup>6</sup>.

We must lose some of our anthropocentric view of creation and replace it with a theo-centric view, where God is engaged with all of creation, not only humanity. While a theo-centric view of creation should not cause us to equate humans with the rest of creation, it should cause us to treat the rest of creation with more respect. We must recognize that animals may very well be co-inheritors with us of the new creation. When we consider that animals were part of God's original design for his creation, it is plausible that they are part of his eternal design, as well. In his letter to the church at Rome, the Apostle Paul said all of creation was subjected to the corrupting effects of the fall and that the day is coming when it too shall be freed from this corruption (Rom. 8:18-22).

God saves animals from destruction during the time of Noah and this very clearly demonstrates God's care for the animals. Prophetic rebukes of animal sacrifices in passages like Psalm 50; Isaiah 1:10-17 etc. all direct us to ponder on God's care for the animal kingdom.

God put animals on the planet and gave them a mandate as well. Part of the human calling is to help them fulfil this mandate in a way that enables them to reach their full potential in creation. They not only en-

rich our lives. They point to the creator of all things. Animals are not only worthy of our respect. They deserve it. Christians understand these and its us who has to live it out what we know so that the world will know too.

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<sup>1</sup>Prakash Abraham Mathew, “Holiness and ecology: insights from the holiness code (Lev 17-26)” *Union biblical seminary journal*.9.2/10.1 (March 2016): 5

<sup>2</sup>Peter A. Huff, “Calvin and the beasts: animals in john Calvin’s theological discourse” *Journal of the evangelical theological society* 42/1 (march 1999): 71

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 72

<sup>4</sup>Saji Mathew Kanayankal, “Being in harmony: biblical vision of interconnected existence” *Journal of Dharma* 36/3 (July-Sept 2011): 281.

<sup>5</sup>Takatemjen, “The Bible and Human Rights” *Clark Journal of Theology* 4/2 (July-Dec 2014): 94

<sup>6</sup><http://www.wheaton.edu/~media/Files/Centers-and-Institutes/CACE/articles/Halteman-AnimalRightsandChristian%20Responsibility.pdf>



Mr Kery Newmai, Director of Admission, Logos College of Theology, Kattaikonam, Trivandrum



# Serampore College

Founded by Carey, Marshman and Ward 1818. Incorporated by  
Royal Charter, 1827 and Bengal Govt. Act. IV of 1918 as  
Modified up to 1997 by the Govt. of West Bengal.

SERAMPORE, HOOGHLY  
WEST BENGAL, INDIA,  
PIN-712 201.  
THEOLOGY DEPARTMENT



## CALLING FOR APPLICATIONS

1. **BACHELOR OF DIVINITY:** Applications are invited from the committed young men and women for undergoing Bachelor of Divinity, which is a four years residential degree program for the new academic year 2017-18. Interested person may apply with the following information given as under:

- (a) He/she must be a Graduate from any Recognized Universities in India;
- (b) Few seats are also reserved for B.Th & B.Miss graduates of the SSC;
- (c) A candidate may choose any of the Entrance Date mentioned below as per her/his convenience; and
- (d) All candidates must send their application form within the date mentioned below.

*First Phase B.D Entrance Schedule:* Written and Interview will be held on **11<sup>th</sup> January 2017** (Written Examination) & **12<sup>th</sup> January 2017** (Personal Interview). Candidates opting for the First Phase must send their Application Form to the Office and must reach before end of **9<sup>th</sup> December 2016**.

*Second Phase B.D Entrance Schedule:* Written and Interview will be held on **5<sup>th</sup> May 2017** (Written Examination) & **6<sup>th</sup> May 2017** (Personal Interview). Candidates opting for the Second Phase must send their Application Form to the Office and must reach before end of **9<sup>th</sup> April 2016**.

For any queries related to the course:

- (i) kindly write to the *Vice-Principal/ the Secretary*, Theology Department, Serampore College ([sssircar61@gmail.com](mailto:sssircar61@gmail.com), OR, [temjenba@gmail.com](mailto:temjenba@gmail.com)).
- (ii) To download application forms for **sl. no. 1, 2 and 3**, follow this link – <http://www.seramporecollege.org/theology>
- (iii) For submission of Application, see the Mailing Address given at the bottom.

**2. BACHELOR OF BIBLE TRANSLATIONS STUDIES (BBTS):** Applications are invited for the course of Bachelor of Bible Translation Studies (BBTS) for the new academic year 2017. Interested person may apply with the following information specified under:

- (a) BBTS is a distance (correspondence) course.
- (b) Kindly see the course detail under the page Academic Program.
- (c) Last date of submission of the application form is **March 31, 2017**.
- (d) Attached all the documents and fees required (as specified in the application form) during submission of the forms.
- (e) For any queries related to the course, kindly write to the **Vice-Principal/ the Secretary Theology Department, Serampore College**.

**3. DIPLOMA IN BIBLE TRANSLATION (DIP.BT):** Applications are invited for the course of Diploma in Bible Translation (Dip.BT) for the new academic year 2017. Interested person may apply with the following information specified under:

- (a) DipBT is a distance (correspondence) course.
- (b) Kindly see the course detail under the page Academic Program.
- (c) Last date of submission of the application form is **March 31, 2017**.
- (d) Attached all the documents and fees required (as specified in the application form) during submission of the forms.
- (e) All the Application Forms and Inquiries must be addressed to:

**THE VICE-PRINCIPAL,**  
Serampore College, Theology Department,  
Serampore - 712201, West Bengal, India  
Email: [sertheology@yahoo.in](mailto:sertheology@yahoo.in)  
Phone: (033) 2652-1067

# News Capsule

## **Mission Training**

(15-17, July)

The Krima No.V under Garo Baptist Convention conducted a Mission Training program to make their effort more effective and productive at Rongjeng Baptist Church. The leaders were challenged and Mission strategy on making greater impact was envisioned. We believe this will help them rise to higher level in doing mission.

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## **Missionaries Conference**

(16-18 September)

Having come to know the pres-

ence of many missionaries of our churches working independently and without the knowledge of the local churches in different parts of India and outside, missionaries' conference was conducted for Tangkhul Missionaries under "Tangkhul Missionary Network" at Ukhrul. The main purpose of this conference was to connect the missionaries with their local churches for support in their work, and also to connect the missionaries working in different parts of India for mutual encouragement and help in times of difficulties. Missionary reports were big encouragement and great challenge



for the churches. As a result, many more churches decided to support the missionaries.

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### **MBC Secretaries' Conference (23-25 September)**

The Manipur Baptist Convention organized Secretaries Conference at Punanamei Baptist Church under Mao Baptist Churches Association on the theme, "Called to Holiness". Out of 29 Associations, 28 Associations participated in the conference with a total of 135 secretaries; Executive Secretaries and Departmental Secretaries.

This is an annual program of the Convention where all Secretaries of all Associations gathered for fellowship and to discuss common issues faced by the churches in

administration and ministries. Good food with lot of refreshing entertainment items were part of the program and the Secretaries were re-energized and encouraged through the program. This also served as Retreat program for the Secretaries. In absence of the General Secretary of the Council, the Mission Secretary participated as the Resource person of the Conference.

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### **Cross Cultural Mission Conference**

(29 September-2 October)

A Cross cultural Mission Conference under Garo Baptist Convention was conducted at Gimigre Baptist Church for Krima No IX and X. Church leaders compris-





ing of Deacons, Mission Board, Youth, and Women gathered for this program in large number. The strategy of “Each One Catch One” was introduced and envisioned for making greater impact in the mission work. The importance of equipping and selecting right candidates for cross cultural mission was focused during the Consultation.

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### **Mission Consultation**

(4-7 October)

Having faced with many challenges on streamlining mission, the Tangkhal Baptist Churches Association conducted Mission consul-

tation. All together 439 church leaders from 59 churches attended in the Consultation. The advantage of streamlining and working together in Mission was refocused during the consultation. In this consultation, the Strategy on “Each One Catch One” was introduced as churches are more interested in having their own mission fields since this has been a long practiced of the churches. Many leaders committed themselves to be more involved in God’s mission.

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### **Envisioning Program**

(24-25 October)

Leadership Training for Krima

No. VIII was conducted at CBCNEI Campus under the leadership of Rev. Ferdinand, Executive Secretary of the Association under Garo Baptist Convention. Issues relating to the present Mission work and church ministry, and also how to reach the Nation during our lifetime through prayer and action was shared and discussed. Special session on praying for the nation was conducted during the program with pastors and leaders kneeling before the Lord and lifting the Nation to the Lord.

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### North East India Transformation Congress

(3- 6 November)

The North East India Transforma-

tion Congress was jointly organized by Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) in collaboration with CBCNEI. More than 170 delegates from across north eastern states participated in this Congress. Rev. Dr. N. Tzudir, Pastor of the hosting church Dimapur Ao Baptist Arogo (DABA), warmly welcomed everyone on the inaugural service.

Rev. Dr. Solomon Rongpi, General Secretary, CBCNEI gave his keynote address on the theme of the Congress based on “Let us reason together” Isaiah 1:18. Rev. Vijayesh Lall and Rev. Dr. Wati Longkumer, Rev Leaderwell Pohsngap were the speakers during the evening services.

The topics discussed during the



plenary sessions were “Peace & Reconciliation” by Dr. Leban Serto, “National & Regional issues” by Dr. Panger Kichu, “Poverty” by Dr. Lalrindiki Ralte, “Family” by Dr. Yangkahao Vashum, “Church” by Rev. Dr. Thangkhosei Haokip, “Mission” by Rev. S. Nengzakhup and “Ecology and Environment” by Mr K. Ch. Momin, President, CBCNEL.

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### **Urban Mission Training**

(7-9 November)

Looking into the need of rapid Urbanization trends in India in general and Guwahati and North East in particular, the Mission Depart-

ment of the Council conducted “Urban Mission Training” for the first time. Resource persons from FMPB and Interserve came as partners to help in the training. Very important topics such as “*Why Urban Mission?, Urban; a disturbing world, Learning from Paul @ city of Ephesus, Business as Mission, etc*” were taught and discussed during the training. Church Pastors, Missionaries and evangelists who attended the training expressed how they were blessed through the training. We are grateful to FMPB and Interserve leaders for the partnership in this training program.

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**Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) Training**

(7-18 November)

13 Missionary candidates who are seeking God’s direction to go as missionaries to East Asian countries and few teachers were trained as English teachers in partnership with Asia Center for TESOL (ACT) Chiangmai, Thailand. All of them completed successfully and certificates were awarded to them. Some of them, after attending the training program, felt called by God to be missionary. They are now praying for God’s leading hand. Please pray for them.

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**Legal Training on Freedom of Religion & Belief Seminar**

(16-17 November)

Manipur Baptist Convention (MBC) conducted a two days “Legal Training on Freedom of Religion & Belief Seminar” and it was held at Manipur Baptist Conference (MBC) Hall, Imphal. The program was organized in collaboration with Justice and Peace Ministries of CBCNEI and ADF India. The participants were the Association leaders and church leaders of MBC. The main purpose of this seminar was to give awareness and train the Church



leaders about the legal freedom of Religion and Belief of the Christian.

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**Conflict Transformation Initiative Seminar  
(18 – 19 November)**

Justice and Peace Ministries of CBCNEI in collaboration with Manipur Baptist Convention (MBC) conducted a two days seminar on “Conflict Transformation Initiative” and it was held at Rikhumai Taphou Tungjoy Baptist Church, Senapati District Headquarter Manipur state.. The

participants were the Association leaders and church leaders of Senapati Karong Area Baptist Union (SKABU). The main purpose of this seminar was for awareness on better initiative on conflict management and conflict transformation in the area. There were other practical session and other session like brainstorm and steps toward win-win solution.

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**Emergency Relief Programme by CBCNEI & CASA  
(9 November)**

An emergency relief programme for the flood affected areas at



Sonitpur was conducted on 11 Nov 2016. The relief was sponsored by Church's Auxiliary for Social and Action (CASA) and implemented by Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI).

Mr. Rabindra Basumatary, CBCNEI and Mr. S.C. Das, Incharge, CASARRC Mawlein, rushed to Sonitpur for flood assessment. The CBCNEI and CASA assisted by Mr. Sunil Pegu, Secretary, Sonitpur Mising Baptist Kebang, Bortamuli and local leaders, including local volunteers carried out the relief programme. The team then went to the most affected areas where accessibility was minimum and they spoke to the people who were affected. The team visited the ar-

reas of Chirakhuwa, Luguti, 1 no Bortamuli, 2 no Bortamuli, 1 no paken, 2 no paken, 3 no paken, Telia bari, Lokosa, Gohnaitapu and Gohnaiati villages where people did not receive any relief from the government or from any other organization. Through the spot assessment the team could see damages of life and property in terms of land, houses, cultivation land and livestock.

Food items like Rice (10 Kgs), Mosur Dal (pulses) (2 kgs), 1 ltr of edible oil (Mustard Oil) were packed and distributed to 1225 beneficiaries in the worst affected areas of Bortamuli Panchayat, Gohpur Sub-Division of Sonitpur District, Assam. The distribution of relief items were carried out at the Bortamuli Mising Baptist Church



**Emergency Relief Programme by CBCNEI & CASA**

compound where the villagers could come and take the relief items. Rev. Dr. Solomon Rongpi, General Secretary, CBCNEI and Mr. Lesehu Meru, Sr. Coordinator, CASA brought short speech with prayer during the short program before the relief distribution. As per the plan the relief distribution was completed successfully and the target of extending help to the people was achieved.

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## **Mission Jubilee of Liangmai Naga Baptist Association**

(25-27 November)

The Mission Department of the LNBA celebrated its jubilee on the Theme, “Moving Forward in Christian Mission”. Pastors, Mission leaders and church elders with youth and women attended the Jubilee Celebration. Missionaries working in different parts of India and abroad were invited to share their reports. It was a time to celebrate, relook the mission work done so far and also working on strategy how to make greater impact in future.



## LOGO COMPETITION FOR BABUPARA CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL

Babupara Christian Hospital (BCH), a 10 bedded hospital, established in 1949, is one of the healing ministries of CBCNEI. It is situated in North Garo Hills in Meghalaya.

The BCH Committee wishes to develop a logo that will symbolize it's Mission & Functions and hereby invites creative individuals to participate in the competition for the creation of its official logo that will uniquely & clearly reflect it's name.

### Specifications:

- 1) The design should be in high resolution. It should be submitted in hard copies of A4 size paper & soft copy in PDF/JPEG/psd.
- 2) The healing ministry of CBCNEI should be incorporated in the logo.
- 3) The logo must be clear & distinctly identifiable for effective application.
- 4) Entrants in the competition should provide their name, email address & mobile number.
- 5) The design should be accompanied by a written description of its meaning & features.
- 6) The design of either the winning entry or any other submission will be subject to necessary modifications and be used in designing the BCH's Logo.
- 7) The Authority will reserve the right to register the winning logo as it's copyright.
- 8) Any material, graphic software or any other items prepared by the entrant in the competition will belong to & remain the property of BCH.
- 9) The judges' decision shall be final & will not be open to any correspondence or appeal whatsoever.

Reward: ₹ 5000/- for the best entry.

Submission: The designed logo (hard & soft copy) as well as detailed information is to be submitted in plain sealed envelope clearly marked "Logo Design Competition for BCH" not later than 28th February 2017 to:

Dr John Ritchi N Sangma  
201 (A), Adarsha Colony  
PO Maligaon, Guwahati - 781011, Assam  
eMail: alaricns@rediffmail.com

## **Frith: The beginning of all ends**

**Fair is the face of the Almighty's given Grace,  
Grace in humanity form, for in humanity love abides,  
For love is colour-less, race-less, creed-less and enemy-  
less.**

**For a sole goal to be told, united all in souls,  
For humanity still prevail in us all,  
Mavrone! I get peeved a little to see this perfectly  
created world shredded by greed, enmity,  
discrimination's and hatreds .  
I yawn in phantom pain.**

**Oh! How I yearn the world's peace where wars all  
dissipated.**

**Oh! How I see giant peace wave, sweeping down to  
devastate the walls of greed.**

**That wave drenching in to destroy the violent  
thoughts.**

**Erasing arrogance enveloping the minds.**

**Wising leaders, softening hearts.**

**Oh! How I yearn to see God's given Grace restored in  
mankind.**

**For love of humanity is the beginning of all ends.**

*Mrs Lichanbeni Tungoe Kithan, Assistant Editor, Baptist News*

# ADMISSION 2017

## Faculty of Theology

*Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agriculture, Technology & Sciences  
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# Peace and Reconciliation

*An excerpt from the paper “Peace and Reconciliation” presented by Dr Leban Serto, Director, Centre for Peace Education, Manipur, CFPEM, during the North East India Transformation Congress (NEITC) at Dimapur.*

## Concepts to understand Peace building and Reconciliation

Some concepts are necessary to understand Peace building and Reconciliation. One of the foremost is the one Lederach describes the “Moral Imagination” is the capacity to recognize turning points and possibilities in order to venture down unknown paths and create what does not yet exist. This is needed for the Northeast India.

Since 2009, the Peace Counts project started in India. It is presently growing in Northeast India. Two major Training of Trainers (TOT) has been conducted in the region in 2013, Guwahati and 2014 in Shillong. Peace Counts is a unique combination of peace education and peace journalism. It started out as an initiative of journalists who travelled to over 30 conflict regions to report about individuals making peace. The reports were published in the media and used to create an exhibition called “Peace builders around the World”. Peace Counts on Tour brings this exhibition to conflict regions. The best-practice examples of successful peacebuilders inspire people and encourage them to take action for peace in their own region or country. The exhibition is accompanied by a training programme, which uses specifically adapted multimedia materials and the Peace Counts Learning Package. With the Berghof Foundation till October 2014, We had trained about 20 multipliers who can now integrate peace education contents and methods into their schools, universities and communities in Northeast India”, There are also now stories from Northeast India, Like that of Joint Peace Mission Team ( JPMT ) which depict the story of Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil and his team.

## Blessed are the Peacemakers

### Adoniram Judson and other Missionaries as Peace builders

- In 1814, Baptist delegates from eleven states and Washington DC met in Philadelphia and organized the: Triennial Convention (Now known as American Baptist international Ministries) to support the Judson's and other missionaries who would follow in their footsteps. The following year, clergy and laypeople from a variety of denominations formed the Massachusetts Peace Society in Boston. After receiving several issues of the Society's journal, Friends of Peace, Adoniram Judson sent a letter from Burma in 1821 to become a member, He wrote, "*Since war has been universally advocated and applauded by nearly all classes of men, it appears to me (without intending to reflect on those whose views may be different) that it is not optional with any to remain neutral or silent on this great question.*" He expresses that conviction that *peace, Bible and missionary societies were 'forming that threefold cord, which will ultimately bind all the families of man in universal peace and love'*".
- Judson may have been acquainted with William Carey's peace views published in an earlier issue of Friends of Peace. Carey had written, "The great things which God, by His spirit, is doing in the United States, are truly astonishing, and call at once for the most grateful praises and the most entire coincidence in all His gracious promises. Among these things must be reckoned this missionary exertions now making ; and the Peace Society lately established at New York, and other places, a society with whose object my heart most cordially coincides ,and which must, through the Divine assistance, which will assuredly be granted, be finally successful in the accomplishment of its ultimate object ( Page x- xi). When the British army captured Rangoon and advanced up the Irrawaddy River, the Ava prisoners were marched twelve miles to another prison outside

of Aungbinle. The spouses of the imprisoned missionaries feared the men would be executed or even sacrificed for the hopes of a Burmese victory. Soon, however the Burmese king realized he needed interpreters to negotiate a peace agreement. Judson was released from prison under guard and became one of the interpreters, helping to negotiate and draft the treaty that ended the war in February 1826. With the ending of the war, Adoniram and Ann Judson continued their pioneering mission work. (Page x- xii).

- Missionaries pursued the making of peace in varieties of ways. For instance in North East India in 1876, Rev E W Clark and fifteen Ao Naga families from the Dekha Haimong village moved a three- hour walk away to a nearby mountain crest to establish the new village of Molung. This village sought to order its life as followers of the Prince of Peace in several ways; the believers did not give offerings to propitiate the demons before building the village; the village abandoned warfare and committed itself to nonviolence; slavery was prohibited in the village; and religious liberty was established with “no law to make Christians”. (Page xiv )
- Martin and Mabel England served as missionaries among the Kachin people of northern Burma, beginning in 1933. When the Japanese invaded Burma in the early days of World War II, the England’s escaped in a harrowing journey under Japanese attack. The riverboat they were on was sunk. They lost all their belongings but made it safely out of the country. Page xxiii
- In Burma, both before and after the war, The England’s bore witness to the need for peace and economic justice. “Jesus or the Chief”. The “Chief” representing the authority of earthly figures and the tendency to be loyal to one’s tribe while hating other tribes. England expanded this globally, challenging the tribalism of race and nation, especially as expressed in the domi-

nation of the wealthier countries such as his own United States. He wrote of the connection between peace and justice, “Whatever else may need doing, there can be no peace between a world half starved, half glutted, between a world that puzzles how to get enough to keep alive and a world in constant danger or suffocation from its surpluses”.

- In 1953 Mabel’s failing health forced the England’s to return to the U.S. Martin joined the staff of the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board (MMBB). Besides his formal job to care for retired ministers and missionaries in the South, he was given the covert assignment of caring for people whose work in the civil rights movement put their lives and well – being at risk. He visited civil rights activists in jail and cared for people who were economically afflicted by the risks they took. One of those visits in 1963 was to Dr Martin Luther King Jr. After he had been arrested in Birmingham, Alabama. During the visit, King passed a written statement to England who immediately sent it to Dean Wright, MMBB’s Executive Director in New York. Wright had the statement published, and the world soon came to know it as the famous “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”. England also secured life insurance benefits for Dr King through the MMBB. King was viewed as a high insurance risk and could obtain no coverage through regular providers, so this support proved to be an especially vital blessings to the King family following Dr King’s assassination.

### **Quotes from the Bible**

All this is from God, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in

him we might become the righteousness

### **Bible Verses about Peace**

The Bible is rich in issue of Peace. Read verses that offer guidance on subjects such as *peace of mind*, love and peace, peacefulness and joy. You can also read verses from the Holy Bible about peace in relation to God, Jesus Christ, and the Christian faith. When you need peace, God promises to provide a peace that passes understanding. The best thing you can do when you are filled with anxiety and worry is to find a quiet place to pray, read Scripture, and listen to encouraging worship music. God wants you to have a life lived to the fullest and that includes being at peace! We are commanded to be Peace builders, Matt 5:9

### **The Six Principles of Nonviolence**

*Principle One: Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.*

*Principle Two: The Beloved Community is the framework for the future.*

*Principle Three: Attack forces of evil, not persons doing evil*

*Principle Four: Accept suffering without retaliation for the sake of the cause to achieve the goal*

*Principle Five: Avoid internal violence of the spirit as well as external physical violence*

*Principle Six : The universe is on the side of justice*

**RENEWING THE NORTHEAST INDIA (NEI): This is the finding of Research Team of IGE 2012. May show some needed directions.**

**A NEW APPROACH TO RENEWING NORTHEAST INDIA (NEI): THE PROBLEM/ ISSUE/CHALLENGE**

- *The NEI has over 200 Tribes and 70 languages and 40*

*million people.*

- *Tribal in India are at bottom of the Caste System and economic level.*
- *It is a remote area and poorly connected to the rest of India.*
- *An influx of people from Bangladesh and the rest of India have impacted traditional agriculture and ways of living.*
- *Tribal groups are in conflict with each other and recent immigrants. Each group sees that another group's gain will be at its expense.*
- *The area has abundant water and significant under used land.*
- *Many insurgent groups exist and the borders with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan plus border disputes with China have made the area a restricted zone for some years since India's independence in 1947.*
- *Income and Education lags behind the rest of India.*
- *Opportunities for Women are limited even though there is a strong tribal and Matrilineal tradition in the state of Meghalaya [( Among Khasis, Garos and Pnar (Jiantia)]*
- *Schools need to be educationally upgraded .Not enough technical Universities in the Region.*

### **The Need**

- *Establish a level of trust and cooperation with a number of Tribes and Communities over a two initial period.*
- *Create awareness that economic growth can benefit every group without hurting other tribes.*
- *Bring additional educational economic development resources to many villages on a demonstration basis.*

- *Better educate youth for the 21st Century.*
- *Make Elcers /tribal leaders aware of view and orientation of their youth.*
- *Create Economic opportunities for women.*
- *Train Teachers in Permaculture.*
- *Use Children's puppetry and photography to improve family harmony and potentially discourage spousal abuse, alcoholism and revision local village.*
- *Bring in a large number of Peace Corps type workers from many countries to help implement permaculture, gardening, puppetry and other strategies.*
- *Create speakers bureau to utilize village leaders and students to share their experience in other villages.*
- *Develop Conflict Resolution models for Villages.*
- *Develop traveling exhibits and shows to many villages.*
- *Build Partnership with Villages/Communities, NGOs Institution in the region.*

## **Conclusion**

Today, we can see that the Church has great responsibility to play a prophetic role to bring healing, peace and reconciliation in the region. The Church can explore areas of intervention and provide workshops, consultation more research studies and viable project. The issue of bringing Peace and Justice is very pertinent today. The Churches and its leadership must play a pivotal role and venture to work for Peace and Reconciliation in the Northeast Region among the tribes and different communities and increase interfaith dialogue. God is in control of the situation and the future and it is now the right moment. The scriptures and the Bible are full of verses about peace building and delivering justice. The Church must therefore take this opportune moment to help the communities and societies to heal and encourage for

## Peace to all in the Northeast Region.

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# The Messiah of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Some 2000 years ago, when Jesus Christ was born on a cold winter night in the town of Bethlehem, no one thought or imagined that this Child would be the Messiah. The Gospel account of Mathew 1: 18-25 tells us how Christ was born through the Virgin Mary who was already engaged to Joseph yet was pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. There were no rooms left in the town of Bethlehem when the birth was nearing. Joseph and Mary did not lose heart but carried the pain and struggles with humility and they came to a manger giving birth to our Messiah. The pain and struggles both Mary and Joseph was enormous as it resembles to our daily life's struggle. Many of us are left struggled and troubled by our daily lives because of our sins. This in turn affects our family relationship, work culture, social atmosphere and our personal relation with Him. In the town of Bethlehem some heard about the birth of Jesus Christ yet many could not come near him and offer prayers. One sad reality check happening in our present day activities within and outside the Church is that many people have the matured understanding of being an experienced Christian that goes regularly to Church, offer prayers, gives tithes and offerings, listens and reads the word of God daily/weekly but sadly Many of us have failed to understand, know and experienced Christ in our heart. The celebration of the coming of Messiah should be with Christ and not Christmas without Christ. To be his follower means not to remain stagnant but to be with Him all throughout our journey. When Christ was yet to be born, there was no peace and people were living a life

filled with sins. There were some who longed for someone to come and deliver them from the bondage of sin. The prophets have anticipated and prophesized the coming of the Messiah. The day when the Messiah arrived, the angels from heaven came down to earth proclaiming the good news that the one and only Messiah has been born. The night was filled with silent and Holy. The angels rejoiced for unto us a Messiah has been born, it was the first Merry Christmas. The son of God has been born to deliver us from our sins and He will return for the second time to destroy sin forever. Jesus' life on earth was also not a smooth going. He too faced many obstacles and temptations but was able to overcome it. The life journey of Christian is also no different than Jesus' journey. In our journey too we will face many hurdles to cross, but when we walk along with Him we would able to resist it. Mark 8:34 "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me". The world is flooded and commercialized in the name of the birth of Jesus Christ. There is no short cut to follow Him. Our service rendered to Him should not be of lip service but a heart that really accepts Him as our Messiah. There will so many false preachers while waiting for His second coming. Our focus should remain grounded on the strong foundation of Christ and wait patiently in prayers and submission for our Messiah.



*Mr Mhabemo Kithan, Mission Assistant, CBCNEI, Guwahati*



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