

# Baptist News

A quarterly news letter of  
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CHURCHES IN NORTH EAST  
INDIA

The Council comprises Assam  
Baptist Convention,  
Arunachal Baptist Church  
Council, Garo Baptist  
Convention, Karbi Anglong  
Baptist Convention, Manipur  
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# Editorial



## **Christ is Our Peace.**

It is only in Christ that our differences are put to death. We live in a world of differences, divisions, conflicts and result in wars. In what ways God is bringing Justice and Peace through the birth of Christ? What did Jesus do? In these verses, Paul tells us how Christ our Peace is the base and foundation of equality and peace between the Jews and the Gentiles. Jesus did accomplished in destroying the walls and barriers amongst us when he died on the cross. When Christ was born He brought reconciliation between the Jews and the Gentiles by breaking the walls of social divisions, He dismantled the social walls between us and brought everyone on to the same ground as one in Him. In Christ, there is no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles. He destroyed the spiritual walls between us and took all our sins on himself. He made it possible for sinners and wretched souls like us to be embraced by God. He made reconciliation possible on every aspects of our life. It is Christ who accomplished our reconciliation as

one, within our human communities. He has broken tribal disunity and brought equality and peace among us. He brought man together with man and man together with God. It is in Christ we all meet at the same ground.

In this issue we have very interesting articles on Christmas, Co habitation: An intimidation to God's original plan for marriage, Christian Leaders and Corruption and more.

The family of CBCNEI extends our warmest greetings and love in this Christmas and wishes all the readers a very blessed and prosperous new year. May the Peace of Christ dwell in you forever and ever!



Rev Dr Solomon Rongpi  
General Secretary

# He Himself is our Peace



*Adakho Lokho, Lecturer, Trinity Theological College, Thakhehu, Dimapur, Nagaland*

## **What is Christmas?**

Every time Christmas comes, we become jubilant to meet our siblings, our parents, our friends, our relatives, our Church members, and other acquaintances. We gift gifts and cakes celebrating Christmas. A huge sum of money is spent to celebrate Christmas, both as individual and community. We celebrate proclaiming that the Savior of the world has come.

But how often do we realize why we celebrate Christmas? The easiest answer we can give without a pause is because of Jesus Christ- it is His birthday and He is our Savior. But how seriously do we take His birthday? How sure we are that He is our Savior? How deeply do we mean when we say Jesus Christ is our Savior? To what extent do we personally know Jesus Christ? Only when we know Him do really know the true meaning of Christmas!

## **What make Jesus Christ so Uniquely Different?**

Everybody has a birthday, but no one's birthday is as unique and as special as the birthday of Jesus Christ. Everybody dies, but no one's death is as unique and as special as the death of Jesus Christ. In the

whole world, no one's birthday is celebrated like the way the birthday of Jesus Christ is celebrated. In the whole world, no one's death is remembered like the way the death of Jesus Christ is remembered. Every Christian in the whole world celebrates the birthday of Jesus Christ. Every Christian in the whole world remembers the death of Jesus Christ. Above all, there is no one's RESURRECTION which is remembered and celebrated in the whole world than that of Jesus Christ's.

Conversely, we regret someone's birth. We wish that they had never been born. Even God regretted that He had made man. "The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain" (Gen 6: 6). Jesus Christ Himself also wished that Judas had never been born. "The Son of man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born" (Matthew 26: 24).

There are two ways of celebrating the deaths of people. The death of a good person is celebrated because he or she is in heaven. Mark Lawry, one of the Gaither Homecoming best singers in his video (Hollywood) narrates the deaths of wonderful old people whom he got to know through Gaither Homecoming and whom he loved. But he says that he is not grieving for them because they are home (heaven). However, the death of a bad person is celebrated because he or she no longer is a problem. When Osama bin Laden was killed in 2011, all the Americans celebrated his death in front of the White House. His death was welcomed throughout most of the world, including the United Nations, European Union, NATO, and some countries in Asia, Africa, Oceania, South America, and the Middle East (including Yemen, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, India, Israel, Indonesia, Somalia, Philippines, Turkey, Iraq, Australia, Argentina, and the rebel Libyan Republic) as a fitting end to a figure who inspired mass bloodshed.

On his birthday, Pharaoh (king) gave feast for all his officials. But it was on his birthday and in the presence of his officials for whom he gave feast he hanged the chief baker. The chief baker was one of his officials. "Now the third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a feast for all

his officials...but he hanged the chief baker" (Gen 40: 20-22). Again, on his birthday, Herod (king) gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. But it was on his birthday he had John the Baptist beheaded (Mk 6: 21-28). John the Baptist was a righteous and holy man (Mk 6: 20)

So unusual is the difference when Jesus Christ was born! Who has ever been born of a Virgin? No one, except Jesus Christ. Whose birth has ever threatened a king? No one's, except Jesus Christ's. Whose birth, life, and death have ever been foretold? No one's, except Jesus Christ's. Whose birth place has any wise man looked for? No one's, except Jesus Christ's. Who has ever ascended into heaven after death? No one, except Jesus Christ. Whose life has ever been studied so much? No one's, except Jesus Christ's.

Pharaoh was the king of the Egyptians and Herod was the king of the Jews. Both of them gave feast to their officials on their birthdays. But also it was on their birthdays that the chief baker and John the Baptist were killed. Jesus Christ also came as a king (John 18: 37) like Pharaoh and Herod. Every year there is feast on Jesus Christ's birthday. But when Jesus Christ was born, the dead were made to live. Lazarus was raised from death (John 11) and the woman caught in adultery was saved from being stoned to death (John 8). Every year and everywhere the birth of Jesus Christ gives life to the dead (John 3: 16).

It was Judas Iscariot, one of the disciples of Jesus Christ, who betrayed Jesus Christ. Resulting from this betrayal Jesus Christ was arrested by the Jews. Unfortunately, after betraying Jesus Christ Judas Iscariot committed suicide. It was Pontius Pilate who handed over Jesus Christ to be crucified. Unfortunately, a few years later (AD 39) Pontius Pilate also committed suicide. Both Judas Iscariot and Pontius Pilate took part in killing Jesus Christ. But both Judas Iscariot and Pontius Pilate killed themselves. Both Judas Iscariot and Pontius Pilate died and never resurrected. Because of Judas Iscariot and Pontius Pilate Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross, and Jesus Christ died on the cross. But Jesus Christ rose again from the death. Jesus Christ went to heaven.

And Jesus Christ is coming back to take those who believe in Him also to be with Him in heaven (John 14: 3). That's wonderful! That's good news!

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14: 6). If we can save ourselves; or if there is another person who can save us, Jesus Christ would never have said He is the way, the truth and the life. He would never have said it is only through Him that we can come to the Father. If there is someone other than Jesus Christ who can save us, Jesus Christ would never have been born. But Jesus Christ was born so that He can save us. That is why He Himself is our Peace. May we find our Peace at this Christmas!



Mr Malthys D Sangma, Secretary, Justice & Peace Ministry, CBCNEI and Ms Giting Sangma were united together in a Holy Matrimony on October 25, 2017.

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



# Christian Leaders and Corruption

*Dr Woba James, Eastern Theological College, Jorhat*

## Introduction

*One of the most challenging issues confronting Christian leaders today is the problem of corruption. Corruption is increasingly recognized as a threat to good governance and sustainable development both in the church and society. This global issue of corruption has cut across individuals, families, churches, societies, race, gender, age, culture, religion, and so on. The problem has left a sordid trail throughout human history. Today there is a worldwide public awareness of corruption; there is an increase in anti-corruption laws and anti-corruption protest in several places in the world and in our region. Yet regardless of the increase in the number of anti-corruption agencies and their activities, the question is about the success and effectiveness of these initiatives by referring to the ongoing occurrence of corruption particularly in some of the states in NEI. Since it is so difficult to detect and to prove corruption, laws will probably never adequately control corruption. Today the world in which we live and work is so much filled with corruption. Both government legal system and church programmes are not always so effective in the battle against corruption. Therefore, personal honesty is very much demanded among the Christians particularly with the leaders. We are*

called to guard against the temptation of corruption and live exemplary lives. It is here that the importance of Christian leaders' personal honesty is affirmed. This is where I want to draw on the topic, "Christian Leaders and Corruption." This is not an academic exposition rather this is more of a personal observation of our society in our region today.

## 2. Corruption

What is corruption? Corruption is misuse of a public office or a position of authority for private material or social gain at the expense of other people. In other words, corruption is misuse of our responsibilities, privileges, opportunities, and our response to any issues that is done against the will of God and other's rights. It also includes favouritism, nepotism, and partiality, giving bribery, and accepting bribery. Further it can be defined as the abusive use of power with the purpose of satisfying personal or group interests. Corruption is a pernicious, ubiquitous problem that has plagued every individuals, families, churches organizations, culture, government, and establishment, to the extent that it is believed no system has ever been able to eliminate its existence. Moreover, all aspects of human life have been affected by the cancer of corruption, yet its complexity in nature renders it extremely difficult to isolate and identify a comprehensive set of causes for its existence. It is true that corruption manifests itself in various ways depending upon culture and context. Yet in North East India, speaking about the Government funds it entails diversion of public funds for the purpose of infrastructural development into personal accounts, while in other states it takes the form of reduced competition in politics and the economy. Therefore, today corruption exists not only in government offices, business sectors, political arena and NGOs but also in churches, associations, conventions, institutions, seminaries, synods and councils. Many Christian leaders today are taking the funds that are meant for the people and churches and are being used for self-satisfaction and luxury. Corruption has led many of the Christian leaders in the region to be involved in building their own kingdom by establishing their own ministry while they continue to work under Councils/Conventions/Associations. Many of them are not building the welfare of the Councils/Conventions/

Association but in this name they all go around the world raise funds and prepare for their connection and their own future ministry. Many Christian leaders indulge in cheating and committing so much atrocity in the churches today. There are so much competition among the Christian leaders for wealth, fame and popularity while their members languish in spiritual poverty. Christian leaders today eat and enjoy to their fullest, clothe themselves with the best clothes available in the market and use best cars sold in the market, but they do not strengthened the weak or heal the sick or bound up the spiritually injured members of the church. It is a fact that in the North East States of today, many Church members are greatly impoverished by the extravagant lifestyles of Christian leaders. Corruption has conquered both the society and the church.

### 3. Christian Leaders

*Christian leadership as portrayed in the Holy Bible is expected to serve as a role model of faithfulness, truth, honesty and chastity, free from any form of corruption.* The focus of the scriptures is on the Christian leaders and their responsibilities as they lead people among multi-cultured and multi-religious context. The central notion of the word of God is that Christian leaders must conduct their lives pleasing to God and the people around; with a clear vision of their assignment of responsibilities. Thus, Matthew 5:13-14 speaks about the "must possess" character of a Christian leader: "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." Christian leaders are called upon to lead a life that is free of corruption and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every aspect of their conduct. Therefore, those who seek leadership in the church and those who are leading people today must prove their character of being free from corruption and that is more important than their personality, preaching gifts, administrative abilities, or academic accomplishments. We as Christian leaders have the obligation to live by the norms of Christian characters as stipulated in the scriptures (1Tim.3:1-7, Tit.1:3-8 "A bishop as God's steward, must be blameless; he/she must be hospitable, must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy." In this epistle, much emphasis is laid on the character of prospective Church leaders rather than the position. As Kretzschmar said, "Christian

leaders need to be rooted in the stability of a relationship with God and the simplicity of a life that is straightforward and open." This rootedness in a God-centered life of righteousness can enable the leaders to face the corruption and conflicts that arise as a result of morally wrong motives, of Christian leaders.

The expectations of God and the people for Christian leaders are very high, this is because Christianity is the way to God. Hence, when Christian leaders are not free from corruption they lose their integrity and value of being Christian leaders. Today there is lack of respect for Christian leaders and consequently Christian leaders are becoming more and more estranged from God and people whom they lead in the society. For example the present state of Nagaland could be a reflection of the states of the North East Indian Church or whole of Indian Church. The loss of integrity, an accountability to our calling among the leaders in recent time have reached an alarming rate which has caused a high level of corruption not only in the quality of Christians but also reflected in the current deplorable condition of the states. The immediate question is where are Christian leaders in fighting against corruption?

The loss of respect by the Christian leaders and their involvement in corruption have impacted negatively on the Christians and members of the society who are key players in the different aspects of national or international leadership. Many who have become national leaders from our region have at one point of time come in the influence of a Christian institutions or churches but at the moment, the Christian leaders are completely losing the godly virtues because of being part of corruption. Therefore, today there is a lot of moral decadence in the lives of the Christians such that the Christian values such as honesty, faithfulness, trust, once celebrated as guide to the life of people, are being eroded by corruption. The ideal Church leader is described in the scriptures (1Tim. 3: 1-7). Anyone whose moral and spiritual qualities do not commend them to their contemporaries is not going to have much influence as a Christian leader. A great deal of damage has been done by many Christian leaders whose inconsistent living and activity

in corruption has been noticed and criticized by the non-Christians in our region. Christian leaders are expected to serve as models of unfailing perseverance in faith, love, purity and free of corruption. We are to maintain high moral and spiritual standards. There are so many churches and denominations in NEI today yet there is no transformation, instead crime, prostitution, embezzlement, corruption, tribalism and the likes are increasing every day in our states.

Some of the diseases of corruption that is rampant among the Christian leaders today are:

1. A means to obtain something for self or someone whom they favour
2. The hidden and non-transparent nature of the activity within ourselves as well as in the church as leaders
3. The illegal search for personal advantage
4. The illegal acquisition of something that one does not deserve
5. The inefficient use of funds (misuse of church funds)
6. Very often proximity to blackmail, abuse of public power, nepotism (showing favouritism to their own family members or their well-known friends and their children)
7. Breach of confidence (congregation doesn't trust leaders today)
8. The damage of moral integrity and of general ethos
9. A breach of law with a disintegration of the sense of justice
10. Loss of one's commitment and responsibility

Many Christian leaders could not perform their assigned office in the church and society simply because most of them are not free from corruption and fail to uphold their integrity and have forgotten their calling. Many have fallen and disappointed the church and people around while many make no difference between what is called sacred and the secular. They continue with their own interests and agendas for their self-gain and self-prosperity.

#### **4. Social Expectation from Christian Leaders**

Christian leaders are called by people in the region by several names as pastors, reverend, bishop, general superintendents, prophets,

missionaries, evangelists, servants of God, men and women of God and so on. This signifies the importance of the position of a person as spiritual guide and community leader in the society. We are believed to be God's representatives on earth and ambassadors of God's kingdom; hence we are respected and treated with much honour. The status of Christian leaders in the society is a unique one and it is the expectation of all the people that he/she is above reproach both in character and in commitment. There are high spiritual and moral expectations from a Christian leader since he/she is supposed to be a person of integrity in the human society.

Notwithstanding the title a man or a woman is carrying in the society, once he/she is discovered to be a man and a woman whose character is questionable, his/her tendency to influence the people around him/her disappears. Thus, it is stated that a person has character if he or she is characterized by truthfulness, courage, justice and compassion, especially if he or she is able to maintain virtuous action, emotion and thought despite pressures to slacken his or her measure. In other words, "a person is said to have integrity if he or she is a complete and definite self and has the powers to resist 'disintegration' in the face of temptation, suffering, peer pressure, and other adverse moral influences." Therefore, integrity and personal honesty are essential to every person who hopes to earn the trust and respect of those around him/her and more importantly is very crucial to a Christian leader if he/she hopes to influence his/her people positively.

The question is if Christian leaders whom the society looks up to fall for lack of integrity and personal honesty by being part of corruption, what then should be expected of people around us? No Christian leader is expected to be part of corruption today. The people are not interested to know whether his/her wife/husband and family have how many houses or cars, people expect them to be godly and behave well. His/her work is not confined to the four corners of his/her Church/institution or organization. But Christian leaders are public figures and consequently must make every effort to protect their integrity by not involving in any form of corruption. Therefore, the Christian leaders' lifestyle is an important

element in their total witness. Their lifestyle should confirm rather than contradict the gospel they proclaim every day.

Therefore, God puts a high demand on personal honesty and truthfulness, because it will ensure a just leader free from evil system (Ex 23:1; Lev 19:1). Christian leaders are instructed not to steal, not to lie and not to deceive one another, because "I am the Lord." This is straight talk from God's heart. This implies that a person may escape in the eyes of people after being involve in corruption, but before God there is no escape and God will assuredly punish the offenders. Therefore throughout the Bible the scripture is very vivid that God expects from Christians in particular Christian leaders that personal honesty and integrity should mark their actions and words.

## **5. Some of the Ways to Overcome Corruption by Christian Leaders**

1. Christian leaders and Churches should further develop clear anti-corruption policies. Many have spoken against corruption and efforts have been started in many of the churches in our region yet much work is still needed to be done in order to become corruption-free Christian leaders. Church-related institutions, councils, seminaries, theological/ Bible colleges, NGOs connected to the churches must work out mechanism and policies r become corruption free.

2. As Christian leaders we need to reflect and renew the theological basis for overcoming corruption and that is truthfulness (integrity) and personal honesty (Jn 8:23 "And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"). Christian leaders also need to know in order to be free from corruption that the doctrine of church leadership is as service and good stewardship. Executing power and leadership in the church and society is a service with mutual accountability between the leaders and those whom they serve, a servant and participatory leadership, characterised by honesty. Spiritual leadership is based on deep roots in faith that give the inner strength to resist corruption.

3. Moreover, today the prosperity gospel is another serious concern that is rocking the Christian church and we need to be aware that

prosperity gospel is promoting corruption with its theology and leadership models. The prosperity gospel, as a globally fast-growing theology promising wealth as a sign of salvation, promotes a culture of corruption by 'bribing God' and by non-transparent leadership practices. Many Christian leaders in our region have become part of this corruption. In the name of God they cheat people, in the name of prayer they threatened people to extract money for their prosperity, and in the name of healing and miracles they rob people today.

4. Church leaders in North East region and indeed anywhere around the world have to be subjected to a moral code. A code of leadership is a personal commitment to God and before people in order to overcome corruption. Christian leaders and churches' staffs and church-related institutions for all employees need to be paid well – which means sufficient for a modest life in dignity. Poverty in many churches of the North East India leads to the fact that salaries in churches are much lower than the market today. This also leads to a negative selection of Christian leaders serving the church or society who are not the best qualified. Wealth and access to abundant resources in some other churches in the region also lead to greed. Therefore, poverty and greed promote corruption too. Wherefore, the church and church related institutions should pay sufficient, decent and fair salaries as a contribution to help church leaders and workers free from corruption.

5. Christian leaders must be able to declare themselves, churches and church-related institutions corruption-free with appropriate monitoring mechanisms. A Christian school, a hospital, a diocesan administration, a theological seminary, a bible school, church synod, church council, church association, a monastery, a development agency, even a single Christian office must be declared a corruption-free in order to make impact on the society today. The scripture is very clear (1Tim.3:1-7) that every Christian leaders must have the nature of God and be right in their relations to God so that they could be right in their relations with the people they lead. God expects a high moral standard from Christian leaders and they are expected to honour God and keep God's name

free from corruption.

6. Christian leaders should be careful and transparent in managing church properties such as institution's building and so on in order to be free from corruption. They are expected to be efficiently transparent and corruption-free in planning and using church properties. God's good steward needs transparent planning, such as managing of institutions, church commercial properties, church vehicles and so on. Christian leaders are using God's properties for their self-benefit and family ministry. Christian leaders are expected to be good God's stewards and shepherd the flocks by making themselves free of corruption and honest in their everyday life.

7. In our region if Christian leaders want to overcome corruption in churches and society then spiritual, ethical integrity and personal honesty need to be strengthened. Fighting corruption in the churches today is not to destroy people who are involved in corruption but to support and heal them to come out and be freed from corruption. Sometimes we are very impatient and arrogant that we are ever ready to condemn church members or leaders who are found to be involved in corruption. Instead of helping them to overcome corruption. Indeed corruption should not be allowed yet if found somebody in that situation the first thing as Christians we need to pull him/her from that pit. Without doing our God-given responsibility itself is a corruption. No one should support corruption but must be willing to help persons to be freed from corruption in our churches and society.

## **Conclusion**

Today we live in world of technology and competition is faster than any speed and therefore, Christian leaders must have a reasonable level of education and training adequate for the setting in which he/she serves. Everybody cannot be Christian leaders and leaders must be qualified both spiritually and educationally. He/she must also demonstrate the capacity for continuous learning and knowing (our setting is never static it is always progressing). He/she must be spiritually mature, regenerated and divinely empowered by the power of Holy Spirit. Effort must be

made by the leaders to prevent any lifestyle that will bring stigma or reproach to the name of God in his/her life and family. On the other side, the Churches and people should see the need to take good care of their leaders as very important as this will help the Christian leaders to overcome temptations with regards to money and it will also help them to be free from corruption.

Therefore, I would like to conclude this short write up with few words of suggestion to all the Christian leaders:

1. Personal honesty is more important than your corrupted popularity
2. Spiritual maturity is a must for all the Christian leaders
3. Misusing of God's properties must be stopped immediately if you want to be free from corruption
4. Theologically all the Christian leaders must be sound and qualified
5. Christian leaders must speak out against corruption without any fear of anyone
6. Stop using the name of Churches, Associations, Conventions, Synod and Councils for your self-ministry
7. Christian leaders, if they cannot be truthful to their calling, must leave the position/ministry

Dear readers let us today, stand and raise our topmost voice to fight against corruption. Let us join our efforts together to set free our leaders, churches, associations, conventions, synods, council from corruption. If we fail today, tomorrow we will be way too late. Now and today is our day and tomorrow belongs to God. Stand up now and today, speak now and today for corruption free church and people of God. Let us create our world a corruption free world!

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## Opportunity to work with CBCNEI Mess Hall

Applications are invited for the post of a  
"RECEPTIONIST cum CASHIER"

The candidate must:

1. be a member of a Church associated with CBCNEI
2. have command in speaking Hindi & English
3. be a intermediate (10+2)
4. be between 18 - 35 of age
5. have recommendation from respective local church

**Last date of Application submission is :  
January 10, 2018**

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



# Why was Jesus Born for? Why did God sent His Son?

*Rev Dr Jolly Rimai, Mission Secretary, CBCNEI, Panbazar*

## Why was Jesus Born for? Why did God sent His Son?

*Galatians 4:4 "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."*

### **I. He was born to be the Savior.** John 3:14-15

A. When Israel spoke against Moses and the Lord God sent fiery serpents whose bite was fatal. The people repented and God told Moses to lift make a fiery serpent's image and put it on a pole and lift it up before the people. When the people would look upon the serpent they would be healed. Jesus uses this to illustrate that He would be lifted up on the cross and crucified for the sins of men. If a sinner would look in faith to the Lord Jesus for salvation from his sin, he would be saved. ( See Numbers 21:4-9)

1. All men are sinners, and exposed to the wrath of God.
2. All men were in a hopeless condition lost in sin.
3. God gave his Son. Man had no claim on him; it was a gift—an undeserved gift.
4. He gave him up to extreme sufferings, even the bitter pains of death on the cross.
5. It was for all the world. He tasted "death for every man," Heb 2:9. He "died for all," 2 Cor 5:15. "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," 1 John 2:2.

B. Jesus was God's manifestation of love. "For God so loved the world." (John 3:16) We often say to people that God loves you....and this is the proof. It does not say God

loved a few special people, or just those who believe in Him, but He loved the whole world. That includes everyone here, in this nation and around the world. Jesus's sacrifice on the cross was to pay the sin debt of all men who ever lived. If that is not true then He could not offer salvation to all men and we could not preach the Gospel.

C. The verse says that "He gave His only begotten Son." The phrase only begotten has great meaning.

1. It says that God gave. Salvation is a free and unmerited gift. It cannot be earned. Only Christ was perfect and only He could satisfy the sin debt you and I owed.

2. "Only-begotten." This term is never applied by John to any but to Jesus Christ. It is applied by him five times to the Saviour, John 1:14; 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9. It means literally an only child. Then, as an only child is peculiarly dear to a parent, it means one that is especially beloved

3. Only-begotten. This term is never applied by John to any but Jesus Christ. It is applied by him five times to the Saviour, John 1:14; 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9. It means literally an only child. Then, as an only child is peculiarly dear to a parent, it means one that is especially beloved. Comp. Ge 22:2; 12:1-20; 16:1-16; Jer 6:26; Zech 12:10. On both these accounts it is bestowed on the Saviour.

He was eminently the Son of God, sustaining a peculiar relation to him in his divine nature, exalted above all men and angels, and thus worthy to be called, by way of eminence, his only Son. Saints are called his sons or children, because they are born of his Spirit, or are like him; but the Lord Jesus is exalted far above all, and deserves eminently to be called his only-begotten Son. Believers are the adopted sons of God. God has only one Son and that is Jesus Christ.

The term specifies Jesus as being like the Father and refers to His deity. The phrase is (ton huion ton monogenè). Literally= "The Son the only begotten." "the only son." "Monogenes" Begotten, describes the absolutely unique relation of the Son to the Father in His divine nature. This verse plainly states...God has only one Son. We are adopted sons, not like THE SON. It notes that He was eminently the Son of God, sustaining a peculiar relation to Him in his divine nature, exalted above all men and angels, and thus worthy to be called, by way of eminence, his only Son. Believers are called his sons or children, because they are born of his Spirit, but the Lord Jesus is exalted far above all, and deserves eminently to be called his only-begotten Son.

D. "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

1. This statement divides religion from biblical Christianity. It states plainly the means of salvation as being by belief or faith. It leaves no room for error to add or subtract from

God's clear statement.

2. If one believes in Jesus Christ, he will not perish, but have everlasting life.
3. It cannot be stated clearer than in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

## II. God did not send the Lord Jesus to condemn the world. John 3:17

Jesus in His first coming did not come to judge or condemn the world: He came to save the world. But Revelation 20:11-15 refers to last judgment which is the judgment of those who rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the judgment of those who trusted in false religions, idols, and false churches for their salvation who all teach that a man can be good enough to be saved and can add his works to God's grace and be saved. Nothing is further from the truth. Here in this passage in Revelation God tells us what will happen to all who reject God's free gift of grace and present their works for their salvation.

The passage says they all will be cast into the eternal Lake of Fire. What a sad thing to be offered salvation freely, but reject it. Yet, Christ came not to condemn....mankind was already condemned, but to redeem and offer salvation to all who would by faith receive it.

## III. He that believes is not commended. John 3:18

This verse explains what should be clear to us all. We are sinners and being sinners we are under the condemnation of sin. Romans 6:23 says "*The wages of sin is death....but the gift of God is eternal life.*" Christmas is "God gave.." the gift of eternal life.

### Conclusion:

1. Why was Jesus born? What is the meaning of Christmas....? The answer is simple....you and I needed a Savior. We are lost in our sins and trespasses against God. We cannot save ourselves, because our sins have condemned us.
2. Jesus was born that we might be able to have life after death. He conquered death and sin for us so we could have eternal life.



# News Capsule

## His story in the history of Indian Mission Movement

The vision of the Mission Board of the Council to reach this nation during our lifetimes and the strategy developed in line with the vision has been widely accepted by our leaders and even by the leaders of other denominations. We believed it is the Lord's doing in the history of Indian Mission. We are grateful to God for allowing this movement to happen during our lifetime where we are given opportunity to be part of this movement. If this is God's doing, and we believe it is, this movement will remain as historic in the Indian mission movement since this type of movement has never happened in Indian mission history.

Except Arunachal Baptist Churches Council (ABCC) and Mising Baptist Kebang (MBK), envisioning has been completed in all Conventions. Mission leaders from over 60 Associations have taken the commitment to encourage their churches to pray for new Districts within India that has less than 5% Christian population. We will continue to encourage and pray for leaders to have the burden for the unreached people in India so that

reaching India during our lifetime becomes a reality.



## Asia Pacific Baptist Fellowship Congress

The recently concluded APBF Congress held at Yogyakarta, Indonesia was historic in the history of CBCNEI as a family. We bade farewell to our leader Rev. P. Bony Resu, former Youth Secretary of CBCNEI, who served APBF for over twenty years as Youth and General Secretary respectively. In appreciation of his leadership, a citation was given. The New General Secretary is Rev. Vee Tetseo, one of our members from NBCC, and was installed during the Congress. Let us encourage him and continue to support his leadership as much as we have supported Rev. P. Bony Resu.

During the Congress, the CBCNEI Mission Secretary was given an opportunity to lead a session on "Global mission is not just for the West". In his presentation, he was able to envision the leaders who attended his session on how we can make greater impact in our mission in APBF areas. Proposals such as, *Proper Coordination amongst the Churches under*



*APBF, Making survey and identifying Target areas such as, 0-5% Christian Nations, Disseminating information about the Mission Fields, Partnership of the Churches under APBF for Mission, The importance of Unity, Remaining focused and being intentional, etc, were presented. We believe this will also bear fruit and we will be able to see cooperation of churches under APBF in God's mission.*



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### **Mission Conference (STNBA) (3 -5 Oct)**

The Southern Tangkhul Naga Baptist Association (STNBA) had its 3<sup>rd</sup> Mission Conference at Ringpam Baptist Church. 41 Churches participated in the Conference where envisioning was done along with other Mission challenges. Missionaries supported by the Association were invited to share their testimonies. It was a blessed Conference with many churches taking the challenge to be more involved in Mission. STNBA has adopted Sonitpur District in Assam as their new Mission field to pray for those people who have not heard



the Gospel so that they will hear during their lifetime.



**Mission Conference (KABS)  
(4-5 Nov)**

The Kamrup Asomia Baptist Sobha (KABS) conducted its Mission Conference at Bakhlapara Baptist Church. Over 60 pastors and leaders attended the program. Envisioning on “Each one catch

one” was done with the leaders and other mission lessons such as Importance of Prayer in Mission, Church and its Vision were presented. Many church leaders made commitment to be more involved in the Mission of God to



reach the unreached. They have adopted Bhagalpur District in Bihar to be their new Mission field to pray for the people so that they will hear the Gospel during our lifetime.



## **2nd Arunachal Baptist Church Council Youth Conference (Oct 17 - 19)**

The three days Conference was conducted at Tezu Baptist Church of Mishmi Baptist Church Council (MBCC), with the theme "Encounter-Transformation. Acts: 9:1-9". More than 500 youth from Arunachal Baptist Churches Council (ABCC) actively participated in the conference. North East Co coordinator, EFI Religious Liberty commission India Rev. Abhisekh John attended as the speaker.

Bible study of the conference was led by Sis. Nyari Tech, Treasurer ABCC youth and Bro. Gyamar Baba youth secretary of NBCC attended as resource person Rev. Tage Doni, Vice Presidet spoke on the theme of the conference at the inaugural service. Apart from sharing the words of God and the religious discussion there were many other activities included like singing and dance, among the participating councils and association. The 3 days programme started with congregational prayer for

communal harmony, which was followed by bible Study, exhortation on bible Message. The programme ended with the handing over of the council Flag to Dibang Lohit Baptist Churches Association (DLBCA) Roing where the next conference will be held.



## **Lewis Memorial Hostel Centenary Jubilee Celebrations (3 Nov)**

It was in the year 1917 that LM hostel was established which saw undue struggles and pains initially. 100 years of milestone journey has put this humble student's ministry of CBCNEI an important element in shaping the careers of young boys. To commemorate this auspicious moments a simple yet meaningful centenary jubilee program were planned. Rev. Dr. Solomon Rongpi the General Secretary of CBCNEI opened the jubilee celebration by inaugurating the jubilee monolith. Mr. Peter Thong, pastor Naga Christian Fellowship Guwahati chaired the program. Melodious song of welcome was presented by the LMers of both the present and past hostellers. Mr. Talimoa, the present chaplain of LM hostel welcomed the gatherings and

gave a brief history of LM hostel. Former Chaplains Justice W A Shishak (ret'd) and Mr. Chubatemjen (Ex. Minister Govt. Of Nagaland) gave brief speeches. Mr Pawan Bhuyan, property manager CBCNEI read out the word of God from the scripture. The offertory prayer was pronounced by Rev K C Gaila, Chaplain Shillong Tyrannus Hall. Special prayer for the students was led by Rev T P Mordecia Director CLC. White memorial hostel girls presented special number. In commeration of the centaryary jubilee celebration, the souvenir was released by Mr. R K Raichaudhary. Rev. Dr. Taku Longkumer, Country Consultant International Ministries spoke on the occasion and encouraged the con-

gregation citing examples from the Israelites' where God helped them in times of difficulties and challenges. The congregation was blessed through his insightful thoughts. Rev. Dr. Jolly, Mission Secretary and in charge of the CBCNEI students ministry thanked all the people who had worked hard in making this centenary celebration a memorable one. He also acknowledged all the program partakers and participants for the grand success. Rev. Joseph Huss Special Assistant to Ben Chan closed the celebration with words of prayer. The centenary jubilee celebration came to a glorious end which was followed a Dinner for all the participants.



## NURTURING SOLIDARITY AND PROPHETIC SECULARISM (20- 21 Nov)

A two days consultation program was organized by the Council of Baptist Churches of North East India (CBC-NEI) in partnership with the National Churches Council of India (NCCI) at CB-CNEI, Mission



Compound, Panbazar Guwahati, Assam. Around 33 participants who were mostly Church leaders, Scholars and leaders of different Christian institutions and denominations from all parts of India attended it. Rev. Dr. Solomon Rongpi led the session and welcomed the participants. The resource persons for the consultation were Dr. Pangernungba, Dr. Roger Gaikwad, Father Melvil Pereira, Mr. Samuel Jayakumar, Mr. A. K. Goldsmith.

In the last session, the participants affirmed to adopt the action plans for the safeguard of the religious minority of India.



# Purpose of Christmas

*Pastor, Guwahati Baptist Church*



The Christmas is celebrated with great fervour and gaiety. This festival commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, who was born about two thousand years ago. Long before the birth of Jesus, it predicted the details of his birth including the place, the nature and the purpose of his birth. Accordingly, in due time, Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary in a town called Bethlehem, also known as the City of David, in Palestine. Jesus was named before he was born. An angel appearing in a dream told Joseph to whom Mary was betrothed, 'She will bear a son and you will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21). Therefore, the name Jesus means the Saviour, the one who would save man from the clutches of sin and its power. Therefore, Christmas has universal significance because Jesus was born to be the Saviour of the world. Salvation or *\_mukti\_* of humankind was thus the purpose of the birth of Jesus.

Jesus was born in a stable for cattle because there was no place for Mary in any house in Bethlehem where she had gone with Joseph from their home in the town of Nazareth. On the night when Jesus was born, some shepherds were watching over their flock in a field. An angel appeared to them saying, 'I bring you good news of great joy for all people, for unto you is born this day in the City of David your Saviour, who is Christ the Lord'; after which the angel was joined by many others singing, 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men' (Luke 2:10, 11, 14). The shepherds went to Bethlehem and saw the baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. It was a Jewish custom that when a boy was born, musicians would gather at the house to greet the baby with music. Since Jesus was born in an unusual way, in a stable, that ceremony could not be held. It is a lovely thought that the ministry of heaven took the place of the ministry of earth, and angels sang the songs for Jesus that the earthly singers could not do.

Therefore, the message of Christmas is a message of peace. About seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus, prophet Isaiah prophesied that God would send his Anointed One, who would be born of a virgin, and he would be

called the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). Prophet Isaiah's beautiful vision of peace is quoted by many secular governments and engraved in the wall outside the U N building in New York. However, the Biblical understanding of \_shalom\_ which has been translated as 'peace' is not just the absence of war, conflict or strife: it also means wholeness, completeness, well being, prosperity and harmonious relationship between man and God and among humankind. This peace of mind and exceeding joy of Christmas can be experienced by believing in Jesus as one's personal Lord and Saviour. The purpose of Christmas or the coming of Jesus Christ was not to establish a new religion but to bring salvation and new life to humanity. Because, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. God sent his son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him' (John 3:16, 17). Therefore, the birth of Jesus means life and hope for man.

It is important to note that though Christmas is supposed to be the birthday of Jesus Christ, the Bible says that he existed with God throughout eternity. Therefore, God could 'give' or 'send' him into the world. This means Jesus is pre-existent. In other words, he is unborn and uncreated because he is eternal or \_sanatana\_. Only about two thousand years ago the one who was already with God incarnated or became avatara\_ by being born as a human. All through these readings of the Bible, we must have been thinking of the rough simplicity of the birth of Jesus. One might have expected that he would have been born in a palace or a mansion. A story tells about a king who worried his court by often disappearing and walking incognito amongst his people. When his chieftain requested him not to do so for security's sake, he answered, 'I cannot rule my people unless I know how they live'. It is a great thought that we have a God who knows the life we live because he too lived it and claimed no special advantage over common people.

Our world is increasingly a world of conflict that is in need of peace and reconciliation. Violence assaults our world on every hand. Personal violence, domestic violence, religious violence, ethnic violence and national violence has escalated to unprecedented proportions. Today, in a world full of strife, anarchy, communalism, terrorism, separatism, regionalism and apartheid, the birth festival of Jesus, or Christmas, summons us to be tolerant, forgiving, selfless and compassionate and to spread the message of peace and love in our society.





## COHABITATION: AN INTIMIDATION TO GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN FOR MARRIAGE

*Ms Chubala Sangma, Kahilipara Baptist Church, Guwahati*

God created man and woman in His own likeness and He said it was very good. He delighted in His masterpiece and right away blessed their union under the legal institution of marriage. From the beginning God's desire for man and woman was to unite in marriage, have children, have a family and inhabit the earth. Marriage is a covenant that permanently seals the relationship between two people with each other and with God. While so much can be said about the sanctity of marriage whether in Christianity or in any other religion there is another reality about marriage and that is- *a partial or the total rejection of it.*

Cohabitation or Live-in relationship the commonly used term today means the practice of living together before marriage. It is no more a recent trend but the rate of growth of it is higher at this age than ever before and the threat it poses to the institution of marriage is horrifying. Over the years the rate of such cohabiting couples has grown to a large extent. Many couples have chosen to live with their partner on the grounds of testing compatibility, economic scarcity, disapproval of parents, religious issues, avoiding the traumas of divorce and many other reasons. But any reason people put forward to justify such living situations, cohabitation can never be the solution. The concern here is not just lose of values and moral standards in living-together but it is highly visible that people have lost regard for the traditional understanding of the union of two people permissible only under the act of holy marriage. There is no doubt that there is a major lack of understanding about the design

and purpose of marriage. For Christians there is absolute absence of accountability to self, towards the partner, and towards the Creator, they are defiling their testimony as well as their godly influence which is a primary call for every believer in Christ. God created man and woman in His own image so that He is glorified in their glory by doing what is right, by fulfilling the command to multiply and inhabit the earth under right relationship as was instituted by God for man and woman for their wellbeing.

Cohabitation contradicts God's command to man to inhabit the earth and multiply in 'marriage' only. It defies the original plan of God to unite man and woman in marriage and elevate them to the level of highest ecstasy.

It is quite alarming to see that many Christian young men and women are adopting this lifestyle especially those who are residing in the metro cities. Unfortunately the parents remain ignorant of this, but surprisingly there are also some parents who indirectly support this cohabiting-culture especially if they cannot afford a wedding (rare cases only, most are unaware). At the same time church can also be guilty of indirectly giving their consent to ripen the relationship of cohabiting couples by keeping silent.<sup>1</sup> People and even the cohabiting couples may say eventually they/we will get married but in most cases they never get married to each other, while some actually marry but that's beside the point because the purpose of marriage already is defiled by pre-marital relationship.

The practise of cohabitation is growing in popularity and partly because the media has failed to flash out the real facts about it. The bliss that is portrayed in media is deceiving and far from reality. In reality it robs from people of their self-esteem, dignity, and leaves them with guilt in the later stage of life. The truth is that living together prior to marriage is one of the single best predictors of divorce. A single survey done in the year 2014 in the city of Pune revealed that about 60% of Christian young people were living together with their partners (this survey was done by the presenter of this article herself). Most of them admitted the igno-

rance of their parents and the uncertainty of the future with their cohabiting partners but they were happy with the present arrangement of living together because it met their immediate needs. This is a popular lifestyle adopted by many young people in all major cities like Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi, including Guwahati and it can happen anywhere in any part of the town or city and not necessarily in the big cities. It is a bitter reality that over half of all the marriages are preceded by cohabitation today and more than ever before the number of cohabiting couples are increasing daily. Some say cohabitation is on the rise while marriage is on the decline. Actually it is not marriage that is in decline because it is still prevalent but approximately half of man and woman have already lived together with an unmarried partner before their marriage and ironically only a very few get married to their live-in partners in reality. This certainly is giving rise to a culture that holds a very low view of marriage.

There are different views, opinions that support the idea that there is no harm in man and woman living together without getting married and raising a family having children either through birth or adoption. In any case the fact remains that living together as husband and wife is not equivalent to real husband and wife living together in marriage. Cohabiting couples assume themselves *as* husband and wife, they pretend to play the role of husband and wife but in marriage couples *are* husband and wife. It is a status and respect they have earned and society accepts it. Those who support live-in relationship defends their argument by saying they want to see what married life would be like but what they don't realize is that they will never know what married life is unless they are married. It is true that sometimes there can be issues of marrying someone who does not seem compatible at all and then marriage becomes a hell on earth but the grounds on which to consider live-in relationship as a good way to test and build the level of compatibility and create lasting marriage is totally unacceptable.

The basis of this article is certainly to expose the impracticality of considering cohabitation as equivalent to marriage but more primarily the gist of this article is to focus on how cohabitation contradicts God's

original plan for man and woman to multiply, inherit and inhabit the earth, only in the institution of marriage. This also must raise awareness among the churches and society who are giving their consent to young people to adopt this immoral lifestyle by remaining silent.

Some of the important issue in relation to cohabitation and marriage which has always put human conscience in deep dilemma are briefly highlighted below.

### **i. Agreement or commitment**

The aspect of *agreement to live together* is found in both marriage and cohabitation but vastly differing in their usage and application. In marriage couples agree to live together in life-long commitment to take care of each other till the end, through thick and thin, regardless of life's ups and downs. Cohabiting couples make an agreement too to live together but without any life-long commitment, their primary agreement is to satisfy each other's physical need. They agree to stay together with the condition that the relationship can be called off anytime if they cannot adjust with each other. In some cases the agreement is called off without the consent of the other partner and when this happen the one who is left behind can go into deep psychological trauma which can be harmful. The point is, in marriage couples make a deliberate effort to sustain their relationship, which may not happen in cohabitation.

### **ii. Pre-marital Sex**

Sex is a primary factor in both marriage and cohabiting only it differs in its intended purpose. Sex is a part of our lives but much of modern society is preoccupied with sex, only with variation in their intensity of obsession to it. Sexual obsession is becoming a form of worship for many men and women today and it is said to be one aspect of what Paul talked about when he referred to worshipping created things rather than the Creator (Romans 1: 24-25). Sex is a driving force for men and women to violate the ethical norms of religion and society. In a book titled *Sexual Sanity* the writer talks about sexual sanity and insanity. He says that there is a certain type of insanity associated with using sex for other than its intended purposes. He further says that sexual sanity comes

when sex is engaged in by a man and a woman who are deeply committed to each other. People who engage in sex apart from these constraints run the risk of becoming enslaved to their sexuality and thus having it lose its meaning (Earl D. Wilson, *Sexual Sanity*, Illinois, 19).

### iii. Divorce

One of the myths of all times could be this understanding that living together before marriage with the partner helps to prevent divorce, build stronger marriage and ensure marital stability for couples. Such views must be reconsidered because at a later stage they turn out to be the ones who mostly opt for divorce. From studies reports and research studies it is clearly evident that the occurrence of a couple divorce after living together are higher than those couples who have not lived together prior to marriage.

### iv. Procreation

A beautiful aspect in marriage is children. Children completes parenthood and they are assets to parents and society. There is vast difference in the treatment of children born out of wedlock and those that are conceived without marriage. Unplanned and unwanted pregnancy is one of the biggest blows resulting from premarital sex. Abortion is common to any couples who are not prepared to have children or do not want to have children. In cohabiting couples usually the abortion ratio is higher because their union is not legalised and therefore they cannot handle the crisis of having a baby and especially when they have no intention of adopting parenthood. In the creation story of Genesis procreation was more of a blessing than a command. In that regard cohabiting couples do not enjoy the blessing instead invite guilt when they have to or rather choose to terminate the life within. Christian men and women in such state do not only miss out experiencing God's blessing but also fail to be effective witness.

### **A look into God's intended plan for man and woman to inhabit together in marriage not Cohabit**

Cohabitation is emerging as a significant experience for men and women

especially among young adults. It is said to be replacing marriage as the first living-together union and not only that but a growing number of cohabiting unions also include children. Why the fuss over getting married when both ways either in marriage or in cohabiting the purpose for man and woman uniting is being fulfilled? *Purpose* plays the key role in deciding why the fuss over marriage stands valid.

### **The Covenantal Aspect in Marriage**

Basically, the term covenant denotes a compact or agreement between two parties binding them mutually to undertakings on each other's behalf. Theologically, the term is used of relations between God and man, denoting a gracious undertaking entered into by God for the benefit and blessing of man, and specifically of those men who by faith receive the promises and commit themselves to the obligations which this undertaking involves (*Dictionary of Theology*, Massachusetts, 142-144).

A Covenant is not a Contract. Quoting an anonymous writer, "a covenant is intended by God to be a lifelong fruitful relationship between a man and a woman. Marriage is a vow to God, to each other, our families and our community to remain steadfast in unconditional love, reconciliation and sexual purity, while purposefully growing in our covenant marriage relationship."

God made a covenant with his people in different periods of history for the welfare and stability of human race. God promised to bless those who commit themselves to the obligations of the covenant. In marriage a man and a woman fulfils the covenantal obligations and invites stability and blessings and that extends to their family circle. According to the Covenant Marriage Movement- Covenants are the fruit of a loving, faithful relationship, Covenant partners take responsibility for their actions, Covenants are based on freedom of choice, Covenants are rooted in actions based on choices, not feelings, Covenant partners nurture their relationship, Covenants are based on commitments freely offered. These covenantal aspects are totally absent in cohabitation and therefore it does contradict with God's real purpose for man to permanently unite in marriage and not apart from it or temporarily. God's ultimate goal for

man was so that He is glorified through them and indeed marriage glorifies God in their relationship and exemplifies His sovereignty over every created being.

### **The Aspect of Spirituality**

It is said that spirituality is not bound by time and space, it is eternal. Spirituality is not something that is visible in our outer devotional practice only but it is a component that permeates in the lifestyle of a believer. Spirituality must be found in our relationship with one another and not only in our relationship with God. This implies then, that spirituality is a vital component between two people in relationship. The most fundamental of all relationship is our relationship with God, the Father through faith in Jesus Christ (John14:6). It is impossible that human beings can have perfect relationship with each other without having relationship with Christ first.

Those couples who have entered into relationship by the virtue of covenantal marriage are not those who are perfect or who share strong faith or never experience problems but they have an advantage over those who are in illicit relationship. For those who believe in the commitment of marriage they recognize their brokenness in their individual lives and in their life together with their spouses and to heal the brokenness they are open to the life of the Spirit within them.

Spirituality is in all relationship, in other words spirituality expresses itself in all relationship and it must be permeated in relationship between couples in relationship too. Spirituality in marriage helps couples to stay committed in relationship because their accountability is first towards God, secondly to their partners and then to self. Such kind of accountability is not applicable for cohabiting couples because their supreme concern is self. God intended man to be accountable to His Creator first and then to his fellow believers that includes spouses, when spirituality finds its expression in human relationship with one another the actualization of God purpose for man to unite in marriage becomes much more clearer and meaningful.

## The Aspect of Fulfilment

One of the primary relationship goals is also fulfilment, couples not only look for it but they must find fulfilment in each other, and to find this fulfilment they ought to know each other, which is also one of God's ultimate purposes of marriage. Derek Prince, the author of the book titled, "The Marriage Covenant" rites that knowledge between a man and a woman is neither temporary nor static. It is not merely intellectual, nor is merely sexual. It is a total, unreserved opening up of each personality to the other and the depth of this truth can be experienced only in marriage. He further writes that if the marriage pursues its God-ordained course, the mutual knowledge of husband and wife will become fuller and deeper as the years pass.

A fulfilled life in marriage does not find its accomplishment in sexual intimacy alone as most people think. One of the biggest challenges men and women face today is the challenge of viewing sex from God's perspective. In the later verses of Genesis 3 God tells Eve that her desire will be for her husband, and through their union she would conceive. Sex is God-ordained but within the boundary of marriage only. God created us as sexual beings and He wants us to enjoy it. Sadly, the liberated idea about sex in and through media has liberated human conscience to use it purely for the gratification of pleasure and lust without any feeling of guilt. God's wonderful plan for fulfilment of man and woman is conditioned not only in sexual intimacy but also in other elements such as unconditional love, forgiveness, trust, mutual respect, spirituality and maturity of each other, all of which finds their true expression in marriage.

## The Aspect of Independent and Dependent

There is nothing wrong in wanting to be independent, to have the desire for freedom because when God created man in His own image and likeness He also gave them the gift of free-will, the freedom of choice. But yes, along with the gift of free will, God gave them the ability to think, reason, make decisions, and know right from wrong. ([Hebrews 5:14](#)) Thus, free will was to be based on intelligent choice. Man was sup-

posed to work in harmony with his freedom and the freedom of his fellow beings because God knew the vulnerability of man to misuse the gift of free will/freedom of choice and unlimited freedom would mean anarchy in society which is exactly what happens in cohabitation.

There have to be laws to guide human activities. God's Word says: "Behave like free men, and never use your freedom as an excuse for wickedness," ([1 Peter 2:16](#)). God wants free will to be regulated for the common good. He purposed for man and woman to have, not *total* freedom, but *relative* freedom, subject to the rule of law. God's laws allow for great freedom of choice within their boundaries. God created man and woman independently of each other but they were not to be independent of God. This dependency on God helps them to find rest and comfort in times of crisis and moments of distress. God created man and woman different but they were equal in terms of enjoying the gift of free will, they were independent as individuals, but in terms of their relationship with each other God made them to be co-workers. Thus interdependency was a vital factor for their growth and fulfilment.

In marriage one do not lose their freedom rather they enjoy the presence of each other, they celebrate their oneness, and lament on the absence of their partners for whatever reason.

### **Children raised in marriage**

Raising a child is always challenging and in cohabiting relationship it is comparatively more challenging and harder than raising them in marriage. Evidence shows that children in cohabiting relationships have more behavioural problems and cognitive problems than those in married-couple families mainly because of the complexities and unstable environment in the family.

According to the [National Marriage Project](#), children in cohabiting families are more likely to use drugs, suffer from depression, and drop out of school than children from married-parent families. While some of the negative effects of cohabitation on children can be partly explained by their parents' lack of resources, cohabitation surely has an independent

negative impact on children.

Cohabiting parenthood may look like marriage in that it provides children with both a mom and a dad but it is a more fragile and less safe family union than marriage because it robs children of a wide range of social, psychological, and educational benefits. Someone has rightly said, "No other institution reliably connects two parents, and their money, talent, and time, to their children in the way that marriage does."

Thus, despite the popularity and convenience of cohabitation, marriage is still the best setting to have and raise children. Children generally adopt the value structure from their parents and are modelling their behaviour and lifestyle. Instilling Christian values is one of the responsibilities God has entrusted parents, especially to the fathers in Deuteronomy 6, therefore adopting their roles as Christian parents will communicate to children what is really important in life as well as to lay the right foundation for Christian adults in the future.

### **A Call to Sexual Purity**

Sexual intercourse that is not preceded by permanent, mutual commitment is considered as an immoral act. There is no mention of pre-marital sex in the Scripture but it does mention fornication, those who indulge in sexual relationships without covenant commitment. There is a strong commendation on marriage and sex in Hebrews 13:4, "*Marriage should be honoured by all and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.*" Any man or woman who allows their body to be sexually involved without marital covenant is exposing themselves to the wrath and judgement of God. Sexual relationship has to be kept pure.

Abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage is not only a sign of chastity but it is also a Christian obligation. The scripture have strong admonitions about abstaining from every kind of fornication and adultery, before and after marriage. Indulgence in sexual immorality is a sin and Paul makes special mention of this sin against the body by stating that the body of believer belongs to God. It is His temple (1 Corinthians

3:16, 6:19) and therefore we are not to defile His temple. There is a very strong implication in these verses for those who claim themselves to be followers of Christ. Engaging in any kind of sexual activity with a person outside the commitment of marriage is a sin against the body.

## Conclusion

Cohabitation contradict God's original plan of marriage. It causes man and woman to lose the blessings that God has reserved for them in marriage. He permitted and blessed the union of man and woman in marriage as husband and wife and not as cohabiting partners. Cohabitation never fulfils any condition for a happy living but it is a sure prescription to invite chaos in relationship.

Of course, no marriage is perfect unless both husband and wife work on it together and it is an ongoing process until death. It is of utmost urgency therefore that Christian parents and elders, the church must talk, discuss, teach and educate the young people about the relationship rules between man and woman, their union in Holy Marriage, its purpose and goal. The church is neglecting a vital aspect of their ministry if they are hesitant and unwilling to take the initiative to reform the lives of such people. The instruction to Peter by Jesus to 'feed the lambs' certainly include all cohabiting couples who need to be fed the truth from the Word of God. May God richly bless and provoke the readers of this article to ponder upon the truths of His Word.

## (Footnotes)

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of confidentiality the names and identity of those churches cannot be mentioned in this article. Nevertheless there are church leaders who admit to refuse to oppose such couples because it would affect their church membership, attendance and numerical growth.





## Lewis Memorial (LM) 100 years of glorious Journey ...

*M. Talimoa, Chaplain, L. M. Student Ministry*

On this day of historic celebration I bring greetings to all the readers. Indeed it is a great joy for CBCNEI family and LM student Ministry in particular to rejoice in the Lord thanking for His faithfulness all these 100 years of glorious journey.

Down by the strand of the great Brahmaputra stand LM Hostel with a Motto ' Thou Be A Man ' ...was established by the American Baptist Missionaries way back in 1917. From the early period of missionary work, Guwahati was the only centre of Educational Institution for higher studies in NE Region . Therefore, taking the opportunity to reach out the young boys, missionaries had a vision from God to open a hostel to help the college going students who come to Guwahati to pursue their academic studies. Thus, Dr and Mrs WE Witter the missionary in-charge of students work in Guwahati in his report said: "We arrived at this beautiful, thriving town of Guwahati, and at once became aware that the opportunities for students work far surpassed our anticipation. A few days after our arrivals a most casual invitation on the part of the missionaries of the station was responded to by 110 of the cotton college students all Hindus and Muhammadans, not a single Christian among them who came to welcome to the mission compound to give us welcome...It was one of the most thrilling moments of our lives, as we stood face to face with this splendid body of young Hindu and Muhammadan college men, and saw in their eager faces the promise of the days to be if only God would help us in the right way to present to them our Christ and His gospel...at the latest, should witness the erection on Guwahati compound of a Hostel for this students work... our American friends and our son all expressed their conviction of the immediate need of a hostel. In this respect the prayers of years have received a first answer through our old friend Judge E.E Lewis, LLD ., of Sioux City, Iowa and friends soon to be erected in order that Christian students in Assam may not be debarred the splendid educational advantages of our famous cotton college. "

Thus to fulfill the vision, the American Baptist Missionaries established initially as Guwahati Students Hostel way back in 1917 in mission compound just adjacent to river Brahmaputra. Later on with a gift of Judge & Mrs EE Lewis.LLD and friends the present hostel old block building was erected in AD 1920. As a result of which the name of the hostel was renamed as Lewis Memorial Hostel, which is popularly known as LM Hostel. But as the enrollment of the students gradually increased the needs to expand the hostel was felt and the Council decided to construct another building (new block) to accommodate more students. Thus in loving memory of Rev Edward Singha the then President of CBCNEI the foundation was laid on 19 August, 1969, and began to progress from July 1970. The present Hostel has two buildings having 57 seat capacities with Auditorium Hall. Though LM hostel was meant for boys, before WM Hostel building was built, a temporary arrangement in July 1933 was made to accommodate thirteen college girls' students of Cotton College in LM Hostel. And the arrangement continued up to April 10, 1937.

When the historic decision to establish LM Hostel was taken, it was small step towards a big cause. Ever since the Hostel was established, it played a long and glorious role producing many young people of the region. From the time of inception both Christians & non-Christians students stayed together in the hostel as one family belonging to rich cultures. It is important to note that during the past 10 decades God has blessed LM tremendously to produce many excellent students, who are capable of being good citizen. To name few among those are some of the outstanding men in their fields like that of Olympian Dr.T.Ao, Chief Secretary of Manipur Mr.T.Kipgen, Chief Minister of Nagaland Mr.P.Shilu Ao, a great Bible teacher Rev.Dr.I Ben Wati, Pro- Vice Chancellor NEHU Kiremwati and many more. And even in our days many are well placed in different capacities in the regional, national and international level. They are the fruits of LM Hostel students' ministry during this 100 years of journey. It gives me immense joy, and a source of inspiration in my life and in ministry as well.

Over the years God has blessed with so many dedicated leaders to serve the Council through LM Hostel ministry. Some of them are known personally, some of them are gone and some of them are known only by name yet who by under their leadership LM completes 100 years of ministry. Indeed we deeply regret for not glean all staff names in this souvenir. Nevertheless, on this memorial occasion we do remember all, and sincerely appreciated for their dedicated service, devotion and commitment. Our only prayer is that God

knows you all by names and He will richly honor and reward everyone. Today, on this remarkable celebration we also salute with deep appreciation and sincere gratitude to all the American Baptist Missionaries for their glorious vision of establishing LM Hostel to shape young people's lives in this part of region.

Today, from a humble and a small beginning LM student ministry stand proud with a milestone completed. Thank you to all... for helping us to grow. We have every reason to thank God for producing many outstanding leaders. On this day as I look back the times gone by memories comes as a fresh though with many ups & downs. Yet God's presence and blessing was so much in action, and He has been so faithful in all through the journey. And therefore, today we are here celebrating 100 years as a day of thanks giving on the theme 'Thus far has the lord helped us'.

Well, LM Hostel is a Student's ministry of CBCNEI, and therefore it uphold CBCNEI vision to produce promising young leaders for the churches and societies. Hence apart from the academic career, hostel also emphases to disciples, imparting Christian values and develop leadership. Therefore it aimed to promote wholesome development for the students spirituality, mental and physically.

In conclusion, I thank God for His abiding grace and unfailing love upon me and my family for the last 18 years of ministry. Today I retrospect those years past, and look forward to serve with deeper commitment & sincerity to continue in fulfilling God's given vision to CBCNEI through LM Student Ministry. Matter of fact, a journey of 100 years is too long in the history of mankind, however the very vision still alive a fresh for the simple reason that 'investment in youth is investment in the future of our church & society'. If the youth are not care for, we will be passing poverty to the succeeding generations of leadership. And therefore with this aspiration together let us continue our journey with responsibilities, opportunities and challenges in transforming young people for the glory of Gods kingdom. Finally, me and my family thank all the CBCNEI leaders & families and well wishers for your wisdom & constant prayer support. May God bless you all on this great day of remarkable Centenary Celebration.

"Thou Be A Man"





## Christ the savior is born, Peace to mankind

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

The greatest news of all so far has been the birth of our savior Jesus. The news that proclaimed that on a perfect time and in the prophesied city the Lord our savior will be born was indeed a joyful news to all who believed and who waited on to the fulfilment of the great prophesy. The birth of Christ was the greatest revelation of the glory of God and Peace was an assurance spread everywhere to all to who received Him. Jesus bridge the gap between God and mankind. He was the mediator between God and His people. God gave us Peace through Christ to live among us.

Now that God has offered Peace to us all, how do we experience the Peace he brought to us?

The gift of Peace and reconciliation that God offered was not only to few people of His choice. God did not distinct us nor judged us when he gave us the greatest gift, our Savior Jesus Christ. But Peace will be upon those who believe and accept Christ as their savior. God's real plan of sending His only son is to give us real joy and that is peace.

The peace of Christ, can never be separated from God himself and Christ himself. God's purpose is not to give you peace separate from himself. We have to allow God's peace to lead us in life.

So the key to peace is having faith and trusting the promises of God obtained

by Christ . In believing God's promises it become real for us and thus peace is delivered to us.

### **Peace with God**

The most basic need we have is peace with God. This is foundational to all our pursuits of peace. If we don't go here first, all other experiences of peace will be superficial and temporary.

The key passage here is Romans 5:1, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith [there's the pivotal act of believing], we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Justified means that God declares you to be just in his sight by imputing to you the righteousness of Jesus. And he does that by faith alone: "Since we have been justified *by faith*." Not by works. Not by tradition. Not by baptism. Not by church membership. Not by piety. Not by parentage. But by faith alone. When we believe in Jesus as the Savior and the Lord and the supreme Treasure of our lives, we are united to him and his righteousness is counted by God as ours. We justified by faith.

And the result is peace with God. God's anger at us because of our sin is put away. Our rebellion against him is overcome. God adopts us into his family. And from now on all his dealings with us are for our good. He will never be against us. He is our Father, and our Friend. We have peace. We don't need to be afraid any more. This is foundational to all other peace.

### **Peace with Ourselves**

And because we have peace with God because of being justified by faith, we can begin to grow in the enjoyment of peace with ourselves — and here I include any sense of guilt or anxiety that tends to paralyze us or make us hopeless. Here again believing the promises of God with a view to glorifying God in our lives is key.

Philippians 4:6–7 is one of the most precious passages in this regard: "Do not be anxious about anything [the opposite of anxiety is peace], but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God [in other words, roll your anxieties onto God]. And the *peace of God*, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

The picture here is that our hearts and our minds are under assault. Guilt, worries, threats, confusions, uncertainties — they all threaten our peace. And

Paul says that God wants to “guard” your hearts and minds. He guards them with his peace. He guards them in a way that goes beyond what human understanding can fathom. Don’t limit the peace of God by what your understanding can see. He gives us inexplicable peace, supra-rational peace. And he does it when we take our anxieties to him in prayer and trust him, that he will carry them for us (1 Peter 5:7) and protect us.

When we do this, when we come to him — and remember we *already* have peace with him! — and trust him as our loving and almighty heavenly Father to help us, his peace comes to us and steadies us, and protects us from the disabling effects of fear and anxiety and guilt. And then we are able to carry on and our God gets the glory for what we do, because we trusted him.

Do that this Christmas. Take your anxieties to God. Tell him about them. Ask him to help you. To protect you. To restore your peace. And then to use you to make peace.

### Peace with Others

The third relationship where God wants us to enjoy his peace is in our relationships with other people. This is the one we have least control over. So we need to say it carefully the way Paul does in Romans 12:18. He says, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”

For many of you when you get together with family for Christmas, there will be some awkward and painful relationships. Some of the pain is very old. And some of it is new. In some relationships you know what you have to do, no matter how hard it is. And in some of them you are baffled and don’t know what the path of peace calls for.

In both cases the key is trusting the promises of God with heartfelt awareness of how he forgave you through Christ. I think the text that puts this together most powerfully for me again and again is Ephesians 4:31–32, “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

Continually cultivate a sense of amazement that in spite of all your sins God has forgiven you through Christ. Be amazed that you have peace with God. It’s this sense of amazement, that I, a sinner, have peace with God that makes the heart tender, kind and forgiving. Extend this to others seventy times seven.

It may be thrown back in your face. It certainly was thrown back in Jesus' face on the cross. That hurts and it can make you bitter if you are not careful. Don't let it. Keep being more amazed that your wrongs are forgiven than that you are wronged. Be amazed that you have peace with God. You have peace with your soul. Your guilt is taken away.

Keep trusting God. He knows what he is doing. Keep his glory, not your success or your effectiveness in peace making or your relationships, supreme in the treasure chest of your heart.

And then you will be like the angels: Glory to God in the highest is the first thing. Peace among his people is the second thing.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." This is why he came — on a day, to a city, as the Savior, Messiah, and Sovereign. That God would get glory, and that you would know peace. May the God of peace give you peace, and get his glory.

*This article contains an excerpt from the sermon "The birth of Christ" resourced by John Piper, an author and founder of Desiring God org.*

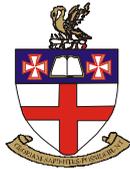
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# Serampore College

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### A. BACHELOR OF DIVINITY:

Applications are invited ([Click here to download B.D Application Form](#)) for the First Phase admission of Bachelor of Divinity Course for the new academic year 2018-19. Interested person may apply with the following information specified under:

Candidate may choose any of the Entrance Date mentioned below as per their convenience.

All candidates must send their application form within the date mentioned below. For any queries related to the course, kindly write to the Vice Principal/ Secretary, Theology Department ([sertheology@yahoo.in](mailto:sertheology@yahoo.in) or [temjenba@gmail.com](mailto:temjenba@gmail.com))

**First Phase B.D Entrance Schedule:** Written and Interview would be held on **10<sup>th</sup> January 2018** (Written Examination) & **11<sup>th</sup> January 2018** (Personal Interview). Candidates opting for the First Phase must send their filled in Application Form to the Office and must reach before end of **9<sup>th</sup> December 2017**.

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Application Form to the Office and must reach before end of **9<sup>th</sup> April 2018**.

**Application with the Fee and All queries must be sent to:**

*THE VICE-PRINCIPAL,*

Serampore College, Theology Department,

Serampore - 712201, West Bengal, India

Email: [sertheology@yahoo.in](mailto:sertheology@yahoo.in) or [temjenba@gmail.com](mailto:temjenba@gmail.com)

Phone: (033) 2652-1067.

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Last date of submission of the application form is **30<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

Attached all the documents and fees required (as specified in the application form) during submission of the forms.

For any queries related to the course, kindly write to the Secretary of Bible Translation Studies ([sertranslation@gmail.com](mailto:sertranslation@gmail.com))

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Kindly see the course detail under the page Academic Programme.

Last date of submission of the application form is **30<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

Attached all the documents and fees required (as specified in the application form) during submission of the forms.

For any queries related to the course, kindly write to the Secretary of Translation Studies ([sertranslation@gmail.com](mailto:sertranslation@gmail.com))

#### **D. MASTER OF THEOLOGY:**

Application for the admission of Master of Theology Course ([Click here to download M.Th Application Form](#)) in the branch of Old Testament, New Testament, Christian Theology and Religion for the new academic year 2018-19 under North India Institute of Post Graduate Theological Studies (NIIPGTS) is now open. Interested person may apply with the following information specified under:

Candidate may apply through the application form uploaded in the website.

Application form must reach to the NIIPGTS Office before end of **15<sup>th</sup> January 2018**.

Written examinations will be held on **8<sup>th</sup> February 2018**.

Interview will be held on **9<sup>th</sup> February 2018**.

Written examinations and interview would be held at Serampore College.

For any queries related to the course, kindly write to the Registrar of NIIPGTS, Serampore College ([niipgts@gmail.com](mailto:niipgts@gmail.com))

#### **E. DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY:**

Application for the admission of Doctor of Theology Course ([Click here to download D.Th Application Form](#)) in the branch of New Testament and Religions for the new academic year 2018-19 under North India Institute of Post Graduate Theological Studies (NIIPGTS) is now open. Interested person may apply with the following information specified under:

Candidate may apply through the application form uploaded in the website.

Candidate must pass the Common Entrance Test conducted by the Senate of Serampore College.

Candidate waiting for the Common Entrance Test result may also apply.

Application form must reach to the NIIPGTS Office before end of **15<sup>th</sup> January 2018**.

Interview would be conducted by NIIPGTS on **9<sup>th</sup> February 2018** at Serampore College, Serampore.

For any queries related to the course, kindly write to the Registrar of NIIPGTS, Serampore College ([niipgts@gmail.com](mailto:niipgts@gmail.com))



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