

PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW



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Singing inspiration during Women Fellowship's Conference at a playground of Republic Veng, Aizawl, March 8-10, 2013

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

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Contents	Page
1. Editorial	1
2. News Around the MPC - <i>Rev. Prof. C. Lalhlira</i>	2
3. Work Spirituality - <i>Ms. Rosy Zoramthangi</i>	13
4. Resolution of SEC Meeting No.244 <i>Dr. Lalrindiki Ralte</i>	18
5. Report of Rural Exposure 2013 - <i>Loye Kabui, B.D. II</i>	20

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

Editorial

To review the Church's activities has been a complex and daunting task! One reason for this being the Church's manifold activities in and out. Sometimes one has to recollect what have been already done in the past without having a personal written record. Sometimes one has depend on those who personally attended the functions or programmes. But it is not easy to get their write-ups when they were needed due to their busy schedules, or may be they have already forgotten to write! In spite of this, the Editorial Board is trying tit best to update and publicise the Church's activities as regular as possible.

In this issue, we publish the usual features of the Church's activities such as resolutions of the latest Synod Executive Committee sessions. They reflect the views, opinions, and theological, social and religious faith and beliefs of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church. In addition to this, it also contains the Bible study written by Ms. Rosy Zoramthangi, a Lecturer in Old Testament Department, Aizawl Theological College, from the book of Jeremiah. The Bible study was initially delivered at the ATC Chapel in their morning devotion under the theme "Christian work ethics". It is hoped that the study will add to the better understanding of work ethics. The issue also contains a report of Rural exposure, a practical work programme in the Aizawl Theological College. The student whose report has been published here comes from outside Mizoram. Her observation may not be the same with those who are inside the state. Though her stay in the particular village is short, she carefully observed the village from social analysis method following the orientation given by their teachers.

Many blessings to all the readers of the Presbyterian Review!



NEWS AROUND THE MPC

C. Lalhlira

Presbyterian Church Women's Conference 2013

During March 8 - 10 the 45 Presbyterian Women's Fellowship General Conference (biennial) was held at Republic Veng Playground, with the theme. Get up, call on your God," (Jonah 1:6)' Speakers include Rev. P.C. Pachhunga, Executive Secretary i/c Women; Rev. Lalzuithanga, Executive Secretary and few leaders at the central Committee. Ms. Rosy Zoramthangi, Lecturer, ATC led the Bible study on the book of Habakuk. The firsts evening i.e. March 8 (Friday) was spent for Welcome and Reports. The next day i.e. March 9 (Saturday) was business session at the khân Republic Veng Presbyterian Church and election was conducted for the year 2013-2015 . They had as many as four agendas from the Central Committee and 15 from pastorates (districts) units. The total budget for 2013 - 2014 Rs. 64,00,000/- Indian Rupees=INR) was approved (which was split into two: Women Centre 50,00,000/- & Central Budget - Rs. 14,00,000/-)

The summary of the Reports form Pastorates :

1. Reports Received : 169
2. Number of Churches : 790
3. No. of Braches : 75
Total : 1034
4. Presbyterian Family: 95,414
5. Mixed Denominations Families : 4,294
6. Total No. of Families : 99,708
7. No. of Women members : 158246
8. Regular donours of handful of Rice : 96,751 = 97.03%
9. Largest no. of members : Chanmari Pastorate (3385 members)
10. Smallest no. of members : Buarpui Pastorate (50 members)
11. No. of families having daily family devotion: 57,002 = 57.17%
12. No. Of Churches having regular worship services 140 No. churches that can have occasional worship services = 29 ; No. of churches that cannot have worship services = 51.

New Office Bearers for 2013-2015 Central Women Committee for were elected as follows:

1. Chairman - Pi C. Lahmangaihi,



Venghlui Bial (Appointed by the Synod)

2. Vice Chairman- Pi Rochuangkimi, from Chaltlang Pastorate

3. General Secretary - Pi H. Lalpianthangi, Asst. Coordinator (Appointed by the Synod)

4. Assistant Secretary - Dr. Vanlalhruaii , from Mission Vengthlang Pastorate

5. Treasurer - Pi C. Lalneihthangi, from Dawrpui pastorate

6. Finance Secretary - Pi Vanlaltluangi, from Republic Veng Pastorate

Resolutions passed by the Conference:

A. Central Committee Agenda :

- i) Programmes detail (Ref. CC 438 : 9 (1) of 22.5.2012) Friday evening Service - Reports; Saturday Day time - Business hours; Evening Service: Preaching; Sunday, 3 times Services - Delivery of Different Topics from the Theme
- ii) Resolved to continue the prayer on every first Tuesday of the months
- iii) That the resolutions made in the

Sessions should be brought for discussion only after three years.

- iv) To increase the amount of assistance for the hosting church/pastorate : for hosting General Conference Rs. 700,000/- and for hosting Business Sessions Rs. 100,000/-.

B. Pastorate Agenda :

- i) Awareness Campaign should be conducted to have more child; and the who are having more children should be given supports. The Central Committee was entrusted to do the needful.
- ii) Awareness should be made to make decent wedding dresses and costumes for both the marriage couples and their witnesses.
- iii) That if the applicants for hosting the General Conferences are in line, they should be given chances to host as per seniority list.
- iv) That fasting prayer be organised for the free and fair election of State Assembly to be conducted during 2013,
- v) To continue the awareness campaigns for ill effects of tobacco
- vi) To educate people for the



- ethical principle on respects of elders
- vii) To educate the general public about the values of children, so also the security of female children in the society.
- viii) To donate the collections on one Tuesday evening service of the Church Women for the Synod Hospital Charity Fund
- ix) For the faster work on construction of the Women Centre the Central Women Committee was entrusted to organise awareness among church members.

- 2:00pm conducted by Rev. R. Lalengzauva, Com. Member. Rev. R. Lalchangliana, Director gave a lecture on "Retrospective on the Ministry of the Synod Revival Committee". The second session was held at 03:30pm - 4:30pm, led by Upa R. Thangchhunga, Com. Member the topic "The Life style of a Christian minister" was presented by Upa D.P. Biakkhuma, Com. Member. Rev. K. Lalthangmawia, Com. Member chaired the Third Session at 06:00pm - 7:30pm. Upa C. Lalmuankima gave an informative dspeech on the "The Receipts and expenses of the Synod's Funds" After this session between HIV/ AIDS related issues was presented by MSAC (a local NGO)

REVIVAL SPEAKERS' RESIDENTIAL RETREAT

Synod Revival Department organised a retreat during March 21-22, 2013 at the Synod Conference Centre. The Rev. P.C. Pachhunga, Executive Secretary i/c Revival conducted the inaugural programme at 10:30 am on March 21, where the Synod Moderator Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau delivered a Keynote Address. Different scholars and experts presented papers on various topics relating to Christian life and ministries. The first session was commenced 01:00pm

THE CHRISTIAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

The Central Kristian Thalai Pawl (Christian Your Fellowship) had a business Session at the Presbyterian Church, Lunglei Chandmary during March 1-5, 2013, during which various numbers of resolutions were passed, and in the evenings worship services were conducted in the church. After each service,



fellowship programmes were held where varieties of items were presented such as short play and dramas, solos, and messages of encouragement and admonitions. The Business sessions were held on Saturday, March 2, and the whole Sunday March 3, was used for worship services and Fellowship programmes. The theme for the year was "To be a blessing for others." The inaugural and Keynote address was delivered by Rev. Lalzuithanga, the Executive Secretary, i/c KTP (or PYP), and a booklet of guidelines for the theme was dedicated and released by him.

The Business Session was conducted by the Leader Rev. H. Lalrinmawia, whose leadership expertise was seen to discuss the 9 Agenda 9 of various concerns from different pastorates and the budget from the Central committee. There are some issues clarified at the business floor, without discussion. Fellowship service was organized on Saturday afternoon at the largest Hall at Lunglei Township called Saikuti Hall. Film awards were distributed. On March 2 (Saturday)

evening onwards till March 3 (Sunday) Evening worship services were held. Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau, Synod Moderator; Rev. Lalrinmawia, CKTP Leader and other Leaders of CKTP delivered messages. Fellowship programmes after and in between the services on Saturday and Sunday were held at the Basketball Court.

Some resolutions:

Prayer for the Election during the State Assembly election will be organized according to the conveniences of the respective Branches.

A song book for the General Conference 2014 should be prepared.

Counselling training for the members should be conducted during 2013.

The Central Office was entrusted to prepare a commentary for the ten confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church of India and be studied by the members according to their conveniences.



The proposed theme by Thingsulthliah pastorate 'Prepare to meet your God' for 2014-2015 was accepted.

Following this business Session, the Central KTP (PYF) which met on March 20, 2013 made the following decisions:

The BUDGET for 2013-14

1. KTP Synod Budget -
Rs. 1,293,000/-
 2. Fellowship Budget -
Rs. 1,300,000/-
 3. Youth Recreation Centre Budget
Rs. 700,000/-
- Total: Rs. 3,293,000/-

The Central Committee selected Isaiah 60: 1 "Arise, shine," for the theme of Diamond Jubilee Celebration that will be held next year 2014 during its General Conference the conference. A sub-committee was formed to prepare a song book for use during the Conference.

2014 General Conference will be held at Khawzawl

The same meeting decided to send delegates from the Youth Fellowship to attend the "I Love Taiwan" mission camp 2013, a youth exchange programme with the Youth Fellowship of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan". This programme will be held during June 26-July 23, 2013 in Taiwan. About five delegates will be sent from Mizoram this time.

2015 Business Session will be held at Mission Veng

2016 General Conference will be held at Champhai

KTP Total No. of delegates = 759
(as on 1st March 9:00 p.m. Friday)

23 branches submitted short films based on the theme 'A blessing for others' and the best film award was received by Bawngkawn Chhim Veng film on the title 'Guardian Angel'.

Three sub-committees were formed to take responsibility towards the fulfillment of the resolutions of 2013 General Meeting, they are - a sub-committee for Counselling Training,



a sub - committee to prepare a programme of learning church's creed; and a sub-committee to set a guideline for the theme during 2014 -15 ,: "Prepare to meet your God". It resolved to revise the rules and regulations of the PYF, which will be forwarded to the Synod Executive Committee for approval.

SYNOD SOCIAL FRONT

An **awareness campaign** was conducted on March 23 (Saturday) at Nisapui Presbyterian Church on the topic "Self-Reliance on Food products," by Mr. Lalrosanga Colney, Synod Office; Dr. Saithantluanga, Ramhlun South (Campaigner) and Ms. Laldusaki (Soloist) were sent from the office.

Training on Masonry: The Synod Social Front in partnership with the Mission Foundation Movement inaugurated Training on cement construction works (or Masonry) from March 11 (Monday) at Bawngkawn, 16 attended the training. The same training programmes were conducted during March in various locality of Aizawl such as Chhing Veng, Mission Veng and Durtlang. During

the whole year of 2013, it will conduct the same training at ten different places within Aizawl and so also in all the district capitals.

During March 25 & 26 the Synod Social Front organised **Counselling Training** on Evangelism, at the Synod Conference Centre, inviting one participant each from local churches within Aizawl. The Synod Secretary Rev. H. Lalrinmawian inaugurated the programme with short devotion. Various persons of experts were invited as Resource persons such as Rev. R. Ramdinmawia, Director, Synod Rescue Home, Elder H. Lalhmingmawia, Social Front Coordinator, Mr. M.S. Dawngliana Tochwawng, Counsellor, Pu K. Lalchhanhima, Social Worker, Pu V. Lalnunmawia, Counsellor, Nl Lallawmzuali, Counsellor leh Mr. K. Siamchhunga, Counsellor.

THE MIZO SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION (MSSU)

On March 23 (Saturday) Sunday School Teachers' Training was Conducted at Serchhip Hmar



Veng, Serchhip Bethel leh Serchhip Vengchung churches in which Rev. Dr. R. Lalbiakmawia (Author of Adult Sunday School Lesson for 2013); Local elder Lalthahluna Ralte, MSSU Asst. Coordinator; Elder K. Zoremsanga, Kulikawn and elder Hrilthansanga, Mission Vengthlang (MSSU Trainers) gave lectures.

THE SYNOD HOSPITAL

On March 18 (Monday) the Synod Hospital organised Surgical Eye Camp at Kawnpui; during the same time a Mobile [Health] Clinic was conducted at Sangau, Saiha and Tuipang Pastorates by a Medical Team.

During March 19-April 2 the Synod Hospital held a series of retreat sessions with a theme "But by my Spirit" in which Pastor Lalsangbera, Vaivakawn, was the Speaker. The workers, who are busy with their daily duties were divided into three batches; each batch has two days each of retreat.

Dr. Lalrinliana Varte has returned from Seoul, S. Korea after he

finished the degree of Master of Surgery M.S. (Ortho) and has joined at the Synod Hospital.

SYNOD BOOKROOM'S MOBILE BOOKSHOP

In the context of "information age" with its sophisticated electronic devices, where in some places 'bookless library' and 'paperless files' have been introduced, the Mizoram Synod with its Synod Bookroom is still conducting a successful Mobile Bookshop service, which means selling books in different villages. This time they took their books to the northeast and eastern areas of Mizoram during March 18 - 23, 2013. School good number of school exercise books, stationary, and other religious books were sold.

THE SYNOD MISSION BOARD: One hundred and eleven New Missionaries Commissioned

The Synod Mission Board once again sent out more than one hundred missionaries to different parts of India. These new missionaries comprised of ordained



ministers who will be taking charges of field secretaries, and newly recruited ones, altogether 111 in number. The missionaries were dedicated and valedicted on January 6, 2013 at Bungkawn Church, Aizawl. The Service was attended by families and relatives of the missionaries, with many well wishers of church members, numbering about 3,000. Rev. Lalchuanmawia, the Secretary of the Synod Mission Board chaired the service; Mr. Lalbiakênga, Assistant Coordinator of Synod Mission Office introduced the missionaries. Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau, the Synod Moderator delivered a message of exhortation and had commissioned them. Two missionaries gave responses. Bungkawn Church choir and Bungkawn Pastorates' choirs presented songs. An intercessory prayer was offered by the Rev. P. C. Pachhunga, Synod Executive Secretary i/c. Mission. Rev. T.C. Laltlanzova, the pastor i/c. of Bungkawn Pastorate pronounced benediction.

The missionaries may be categorised as follows: 8 pastors

(ordained ministers); 39 evangelist teachers; 52 Evangelist; 8 Staff Nurse/Health Workers and 4 craft teachers. Excepting ordained ministers as missionaries, all the newly commissioned missionaries were taken for a year, as the Synod Mission Board since recent year has made its recruitment for mission on a one year contract basis, which is renewable both on the part of the Church (Mission Board and the individual persons (missionary). The educational qualifications of missionaries range from below HSLC (class ten) passed to Masters/Doctorate degree holders.

SYNOD THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BOARD

The Synod Theological Education Board has given admission to 27 candidates to study M. Th. O.T - 6; N.T. - 5; Hist. - 8; Missiology - 8; and to 27 candidates to study B. D. in English at the Aizawl Theological College. In addition to these 4 candidates were allowed to study B.D. in Hindi at the Allahabad Bible Seminary, Allahabad.

The TEB is setting to start a doctoral centre at the Aizawl



Theological College from 2013-2014 academic session following the resolution made by the 2012 Session of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod. The inaugural service will be conducted on June 7, 2013 at the Aizawl Theological College.

Since the Librarian Ms. P.C. Laltlani has retired superannuated, Mr. Thankima, the Assistant Librarian has been promoted to the post of Librarian.

Valedictory Function: The Aizawl Theological College held the Valedictory service on April 23, 2013 in their College Chapel. The Service was conducted by the Rev. Prof. Vanlalchhuanawma, Principal, and Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau delivered a valedictory message. The meeting was started with the procession - all the students of lower classes and invitees were sitting inside the Chapel, the members of the Board, Faculty, and the Graduants came in procession while the music of the Hymn "All the Way, my Saviour leads me" was played. After all the members in procession reached

their seats, the Chairman asked them to be seated. The Chairman made a short speech of welcome, and a solemn worship service began. The Chairman called the audience to worship God, which was followed by the singing of the Hymn, "To God be the Glory, Great things he has done." After which each of the assigned faculty members did his/her role as solemn as possible. Each had done his/her part as the order given in the litany of the Service. The items include Invocation, done by Rev. Lalchungnunga; the litany of thanks led by Dr. Lalrindiki; Prayer for forgiveness led by Rev. Dr. H. Lalrinthanga. These were followed by the presentation (in other words introduction) of the graduating students which was done by the Dean of Post Graduate studies. Usually, the B.D. Graduants have been presented by the Registrar, the academic in-charge while the post Graduants candidates have been presented by the Dean. Due to the ill health of The Registrar, the Vice Principal and Dean had to do both classes. After the presentation of the Graduants, the Moderator delivered a message, which was



particularly challenging for the new theologically trained candidates. After the preaching was over the hymn "Just as I am" was sung; this was followed by the act of dedication - the Chairman asked the graduating students to dedicate themselves to the service of the Lord. The intercessory prayer followed, led by Ms. Rosy Zoramthangi. This valedictory service was also a farewell service, and thus farewell messages were delivered by Dr. Lalnghakthuami (faculty) and Mr. Laldusaka (continuing student) and speeches of responses were delivered by Mr. V. Khairodinga (M. Th Final) and Mr. C. Lalngaihawma (B. D. final). Few prizes were distributed by Rev. H. Lalrinmawia, Synod Secretary, such as

1. Upa R. Zobela memorial prize for best student in co-curricular activities (winner Thangromawia)
2. Rev. Liandova memorial prize for homiletics (winner Isaac Lallawmkima)
3. J. M. Lloyd's memorial prize for Preliminary Greek (winner Lalthanliana)
4. Rev. & Mrs. C. Vanlalhruaia prize for Preliminary Hebrew

(winner S.T. Lala)

5. Upa Prof. C. Lalkima prize for Library Knowledge (Malakia Lalnunfela)

The Mizoram Synod Choir presented two songs, as beautifully as usual. Distributions of prizes were followed by the presentation of diploma certificates, which was given away by Rev. Lalzuithanga, Executive Secretary i/c Synod Theological Education. The last hymn of dedication was "Take my life and let it be." Rev. Lalchhanhima, member of the Board, pronounced benediction. The Graduants and the members of the Boards and the Faculty were in recession, the music of "For Christ our land we give" was played. The farewell dinners followed.

THE SYNOD FINANCIAL YEAR ENDS WITH SURPLUS OF THE BUDGET

At the end of the Financial Year, the Mizoram Presbyterian Church has surplus growth in its contribution. This is commendable because the Church usually makes its budget without knowing the rate of growth



in its contribution. The leaders of the Church use to say that they prepare a budget for a financial year with "having faith in God" because they have no idea on how the church members will give that year. However, God inspires people and they give to him, which is received by the Church. The last financial year of 2012-2013 ended with 14.89% surplus amount i/e Rs. 1,15,47,20,510/- from the total

budget of 1,00,50,24,000/-. The Synod Finance officer Rev. Lazuithanga expressed on behalf of the Church his gratitude to all the church members who readily gave to God through the Church. The summary of the Synod Financial position at the Year end is given as below:

Summary of the Synod Financial Position 2012-2013

Budget Head	2012-2013 Budget	Total Receipts	Surplus from the Budget	Surplus percentage
Pastoral	59,67,67,000	64,36,59,045	4,68,92,045	7.86
Mission	40,82,57,000	51,10,61,465	10,28,04,465	25.18
Total	1,00,50,24,000	1,15,47,20,510	14,96,96,510	14.89



WORK SPIRITUALITY
A Reflection on Jeremiah 18:3-4

- Rosy Zoramthangi Ralte

In Jeremiah 18 we read how the Lord told Jeremiah to go down to the potter's house, for there he would let Jeremiah hear his word. So Jeremiah went down to the potter's house, located in a valley just outside Jerusalem's walls.

TEXT

The word for potter simply means 'shaper'. This term is often used to describe God's creative activity (Gen. 2:7-8, Ps. 94:9). The metaphor ascribed to gods is also present in Mesopotamia. The word for wheel here literally means 2 stones. In Jeremiah's time there were two varieties, a slow wheel and a fast wheel. The context of the text suggests the fast wheel which consists of two disks or stones joined by a vertical axis. The potter's wheel has been in existence since approximately the 4th Millennium BC.

Pottery was an important business in ancient Israel. Every household needed several clay jars for carrying and holding water. As explained in this parable, often during the process of throwing the clay, some

defect appears either in the nature of the clay or in the design of the object. The potter then squeezes the developing objects into shapeless mass of clay and begins the process of creating the clay vessel all over again.

We read, "The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand and he reworked it into another vessel as seemed good to him (v. 4)". The potter did not throw the flawed vessel into the reject bin. The clay was still soft and pliable; so he crushed it down and reshaped it into a more perfect vessel. Prophet Jeremiah finds inspiration for his spiritual message in a strange place by watching a potter turning a pot at his wheel. He watches as the worker moulds and shapes the spinning pot skillfully with his hands. At one point he goes



too deep and spoils the pot he is making. So he starts over using the same clay, until he has the vessel that he wants. Jeremiah found sacred meaning in this very earthy, physical task of an artisan. The potter spun his wheel and made his pot with skill and care and precision and it was sacred work, and Jeremiah saw in that work an image of how God works with us, God's creatures, to mould and shape us into the persons we ought to be.

Work Spirituality: Is work sacred?
The idea of putting a word like "sacred" next to "work" may seem strange to some. Work can be satisfying, aggravating, exhilarating, exhausting and many other things. But sacred? How do we see our respective works and responsibilities? Do we think it is 'sacred'?

The one who put sacred next to work some time back is a man named Thomas Moore, a writer, psychotherapist and a former monk. In his book, *Care of the Soul*, Moore says that in many religious traditions "work is not set off from the precincts of the sacred.

It is not 'pro-fane' - (literally) in front of the temple - it is in the temple. In Christian and Zen monasteries," he says, "work is as much a part of the monk's carefully designed life as are prayer, meditation, and liturgy."

That means the different works we do during our training for future ministry is sacred. It is studying diligently as a student, regular and supportive in teaching not only these, doing floor duty, sweeping, cutting grass, trimming trees, collecting cow-dung, looking after flower beds, making kitchen garden etc are all sacred work if done for the sake of God. By doing our respective works diligently we find some peace of mind and happiness. Words cannot express the joy we feel when we see the seeds we sowed germinate or looking at the clean roads after sweeping it meticulously or the clean surroundings after weeding. The important thing about work is that it is a form of therapy.

If we let other people do our ordinary work for us, or if we do it ourselves without care, we might be



losing something irreplaceable and eventually experience that missing element as a painful sense of loneliness or homelessness.

The work we do, whatever it is, can be done with imagination and artfulness or it can be done routinely and unconsciously, but however it is done, we must remember that "work affects the soul profoundly."

God worked for six days creating the world and then rested on the seventh and God invites us likewise to create and build and shape and mould, whether it is curtains, bookcases, student's minds, or a loaf of bread.

The Protestant Work Ethic: Is there sacred and secular work? Do we believe in the distinction between sacred and secular work? The usual understanding is - the work done by the clergy and lay volunteers being sacred, the everyday work done out in the world being secular. But as children of the reformation we should know better. Martin Luther said that the work done by the farmer in the field or the farmer's wife in the kitchen was just as holy

as that done by the priest if done to the glory of God.

The Reformers affirmed that all legitimate work, done in faith, glorifies God - it is worship. The different works that we are doing for the sake of God are equally important; we must therefore put our best efforts even if we feel lethargic. To be 'called' by God does not entail withdrawing from the world, but demands critical engagement in every sphere of worldly life.

To speak of a 'Protestant work ethic' is not to decry those who cannot work, but to censure those... who will not work. Am I the one who often try to excuse myself citing lame excuses like I don't know how to do manual labour? Let us examine ourselves from the point of view of protestant work ethic. If we know what to do we should not wait or keep it pending, for James 4:17 says, "Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for him it is a sin."

'Work,' it must be added, for the Reformers is not understood as 'paid employment,' but as diligent and productive use of whatever resources



and talents one has been given. Work is a profoundly spiritual activity, a productive and socially beneficial form of prayer. Physical and spiritual activities are combined in this one action, by which socially useful functions may be discharged and personal assurance of salvation may be gained. It also brings a new depth of meaning to the everyday mundane activities of life.

With the right knowledge of work, our culture of work can be revived. We may be doing different kinds of work but we all are working for God. Recollection of my stint as an LDC for 2 years till I joined BD course revealed that most of the office employees work to earn a livelihood without ever realizing that we are doing the work of God and serve others. It is a challenge for us to teach and set an example to others that we are doing the work of God in various ways through the many daily works that we are engaged in. We must therefore do our work as if we are doing it for God, not humans.

One important ingredient for work:
Determination

Any work demands 'Determination or Perseverance'. Just as the potter saw beyond the disfigured soft clay, we must not dwell in what is visible now. Determination helps us look beyond the ugly spoilt clay, but the beautifully designed vessel that it can become.

Our life carries with it certain works and responsibilities and it is up to us whether we will let ourselves be stopped or move on in spite of certain failures. Are we going to make excuses or face the stumbling block headlong? Failures are not meant to break us rather it is an opportunity to retreat, regroup, re-evaluate and then take action more determinedly. We might be unable to run most of the time, but we can walk, even if to just walk is hard, we should at least crawl instead of sitting and making excuses. If we think and regard the many works we do like teaching, studying, manual labour, office work, for the glory of God and as a contribution for the extension of God's kingdom, we will be more determined and try harder to be more productive and at the same time supportive of one another.



Our prayers for God's will to be done on earth is deeply attached to how we see and carry out our works. For to pray that prayer we need to work to make it come true, prayer without work is another form of hypocrisy. Realizing this, many people pray not through words but through the witness of their lives, through the work they do and the love they offer to others.

George Arthur Buttrick said, "Fields

are not ploughed by praying over them. But let everyone remember that fields become drudgery, or a botched labour, or even greed and bitterness, unless the ploughing is not done in prayer".

We must therefore remember the difference between just doing and making it a prayer because when we make our work a prayer, we do it not only for ourselves or our neighbour, but for God.

(This biblical reflection was delivered on February 26, 2013 Morning Devotion at the Aizawl Theological College Chapel. We thank Miss Rosy Zoramthangi for making it possible to publish in this Review. Rosy is a Lecturer (on contract) in the Department of Old Testament at ATC.)



**RESOLUTIONS OF THE SYNOD EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 244
DURING FEBRUARY 26-28, 2013**

The Synod Executive Committee, the apex committee of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod had its three-days session during February 26-28, 2013 at J.M. Lloyd Hall, Synod Office, Mission Veng, Aizawl. Some of the important resolutions of the session are given below:

1. The Mizoram Synod will give financial support of Rs. 300,000 to the local Church who is hosting the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of India.
2. The amount of house rent given by the Synod for Pastors/Ministers has been increased.
3. A new Chairman and Secretary of Central Women's Fellowship during 2013-2014 were appointed. Mrs. C. Lalmangaihi, Venghlui was appointed as the new Chairman and Mrs. H. Lalpianthangi, Asstt. Coordinator, Women's Department as the new Secretary.
4. The resolution of the Officers' Meeting for getting prior permission from the concerned Church authority with regard to the publicity of some of the decisions made by the Synod meeting which can have negative impact upon the public was accepted.
5. The proposal of Revival Committee to hold State level Pavalai Meet and to give financial support of Rs. 1,00,000 to the hosting church was accepted.
6. A new Office hour for the different departments under the Synod was made as follows:



09:30 am to 04:00 pm - October -February
09:30 am to 05:00 pm - March - September

7. It was decided that the Synod will sponsor visiting professors from USA and Netherlands who are teaching in Aizawl Theological College.
8. Due to the increasing price hike in commodities it was decided that the Living Allowance of Synod workers will be increased by 20 per cent from April 2013.
9. As demanded by Govt. law Synod Information and Publicity (Synfo) was given permission to be registered as an Association.
10. Four committee members under Unit Committee were appointed to take care of matters concerning the establishment of Meitei Presbyterian Singlup as an Administrative Unit.
11. Manipur Mission Field headquarters will be shifted from Imphal to Kwakeithil from 1st April, 2013.
12. The meeting entrusted the OM to identify appropriate person to be the Registrar of United Theological College, Bangalore as requested by the said College.
13. The request to donate Rs. 2,00,000 by the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) to the Mizoram Presbyterian Synod for the celebration of the NCCI 100 years in 2014 was granted.



REPORT OF RURAL EXPOSURE
Aizawl Theological College
Field Education, 2013

- Loye Kabui, BD II

Introduction:

The Mualcheng vilage is around 160 Km from Aizawl via World Bank Road. It is under Serchhip district and E. Lungdar RD Block. Mualcheng village was established in 1912 by Christian community who were expelled by Lungchhuan chief; a few years later, the Lungchhuan chief made his son as the chief of Mualcheng. In 2012 Mualcheng Presbyterian church celebrated its centenary. There are around 280 houses, with around 1600 people living there.

THE ORGANISATION OF MATERIAL BASE

1. Economic Structure:
a. Interaction with nature:

Most of the villagers depended on agriculture. Shifting cultivation is practiced and also numbers of people are making farm, meanwhile they also depended on shifting cultivation. The people of the village are not highly educated but they are very much aware about the environmental problems. The village is eco-friendly. The forest of the surrounding village is preserved; they are restricting cutting trees for commercial purposes. It was only allowed for household materials such as construction of a house; it

is not allowed for producing firewood and timber for commercial purposes. The river Varhva is flowing near the village and the Young Mizo Association (Y.M.A) protects it: They prohibit catching fish with poison, so also hunting within the village council area. The authorities of the village restrict selling of hunting tools in the shops. The village people use firewood for cooking. Houses are built of woods; only few can afford concrete buildings.

b. Tools of production:
People began to cultivate cash crops. The villagers depended on wet-cultivation (paddy field on flat land); there are three rivers near the



village; this made tilling easy. People of the village used traditional tools in their agricultural field; only some few can afford modernized tools for cultivation those who are mainly working government's jobs, whereas the common masses could not afford such tools. Those who have wet-cultivation lands can get a tiller machine in subsidized rate from the government, and other machines were received from government for subsidised rates. Carpenters have started using modern or electronic tools. Most of the production tools they used were traditional and classic. The Government funds like New Land Use Policies (NLUP) were also distributed but the result was found to be a failure in the village. The reason for this failure being that those who received such funds purchased machines, or electronic gadgets, or even two-wheelers vehicles than trying to improve their economic products.

c. Property relations: Most of the houses were Assam type - built from tin sheets and timbers, with tiles for wall; only around ten houses were concrete buildings

constructed by using bricks and mortar. The village council distributed the land equally, and those who grow orange for cash crops were allotted about 3 bighas and those who did not own land were allotted an area of 5 bighas. Some plots of land were privatized. Electronic goods like television, refrigerator, washing machine, computer and mobile phones were used in the village. There are numbers of vehicles especially two wheelers; most of them are secondhand, and there were only two or three motor cars which were mainly used for going to their cultivation. Most of the family property is controlled by a father, who is the head of a family, and the society is very patriarchal. Property is inherited by the son, while some few families give shares to their daughters.

Most of the government servants have their own land. When the government makes NLUP, MIP etc, village council court gave a land to those who do not have their own. But many of them have sold their land and now they became landless.



d. Division of Labour:

There is no formal division of labour, since most of the people were working on the agricultural fields. There were around thirty persons who have been working in government offices or schools. Society is very much patriarchal based, but men and women were working together in the fields; the wages of men a day is Rs.170/- while it is Rs.150/- women.

e. Distribution of wealth:

In the distribution of wealth, it is more or less equally distributed, although the government servants were wealthier than the farmers. Those who have wet-cultivable lands were wealthier than those who do not have. NLUP funds were also distributed; it was given to those who were really in need. The families who have orange farm for cash crops were supposed to be richer than others. MNNREGS scheme (a development scheme from the central government increased the income of the people; this was a source of income for the poorer class; those who work for daily wages were working under those who have government jobs.

f. Market and money:

The village economics system was based on Commodity-Money-Commodity (C-M-C). Most of the families used to sell their crops according to the market rate, in which more women were found working than their men folks. Mostly women were seen dominating their family economics systems. Shop owners sold their goods at higher rates than the retail prices due to high rates of transportation charges from city to the village. There is a co-operative society which made available things like hardware and medicine in a very cheap rate. The people from surrounding areas and from other villages such as North Vanlaiphai and some other places were purchasing drugs in a very cheap rate and sold it to the youths of their villages those who abused and addicted to drugs. The village has no market. The villagers keep the vegetable when they can make it available in the shops, and the shopkeepers sell it for them either gaining some amount or free of cost. Some women were found selling their vegetables door to door. Orange and Ginger were cash



crops grown in the Jhum or in their own gardens.

2. S O C I A L STRUCTURE:

a. Socio-Economic: *Urban vs. rural:* Mualcheng village was dominated by the urban lifestyle, which could be seen from their interior decoration of the houses and the availability of consumer goods and their use of electronic media; one wondered that how much the society would have been influenced from seeing and using of all those things. Mobile phone users, especially the youths, were seen using costly model types; cars and bikes were also seen in this remote area; the youths and the women were very much influenced by the Korean serial movies which was obviously reflected in their dresses, hairstyles and the use of cosmetics to have clear and glowing skin to look like the Korean people; this has greatly affected the economic condition of families.

Class: The people of this village treat each other equally; it was difficult to make a class division.

Government servants were regarded as higher class in the society; they were respected and were given important positions in social organizations such as YMA, Mizo Hmeichhe Insulhkhawm Pawl (MHIP-a women's Organisation), and so also in the church. Government scheme like MNNREGA to certain extent was maintaining equality among the rich and the poor by the distribution of the fund equally; those who have extra skills like carpenters and mechanics have extra sources of income.

b. Socio-culture: *Patriarchy:* The dominant ideology of the Mualcheng village was very patriarchal. The village is male dominated as most of the heads of families were males; even the widows and divorced women were under the control of men if they have a male member in their family. Most women were expected to do the household work apart from going and working in the field. Meanwhile women contribute a lot more than man in regards to the economic life of the family. More women were found than men as



Shopkeepers, vegetable vendors and the government office workers. The villagers did not feel necessity to include women in the organizations like YMA as office bearers, excepting Church women and MHIP in which inevitably women hold leadership which is their own organisations. They have the strong opinion that women's work should be confined to look after the family but not the society. They didn't encourage women to be their leaders. In the past there was a women candidate in the village election, but she was not voted even by the female voters. When asked the reason why, the response was blatant: "We don't want women to be our leaders." Even the Church is very patriarchal. The women pointed out that in the adult Sunday school there was no female teacher even though there are many women would be capable of teaching in the Sunday school. However the Church has not yet given them a chance. The Church still thinks that a female teacher is needed. The Church seemed to understand literally what Paul would say about

the subordination of women which he said from his own cultural context.

Clan/tribe/ethnic group: Mualcheng village is dominated by Mizo. There is only one *Gorkha* family who resided there because of a government job. The organization like YMA, MHIP, MUP, Student's Union tried to check any chance of immigration from outside other than the Mizo, and even if any outsiders other than a Mizo have engagement to work, they were supposed to leave the village immediately after they finished their work.

c. People's organization:

Parties: There are four political parties; Indian National Congress, Mizo National Front, Zoram Nationalist Party and Mizo People Conference. There was a great competition among them, and among that the Congress party was the strongest at present.

Social Movements: In respect of social activity it seemed that there was no movement as such; in the middle of 2012, a 13 years old girl



was raped by one young man and the MHIP organized a protest by having procession by demanding the punishment of the culprit. One of the important social activities of this village was the protection of the Varhva River particularly during the time when fishes lay their eggs. During that particular time, the YMA organized the activity of protecting the fish for which many of the youths participated by making camps near the river for the same purpose.

Trade union: In this village one society, Co-operative society actively involved in the trade by having a Drugs store, hardware store and Departmental store. They were trying to strictly control the price of the commodity; because of that prices of goods were comparatively low than their neighbouring villages. Some items like dendrite and some other drugs can only be sold by the co-operative store, under the guidance of Joint Action Committee.

Communal Institution: YMA and MHIP are the communal based institutions in this village. YMA has more members than MHIP

because MHIP was gender based organization, while YMA is including both men and women. They were actively participating in every activity of the society. Social life was greatly controlled by the activity of these two organizations. Both work for the welfare of the society. Even the Church joined hand with those organizations. The YMA in Mualcheng bought plot of land for their own and cultivate ginger, and the income from this was used for YMA. This clearly shows that they don't depend on the funds from the government. One of the remarkable things done by MHIP is that they help the poor and the widow by collecting firewood for them and also weeding their farm, etc. In their attempt to maintain social equality, the MHIP prepared wreath to be put on the coffin of a dead person so that no rich or poor would make their own preparation. Even the YMA also made restrictions of numbers of photographs to be taken after funeral function is over. These two communal based institutions have good relationship with the village council court; they worked together for the welfare of



the village. In these communal based institutions mostly the leaders are educated people.

d. Civil institution: *Health Institution:* Mualcheng village is surrounded by small towns such as East Lungdar, North Vanlaiphai and Khawlailung about 10 Km each distances which are having Primary Health Center and Community Health Center. But the Mualcheng village did not have any Health institution; there is only one Health Sub-Center run by the Government. There are two Health Workers who were working in the Health Sub-Center and one fourth grade worker. The villagers made good recommendation of these workers. They were regular in giving monthly vaccination as per required. In this village the Health Workers work like nurse and most of the people trusted them very much. But to make more impetus, I feel they should open their Health centre everyday which they did not do during our visit.

Educational system: Most of the institutions were not satisfactory,

especially those who were working in the Middle schools were advanced in age and they were not very active. In the High school there were six teachers having only two classes, thus it was possible for four of them to keep on chit chatting while two others were taking classes. However, they maintain their school campus, which is also a school park, clean and tidy. Students were trained to do cleaning; by doing this they sowed the seed of a good work culture. The parents did not encourage the students to continue their studies if they failed. They always asked their children to work in the field helping their family while schools are in session; this made the students lose their interest towards pursuing higher studies.

Transport system: The approach road to Mualcheng from the main road is rough and is not properly maintained. There is one regular vehicle service to and from the village; thus the villagers had to depend on the neighbouring village such as E. Lungdar if they want to go on tour. Two wheeler vehicles



are very common, but they used them for going to their neighbouring villages and paddy field.

Religious institutions: All of the villagers are Christians; there is no other religious institution. There are two Christian denominations, such as the Presbyterian Church and the United Pentecostal Church (NEI). The Presbyterian Church is bigger in number as more than two-third of the village population belonged to this denomination. Denominational competition between the two sometimes triggered social conflict. Both of the Churches have youth fellowship and women fellowship.

3 . S Y M B O L I C REPRESENTATION

a. Material, mental and social aspects of communication: Language, art, culture, music, religion etc. mould and guide livelihood of the peoples' day to day life. We find competition among the neighbourhood or try to imitate them by observing them. It is materialistic world like in other places, and people try to consume

all the goods whether they find it is necessary or not in their life. They simply buy goods to show themselves that they are capable of using them. People's minds are motivated by materialism. At present the Mualcheng village is in the process of development, after a few decade there might be many changes in regards to their mindset towards one another, and also class division and distinction between the poor and the rich will grow, even though now we find it is in controlled; the seed of it has already been sown.

The common language is Mizo which is their official language. It has been used in the educational institutions which I found not preferable. I thought students should be taught how to be fluent in English. The parents have high hope towards the Presbyterian English medium school, thinking that their children would learn to speak in English well.

With regards to administration of the Church the Church leaders excel satisfactorily. Still it was found that many church members neglect attending church



services. On Wednesday and Saturday out of 700 and above full communicant members about 200 of them only were seen in the church. In the Church activities like social work we find only the church leaders. The youths were found to be active only when the KTP called for such activities. To me, it was the young people who should do manual work than the old ones. It is the responsibility of the KTP leaders to encourage their youths to take part regularly and render their services in such activities of the church. The church does not interfere in the politics but maintain good relationship with the organization like YMA, MHIP and others.

The people practiced *Mizo tlawmngaihna*, a selfless service, which creates a sense of unity among them. If there is a construction of the house they don't need to hire any other labourer; they themselves appoint a supervisor among themselves and the villagers gathered to work, and they spend a whole day until they accomplished the job. If there were death in the village, and

needed to keep the dead body throughout the night, the youth sing the whole night long to comfort the bereaved family.

Smoke chimneys were found in every roof of the houses of the village which symbolize that they solely depended on firewood even though they have cooking gas stoves; the distributions of gas were not regular as it is in the urban areas. Due to influences of globalization most of the people did not realize the importance of Mizo culture; most of their life were influenced either by the Western or Korean life styles. This was not found only among the youths but even among every stages people. Few people of the village thought that they've almost lost their Mizo identity; those people have the fear that their cultural values will be totally lost particularly songs, dances and even the dress and fashion. They would like to have more of singing in "Mizo tune" than the Western's tonic *solfa*. In the case of music many of the youths are influenced by the Western music even if they didn't really



understand its meaning..

b) Ideology: In Mualcheng village, the people's dominant ideology is very patriarchal, which we observed in every organisation and also in the Church and the thought of the community itself is very patriarchal. So also the people's ideology is mainly controlled by the religion, economics, and experience. In the day to day life the ideology they have inherited from their ancestors, is the patriarchal type of family. Father is the head of family; he has full authority; no women dared not to complain, for they think that it is the family system. In the social life also this kind of practice is still seen. Class division between rich and poor are found to be developing. The political ideology of the people is changing slowly; among the old aged group their view of politics seemed to be unchangeable as party feeling is very strong. But among the youth party feeling has gone. They hope for a better political environment. In social work most of the youth were found idle for they were not sincere in

the social work but they were acquisitive only in their personal work. The good thing is that the communitarian spirit of the traditional Mizo society has is remaining.

4 . T H E O L O G I C A L REFLECTIONS

- Women did not have equal opportunity in the church and in the society. They were neglected by the church. While the women themselves felt that they were capable to teach and preach in the church, they were not given chances to participate to show their capability. Once there was a female candidate for church leadership but most of the people said that they did not want a female for their leader. When I heard and experienced this, I think it is a high time to change our view towards women regarding more participation in the church. If we read Galatians 3:28, Paul said that *'there is no longer Jews nor Greek, slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all you are one in Christ Jesus'*. If so, we have to give more opportunity to women particularly in the church



level without having any discrimination on the basis of their femaleness.

- We have seen the unity among the community, organizations and in the church. Whenever they have any work for the development of the society, they gathered together to help one another. Even in construction of a house there is only the head supervisor and all other villagers worked under his instruction as labourers. When I saw their unity, it reminded me of what Jesus has taught to his disciples to love one another and to become one. This Mualcheng people were maintaining the very Jesus' teaching of love and unity.

- The community is eco-friendly which is appreciable. They preserved the forest, water, and animals as far as possible on their part. They forbid cutting of trees for commercial purposes, restricting the sale of tools for hunting birds and animals. They plant bamboo in the surrounding vacant areas. The villagers of Mualcheng practiced what God has given responsibility

to Adam to preserve and look after the land.

- In Luke 4:14 we found that Jesus is on the side of poor. But the church is very busy for its own activities in that mostly middle class people have more opportunity. The social organisations such as YMA and MHIP were found to be rendering their services to the poor. Meanwhile, the *Pavalai Pawl*, a newly formed fellowship of the middle-aged married men was found active in helping the poor and needy.

- The mindset of the youths were very much influenced by electronic media, which could be seen from their fashion and in their lifestyles. During the last decade the youth at Mualcheng were to have lived a simple life especially with regards to fashion, but from two or three years back onwards they were copying the fashion they see from the electronic media. This causes them to be neglecting family and religious values they used to maintain. They may seem to be reminded what the Ecclesiastes wrote thousand of years ago to



young people of his time in 12:1 to help them live a meaningful life! Since the church has been given the responsibility of preserving the environment, to be siding with the poor, and to give equal chances of doing his ministry, it is important that churches everywhere, in rural or urban, need to realise this.

(This report has been published after some modifications. Ed).

SEMINAR ON STUDIES IN MIZO RELIGIOUS MINDSET

On January 18, 2013, 9:30 am Sandy Hall at Aizawl Theological College, the Aizawl Theological College in collaboration with the Zoram Research Foundation (anon political organisation) organised a seminar on "Studies in Mizo Religious Mindset; Conversion and 'Born Again' Phenomenon".

The Sessions of the seminar were divided into three periods: Between 10:00-11:00 am. Prof. Thangchungnunga, Registrar of Mizoram University conducted the session in which Rev. Vanlalzuata, Senior Executive Secretary led the devotion and Upa Prof. R. Lalthantluanga, Vice Chancellor, Mizoram University-gave a Keynote address.

The second Session was held during 11:15am-1:00 pm conducted by Prof. O. Rosanga,

Head of Department, Department of History & Ethnography, Mizoram University, and a paper on 'The conversion of the leading Mizo community members into Christianity and its impact on Mizo the whole Mizo community by Rev. R. Lalthanmawia, the former Synod Moderator and an expert in Calvinistic and Reformed Theology Another paper was presented on the topic Economic factors for Conversion" by Dr. Sangkima, President, Mizo History Association. Discussion followed on the two presentations.

The third and final Session was held between 2:00-4:00 pm; Rev. Prof. C. Lalhlira, Vice Principal, Aizawl Theological College chaired the function, and a paper on "The Understanding of 'Born again' among the Mizo, and its implication



on the life of the people' presented by two persons namely Rev. R. Zolawma, Assistant Professor, Academy of Integrated Christian Studies leh Rev. Rosiamliana Tochhawng, Assistant Professor, Aizawl Theological College. A lively

discussion followed again.

Mr. Rochamliana Gen. Secretary, Zoram Research Foundation proposed vote of thanks at the the sessions was dismissed.



Some pictures of Central KTP Business Sessions March 1-3, 2013 at Lunglei Chanmari



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