

# PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW



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Jharkhand Mission Field  
*p. 21*

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

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**PRESBYTERIAN  
REVIEW**

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

## EDITORIAL:

**NO EXCESSIVE EXPLOITATION, PLEASE!**

The New Year 2014 has dawned, that we are given another year of serving God and his creation! We bring greetings to all the members of this Presbyterian Review by way of either subscribing it or reading it from some where.

Let me once again draw your attention to ecological concerns in few words. While many people have been amazed and moved by the skillful creation of God, others have been exploiting them for their own easy and pleasant living. In this, Christians have been blamed since long time ago for not feeling responsible enough to preserve the whole realm of creation, but rather exploiting them for their easy living. Say for example, Lynn White in late sixties and early seventies ("The historical roots of our ecologic crisis" [with discussion of St Francis; reprint, 1967], and *Ecology and religion in history*, (New York :Harper and Row, 1974) blamed Christians for wrongly interpreting the story of creation in Genesis which highly esteemed Man (or humans). Due to this misunderstanding, according to them, many people have been exploiting indiscriminately the gifts of nature such as the trees in the forests, the rocks, sands and soil, the fishes and any other living creatures in the rivers and seas, and even the space above the sky. The consequences of all this being the 'hole' in the ozone layer, the extremity in climate change, untimely and unusual incessant rain and snow fall, drought and famine worldwide. It is pertinent to reread the Bible and understand afresh the texts not only in terms of anthropocentric view, but together with all other creation. That will only help us to view the whole creation in a positive way and look at them as fellow members in God's family.

Let the people of God be reminded that it is God's gift to his creation to bring another New Year. We human beings are not supposed to trample down upon the creation indiscriminately, but rather we have been entrusted to care for and to look after the world. While it is very true to say that we are to enjoy life here on earth as God's gifts, we are not supposed to exploit it haphazardly. We are altogether members of God's own family.



**PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW**  
**RESOLUTIONS OF THE**  
**SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
(February 24-26, 2014)

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The Synod Executive Committee (SEC) held its first session for 2014 during February 24-26, 2014 in J. M. Lloyd Hall, Synod office, Mission Vêng, Aizawl. Most of the agenda were the follow up of the resolutions made in the last Synod Session, 2013. About half of the Synod resolutions last year were left to the SEC to pursue further and find ways and means to make the resolutions successful. Some of the resolutions could be made effective after they are given clearance, while some of them have to be forwarded back to the subsequent Synod session (i.e. Synod 2014 ). Some members of the SEC last year were transferred to new places, and the concerned presbyteries sent their replacements to be approved in the the meeting. Another remarkable event during the session was the meeting with the newly elected members of the State legislative assembly.

It may be suffice to give highlight of the minutes of the SEC meeting, which are thought to be more relevant for the public.

1. The Research and Evaluation wing was entrusted to do survey on the date of the establishemnet of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church, so also the sectarian group in Mizoram.
2. The Synod officers' meeting (OM) was entrusted to make a concrete proposals for the suitable time of the transfer of the Synod workers.
3. A similar letter head format to be used by all the churches under the MPC should be proposed by the OM.
4. The OM was entrusted to propose new rates for disbursing the Synod endowment fund.
5. Chaplain will be posted at Cancer Hospital, Zemabawk.



**6.** In order to press the state government to continue enforcing the Mizoram Total Liquor Prohibition Act -(MTLP Act) the SEC resolved)

- a) to submit memorandum to the State Chief Minister
- b) to have a prayer on March 9, 2014 Saturday evening worship service
- c) to make a press release to be published in the newspapers and telecast in the local television.

**7.** Rev. Lalremsiama was appointed as the new leader for Central *Kristian Thalai Pawl* (CKTP, i.e., Central Christian Youth Fellowship).

**8.** During the political turmoil in Mizoram (between 1966-1986), many villages were burnt down by the armed forces, causing loss of valuable materials which include the pastors' baptismal and marriage registration books. In order to help people get new copies of certificates, the SEC resolved that application could be submitted to the Executive Secretary i/c Archive with necessary and relevant bio-data of the applicant through the local church they belong to. The E/S may issue new certificates to those trusted applicants.

**9.** A sub-committee for the Campus Ministry was formed as below:

- (1) Upa Lalthanzâma
- (2) Rev. Dr. R. Lalbiakmawia
- (3) Rev. Zosangliana Colney
- (4) Rev. Dr. C. Lalhlira
- (5) Rev. Dr. Lalchungnunga
- (6) Upa C. Ngurthantluanga
- (7) Upa Chhawnvung
- (8) Rev. K. Lalthangmawia

**10.** Mr R. Lalnuntluanga, Assistant Coordinator was promoted to Coordinator post, and he has been assigned the Synod Information and Publicity (Synfo) section.

**11.** The SEC has also granted permission to revise the manual/guidelines of youth fellowship - KTP by appointing five members among themselves under the leadership of the Executive Secretary i/c KTP.



**1. SKILLED TRAINING OF ALUMINIUM TRADE CONDUCTED:**

The last batch of vocational training in 2013 organised by the Synod Multipurpose Training Centre was concluded on December 13, 2013. Rev. Lalzuithanga, the Executive Secretary in-charge was the Chief Guest at the farewell function.

Till now, 1,015 persons had been given skilled training in sewing, shoe making. The trainees were given ₹.500/- per month for their pocket money. They were having 27 trainees on computer skills who paid ₹. 100 for admission fee and ₹. 50/- as monthly fee. Those who could complete the course with 80% attendance were given ₹. 1200/- as incentive prize.

**2. SYNOD OFFICE RE-OPENS FOR 2014:** The Synod office was reopened on January 6, 2014 with a solemn devotion and rededication. While Rev. Vanlalzuata, the Senior Executive Secretary was bidden farewell, Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau, the Moderator in 2013, was installed as one of the Executive Secretaries. Rev. Lalzuithanga becomes the senior Executive Secretary; Rev. Lalhmuchhuaka occupies the Moderator's Office. Rev. Lalchungnunga, a lecturer since 2003 in Aizawl Theological College was welcomed as the Director of the Campus Ministry (although he could not attend the function as he recently underwent heart surgery). Rev. Lalzuithanga chaired the function and all the office workers rededicated themselves to serve God better throughout the New Year.

**3. CENTRAL KTP CELEBRATES DIAMOND JUBILEE:** The Youth Fellowship of the MPC, The Central Kristian Thalai Pawl, (The Presbyterian Youth Fellowship) celebrates its Diamond Jubilee this year. On the February 22, 2013 (Saturday) torches were lit in every churches wherever the Youth Fellowship has its branch to symbolise the continuing activi-



ties of the fellowship since its establishment. The former leaders of the youths were honoured in the functions organised for the celebration. The General Conference held at Khawzâwl during February 28-March 2, 2014 had also commemorated the Jubilee year by having a musical concert in which gospel singers, old and new, presented very special numbers. A Diamond Jubilee monument was inaugurated at the spot of the conference.

The Youth Fellowship was established by few Christian youth leaders in 1953 by making an adhoc committee. But it had started functioning since February 22, 2014. (The detailed report of the General conference could be read elsewhere in this issue).

**4. BUSINESS SESSION OF PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S WOMEN FELLOWSHIP HELD:** The business session of the MPC's Women Fellowship was held at Durtlang Church during March 7-9, 2014. Apart from business sessions in the noon time, there were worship services in the evenings in which the Synod Moderator Rev. K. Lalhmuchhuaka and other women leaders addressed the delegates. Two delegates each from the pastorates attended the sessions (a detailed report could be read elsewhere in this issue).

**5. NEW COUNSELLING CENTRE INAUGURATED:** A new counselling centre was inaugurated by the Moderator Rev. K. Lalhmuchhuaka at Vaivakawn Church's complex. This was a significant moment for the Family Guidance and Counselling Centre (FG & CC), which now has two branches at Aizawl, namely at Chanmari and at Viavakawn. Another centre will be opened at Champhai, the important town in the eastern corner in Mizoram and Myanmar border of the Indian sub-continent. While Rev. Lalzuithanga, the Senior Executive Secretary chaired the function, the Moderator opened and dedicated the



centre. Rev. Lalhmingthanga, the programme Director reported the works and progress of the FG & CC.

The first centre of FG & CC was started in 1997 at Mission Veng, and in 2009, after more than a decade, a branch was opened at Chanmari, Aizawl. Both the Revs. Lalzuithanga and K. Lalmuchhuaka pointed out that eventhough the importance of counselling has been realised by the Church for more than two decades, it could not take fast steps to start more centres to meet the need of the public. They both expressed their hopes that the new centre will serve the needs of the public, especially in the Western locality of Aizawl. As of now, most of the pastors have been given training in counselling, but due to their busy pastoral schedules, they could not give their times for intensive counselling. The Living Hope Ministry, Vaivakawn donated a TV set for the centre, to be utilised by the patients while waiting for their turn of counselling. The Vaivakawn local church made all the physical preparations for the centre.

#### **6. NEARLY 200 NEW MISSIONARIES SENT OUT:**

The Synod Mission Board (SMB) sent out 173 new missionaries to work in different parts of India. The ceremony for thre sending out was held at Mission Vengthlang Church, Aizawl, on January 5, 2014 in the solemn afternoon worship service (01:30pm). Rev. Lalchhuanmawia, Secretary of the SMB chaired the worship service, and elder Lalrinmuana Co-ordinator of the SMB, Synod Office, introduced all the new missionaries calling their names one by one. Rev. K. Lalmuchhuaka, the new Synod Modarator dedicated and addressed them with words of encouragement. Rev. P.C. Pachhunga, the Executive Secretary i/c of SMB offered intercessory prayers. The Mission Vengthlang Church choir and the Synod choir sang melodies and the missionaries also presented a song. Out of 173, 13 of them were ordained ministers





while all other were new recruits as contract missionaries. With these new ones, the SMB has sent out about 2,300 missionaries both inside India and abroad.

**7. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BOARD GIVES ADMISSIONS FOR M. Th. and B.D. STUDIES:** The Synod's Theological Education Board in its second and third sittings in 2014 has given admission to 25 applicants for M. Th. studies and 20 for B.D. to study theology in 2014-15 academic session. Five applicants were recommended to study B.D. in Hindi at Allahabad Bible Seminary.

**8. THE SYNOD MISSION BOARD MEMBERS VISIT MISSION FIELDS:** Some members of the Synod Mission Board Committee visited the mission fields in order to know better the mission activities in the central/northern part of India. During February 12-18, 2014, members paid a visit to the Patna Mission field (in Bihar state) comprising 18 of them, 3 ordained ministers and one female member, while all others were church elders. A similar tour was organised for another 15 members - one ordained minister and fourteen elders visiting Delhi Mission field during February 12-20, 2014. Another group of 15 members visited Lucknow mission field during February 13-20, 2014, in which five were ordained ministers. The members were selected from different churches of both rural and urban localities.

These visits to the Mission fields by the Mission Board members were planned to help them get better understanding of the needs of the people, the missionaries, and so also would help them find better mission strategies to uplift and evangelise the people in the fields.



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**THE 7<sup>th</sup> MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN  
WOMEN FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE  
REPORT 2014**

Mrs. H. Lalpianthangi  
Gen. Secretary i/c. Women

The 7<sup>th</sup> Mizoram Presbyterian Women Fellowship Committee was held during March 7-9, 2014 at Durtlang Presbyterian church, Mizoram.

The programme highlight was as follows :-

**1)** The programme was started from March 7, 2014 Friday evening worship as usual. The General Secretary Mrs. H. Lalpianthangi highlighted the activities of Mizoram Presbyterian Church Women Fellowship on Friday evening service with a blessing of short sermon by Rev K. Lalhmuchhuaka, Synod Moderator. On March 8, 2013 (Saturday) - the whole day was spent for Business session. In the evening service we listened to free sermon from Mrs. Rochhuangkimi, Vice Chairperson.

On March 9, 2014 Sunday, morning service till evening service, we listened to the theme of the meeting "Let us return to the Lord" (Lamentations 3:40) which sub-themes were delivered by different people viz. Dr. Lalnghakthuami, Associate Professor, ATC; Mrs. Rosangpuii, Central Committee member, and Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau, Executive Secretary i/c Women.

**2) Choirs:** Every service was blessed with one Church Women Fellowship Choir; the Synod Choir had also sang melodies. Besides the choirs engaged before, the Durtlang Pastorate choir presented one song as they were requested.

**3) Delegates:** Two delegates each were expected from each 177 pastorates, and one delegate each from Central Christian Youth Fellowship (CKTP), ATTWI, and from other invitees. The total number of delegates became 401.



**4) Handful of Rice:** During 2013 the total amount of rupees collected from the 'Handful of rice' collection amounted to ₹. 9,66,28,375/-. This year the 1st Prize of the Handful of Rice Collection was again won by N.E. Khawdungsei Pastorate, in which out of 554 families 547 hundred offered handful of rice offering and a hundred percent observed daily family devotion.

**Statistics:** Under Mizoram Synod, there are 177 pastorates (districts) which joined us in our assessment. All Pastorates except one submitted their reports. The summary of the report was:

Number of churches	:	875
Number of families	:	1,02,260
Number of women members	:	1,61,449
Number of families observing daily family devotion	:	60,179 (58.85%)
Number of families offering handful of rice collection	:	99,727 (97.52%)

**The Resolutions passed were as follows**

**I. OVERTURES FROM CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

It was resolved to continue prayers in worship services on the first Tuesday night of each month by having the following prayer items:

- a) For the children in every families, and for all those families who could not start having family devotion.
- b) For Hmangaihna In (Home of Love - the orphanage) and for the Grace Home which has been taking care of HIV/AIDS infected people.
- c) to overcome all kinds of evils prevailing in our country.
- d) for the success of the construction of the Women Centre, and
- e) for the churches in Wales to receive spiritual revival.



**II. RESOLUTIONS FROM GENERAL AGENDA**

1. It was resolved to hold awareness campaigns for a better use of freedom among Church women.

2. It was resolved to organise an awareness campaign within pastorates (districts) on the responsibility of the mothers, and the Central committee was entrusted to prepare the programme.

3. It was resolved to reduce the activities of women outside their homes as practicable as possible while accomplishing the responsibilities in the church.

4. It was resolved to collect offerings twice on Women Fellowship evening worship services to meet the need of the Synod Hospital's Charity Fund.

5. The Central committee was entrusted to prepare a guideline for encouraging each family to make their children more frequent to the Church.

**Budget for 2014-2015 and Project :**

<b>Projects</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1. Women Centre	₹. 50,00,000
2. Central Budget (Women Centre Special)	₹. 15,00,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>₹. 65,00,000</b>

Durtlang Church has to be appreciated for hosting the Business Session this year. They formed the organizing committee, which again formed seven sub-committees for the success of the session. Apart from the business sessions in the day time, there were evening worship services in which singing praises were lively and inspired. The messages delivered by those able speakers were also meaningful and valuable for the delegates.

In 2015 the Mizoram Presbyterian Women Fellowship's General Conference will be held at Mamit; we request your prayers support for the success of the conference.



**PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW**  
**55<sup>TH</sup> KTP GENERAL CONFERENCE**

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Elder Zonunmawia,  
General Secy,  
Central Kristian Thalai Pawl

The largest gathering of young people in Mizoram, the *Kristian Thalai Pawl* (Christian Youth Fellowship, shortened KTP) General Conference was held at Khawzawl from February 27 to March 2, 2014. The 55<sup>th</sup> edition of the Conference coincided with the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the KTP itself. According to records maintained by the host branch, there were 24,146 attendees staying at Khawzawl while more than a 1000 others attended the Conference from outside the host village. To mark the 60 years of the KTP's existence and as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, all former leaders of the Central KTP were invited to attend, out of whom 32 were able to attend the Conference. The theme of this year's Conference was "Arise, Shine" (Isaiah 60:1), highlighted in sermons preached by three former leaders of the Central KTP - Rev. H. Lalrinmawia, Rev. Lalzuithanga and *Upa* (Elder) C. Ngurthantluanga. Dr. Ramdinthara Sailo (a missionary to Solomon's Island) spoke in the programme dedicated to Missions. In addition to the worship services, a Multiplex programme was simultaneously held in four venues - three Churches and a YMA Hall. The following four topics were studied in the Multiplex programme-

- a. Youth Perspectives on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- b. Youth Perspectives on Social Media
- c. Youth Perspectives on Corruption
- d. Youth Perspectives on Facing Problems/Obstacles

Representation in the Governing Session was as under:-

- |                          |   |     |
|--------------------------|---|-----|
| 1. Central KTP Committee | - | 21  |
| 2. Pastorates            | - | 179 |



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3. Branches	-	748
4. Synod	-	2
5. Central Kohhran Hmeichhe (Presbyterian Women) Committee	-	2
6. Ministers/Pastors/Elders	-	15
7. Invitees	-	36
a. Lairam Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran (LIKBK)	-	2
b. Presbyterian Youth Fellowship of PCI (PYF)	-	2
c. Kristian Khanglai Pawl (KKP)	-	2
d. Others	-	30
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>- 1003</b>

**Agenda Discussed:-**

I. Announcement of host for KTP General Conference 2018

Place : West Phaileng  
 Date : March 1-4, 2018



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## II. RESOLUTIONS FROM GENERAL AGENDA

i. **Dedication of Collection from KTP Service towards Synod Hospital Charity Fund:** The agenda brought in by Armed Veng Pastorate was discussed and accepted as "That a one-time collection be made during KTP Church service in 2014 towards Synod Hospital Charity Fund".

ii. **Central KTP to take a step with regard to Human Trafficking:** The agendas brought in by ITI Veng Pastorate and Venghnuai Pastorate were discussed and accepted as " That the Central KTP take measures to create awareness on Human Trafficking and on the threat of questionable employment for young people who move outside of the state for employment.

iii. **Increment in Members' Contribution towards Youth Recreation Center (YRC) :** The agenda from Khatla Pastorate and Dawrpui Pastorate were discussed and accepted as "That it is accepted to increase the expected contribution of members towards YRC from Rs.5 to Rs. 10"

iv. **Creation of Attractive Programmes for Youth:** The agenda from the Central KTP Committee was discussed leading to the resolution that CKTP take the necessary steps towards its fulfilment.

v. **On Adoption of KUMPUAN** (Designated Theme/Focus for the whole year)

1. It was resolved to have a *Kumpuan* (a theme) for the year 2015-16. The following were suggestions received for adoption:-

- a. Self-Control (Galatians 5:23) - Hmuntha Pastorate
- b. Transformed for Christ - Dawrpui Pastorate
- c. Believer's Life - Chaltlang Pastorate
- d. Holiness - Phuldungsei Pastorate
- e. Youth and Politics - Keitum Pastorate
- f. Fulfilment of Ministry (II Timothea 4:5) - Khawbung Pastorate



Out of these suggestions, "Transformed for Christ" was chosen as the theme for *Kum puan* during 2015-2016, based on Romans 12:2.

**BUDGET (2014 -2015):** The budget proposal was accepted as follows:

- |   |          |                     |
|---|----------|---------------------|
| 1. Bial (Pastorate) budget                          | :        | ₹. 3,10,300         |
| 2. For the construction of Youth Recreation Centre: |          | ₹.1366700           |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>:</b> | <b>₹. 44,69,700</b> |

**Elected Leaders of CKTP :** The following persons were elected to be leaders of Central KTP for the period of 2014 - 2016

- 1) Dr. Julie Remsangpuii, Zonuam Pastorate
- 2) Dr. Lalliansanga, Durtlang Pastorate
- 3) Pu Samuel Laldingliana, Electric Veng Pastorate
- 4) Upa K. Rorelkima, Ramhlun North Pastorate
- 5) Pu R. Lalruatkima, Dawrpui Pastorate
- 6) T. Upa Richard B. Lalhriatpuia, Armed Veng Pastorate
- 7) Tv. R. Lalramnghaka, Bawngkawn Pastorate
- 8) T. Upa T. Lalawmpuia, Ramhlun Vengthar Pastorate
- 9) Pu Ngurhmingliana, Khatla Pastorate
- 10) Pu Vanlalpeka, Chanmari Pastorate
- 11) Pu Zonunsanga Ralte, Mission Veng Pastorate
- 12) Tv. Joseph Lalsangzuala, Chaltlang Pastorate
- 13) Pu Lalthangvunga Sailo, Republic Veng Pastorate
- 14) Pu P.C. Biakmuanpuia, Mission Vengthlang Pastorate
- 15) Pu C. Laldingliana, Kulikawn Pastorate
- 16) Pu V. Lalrinmawia, Vaivakawn Pastorate
- 17) Pu Lalchhuanliana, Bungkawn Pastorate
- 18) Pu K. Lalruatpuia, Venghlui Pastorate
- 19) Pu Lalmuanpuia, (Asst. Coordinator, KTP)

**OFFICE BEARERS:** Out of these elected members, the following persons were selected for office bearers as against their names:





- Leader : Rev. J. Lalremsiama  
(appointed by The Synod)  
Asst. Leader : Mr. Samuel Laldingliana  
General Secretary : Upa Zonunmawia  
(appointed by the Synod)  
Asst. Secretary : Dr. Lalliansanga  
Treasurer : Dr. Julie Remsangpuui  
Fin. Secretary : Mr. R. Lalramnghaka

(all other elected members are members of CKTP Committee)

March 20, 2014 (Thursday) was appointed as the day for handing over of charges to new leaders.

**General remarks:** Churches in Khawzawl Venglai, Khawzawl Vengthar and Khawzawl Dinthar pastorates were worthy of appreciation for hosting the General Conference, which also celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of the KTP. It was remarkable to see that all the families were taking parts in hosting delegates irrespectives of church denominations. Some had more than twenty, some even more than thirty, guests eating and sleeping in their houses while the host families patiently served them. The youths could be regular in attending worship services and fellowship meetings thanks to the services rendered by their respective hosts. Special thanks should be given to the Synod Information and Publicity section (Synfo) team for covering the whole programme with their video cameras, and made it possible to telecast it live in the local cable television channels. Their commitment to make the programme available in television had made them busy with arranging the technological and mechanical appliances even late in the nights, but it worth. The presence of the ‘oldies’, former leaders of KTP in the celebration of the Jubilee made the Conference more valuable and a grand success. The Jubilee concert was another ‘hit’ item during the conference, in which gospel sing-



ers inspired the audience through their ‘special numbers’. The ‘Multiplex’ programme was another venturing one for the youths in which they exchanged their views on different current issues and concerns. While many young people today have fallen into sins and committing vices and evils, it was encouraging to see tens of thousand youths gathering at the Conference to praise God and listened intently to the preaching of the Word.



Rev. Lalrinmawia, Leader of CKTP, inaugurates the Jubilee monument during the celebration



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***PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW***  
**THE SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (SEC) MEET  
THE MEMBERS OF STATE ASSEMBLY**

On February 25, 2015, at 1:10 pm, the Synod Executive Committee members had a meeting with the newly elected Members of the State Assembly (MLA). With the Assembly Speaker Mr. Hiphei and the Chief Minister Mr. Lalthanhawla, 31 MLAs out of 40 were present. The SEC had meetings with MLAs even before as soon as they formed a government after the general election.

The meeting was held at J.M. Lloyds Hall, Synod office, Mission Veng, Aizawl. The Synod Moderator Rev. K. Lalhmuchhuaka chaired the meeting. Elder H. Zoliana, Synod Secretary, said greetings and congratulated the newly elected members of the State Assembly. He had also expressed the expectation of the Church on the new Government with the following points:

a) that the Church expects the Government to bring justice to all, to give priority for sufficient supply of Power and Electricity, economic self-sufficiency, health, education, preservation and responsible use of the forest produce, and construction of better transport communication in and throughout the state.

b) to continue the enactment of MTLP (Mizoram Total Liquor Prohibition Act);

c) to protect the rights of the Mizo people who are living near the border with Assam state;

d) to make more commitment in attempting the eradication corruption.

The members were presented the Holy Bible, calender and mementos. From the MLAs, Mr. Hiphei Speaker, Mr. Lalthanhawla, Chief Minister, Mr. (elder) R. Romawia and Pu Lalsawta Cabinet Ministers, Pu Vanlalzawma leader of opposition, delivered short messages. Few of the SEC members namely Rev. C. Vanlalhraia, Rev. Zosangliana Colney, Rev. Lalchhuanliana, Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau also congratulated the new MLAs, and expressed their expectations from the new State Government. Rev. Lalzuithanga the Synod 's enior Executive Secretary proposed vote of thanks, Upa Challiana offered the closing prayer.



**THE MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SYNOD  
HOSTS THE NCCI REGIONAL JUBILEE  
CELEBRATION**

Following the request made by the National Council of Churches of India (NCCI), the Synod Executive Committee (SEC) which met during February 24-26, 2014, agreed to host the Northeast Regional celebration of the NCCI centenary Jubilee. The Mission Veng Church, Aizawl, was requested to host the programme on behalf of the Synod. The church has taken all the responsibilities of organising seminars, church services, food and lodging. The theme of the celebration: "Towards Integral Mission and Grassroot Ecumenism" was the theme of the seminars which was conducted on March 28, 2014 at Synod Conference Centre, Mission Veng, Aizawl.

The first day of celebration started off with Synod Moderator's welcome dinner for delegates coming from different parts of India, but mainly from North East India. It was held at Synod Conference Centre, Mission Veng, Aizawl. Cultural items were presented by Lily Veng Cultural Club, Aizawl. Their cultural dances of *Cheraw*, *Chawnglaizawn* and *Chheihlam*, and gospel song in Hindi (*Jaiho*, *Jisu*) enthused the delegates. Rev. Lalmuchhuaka, Moderator, delivered welcome speech in which he ensured peaceful and pleasant rest during their stay in Mizoram.

On the following day, i.e., March 29, 2014 Friday, a Seminar was held on the topics related to the Jubilee theme. At 9:00 am, the Faculty of Aizawl Theological College led worship devotion in a meaningful and solemn manner. At 9:30, An inaugural function was held in which the State Governor of Mizoram Mr. Vakkom Purusothaman inaugurated the celebration. He lauded the Churches in India for their contributions to the upliftment of the society in India in many ways, including culture, education and health. Rev. Lalzuithanga, Senior Executive Secretary of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod welcomed the delegates. Rev. K. Lungmuana, former General Secretary of the NCCI, gave a keynote address by presenting a comprehensive paper on issues and prospects of the Ecumenical movements in India. Rev. Dr. K. Thanzauva made an initial response, followed by discussion. After this, Rev. Awala



Longkumer presented her paper on “Integral Mission and Grass root Ecumenism: Challenges and Response from North East India.” Dr. Lalrinawmi Ralte made an initial response. In the afternoon session the paper written by Rev. P.B.M. Basaiawmoit on “Toward Integral Mission and Grassroot Ecumenism” was read by Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad since the paper writer could not turn up due to his candidacy for the upcoming general election for State member of assembly (MLA) and his ill-health also prevents him from long distance travel. The paper reader made a response of it, and discussion followed. In the evening Mr. Lalthanhawla, Chief Minister of Mizoram, and his family hosted the all the delegates with a cultural programme and delicious dinner at Aijal Club.

Saturday was used for excursion; delegates were taken to various institutions of the MPC Synod such as MTC and SMTC, Synod Hospital, Grace Home (care for the HIV/AIDS patients), Aizawl Theological College. Delegates from outside Mizoram were taken to different local churches in Aizawl to experience worship services and also to deliver God’s Word.

The main celebration programmes were held on Sunday at Mission Veng Church (which is dearly known as Biak Inpui - the mother church of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church). In the forenoon worship service, Rev. H. Lalrinmawia, Pastor in-charge of Mission Veng pastorate conducted the worship. Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad, General Secretary of NCCI delivered the message. The afternoon worship service was chaired by Dr. Hrang Than Chhungi, Executive Secretary and Rev. R. Lalnunzira, General Secretary of the NEICC delivered the word of God. In the evening worship service, Rev. Zosangliana Colney, former Executive members of NCCI chaired the meeting and the Rt. Rev. Dr. Taranath S. Sagar, the President of the NCCI delivered the Message. In all the meetings, choirs from different denominations of member churches of the NCCI sang praises which were the important parts of each meeting, and they enlivened the atmosphere of the services and inspired the worshippers.

The Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod felt fortunate to have hosted the Regional Centenary Jubilee celebration. The Church thanked the leaders of the NCCI for giving the chance to host the



historic celebration. The leaders of the NCCI also thanked the MPC for hosting the celebration which would require them high amount of money for expenses if they have to bear all the costs.





**PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW**  
**Report of The**  
**JHARKHAND MISSION FIELD**

23

Rev. P. B. Zosapthara  
Field Secretary

**Introduction**

The Jharkhand Mission Field located in what was previously known as the Santal Parganas. Here the Santal people are majority, hence it is named. Our Mission works in different districts such as Dumka, Jamtara, Dhanbad, Godda, Pakura where Santals are predominant and also among Munda in Ranchi area. But we confine works more in the Dumka district where out of 14 lakh population about 5 lakh are Santals. There are 24 districts in Jharkhand, having more than 270 lakhs of people; Ranchi is the capital city. Santal are about 66 lakh of people.

Like many tribals in India, the Santals traditionally worship trees and stones by offering sacrifices to them; they are easy to accept the gospel than many other people in India. They are loyal and sincere people by nature. But there are few educated people among them even now. Thus, in order to develop and grow into faith, they need better education throughout the state. They have been oppressed and dominated by educated and rich people from outside the state. Good houses which are owned by a Santal were rarely found in the cities and towns. They need proper guidance to become self-sufficient and develop in all spheres of life. Only the Word of God can make them free and grow into development.

**1. The beginning of Mission**

The 'Non-Mizo Joint Christian Fellowship' in Mizoram sent 4 Santal missionaries to Jharkhand in March 1987, and that was the beginning of the mission of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church (MPC). It was under the Kolkata Mission Field at that time, later under the Patna Mission Field. During those years, it grew very slowly as it was look after from far distances. In April 2008 the Jharkhand Mission Field was inaugurated to confine the work among the Santal. The headquarters was stationed at Dumka city. God has been showering his blessing on the Mission that within 7 years the number of church members becomes almost 5,000. Unlike many



people in other parts of India sub-continent, they never ask for the benefit if they become Christians. It is significant to note that those who have received baptism never return to their previous faith.

**2. The Growth of the Mission Field**

Keys	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
							(Jan-March)
Pastorates	3	3	3	3	3	5	nil
Fellowships	25	29	34	44	57	64	7
Members	2619	2876	3194	3553	3862	4538	4951
No. of							
Workers	43	47	64	75	93	101	109
New believers	207	272	262	333	453	727	171

The above table shows the growth of mission in terms of numbers within six years. The main reason for this fast growth has been the Santali missionaries who came from Mizoram after receiving baptism there. Those people have missionary zeal and commitment to evangelize their community members. Even before the mission workers came to know of their works, they themselves had made converts and had organised believers meeting in certain places. The converts are firm in their faith, which can be seen in their houses that they hang Christian symbols (e.g. the Cross) on their walls. This makes it easy for outsiders to identify them. Their use of common language makes it convenient to preach the gospel and thus make the mission grow. They easily would form Fellowships, which also do have the zeal of evangelizing their neighbours; even at dark the whole family including both grown-ups and children would take with them lanterns and go to their neighbouring villages for evangelism.

As mentioned above, their growth in education is comparatively slow and the Mission needs to take more steps toward this. The literacy rate among the Santal population is very low, that only about 4% may be literate in villages. If the Synod Mission of the MPC could give more emphasis on school education, the mission work could also grow faster.





### 3. Our Joys

One significant thing among the Santals is that they have deep commitment to do evangelism; this they do by themselves. Once a Santal becomes Christian, he/she would try to share the good news to his nearest person, either one's family members or a neighbour. A 'Fellowship' is formed when a family accepts Christianity, and that makes the mission work easier. People who had worked in Mizoram in one way or another and have returned to their homes and villages are dedicated missionaries in their respective locality. They give their best efforts to have a 'Fellowship' in their villages. They would also like to have a place of worship (church), for which they would donate their own lands. Even now there are some lands where a church can be constructed if there is fund.

This year, when the mission workers go out for evangelism, they search for people who have returned from Mizoram, because they usually have accepted the gospel; and they are always helpful in searching others for having fellowship meeting. Such search will be done in a more systematic manner. When such people were found, they are happy to see us, because while they live in Mizoram they received baptism and participated in Christian gatherings such as Mashihhi Sangati meets, etc. They learnt many good practices in Mizoram such as giving tithes, collection of a handful of rice, and raising of funds for mission by collecting cash or in kinds. They even give tithes from their produce of paddy and other food produce. They are friendly by nature. Unlike in other parts of India, they never disturb mission workers, nor do they make obstacles to missions. However, there are cases of problems from their own local people or family when one becomes Christian. But these are comparatively minimal cases.

### Conclusion

In Jharkhand state, different churches such as Roman Catholic, NELC, CNI and GOSNER have been doing mission work. But they do not give serious efforts to evangelism (soul winning). There are other new mission agents that are more keen to make converts and their main attempts are to increase the numbers of baptised people. In some places, they even promised people to be appointed as pastors if they could baptise good number of people and will also re-



ceive some amount of money! Thus it is pertinent to do mission carefully in such contexts. The people are open to receive the gospel, and wherever the mission workers go, they receive invitation to to work among them. It is the right time to preach and witness the gospel to them.

**OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO**

**TRIBAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT**

- Dr. Lalrindiki Ralte

**Contested Understanding:**

"Development" is a loaded word which can mean different things to different people. It implies growth, maturity, progress, blooming/ blossoming, burgeoning, fullness of life and so on. In spite of the different connotations, nowadays the word "development" is strongly attached to the concept of "growth", particularly that of economic growth, with the help of western science and technology. The main goal of this kind of development is the economic success of individuals or business corporations at the expense of other people and nature. This has become the dominant understanding of development in today's world.

However, in the tribal understanding, 'development' means a quality of life in a community rather than isolated individual achievements in only one aspect of social life, such as the economic life. This understanding of development is clearly expressed in traditional tribal communities in various ways, which is still practiced by many contemporary tribal communities at different levels.

In this paper attempts will be made to analyze the concept of development in tribal communities from the past to the present. This kind of historical analysis is necessary in order to avoid idealizing the past and to situate the concern of this consultation in re-thinking development in the life of contemporary tribal communities. We will deal with three components of tribal communities, such as development in relation to human community, development in relation to the rest of the creation and development in relation to tribal economy.



There is no doubt that each tribe has their own unique way of expressing their understanding of development. But since it is not possible to deal with each and every unique tribal practices, this paper will try to highlight only few general practices and understanding of development among the different tribal communities in India. At the same time, to bring clarity to our discussion, examples will be drawn from some particular tribes, mostly from Northeast India since the paper presenter is more familiar with that region. However, it is not only for the sake of simplification that a more generalized understanding of development from tribal perspectives will be dealt with. It has been observed that too much emphasis on uniqueness and differences lead to more fragmentation and competition, whereas the need of the hour is to find common ground on which unity and alliances can be build up for re-thinking development. This is particularly crucial in the context of modern day tribals and all other marginalized groups, such as dalits, women, subsistence laborers etc., who are the main victims of the dominant development paradigm. Therefore, it is necessary to highlight similar ethos and practices of the different tribal communities without negating the unique characteristics of each tribe.

### **Development in tribal communities**

**1) Development in relation to human community:** One of the most distinctive features of tribal communities is a communitarian way of living together in the village level where people know each other, sharing their joys and sorrows. The common good is the organizing principle out of which the values and practices of the community evolved. Thus, in the tribal perspectives, development is the development of the community rather than individuals. In other words, fullness of life or real development can be achieved by individuals only in relationship with others in the community.

In order to ensure the common good the needs of the more vulnerable members are taken care of by the whole community. This may include construction of houses for the sick, the widows and poorer members and helping them in their economic life. Nowadays, among the Mizo tribe, this practice is taken over either by the Young Mizo Association in their respective villages or localities, or



by the church. However, the participation of the whole community is declining and when the church takes over such kind of community service, it usually does not extend beyond its own particular denomination.

In the past, respect and honor were given to individuals on the basis of their contribution to the welfare of the whole community. More well-to-do members known as *thangchhuah* in the traditional Mizo community were required to organize feasts for the whole community and to redistribute their wealth on such occasions. *Thangchhuah* people were also expected to go to *Pialral* after death, where they no longer had to work for their living. Thus, redistribution rather than accumulation of wealth was regarded as one of the highest forms of individual achievements. The criteria for achieving higher status in life after death was also based on how much one had given for the welfare of the whole community in their earthly life. Unfortunately, change in religion had eroded the concept of *thangchhuah* and similar such practices among many contemporary tribal communities. However, community services are still highly cherished albeit under different religious teachings.

Many tribes in Northeast India, such as the Ao Naga, Mizo and others, have a strong ideological and ethical principle which upholds the community life even under adverse circumstances. In Mizo, this principle is called *tlawmngaihna* and among the Ao it is known as *sobaliba*. Other tribes have also given different names to this kind of ethical principle. In short, it is the principle of self-denial in order to serve the interest of the community or any person in the community who are in need of help. Without this principle no communitarian society can develop. Till today it is the principle of *tlawmngaihna* or other similar practices which still gives a sense of community feeling and support within the different tribal communities.

For example, among the Mizo, in times of death all the members of the community express their *tlawmngaihna* towards the bereaved family in various ways. One prominent expression of Mizo *tlawmngaihna* is the collection of rice and firewood by young women from each family in the community for the bereaved family. This practice is continuing till today. However, in urban areas since people



no longer use firewood for cooking, the young women of the locality collect rice and some amount of money from each household. Apart from this, each family or individuals will give some amount of money when they visit the bereaved family to express their desire to help in the time of their loss. It is this kind of community care and support which continue to bind together modern day tribal communities, even though the forces of individualism has become very strong.

However, it is important to remember that tribal communities from the past to the present day are not ideal communities. Most of the tribes have strong patriarchal underpinnings in their socio-economic, political and religious life, which deny the value and contributions of women in their respective communities. Change in religion and in various aspects of their community life do not bring about much changes in the position of women who are still denied leadership position, particularly in the decision making bodies in the church and in the wider community life.

Moreover, community-centred life gives little or no space for individual freedom of thought and expression, for differing views and creative talents of minorities who have to fall in line with customary traditional views and ways of life of their respective tribal communities. Exclusive tribalism among modern day tribal communities and their sub-tribes is often manifested in violent conflicts over territory considered to be the exclusive property of one tribe or sub-tribe. This kind of tribalism distorted the concept of communitarian development among the different sub-tribes as well as among the different tribes. Above all, under the impact of the dominant development paradigm individualism, consumerism and class divisions already made a deep in-road into many contemporary tribal communities, which pose a serious challenge in upholding and sustaining the tribal concept of communitarian development.

**2) Development in relation to the rest of the creation:** It has now become a well known fact that tribal communities all over the world have a unique and intimate relationship with their natural environment compared to other non-tribal communities. In the traditional tribal communities nature is perceived as a living organism,



which human beings can experienced in their day to day life. The existence of human beings is understood to be a part of the ongoing rhythm of life in the rest of the creation based on reciprocal relationship and not on exploitation. Therefore, in the tribal perspectives development cannot be confined only among human communities but in terms of the relationship between human and the rest of the creation.

The intimate relationship between human and the world is manifested in their religious beliefs and in their myths. Among some of the Naga tribes the presence of the Supreme Being or the Creator is manifested through the land and soil which brings forth vegetation to sustain and nourish them. The Mizo, the Kuki and other tribes share the myths of their fore-parents emerging from a stone or from a big hole of the earth. This kind of belief has been interpreted as perception of land as a mother, who gives birth to human beings and nourishes them with her bounty. The Mizo concept of the Divine as *Khuanu*, *khua* meaning 'village protector' and *nu* meaning 'mother', can also be related to the understanding of the land as a mother. But *Khuanu* is understood to be more actively involved in building up relationships among human beings. The Munda tribe of Chotanagpur area also believed that their God, *Singbonga*, was affected and became angry when the land and the ecology were desecrated through the greed of human beings.

In many tribal myths animals are personified and understood to make crucial contributions in unfolding creation along with human beings. They are portrayed as having a sense of personality and discernment which often guided human beings in times of need. Tribals also believed in the active presence of spirits in their daily lives and in the natural environment around them, such as in the forests and rivers. These spirits are male and female or neuter, malevolent and benevolent. The belief in the presence of spirits among the life sustaining resources of the tribal people acted as important safeguards against unnecessary exploitation and degradation of the environment. Apart from these, taboos, totems and the concept of 'sacred groves' practiced by many tribal communities are important means of preserving and safeguarding creation which has become particularly significant in the age of ecological crisis.



Thus, we can see that in the tribal perspectives development cannot be envisaged without respecting and sustaining the rest of the creation. In this way the tribal worldview provides a fertile ground for evolving eco-theology in general, and eco-feminist theology in particular, which can help in developing an alternative ideology in re-thinking development which ensures a more egalitarian human community along with the rest of the creation.

At the same time it is also true that many contemporary tribal communities have lost their intimate relationship with the rest of the creation based on respect and reciprocal relationships. This is mainly due to conversion to other religions, such as Christianity among many tribal communities in Northeast India followed by the process of modernization and globalization. Nevertheless, there are still many tribal communities in different parts of India, including Northeast India, who are still practicing their traditional religions which is closely intertwined with respect for the rest of the creation. Among such tribes creating awareness on the ecological implications of their beliefs and practices can serve as effective tools for resisting destructive development paradigm imposed upon them.

Even among the tribes who had been converted to other religions, one can still observe a feeling of oneness with other creations, particularly among the rural people who are still directly depending on their natural environment for their livelihood. Such feeling may no longer be the dominant ideology in the day to day life of the people. However, a sensitive reinterpretation of their traditional beliefs and practices in the context of their present day situation can still be relevant in making them to re-think the most viable form of development for them.

**3) Development in relation to tribal economy:** Another important aspect of tribal communities is their subsistence economy based on community ownership of land and sharing of forest products and other resources like water. Once people got what they need from their economic activities they stop utilizing the natural resources at their disposal. Instead they spend their time in reproducing social relationships, such as feasting, celebrating life with songs and dances and in many other group activities which give protection,



reciprocity, cooperation and cultural continuity. In this way the tribal subsistence economy is deeply embedded in the socio-cultural and political life of the community. Women and nature play prominent role in this kind of economic activity.

Among the Northeastern tribals their subsistence economy is largely based on jhum cultivation, also known as slash and burn or shifting cultivation, and collection of forest resources. For many generations jhumming was the fulcrum of the lives of the different tribal communities in the region. They had woven their religious beliefs and traditions, customs, culture, traditional knowledge system, measures of time, quantities and distances around jhum activity and it determined their well-being and quality of life. In other words, we can say that jhumming is a way of life for the tribals in Northeast India.

Unfortunately change in religion and the process of modernization and globalization brought about a very negative understanding of the traditional subsistence economy of the tribals, particularly toward jhum cultivation. Jhum cultivation is now regarded as primitive, backward, economically unviable and ecologically destructive. Some of the major threats to the subsistence economy of contemporary tribal communities are State Policy, ethnic conflicts and State reprisals, globalization, privatization of land and other life sustaining resources, promotion of tourism, population growth and changes within the communities.

However, in spite of the systematic attempts to replace the subsistence economy of the people with cash oriented economy, studies have shown that there has been an increasing trend in the extent of jhumming all across the region. The increase in population in the region could be responsible for the tenacity of jhum cultivation as it is the only means of cultivation which evolved out of local experiences and knowledge. But what is more important is the fact that jhum cultivation continues to provide basic food security to the different ethnic communities. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) observed that the possible reasons for the persistence of jhum cultivation, in spite of all efforts of turning people away from this practice, seem to be related to its capacity to offer a reasonably good food security with minimum inputs and almost com-





plete absence of pest infection in slash-burn environments . This has validated the age-old wisdom in the region which says "if you don't jhum, you'll perish" and that "jhum never returns you empty-handed".

Since the past few decades more sensitive and in-depth researches have also presented contradictory findings to that of the commonly held belief about jhum cultivation. A five nation case study conducted by International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), on the shifting cultivation being practiced by over 300 million hill communities across Asia, advocated protection of and improvement on the jhum farming method on four major counts, such as: (i) shifting cultivators conserve more forests on their land than any other farmers, and make it productive at the same time, (ii) biodiversity conservation is favored in the forest and farm management practiced in shifting cultivation, (iii) shifting cultivation farming systems are a storehouse of innovative organic farming practices and crop species of commercial value, (iv) social security is one of the main functions of local institutions of shifting cultivators.

Researches conducted on *jhum* cultivation in Northeast India also came to more or less the same conclusion as stated above. In fact P.S. Ramakrishnan, who had conducted extensive research in the region, came to the conclusion that in Northeast India it is better to build upon *jhum* cultivation rather than trying to replace it with new farming method. Daman Singh is also of the opinion that *jhum* cultivation is still viable in Mizoram, and proceeded to dismantle many of the negative assumptions about jhumming through her research. Steps had already been taken to strengthen jhum cultivation in some of the states like Nagaland, where the State Government included it in the State 11th Five Year Plan, 2007-2012.

What is also important to note is that nowadays the subsistence economy of the people, such as jhumming and collection of forest resources, have found their way to the subsistence local markets in urban centres throughout Northeast India. The local markets have become important channels for ensuring food security in terms of vegetables for urban dwellers as well as in providing crucial cash income needed by the rural people who are still depending on their traditional economy. The overwhelming majority of the people who



are taking part in upholding the tribal subsistence economy, in the production process as well as in selling their products, under adverse circumstances are women from the toiling class.

From what had been discussed it is obvious that tribal perspectives on development cannot become authentic and relevant unless the subsistence economy of the people is taken into consideration. In fact the traditional subsistence economy of the tribal provides the material base from which the communitarian lifestyle and respect for the rest of the creation evolved. Therefore, we need to re-think about the traditional tribal economy in the search for a more viable form of development.

### **Theological Task**

From our analysis we can know that tribal community is not an ideal community per se out of which theologians can begin the process of re-thinking development which is based on justice and integrity of all creation. At the same time, it is also obvious that tribal community does have rich resources or raw materials to help us in carrying forward our theological endeavor. In this process the communitarian life of the tribals need to be reinterpreted to be more inclusive and democratic. Tribal communities also need to be liberated from their exclusivism in order to accommodate all other groups of people, who need care and support from other human beings and the opportunity to share life sustaining resources like land and forest for their survival. Our theological endeavor has to rescue 'respect for all creation in the traditional tribal worldview' from its marginal position to the centre of development discourse. Moreover, we need to incorporate liberative aspects drawn from different religious traditions and practices as well as from the secular world in the process of our theologizing. This is because traditional heritage alone is no longer enough to make contemporary tribal communities to re-think about the kind of development they need.

The multi-cultural context of the Indian society itself is another factor which encourages us to explore different traditions and practices for building up alliances. In fact attempts had already been made to identify common issues in dalit and tribal theologies, which are important steps for implementing justice and liberation.



However, our theology cannot be really authentic and relevant unless theologians themselves are involved in the political struggle of tribals, women, dalits and other victims of the dominant development paradigm in their attempts to protect their right to life and livelihood. The need of the day is not a theology from above but rather a theology from below, which is born out of solidarity and commitment to the cause of the downtrodden and marginalized, including the ecology.

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(This paper was presented at the national consultation on "Re-thinking Development: A Theological Consultation on Mission and Development" organized by Dharma Jyoti Vidya Peeth, Faridabad on 14 & 15, March, 2014)

[Due to lack of space we could not include notes; we apologise to the author of this article]



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