



# PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW

**VOL. XXIX January - March, 2011 No. 61**



**J.M. Lloyd's Hall, Synod Office  
Mizoram Presbyterian Church**

**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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## EDITORIAL

## PASSING ON THE GOSPEL TORCH

Right from its inception the main task of the Church is to pass on the torch of the Good News of God's salvation in Christ, the Gospel light, to others so that throughout the successive generations the light of the Gospel has reached the corners of the world.

The blazing flame of the Gospel has consumed the works of evil and their influences from the life of individuals and communities who embraced the Gospel. So that history has witnessed dramatic change in the life of many individuals and societies wrought about by the transforming power of the Gospel. This change has been spectacular in Mizoram where we see a great change in the lives of the Mizos within a time span of fifty years in the first half of the twentieth century. The Gospel was brought to this land in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and within fifty years the whole Mizo community embraced Christianity which was marked by the transformation of the traditional Mizo world view, value system, social life and religious beliefs purifying them with the blazing flame of the Gospel.

The Mizoram Presbyterian Church had been the parent Church body within Mizoram that has passed on the Gospel light from one generation to another and even across its borders. The Church in Mizoram today has been challenged to pass on the Gospel torch to the future generations in the midst of evil forces operating from within and without in the forms of materialism, individualism, immorality and religious fundamentalism. In the past the Mizo Christians had stood firm by with their faith, call and commitment to the Gospel. The Mizo Church today is facing a defining moment with its commitment to the Gospel. Future will tell how much faithful we are in carrying on the Gospel torch in our own time.

*The Presbyterian Review* has been trying to reflect through its contents how the Mizoram Presbyterian Church (MPC) through its life and ministry has been engaged in various ways in the task of carrying on the Gospel torch. So that one can see and assess the Church's commitment in witnessing the Gospel today.

Now the time has come for the existing editorial board members to hand over the task of running this journal to the new members. This journal has always been the outcome of many hands put together. Our sincere thanks to all those who have been working very hard for the publications of this journal, to those who have contributed valuable articles to this journal and also to those who used to read them with interest and have encouraged us and extended helping hands in many ways. We believe that by God's grace, the journal will carry on this important ministry of giving information to the readers about the life and work of the Church of Christ in this part of the world. This will enlighten and encourage the faith community today to work harder for the cause of the Gospel. Our best wishes to the journal and the new editorial board members so that God may use them for the extension of His kingdom and for His glory!



## LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

- Rev. Dr. K. Lallawmzuala & Ms. P.C. Laltlani

### **New Pastorates Inauguration and Pastors Induction**

Following the 87<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church (2010), 6 pastorates were opened, three each inside and outside Mizoram on 15 January, 2011 (Saturday). And on January 16, Pastor Induction Services were held in 33 pastorates inside Mizoram and 31 pastorates outside Mizoram; also 10 pastorates in Manipur Area. 23 Probationary Pastors were also installed in their own respective pastorates.

### **Synod Office Opened**

The Synod office began their work in the new building from January 5, 2011 and there was an inauguration function at the Synod Committee Room No. 2. Rev. Vanlalzuata, Senior Executive Secretary conducted the meeting and Rev. C. Lalsangliana Synod Moderator delivered a sermon. The Synod office new building was opened on November 11, 2010 by Rev. C. Chawngliana, the then Synod Moderator. Due to Synod office engagement in the Synod Executive Committee meeting and MPC Synod in December 2010 the new office was not occupied till January 5, 2011.

### **ATC New Principal**

Rev. Professor Vanlalchhuanawma who was elected by the Synod Executive Committee meeting for the new Principal of Aizawl Theological College was inducted by Rev. C. Lalsangliana, the Synod Moderator on January 7 in a special meeting attended by the Synod Theological Education Board members and ATC Faculty members and ATC Office Staff at the ATC Chapel. Rev. Dr. C. Lalhlira and Rev. Dr. Vanlalnghaka Ralte were also installed as the Vice Principal and Registrar respectively by the Moderator.

### **SMB Missionary**

The Synod Mission Board conducted missionary commissioning service at Mission Veng Church on January 9 evening. Rev. Lalchhuanmawia, SMB Secretary conducted the meeting. 19 Pastors and 62 Contract Missionaries, altogether 81, were introduced by Elder R. Lalmalsawma, SMB Co-Ordinator and Rev. C. Lalsangliana, Synod Moderator commissioned the missionaries and preached a message. The meeting was attended by 2, 500 church members.



Missionary Orientation Programme was conducted by the Synod Mission Board on 10th January, 2011 for contract missionaries.

### **Dedication of New PBS Classroom**

On January 14, 2011 new Presbyterian Bible School Classroom in the Owen's Building was dedicated to God by the Synod Moderator. The room contained Lecture Hall, Recreation Room and four toilets.

### **Pastorate KTP Conferences**

The Pastorate Youth Fellowship (KTP) Conferences were organized in different places during 28-30 February, 2011 and the members of KTP Central Committee participated in different Pastorate Youth Fellowship conferences.

### **Visitors From Presbyterian Church of Wales.**

Presbyterian Church of Wales (PCW) Moderator, Rev. Ian Hodgins and his wife Christine Hodgins and two church elders, Peter Davey and Elcanor Jenkins visited Mizo Synod on 15 February, 2011. They attended the morning devotion of the Synod office staff and Rev. Ian Hodgins said greetings and gave a short reflection. After that they spent the whole day to visit different departments of the Synod and they had dinner with the Synod Officers.

The same day Mrs. Margaret Jones, wife of Rev. Basil Edward Jones, former Welsh missionary to Mizoram, her son Zoduha and the Pastor Adrian Williams visited different Synod Departments. Rev. Basil Edward Jones and his wife Margaret Jones worked during 1942-1953 in Mizoram as Welsh missionaries. Mrs Margaret Jones inaugurated the Library of Mission Veng Church. Earlier she had sent 5,000/- Pounds for the Library.

### **Synod Moderator visit Bru Refuge Camp**

A fiery fire broke out at Naisingpara Bru Camp, Tripura on 19th March, 2011 and out of 2,895 houses 2,085 houses was completely burned down by the fire. 18 people died and 40 were wounded. Rev. C. Sangliana, the Synod Moderator visited the Camp and he gave hand outs to the victims in the name of Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod. He handed over utensils and clothes to Mizoram Bru Displaced People Forum, Vice President and the money amounting Rs. 4,50,000/- was handed over to Rev. C. Zoramawia, Tripura Mission Field Secretary to be distributed to the victims of this tragic incident.

### **Construction of House for the Wife of the Late Rev. R.C. Zokhuma**



Rev.Zokhuma, Pastor i/c of Zemabawk Pastorate died on June 17, 2010. As the pastor's wife and her children had to vacate the Pastor Quarters, the Standing Committee of the Pastorate purchased a plot of land by Rs. 6,80,000/- for the construction of a house for the late pastor's family. For constructing the house the local churches within the pastorate contributed Rs. 8,35,417/- and Mrs.B. Zaikungi (Rev.Zokuma's wife) also spent Rs. 5,10,000/- from her own accounts. The volunteers of the local church members and some hired workers constructed the house. On January 17, 2011 the house was occupied by the late pastor's wife and her children.

### **U.S. Consul Visited Synod Office**

On 25th February 2011, Kolkata US Consul General, Ms.Beth Payne visited Mizoram Presbyterian Synod Office; she said that she was deeply impressed by the Mizo culture and the Christian's faith in Jesus Christ in the midst of the changing world. The meeting with Ms.Beth Playne was held at JM Lloyd's Hall in the Synod Office building. Synod Moderator Rev C. Lalsangliana chaired the meeting and special number was presented by the Synod choir. Rev. Lalzuithanga, Executive

Secretary proposed vote of thanks. Ms. Beth Payne and her friend Ms. Erica Basu, Regional Media Advisor were given Mizo bags as souvenirs by the Synod. Ms.Beth A. Payne had been the US Foreign Service Officer in different countries, such as, Senegal, Rwanda, Israel and Kuwait and she became US Consul General in India from August, 2008.

### **Synod Executive Committee**

The 233rd Synod Executive Committee (SEC) meeting, the apex committee of Mizoram Presbyterian Church was held during 22-24, February, 2011 and out of 136 members 114 were present. Synod Secretary, rev.P.C. Pachhunga reported that between SEC 230 - 233, Marriage Revocation Certificate was given to 72 persons and Re-marriage License was given to 81 persons and he also gave reports of some important ministries of the Synod. Rev. Zosangliana Colney, Synod Financial Officer gave the report of Synod financial position during April, 2010 -January, 2011. He said that for the head of Pathian Ram ('God's Kingdom'), Rs. 293,739,604 have been received and for the head of Ramthar ('Mission') (for evangelism and mission) Rs. 230,602,675 have been received.

The SEC meeting also made



different sub-committee to draft proposals for the institution of Secular College and Pavalai Pawl (Middle-Aged Men Fellowship); Owning back of Government Boys ME School, Dress Code for Worship Service, etc.

The SEC also revised the portfolios of the three Synod Executive secretaries as follows:

**Senior Executive Secretary Rev. Vanlalzuata.**

- Pastoral, Finance, General Administration, Communication, Synod Literature & Publication Board, Pension & Provident Fund, Service Board, Worship, Endowment Fund, Manipur Area and others.

**Rev. Zosangliana Colney, Executive Secretary.**

- Sunday School, Theological Education, Education, Hospital, Property, Revival, Rules on Matrimony, Research & Evaluation, Presbyterian Women Hostel, Young Men Fellowship and Archives.

**Rev. Lalzuithanga, Executive Secretary.**

- Mission, Music, Social Front, Information & Publicity, Presbyterian Bible School, Partnership, Synod Multipurpose Training Centre, Family Guidance & Counseling Centre, Women Fellowship and Love Home.



## REPORTS OF THE 233<sup>rd</sup> SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE SYNOD FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2010-2011

- Rev. Rosiamliana Tochwang

### I. HIGHLIGHTS OF 233<sup>rd</sup> SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 22 - 24, 2011

Synod Executive Committee, according to the Presbyterian Church of India constitution, is basically responsible to exercise the functions of the Synod in respect of routine matters and attend to matters which cannot be postponed until the next regular meeting of the Synod. The Executive committee of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod regularly meets four times a year (February, June, November and December).

The first meeting of the SEC for a year, held in the month February, usually attended to matters entrusted by the annual Synod held in the month of December of the previous year and implementation and execution of the resolutions of the Synod. This year the SEC met during February 22-24, 2011 at the J.M. Lloyd's Hall, Synod Office and was attended by 122 members. The followings are some important resolutions.

1. The Secretary reported the followings

- (i). Six new pastorates were inaugurated on January 15, 2011
- (ii) Three new Presbyteries were scheduled to be inaugurated in the month of March and May, 2011
- (iii). The Synod new building was inaugurated on January 5, 2011
- (iv). 81 missionaries (6 field secretaries, 13 missionary pastors and 62 newly recruited) were commissioned on January 9, 2011 at the Mission Veng Church and the service was attended by 2500 people.
- 2. Sub committees were constituted to prepare a draft for
  - (a) Rules for degree increment for the synod workers
  - (b) Establishment of Secular College
  - (c) Pavalai Pawl (men's fellowship)
  - (d). Worship Manner and Etiquette
  - (e) Establishment of transit accommodation near North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences, Shillong
  - (f) Revision of Guidelines for Probationary Pastor Recruitment
  - (g) Revision of Guidelines for Love





Home (orphanage)

(h) Field Workers Pay Fixation

These sub-committees were entrusted to prepare a draft for the subjects and to submit to the next meeting to be held in June this year.

3. The meeting also approved the following

(a). Financial Rules for Transfer and Travel

(b) Synod Financial and Audit Rules

(c) New portfolios of the Executive Secretaries

4. The meeting entrusted Synod Mission Board to study and make concrete proposal for the following concerns

(a). Uniform baptismal practice in the mission fields

(b) Revision of Mission among the Brus

(c) Shifting of the Missionary Training College to new site

(d) Allowances and entitlement of field Worker Pastors

(e) Opening of High School section in the Home Mission Schools

5. The Officers Meeting was entrusted to approach the state authority to reclaim 'Sikulpui' i.e former mission school and report the matter to the next meeting. It also

entrusted the OM to do the needful to request the state authority to reduce the alcohol content of Grape wine.

6. In pursuance of the Synod Resolution to improve the quality of books published by the Synod Literature and Publication Board, the concerned departments were requested to make improvements under the convenership of the Editor of SL&PB

7. The Synod Service Board is entrusted to make proposal for better coordination among the various departments of the Synod

8. With regards to the request of the Lairam Jesus Christ Baptist Church for a medical help, the meeting agreed the proposal from the Hospital Board

1) Reservation of two seats in the Presbyterian Hospital Nursing School

2) To avail Synod Quota in the CMC&H Vellore for MBBS and Post Graduate Studies at their own expense

3) Three months doctors service at the Lairam Medical Centre according to convenience.

9. The meeting decided to refer back to the Synod about establishment of Hospital at Lunglei due to various problems.



10. The proposal of the Hospital Board to accept the request of the Christian Blind Mission to run Community Based Rehabilitation Programme was approved.

11. The meeting accepted the request the Education Board

(a) to appoint four contract teachers for P.C. Girls School

(b) to permit Ruallung Church to establish English Medium School

(c) telephone connection for Synod Higher Secondary School

12. The meeting agreed to raise the Living Allowance to 15% for its workers.

13. The meeting appointed

(a) Rev. K. Lalrinkima to be Pastor i/c English Congregation

(b) Ms Laltlanmawii, to be Chairperson of Women Fellowship 2011-2013

(c) Ms Lalpianthangi, General Secretary of Women Fellowship 2011-2013

14. The following financial requests were granted by the meeting

(a) Rs 12,03, 000 request by the Manipur Area Committee for field workers salary

(b) Rs 5,00, 000/- requested by the National Council of Churches in India

(c) financial support for Rev. Dr.

H. Vanlalauva, Dean of Research, Senate of Serampore as requested by the Registrar of Serampore College (University)

15. The meeting agreed the request of the Youth Fellowship to send The Synod Choir to Taiwan with its financial implications.

16. The request of the Synod Literature and Publication Board to observe October 10-16, 2011 as literature week was granted.

## **II. FINACIAL REPORT OF THE MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SYNOD FOR THE YEAR 2010-2011**

The financial year (2010-2011) of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod has come to an end in the month of March 2010. As financial transparency is one of the main characteristics of the church, the Finance Manager of the church has circulated the financial report and the same has been published in the Synod News Letter. We bring here the report, with some comments, for our English readers who are interested to know about the Mizoram Presbyterian Church.

### **FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR APRIL 2010 - MARCH 2011**



Budget Head	2010-2011 Budget	Actual Receipt
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**A. PASTORAL (all figures in Indian rupee)***1. Kingdom of God*

1) Kingdom of God	21,47,39,000	30,03,60,748
2) Handful of Rice	5,90,00,000	7,55,28,608
3) Sacrament	17, 00,000	27,09,554
4) Sunday School	21, 00, 000	26,39,954
5) Marriage Registration Fee	85, 000	1,47,297
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,76,24,000</b>	<b>38,13,86,161</b>

Designated	6,50,000	4,33,411
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Miscellaneous	1,33,50,000	1,85,86,742
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<b>Pastoral Grand Total</b>	<b>29,16,24,000</b>	<b>40,34, 06,314</b>
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(The Surplus of the pastoral budget amounted to Rs. 11,17,82,314)

**B. MISSION***1. Mission*

1) Mission	19,54,77,900	20,14,46,561
2) Missionary Support	9,60,00,000	11,06,50,761
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,14,77,900</b>	<b>31,20,97,322</b>

3. Miscellaneous	1,07,95,800	75,30,703
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4. Mission Grand Total	30,22,73,700	
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(The Surplus of Mission fund amounted to Rs 1,73,54,325)

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9,38,97,700</b>	<b>72,30,34,339</b>
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(The surplus of the whole budget amounted to Rs 12,91,36,639)

**Comparing with last year:**

	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010 - 2011</b>	<b>Surplus</b>
Pastoral	33, 00, 44, 168	40,34,06,314	7,33,62,146
Mission	27, 04, 22,390	31,96,28,025	4,92,05,635
Total	60, 04, 66,558	72,30,34,339	12,25,67,781

From its inception the Mizoram Presbyterian Church was taught to be self supporting, self propagating and self governing. Indeed, one of the prides of the MPC is its financial self support, not depending on

foreign funds. The main source of income is people's expression of their love and gratitude to God by giving tithe and other contribution to the church. Only a small amount was received from outside.



From the figures above it is observable that the Synod Fund is divided broadly into two namely Pastoral and Mission. The previous is general fund and latter is solely for mission enterprise. One may notice that a little more than 50 % of the budget was allocated to Mission fund; this clearly shows the church serious concern for mission. One of the main reasons for the financial strengths of the Synod is

the willingness of each local church to unite in the central thereby submitting a comparatively high percentage of their income to the central. Each local church submitted more than two-third of their income to the headquarters.

Let us continue to pray that God will shower his blessing more and people in turn express their joy and love to God by giving freewill offering as 'God loves cheerful givers.'



*(The Synod SEC in Session)*



A REPORT OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> K.T.P. BUSINESS SESSION (2011)

— Rev. Lalthangpuia Fanai

Before 2005 the Central KTP (Kristian Thalai Pawl=Christian Youth Fellowship) used to organized the KTP General Conference every year. Since there could be many problems like financial, venue, construction of pandal, etc., the Synod Executive Committee (here after cited as SEC) resolved that the KTP General Conference should be held once in every two years or biennially (vide SEC 191:41), and that the KTP Rorel Inkhawm (Business Session) in which there will be less number of delegates should also be held biennially, especially in the year when there will be no General Conference. As such the Business Session had been organized in the years 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2011.

The Fourth KTP Rorel Inkhawm was held on 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2011 at the Presbyterian Church, Bethlehem, Aizawl. There were as many as 748 delegates, and out of these 377 delegates were from different pastorates outside the city of Aizawl who were hosted by Bethlehem church.

The programme scheduled was as follows:

1. On 11<sup>th</sup> March (Friday night) the programme was inaugurated welcoming all the delegates and Upa Lalrinmuana, General Secretary, delivered a sermon using the theme “Ministry” (*Rawngbawlina*).
2. On 12<sup>th</sup> March (Saturday) reports of the General Secretary, Finance Secretary and the General report of all the Pastorates were

given in the Morning Session. After the reports Rev. P.C. Pachhunga, Synod Secretary, released the booklet *Thuawihna* (Obedience), which will be the theme of KTP for the year 2011-2012. In the afternoon, the Business Session was led by Rev. K. Lalpiangthara, Leader, Central KTP (here after CKTP). In the evening Mr. Zohmingliana, Assistant Leader, CKTP, preached using the theme “Watchman” (*Ralvengtu*).

3. On Sunday morning (13<sup>th</sup> March) Rev. Lalzuithanga, Synod Executive Secretary, delivered a sermon on the theme “How did you know Jesus?” In the afternoon, Mr. Vanlalging, Finance Secretary CKTP, preached and the theme was “Let us hold fast to what we attained”.



In the Evening, Rev. K. Lalpiangthara delivered a sermon and after the service was over a Fellowship was held where Mr lalrohluia and Dr. Samuel Vanlathlanga delivered speech on the theme “Youth and Suicide’ and “Youth and Self-sufficient” respectively. It is very grateful all the preachers, choirs and other special responsible persons could fulfill their respective responsibilities and duties. The preparation and hospitality of the host Church (Bethlehem) was excellent and all the delegates were feeling at home and they were moved and inspired by the sermons.

There were some important Resolutions in the Business Session which was attended by 748 delegates including two visitors. The proposal that the 5<sup>th</sup> KTP Rorel Inkhawm (2013) be held at the Presbyterian Church, Chanmari, Lunglei, suggested by the Central Committee (622:111{2} was approved. It shall be co-hosted by the Chanmari Pastorate and Venglai Pastorate. The general resolution are as follows:

1. The matters submitted by two Pastorates – Bungkawn and Chhinga Veng – was combined and it was decided to organize fasting-prayer

specially for some KTP members who never come to the Church.

2. The CKTP was entrusted to choke out programme on Career Awareness that would suit with Christianity.

3. It was resolved that the CKTP be entrusted to make guidelines and instructions with regards to the celebration of Christmas and New Year.

4. The matter proposed by the Pastorates of Electric Veng and Ramthar Veng that ‘let the CKTP organize Gospel Camping for the prostitutes and other female sex workers’ was approved and the Central Committee is entrusted to do the needful.

5. It was also decided to look for possibilities to increase the number of marriage inside the Church and the CKTP will do the same.

6. Among the eight Pastorates who had matters concerning Youth Recreation Centre, three of them proposed to discontinue the work and the programme as a whole. After having long discussion the CKTP was entrusted to continue the construction works and see the possibilities.

7. ITI Veng Pastorate proposed that let the special budget for the Youth Recreation Centre be included in the CKTP annual budget; Ramthar Veng Pastorate also proposed to increase the same budget from Rs



5/- to Rs 10/- per head. It was resolved that these matters depend on the decision taken by the Central Committee.

8. It was decided to take part in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

9. The CKTP felt the need of training the leaders of different Pastorates, the matter was approved and the CKTP was entrusted to do the same.

10. It was also resolved to have a particular theme for the year (*Kum puan thupui*). Of the five themes proposed by different pastorates the topic "With the Lord Jesus" (*Lal Isua Nen*) was selected for the theme of the year 2012-2013.

Besides these, there were many others matters which were clarified by the General Secretary and were approved.

### CKTP BUDGET:

Mr. Vanlalfinga, Finance Secretary, presented the Budget estimate for the year 2011-2012 and approved as follows:

#### Income

Sl. No	Budget Head	2011-2012 Budget
1.	Pastorate Budget	8,00,000
2.	Others	2,30,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10,30,000</b>

#### Budget Estimate For Expenditure

Sl. No	Budget Head	2011-2012 Budget
1.	General	2,40,000
2.	Synod Choir	1,55,000



**MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WOMEN  
FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE 44th & GOLDEN JUBILEE  
CELEBRATION REPORT**

*- Mrs H.Lalpianthangi  
General Secretary*

The 44th Mizoram Presbyterian Women Fellowship Conference and Golden Jubilee Celebration was held on 3-6 March'2011 at the playground No.II of Kawnpui Village, the North West of Mizoram.

The Programme is highlighted as follows :-

1. The Highlighted programme are as follows :- Usually the Conference had been started from Friday evening since 2005 but this year Mizoram Women Fellowship Conference hold its 50 year counting from 1960. So Central Committee decided to Celebrate its Golden Jubilee alongwith, so, another one day was spared for the Celebration of Golden Jubilee.

**A. The General Secretary** Pi Lalrinkimi gave the highlighted report on the activities of Mizoram Women Fellowship on Thursday evening service (Dt. 3.3.2011) Central Committee prepared Golden Jubilee Souvenir Magazine, it was also released by Rev. P.C.Pachhunga, Synod Secretary (Sr.)

Business Session was started on Dt. 4.3.2011, Friday morning from 6:00 a.m to 2:20 p.m at Presbyterian Church Kawnpui North. For them, morning meal was prepared

together at the expense of Central Women Committee. Meanwhile, there was Pandal Service in the morning, we listened a sermon from Mrs.Lalengthangi, Missionary.

In the afternoon Service we had Bible Study on II Timothy by Mrs P.C.Laltlani, M.Th, Librarian A.T.C.

The evening service was the Opening of Golden Jubilee year, Sermon was delivered by Rev.Zosangliana Colney, Executive Secretary i/c Women.

After the service over, we had fellowship, Mrs Liankimi, Committee Member presented a very important theme "Christian family and to be Economical with".

**B. Golden Jubilee Celebration Day** :- Dt. 5.3.2011 (Saturday) was a Golden Jubilee Celebration Day. The General Secretary introduced and give away present of Golden Jubilee Souvenir to all the former-





leaders of Central Women Committee. The theme of the sermon delivered by Mrs Lalzawmliani was "To Praise God". The Aizawl City joint Choir presented, "Jerusalem Ka In Ropui". After the service was over we had a heavy Jubilee Tea it was brought from Aizawl prepared an expense of Central Women Committee.

Afternoon service was spent only in praising God together. From evening service, we listened the Theme 'Christian Family' (Joshua 24:15) Theme I: 'Christian Family and Today's World' was preached by Miss Zohmangaihi, Secretary for Women's Relations PWF. In the fellowship programme we listened about "Christian Family" by Mrs Liankhumi, Central Committee.

Dt. 6.3.2011 In the (Sunday) Morning Service, we listened the Theme "To Serve God with all family members" preached by Mrs C.Lahmangaihi, Treasurer. The Theme III "Christ in the Foundation of Christian Family" was preached by Mrs C.Lalthanzami, Central Committee Member in the evening service.

Holy Communion was Celebrated in the afternoon service by Rev.C.Lalsangliana, Synod Moderator with the Assist of Ministers and Elders who were presented.

**C. Choir :-** Every Service was blessed with two Church's Women Choirs and all Women Conductors had done very well and acted nicely.

#### **D. Delegates :**

S/No	Pastorates/Field	Present
1.	151 Pastorates (two each)	318
2.	3 Pastorates (one each)	3
3.	Central Women Comt.Members	33
4.	Synod Leaders	2
5.	Central K.T.P	2
6.	ATTWI Members	2
7.	Pastor	3
8.	Pro.Pastor	4
9.	Elder	1
10.	Manipur Area	5
11.	Arunachal 'E' Mission Field	3
12.	Karbi Anglong Mission Field	2
13.	Tripura Mission Field	2
14.	Barak Area	1
15.	Chairman Elect	1
16.	LIK BKHP	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>386</b>

**D. Handful of Rice Collection :** In 2010 the Total Collection amounted to ₹. 86,97,424.760 qtls (86974.24 qtls), This year the first prize of the handful of Rice Collection was again won by N.E.Khawdungsei Pastorate for the 9th times, 523 out of 552 families observed family prayer every day. Out of 552 hundred percent of families offered handful of rice Collection.



2. Statistic : Under Mizoram Synod, there are 161 Pastorates out of which 156 Pastorates submitted their Reports. There are 812 Churches and 92912 Families. 145242 are the Women members. 45698 (49.18%) are the Families who observed family prayer daily , while 89342 (96.15%) offered handful of Rice collection.

3. The Resolution passed as follows:-

1) Let Women Cente Special Budget be continued.

2) Let the term of Secretary of Handful of Rice collection follow the term of Pastorate leaders.

3) Equal Nomination of Women's Pastorate leaders to be revised.

4) Let Theologian Women who deserved to be ordained as Pastor/ Minister be ordained. This will be put up in the Synod Executive Committee.

4. New Leaders : With the Assist of Rev.Zosangliana Colney, Executive Secretary i/c Women, Rev. P.C.Pachhunga. Synod Secretary, Host Pastor R.T.Lianthanga. The new leaders were elected as follows :

1) Chairman : M r s Laltlanmawii (Appointed by Synod)

2) Vice Chairman : Mrs Khawlvuani, Hlimen Pastorate

3) Gen.Secretary : Mrs H. Lalpianthangi (Appointed by Synod)

4) Asst.Secretary : Mrs Laldawnkimi, Ramhlun Pastorate

5) Treasurer : M r s Lalsawmliani, Bawngkawn Pastorate

6) Fin.Secretary : Mrs Liankimi, Mission Veng Pastorate

5.2011 - 2012 Budget and Project :  
Project Amount

1) Women Centre ₹ 7,20,000.00

2) Women Fellowship Conference Host Church fund ₹ 1,50,000.00

3) Womens Fellowship Committee Host Church Fund ₹ 30,000.00

4) Women Fellowship Fund ₹ 1,00,000.00

Grand Total ₹ 16,45,000.00

6. Organising Committee :- Organising Committee set up ten sub-committees. The area of Pandal is 168 feet long and 169 feet wide with 6200 people packed. They spent Rs. 341.550 for the construction of Pandal.

This Conference had differences comparing to others Conference because of no disturbing not only



raining and storming but also Accident etc. Throughout the programmes, we received God's guidance. Everything went smoothly. We can feel that God is within us and can feel that the presence of Holy Spirit to each and everyone of us. The atmosphere of Church service, fellowship and all the other programmes are very lively and meaningful.

In 2012, we will have Mizoram Presbyterian Women Fellowship Committee at Tlangnuam Presbyterian Church. Hope to meet at any place in the coming Conference which will be held in the year to come 2013.



*(Combined Choir at the Conference)*



## REPORTS OF WACC-AR TRIENNIAL ASSEMBLY

- Mr. Lalhruaitluanga Ralte  
Manager, Synod Press

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), Asia Region's Triennial Assembly was held at Yogyakarta (called Jogja) in Indonesia on May 16-20, 2011. The Presbyterian Church of India (PCI) General Assembly decided to send one delegate to this assembly and I was lucky to be appointed to represent our church.

**May 16:** The opening day was graced by WACC Gen. Secretary Rev. Karin Achtelstetter. She greeted all delegates and invite everyone to share and contribute in the assembly.



**May 16 & 17:** Presentation and discussions of our pre-assembly seminar theme - Communicating Climate Justice. Resource persons were young energetic experts from around the world, voicing their hearts and their convictions to their cause, Save the world by educating the people and advocating the authority.

Here are various topics presented:

- Communicating climate justice: A Christian communicator's response

to the challenges of the climate crisis by Rev. Dennis Smith, President WACC.

- Kicking the habit: Restoring city, recreating faith, hope and love by Fr. Dr. Al. Andang L. Binawan, Driyarkara school of Philosophy, Jakarta.

- Current initiatives towards solving the climate crisis by Ms. Maria Theresa Nera-Lauron,

- The UNFCCC process, The Cochabamba Peoples Accord, Civil society and social movement responses by Mr Frances Laminero, INPeace Mindanao.

- Theological reflections on climate change by Prof. Dr. Gerrit Singgih, Duta Wacana Christian University of Yogyakarta

- Communicating gender justice and climate justice by Ms. Cai Yiping, ISIS International.

- How did Indian media cover climate change controversy by Dr. I. Arul Aram, Anna University, Chennai.



There was film presentation by Penghijawan Area Lereng Merapi (PALM), an NGO comprising of Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Christian united for one cause: Reforestation Merapi Area Movement. PALM organized an eventful reforestation of the mount Merapi, an active volcanic mountain, planting more than hundred fifty thousand trees. More than 5000 volunteers participated.

### **May 18: Excursion.**

Mt. Merapi: We visited the devastation made by eruption of Merapi, an active volcanic mount. Every 4 years this Merapi announced its presence in this volcanic island of Java. Its last eruption was in Oct- Nov 2010, spewing 14 kms high of red hot lava of 900 degree C. Killing 550 and leaving a trail of ashes and charred bodies, burning and swallowing villages, cars, forests and everything on its 26 kms way down to the lowlands. This eruption affected 2,90,000 people, destroying materials worth thousands and thousands of Rupiah.

Peoples from all walks of life in Jogja came forward to form an NGO called Penghijawan Area Lereng Merapi (PALM), comprising of Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and

Christian united for one cause: Reforestation of Merapi. It's a joy to see new lives growing on the burned soil as 150,000 young trees started singing their songs again - planted by PALM volunteers. Seeing the destruction of villages, forests, roads and rivers and how the NGOs worked for reforestation of the mount is truly amazing.



We also visited a 2 kms wide Keraton, a palace of Muslim Sultan. Jogja has its Sultan, Hamengkubuwono X, the current monarch of the historic Yogyakarta Sultanate.

### **May 19: WACC-AR Triennial Assembly.**

We elected the new WACC Asia region executive committees for 2012-2014 . They were - Chairperson: Rev. Sam Meshack (India), Vice Chairperson: Mr. Ramon Bultron (Philippines), Secretary: Ms. Lidya Ma Hui-Jen (Taiwan), Treasurer: Ms. Debby Lai (Hongkong), Executive members: Ms. Carla Natan (Indonesia) and Mr.



Hla Aung (Myanmar). Rev. Dennis Smith WACC President officiated installation of the new officers.

### **May 20: WACC-AR Triennial Assembly.**

Secretary's reports indicated that the assembly was attended by 29 Corporate members, 4 personal members and 15 other participants around the world and 10 locals. In the assembly, WACC strategic planning was discussed and we were informed of the WACC updates by President and GS.

Yogyakarta unity statement was adopted in the morning, and we were updated with Secretary's report, Treasurer's report and also passed the new budget for 2012-2013.

### **Yogyakarta Declaration 2011**

We, the 51 delegates coming from Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand, met in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, for the Triennial Assembly of the WACC-AR from 16-21 May 2011 and deliberated on the theme: Communicating Climate Justice. We submit the following proposals for deliberation, adaptation and implementation at the local, national, and regional levels:

- We acknowledge the devastation

caused by climate change and its drastic impact on vulnerable communities. Human lives, particularly women, children, the poor and indigenous communities, are affected by compromised health, financial burdens, food and water shortages, and social and cultural disruptions. We observe that the people least responsible for climate change pay the highest price.

We understand that climate change adversely affects food production, deepens food shortages and aggravates rural poverty, unemployment and misery, as people face crop losses through climate disasters such as droughts and floods. Many countries in Asia like Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, China, Thailand and Indonesia have faced the disastrous aftermaths of climate change. This has resulted in the devastation of most vulnerable communities and displacement of people.

With gaps in taking timely measures since the 'Bali Road Map 2007', Copenhagen Accord 2009 and Cancun Consensus 2010, the tipping point for runaway climate change will be reached by 2015. The number of people being displaced as climate refugees due to flooding,



shoreline erosion, drop in agricultural yield, landslides, unusual rain, melting of glaciers in the Himalayas, and desertification (due to deforestation, scant rainfall and floods) will drastically increase by 2050. Reduced agricultural yield results due to land grabbing and land conversion may endanger food sovereignty. Worse, people who suffered from environmental destructions are the same victims of land conversion and land grabbing by big agri-business corporations and those in power.

We raise concern over the United Nations Environment Programme prediction in 2005 according to which climate change would create 50 million climate refugees by 2010. These people would flee a range of disasters including sea level rise, increases in the numbers and severity of tropical storms, and disruption in food production.

We condemn a market-driven and profit oriented economic model which ignores the needs of sustainable development. This includes global economic and political systems in which corporate monopoly and outright consumerism are the order of the day. Because governments side with the business

interests, they fail to take measures required to protect the well being of their own people and the ecosystems. The impoverished communities and people around the world face the consequences.

We, as Christian communicators and members of WACC-AR, stand up against the false climate solutions that continue to harm communities, which reinforce corporate control and consumerism. We renew our commitment to fulfill our responsibility to stand up for climate justice and voice the concerns of peoples in Asia.

We affirm the Christian principles of upholding the integrity of God's creation and establishing healthy relationship with fellow beings of the Earth. We aim to promote green theology and uphold Christian values of "take care" (Genesis 2:15) of the Earth where God has put us. We support green theology and urge churches to create congregations sensitive to ecological justice ministries. We emphasize interpreting and understanding Christian doctrine in the light of evolving knowledge on ecology and environment. We encourage our churches to take a proactive stand by promoting awareness about climate justice





among congregations and observing Green Sundays coordinating with international days of action.

We also demand reparation and financing for ecological debt. We also share concern about the closing of borders, especially by the developed countries in prospect of exodus of climate refugees. There has to be considerate measures regarding the climate refugees adopted by the governments. The United Nations should come up with international guidelines supporting the communities displaced by the climate change.

We recommend the use of traditional media as well as innovative forms of the media to create awareness with a special focus on grassroots people. We also recommend an increased use of social media for advocacy and campaigning on the issues of climate justice. Other alternative media such as community radio and other community-appropriate forms shall also be used for this purpose.

We should encourage communities and develop peoples' capacities in eco-friendly practices, such as renewable and alternative energy sources, organic farming, ban on plastics, and reforestation.

Good practices of specific communities should be replicated elsewhere too, such as indigenous knowledge systems and practices - facilitating networks among them.

We call for climate justice issues to be incorporated in general education (formal and non-formal), and theological education, curriculum, and preaching. We recommend a preparation of 'Green Guidelines for Communicators and Theologians'. Peoples' movements for climate justice should be strengthened. Linkages of climate change with other development issues should be established. We also invoke a common response to the climate injustices as faith communities. This should include collaborative initiatives like production of resource materials in local languages such as posters, books, brochures, and other communication means.

We aim to influence the governments, corporations, international organizations and the private sector to develop and implement pro-people and ecologically sustainable policies on climate change, working along with civil society organizations, international organizations as well as churches. As





Christian communicators we also hold governments accountable to fulfill their promises to maintain balanced ecological systems and implement pro-people policies to ensure climate justice.

We also seek collaborations and express solidarity with other WACC regions, demanding climate justice with focus on underprivileged communities. As WACC we reclaim our prophetic role as Christian communicators to support people's movements for climate justice, voicing the concerns of marginalized communities by holding

governments, corporate organizations as well as political and economic mechanisms responsible, which are adding to climate change.

It is my humble view that our PCI General Assembly and The Mizo Synod can be a major contributor for the welfare of WACC as well as to strengthen and support the cause as most of the WACC projects are similar to what our churches have done through the ages.



*(Delegates of the WACC-AR Triennial Assembly)*



**PRESSBYTERIAN WOMEN FELLOWHIP OF INDIA:  
VISION BEYOND 2010  
(Sermon)**



- Ms. Zohmangaihi,  
Secretary,  
Women Relations, PCI

**References:** *Esther 4:13&14;  
Lk. 10: 38 - 42*

**Introduction:**

First of all, Silver Jubilee greetings to you all in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Let me take this opportunity to express my words of appreciation to all the delegates, the former PWF leaders, the invitees and the Assembly Officers for attending the service and witnessing this historic moment in the life and ministry of the PWF. It is my wish and prayer that you would join our celebrity mood of joy along with us.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the former PWF leaders who toiled and labored hard for the development of PWF. I learnt that through your unceasing efforts, untiring thoughts and contributions, I and my predecessor could enter the ministry of the PWF. We enjoy and pluck the fruit of their labour.

Let me also express my heartfelt thanks to the PWF sitting OBs and

Committee members, sub-committee members, the Administrative Secretary i/c PWF and other Administrative Secretaries, the Office Staff. You all know that I entered the PWF ministry without much experience. Your concerns and understanding, your advice and encouragements help me go through the years. I hope that the same atmosphere would be maintained with the incoming OBs and Committee members. It is through your support and helping hand I can get through those busy moments in the preparation for this Biennial cum Silver Jubilee Celebration.

It is worthwhile to mention the contributions and preparations rendered by the Jaiaw Presbyterian Church. They are the hardcore instrument for the success of this grand celebration of our Silver Jubilee. Let us all say thanks to them. Please say “Khublei Shibun” to all the members of the hosting church.

**Introduction to the chosen theme:**



As we all know, our Biennial Conference theme is **Vision Beyond 2010**. The assigned Speaker Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau, the Administrative Secretary, PCI has some other important assignments. He was our Administrative Secretary i/c PWF for two consecutive terms, I'm sure that he is the right person who can enlighten us to consider on what will be the vision for the 25<sup>th</sup> years old Assembly PWF. From the very moment when the Committee assigned me to preach in this important and significant occasion in place of Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau, I was thinking and thinking what would our Vision beyond 2010 be, what would be the vision of 25 years old Women's Fellowship which is entering maturity. Finally, I thought that by analyzing the present status of women, we would try and highlight what would be our vision beyond 2010.

**Bible Reading:** Esther 4:13&14; Lk. 10: 38– 42

As our theme is **Vision Beyond 2010**, I believe and hope that just looking back at the historical development of the PWF we could obviously realize what would be the **Vision Beyond 2010**. So, let us first look into the brief historical development of PWF.

### **A brief historical development of PWF**

A proposal of having Women's Wing at the Assembly level came from the KJP Synod, and was discussed in the 24<sup>th</sup> PCI Assembly session at Churachanpur in 1980. The proposed ideas were sent out to all the Women's Fellowship under the PCI. The 26<sup>th</sup> PCI General Assembly held at Jowai in 1984 passed and entrusted the PCI Executive Committee to prepare the details in line with the Presbyterian Youth Fellowship. The draft scheme was submitted to and approved by the PCI Executive Committee in May 29, 1985.

In its inception PWF had four units viz. Mizoram Synod PWF, KJP Synod PWF, Manipur Synod PWF and CHT Synod PWF. By the grace of God the PWF units have grown into 8 units and 2 Associate members.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the PWF at Mairang in 1994 resolved to send 5 representatives of the PWF in the PCI General Assembly. The PCI also allowed PWF representation in the General Assembly. From 2006 onwards, when we celebrated the revival centenary, our presentation has increased from 5 to 10 in the PCI General Assembly.



Moreover, from 2002 onwards, PWF has 2 representatives in the PCI Executive Committee. The 39<sup>th</sup> Biennial Assembly of the PCI has allowed 1 representative in each sub-committee of the PCI.

From its inception, the PWF realized the need for a full time Secretary for its development. It was often discussed in the biennial conferences as well. The initial proposal was submitted to the PCI but was rejected. The PWF again submitted another proposal to the PCI. The 36<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the PCI at Dawrpui, Mizoram has agreed to the proposal. The first Secretary for Women's Relations was Ms. H. Lalhmingthangi, B.D from Mizoram Synod. She joined the office in 2005 and left in 2008. From 2009 June, I came and joined the Office till today as your Secretary for Women's Relations.

**Contribution of PWF:**

From the first biennial conference held at Mawkhar in 1986, the PWF decided to contribute towards the Mission and Evangelism fund of the PCI. Every year Rs. 15,000 is contributed to the Assembly Office for mission and evangelism fund. Besides this, every year PWF contributes assessment to the PCI. Moreover, whenever there is a

request to contribute for a particular and immediate project, PWF has contributed a lot. Moreover, the 39<sup>th</sup> Biennial General Conference of the PCI at Mawngap requested PWF to contribute Rs. 1,00,000.00 (Rupees one lakh) only for five consecutive years for the construction of Centre for Capacity Building and Empowerment. Assessment has been made and sent out to all the PWF units. Furthermore, the PWF has resolved to work together with Interserve India in mission by sponsoring a partner. Accordingly, Mrs. Rami Kant, a nurse is sponsored by payment of Rs. 2000/- a month from 2008 onwards.

PWF is also a member unit to the AICCW (All India Council of Christian Women) from 1990 and observed and attended various programmes conducted by the AICCW. At present Ms. Lalthatlingi Hrangchal, one of our Standing Committee Members and former Chairperson from CHT Synod PWF holds the post of Vice-Chairperson in AICCW (2008-2012). As a member unit of the AICCW, PWF has observed World Day of Prayer as proposed by the AICCW every year and sent the collection amount to the AICCW. We have also been observing PWF Day of Prayer in



the first week of October every year from 1996 onwards. The collection is sent to the Office as General Fund of the PWF.

### **Status of women in the church**

Extract from the consultation on the “*Status of Women in the Church*” organized by the PWF on 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at Lamka Chhim Veng Presbyterian Church.

Regarding the pay of full time women workers, all the Synod PWF, except the Mizoram Synod PWF, pay the salary of the women workers.

Regarding the inclusion of women in the decision making body, only a few un-ordained women are included in some local churches. Few women from Women’s Fellowship are included in the sub-committees of Synod and local church level in Mizoram Synod. The CHT Synod included women only in the Synod Managing Board. Manipur Synod has also included a few women in the local church level sub-committee. The rest of the Synods do not include women in the decision making body in the Synod or local church levels.

In the Sunday school, only a few women are appointed as adult Sunday school teachers in Mizoram, CHT and Biateram, in the rest

women are included in the children Sunday schools.

Regarding recognition of the theologically trained women, they are not fully recognized by all the Synods. In some local churches, they are included among the preachers’ list. In the CHT, Biateram and Mizoram Synod women are allowed to preach from the pulpit and a few of them are included in the preachers’ list in the local churches.

One of the most outstanding contributions made by the PWF in the entire Synod is maintenance of a handful of rice. In all the Synods, maintenance is done by the PWF. In the KJP Synod Mihngi 5% of the income from the handful of rice is given to the PWF Fund while 10% is given to PWF fund in KJP Synod Sepngi. In Zou Synod, 50% goes to PWF fund. In other Synods the exact amount (100%) is submitted to the Synods.

### **Vision Beyond 2010:**

From the above mentioned points, we can clearly know the exact position of women in the Church. As delegates who represent our PWF units, do we think that what we have reached so far is enough? Are we satisfied with



our present status or position? Do we have a vision for the progress and advancement of the PWF?

Let us critically look into the present condition of women in our society. Many of our women folks are suffering or victimized by the so-called social evils – commercial sex work, drug abuse and alcoholism. There are many young girls whose lives are at risk – endangered with rape or human trafficking. Moreover, if we seriously look into the data shown by the State AIDS Control Society in our States, half of the infected persons are women. Moreover, many of our women folks have come to know their status at the time of their labour pain.

For our better understanding, let us see the present condition of our States. For Meghalaya the fact about Ladrymbai alone could make us alert. How many trucks have been crossing in an hour or how many migrant workers are there. According to the National AIDS Control Organizations' classification, the truckers and the migrant workers are the bridge population who can bring home the disease to the general population.

For Manipur, before I joined PWF ministry, I once worked in one

NGO and had an exposure visit at Churachanpur. I came to know the real situation there, known as the high prevalence area where more than 1% of pregnant women have HIV/AIDS infection. Mizoram has also nearly reached this percentage; the present percentage is 0.71% .

As one of the biggest women fellowships in India, are we ready to stretch out our hands to those women folks who need our help. Or shall we leave them behind and say that they are out of our concerns. Or shall we leave them to the hands of the Government or NGOs.

Moreover, there are so many women theologians who are eagerly waiting for their chance to serve God in a more meaningful way. In the Assembly and Synod levels, the status of theologically trained women is often discussed. Some women theologians have also applied for ordination too. Till today, no further steps have been taken in favour of women theologians in the church.

In order to address these issues faced by women in our society or in our church, the most important thing we need to do is to strengthen ourselves or re-establish ourselves. In almost all the Synods except Zou and Ri Bhoi Synod, we have



employed permanent women workers. Some Presbyteries have been able to employ full time permanent workers. Are we thinking of upgrading the office of Assembly PWF? Shall we include this matter in our vision beyond 2010?

I want to point out my post as Secretary for Women's Relations as an example since this is the only project that we have in the Assembly PWF. Please don't think of me as campaigning for my personal benefit. But this matter needs a serious consideration for the welfare of the PWF as a whole.

The recruitment is done inline with the posting of the Administrative Secretaries in the PCI. The post itself is not a permanent one, but in a term-based to be recruited up to 2 terms i.e. 8 years since one term is for 4 years. The salary and other incidental expenses are borne by the PWF. After completion of 2 terms, there is no provision for further employment. Without pension and other benefits the Secretary for Women's Relations needs to leave her ministry. In the meantime, the Administrative Secretaries are deputed by the Synod, when they have completed their term, they

could go back to their respective Synod and continue their ministry. Since the Secretary for Women's Relations is not deputed by the Synod/PWF unit, they would surely leave empty handed, no job maybe too old to find another appropriate ministry in the future.

We need to focus on our ministry with deep consideration. As already mentioned, the salary and other incidental expenses are borne by us. Are we thinking of upgrading the status of the full-time PWF employee? In the proposal idea and in the guidelines also, mention is made that the Secretary should visit all units at least once each year. May be because of that we are afraid of having a permanent worker who would be too old to travel and pay a visit to the units. In this point, I want to mention that those who are deputed by the Synods as our Administrative Secretaries are much older than me. We acknowledge them as mature and experience in ministry.

If we are following the same system in our PWF ministry, after my term another young person without experience would come. When she finishes her term, she would go and yet another person





would come. Following this manner, do you think that the ministry of the PWF has any prospect or vision? I was thinking that we ourselves are creating our own problem.

If we are really willing and ready to address the challenges that come ahead of us in our society and in the church, how can we address such issues without having a proper establishment in ourselves? Shall we include this in our Vision beyond 2010?

### **Main message:**

From the selected Biblical verses from Lk. 10: 38-42, we come across the narrative/ story of Jesus' visits to Martha and Mary. The story itself is well-known to us and Martha is best known as sister to Mary and Lazarus of Bethany. We know little about the background of the family. They may have been orphans who had the management of their own lives, since there is no mention of their parents. Among them, the eldest of the three, Martha appeared to be in the control of the household.

Following the Jewish patriarchal traditional role of women, Martha busied herself preparing dinner. Let me remind you that Martha, as the hostess of the house, may well have been faced with entertaining a sizable group. We know that Jesus

was often accompanied by a large party not only his 12 disciples.

Moreover, in that day and time (almost the same in our context today) the men would sit about talking "man talk" while the women were going about their "domestic duties". For Martha who is so much inborn with the patriarchal tradition, working in the kitchen was the "better part", not only for her, but also for her sister Mary too.

When Martha saw her sister Mary sitting at Jesus' feet, listening to His teaching along with male disciples, she felt that Mary had no right to sit and listen since women's work was in the kitchen, fixing meals. Then with frustration and anger, Martha blamed both Jesus and Mary for not sticking to the traditional norms and practices. When she said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me", Martha was not merely asking for Mary's help but was demanding that Mary should keep the traditional way of behaviour.

Jesus answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things, there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will





not be taken away from her”. Here we see Jesus ignoring the traditional role of women and encouraging Mary to think and learn. He upheld that Mary had every right to listen, think and to develop her mind. She should not be limited to the task that Society laid down for her, but be allowed to access to ideas as Jewish men were.

Like Martha, many of us, almost all of us are so much deeply inborn with the patriarchal tradition. Our ideas, thought and mind are controlled by patriarchal perspectives from time immemorial. Some of us are manlier than many man folks in our thought pattern. From these inborn patriarchal traditional ideologies, we keep on moving ahead and reaching not much far.

Like Martha, standing firm in our traditional worldview, we condemn and criticize some liberated women. For example: Our former Secretary for Women’s Relations, when she left her post for higher call and entered the politics arena, we find it difficult to understand. Instead of encouraging and supporting her we say that political arena is not for a woman, especially for a theologian. If we had said “Oh, she took up a new challenge since very few

women are in the political field, lets support her. As woman she knows better what a woman has needed in life, if she won, we are going to be the benefactor” I am sure she would have won in that election.

Or, when a woman theologian applies for ordination in her Synod or whenever we talk about women’s ordination/ inclusion of women in decision making body as Elder or Pastor, we women ourselves are the ones who are against this. We seem so happy sitting in the position where we are at present. Last year i.e. May 26&27, 2009, when the Theological Education Committee of the PCI organized a Consultation on Women’s Ordination, we came to know that there is neither Biblical nor Constitutional objection to Women’s Ordination. In the findings, it was pointed out that “the PCI is not yet ready to ordain women due to socio-cultural factor”. PWF was entrusted to have a follow-up programme in all units.

I would also like to give another example - our profound traditional practices till date. When I attended the CHT PWF annual session at Boro Haflong this year, according to the Synod practices, during the time of the Synod meeting, the PWF



has an annual session in the same place. I learnt that all the Synods except Mizoram, Manipur and Zou have this kind of practice. One thing that came to my mind is that though we talk a lot about the inclusion of women in decision making, how can women be included in the decision making body if such practice goes on? Shall we say that we ourselves are creating a barrier, a blockade? How can we be included when we need to attend our own session?

Afterwards, when I had a chance to discuss this matter with the PWF members, I proposed the idea of having a separate conference/session in some other convenient time. They seemed to be afraid of changing the tradition. If we are planning to have our session at some other time, it won't create the problem now faced by father and mother who need to leave home at the same time. That would surely be a big problem to some family. By changing our practice, a big headache for some family will be gone and we can have our session in a proper manner. Moreover, we can freely participate in the decision making body in our respective Synods. Let us make ourselves ready and available, free to be included in the decision making body.

All these mindsets are the by-product of traditional patriarchal ideology where we all are brought-up and nurtured. Many writers have said that women empowerment should start from the hearts of women. As we are living in post-modern world, advancement and development take place in the area of information technology, mass media and communication. Many women folks are holding the top rank in various fields - education, politics or whatever.

However, we have one area where women are still holding subordinate role i.e. the church where we all are belong. In our preaching, we often point out our theological stand referring to creation story (Gen. 1:27)-

***So God created humankind in his image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them***

According to the Bible, we both (men and women) are created in the image of God. There is no difference to be found in the beginning of human history (creation story).

Being Protestant in tradition, we advocate ***priesthood of all believers***. Not priesthood of man but ***of all believers***. If we look into the



PCI Constitution, it is stated that “there is no mention of sex but rather **all believers** or **without any division or discrimination ...of gender**” or “**person**” or “**all communicant members**” which is inclusive of both male and female, it is obvious that the church has no prejudice against women as such. Therefore, we need to recognize our traditional limitations in the light of our Constitution and Doctrines.

To practice what we have preached, we need to change ourselves, our thoughts, our mind, our outlook. Let us look back to the NEICC – WA Biennial Conference of April 2010. Woman Pastor from the Baptist celebrated the Holy Communion with some ordained women pastors and elders. One thing that clearly indicating the status of women in the PCI is that among them there is no ordained woman, neither a pastor nor an elder, in the PCI.

Being known as one of the biggest churches in India, we proudly talk of our strength in membership. But if we critically study this particular area (the status of women in the church) there is something to be done. We already know that there is no objection to women’s ordination as Elders/

Pastors from our biblico-theological and constitutional grounds. What we have to do is to make change, to come out from the traditional bound.

As said, “The PCI is not yet ready to ordain women due to socio-cultural factor”, if we women, half of the population is ready, that means we are ready to ordain women.

In order to address our visions, challenging various issues that women face today, let us remind ourselves again of the pleading/challenge that Mordecai brought to Queen Esther. We all are very much familiar with the details of the story and we will not repeat this time. Mordecai urged Queen Esther to do something, to save her fellow Jews, saying “***You have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this***”.

Likewise, we are who are celebrating the Silver Jubilee of PWF, delegates representing our fellow members or a Committee Member or whatever post we are holding, do we think it is high time to make a change in the life and ministry of the PWF? Are we ready to address a challenge that comes before us?

Women folks, who are victimized, suffering different kinds of ill-treatment, are waiting for us,



calling, pleading and challenging us with the words of Mordecai “You have come to royal dignity/ such position for just such a time as this”. Should we remain passive and quiet and do nothing, or are we willing and ready to stand up and bring changes?

To wind up our message let me borrow the campaign theme of Barak Obama, **“Change we can, if we believe”** shall we say **“Yes, we can”**. There is a saying that

“God helps those who help themselves”. Likewise, let us make ourselves ready and God will surely help us. Let us make this Silver Jubilee be an eye opener, let us make this historical occasion an important milestone in the life and ministry of the PWF, enabling ourselves to address the issues that come in the future.

May God bless us through the sermon -Amen

*(This sermon was delivered at the PWF 13<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference cum Silver Jubilee Celebration on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2010, 6:00 – 8:30 pm Public Worship Service at Jaiaw Presbyterian Church, Shillong.)*



## OBITUARY



### **Rev.S.Lalhluma (1931-2011)**

Rev.S.Lalhluma s/o Mr.Thanchhuma Sailo, a retired ordained minister of Mizoram Presbyterian Church (MPC) passed away due to Parkinson's disease on March 1, 2011 at 3:50 am at his residence in Republic Veng, Aizawl. His funeral service was conducted the same day which was led by Rev.Vanlalzuata, Sr.Executive Secretary, MPC Synod.

Rev.S.Lalhluma served in the MPC ministry during 1960 -1993. He began as a Probationary Pastor at Phuldungsei village and after ordination he was in-charge of five different pastorates such as West Phaileng, Sateek, Khawbung 'S', Kawkulh and Zemabawk. He got retired from active ministry in 1994 and got settled in Republic Veng where he continued to serve the Lord in the local church with fervent zeal and graceful heart until his deteriorating health prevented him to carry on the ministry.

The Editorial Board of the Presbyterian Review thank God for the life and ministry of Rev.S.Lalhluma and pray for God's abounding grace and comfort for the family of Rev.S.Lalhluma in their bereavement.



## OBITUARY



### Rev.Thangdela (1944-2011)

Rev.Thangdela s/o Elder Rokunga (L), a retired ordained minister of Mizoram Presbyterian Church (MPC) passed away due to cancer on March 7, 2011 at 11:10 am at his residence in Mission Veng, Aizawl. His funeral service was conducted the next day which was led by Rev.C.Lalsangliana, the MPC Synod Moderator.

Rev.Thangdela joined the ministry of the MPC Synod in 1974. During his probationary period he had three different placements, namely, Khawhai and Dawrpui pastorates, and Synod Mission Board (SMB) Office. After being attached to the SMB Office for another four years, Rev Thangdela had been a Pasor in-charge of Saitual, Noagang, Republic and Electric Veng Pastorates. He was also posted as the Field Secretary of the MPC Synod Tripura Mission and Chaplain of the Civil Hospital, Aizawl. He was also a Leader of the MPC Synod Central *Kristian Thalai Pawl* (Christian Youth Fellowship) (1996-1998), Secretary of the MPC Synod (1998-'99) and the Synod Moderator (2004). After he got retired from active service of the MPC Synod he joined the ministry of one of the local para-church organizations known as *Thlarau Bo Zawngtute* (Seekers of the Lost Soul) and served as its Field Director in Madhya Pradesh which had become his last assignment in the Lord's ministry.

The Editorial Board of the Presbyterian Review thank God for the life and ministry of Rev.Thangdela and pray for God's abounding grace and comfort for the family of Rev.Thangdela in their bereavement.



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