

PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW



Vol. XX

October - December, 2012

No. 65



Chanmari Church where the 89th Synod Session was held

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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Subscription Rates

Annual - Rs. 100.00

Per Copy - Rs. 25.00

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MIZORAM, INDIA.

Printed at
Synod Press



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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

New Year's greetings to all the readers of the *Presbyterian Review*! We hope you wouldn't be disappointed for receiving this issue late. We apologise once again for that, but we can't help, though we do not want to make 'lame excuses'! When this issue reaches you, the preparation for the next issues may already be in its last stage. We are glad on our part to be able to bring the issue out in the midst of many schedules of works among the contributors and the members of the Editorial Board.

As we have landed to a new year of 2013, the Review has already reported lots of the ministry and mission activities of the Church. The task of the Review has been to look back and give reports of those that had been done within the Mizoram Presbyterian Church in particular, and also the Presbyterian Church in India in larger contexts. This does not mean that it has to confine itself solely within the Presbyterian Church activities, but rather it will look around the environment where the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram has been doing her ministry and mission. We sometimes bring to you articles which we think useful for the understanding of an reflecting upon the ministry and mission of the Church. Such articles reflect the individual opinions, though. In this issue, apart from the reports of church's activities, we include articles that were delivered in the important occasions, with the thought that they will provoke thoughts for further deliberations.

We request the readers of the *Review* to be patient and continue to actively reflect on reports and the articles we bring to you through this magazine. May the good Lord continue to bless you to be channels of His blessings throughout this year.



NEWS AROUND THE MPC

- Ms. P. C. Laltlani &
Dr. Lalrindiki Ralte

The College Day Celebrated: On November 23, 2012, the College Day of the Aizawl Theological College was celebrated. The solemn celebration was preceded by two 'Professorial lectures' given by the two newly promoted lecturers to professorship, namely Rev. Dr. C. Lalhlira (Communication) and Rev. Dr. Vanlalnghaka Ralte (New Testament). The topic of their lectures were "Intercultural Communication for Ministry and Mission," and, "Redemption of The Body (The Soma Motif in Pauline Soteriology)" respectively. There were good numbers of participants listening to the lectures. The solemn celebration of the Col-

lege Day was held in the afternoon. It was conducted by Rev. Thangzauva, the Synod Moderator. The Principal Rev. Prof. Vanlalchhuanawma gave the reports of the progress of the College in good detail, but in a commendable short period of time. According to the report, there were 29 lecturers altogether, out of which four of them were on study leave for Doctoral courses. There were six post graduate courses (for M. Th. degrees) namely Old Testament, New Testament, Christian Theology, History of Christianity, Missiology, and Religions. There were 129 students out of which 28 were M. Th. students and 101 were doing B. D. courses. The College is having 11 permanent workers in the office with 10 others as contract or daily labourers on



Congregational singing the theme song at the College Anniversary (College Day)



www.mizoramsynod.org

regular basis. The library of the College grows to improvements and it now has 60, 249 volumes of books, 237 journals and 2 national English dailies and 2 English dailies published in Mizoram and 7 dailies in the local vernaculars. The library has been looked after by 11 staff.

The Chief Guest of the College Day was the Right Rev. Bishop Isaac Mar Philoxenos, the President of the Senate of Serampore College/University. He delivered a speech on the topic "Mission as Building Fraternity - the Impact on Theological Education". By dealing with the changes in mission paradigm such as from the colonial attitude with the attempt of winning others to the attitude of solidarity with all other humankind and creation, he exhorted the audience to be more contextual in approach to mission. "The earlier

Enlightenment epistemological understanding of the church as the conqueror of the world was replaced by the new perceptions of the church in solidarity with the world," he said. The topic was relevant as it deals with the mission of the church in a pluralistic context such as India, exhorting the audience to have a broader attitude towards others and more tolerant to their differences in faiths and beliefs so that mission should be more meaningful. The College chorale sang which was beautiful and impressive. Prizes were distributed by Rev. Zosangliana Colney, the Synod Executive Secretary i/c Theological Education to students who secured higher marks in their courses of studies. The meeting was concluded by Rev. Vanlalzuata, the Senior Executive Secretary by pronouncing benediction



THE CKTP DISTRIBUTES GIFTS

The Central Committee of the Christian Youth Fellowship of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church (the Central Kristian Thalai Pawl - CKTP in short) distributes gifts to the luckier ones on December 18, 2012. The gifts had been received by the Central Committee from different branches in local churches that made it possible to do the Samaritan work.

The General Conference (of the Youth Fellowship) which was held at Thenzawl during March 1-4, 2012 resolved that all the branches of the Youth Fellowship should donate gifts cash in their two worship services

during May and June 2012 and the donations were brought to the office during the month of August.

The distribution was preceded by a formal but brief function held at the vicinity of the Synod Office, Mission Veng, Aizawl. The Central KTP Leader Rev. Lalrinmawia conducted the function, and Rev. Zosangliana Colney offered a word of prayer. The donations came from 165 pastorates (only one pastorate could not send it) which amounted to INR.5,66,078/- only. Central Committee distributed it as follows:

1. To sponsor individuals who have been indulging in the abuse of drugs and alcohol but are willing to be ad-



Rev. Lalrinmawia, Leader, Central Youth Fellowship, flagged off gifts contributed by local branches for the needy.



mitted in the rehabilitation centres/
homes Home - Rs.3,00,000/-

2. For employment of a cook at the
Synod Grace Home where HIV/
AIDS patients have been looked
after - Rs.36,000/-; this will start
from December 1, 2012.

3. For the after care of rehabs -
Rs.1,00,000/-

4. The gift was distributed to differ-
ent Rehab centres/Home as below:

1) TNT (a home for orphans and
destitute) - Rs.30,000/-

2) Bethel Prayer Camping Cen-
tre, Chawnpui, for purchase of food
items - Rs.30,000/-

3) Hermon Children's Home -
Rs.20,000/-

4) Grace Home - Rs.10,000/-

5) Central Jail - Rs.10,000/-

CONSULTATION ON EVAN- GELISM

On November 8, 2012, the Central
KTP (Youth Fellowship) organised
a consultation on Evangelism at Mis-
sion Veng Church's Hall for its mem-
bers of different branches. The
meeting discussed about how to
strengthen the evangelistic work
among the youth. One representa-
tive each was invited from each
branch, and altogether 400 mem-
bers attended the meeting.

Registration was held between 9:30-
10:00, and from 10:00-12:00 noon
Mr. V.L. Muanchhana, Asst. Sec-
retary, CKTP conducted the
programme and the Rev.
Lalrinmawia, Leader, CKTP pre-



sented a paper on "Meaning of Evangelism and the responsibilities of the Evangelical Cell" which was followed by discussion.

The afternoon session was commenced at 01:30 to 03:30pm. Mr. Lalnghinglova, Committee Member, CKTP conducted, the topic "Spiritual Readiness" was presented by Mr. Vanlalvuana, Venghlui, followed by discussion.

The main intention of the meeting was to make aware of the problems faced by their members who are far from the activities of the Church and to bring them closer. An emphasis was given on the empathy to such people and the development of one's skill to evangelise them. The Youth Fellowships have been instrumental in evangelism down through the decades till today.



**THE 89TH SYNOD OF THE MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH 2012**

- A Report

The Annual Synod of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church 2012 was held at the Chanmari Church, Aizawl, during December 3-10, 2012. It was jointly hosted by the Churches of the Chanmari Pastorate/District. The total number of delegates attended was 1, 915, While two of the Synods under the PCI namely the Ribhoi Synod and the Zou Synod could not send their delegates, all other sister Synods such as the Manipur Synod, the Khasi and Jaintia Synods - Sepngi and Minghi, the Biata Ram Synod, the Cachar Hills Tribe Synod sent representatives. The outgoing Moderator Rev. Thangzauva handed over the charge of Moderator to Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau, the new Moderator as the delegates stood up from their seats to witness.



The officers of the Synod were:

Moderator:

Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau

Secretaries:

Upa D. P. Biakkhuma (Sr.)

Rev. H. Lalrinmawia (Jr)

Statistician:

Upa C. Ngurthanmawia

Finance Officers:

Rev. Zosangliana Colney

Rev. Dr. Lalmangaiha

The Synod transferred forty-four pastors to new places, while thirteen pastors were permitted to pursue higher academic studies. Forty-nine probationary pastors passed their exams, among whom seventeen of them were ordained; eighteen persons were newly recruited for probationary pastors. Nine new pastorates/districts have been created inside Mizoram and two new pastorates/districts in the mission fields (Guwahati and Dumka area). Two ordained ministers were received from 'other Synods', and 'obituarial' were conducted for two ordained ministers.

There were as many as 90 'general' agenda, which were forwarded from different Presbyteries; after the related agenda were clubbed together, it became 82 in number; and there were 20 agendas forwarded by the

Synod Executive Committee (SEC). Of all the agenda, 20 of them were resolved to be taken up by the SEC in its subsequent meetings, and seven of them will be discussed again in the next Synod meeting after the SEC make proposals about them. There were 14 agendas which were passed as proposed by the presbyteries, one of the agenda was resolved to be forwarded to the General Assembly of the PCI for discussion in the next General Assembly. While 'explanations' were sufficient for six of the agenda, 'discussions were enough' for another five, while 12 were found 'not necessary to change'.

The following are the summary of the resolutions:

1. March 15, 1891 was accepted as the date for the first day of the coming of the Gospel to Mizoram (when William Williams of Wales came to Mizoram) against the accepted date of January 11, 1894 (when two missionaries namely F. W. Savidge and J. H. Lorrain landed in Mizoram).
2. No celebration of the Lord's Supper at the Women's general Conference.
3. There will only be two times for discussion on selected issues



- after evening church services during the Synod (usually three evenings were spent for the same).
4. That the Missionary Training Centre will not be shifted to Bualpui from its present location at Mission Vengthlang, Aizawl.
 5. Special Programmes should be prepared for Children on Church's calendars.
 6. The Synod will pay 25% cost for the textbook of Wednesday evening lesson specially prepared for the Home Mission members.
 7. A CCTV camera will be fitted in the account section at the Synod's office.
 8. Systematic step should be taken for the preservation of the soil from depletion.
 9. To study the growth of other faiths in the region.
 10. To make a more systematic step for the preservation of wildlife in Mizoram
 11. To organise a Prayer day for the coming State's Assembly Election which is due in 2013.
 12. New guidelines for the Mission of the Synod should be drawn and the Commission to Evaluate and make a future plan for the Mission of the Church should be set up.
 13. It was resolved to strengthen the Mizo Sunday School Union (MSSU) in the Synod's Office by recruiting new workers.
 14. It was agreed upon the proposal to provide a Refrigerator in each of the Pastor's Quarters.
 15. Resolved to educate the Church's members on faithfulness.
 16. Resolved to educate the Church's members about the facts of HIV/AIDS.
 17. The Synod agreed to set up Pay Commission.
 18. The Synod Executive Committee has been entrusted to study about the partnership in mission in Meghalaya with the Khasi and Jaintia Synod.

There are many other concerns that had been discussed in the Session which may be said to be more relating to internal matters of the Church.

The Synod had approved of the new assignments and appointments for various responsibilities made by the SEC. The Executive Secretaries were elected by the Synod Executive Committee as below:

- Rev. Vanlalzuata - Senior Executive Secretary (re-elected)
- Rev. Lalzuthanga - Execu-



tive Secretary (re-elected)

Rev. P. C. Pachhunga -
Executive Secretary (newly elected)
{Rev. Zosangliana Colney,
who had been in the office as the
Executive Secretary for two consecutive terms (of eight years) had to be replaced, and he has been appointed as the new Director of the Synod Multipurpose Training Centre.}

Others were also elected as follows:

Rev. Lalchuanmawia

- Mission Secretary

Rev. Z. D. Lalhmachhuana

- Administrative Secretary,
Barak Area (Assam)

Rev. F. Lalrinnunga

- Administrative Secretary,
Southern Area

Rev. Lalbiaknia -

Administrative Secretary &
Partnership Consultant,
Manipur Area

Dr. Vanlalruata -

Director, Synod Hospital

Elder R. Lalmalsawma -

General Manager, Synod
Press and Book room

Mr. Rozama Chawngthu -

Principal, Synod Higher and
Secondary School

Elder F. Lalsangliana -

Superintendent, Synod
Office

The Synod session could not finish the discussion of the agenda during the stipulated time, requiring to extending it till Monday (December 10, 2012) of the following week. The session was closed on that day at 4:30 pm in the evening after the minutes were read, corrected, and necessary changes were made. The host pastorate and the host church were praiseworthy for their good preparation and well organised services for the success of the Synod. Rupees 21, 40, 000/-was their budget for the Synod, and they did a very excellent job.

The next Synod session will be held at Ramhlun North Presbyterian Church at Aizawl which will be jointly hosted by the churches of Ramhlun North pastorates. The following persons were elected for the leaders of the next synod:

Moderator:

Rev. K. Lalhmuchhuaka

Secretaries:

Rev. H. Lalrinmawia (Sr.)

Elder H. Zoliana (Jr.)

Finance Officers:

Rev. Lalzuithanga &

Rev. Dr. R. Lalbiakmawia

Statistician:

Rev. K. Lalthangmawia

Besides these, members for different Synod Committees and Boards



were accepted as proposed by their presbyteries such as Executive Committee, Mission Board, Education Board, Theological Education Board, Communications [Prescom] Board, Hospital Board, etc.

With regards to statistics, the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod is comprised of 50 Presbyteries, 277 pastorates/districts, 1183 local churches, and 768

branch churches. There were 481 ordained ministers, 50 probationary pastors, and 4,784 church elders; 3,89,814 communicant members, and the total number of church members was 5,81,233. The church has one theological college, one Higher and Secondary school, and one girls' school at Middle school level, and almost a hundred local "English Medium Schools" were sponsored and supervised.



Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau takes over Mederatorship from Rev. Thangzauva whil delegates witnessed by standing



**REPORT OF STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT NORTH
EAST INDIA PROGRAMME**

- Malakia Lalnunfela, BD IV,
President, SCMI-NEI Region

The SCM NEI celebrated its Platinum Jubilee on 17th October 2012 at Aizawl Theological College. Along with this, regional workshop and SCMI Centenary thanksgiving were also organized where a paper on Economic Justice was studied and thanksgiving service was held. The programmes were held

during October 15 to 17 2012.

Regional Workshop is an annual feature of SCM NEI, this year being the 72nd Regional Workshop. Papers on 'Economic Justice' written by Rev. Dr. K. Lallawmzuala and Rev. Rosiamliana Tohhawng were studied on October 16th forenoon and afternoon. The delegates benefited from these presentations with new and meaningful insights.

It is the centenary year for Student Christian Movement of India and a platinum Jubilee year for North East India SCM. At the centenary thanksgiving Service, the General Secretary of SCMI highlighted the brief history of SCMI and its 100 years of pilgrimage in praxis. The service was blessed with various artists: Stewart Lalrochama, Lalremsiami, Zero beat group and a group of youth from Zarkawt Presbyterian Church.

There were 30 delegates representing eight units such as the Aizawl Theological College Aizawl Unit, the Jorhat Unit, Jorhat, Assam, the Union Christian College Unit Barapani, Trulock Theological Seminary Unit Imphal, Manipur, the Angu Baptist Church Unit, Arunachal, Shillong City Unit Shillong and John Robert Theological Seminary Unit Shillong, and the Academy of Christian Integrated Studies Unit, Aizawl

The programmes were also blessed with the presence of three official delegates from National office: Bishop Geervargeese Coriloos, Chairperson of the National SCMI, Rev. Raj Bharath Patta, General Secretary and Dr. A. J. Anandan, Hon. Treasurer. Bishop Geervargeese addressed the Platinum Jubilee celebration on the theme "Witnessing Christ in Pluralistic world." He emphasized on the need of having humility and love for people



of other faiths so as to have an efficient and effective mission. He also added that it is through Christian love and humility that we witness Christ in pluralistic world.

Through this ecumenical movement the youth of North East India stand together in one faith so as to realize the Kingdom of God here down to earth so that all may be one in Christ.



**A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON RURAL EXPOSURE
TO MAITE VILLAGE**

- C. Rosangzuala
BD IV (Old Course)

(Every year each batch of the BD students in Aizawl Theological College are sent either to urban or rural places to expose them to the reality of the people living in various places and under different circumstances. They are expected to take part in the daily life of the people in order to understand the situation at the grassroot level. After this kind of exposure students are expected to give their theological reflection based on their ex-

periences. This kind of exposure is one of the most important parts of the ministerial training for the students. The following is one such report of rural exposure based on a modified framework of analysis developed by Francois Houtart in a village called Maite in Mizoram during 30th Oct. - 6th Nov., 2012. Two male students went to this village and the report published in this journal is the report submitted by one of the students Mr. C. Rosangzuala. Ed.)

Participation of ATC Students:

In Maite Village there are 200 houses with a population of around 1000. During our stay we participated in the activities of the community and church life as much as

we can. We also helped our hosting families in various household works. During the day we visited the village schools and also helped in cutting and collecting firewood and food items from the surrounding forest and work in the jhum fields. At night we usually visited leaders of the village community like the Village Council President (VCP), Young Mizo Association (YMA) and Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkawm Pawl (MHIP) and others to ask them questions and also to discuss with them their concerns about their village.

We were also warmly welcomed by the local Presbyterian Church members. We spent together inspiring moments in the worship ser-



vices and fellowship programmes. We were also given the opportunities to preach a number of times.

Major Issues:

1. Economic Life

The people of Maite village have close interaction with their natural surroundings. They are depending on nature for food, water, firewood, building materials etc. Most of the people continue to practice the traditional agricultural system called jhum cultivation or shifting cultivation which continues to be their primary source for getting their daily food. Even though majority of the people wanted to give up jhum cultivation they cannot do so since they have no other means of alternative livelihood which is sustainable and dependable. Cash crop plantation is also taken up by some of them according to their conveniences. But they do not want to depend solely on cash crop plantation since market opportunity is very uncertain. Therefore, acquiring money for the common people is very hard and some of them cannot even pay Rs. 5 for their children's school examination fee.

Due to the presence of rich forest resources around them hunting is still popular among the men. However, they hunt mainly for food as well as to protect their crops from being destroyed by the animals. This type of hunting based on human needs do not seem to endanger the survival of other species. The animals also seem to have enough time to give birth and to nurture their young ones due to the presence of the rich natural forest. But the case will be very different if people hunt animals for commercial purposes and if there is no proper natural vegetation for the animals to replenish their population. Apart from the country guns used for hunting the villagers continue to use traditional tools which are eco-friendly and less destructive for the environment.

The villagers themselves work in their own fields and reap what they sow. Division of labor on the basis of sex seems to be minimal since most of the works in the jhum are shared by men and women together. But when people work for wages then one can observe the different treatment given to the labor of men and women since the women are getting less wages



than the menfolk. One can also observe disparity in income depending on the level of their education. The more educated people work in the village schools from where they get their monthly salaries. For the uneducated the only work available is jhum work and other manual works. This kind of work cannot fetch higher monetary income for many families. However, all the villagers are still self-sufficient in getting their daily needs and there are no beggars or destitutes among them.

The exchange system which they practiced is need based where people sell their products for some amount of money and they spent their money in buying the needs of their respective families.

2. *Social Life*

The approaching road to the village is in a very bad shape, particularly during monsoon. Although the village is only 8 kms from the main road it takes more than 2 hours to travel. However, since many facilities, such as proper health care, higher education, market etc. are not available in the village people

are constantly going to more urban centres like Keifang, Saitual and even Aizawl. On the other hand the urban people rarely visit Maite village. Apart from politicians who visit the village during election campaigns and medical doctors who are on duty the villagers hardly got visitors from outside.

Class division on the basis of income between the educated and uneducated can be seen but division on the basis of status is not so conspicuous. Government servants, such as teachers and health workers are respected but they do not receive any special treatment when it comes to discipline and order in the community life. All have to abide by the rules and regulations laid down by the Village council and the YMA. If not, they are either ostracized or expelled from the village.

Patriarchy is the dominant social and family set up. The crucial contributions of women in household responsibilities, such as in taking most of the household works, nurturing the younger generations and in giving care to the rest of the family members are hardly recognized.



Women are considered to be lower than men and they are not represented in any of the decision making bodies in the church and society, except in women's group like the MHIP. On the other hand, the hunting prowess of men and their physical strength are looked up and glorified by the society and families.

Since all the inhabitants are Mizo there is no conflict or tension on the basis of ethnic differences. But there is some kind of tension between the earlier settlers of Maite village and those who came later. This is because those who came later owned more lands than those who were there earlier. The earlier settlers feel that it is not right for the late comers to have more lands than them.

3. Relationship with State Government

The Government established one Primary School, one Middle School and one High School which are adhoc-aided. There are also one Health Sub-Centre and two Anganwadi Centres. It seems that those who are working in these Govt. institutions are dedicated and sincere in carrying their responsi-

bilities. There are no other departments or institutions established by the State Govt. This is one of the reasons why people have to go to urban centres quite often to

Every year the Village Council takes up the full responsibility of allotting jhum field to each family in the community land of the village. Jobs through Govt. projects like the NREGS are also managed by the Village Council.

4. People's Organization

In Maite village the two major political parties are Congress and MNF. All the villagers, including Govt. servants, openly claim their affiliation to these political parties. But the party workers are active only during election time. Party feeling is very strong and it seems to have negative impact in the distribution of assistance coming from the Govt. For example, assistance which comes under projects like New Land Use Policy (NLUP) is given mainly of members of the ruling political party. This kind of favoritism based on political party affiliation can create more division rather than unity among the villagers.



The YMA is very influential and powerful in the life of the community. It prohibits selling and bringing liquor into the village. It also prohibits selling of timber outside the village by the villagers. Anyone who violates these regulations are ostracized or expelled from the village. Equal treatment to everyone and safeguarding of the community from unhealthy and destructive practices is the main policy of the YMA. In this way the YMA is upholding the traditional value system of upholding community welfare rather than individual interest.

The MHIP is also active. The leaders are present in most of the social decision making bodies. They can freely voice their suggestions and opinions. They are also consulted in a number of cases. This shows that women are not completely marginalized or disregarded by the community, which is appreciable. However, it is also seen that patriarchal value system is still the dominant ideology since the MHIP has not been successful in their struggle to secure equal pay for equal work for men and women. It seems that the employers themselves are will-

ing to pay equal wages to both men and women but the male laborers are staunchly refusing to accept equal wage. Employers eventually succumb to the demand of the male laborers who earn Rs. 10 more than the women laborers.

The policy and projects implemented by the Govt. are never questioned by the community leaders. They are simply following whatever is implemented by the Govt. in their village. This may be due to the fact that the policy of the Govt. so far is not seen as a threat to the welfare of the community or people are not aware of their rights to challenge some of the policy and projects of the Govt. if they wish to do so. The villagers, including the leaders, seem to think that due to their low level of education they dare not challenge the Govt. and they do not know how to critically analyze the policies of the Govt.

5. Civil Institutions

People have access to local TV channel called Zonet, which is very popular. In this way they are exposed to the different aspects of the wider world chosen to be shown



by the channel owners.

There is one private English Medium School which is only up to 6th Standard. Parents who can afford to pay the fee send their children to study in this school.

Since the Govt. transportation system does not reach the village all the transport system are owned by individual owners. Therefore, availability of transportation in and out of the village depends on the condition of the vehicles, the good will of the vehicle owner, the number of passengers available and the weather.

There are three major denominations in Maite village. The largest is the Presbyterian Church followed by the United Pentecostal Church (UPC) and Isua Krista Kohhran (IKK). There are few individuals who claim to belong to the lost tribe of Israel and one person who is a Roman Catholic. Denominational feeling is very strong among these different groups. Therefore, the leaders of the different denominations are trying to maintain good relationship with the members in

their respective denominations so as to prevent them from leaving their denomination. However, in spite of the strong denominational feelings, when it comes to the community life, there do not seem to be any discrimination on the basis of denomination. The present YMA leader belongs to IKK and the Village Council President belongs to UPC while all the MHIP leaders belong to Presbyterian Church. This also shows that community cohesion transcends smaller group interests and loyalties.

6. Symbolic Representation

It seems that the value system of the people is very much influenced by modern technologies. Television set is owned by almost all the houses. Those who have better economic background dress better than normal folk. The youths are also greatly influenced by the urban and western fashion. However, what is noteworthy is that fashion is not used as a means of discrimination. People dress themselves in accordance to what they have and the treatment they receive from others is not determined by what he/she wears. Thus their relationship



to one another is not based on their possessions or fashion. Most of the youths have mobile phones. For the well to do motor bike or pick-up truck is a must. Though Maite is a small village where every place is within walking distance those who can afford to own motor bike prefer to use their bike to go from one place to the other rather than walking. Such lifestyle definitely sets apart the haves and the have nots.

The people try to equip themselves through material possessions to the best of their abilities. Most of the well-to-do families have large houses. Some can even afford to construct their house with concrete cement. However, the majority of them have wooden houses. It seems that material possessions is an important criteria for having higher status since most of the people who hold leadership position in the church and community come mainly from the well to do families.

7. Ideology

The Mizo 'sem sem dam dam ei bil thi thi' ideology, which can be roughly translated as 'by sharing you live, be selfish and you die', is still

being practiced in some matters it is decreasing at a fast pace. Materialism and consumerism is increasingly becoming the dominant ideology. Sharing of food items and free services even among relatives is becoming lesser. Almost everything is now measured in terms of monetary values. There is no doubt that the bad condition of the approach road to the village is creating great hardships for the people in their travel to and fro to urban centres. On the other hand, it is also possible that good road condition which provides better access to urban centres can also bring to a rapid end the sharing and communitarian life of the people in Maite village.

Theological Reflection

In Maite village the sustenance of life is continued through the people's interaction with their natural surroundings. The rich forest gives them almost all of their needs and they rely on its bounty for their survival. In fact, their whole life revolves on their interaction with nature. But from our interaction with them the people do not seem to realize the extent of their depen-



dency on nature nor their inter-related with all other creations. They seem to consider their land as a lifeless commodity from where resources can simply be extracted and which can be simply bought, grabbed, bargained and seized to satisfy one's economic interests. Therefore, the feeling of oneness with their natural surroundings seem to be absent from the mindset of the people.

In order make the people aware not only of their dependency on nature but also their inter-relatedness with the rest of the creation which can create a feeling of oneness with their land the space and creation centered theology propounded by theologians like Wati Longchar could be useful and relevant. This theological method provides an orientation to life which is centered on relationship, reciprocity and wholeness, and conveys the imperative recognition of cosmic oneness. Yangkahao Vashum cites Wati Longchar as follows - "in this method the point of reference will not be humans (which is how dominant Christian theology looks at space/land). Space/land is the point

of reference and the key to understanding human selfhood, God and spirit. The space/land is the foundation of liberation". This kind of theological methodology can affirm for the people of Maite village the relatedness of all creations and help the close-knit rural community to respect and retain their rich forest resources and to continue to utilize in a responsible manner these resources for their survival and livelihood. The policy of the YMA in Maite village can be incorporated in this kind of theological affirmation.

In the context of rapid privatization of community land Rev. Dr. K.Lallawmzuala had said that 'in a rural peasant society where there is no food without land, the best way to distribute food was to make sure that every household had a share of land cultivation'. At present Maite village still has a vast community land which is under the custody of the Village Council. But privatization of land is becoming common and the Village Council easily gives away the community land to individuals. Such being the case, the space and creation centered theology of Wati Longchar



again will be useful in protecting the community land and its resources from latifundialization as it promotes the continuous existence of communitarian land.

Privatization of community land and increasing disparity among the villagers based on material possessions cannot be separated from the growing consumeristic ideology imbibed by the villagers under the impact of the dominant development ideology propagated through modern technologies, including mass media like television. Thus, it is crucial to make the people aware of the changing value system which they are uncritically accepting from the outside world. Biblical teachings and insights can be very helpful in this task since almost all the villagers in Maite are Christians. Jesus himself said that "it is not possible to serve God and wealth, without hating the one and loving the other' (Mt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13). "Wealth" in Greek means mammon, which may be understood as the idol of accumulation of power and wealth. Resisting consumeristic ideology which corrupts the lives and the spirituality of

people is one of the most important ways to fight against the rule of mammon in all aspects of life.

Quality education, which means education that provides an all round development is lacking in the schools of Maite village as almost everywhere else. Among the students there is no healthy competitive environment. They do not understand education as a force that can give them the power to fight for their rights, to stand up against unjust and destructive policies of the govt. and to challenge gross consumerism. Therefore, the people need education which can open up their minds in the most positive and constructive ways.

A firm conviction in the theological method discussed above and evolving practical steps for promoting constructive development based on the analysis of the real life situation of the people in Maite village can be one of the most relevant means of carrying out Pastoral Ministry in today's world.



REACHING THE GOAL

- Upa D.P. Biakkhuma,
Secretary Mizoram Synod

1. Greetings and Preface : The Principal, Vice Principal, Registrar, all faculty members and the whole community at the Aizawl Theological College, on behalf of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church and on my behalf, I would like to greet you all in the matchless name of our risen Lord Jesus Christ. I am really delightful tonight for God and the Worship Committee of the College give me unexpected privilege to deliver message here in your midst. In fact it is unexpected pleasure and opportunity for me to take place in my lifetime. I therefore express my heartfelt gratitude to the authorities and to you all.

As you all know that neither I am a theologian nor a pastor like lecturers of this institution. For that reason I do believe that you do not expect me to deliver message like theologians. And I also believe that you do rather expect me to simply share the words of God which touch and inspire my heart. Therefore, it is my request to you all to bear with me and pay your attention to my simple and humble message with prayer.

MOVING TOWARDS THE DESTINATION

(Phillipi 3:12-16)

Tonight, the topic or the subject of

our message I choose with which we shall all meditate unto God is "Moving towards the Destination". In other words we can also put it as "Moving towards the Goal". Your thought might be convinced to consider or you might suppose that choosing or selecting this topic is not well appropriate with the present condition and the development that the institution already attained, even if so I do agree with that. But brothers and sisters in Christ, as soon as I received the invitation from the College Worship Committee through Rev. Dr. Tlanghmingthanga, on the 1st of June, 2012; this topics takes pos-



session of my heart and no other topics can replace it. That is the reason why I am here in your midst with this humble message.

2. What kind of lessons or instruction should we learn from the Bible passages we have read for the growth and development of the College and our spiritual life?

2.1. Setting a goal or destination: A very important thing I would like to mention before all others is setting a goal or destination is a must. I know that you know better than me if a man sets no goal or destination for his life, he will never make great achievement in life. In order to be a successful one or to make a grand success a person must have strong determination to attain the destination or goal. Even any organization and the government should have good and right agenda for the country and the people (citizen). What I would like to emphasize or stress in this regards is that faculty members, all staff of the college and also Theological Education Board should have a clear cut vision, goal and destination for the college and its

development physically and spiritually as well. Theological Education Board, faculty members and all the workers in the college should have a definite objective, fixed principles for the upliftment of the college that it may attain the goal and it may reach the destination.

3. What kind of actions or steps that have to be taken in order to reach the goal or to reach the destination?

There might be many important steps that can be taken in order to reach the goal or the destination. Apart from the many, let me particularise the followings:-

3:1 Making a move: We certainly know that nobody can reach the goal or destination unless he makes a move. You know that one of Mizo folklore about Samdala who was a very indolent/slothful(lazy) man.. he just lie down on his back under the fig tree, opened his mouth in order that he might take the fruit falling into his mouth from its tree!! No, that is not proper way to get the fruit. He should climb on that fig tree and plug its fruit and eat it. You know that I came here to the college to deliver message tonight.



What makes me reach here, how and why do I become available here? It is only because I made a move and proceeded towards my destination this place, the Aizawl Theological College. In the same manner, making a move is the first thing we should do as a college/an institution, as Mizoram Presbyterian Church Theological Education Board, as a country in a wide range inclusion, as an individual Christian, as the whole church, so on and so forth. What I do like to emphasize here is that making a move is important to reach our goal, our destination.

3:2 Forgetting what is behind or the past : From the Bible passages we have read we find that St Paul said that he forgets what lies behind/he forgets the past and reaching forward to what lies ahead. Do we imagine/reckon that St Paul simply or thoughtlessly mentioned or narrated that he forgets what lies behind or the past? What do we suppose St Paul meant to say about forgetting the past? Do we assume that he never recollected the past or simply never considering what lies behind. We definitely know that what St Paul was

before, what achievement he made before, what he contributed for the government. But he never mentioned what he was and what he did he do in order to boast of himself.

We, human beings are easy to be tempted to remember and speak about what good things we did before and what we were in the past. It is of course a great pleasure to tell and to made known to others about the development of our College, what a move forward and progress it made before and even now. As we are human being, it is a great pleasure to blow our own trumpet. You and I know that this College was established in the year 1907 as Theological School for training of Evangelists and besides training of evangelist, a Diploma Course on Theology was also introduced for Pastors in 1951.

The Theological School was therefore upgraded to the status of College in 1965 with L.Th Diploma Course and in the year 1971, B.Th. (Bachelor of Theology) degree Course was opened. On the 13th of October, 1994 Celebration of B.D. Program was inaugurated



and B.D. Class for the first batch was started straightway. Furthermore, solemn inaugural Service of the programme for Master of Theology (M.Th.) in Christian Theology was held on the 21st of June 2002 and in addition to that existing M.Th. programme, two new departments were introduced viz. New Testament and Missiology Department on the 23rd of June, 2007. Moreover, Department of History of Christianity, Old Testament and Religion were also introduced last year, 2011.

The development and the achievement that the College made was such a remarkable deed. Will it be right or good to be remained in the same status without straining forward, making no more progress or a move and at the same time blowing our own trumpet, proud of our deeds and development? No, I do not believe that is beneficial or helpful for the upliftment of our College. Rather it will be monotonous, annoyance and noisy music for others. As St Paul said that he did not consider himself to have already attained perfection, our College also not yet reach perfection. The

development and the achievement that the college had made before was well and great but let us remind ourselves that still there are many things left to be done.

Even in spiritual life, we used to find some Christians who made no progress in Christian life but very much fond of talking. We need not remember what lies behind, we need not to narrate time and again what we were and what we did before. In accordance with the English Proverb, let us assent to say, "let by gone be by gone". Keep on doing work, deed is needful for growth of our Christian life and the Church as well.

3:3. Straining towards what is ahead: As we have just mentioned above that St Paul did not count himself to have achieved perfection, in the same manner we may not claim that our personal Christian life and our college already attained an ideal achievement or reach perfection, still there are many things left to be done. If that is so, how shall we strain towards what is ahead or in what ways shall we strain ahead for what are still to come?



3:3.1 Preparation for higher status or grade up of the College and personal Christian life: As we all know that pursuing 2011 Synod Resolution General No 43, we are eagerly looking forward and doing our best to make our college a Doctoral Study Centre or Doctoral Research Centre. In order to accomplish the resolution made by the Synod, Synod Theological Education Board, Faculty members, and all of us with one accord have to strain forward to what lies ahead. Let us strain ahead/look forward for what is still to come, shall we go forward with hands outstretch to whatever lies ahead that our college may fulfill the upward call of God.

In the same way, let us also not only remain in the same standard or status in our personal Christian life but make a move in order to attain higher status.

3:3.2 To beautify the Church and her owner and head : Aizawl Theological College is the beauty of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church heretofore (in the past) and even now. Let the college carry on to

beautify Mizoram Presbyterian Church and her owner and head Jesus Christ in the future.

3:3.3 Move forward to be a better link : The Aizawl Theological College (ATC) is a junction which joined the Mizoram Presbyterian Church and Sister Churches under Presbyterian church of India and the Churches abroad together. By virtue of the existence of the ATC, Mizoram Presbyterian Church has become known to the other churches in India and abroad as well. Let us make the owner Church to have a better relation or link with other Church to have a better relation or link with other Churches in the home land and abroad by our good deeds and actions.

3:3.4 To impart better Theological knowledge and provide more meaningful preparation to the Ministers : As we all know that the Aizawl Theological College is a place where in our Ministers are prepared for their ministry. Our Pastors, Ministers although not all but most of them have gone through their theological and spiritual train-



ing in this place. Responsibility of the teachers is to impart better, accurate, and sound theology to the Pastors who take care of the flocks. Whether Our Pastors are spiritually and theologically taught and enthusiastically, and satisfactorily minister (look after) their flock, and the church or not deeply depend on the teaching, training and nourishment that the college given them. It is therefore possible to state that the spiritual growth of the church people and the Pastoral Ministry of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church truly rely upon this institution. For that

every reason, faculty members and all staff herein the college will have to work harder than ever before.

Let us therefore, fastening our belt work together with all might and main for the growth of the college, for the betterment of the Pastoral Ministry and also for the spiritual development of the Church members throughout the country. So forgetting what lies behind, shall we make a move towards the goal or our destination. May God bless his holy words.

(This was the Message delivered at ATC Evening Chapel Service on the 19TH August, 2012 Upa D.P. Biakkhuma, the Synod Secretary (2012) has been in the mission service for many years. At present he has been in the Mission office of the Mizoram Presbetyryan Church Synod's Office.)



CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO DRUGS AND ITS RELATED PROBLEMS IN MIZORAM

- Upa Lalbiakmawia Khiangte

Good Morning to each and everyone of you. I wish you a very happy and prosperous New Year of 2012.

It gives me great pleasure to be with you here. I would, first of all, extend my profound gratitude to the Principal and the faculty members for their having given me an opportunity to speak to you in this national day of happiness. It is, indeed, a remarkable moment for me.

Let us listen to the words of God, the Second letter of Paul to Timothy, Chapter 2, verses 14-16.

14 Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. 15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 16 avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.

Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for giving us this beautiful and wonderful day. We thank you for hav-

ing brought the Gospel to this remote and corner land of Mizoram 118 years back. We thank you for giving us this Theological College for your ministry. Bless this institution and be the Head of it all the time.

Lord, on this special occasion, we have gathered here to listen to your words. Help us to understand the words which are about to be spoken.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ.

Last year in July, I was on tour to Kolkata. As I was not very well one day, I was lying in bed almost the whole day. I was thinking several things. I recollected that 2 years back I and my son were touring



around USA and Israel. Wherever we happened to be there in US we found that things were orderly. In Israel also, the same thing had happened except amongst the Palestinians.

In the meantime, I looked at Mizoram. In all the localities of the city, townships and villages all the Government and Non-Government Organisations appeared to have given utmost efforts for running their respective administrations smoothly. As a result of this, the local councils or village councils are making various announcement through public address system or loud speakers. YMAS are also having many things to be announced through loud speakers. MHIP is also doing the same thing. VDPs, Student Associations, Games and Sports Association and other organizations are also not exception to others. The availability of Ration Rice, Sugar, Kerosine Oil, LP Gas would also be announced through the same public address system. There are also many other announcements from Health & Family Welfare Department, Revenue Department and so on. Not only

these, even the church is also making such announcement of Hnatlang, Church Communal Works or the like in many places.

I again looked at the places outside Mizoram where there are no announcements through loud speakers. Are things happening disorderly in those places? No, not at all. Things go smoother than Mizoram.

We all know the problems and the social disorderliness we had because of the alcoholic beverages. Under this situation, the church and other NGOs orchestrated the campaign for prohibition. Therefore, utmost attempt had been made by the Government to wean away the people from the evil habit of drinking alcoholic beverages. Government fight against the alcoholic drinks by enforcing the MLTP Act, 1995. In short, we all the people as a member of church or NGOs, fight against alcoholic liquor. In spite of this, Does Mizoram become better than the places where prohibition law not existed or the places where the general public did not fight against al-



coholic liquor? The answer is 'No'. They do not have the problems what we have here.

Now, let us look into the matter relating to drugs abuse. We all know that a good number of lives have been lost due to over dosage or adverse effects of drugs. Drugs abuse could not now be restricted to one place or to a particular section of social strata, but spread to all places and to the whole section of the society in Mizoram. Why has this happened? Awareness campaigns may excite curiosity to the youths and lead them to drugs. The awareness campaign may also excite curiosity to the students and lead them to drugs.

It is a fact that some speakers in the church said that almost all the youth's boys in Aizawl had gone to drugs. Is so, why should not the listeners in the villages also do it since the youths and boys of Aizawl city are the role model to them.

From what we have discussed, it is clear that the manner we addressed the social problems has to be rethought and reconsidered.

From the Scripture of 2nd Corinthians Chapter 2, verses 14-16 we come to know that Christian belief is maintained in all its purity and that, false and misleading ideas are not allowed to enter in. This does not mean that there should not be new thought. I feel that this is a time to pause and reflect where we stand vis-a-vis the purpose for which we are elected to be the children of God. Why should not the infamous ATC rethought as to how the said social problems be addressed.

Many preachers and their followers are very much interested in talking about Satan and social evils. They have popularized Satan. They said that all the illness of both mental and physical are happening because of Satan. As they always presented Satan to be very powerful, some persons worshipped it. This is really unfortunate. It is, indeed, a talk that creates controversies rather than God's works.

Again, many preachers are very interested in talking about Corruption. They said that almost all the



RCC buildings in Mizoram were constructed only with disproportionate income of the owners. Do we believe it? They used to say sarcastically that all the people including the Pastors, Elders and all other leaders of the church are not trustworthy enough, not dependable and they accused them of possessing very doubtful integrity.

From what we have discussed, it is clear that there is a preaching that engages in criticism and gossip. And also, that many preachers have unhealthy interest in talking about others which only ruins and misleads those who listen. Many preachings are ungodly and empty which leads to ungodliness. Such preachings increased ungodliness in the heart and life of the listeners.

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Let us see again the words of God we have read - 14 Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. 15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 16 avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.

We are to preach the word of God which should be correctly handled. We are not to mishandle the word of God; not to twist it to fit what we think or what we want it to say, nor overemphasize the teachings.

May God bless the message.

This message was delivered at D. E. Jones Hall, Aizawl Theological College on the Indian Republic Day, January 26th, 2012.. Upa Lalbiakmawia Khiangte, a Church Elder at Laipuitlang, Aizawl, and a high Government Official, has been committing himself for social reform both in the Church and outside. We publish this article with the hope that it will motivate our thoughts on this line of concern.



DECLARATION
SCHEDULED FORM OF DECLARATION
FORM I (See Rule No. 3)

1. Title of the News Paper : Presbyterian Review
2. Language in which it is published : Mizo
3. Periodicity of its Publication : Quarterly
4. Retail selling price of the Newspaper
a) Annual subscription : ₹. 100.00
b) Per copy : ₹. 25.00
5. Publisher's Name : Rev. Prof. Vanlalchhuanawma
Nationality : Indian
Address : Aizawl Theological College
Durtlang, Mizoram
6. Place of Publication : Mission Veng, Aizawl
7. Name of the Printing Press : Synod Press
Where Printing is to be conducted : Mission Veng,
Aizawl, Mizoram
8. Name of the owner of the Printing Press : Upa F. Lalsangliana
9. Editor's Name : Rev. Dr. C. Lalhlira
Nationality : Indian
Address : Aizawl Theological College,
Durtlang, Mizoram
10. Owner's Name : Mizoram Presbyterian Church
Nationality : Indian
Address : Aizawl Theological College,
Durtlang

I, Rev. Prof. Vanlalchhuanawma, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated Aizawl
the 27th September, 2012

sd/-
REV. DR. VANLALCHHUANAWMA
Publisher



RNI Regd. No. 67377/96

To

If undelivered, Please Return to :

The Manager,
Presbyterian Review
Aizawl Theological College
Durtlang, Mizoram - 796001
INDIA

Published by Mr. F. Lalsangliana at Aizawl, Mizoram on behalf of Mizoram Presbyterian Church, Synod, and Printed at the Synod Press, Aizawl - 796 001, Mizoram