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PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW



COVER STORY

MIZORAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2023 AND THE CHURCH



Awareness Campaign



PRESBYTERIAN
REVIEW

is a quarterly
news magazine
concerning the life
and witness of the
Church in Mizoram
and other related
matters, published
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PRESBYTERIAN
REVIEW

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Editorial

This issue of *Presbyterian Review* addresses the concern of ethnic conflicts in Manipur. The Tribal Christians are suffering severe and painful wounds which may not be healed during their life time since the outbreak of ethnic-clashes in the state. Around 350 churches and quarters belonging to the Tribal Christians were burnt down to ashes, more than 4,550 of their houses were also burnt down and more than 150 lost their lives. The situation is still tense and the suffering of the Tribal Christians may not end easily.

Thanks to God for his providence and guidance, the 100th Synod Annual Meeting of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church was successfully held from December 5-10, 2023 at Mission Veng Presbyterian Church, Aizawl. We gratefully bring to you the report on the Synod Meeting. We hope that all the readers will go through the article with a grateful sentiment. Along with this, we include an interesting report of the partnering of various churches under the Synod to develop and meet the basic necessities of the smaller and poorer churches. We also bring an article on the role and contributions of the churches, especially the Mizoram Presbyterian Church

in the previously held State Legislative Assembly Election, 2023.

Sadly, two of our ministers left us during the period of this issue. We share the sorrow and grieve of the mourning families during their time of loss. May God comfort and guide them in their difficult times.

I hope and pray that the news, reports, article and obituaries we bring to you in this issue shall be beneficial and enrich your knowledge about the life and ministry of Mizoram Presbyterian Church.

Dear readers, as I have been transferred from Aizawl Theological College to Melriat Pastorate, this is the last issue that the Editorial Board is publishing during my tenure as the Editor. I wish the New Editorial Board members all the best for their future endeavour in serving God through this valuable organ of our Synod. *Antio sas!*

Rev. Dr. L.H. Rawsea
Editor

Synod NEWS

(October - December 2023)

1. Short Video Competition Results Announced

October 2: Announcement of results and distribution of prizes of Short Video Competition for children organized by the Children Media Committee were held at the Synfo Studio.

The theme of this competition is 'Obedience to Parents.' The video should not be shorter than 4 minutes and not longer than 5 minutes. Twenty-three churches submitted their videos, of which Biate Venglai Church won the first position. Salem Veng Church and Chhinga Veng South Church got second and third positions respectively. Consolation Prizes were awarded to five churches - Bawngkawn Shalom Church, Bethlehem Vengthlang Church, Chhinga Veng Church, Sateek Church and Serchhip Kawnpui Church.

2. Presbytery Meetings

October 5–8: The Second highest Church Court Meeting under the Mizoram Synod, the Presbytery Meetings were held in various Presbyteries of Mizoram Synod. There were also some Presbyteries who had to shift their meeting programmes due to certain unavoidable circumstances. As a tradition, Nomination Committee, Finance Committee and Sub-Pastoral Committee meetings were held on October 5 while the next two days,

i.e. October 6–7 were spent for Presbytery Business Sessions. The last day, October 8 (Sunday) was spent for ordination of elders, Lord's Supper and Valedictory Sermon by the Presbytery Moderators.

Synod Officers attended the following Presbytery Meetings:

- 1) Rev. Dr. C. Chawngmingliana, Moderator - Tuivawlrar Presbytery
- 2) Elder B. Lalhmunliana, Synod Secretary (Sr.) - Champhai South Presbytery
- 3) Rev. P.B. Mankima, Synod Secretary (Jr.) - Aizawl Central Presbytery
- 4) Rev. V.L. Luaia Hranleh, Finance Officer - Tuichangral Presbytery
- 5) Rev. P.C. Pachhunga, Finance Officer - Teirei Presbytery
- 6) Elder Dr. Lalnunsiam Colney, Statistician - Aizawl Hmarchhak Presbytery
- 7) Rev. C. Zorammawia, Senior Executive Secretary - Sakawrhmutuai Presbytery
- 8) Rev. Dr. K. Lallawmzuala, Executive Secretary - Lunglei West Presbytery

3. NEICC Prayer Meeting

October 15: The Annual Day of Prayer of the North East India Christian Council (NEICC) was observed in various churches under the Mizoram Synod. The main topics of prayer includes: 1. For the smooth and fruitful ministry of all the member churches of NEICC 2. For the fruitful ministry of NEICCYA and

NEICCWA 3. NEICC employees and their families. 4. For NEICC Office Bearers. 5. For the growth and development of Union Christian College. 6. Peace and tranquillity in Northeast India. 7. For NEICC Biennial Session 2024. 8. For Peace in Manipur.

NEICC was founded in 1937 as Assam Christian Council and in 1962 it was renamed 'North East India Christian Council' (NEICC). It was established to maintain unity among the churches in Northeast India and to promote understanding between the government and the church. It organizes consultations and addresses emerging problems as required to ensure church unity in Northeast India.

4. Synod HSS Celebrates NSS National Award



October 17: The Synod Higher Secondary School celebrated the National Award for NSS Programme Officer (2021-22) received by its Lecturer, Mr. Joseph Vanlalhruaia Sailo and the National Award for Best Unit (2021-22) at the Synod HSS Multipurpose Hall.

The function was chaired by Mrs. Zirkungi Chhakchhuak, Principal of Synod HSS. The Staff Welfare Committee presented ₹10,000/- to the Awardee, Mr. Joseph Vanlalhruaia Sailo. Afterwards, the Awardee Mr. Joseph expressed his sincere thanks for the celebration programme of the award which was the result of the efforts of the Principal, NSS colleagues and students and teachers. Rev. Dr. K. Lallawmzuala, Executive

Secretary, i/c Education, Mizoram Synod congratulated the students on the recent achievements of the Synod HSS. State NSS Officer Mr. F. Sangvuana and Program Officer Mr. C. Lalrintluanga also attended the function.

5. Annual Meeting of Pastors' Wives



October 19: The 43rd Annual Meeting of Mizoram Presbyterian Church Pastors' wives was held at Pi Zaii Hall, Synod Conference Centre. The programme was divided into two sessions: morning and afternoon. The morning service was chaired by Mrs. Zokimi (w/o. Rev. Dr. C. Chawngmingliana, Synod Moderator). Elder C. Ngurthantluanga gave the address on the theme, 'Pastors' Wives and Today's World.' The afternoon session was led by Dr. Zohmingliani Hrahse (w/o Rev. V.L. Luaia Hranleh, Executive Secretary). Mrs. Lalrinngheti Ralte taught about 'Food and Drink for Health' and Mrs. Zokimi released Pastor's Wives Directory.

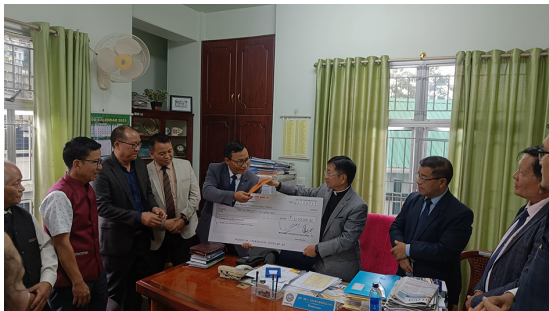
6. 27th Residential Choir Conductors' Training

October 24-27: The 27th Residential Choir Conductors' Training organized by the Synod Worship Committee was held at Pi Zaii Hall, Synod Conference Centre. Elder B. Lalhmunliana, Synod Secretary dedicated the training programme with prayer on 24th October 2023 evening. 31 conductors attended this training programme of which one was from UPC (NEI).



The closing ceremony was held on October 27, 2023 Saturday evening. It was chaired by Rev. Dr. K. Lallawmzuala, Executive Secretary. Rev. Dr. C. Chawngmingliana, Synod Moderator delivered a message and presented Certificates to the graduates. Mr. H. Lalrinmawia, Senior Music Instructor proposed vote of thanks and the Synod Moderator dismissed the function with benediction.

7. Gifts from Apex Bank



October, 26: The Mizoram Cooperative Apex Bank has donated ₹ 12.5 lacs from its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Fund to Rev. Dr. C. Chawngmingliana, Synod Moderator for the purchase of computers for the Presbyterian English Schools. This donation hand over programme was held at the Moderator's Room, Synod Office. Mr. Lalnunsanga, Chairman of Mizoram Cooperative Apex Bank had a short speech and after which he presented the donation to the Synod Moderator which was followed by a closing prayer.

The Chairman of Apex Bank was accompanied by the Bank officials while the Synod Moderator was accompanied by Elder B. Lalhmunliana, Synod Secretary, Rev. Dr. K. Lallawmzuala, Executive Secretary i/c PES and Mr. C. Lalrinliana, Supervisor of Schools.

8. Synod Sent Relief Material to Manipur



November 1: Mizoram Synod sent three trucks of relief material like clothes and bedding to the victims of Manipur conflict. The Synod granted ₹ 65 lakhs in July for the construction of houses for the victims of the Manipur conflict. These houses are being completed and occupied. The occupants were those people whose houses were burnt down and forced to flee with nothing but the clothes on their back. The Synod Officers' Meeting requested five Pastorates - Mission Veng, Mission Vengthlang, Venghnuai, Kulikawn and Tlangnuam Pastorates to donate clothes and bedding for these people. Additionally, some individuals and organisations also donated relief materials. The clothes and bedding were then sent to Manipur on November 1, 2023 (Tuesday) evening. Rev. Z. John Malsawma Colney, Synod Partnership Secretary flagged off the trucks.

The Synod had also delivered cooking utensils for 250 families who occupy the newly built houses in early November.

9. Oath Taking, Lamp Lighting & Graduation Day



November 2: College of Nursing, Synod Hospital, Durtlang celebrated its 50th Oath Taking, Lamp Lighting Ceremony and 19th Graduation Day at the Multipurpose Hall, Synod Hospital. Rev. Dr. C. Chawngmingliana, Synod Moderator graced the function as Chief Guest.

Dr. Lalthakima, Director greeted the gathering and Mrs. C. Lalrintluangi, Principal gave the reports. Mrs. Lalbiaksangi, Jt. Director, Nursing (Rtd.) conducted Oath taking and Lamp lighting ceremony and then handed over certificates to the outgoing students. Rev. Dr. C. Chawngmingliana, Synod Moderator distributed the awards and addressed the gathering. Rev. V.L. Luaia Hranleh, Executive Secretary offered intercessory prayer for the new graduates and new students. Elder Lalrinmuana, Coordinator, Synod Hospital proposed vote of thanks.

10. World Sunday School

November 5: World Sunday School Day, 2023 was successfully observed throughout the Presbyterian Churches in Mizoram. This year, the Adult Sunday School studied the 'Life and Works of the late Rev. V.L. Zaithanga' written by Rev. C. Rosiama. Intermediate–Senior departments studied the Life and Works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Rev. J.H. Zaikima while Beginner–Junior studied the

'Life and Works of Thomas, the Disciple' by Dr. Rosy Zoramthangi.

World Sunday School Day has been observed since 1910 on the recommendation of the World Sunday School Association. In Mizoram, it was first observed in the year 1944.

11. 223rd Lay Leaders' Training



November 14-17: The 223rd Lay Leaders' Training organized by Synod Multipurpose Training Center (SMTC) was held at SMTC.

The opening ceremony was chaired by Rev. Lalrinthara, Director of SMTC while Rev. C. Zoramawia, Senior Executive Secretary addressed the gathering and inaugurated the training programme. The Resource Persons were – Rev. Vanlaluata, Rev. Thangzauva, Rev. K Lalpiangthara, Rev. Lalrinthara and Elder Lalsawmliana, Synod Finance Manager. 41 Elders from 8 Presbyteries - Aizawl West, Aizawl West-II, Aizawl East, Tawi, Hmarphei, Hmarthlang, Chhimthlang and Tuivawlral joined the training. The closing ceremony was held on November 17, 2023 (Tuesday) evening. Rev. Dr. C. Chawngmingliana, Moderator distributed Certificates to the trainees and delivered a message.

12. ATC Day

November, 17: Aizawl Theological College (ATC) successfully celebrated its 58th College Day. The programme was led by Rev. Dr. C.

Chawngmingliana, Synod Moderator while Rev. Prof. Tlanghmingthanga, Principal greeted the gathering and gave general reports of the College. Rev. C. Zoramawia, Senior Executive Secretary and Elder B. Lalhmunliana, Synod Secretary (Sr) handed over the various awards and prizes. The Speaker, Elder Lalnundanga, Registrar, Mizoram University addressed the College Day theme “Education from Christian Perspective”. He preached about the changing world especially the challenges and responsibilities of Christians due to the New Education Policy. Rev. Prof. L.H. Rawsea, Dean of Graduate Studies gave vote of thanks and the programme came to an end with benediction from Rev. Dr. C. Vanlalhruaia.



ATC was established in 1907 by Rev. D.E. Jones (Zosaphluia). Presently, there are 204 students from three regular courses - BD, MTh, and DTh. The College is also offering some lay theological degree courses like BCS, DCS and DCPC.

13. PPPF General Meeting

November 23: The 53rd Presbyterian Pastor Pension Fellowship General Meeting was held at Pi Zaii Hall, Synod Conference Centre. The Meeting was divided into two sessions – the morning and the afternoon sessions.

The Morning Session was chaired by Rev. Dr. Zaihmingthanga, Chairman, PPPF while Rev. Dr. H. Vanlalauva, Secretary gave reports. A paper prepared by Rev. C. Chawngliana, Fin. Secretary, PPPF on the theme, ‘Good use of Pension Life’ was studied and discussed. In the afternoon, Rev. C. Rosiama, Vice Chairman of the PPPF led the function. It was spent for discussion, sharing and entertainment.

14. Presbyterian Women’s Day

November 24: The Mizoram Presbyterian Church Women’s Day was observed successfully throughout the Presbyterian Churches under Mizoram Synod. The topic studied on this day was ‘Good Christian Mother’ written by Elder B. Lalhmunliana, Synod Secretary.

15. Pastoral Care & Counselling Training



November 28: The 31st Intensive Residential Pastoral Care & Counselling Training for Pastors organized by Family Guidance & Counselling Center (FG&CC) on November

15-28 was concluded at Pi Zaii Hall, Synod Conference Centre. 24 Pastors from Mizoram Presbyterian Church and five Pastors from Myanmar attended the training programme.

Rev. V.L. Luaia Hranleh, Executive Secretary chaired the Graduation Service while Rev. R. Lalhmingthanga conducted the Final Evaluation. Rev. Dr. C. Chawngmingliana, Synod Moderator distributed Certificates to the trainees and delivered a message. He encouraged the trainees by saying, "Since counselling ministry is an important and challenging ministry, we must have to continue to rely on God for a more extensive and fruitful ministry."

16. Synod Meeting



December 5-10: The 100th Synod Meeting was held at Mission Veng Church. It was hosted by Mission Veng Pastorate. The

First day of the Meeting, December 5, 2023 (Tuesday) was set aside for Nomination Committee meeting. Business Session was held on December 6 – 9, 2023 between 9:00 AM–4:00 PM while there were public worship services in the evening. December 10, 2023 (Sunday) Morning Worship Service was meant for Pastor ordination and Pro. Pastor installation ceremony. The afternoon service was spent for the Lord's Supper and condolence of 2 deceased ministers. In the evening service, the Moderator preached his valedictory sermon. The spiritual theme of the Meeting was 'Following Jesus by taking up our Cross' basing on Luke 9:23.

17. Film Making Competition Results Announced

December 14: Result announcement and prize distribution service of the Christian Family Film Making Competition organised by the Family Guidance & Counselling Center (FG&CC) was held at Upper Republic Church Jubilee Hall. The program was led by Miss Lalrinfeli Sailo while Rev. Dr. Lalhawimawia, Committee Member, FG&CC offered opening prayer. Rev. V.L. Luaia Hranleh, Executive Secretary and two FG&CC Committee members – Elder R. Lalmalsawma and Elder Lalbiakmawia Khiangte distributed the prizes. Rev. Lalsangbera, Director, FG&CC proposed vote of thanks and Rev. J. Lalremsiama, Committee Member, FG&CC concluded the programme with benediction.

There were 37 churches who participated in the Film Making Competition. Mr. Andrew Laltlankima, Kolasib Diakkawn Church and Miss Lalmuankimi, Khatla East Church were awarded for 'Best Actor' and 'Best Actress' respectively.

Partnering with the Churches in Mizoram

Rev. H. Lalbiakhluna
Assistant Professor, ATC



*Bawlte Church constructed in partnership
with Ramthar North Church*



*Saipum Hmarveng Church constructed in partnership
with Dawrpui Church*



Pangbalkawn Hmar Veng Church constructed in partnership with Leitan South Church

One of the inimitable and distinctive features of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church (Synod) is rendering helping hands to the needy in different circumstances. The beautiful and important tradition which the Synod had rendered to persons, families and the Churches can be witnessed in several ways.

Under the Mizoram Presbyterian Church, there are 1,139 Local Churches. Some churches are large in members and self-support in terms of finance, building, material, etc. On the other hand, some churches are lesser in number of church member and they could not even meet the basic necessities of the church. Therefore,

remembering those small churches' condition, the Synod Meeting 2019 resolved to have partnership between bigger churches and smaller churches under the Synod so that smaller churches may also meet their needs in terms of finance, building, material, etc (Synod 2019 General 1).

The Synod Meeting entrusted the Synod Executive Committee (SEC) to take necessary action in this agenda. Then the Synod Executive Committee discussed in its meeting and selected 48 local churches to help each other for the first time. The requisition has been made by many

Churches and therefore the Synod Executive Committee met for numerous times and also make a resolution in order to fulfill the partnering of the Churches. Finally, the Synod Executive Committee selected 128 Local Churches to have partnering with churches under Mizoram Synod (Synod 2019 Gen. 1; SEC 284:28 of Feb. 2020; OM 4:10 of Feb. 24,2020; OM 15:17 of Aug. 24,2020; SEC 286:45 of Sept. 2020; Synod 2020 Gen 21; SEC 290:15 of Feb 2021; OM 6:15 of Mar. 17,2021; OM 20:20 of Oct. 30,2021; OM 23:5 of Nov. 23,2021; OM 7:25 of Apr. 20,2022; OM 19:28 of Sept. 6,2022). The selected churches and their partners are as follows:

Sl. No.	Church	Pastorate	Partner
1	Lungzarh̄tum	Siaha	Mission Veng
2	Siahatla	Siaha	Chanmari
3	Thingsat	Sakawrdai	Khatla
4	Lamherh	Suangpuilawn	Zarkawt
5	Forest Veng B/C	Tuipuibari	Electric Veng
6	Persang	Tuipuibari	Bungkawn
7	Tuipuibari Venghlui	Tuipuibari	Chhinga Veng
8	Ralvawng	Zobawk	Chaltlang
9	Hliappui Hmar Veng	Hliappui	Mission Vengthlang
10	Changzawl	Hliappui	Hunthar
11	Teirei Forest	Damparengpui	Venghlui
12	Tlangnuam P/S	Damparengpui	Lunglei Chanmari
13	Hmar Veng	Damparengpui	Ramhlun Venglai
14	Khawhnai	Damparengpui	Chaltlang South
15	Tuirum	Damparengpui	Dinthar
16	Dampa Zodin	Damparengpui	Ramhlun East
17	Ch̄ekawn	Khawlailung Dinthar	Saron Veng
18	Ratu Chhim Veng	Ratu	Republic Veng
19	Buarpui	Buarpui	Kanan
20	Lungchem	Buarpui	Ramhlun
21	Tlangsam North	Champhai Bethel	Tuikual
22	Chhiahtlang Bazar	Chhiahtlang Kawnveng	Chawnpui
23	Rengdil Dinthar B/C	Rengdil	Aizawl Venglai
24	K. Sarali	Kawrthah	Zemabawk
25	Dinthar	N. Vanlaphai Damdawi Veng	Zotlang

Sl. No.	Church	Pastorate	Partner
26	Zawlpui	Zawlnuam	Bawngkawn
27	Zonun Veng B/C	Zawlnuam	Bawngkawn Chhimveng
28	Zawlnuam Vengthlang	Zawlnuam	Durtlang
29	College Veng P/S	Zawlnuam	Tuikhuahtlang
30	Saipum Hmar Veng	North Hlimen	Dawrpui
31	Sethawn	Thingdawl	Khatla East
32	Lungsai	Sateek	Chhinga Vengthlang
33	Lungsen	Lungsen	Kolasib Diakkawn
34	Lungsen Hmar Veng	Lungsen	Khatla South
35	Phairuankai	Lungsen	Armed Veng
36	Chhumkhum	Lungsen	Chanmari West
37	Hmar Veng	Pangbalkawn	Leitan South
38	Meidum Vengthar	Pangbalkawn	Madanriting
39	Hmunzawl	Khawlailung	Kolasib Venglai
40	S. Vanlaiphai	Sangau	Vaivakawn
41	Rawlbuk	Sangau	Republic Vengthlang
42	Sangau	Sangau	Aizawl Kohhran
43	S. Lungpher	Sangau	Laipuitlang
44	Mampui	Lawngtlai Chanmari	Dawrpui Vengthar
45	Khawmawi	Lawngtlai Chanmari	Serchhip Kawnpui
46	Sairang Vengthar	Sairang	Ramthar Veng
47	Tipa	Tipa	Champhai Vengthlang
48	Laki	Tipa	Bethlehem Venglai
49	Marpara North	Marpara North	Kulikawn
50	Vaṭhuampui	Vaṭhuampui	Bethlehem
51	Chamdur Project	Vaṭhuampui	College Veng
52	Tuichawngtlang	Vaṭhuampui	Leitan
53	Chamdurtlang	Vaṭhuampui	Zonuam
54	Bungtlang South	Bungtlang South	Chanmari W Hmar Veng
55	Kawrthindeng	Bungtlang South	Champhai Kahrawt
56	Saibawh	Bungtlang South	Keifnag
57	M. Kawnpui	Bungtlang South	Salem Veng
58	Bungtlang South Bazar	Bungtlang South	Champhai Venglai
59	Saizawh East	Bungtlang South	Upper Republic
60	Darnamtlang	Bungtlang South	Ramhlun North
61	Saibawh B/C	Bungtlang South	Ramhlun Vengthar
62	Hmunnuam B/C	Bungtlang South	Venghnuai
63	Damdep II	Damdep	Ramhlun Vengthlang

Sl. No.	Church	Pastorate	Partner
64	Parva II	Damdep	ITI Vengchhak
65	Damdep I B/C	Damdep	Sihphir
66	Parva I B/C	Damdep	Champhai Bethel
67	Siminasora B/C	Damdep	Tlangnuam
68	Khanthum	Mamit Hmunsam	Lily Veng
69	Chungtlang	Rawpuichhip	Dam Veng
70	Kanghmun S B/C	Thenzawl Field Veng	Tuithiang
71	Thaidawr	Thaidawr	Zemabawk North
72	Zomuanthlang	Thaidawr	Kulikawn West
73	Thaidawr Tlangveng	Thaidawr	Model Veng
74	Mualthum B/C	Thaidawr	Thakthing
75	Pukzing	Pukzing	ITI
76	Marpara	Pukzing	Bethlehem Vengthlang
77	West Phulpui	Pukzing	Durtlang North
78	Pukzing Vengthar	Pukzing	Tuikual North
79	Buarchep	Phainuam	Ramhlun Vengchung
80	Zawlpui	Zawlpui	Champhai Vengthlang
81	Zawlpui South	Zawlpui	Jubili
82	Zawlpui North	Zawlpui	Ramthar Tlangveng
83	Putlungasih	Zawlpui	Dawrpui Vengthar West
84	Belthei	Zawlpui	Lungmual
85	Kauchhuah	Zawlpui	Saikhamakawn
86	New Vuakmual B/C	Zawlpui	Ainawn
87	Bolia	Zawlpui	Bawngkawn Shalom
88	Chawngte P	Chawngte P	Champhai Vengsang
89	N. Chaltlang	Bukpui	Ramhlun Vengchhak
90	Bunghmun North	Kawrtethawveng	Armed Veng North
91	Lalnutui	Chawngte L	Lungmual Vengthlang
92	Lungrang South	Chawngte P	Falkland
93	Hmunlai	Chawngte P	New Serchhip
94	Saizawh West	Chawngte P	Bungkwawn Vengthar
95	Buknuam	Chawngte P	Chawlhmun
96	Mautlang	Chawngte P	Khatla North
97	South Sabual	Darlung	Sairang
98	Bawlte	Darlung	Ramthar North
99	Zohmun	Zohmun	Hlimen
100	Darlak West B/C	Tuidam	Seling
101	Tuipanglui	Tuidam	Armed Veng South

Sl. No.	Church	Pastorate	Partner
102	Bawngva	Tuidam	Champhai Kanan
103	Zokhawthar Vengthar	Zokhawthar	Maubawk West
104	Lungsei B/C	Sialsuk	Ruantlang
105	Chhipphir	Thenzawl Vengthlang	Serchhip Bethel
106	Pukupui	Lunglei Bazar	East Lungdar
107	Lily Veng B/C	Kanhmun	Chhinga Veng East
108	Thinghlun Vengthar B/C	Kanhmun	Kawnpui Venglai
109	Kanhmun Venglai	Kanhmun	Saitual
110	Kanhmun North	Kanhmun	Lily Veng North
111	Luimawi	Kanhmun	Shillong Mizo
112	Vaseikai	Damdep	Lengpui
113	Thingkah	Lawngtlai	Aibawk
114	Bethel Kohhran	Lawngtlai	Sihphir Venglai
115	AOC Veng	Lawngtlai	Bethlehem North
116	Hnahthial South	Hnahthial	Champhai Vengthlang N
117	Pangzawl	Hnahthial	Thingsulthliah
118	Tuipui D	Hnahthial	Serchhip Bazar
119	Thiltlang	Hnahthial	Darlawn
120	Rotlang East	Hnahthial	Kolasib Tumpui
121	Thingfal	Tawipui Noth II	Thenzawl Field Veng
123	Minpui	Tawipui Noth II	Lunglei Venglai
124	Tawipui South	Tawipui Noth II	Electric Vengthlang
125	Hmawngkawn	Baktawng	Serchhip Vengchung
126	Kananthar	Suarhliap	Kolasib Tumpui
127	Damdiai	Suarhliap	Sakawrtuichhun
128	Chuhvel Chhimveng	Suarhliap	Melriat

As per the resolution of the Synod Executive Committee, the partnering churches can make arrangements in which how they are going to pursue their partnership. This partnership will be for five years term. It can be seen from the proposal of the small churches, the common needs are construction of Church Building, Church Hall and Sunday School Hall, Renovation of Building, Compound Fencing, Retaining Wall, Church materials, etc. Interestingly, when the Synod Executive Committee made an intimation to the churches, some churches have already started

their partnership and some churches have accomplished their mutual partnership, while some churches are on-going process.

The resolution made by the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram is highly appreciable and noticeable. Many churches are blessed with a beautiful church building, hall, material, etc. which are really difficult to construct or buy through their own hard working. It will be much more beneficial and valuable for small churches if the Synod stress more on this kind of partnership.

Mizoram Legislative Assembly Election 2023 And The Church

Rev. Dr. Lalawmpuia Hauhnar
Associate Professor, ATC



MPF Annual General Meeting

Introduction

Election is part and parcel of democracy. It is by and through election that government is formed in a democratic state. Such being the case, election is very important in a country like India. As per the decision of the Election Commission of India, legislative assembly elections were held in five states of the Indian union in the recent past such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram. The ruling party in the central government, i.e. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) held its head high in the first three states where Hindi is a lingua franca whereas the Indian National Congress (INC) formed a government in Telangana. It is the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM), a very young regional party that won the assembly

election which was held on 7th November, 2023 in the state of Mizoram with 27 seats out of 40. Normally one political party ruled the state for two consecutive terms in the political history of the state of Mizoram. On the basis of this, there was an expectation from some corners that the Mizo National Front (MNF) that ruled the previous term might have a chance to go for the second term. However, they could not manage to do so probably because of anti incumbency wave and the intensifying hope of the people on the ZPM.

Political parties, their slogans and the verdict

The powerful influence of the BJP is quite apparent in several states of the country. This is true to some states in north east India

too as the party can form a government either by its own or in alliance with other political parties. As of now, the BJP is ruling in 12 states and is part of the government in 4 states in India. However, the case is different in the state of Mizoram! The party had a single seat in the previous assembly term from the area of minority in the southern part of the state. As they tried every nerve to be a part of the government in the state in the last election, many prominent leaders and star campaigners of the party from the central government repeatedly visited the state during the election campaign with a particular focus on the southern part of the state where they had a high expectation to win among the Maras and the Chakmas. They were wooing the voters with a promise of development and direct funding to the autonomous district councils. They eventually got two seats from the minority areas in the southern part of the state.

The Mizo National Front (MNF) had no new and striking slogan to the voters in this election as they promised that they would continue to implement their flagship programme, i.e. Socio Economic Development Programme (SEDP) which they had partly implemented in the previous term. They projected themselves to be a Mizo nationalist party and claimed that they did very well in terms of safeguarding the boundary of the state. What is more, they considered that the accommodative nature of the party which was shown to the ethnic brothers and sisters of the Mizo people such as the refugees from Myanmar and the internally displaced people or migrants from Manipur would work in favour of their party in the election. Surprisingly, they were more or less silent in some of the slogans they had popularly made in the 2018 election such as bamboo project, construction of flyover bridges in the city of Aizawl and zero traffic jam, probably because they had no sign of effective implementation of those promises



Queue for Voting

in the last term. With a nationalist card and some developmental works amidst covid19 pandemic, boundary problems, issues of refugees, spread of African Swine Fever (ASF) and other issues, the MNF party had a high expectation to continue their second term. However, it was only with 10 seats (9 men and 1 woman) in the last election that they ended their tenure as the ruling party.

The Indian National Congress as a national party gave emphasis on its commitment to freedom of religion and peaceful coexistence of different cultures and languages in their election campaign. They projected themselves to be a minority friendly party not only in a state level but also in a national level as a whole. They were trying to persuade the voters by claiming that their party President has a financial acumen and credibility that would make the financial position of the state in a good shape. They promised to implement a meaningful programme for the upliftment of the economy of the state by introducing ‘Tang Puina’ which means a help given to those who sincerely work. Even though the party was considered to be one of the big players in the triangular fight in the last election along with MNF and ZPM, they got a single seat only.

The main slogan of the Zoram People’s Party (ZPM) in the election was “Kalphung Thar, Mipui Sawrkar” which can roughly



be translated as “New System, Government of the People.” They repeatedly said that the foregoing governments were ‘party governments’ which means governments mainly meant for members of the party. They said in this situation that the government they would form will be an inclusive government which is meant for all citizens irrespective of party affiliation and identity. They also claimed that the state is very much in need of a new system where we can see sustainable development and good governance. In addition, all the candidates made a public promise that they would not indulge in corruption. As the party is comparatively new, they got some new faces in their party along with some experienced politicians by drawing candidates from sports, entertainment, academics, etc. and skillfully publicized their proposed programmes and agenda. It seems that the party got a good recognition and support of many people who have no party affiliation. They managed to have 27 MLAs, out of which 2 were women in the last election and therefore formed the government in the state.

Besides the political parties mentioned above, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) also had candidates in some constituencies. However, they could not yet manage to be a popular player in the last election. In addition to those candidates from recognized political parties, there were certain independent

candidates who fought the last election in some constituencies. Some of them were self style spiritual leaders, prophets and prophetess who claimed themselves to have been called by God for the rise of novel administration in the land. It can be observed that some of them were greatly shaped and steered by misguided understanding of biblical prophecy, apocalyptic literature and election theology. It is not a new thing that several predictions were made by some self style prophets from different corners which the election result that was announced on 4th December, 2023 proved wrong! There was not even a single independent candidate who won in the last election.

Role and Contribution of the Church

One of the most interesting features of the election history in Mizoram is the significant role played by the church in the political life of the people. In spite of the fact that the theory of separation of church and state is subscribed by some people in the state, there has been a mutual connection between church and politics in a practical level. In other words, the church has played an important role in the political life of the state in and through different areas. It may be recalled that it was largely the church that brought the MNF and the government of India to sit together so as to bring peace and harmony in the land in the middle of the 1980’s. In fact, the church has been quite vigilant to the life and activities of the government particularly when it comes to the issues pertaining to the socio-religious life of the people.

The Mizoram Presbyterian Church, as the biggest church in the state that consists of about half of the population of the state, has made enormous contribution to the politics of the land. It has made several resolutions in the Synod meetings to make a positive change and development in the political

life of the people. The Synod Social Front (SSF) which is one of the committees under the church has made awareness campaigns, published books and booklets, coordinated many programmes and activities in order to do away with dirty politics and therefore to bring about good politics in the land.

As per the decision of the Synod meeting in 2022, the Synod Social Front organized a series of political awareness campaign in view of the MLA election in 2023. The campaigners selected for this campaign actively carried out their task by visiting many churches across the state. It may also be mentioned that the Mizoram People's Forum (MPF) which is a conglomerate of churches and civil societies has made several programmes for the politics of the state. The points of agreement signed by both the MPF and political parties were used as yardsticks in the election campaign, along with the election model code of conduct of the Election Commission of India (ECI). It can be observed that the people of the state are well aware of the meaning of politics and the duties and responsibilities of the citizens in the election owing to the awareness campaigns organized by the church and the MPF.

Another important area where the church played an active role in the last election was the change of date for counting of votes. The date appointed by the ECI for the same was 3rd December, 2023 (Sunday). Sunday is in fact not only a holiday in the state, but also a day when the church has its important worship programmes and activities. Based on the conservative view of the people of the church on strict observance of Sunday, the Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC) which is a committee of different churches in the state repetitively brought its plea to the authorities of election to change the date for counting of votes. The same request was repeatedly brought to the notice



MPF Political Awareness Campaign

of the election office by the NGO Coordination Committee both in Aizawl and Delhi. It may be mentioned that political parties are also in favour of the change of date for counting of votes from Sunday to some other day. While the ECI was adamant for quite a long time, it finally changed the date to 4th December, 2023 (Monday) that helped the state to dodge further controversy.

Conclusion

There are certain remarkable things that took place in the last election. The election was as usual quite peaceful compared to the election process in other states of the country. It is obvious that the church is highly responsible for this incredible fact. The MPF and other NGOs should also be given credit as they performed very well for the good of the people. The large and active participation of the people in terms of casting votes was noteworthy. This shows that the people in general are conscious of their duty as responsible citizens of the country. While the previous term had no female member in the legislative assembly of the state, the last election brought three female members to the assembly, and one of them has become a cabinet minister. As the ZPM that formed the new government has a slogan of new system and government of the people, the people of the state are keen to see their performance for the positive growth and development of the state.

Report of the 100th Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod Meeting

Rev. V. Khai Rodinga
Assistant Professor, ATC



The 100th Synod Meeting of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church was hosted by the Mission Veng Pastorate at Mission Veng Presbyterian Church, Aizawl during December 5-10, 2023. There were as many as 2174 delegates from various parts of Mizoram, India and abroad. Among these, 1338 delegates were permanent members while 836 were elected members. The Synod was blessed with the presence of 6 delegates from other denominations within Mizoram and 25 delegates from her sister Synods.

The theme of the Synod Meeting was 'Following Jesus by taking up our Cross' basing on Luke 9:23 which was preached by Rev. John Raldosanga, i/c Bethlehem Venglai Pastorate.

The Office Bearers of the Synod Meeting were:

Moderator	: Rev. R. Vanlalnghaka
Secretaries	: Elder B. Lalhmunliana (Sr.) Rev. P.B. Mankima (Jr.)
Finance Officers	: Rev. V.L. Luaia Hranleh Rev. P.C. Pachhunga
Statistician	: Elder Dr. Lalnunsiamia Colney
Senior Exe. Secretary	: Rev. C. Zoramawia
Executive Secretary	: Rev. Dr. K. Lallawmzuala

Nomination Concern:

As per the resolution of the Synod Nomination Committee, the Synod Meeting, 2027 will be hosted by Ramhlun North Pastorate at



Ramhlun North Presbyterian Church, Aizawl. The previous Synod Meetings resolved to hold the subsequent Meetings at Mission Vengthlang Church (2024), Zarkawt Church (2025) and Chanmari Church (2026).

The Next Synod Meeting will be hosted by Mission Vengthlang Pastorate at Mission Vengthlang Church, Aizawl during November 29 – December 8, 2024. The following persons will be the Office Bearers for 2024 Synod Meeting:

- Moderator : Rev. R.C. Lalnghakliana
- Secretaries : Rev. P.B. Mankima (Sr.)
Elder Vanlalsawma Siakeng (Jr.)
- Finance Officers : Rev. V.L. Luaia Hranleh
Rev. P.C. Pachhunga
- Statistician : Rev. H. Laltlanthanga
- Senior Exe. Secretary : Rev. C. Zoramawia
- Executive Secretary : Rev. Dr. K. Lallawmzuala

The Nomination Committee chalked out the programme of the next Synod Meeting in which the spiritual theme ‘Preparing the way of the Lord’ will be preached by Rev. C. Sapkaia, i/c Khatla Pastorate. The Committee also appointed delegates to various sister Synod and Assembly Meetings. Besides these, auditors to different Synod departments and the dates of different Synod board meeting were approved.

Pastoral Concern:

As a common practice, the Synod Meeting approved the transfer and posting of

Ministers/Pastors, ordination of Pastors, installation of Probationary Pastors and creation of new Pastorates etc. The Meeting transferred 105 Pastors/Ministers to new posts. Meanwhile, 18 Probationary Pastors were ordained in the Meeting and 18 persons were commissioned as Probationary Pastor, out of which one is from Tangphai Provisional Synod and 5 were candidates from Mission Board, including 2 Field Worker Pastors. At the same time, 7 senior Pastors get their superannuation pension. As a token of appreciation for their valuable services rendered to the church, certificates of appreciation were given to them. The meeting also granted 12 Pastors to pursue higher studies and subsequently 4 Pastors will complete their higher studies next year.

The Synod Meeting resolved to create 5 new Pastorates within Mizoram and another one Pastorate outside Mizoram. The Meeting also accepted ‘Unity’ basing on John 17:11(b) as the Pastoral theme for the year 2024.

General Concerns:

The Business Session was scheduled to be held from 6-9 December, 2023 (Wednesday-Saturday) between 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Since the Business Sessions could not be finished as scheduled, the Session continued after Saturday public worship service till 9:30 PM. There was a total of 52 general agenda in this Synod meeting, of which 37 were put up by various presbyteries while 15 agenda were put up by different Synod departments



and committees. The following were some of the resolutions made in the Meeting:

1. The Synod Executive Committee was entrusted to take initiative to combat and alleviate illegal trade in the state.
2. A proposal to revise the recruitment rules for Probationary Pastor was approved.
3. The Synod also approved the proposal to publish a lesser spelling mistake in the Sunday School lesson book and Nilai leh Beihruah Thupui Bu (a lesson book for Wednesday evening services and Christian Endeavour Month). All the concern departments were entrusted to take necessary action.
4. All Local Churches were also charged with ensuring the tradition of the Synod in relation to the frequency of worship services.
5. A proposal for the celebration of Mizo festivals in a more meaningful and beneficial way was approved and the SEC was entrusted to do the needful.
6. The SEC was entrusted to take necessary steps to promote reading good books.
7. The SEC will take measures to combat selling of contract works under the state government.
8. A proposal to give Certificate to re-elected ordained elders was approved.
9. The Synod also approved to discontinue a member representation of presbyteries in the Synod Board/Committees for two consecutive terms from 2025-2027 Committee term.
10. A proposal to take measure to prevent the increasing number of broken families in the state was approved and SEC will do the needful.
11. The SEC was entrusted in relation to the preservation of traditional Mizo Christian songs (Lengkhawm hla) in audio.
12. A proposal for the nature and functions of the Council of Churches in Mizoram was approved and the SEC was entrusted to proceed with necessary action.
13. The Synod approved to make cooperation with rehabilitation or recovery homes for people who have been released from prison.

Ethnic Problems in Manipur

Rev. P.B. Zosaphara
Consultant
Tangphai Provisional Synod



One of the burning issues in today's society is ethnicity and related issues. Ethnic problems are not restricted to any particular region or society, but world-wide phenomenon. Epoch making events were taking place all across the globe especially after the Second World War: in terms of development and modernization; eradication of diseases, spread of education, economic and political developments. The same epoch has witnessed the rise in repressive authoritarianism, radicalism, fundamentalist doctrines, gruesome interracial and interethnic bloodsheds; fortified by western weaponry, and assisted by flagrant manipulation of mass media by the majority group-which have vastly expanded their reach in their favour.

The on-going ethnic problems in Manipur may appear as a one-off incident - avoidable and easily resolvable. However, it is so deep rooted, complicated and systematic. Numerous news write-ups have been circulating the social media - print as well as electronic, for the past seven months or so; but even reputed journalists are often perplexed and unable to place the issue into context as they lack a firm grasp of the nuances of the ground realities. Therefore, this article is written with the burden of trying to do justice to the crucial topic; which may be considered as only a bird's eye-view.

History of Systematic Exploitation

A number of political scientists argue that the root causes of ethnic conflict do not involve

ethnicity per se but rather institutional, geo-political, and economic factors. The concept of ethnic war is sometimes misleading when in fact the wars between them that occur are often the result of political decisions. The current ethnic problem in Manipur is an indication of deep ethnic, ideological, territorial and historical divides a result of a long-standing discrimination against the tribals.

Since the ancient period till date, the hills and valley of Manipur were two distinct socio-political and geographical entities. Tribal settlements in the hills pre-date the colonial administration, and a unique justice system and land-ownership under tribal chieftainship existed. For administrative convenience and security, the colonial government forcibly merged the hills and valleys of Manipur into a single administrative unit. The merger of these two disparate entities prepared the ground for intermittent conflict and development disparities between the hills and the valleys. The relations between the hill areas and the valley areas continued to be unsympathetic. Which was characterized by sporadic raids and counter-raids. It is worth noting that the Maharaja of Manipur was not able to exert or establish his rule in the hills at any point in history.

Disparities and Negligence

It goes without saying that there is a sharp contrast between the hills and the valleys in regard to development in the state. The prevalence of poverty is much higher in the hills than in the valley. There is severe inequality in terms of population, literacy rate, infant mortality rate, and expectancy of life at birth, poverty, per capita income, electricity consumption and road length, Even the Manipur reservation of Vacancies in Post and Services for ST/SC Act, 1976 has been kept inoperative for one reason or the



other. State government has also repeatedly failed to implement ST quota/reservation based on the ration of tribal population.

Furthermore, the demand for the extension of the Sixth Schedule to the Hills Areas of Manipur in the year 1974, which was reiterated in the years 1978, 1983, 1990, 2002 and 2003 has always been out-rightly rejected by the Meitei dominated State-government.

Since the valley people control the government and bureaucracy, the hilly areas have been devoid of development, especially with respect to public infrastructure. All government institutions are concentrated in the valleys. The concentration of public institutions like Central Agricultural University (CAU), Central Institute of Plastics Engineering and Technology (CIPET), Manipur University (MU), Regional Institute of Medical Sciences

(RIMS), Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS), National Institute of Technology (NIT), Manipur Institute of Technology (MIT), Institute of Bio-resources and Sustainable Development (IBSD), Manipur Technical University, National Sports Academy, National Sports University. Sport Authority of India, etc. in Imphal is an example of this phenomenon. Even Tribal Institutions, such as the Indira

Gandhi Tribal University are based in Imphal valley. Political power, which determines development priorities, has always been denied to the tribals.

Yet again there is a biased allocation of funds for development works and infrastructure in the Hills and Valleys. Many villages in the Hills are enduring without basic health care services, water supply and electricity.

Manipur Budget Allocation

Year	Budget (Rupees in Crore)	Valley (in Cr.)	Hills (in Cr.)
2017-2018	5,000	4,892	108
2018-2019	4,900	4,750	150
2019-2020	5,000	4,880	120
2020-2021	7,000	6,959	41
Total	21,900	21,481	419

Land Distribution	Valley 10%	Hills 90%
Population	Valley 60%	Hills 40%
MLA Representation	Valley 40	Hills 20

“Manipur’s Budget is beautiful, but how would the Hill Areas grow?” laments Alfred Arthur, MLA 44ST

It is also evident from the budgetary allocations of the valley and the hills that the Hill people have been discriminated against for decades, and have suffered innumerable. Though the tribals represent more than 40% of the total population, they remain unable to play any substantial role in the decision-making process in the States, as only seats are reserved for tribals out of the total 60 seats in the State Legislative Assembly. Additionally, the Meiteis have continued to sabotage the delimitation exercise in the Manipur State out of feat that the delimitation will proportionately increase tribal representation in the State Legislative Assembly. As per 2011 census, each of the tribal MLAs from the Hill

areas of Manipur represents 1,005 sq. km and 55,000 persons each, while their counterparts in the valley represents 56sq. km and 43,000 persons respectively.

Land and Economic Interest in the Hills

Land occupies the most prominent place in this conflict. Meiteis have traditionally lived in the valleys of Manipur which is more prosperous than the hills that makes up about two percent of the state’s geographical area. The Zo ethnic people live in their pristine traditional way, neglected and unaffected by the wind of change. Until recently, the forest and hills were foreign to the Meiteis and the State government never had any interest in developing them. However, the strategic importance of these border areas



under the present Central government's Act East Policy and its possible significance for long-term trade had seen the rewriting and imposition of majoritarian history and culture upon these once far-removed hill areas. Further, the claim to the hills areas was rationalised in media outlets through a distorted interpretation of historical data and records maintained during the Lushai Expedition and prior.

Anti-Tribal Three Bills (2015)

On 31 August 2015, the Manipur legislature passed three controversial Bills – the Protection of Manipur People Bill, the Manipur Land Reforms (Seventh Amendment Bill) and the Manipur Shops and Establishment (Second Amendment) Bill, which directly attempted to take control over lands in the Hill areas. Thereby, authorising the State government to acquire land rights and titles. The hill tribes were gravely apprehensive of the Bills as they intrude on their land rights. They led to widespread anger and protest.

Illegitimate Demand for ST

The Meitei community is now demanding Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to monopolize all available privileges and resources in a total sense, which will nullify all legal protections that tribals currently possess. Moreover, the status and position of the tribals will be further reduced in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, as the Meiteis will then be able to contest in all constituencies. This will ensure their total majoritarian domination of Manipur. The tribals are rather underdeveloped as compared to the valley people that allowing for land transfers by granting the ST status to the Meiteis, would open the floodgates and tribals would become landless in no time.

On the contrary, the State government has declared Reserved Forest, Protected Forest, Wildlife Sanctuaries, National Parks, and Wetlands over a majority of tribal lands without the 'knowledge' and 'consent' of the tribal land-owners. This is a serious and unconditional procedural lapse. If all

the proposed Reserved Forests, Protected Forests, Wildlife Sanctuaries and other declarations are implemented the tribals will have less than 10% of their present area for their habitation and livelihood.

There are other narratives about the potential plunder of resources as a Meitei intellectual told the media that Manipur is floating on a bed of oil, uranium, platinum and precious stones. Many reputed officials also opined that the main reason for the present conflict is the attempt to take over the land and minerals embedded in the hills.

False Narratives

The long-standing lack of development and disparities is compounded by the Scheduled Tribe (ST) status demand by the Meiteis to monopolize all available privileges and resources in a total sense, which will nullify all legal protections that tribals currently possess. This has made the tribals highly insecure. This is aggravated by aggressive State's campaign of demonising the entire Kuki-Zo community through false propaganda by referring them as infiltrators, drug peddlers, narco-terrorists and forest encroachers or illegal immigrants. Ms Brinda Thounaojam, former IPs officer, in her interview, unequivocally blamed the chief Minister Biren Singh for starting the slogan that all Kukis (Zo) are Burmese and narco-terrorists, which has affected the mind-set of the Meitei people towards Kuki-Zo.

Brinda Thounaojam states as follows: "Since its resurgence, the BJP has worked to provide the Meitei community significant electoral positions while marginalising other religious and ethnic minorities. As a result, ethnic politics have become more intensified in Manipur. Since 2017, BJP karyakartas and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSSO) pracharakas have been on an ambitious mission to incite the valley's Vaishnavite

Meitei to assert their Hindutva politics against religious minorities..."

In response to the ST demand by the Meiteis, the All Tribal Students Union Manipur (ATSUM) called for a peaceful solidarity March scheduled for May 3, 2003 in all the hill areas of Manipur. Valley based Meitei organizations reacted to this call by organizing counter-blockades in the valley areas the evening before the peaceful rally. The rally ended peacefully at 1:05 pm after a memorandum was submitted to the Hon'ble President and Hon'ble Prime Minister of India through the Deputy Commissioner.

The immediate spark began when some Meitei miscreants started burning the Anglo-Kuki Centenary gate at Leisang Village, Churachandpur, which is one of the most important symbols of the tribals' resistance against British rule. The radical Meitei mob also assaulted returning rally-goers who resided in the border areas of Churachandpur district. The Mob instantaneously carried out a systematic pre-organized arson and extermination in the capital city Imphal and other valley districts. Having identified tribal home, churches, hostels, educational institutions, and even paying-guests rented a month before the ethnic cleansing through official and unofficial means, the organized mobs were able to immediately identify all tribal residence in a matter of hours. This ensured the targeted destruction of all tribal homes, properties and places of worship without any hindrance. The outbreak of violence is deliberately targeted against the Zo ethnic people. Hundreds have been openly lynched to death in the open in the Imphal valley, and the death toll has been on a constant rise, while perpetrators of the violence enjoy unbridled impunity. Homes, churches, and schools were set on fire and destroyed. Not even women and children were spared. Many family members are

simply recorded as missing, with no tribal family harbouring the hope of them returning alive. Central and State tribal government officials, tribal civil servants posted in Imphal and tribal representatives (MLAs) were also not spared

The ethnic problem in Manipur can safely be understood, as state-sponsored ethnic cleansing, which is direct outcome of the majority Meitei's long-standing attempt to grab tribal lands through the subversion of their constitutional safeguards and protections in Manipur. They are willing to pursue this end at all costs, and as this ethnic cleansing has shown, even at the cost of exterminating the whole Zo community.

Playing the Hindu Card

In a bizarre and devious ploy, Meiteis are propagating and projecting their Hindu-ness in an attempt to influence the emotional support of the national Hindu population, who are often otherwise not aware of the complexities of the ethnic contentions. However, it is impossible to forget their long history of persecuting Hindus from around the nation. The Meiteis traditionally, are proud followers of the Sanamahi religion (their ethnic animist religion) before their mass conversion into Vaishnavite-Hinduism. Adherents of the Sanamahi religion are predominantly anti-Hindu and proudly champion what they call the "Kangleipak Flag' or "Salai Taret Firal (Flag of the Seven Clans)" against the National Flag of India. The rise of militant Meitei-ism is closely linked to the revivalism and resurgence of their Sanamahi religion. Biren Singh, CM and Leishemba Sanajaoba, MP (Rajya Sabha) are committed to the retraction of Sanamahi faith rather than promoting Hinduism in Manipur.

In a case of blatant xenophobia, extremist

Meitei outfits have banned the screening of Hindu films as early as the 1980s. The much-hyped Bollywood movie 'Mary Kom' could not be screened in Manipur despite Mary Kom hailing from the State! They have also banned the teaching and use of Hindu language since the 1980s.

Cultural Revivalism and the Role of anti-national AT & ML

In a democratic set up, the role of a civil society is to help usher transformative change by ensuring accountability and local participation in the affairs of the people concerned. The Meitei civil society promotes exclusive majoritarian interest at the cost of minority communities, despite such unchallenged dominance, Meiteis have always been determined to expand their monopoly of political aspirations of the minorities who are only demanding their constitutional rights and safeguards. They therefore, regularly oppose such demands both structurally and violently.

Not much is known of the origin of two Meitei extremist organisations-Arambai Tengol and Meitei Leepun, which rose in sharp prominence in May, 2023 when the violence began. They extensively propagate secessionist cultural revivalism for re-establishment of pre-Hindu Meitei religion Sanamahi. In an interview, one of the leaders of the Arambai Tenggol is also noted saying that rising conversion of Meiteis to Christianity is an issue of concern for the Arambai Tenggol and bringing them back to Sanamahism faith is a key goal.

It has come to the limelight time and again that the Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun are the main initiators of the violence. Communalism is one of the key ideological planks of the secessionists Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun. They were so prepared

that within 24 hours of the violence broke out: they immediately vandalised and burned down over 359 Churches. The communalism of Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun is cleared from the fact that a serious issue of pressure is being exerted on Meitei Christian as well to convert to Sanamahism. In fear of these two organisations, many Meitei Christian have fled the valley before the violence broke out.

Moreover, many people believe that the demand for a “separate Manipur” independent from India, will resurface again. The Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun are smokescreens for Meitei separatist organisations which have been dormant for a decade. These organisations project themselves as cultural revivalists but are in fact re-agitating the issue of a separate Meitei nation, though they could very well get subsumed within the larger Hindutva narrative.

It’s Impact

Much has been heard and said in the social media regarding falsely branding the whole Kuki-Zo community as ‘illegal immigrants’, ‘forest encroachers’, ‘poppy cultivators’, ‘drug peddlers’ or ‘narco-terrorists’. It is also unfortunate that this biased narrative or false propaganda influenced in radicalising the general Meitei publics in the valley. It is also more devastating; on the other hand, that the common Meiteis have been convinced too!

It goes without saying that the offensive violence of the Meiteis – attacks, genocide, vandalising and touching of houses and properties, sexual violence, looting of arms and ammunition, banning of internet etc. have been the order of the day since 3rd may; that I considered, may be unexciting to mention over again. The following table is the losses discounting land, properties and fields, incurred by the Zo ethnic groups in the violence.



Zo Ethnic Losses in the Violence

Dead Count	150+
Churches	359
Houses Burned	4,550+
Settlements Burned	257+
Displaced Persons	45,000+

Separation seems the only Solution Indeed

Peace is possible on the basis of justice and reconciliation. For any political solution to emerge, restoration of peace and normalcy is a must and the first step in this direction is the fixing of accountability on the state government in Manipur. Further, it is in the interests of all that further hostilities are ceases and the dead lying in the mortuaries are given a dignified burial as a gesture of moving forward from the conflict and towards a resolution to the present impasse. However, the peace advocated by Imphal is often a return to the status quo: to the vicious cycle of operation and exclusions. Unless reconciliation involves structural modification that will ensure proportionate representation and equality for all, any other peace talks will be fruitless.

“When the rift between communities is so deep and a CM owing loyalty to his community spares no pains to defame the other community, how can anyone even think of peace in such a situation? The othering is complete. Where is the space for peace?”

- Patricia Mukhim,
Senior Journalist

“The idea that the state is helpless to stop violence and ethnic displacement and targeting after 100 days, is one of the atrocious lies you will hear. Every institution, from police to NHRC has become part of the problem, not the solution. It is astonishing that a government that prides itself on ‘national security creates a national security threat in its own country.’”

- Pratap Bhanu Mehta, in ‘After Manipur, Our Self-Serving Morality’

“Only way forward to solve Manipur issue is to create separate administration immediately for the Kuki-Zo and Meiteis. After such violence and hatred there is no scope of these two communities living together in peace and harmony- make law immediately and create separate state for them so that this bloodshed stops.”

- Vijay Thottathil

The situation in Manipur today, is of unprecedented complete ethnic segregation of the two communities. Zo ethnic group and Meiteis. Neither community can venture into the other’s territory. The valley and the Hills today stand divided by a border officially termed as ‘buffer zone’ by Central Government. There are bunkers on either side of the border manned by armed squads from their two communities, while the Central security forces are deployed along the buffer zones. In effect, Manipur has already been bifurcated into two distinct political units. The exchange of populations and drawing of boundaries is complete. To recognize their de facto political autonomy of Zo territories is the only thing left to do. This would be a reversal of the British imperialists’ mistake in unifying the two political entities that should have been left separate and independent of each other.

Concluding Remarks

The Zo ethnic groups today reflect the cumulative progress it made during the past about hundred years, because of the advent of Christianity. Prior to this, the hill areas of Manipur were a neglected region and the Zo ethnic people live in their pristine traditional way, Unaffected by the wind of change. It is Christianity that brought a qualitative change in though, behaviour, culture and worldview of the Zo people. Besides the advent of Christianity has brought along education and modern medicine which have led to a

number of significant changes on the lives of the hill tribes.

As we march forward, we still need to reorganise and revitalize ourselves in a number of ways; most importantly, adhering the faith that transforms our society. Building a better community by developing our strengths and addressing our weaknesses by understanding ourselves, should be our slogan. Our society rests on mutual respect, selflessness, respect for elders, justice and generosity, which is akin to the principle of Christianity. We live within the bounds of religion with faith in Christ entrenched in our society. This makes us accept reality in the context of God's will and plan. We are not to think that the heavens only are the Lord's. No! even the Earth is his, though he has prepared the throne of his glory in the heavens, yet his kingdom rules over all; so that, wherever a child of God goes, he may comfort himself with this that he does not go off his Father's ground. God's absolute

propriety in this part of the creation where our lot is cast. This is a good reason why we should be content with our allotment in this world and not envy others theirs. May he not do what he will with his own, and give to some more of it to others less, as it pleases him? Our responsibility is not to dwell on the land which God has allotted us, but also to care and protect it. Margaret Mitchell once says, "Land is the only thing in the world worth working for, worth fighting for, worth dying for because it's the only thing that lasts". A people and a nation do not rise without land.

Daniel 4:32b in the Bibles says "... seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes." As a Christian, it is our solemn duty to acknowledge on the one hand that "The land belongs to the Almighty – our God", and fully trust his wisdom and judgement as a devoted child of God, on the other.

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OBITUARY:



REV. T.M. THANGZALIANA (1948-2023)

Rev. T.M. Thangzaliana was born on February 8, 1948 at Chawngmum village, Lamka Dist., Manipur. His father was T.M. Paupua and his mother was T.K. Niangi. In 1979, he married R. Thanglianmawi, missionary staff nurse serving at Moirang, Manipur Field. They have one son and three daughters, namely: 1. Moses Lalzuithanga 2. Esther Vanlalchawii 3. Mary Jones Valalruati 4. Ruth Lalhrualtuangi.

Education:

Rev. T.M. Thangzaliana and his family began to settle at Moirang Lamkhai in 1961. As such he graduated from Moirang High School. In June 1972, he started working as an Evangelist Teacher at Loktak Christian Model School, Moirang. While serving there, he graduated from Churachandpur College and Moirang College as a private candidate.

Ministry:

After his graduation, the Synod sent him to study theology at Serampore College in 1980 and completed his study in 1984. As there was no Church Court in Manipur Mission Field, he could not apply for Probationary Pastor. Then he was appointed as a Distribution Promoter under the Bible Society of India Shillong Auxiliary and was posted at Ningthoukhong, Manipur. After two years of service under Shillong Auxiliary, he was posted under Dimapur Auxiliary, Nagaland.

While he was serving under BSI, the Synod Officers' Meeting informed him to face an interview for the post of Probationary Pastor if he wanted to serve as a Pastor under the Synod. The Synod Meeting held at Dawrpui Church in 1987 appointed him to be a Probationary Pastor. He served as Pro.

Pastor for two years at Moirang Pastorate under Manipur Mission Field. He was then transferred to Ramhlun North Pastorate, Aizawl in 1990 and was ordained at the Synod Meeting held at Dawrpui Church the same year.

After being ordained, he was posted at Mayang Imphal Pastorate from 1991–June 1993. From 1993 July–1995, he was shifted to Moirang Pastorate and then at N.E. Khawdungsei Pastorate from 1996–2001, Lungdai Pastorate from 2002–2005. From 2006–2007, he was transferred to Awangkhunou Pastorate and was then posted to Champhai Bethel Pastorate in 2008 where he got his retirement the same year. Even after his retirement, he served as a Pastor of Gangte Christian Fellowship (GCF) Delhi from 2010–2013.

Final Period:

Rev. T.M. Thangzaliana's health condition had deteriorated since his retirement. He had undergone eye surgery. While he was

actively involved in the establishment of Delhi Presbyterian Church from 2016-2019, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. In 2019, he underwent surgery at the AIIMS, Delhi. In March 2022, he returned to Melriat from Delhi. After his return, he continued to undergo chemotherapy treatment every two weeks. On December 19, 2023, he was admitted to the ZMC and then shifted to the ICU on December 23, 2023. He then gradually weakened and passed away on December 30, 2023 at 2:10 AM.

The funeral programme was held at Melriat Presbyterian Church on the same day (Sunday) at 2:00 PM. The function was conducted by Rev. R. Vanlalnghaka, Moderator of Mizoram Synod. Rev. P.B. Mankima, Synod Secretary gave a report of his life story while Rev. H. Laltlanthanga, Synod Statistician performed intercessory prayer. Rev. Dr. K. Lallawmzuala, Executive Secretary concluded the service with a benediction. The last rites at the cemetery were performed by Rev. R. Lalrinsanga, i/c Melriat Pastorate.



REV. T. LALTHANTLUANGA (1966-2023)

Rev. T. Lalthantluanga was born on May 30, 1966 at Hmawngkawn, Mizoram. He was the middle one among the five children of Mr. H. Hualthanchhunga (L) leh Mrs. Lalnunmawii. In 1989, he married Lalengzawni Tochhawng and they have three children. Their children are: Benedict Lalhimpuaia, Vincent Lalrindika and Florence Lalmuansangi.

Education and Ministry:

Rev. T. Lalthantluanga spent his childhood in Sikkim and Darjeeling where his father, Hualthanchhunga was posted as a soldier. He went to School in these places. After his father's retirement from the army in 1977, they moved to Baktawng. From there they moved to Aizawl and settled in Khatla. He was significantly affected by the revival movement that arrived in 1984 in Mizoram. From that time onwards, he had a deep inclination in his heart to serve the Lord as a full-time worker. In 1985, he left home for missionary work.

While he was a missionary, his mother encouraged him to continue his education so that he could widen his ministry. As it was his greatest desire, he continued his matriculation. After passing matric in 1990, he continued his B.Th. studies. The Synod Meeting held at Mission Veng Church in 1993 appointed him to be a Probationary Pastor. He served as a Pro. Pastor at Zamuang Pastorate since 1994 and was ordained at the Synod Meeting held at Khatla Church in 1996.

After being ordained, he was posted at Khawzawl Venglai Pastorate from 1997-2001. From 2002-2005, he studied B.D. at Bishops' College, Kolkata. After graduation, he was posted at Farkawn Pastorate from 2005-2008. From 2009-2011 he studied M.Th. (Counselling) at Eastern Theological College, Jorhat. From 2011-2013, he was posted at Sairang Dinthar Pastorate and then at Sesawng Pastorate from 2014-2018. He was then posted at Chawnpui

Pastorate in 2019, where he served the Lord till his last breath.

His Personality and Final Period:

Rev. T. Lalthantluanga was a humble but dedicated to the ministry of the Lord. He was a very friendly and approachable person who endeared himself to everyone, including the youths of his Pastorate. They all treated him like a friend, and he had always been ready to render help for others. He used to be a healthy person; however, since May 2023, he had been complaining his chest and ribs and had undergone investigations. But the exact cause of his illness could not be discovered.

On October 26, 2023, he was diagnosed as suffering from pleural effusion at the Synod Hospital, Durtlang which caused him to have difficulty in breathing. As a result, he was admitted to Synod Hospital on October 29, 2023. Since there was no improvement, he

was shifted to Aizawl Hospital on November 3, 2023 and admitted to the ICU. On November 5, 2023, he was unfortunately diagnosed with lung cancer and his pleural effusion was drained. Chemotherapy treatment was started since November 21, but he was gradually weakened and left for his eternal home on December 10, 2023 at 12:35 AM.

The funeral programme was held at Chawnpui Presbyterian Church on December 10, 2023 (Sunday) at 2:00 PM and was conducted by Rev. Dr. Vanlalngbaka Ralte, Ex-Moderator of Mizoram Synod. Rev. P.B. Mankima, Synod Secretary gave a report of his life story while Rev. P.C. Pachhunga, Finance Officer performed intercessory prayer. Rev. C. Zoramawia, Senior Executive Secretary concluded the service with a benediction. The last rites at the cemetery were performed by Rev. H. Laltlanthanga, Pastor-in-charge, Tlangnuam Pastorate.

To,

RNI Regd. No. 67377/96



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