

Contents

Editorial	02
The basis of Christian Stewardship	04
Christian Stewardship	12
Stewardship of Property	19
Managing staffs at workplace	23
What is Human Resource Management?	30
Meeting a Church Growth Specialist	60
White Memory Hostel - the Trailblazer	65
An interview with Rev Dr A. K. Lama	70
A brief report from Rev Donyi	78

Baptist News

A quarterly news letter of the COUNCIL OF BAPTIST CHURCHES IN NORTH EAST INDIA

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Dear friends,



Has Obama lived up to the hype of “Change”? Change was the buzz word for the Chicago based senator Obama in 2008, contesting for the office of President of USA. Now that he is inching toward completion of his second term very few would agree that he has lived up to that promise. Would our political leaders in our country live up to their manifesto? Will there be any change or will stagnancy continue? The answer seems to be YES and NO. While in some places the voters turnout was low, in others there was a slight increase. The hype created by the newly born political party in Delhi Legislative Assembly election last year died down within a month. Uncertainty seems to be still lurking in the air. Can we hope for the best?

We will certainly need to pray for our country—that there would be a decrease in the number of corrupt and criminal political leaders; that we would have better roads, government hospitals, schools, and developmental infrastructures; and that we shall have more honest and committed police personals and officers in the government machinery. *Thy Kingdom come on this earth as it is in heaven!*

The responsibility of the Church to pray and influence future political and government system of our nation is perennial and indispensable. However, we may have to begin first by setting our house in order. We need to make our Church, which is within our control, free of corruption and mismanagement, lest our prayer and preaching should lack integrity.

Hence, we have decided to focus some concerns over Christian stewardship in this issue. Hope you will enjoy reading this and

benefit from the perspective of some of our writers. These articles are not a research paper or comprehensive academic writings for training on Christian Stewardship. Out there, there are many good books published on the subject. But our intention is to challenge us. Shall we serve and sacrifice a little more in our stewardship?

This is my last editorial for the Baptist News. I shall complete my five year term as the General Secretary of the Council this April. After much prayer, my wife and I have resolved not to continue for the second term. We have enjoyed God's presence, providence, and people's love while serving the Council. Besides many other things what I enjoyed most is the fellowship, teaching and preaching opportunities in conferences, training programs, and consultations. I have a huge collection of name tags and I shall keep that as memoir of my ministry in CBCNEI.

In the last five years, the Lord has enabled us to complete all that we wanted to accomplish in bringing system and order in the Council. We clearly sensed this to be a good time to handover the leadership and step aside. The EC has a leader now to take over from me. After the AGM in April, the name shall be made known public.

I request you to pray for the Council and the future leader.

May God continue to bless the family of CBCNEI.



*name tags from
various conferences*

Rev Dr A. K. Lama

Baptist News, January - March 2014



THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

by Karen O. Allen, author of *“Confronting Cancer with Faith.”* She is one of the TLA Board Member (Transforming Leaders of Asia) and Secretary. She lives in Birmingham, Alabama and affiliated with the Shelby County Baptist Association.

As a young child my parents taught me to give a church offering each week. It’s unlikely my small coin made any difference to the operations of the church but it did make a difference in me to instill the basic principles of stewardship. Each year our church would have a designated Sunday known as Stewardship Sunday. The pastor would preach about the importance of tithing and/or giving.

So let’s address the financial aspect of stewardship. After all, that’s what comes to our minds first, isn’t it? That’s what pastors preach about from time to time like on Stewardship Sunday. Besides, don’t churches want/need our money? Of course! How else do we expect them to operate? Shouldn’t we be willing to give back a por-

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tion to the Lord from the well of our financial blessings regardless of how shallow our well may be? Certainly, but make no mistake, money is not the only aspect of stewardship. Stewardship is not merely an investment in a building (e.g. church) where believers meet to worship. “As Christians we are responsible to God for all that we are and all that we have, not just the tithe. But before one can go beyond the tithe, one must start with the tithe” according to Bob Terry, editor of *The Alabama Baptist newspaper*.

Stewardship is a commitment, a lifestyle, if you will, that shapes our actions, our responsibilities, our approach to management, and our spiritual relationships. The term “stewardship” embodies responsible planning and management of something valuable that has been entrusted to one’s care. While we know that tithing is an important entity of stewardship, that’s not all that stewardship entails. In Luke 11:42 Jesus admonished the religious leaders, specifically the Pharisees, for being careful to tithe the tiniest income from their herb garden but yet ignore justice and God’s love. Jesus told them, “You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.”

The basis of Christian stewardship has three components: 1) biblical, 2) practical, and 3) personal. The biblical basis is that God owns all things and all people. We are only the managers of what we possess. There is a quote in my Bible dated July 22, 2007, from Rev Dr A. K. Lama on his last Sunday in America before leaving for India. He says, “The Christian’s human nature continuously subordinates to God’s divine nature.” Again, we are only managers of all we possess. Our nature, our possessions, are under His domain and watch care.

The second component of Christian stewardship has a practical element. While tithing falls under all three compo-

nents, let's further address the issue here. I once heard a pastor say, "The tithe is a test of obedience whereas the offering is a test of love." The Bible is clear as early as the 27th chapter of Leviticus that a tithe constitutes one-tenth of the "increase of the land, trees, herds, and flocks." Abraham may have been the first person to tithe as we see his gift of spoils from battle that he gave to Melchizedek king of Salem and Most High priest (Gen 14:20). This gift was Abraham's expression of gratitude to God for victory

Stewardship is
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and to God's Most High priest Melchizedek for sanctuary at Salem. So we see once again, tithing is not meant to be a financial matter but rather a spiritual matter. My former pastor summed it up this way, "Tithing is an external expression of the internal reality of the heart." Then there must be a lot of hearts in our church congregations that

need to re-evaluate their "internal reality" since the vast majority do not tithe. In fact, that is precisely what needs to happen: a re-evaluation of the heart! The sad truth is that few Christians practice the discipline of tithing. And yes, it is a discipline. A recent Barna study in the United States found that only 5-7 percent of Christians practiced biblical tithing that is, giving 10 percent of one's income to God through the church. The percentage of tithing for evangelical Christians is better with 24 percent. While 96 percent of the evangelicals reported giving a financial offering of some amount to a church during the year, it was not a tithe.¹ Startling statistics, Revealing hearts.

God tells us in Malachi 3:10 to "test Me now in this" [to

bring the whole tithe into the storehouse so that there may be food]. Why is it so hard for believers, those who proclaim to be knowledgeable of the Word, to secretly shirk the practice of tithing? Fear? Defensiveness? Lack? Greed? Priorities? If we were honest, we could dispute every one of those excuses with scripture. Maybe we take the stance that tithing is an optional exercise of our free will. Oh, we are pleased to give that love offering and/or maybe that special missions offering. I mean, the Bible says God loves a cheerful giver (II Cor 9:7). But here's a thought-provoking and revealing question: Is it possible that God recognizes our gift not by what we give but what we have left? The question reminds me of Jesus' response to the widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4). With only two coins given by the widow, Jesus said she gave everything.

The third component of stewardship involves a personal element - time, talent, finances, our body, our family, the gospel, and more. We are stewards of all these things but are we responsible and mature stewards? If God expects a ten percent financial effort, shouldn't it be the same with our time and so on? A good steward recognizes the opportunity to partner with God in *all* that He does. We should consciously incorporate the concept of stewardship into each area of our personal life, not a select few. Remember, stewardship is a lifestyle, a holistic philosophy. A portion of our time, at least one-tenth, should be spent in spiritual enrichment. This can be achieved through prayer, Bible study/reading, spiritual discussions, enhancement of spiritual knowledge through other literature and resources, worship, praise, communion, service, missions, ministry activities, visitation to those in need (hospital, prison), outreach efforts, preparation of sermons/presentations, devotionals, journaling, the list goes on. These are ways for which our time can be attributable to good steward-

ship as long as it is bathed with wholesomeness and good intentions. I say that because you can go through the motions of spiritual enrichment and not have a devoted heart. There are cult leaders and cheating pastors that go through these motions, too.

The use of our talents is more individualized. We all have some sort of talent that can be used to magnify the Lord's name: music, singing, speaking, preaching, writing, construction skills, technical expertise, design, marketing, organization, etc. Much creativity can be found through the use of our talents for the Lord. I have seen horse whisperers, ventriloquists, and weightlifters turn their unique talents into witnessing tools.

Being a good steward of our body can perhaps be more of a challenge for many of us, myself included. It is not only about diet but also about exercise. We know our body is God's temple and that temple needs to be presented holy and pure before the Lord both inside and outside.

How can we be good stewards of the gospel? Simple-By sharing it, by creating opportunities to present the saving grace and forgiveness of God, by seizing God-given moments and by fulfilling the Great Commission mandate to "go and tell."

As we have read, stewardship has many facets with eternal value, but just like faith has different levels, stewardship has growth potential. And with that growth comes knowledge and conviction. Obedience and action must follow to complete the growth cycle. Let me offer a personal example of stewardship growth. When my husband and I married, we combined our income for a monthly tithe. As a young couple we did this for a number of years before we heard a sermon challenging us to tithe our gross earnings (before taxes), not our net pay (take-home pay).

Once we became aware of our oversight, we had a decision to make. We were convicted to change our tithe from a “net tithe” to a “gross tithe.” I further expand my tithe to include earnings outside of my salary for things such as book sales, speaking engagements, and piano/organ substitution pay.

If you think you cannot tithe because of your circumstances or you believe your tithe makes no difference, here is a formula you need to know: extreme poverty + great affliction = abundant joy. While I confess I have never encountered extreme poverty, I know a Christian man in Manipur who cares for abandoned children. I have heard him pray about where his next meal was coming from. His demonstration of faith and hope resulted in an exponential amount of joy. And God answered his prayers. Great affliction without extreme poverty can still result in abundant joy, maybe even supernatural joy. I have experienced that and it’s a powerful and glorious thing.

1 The Alabama Baptist, January 30, 2014, “Should Churches Resort to Renting Pews?” editorial by Bob Terry.



From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Eph 4:16 (NIV)



Christian Stewardship

by Rev Dr A.K.Lama, General Secretary, CBCNEI

Christians are expected to be good steward of three important resources: Divine, Human, and Material Resources. I have listed them in order of priority. Since this issue of Baptist News is focusing on the stewardship of material resources, I shall leave the first two resources for the readers to reflect on, but focus more on stewardship of material resources here.

Christian stewardship is more than caring, protecting, and managing. It is about developing, multiplying and growing. It is about transforming unproductive unit into productive, converting unfertile soil into fertile soil, changing a barren tree into fruit bearing tree. In some sense, it is about claiming the miracle of God for life, growth, and multiplication.

In **Matt 25:14-30**, Jesus defines stewardship more than simply being a manager. He puts the parable in the context of the coming Kingdom of God. A steward is accountable to the ultimate master who is a “hard man” looking for a harvest without sowing (v.24). The man who had one talent knew his master’s expectation but he failed to please his master. He was remarked “worthless steward” even

though he protected and managed to retain the “talent” given to him. He maintained the status quo. But the other two made their “talents” to work and multiply. They were regarded as “good and faithful”.

A good steward must ask the question: How to make the best use of the assets that I am asked to manage? What is its worth? How do I actualize its fuller potential?

Christian stewardship is more than caring, protecting, and managing. It is about developing, multiplying and growing.

In mundane management of property, book keeping, observing best financial system or policy, earning through bank deposits and investment, Churches in

general have much to learn. Some don’t care, others are ignorant, still others manipulate to their personal gains. Stewardship of material resources in most protestant Churches or Christian society, often run by short term corporate leadership, has failed to excel.

What may be the reasons? How can this problem be addressed? Comparatively better stewardship is visible in Catholic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and privately owned ministries. What can protestant Churches learn from them? We need to do some comprehensive research and consultation to address this issue.

However, for a practical and quick response, let me jot down some of my observations. Besides lack of vision and

spiritual commitment, I have found following few reasons for poor Christian stewardship:

1. Ignorance/Lack of determination

- Not having good financial policy, system, and practices in place.
- Not knowing the best book keeping procedures that might penalize the organization with unnecessary loss and taxation.
- Not knowing the potentials and worth of the assets.
- Not knowing how to convert assets from assets and reduce liabilities.
- Lack of good Christian business entrepreneurship.
- Not knowing the best interest rates, better investments, and better ways to generate income out of unused money.
- Not knowing the rule and regulations might jeopardize the potential resource of the society, FCRA registration, and other privileges of tax exemption.

Accounting is a tedious, timely, and tenuous work of a tireless committed hard working steward.

2. Illegal practice

- Breaking the barrier between public and private possession of resources.
- Violating deliberately financial policy or moral code of conduct.
- Borrowing money or lending public money for personal use.
- Receiving payment or making payment in cash be-

yond statutory limit.

- Doing illegal favor in return of favor.
- Keeping or carrying huge cash alone.
- Non-issue of receipts.
- Keeping all the entry pending.

3. Working in isolation without transparency

- Not having more than two persons accountable.
- Irregular internal as well external audit.
- Not using Audit as a learning opportunity for correction.

4. Absence of a system that holds one accountable

- Absence of assessment of one's performance in terms of good steward.

- Absence of good governance and administration.
- Absence of staff disciplinary committee.
- Allowance and tolerance of bad stewardship.

5. Depreciating and draining the resources

- Using organizational vehicles without any log and transparent policy on the use of vehicle.
- Using public assets as personal assets.
- Doing favor to friends and relatives with public assets.

6. Devaluing the resources

- Not able to recognize the possible resource of revenues

Change is always scary as it pushes us out of our comfort zone and makes us feel vulnerable and

- Not able to recover the maintenance cost when it is recoverable

- No long term plan for sustaining the resources or its development

In addition to the above correction, I believe that following few disciplines in our system might enable good Christian stewardship:

- Know the assets and their value in the present market.
- Know all possible opportunities for revenue generation.
- Have consultation how to develop, generate revenues, and build.
 - Establish a clear and informed financial policy and transparent system of operation that involves more than two persons.
 - Monthly closure of account and book.
 - Realistic Budget and Faith budget balance.
 - Monitoring of the budget quarterly.
 - Finance Committee/ finance management meeting.
 - Regular payment/collection/bank reconciliation.
 - Working not only for the present but also for future.
 - Dare to ask questions of financial implications, feasibility, and future.

You might be able to add few more from your own perspective. At first glance, good Christian stewardship might look like a giant task. We may not like too much of details and paper work. Especially in Christian organizations where we need to trust God and each other, talking about a sys-

tem and policy may seem like being secular, or suspicious. Be that as it may be, one must clarify and pursue the details and paper works because it will surely bear good result in long run.

I joined CBCNEI as the designate General Secretary in October of 2008, I had six months to study and observe. I was given my first responsibility as the in-charge Medical Secretary. It was an uphill task to bring a system that disciplines non-performing staffs, pay more to the performing employees, and generate motivation for sacrificial service.

Then, I was installed as the General Secretary in April 2009, it took almost one year to understand the loopholes in the working system and structure. Gradually, I began to introduce some changes. We had series of meetings and consultations. Some complained that it was too fast, others waited and watched with suspicion, still others resisted and opposed. I was served anonymous letters of threat and warning.

Change is always scary as it pushes us out of our comfort zone and makes us feel vulnerable and insecure. We all desire to spend our life vacationing in a resort for a longer period if it does not cost us a penny. It does not hurt us because we drain resources that don't belong to us personally. We want free parking, discounted food and lodging, and helps of all kind in charity. But we don't realize that resources are not unlimited and our expectations are short-sighted.

Well, we continued our effort for last the five years in CBCNEI with the help of few who were willing to follow

and usher changes. Three crucial things happened:

1. Evaluation and assessment of our services, system, and structure.

2. Town hall forum of discussion in leaders meetings, secretaries & staff meeting. We began to meet more formally to discuss and wrestle for change.

3. More intentional in planning activities, budgeting, and reviewing the budget regularly.

4. Defining our financial system, policy, and working pattern.

5. Consciously putting effort to improve the quality of service, generate revenues, and spend judiciously.

6. Improve communication within and help every staff to be in control of their areas of management.

7. Transparent and team decision making process. We emphasized on team effort.

***one can finish
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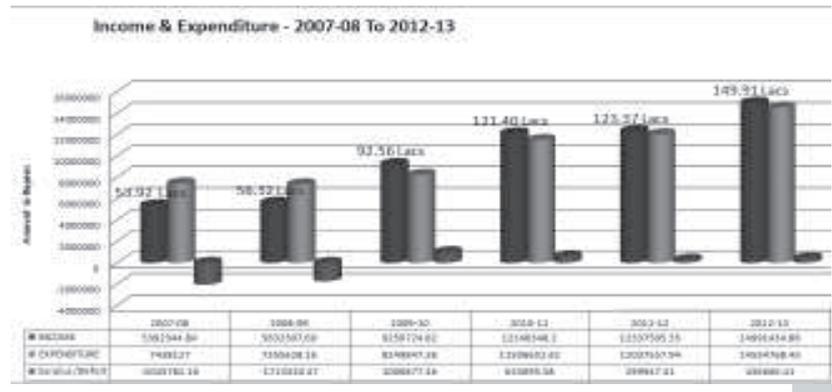
We were not perfect, we were not free from challenges but we have grown well in the last five years. I am listing some of data below to give us an idea of growth in CBCNEI because of good stewardship. [For an example, CBCNEI campus was allowed to use for parking

vehicles free of charge. The Council needed enough money to repair the broken road and pay for the salary of the

security guards. So we decided to charge parking fee. It did not take much effort to generate a new source of income and we could have some money to spend on the campus]

Particulars	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Membership Fee	5,30,402	4,71,996	8,21,186	4,64,868	6,26,024	5,11,903	5,65,151
Hospitals	75,000	3,75,000	1,75,000	1,75,000	2,80,100	7,61,210	9,48,548
Rentals	3,21,300	9,68,371	17,22,700	19,75,138	21,34,420	33,04,862	39,88,654
Conference	33,46,802.50	27,11,168	41,16,733	47,47,883	50,44,507	56,50,655	70,58,192
Canteen	41,000	1,63,732	7,75,197	10,91,773	16,76,015	17,15,217	19,42,221
Parking	-	-	-	1,13,865	89,650	1,23,250	1,04,500
Baptist News	9004	11,138	23,010	54,784	62,430	64,500	81,666
Contributios Towards Mission				4,05,100	5,45,861	8,17,900	1,010,252

You will notice that we have not gained much from the membership fee of the Conventions. In fact, the contribution was cut down from ₹ 1/- per member to ₹ 0.50 paise per member. However, we had assets and we managed them to generate income. I am glad today because CBCNEI has made 40% increase in the staff salary and has given more money for field ministry today. Our income has grown from ₹ 53.92 lacs in 2007-08 to ₹ 149.91 lacs in 2012-13.



Each department has reached out to the local churches, associations, and conventions helping some specific needs.

Let us remind ourselves that no system and policy is perfect, they are there to guide and protect us only if our intention are right. One can always manipulate system and policy. Hence, besides all these, pastoral and spiritual care is also essential for good stewardship.

Good stewardship is not an impossible task. It takes sacrifice and commitment to the biblical principles. Would a leader bind oneself to rules and regulations for better governance? How much one can make oneself dispensable for the cause? Good administration of any organization primarily begins with self-imposed good practice of the leader who leads the organization.

The task may look like a gaint elephant? but ***one can finish eating even elephant if one persists eating it with smaller bite at a time continually.*** It is better to start a baby step immediately then to feel paralyzed and helpless. If you desire to be a good steward, then take the first step of faith and the Lord will help you. Remember, our motivation for good stewardship is not earthly but heavenly one:

'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' (Mat 25:21 NIV)





Stewardship of Property

by Pawan Bhuyan, Property Secretary, CBCNEI

Steward is a biblical term that refers to a manager who is responsible for the goods and property of another. A steward, therefore, is not an owner, but one who has an accountability to an owner to treat the property with care and respect. *Stewardship* is a term that refers to the responsibility of a steward to manage wisely.

Stewardship has come to be used in the Christian community in a broader sense for our responsibility to manage wisely the goods and property that are in our possession. The assumption is that we do not really possess or own anything. Rather, the world, including us, belongs to God, and it is arrogant for humans to think otherwise. Therefore, we are not owners but stewards of all that come into our arena of responsibility—income, assets, property, goods, time, talents, and our very selves. Religious stewardship is management as sacred trust.

Council of Baptist Churches in North East India is privileged with so much of valuable assets such as land, buildings and other infrastructures built by our predecessors “American Baptist Foreign Mission Society.” They spent much time, energy and finance in meticulously locating the

prime spots to have all the mission stations in North East India. When we look at and visit all these places we could find the strenuous journey they had to undergo to build these properties and assets which we are enjoying now. Following are some of the precious assets the American Baptist Missionaries have left behind for us:

Council Headquarter at Panbazar, Guwahati: This property having an area of 6.30 acres is located at the prime area of the city where we have the Conference Centre Complex, Lewis Memorial Hostel, Archive and Library etc. This is the place where many of our church members find home away from home when they come to the city for medical treatment and other personal works. The campus is buzzed with activities all throughout the year where various seminars, conferences are held for the churches by the Council as well as many other church organizations. The church members, those working and pursuing studies in the city find it a suitable place to conduct worship services and have fellowships on Sundays. The Council is still in the process of developing the land and property for optimum utilization and benefit for our churches.

Satribari Christian Hospital (SCH), Guwahati: Another property having an area of 18.67 acres is in the heart of the city where we have the healing ministry (SCH) of the Council. Through this hospital many people have experience and witnessed the healing touch of our Lord. At present the hospital is limping its way for service and excellence amidst the hi-tech competitive healthcare institutions in the city. The hospital needs your prayers. In this property also the Council operates the White Memorial hostel ministry for girls.

Shillong Vacation House (Students' Ministry), Shillong: The Council in partnership with Tyrannus Hall operates a

boys' hostel ministry in this beautiful property at Shillong. Located in the quiet neighborhood of the city with an area of 4.69 acres, it serves as a favorable place for students to stay and pursue their studies. In view of the climate condition of the region, earlier the missionaries used this property as a vacation house. On a leased plot of land the Shillong Baptist Church is constructing a beautiful church. Most of our church members, residing and pursuing their studies in Shillong would be privileged to worship and fellowship in this city church. In addition, Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) also has an office on a leased out portion of the land. The property has much scope for further development in the future.

Jorhat Christian Medical Centre, Jorhat: Located on the outskirts of the Jorhat city, on a sprawling campus of having a land area of 70 acres, this is another old medical institution of the Council. The property comprises the general hospital and the Christian leprosy clinic. Maintaining and developing this huge property is a challenge with the present circumstances. Yet the Council is in process of developing it in phase manner. Christian Leprosy Clinic Rehabilitation Centre project under the management of the general hospital is under way and is yielding positive results. The vision is to have one conference centre complex, visitors' guesthouse, self reliance project along the main road are some of the key projects that need further reflection. We covet your prayer support for this ministry of the Council at Jorhat, Assam.

Eastern Theological College, Jorhat: A pioneer theological institution of the northeast, located in the suburb of Jorhat city has an area of 23.67 acres. Much development is seen over the years on the property, where students from all over North East India come and pursue their theo-

logical studies. Efforts have been made with initiation of a self reliance project (with the contribution from churches) along the main road for revenue generation for the college. Much need to be done in terms of development and up-gradation of the old buildings. Due to paucity of funds the maintenance and development of the property is slow. We request your prayer support for the college.

Being the steward of these vast properties is a challenging task when there is limited or no financial resources at all for sustenance and development. Presently, by God's grace the Council does not have any litigation in the court of law for the last 13 years. All our properties are free from encumbrances and only area we need to focus is for optimum utilization and development of the land area for revenue generation for the ongoing ministries of the Council.

.....to be continued in the next issue



“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Gen 1:28 (NIV)

MANAGING STAFFS AT WORKPLACE



by Dr Asangla Ao, Women's Director, TLA Ministries

Supervising the work at the Canteen of CBCNEI was a new experience for me. What this experience has helped me see is the beauty of TEAMWORK emerging out of the complexity of diverse human nature, behavior, and temperaments. And the profound lesson that I have learned is the need of divine love, grace, and wisdom one requires in efficient dealing of such complexity. The Creator God has assigned us to take care of all the things that he has created but managing human resources efficiently is perhaps one of the most challenging tasks for any leader.

Managing staffs at workplace efficiently depends on various factors. However, I would like to share with you, out of my experience, some of the factors that helped me in managing the staffs under my supervision.

ENVIRONMENT: Managing staffs efficiently begins with creating an environment at workplace that motivates them to give their best. Provide the necessary resources, tools, and equipment so that they can do their work efficiently.

Our old canteen dining hall could accommodate only around 50 people at a time. With limited facilities our canteen staff used to work day and night. Under the leadership and initiative of our General Secretary, Rev Dr. A. K. Lama, today we have a renovated, air-conditioned canteen dining hall that can accommodate 100 people at a time. The kitchen is equipped with modern facilities which have made the works of our staff much convenient.

JOB SATISFACTION: It is one thing to do a job and it's another thing to enjoy doing it. Asking good question like "Why are you doing what you are doing?" may help one see if he/she is placed in the right place. Before hiring a new staff I always make sure to know couple of things about the person: past work experience, loner or group player, likes/dislikes, temperament, attitude, ability to cope under pressure etc and then explain the nature of work he/she is expected to do at canteen. Any time my staffs feel mismatch for the job, I do encourage them to leave the job and do something they enjoy doing. It's so important that we match the job and person with the right skills. Otherwise it will be like pushing the horse to pull the cart instead of the horse pulling the cart forward. Hire those who are cut for the job—whose interests and skills will enhance the productivity. And also who have the potential to be groomed according to the need. Creating job satisfaction enhances work performance.

KNOW YOUR STAFF TEAM: Before you entrust any responsibility to staffs, it's good to know the individual staff's strengths and weaknesses. This helps you to delegate work according to one's strength and weaknesses. Our strengths help us shine with competence. One's weakness can be improved but it can never become one's strength. So placing the right person at the right place boost up one's confi-

dence and motivates one to get job done more efficiently. Also ask, listen, observe, and learn about staff issues that affect the performance of the team. Find ways to motivate staff to do their job efficiently. In our society we measure the value or status of a person by his/her occupation. Our canteen staffs get discouraged sometimes when some insensitive people treat them in a disrespectful way. I encourage them to work with pride, having a high self-esteem about themselves and what they are doing. Serving others is a humble but noble ministry.

CARE & SUPPORT: Every human being has some basic need(s) that one desires to be met. I believe that meeting realistic needs of staffs can motivate one to strive forward for excellence. Besides works, get to know what's happening in their personal/family lives and offer all possible assistance. Being sensitive to their spiritual, emotional, and physical needs I do facilitate staffs to attend churches/fellowships on Sundays; meet with them and counsel one-on-one when they go through emotional crisis; provide basic comfort of clean bed and room for them to rest after hectic schedule. On regular basis I meet with all the staffs listening to their views, feedback, complaints and address them accordingly. Besides offering help from the canteen budget I also encourage all the staff to contribute sacrificially if someone is going through financial crisis in family.

TEAM SPIRIT: In every workplace maintaining a good team spirit among the workers is paramount to the productivity. Unless we nurture the relationship on regular basis, we cannot expect teamwork or team spirit to prevail among staffs. So, helping them understand each other's strengths, weaknesses, and temperaments I encourage them to accept each other as they are. Regular reminder through 'emotional and cognitive orientation' about the essence

and importance of love and forgiveness in building a healthy relationship with each other motivate our staffs to contribute positively toward nurturing a healthy relationship.

In one specific area I encourage my staff to exhibit teamwork is ‘going extra mile’ when need arises. Although every staff is hired for a particular work, they should be willing to go beyond the boundary of their job description. For instance, cooks washing the dishes, cleaning toilets or servers cleaning/cutting vegetables etc. I have seen the spirit of teamwork blossom when staffs allow not “my & yours” but “Ours” attitude to breathe freely.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION: In Christian ministry we tend to use “forgiveness” too lavishly, so much so that our decision not to punish but forgive encourages the erring staff forget the important aspect of ‘accountability or consequences.’ In any working place it’s good to have some provision for disciplinary action to be taken when a staff breaks the rule or does wrong. When it comes to taking a disciplinary action, we need to be fair but firm. Never penalize the entire staff team when one staff does something wrong. For instance, when a staff reports to work late, meet with the erring staff privately and address the issue, instead of making a general statement for all the staffs. When the issue is private, I try to deal with it privately; however, if the issue is likely to affect the entire team, I do address it corporately. I mention and discuss the issue with the entire staff team and forewarn them about the consequences they have to face should they fail.

REWARD: It’s always good to balance ‘sweetness’ and ‘bitterness’ in life. Along with disciplinary action, reward should not be left too far away. We all desire to be rewarded, whether in cash, kind, or encouraging words for our performances at workplace. Although it feels good to receive

money as a reward, money is not a primary motivator to encourage staffs to excel. Public recognition of a staff's hard work, sincerity, commitment, sacrifice, or good performance could motivate the staffs for better performances. For good performances I do appreciate my staff in front of all and sometimes I grant the deserving staff a day off from his/her duty. Discipline privately (except in cases where public addressing or confrontation is necessary) but reward publicly.

FUN TIME: Working in places like restaurants or canteens is quite intensive. Only works do wear down everyone. Workers do need a break from work. Be creative and find various ways to share some fun time together. As the canteen staffs team we do various things to have good time together. For instance, we celebrate every staff's birthday and the "birthday baby" gets half day off; sometimes we go for special lunch/dinner together at restaurant; watch movie; staff outing for 4-5 days in a year, visiting various new places. Finding ways to have fun time together on regular basis allows staff to relax, get to know each other better which adds flavor in building a better team work.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT: Very often the 'smart or competent' people are attracted to places where better salary or facilities are offered. Not always but many times the "remnants or left-outs" are drawn to lowly paid jobs at Christian institutions. You get what you pay! So, what shall we do? Should we keep grumbling about the incompetence or lack of experience of our staffs or do something about it? I guess where there is some hope, we must pursue it (unfortunately some are BC- beyond correction!). Brainstorm and look for various ways how you can facilitate your staffs to enhance their performances or learn new skills that in turn will equip the staff to perform better.

I believe in giving staffs opportunities to grow. So, I have always encouraged learning and provided opportunities to develop new skills. For instance, we have tried new recipes together, got feedback from each other and also from some customers which has helped us improve the quality of food items. Since we live in a competitive world today, I have encouraged interested staffs to go for computer classes; pursue their studies (almost all the staffs at canteen are under matriculation) and as a result some staffs have enrolled themselves in open school and one of them will be completing class 12 this year. Besides these, teaching and learning about health, hygiene, and also basic demeanor are some of the ways I have tried to help my staffs to prepare and equip themselves for their better tomorrow.

CONFIDENTIALITY: As the canteen staff team we live and work as a big family where we learn not only to love but also to value and respect each other. Like any family we encourage to maintain staff and corporate confidentiality.

ROLE MODEL: Workers look up to their leader. So be a good role model to your staffs. Show compassion, understanding, and respect to your staffs. Your lifestyle must impart your values, dedication, and commitment.

CONCLUSION: There is no one perfect way or approach when it comes to managing staffs at workplace. Depending on various factors like the people group, size, place, circumstances etc one has to adopt an approach/strategy that fits best. The most important thing is to know your staff team well. Encourage, equip, and empower your staffs, help them see and own the vision. Lead them confidently as they follow.



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What is Human Resource Management?



by Ms. Istrella Sangma, Assistant General manager, CBCNEI Conference Centre

Human resource management (HRM or simply HR) is the management process of an organization's workforce, or human resources. It is responsible for the attraction, selection, training, assessment, and rewarding of employees, while also overseeing organizational leadership and culture and ensuring compliance with employment and labor laws. In circumstances where employees desire and are legally authorized to hold a collective bargaining agreement, HR will also serve as the company's primary liaison with the employees' representatives (usually a trades union).

Many scholars have defined Human resource in various manners. According to Dowling and Welch, Human Resource Management refers to those activities undertaken by an organization to utilize its human resources effectively.

Tokesky and Kornides underline the fact that HR not only helps to achieve business excellence but also provides the

company with a competitive advantage if HRM practices are integrated into the overall business strategy.

In short we can define HRM as, “managing people within the employer-employee relationship.”

In startup companies, HR’s duties may be performed by trained professionals. In larger companies, an entire functional group is typically dedicated to the discipline, with staff specializing in various HR tasks and functional leadership engaging in strategic decision making across the business. To train practitioners for the profession, institutions of higher education, professional associations, and companies themselves have created programs of study dedicated explicitly to the duties of the function. Academic and practitioner organizations likewise seek to engage and further the field of HR, as evidenced by several field-specific publications. In the current global work environment, all global companies are focused on retaining the talent and knowledge held by the workforce. All companies are focused on lowering the employee turnover and preserving knowledge. New hiring not only entails a high cost but also increases the risk of the newcomer not being able to replace the person who was working in that position before. HR departments also strive to offer benefits that will appeal to workers, thus reducing the risk of losing knowledge.

Human Resource Management in Church Ministry

What is church Ministry? Are the business practices of Church Ministry different to those in Commercial Organizations? If so, why and how are they different? What are some of the challenges of HRM in Church Ministry?

Many people do not realize sufficiently that a big space is left empty between, on the one hand, a rigid canonical

attitude in sacred things, wherein all the emphasis is on the receptive position of the faithful and their subordination to the clergy, and on the other hand, the field of social and international secular activity. Nowadays people are becoming conscious that it is their duty to fill that empty space, through a spiritual activity, an active role in the church. Churches cannot thrive unless their members are engaged fully, believing they are valued, sharing ideas, working harder than the necessary minimum, and relating better to members. At present very little is known about the practices of Human Resource Management in churches. Churches are characterized by both human (organizational) and godly (spiritual) attributes. The church is the body of Christ comprising of all the Christians worldwide and a human institution with local, regional or international presence that requires managing. Because of its unique dual nature, the local church requires both spiritual and organizational management.

With this in mind, lets us explore what makes Church Ministry different from Commercial Organizations.

The philosophy of the Church differs from that of Commercial Organizations. Church Ministry is predicated on fellowship, love and service for God and each other, proclamation and evangelization of the Word of God. Commercial organizations on the other hand, are predicated on customer service, quality, organization centeredness, profit and greed. Church Ministry is considered to be success the more it reaches out in service to others, the more it engages those within the church, converts and renews the lives of those within and outside the church. Commercial organizations, on the other hand are considered to be successful if their "bottom line" is in black (profit) not red (loss). Where the Church is accountable to God through its

representatives, Commercial organizations are accountable to the Chief Executive Officers (CEO).

Clearly, there is a marked difference between the two, based primarily on its motivation: for the Church, its motivation is God's Salvation of humankind. For a Commercial Organization, its motivation is primarily money, prestige and power. Moreover, the motivation driving these two entities will certainly impact differently on their vision, mission, core values, policies and procedures including HRM. We can say that Church Ministry is based on and reflects three elements: communion, conversion/renewal and mission.

What should HRM be in Church Ministry?

Human Resource management is generally not conceived of as a profit centre because it is not considered to have products or services that can be purchased by the organization's external clients but it is conceived more as a service centre for internal clients (other functions or departments within the organization) and is therefore, considered a 'cost' to the organization. Although in some businesses, for example, banks and other financial institutions, HRM is provided as a shared service offering advice and providing training, and is operated along the lines of a 'profit centre', adding value through the provision of organizational strategies and HR initiatives.

The above definition of HRM can be used effectively as a basis for HRM in church ministry, but it needs to be adapted to reflect the communion, conversion/renewal and mission oriented that differentiates Church Ministry from Commercial Organizations.

A look at St Paul the Apostle, the theologian, is appropriate at this time. Paul's theology is based on the concept of

wholeness: “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ” (1Cor 12:12). Each part is equally important as the other, each part working in harmony and each part taking responsibility for working in concert with the rest of body. For Paul, life in Christ meant life in the body of Christ, the Church. There was no such thing as an individual believer understood apart from the life of the Church, for the Church was no mere aggregate of individuals. Rather, by baptism into the Christian community one participated in a new reality, one was a new creation. Individual believer did not make a church; initiation into the Church through faith and baptism made the believer. Faith and baptism introduced the individual into a new mode of existence. However, not only are Christians one body in Christ, their existence is based on love, for without love they are nothing (1Cor 13:2). And it is because of this love there is a shift from a focus on “I” or “me” outwards to a focus on “you” or “we”. There is a mission orientation as we cannot help but to service others (1Cor 14:12).

Sadly, we frequently hear stories of the lowly paid and over-worked pastoral associate, lack of understanding among the pastors, deacons and church members, the recruitment behind closed doors, the quiet letting go of staff without due process, the changeover (redundancy) of staff and re-appointment of hand-picked staff etc, are result of inadequate managerial or leadership skills and insufficient training and support provided. Through baptism, we are initiated into a life in Christ. We are Christian! Whatever we say and whatever we do is in service to this baptismal call which is a call “to participate in the mission of the Word and the Spirit and by doing that we share the life of God. Our lives are shaped by an awareness of responsibil-

ity more than obligation, a responsibility springing from our membership in God's holy people. We commit ourselves to being and building the Body of Christ in the Church and in the world, so that both will be transformed by love.

So it is this idea of "love" that we must take HRM for Church Ministry. If we view the Church and Church Ministry as a whole, that is, as the "Body of Christ", anything that we do to one part of the body will affect the other parts of the whole Body of Christ. The questions that must be asked, therefore, to help guide the church towards a more organic view of HRM, particularly for Church Ministry, are: Is the Church being and building the Body of Christ in its HRM practices? Do the HRM policies and procedures reflect the love, respect, patience, consideration, generosity, fellowship and service that are the way of Christ? Does what we do in HRM reflect the primary aim (or objective) of the Church which is the proclamation of the Gospel? Do HRM practices adopt a pastoral approach, like that of St. Paul? In other words, do the HRM practices reflect the 'mind' and 'attitude' of Christ?

It has been mentioned already that the church's mission is derived from the triune God from whom we learn of and achieve salvation through the rationality out of which emerges love and reconciliation on the persons of Father, Son and Spirit. It is this concept of rationality that is of crucial importance for HRM in Church Ministry. The Church has been gifted with the Spirit from the Father through the Son to bring the Church in to the communion paschal mystery- death, resurrection, new life (1 Cor 15:22, 45).

Underlying Principles in HRM for Church Ministry

Church Ministry must keep before it the concepts of communion, conversion and mission:

- The conscience of the Church, ensuring that people are treated equally and justly at all times to meet the Christian's obligations for social justice.

- Developing and sustaining relationship of love, trust and respect within Church Ministry and outside Church.

- Affirming staffs in their roles and in themselves, through supporting, recognizing and challenging staffs.

- Work for transformation of both staff and ministry through the rejuvenation of faith, combined with the affirmation of belief in the obtainment of knowledge to progress transcendence of self and ministry to transform a new way of perceiving humanity and the world.

- Ensuring consistency of policy and procedures to ensure that there is no possibility of inequity and achieving this through an understanding with the concept of love, relationship, reconciliation and service.

Challenges in HRM for Church Ministry

There are four challenges in Church Ministry today, Recruitment and Selection, Remuneration and Benefits Management, Performance Management and Spirituality of Work.

In **Recruitment and Selection**, we must not fall into the trap of believing that the best person is the one who should be appointed. We should search for the right person, that is, the one who is both *cultural fit* and a *position fit* for the Church Ministry. *Cultural fit* refers to a person whose values and standards are in 'synch'. *Position fit means* a person whose knowledge and skills are a 'match' with the job's requirements.

With regards to the concern about **Remuneration and Benefits Management**, it is important to remember that while many of them may have taken the vow to serve God and

spread His gospel, they still have the need of basic things (food, water and shelter). If they are married they usually have family members who are dependent upon them to meet these needs in addition to high education costs for their children. So Remuneration and Benefits Management is a key area in which review and change is necessary. If Church Ministry wants to attract and retain well-educated and committed people, a fair and equitable salary is mandatory, no longer can Church Ministry afford to pay its staff with a 'pittance and prayer'.

As for **Performance Management**, this is an area, sadly, is not understood or practiced by our Churches. At a strategic lever, it includes: Induction, Performance and Development Reviews, Mentoring and Succession Planning for sustainable leadership, right through to the exit of the employee from their position within Church Ministry. To be precise, Performance Management system, at its simplest, is a process that allows the Church employer and the 'employee' to openly discuss the expectations of the organizations and the achievement of the employee, with the emphasis on the future development of the employee within the objective of the organization.

With respect to the **Spirituality of Work**, Church Ministry must be proactive in forming a spirituality of work which will help all people to come closer, through work, to God, the creator and redeemer, to deepen their friendship with Christ in their lives by accepting through faith. Developing a spirituality of work recognizes the value of human work. A Spirituality of Work would certainly impact the office policies and procedures, for instance, in meetings commencing and closing with a prayer, encouragement and support of staff to participate in regular prayer gatherings, just to name a few.

Conclusion

When managing the Human Resources within Church Ministry one must remember that the call to ministry is a different type of response made by a person than merely a response to a job advertisement in the newspaper. As an HR Manager in Church Ministry, one must remember what ministers and those drawn to working within Church Ministry, are actually 'called' to. They are called to the service of the kingdom of God, which means: all members of the church share the equal responsibility of making the church a credible sign and an effective instrument of the Kingdom of God. It is important to remember that the call to ministry needs to recognize the *community of believers*. You may recall the earlier discussion on the difference between Church Ministry and Commercial Organizations. Clearly, ministry is more than job or a function; it involves the whole person. The call to ministry is a call to a relationship with the people of God - to be one of them and service them. Therefore, the ministering person (including the HR manager) should grow in the understanding that any ministry is rooted in Christ's ministry as its source; be aware of their relatedness to those whose needs are being addressed and to Christ who is at work through their gifts; listen contemplatively to hear God's word of mercy and learn to adopt this listening and mercy approach, with others and pray surrounded by the experience of the needs of God's people and Christ's gracious response to those needs.

Reference:

James Bacik: 'Spirituality for Church Ministers'

Hargreaves, Andy & Fink: 'Sustainable leadership'



NEWS CLIPPINGS

Tangkhul Baptist Churches Leaders Retreat (October 7-9, 2013)

CBCNEI Justice & Peace Department organized a three days retreat for Tangkhul Baptist Leaders at Life Spring Corner in Dimapur, Nagaland. It focused on creating a time where these leaders could isolate themselves and connect with God on a personal level. Attendees were encouraged to participate in self-evaluation of their calling and purpose as leaders in the church. Each meeting time began with worship & prayer, followed by a message, and ended with a time of self-reflection. 20 secretaries from the various Tangkhul associations participated. The impacts of this retreat were ground breaking on an individual and communal





level as God's presence was at work during this time.

Testimonies

Most of the participants commented on the uniqueness of the retreat. It was exactly what the Tangkhul leaders needed. Life gets busy with work, which makes it difficult to step away and retreat. But such time of retreat help people grow in their personal relationship with God. The personal time of reflection after each message was key for many leaders who do not regularly give themselves the time. This brought awareness of compromise and mistakes in doing God's will. A key area is finding a balance between their personal relationship with God and the leadership position that they hold. One leader shared "let our tears bring fruit". This brokenness before God and reconciliation with Him doesn't end when the retreat ends, but will produce fruit through each individual that was renewed. Everyone asked that this be a yearly event where Tangkhul leaders gather. Their vertical relationship with God needs

to be right before their horizontal relationships with one another can be restored.

Prayer Requests (Shared by those in attendance)

- Degeneration of spirituality in Manipur
- Political condition of Manipur
- Spiritual condition of the church
- Long lasting impact that won't stop in the middle
- Reconciliation and unity among the Tangkhul



Mission Conference Napak Baptist Church, Garo Baptist Convention (GBC) (December 6-8, 2013)

The first Mission conference of Napak Baptist Church (20 sister churches) under Krima No.5 was conducted on the



theme “*Church and Mission.*” Rev Dr Jolly Ramai, Mission Secretary of the Council was able to minister to them in making Mission the priority of the church. The church is now looking for mission field as they are prepared to send missionary.



Christmas Peace Banquet (December 19, 2013)

Manipur Baptist Convention in partnership with the Justice and Peace Department, CBCNEI, organized “**Christmas Peace Banquet**” at the Hotel Classic, Imphal. Altogether 50 Church leaders from all denominations from Imphal City were officially invited and out of which 42 Church leaders attended the program.

Rationale of the Banquet

Manipur, one of the North Eastern states, bordering the International Commercial Trade Centre, Myanmar (well



known as Burma), is a trouble torn state because of its multi ethnic population and armed struggles for self determinations. Various tribes and communities such as Nagas, Kukis, Meiteis, Nepalis, Pangals(Muslims), Mayangs (people from outside NE states) and so on, are living together in the state. Due to this multi ethnic nature and the prevalence of armed struggles for self determinations there are naturally differences of opinions, ideologies, philosophies, aspirations, etc. manifesting very often in various forms of ethnic conflicts, brutal and random killings, kidnappings, agitations, atrocities, and so on. People are experiencing fear, anxiety, uncertainty, insecurity, distress, tumult, turbulence, disturbances, and so leading to political, social, economic and educational system dysfunctional. There is in fact the prevalence of political and social unrest in the state.

In such a situation, where social and political fibre are broken down due to the absence of peace and tranquillity in the state, the role of church leaders who can play a



pivotal role in restoring and building peace and tranquillity amongst various ethnic groups, social organizations and club, armed groups, etc. are in dire need.

Goal of the Banquet

Taking into consideration the importance of church leader's role in restoring and building peace and tranquillity in the state, "**Christmas Peace Banquet**" was organized by MBC, inviting Imphal, City Church leaders to disseminate the message of Peace during Christmas season. It is also to make the leaders aware of their role in restoration and building of Peace as integral part of their ministries in their areas of influence to make the Manipur state a place of peaceful coexistence for all the people irrespective of tribes, castes, creed and religions.

Impact of the Banquet

Accordingly, the **Christmas Peace Banquet** program was led by the Cabinet Secretaries of MBC with a short fellowship just before the banquet where Rev. Dr. W. Konghar, General Secretary, delivered the message of Peace for the state based on Luke 2.8-14, challenging the participating City Church leaders to be ambassadors for peace. He also stressed on the importance of sharing the message of peace with other faiths while celebrating Christmas.

The key indicators in evaluating the impact of the Banquet were through hearing response from the participating leaders. The participants appreciated the program and gave their commitments to taking up peace initiatives. They committed themselves to invite people of other faiths during Christmas celebration. They proposed to make the program as a regular feature for the years ahead.



Konyak Baptist Association Staff Retreat (January 11-12)



Headed by the Executive Secretary of the Association, the leaders of the Konyak Baptist Churches Association from Nagaland came for Retreat and exposure tour in Guwahati. The theme of the Retreat was, *“In step with the Spirit,”* based on Gal.5:25. Rev. Dr. Jolly Ramai, Mission Secretary



of CBCNEI had the opportunity to minister to them. It was a blessed experienced for all. We thank God for this wonderful time of retreat and exposure.



Asia Pacific Baptist Federation (APBF) Executive Committee (January 17 -18)

The APBF Executive Committee met at Yangon, Myanmar and reshuffled responsibilities of the Federation. The following are the leaders appointed to take up various tasks in different capacities:

1. Appointed Rev. Victor Rembeth, of the Union of Indonesia Baptist Churches as Chairman APBAid.

APBPF is grateful to Rev. Alan Marr of Australia for shouldering the responsibility of Chairman, APBAid during the last one year.

2. Appointment of Dr. Les Fussell, of the Australian Baptist Ministries (formerly the Baptist Union of Australia) as Treasurer, APBF.

APBPF is also grateful to Ms. Surang Kinghirunwatana of Thailand for carrying that responsibility since September 2012. She remains in the APBF Executive Committee as co-opted member.



Anal Naga Women leadership Training and Conference (January 17-19)

On the Theme “*Women Leadership in 21st Century,*” the Anal Naga Association conducted women leadership training and conference. Over hundred women leaders from all the churches attended the program. Rev. Dr. Jolly Ramai, Mission Secretary, CBCNEI ministered to them for three days.



Silver Jubilee Celebration of Nagaland Police Baptist Churches Association (NPBCA), Dimapur (February 3-4)



Nagaland Police Baptist Churches Association (NPBCA) is a unique association serving the spiritual needs of the police personnel and their

families in Nagaland. Under the leadership of Rev Mong Lotha, the NPBCA celebrated 25th years of their successful ministry with great jubilation and colors in the NPBCA Mission Compound. The theme was “*Jesus, the Hope of Ages.*” On this occasion many distinguished guests were invited to bring greetings and grace the occasion. The main speakers were Rev Dr Anjo Keikung, Rev Dr A. K. Lama, Rev Bonny Resu, and Rev Dr Wati Aier.



Mission Conference of Tangsa Baptist Churches Association (February 7-11)

Under the able leadership of Mr Wangtum, Mission Secretary, the Tangsa Baptist Churches Association conducted its first ever Mission Conference on the theme “*Church and Mission.*” Around two hundred Pastors and church leaders from 97 churches and fellowships attended the program. Rev Dr Jolly Ramai, Mission Secretary of the Council was the Resource person for the whole three days program.



Gospel Crusade of Chima Apal Baptist Church, Chima Apal (February 14-16)

In the community ground of Chima Apal village, the local Baptist Church organized a crusade. Rev Dr A. K. Lama was the speaker. Though it was interrupted by rain many attended and made personal commitments.



Consultation on Centralization and Leadership, Guwahati (February 19)

The Leaders and Executive Committee of CBCNEI met for an intensive consultation at CBCNEI Mission Compound to discuss the issues concerning the Medical Department under CBCNEI and various other ministries of the Council. Along with the Executive Committee Members, CBCNEI Leaders, Mr A.K. Goldsmith; Mr N. Lokho Moa; Rev Vumthnag Sitlhou were present. Various agendas discussed during the meeting were: Healing Ministry, Student Ministry, and North East Christian University. The leaders recommended three important actions to be taken up by the Executive Committee namely: 1) Centralization of the Medical Department; 2) Amend the selection procedure of the CBCNEI leaders; and 3) To setup a proper protocol for communication between CBCNEI, Conventions and Associations.



Training on FCRA & Financial Management (February 21-23)



Training on FCRA & Financial Management was held at CBCNEI Conference Centre. The program was sponsored by CBCNEI. There were 36 delegates representing various Baptist Convention's/Associations/Churches/Organization. Mr Vikato Shikhu, Finance Secretary, CBCNEI, spoke on importance of Supporting Documents for various transactions, Payment Vouchers, Receipts, Invoice, Filing and Subsidiary Books & Registers. While Budget Preparation & Cash Flow Forecast, Book-Keeping & Accounts -[Practical Sessions], Finalization & preparation of Financial Reports was dealt by Mr S.Sudarsan. Rev Dr A K Lama, General Secretary, CBCNEI, led the session on Stewardship - Accounts & Finance. Mr Manoj Fogla CA led the sessions on FCRA, Income Tax [with latest amendments], and matters relating to Company's Act and Society's Act. He also gave guidelines how to handle various issues concerning the Government departments.



Baptist Women Fellowship of North East India (BWFNEI) (February 27-28)



The Baptist Women Fellowship of North East India held a seminar on Women & Development cum Executive Meeting at CBCNEI. Women leaders from different parts of North East India under the Council attended the seminar. The resource person for the seminar was Rev Katie Longkumer, Development Consultant BIM. She presented two papers on developing effective mature leaders namely, *“Discerning Personality types to improve communication and promote understanding,”* and *“The Spiritual Journey Discussing Stages of Faith.”* The members also sat for its executive meeting discussing on the welfare of the BWFNEI and ways of making the Fellowship a facilitator for development of women in Baptist churches.

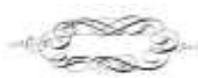


Mission Retreat of Sibasagar Baptist Church, Sibasagar, March 1-2.

Sibasagar Baptist Church claims itself as the first Church that American Baptist Missionaries established in Assam in 1845. Mr. Godhula was the first Indian missionary who was



sent out from this Church to reach out Nagaland. This Church continues to be missional and sponsor few missionaries. They organized a one day mission retreat and Rev Dr A. K. Lama was the speaker for the occasion.



Manipur Baptist Convention, Mission Conference (March 4-7)

In partnership with the Manipur Baptist Convention, a mission conference was conducted at MBC Centre Church Imphal. Association and church leaders and missionaries



participated in the conference. The focus of the Conference was on *“Being Effective”* in Mission.

Peace Meeting of Karbi-Rengma Community Church Leaders and Village Heads at Chokihola, Karbi Anglong (March 4)



The Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention (KABC) along with representatives of Nihang Karbi Baptist Association (NKBA) and Western Rengma Baptist Association (WRBA), with assistance of the Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India (CBCNEI) and International Ministries (IM) organized a peace meeting comprising of church leaders and village heads at Chokihola, Karbi Anglong to discuss and plan for the rehabilitation process of the Rengma community who are in the relief camps in Silonijan area of Karbi Anglong. In the meeting, the members present resolved to form a rehabilitation committee under the leadership of Mr. Benting Teron, Executive Secretary of NKBA (Chairman of Karbi Anglong Peace Forum, a frontal organization of Karbi Anglong which actively undertook peace initiative during the conflict period) to approach the Deputy Commissioner of Karbi Anglong and Chief Executive Member of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council to request assistance in the rehabilitation process. The members also resolved to entrust NKBA to support the rehabilitation of the Rengmas through human resource assistance in rebuilding the houses destroyed in the conflict. The Council and KABC express appreciation to Western Rengma Baptist Association for hosting the meeting and IM for the financial assistance.

The Council also appeals to all the constituent churches under CBCNEI to continue to support the effected community in prayer and with material assistance.



Theological Educations Committee and Principals' Meeting, Guwahati (March 22)

The Theological Education Committee and Principals Meeting was held in CBCNEI Mission Compound. Principals from various theological colleges affiliated to CBCNEI attended the meeting. The meeting was organized to deliberate on issues concerning the development of good theological education and leadership among the young theologians. They also discussed on how to network with each other so as to train better future church leaders.



Mission Conference of Tangkhul Baptist Church Shillong (March 22-23)

The Tangkhul Baptist Church Shillong conducted a Mission conference under the theme “*Church and Mission.*” The church is now more focused on Mission and evangelism in obedience to the Great Commission. Rev Dr Jolly Ramai, Mission Secretary of the Council was the resource person for the conference.



Mission Leaders Tour to UP with YBPS (March 27 -April 5)

Packed and well equipped both physically and spiritually ten mission leaders comprising of Mission Secretaries, Pastors, and Evangelists set out for a challenging and educative Mission tour to UP under Yeshu Bhakt Pavitra Sabha organized by CBCNEI, Mission Department. It was a great experience for all the Mission leaders to see and witness how the Missionaries are really toiling hard to do evangelism in main line India. The field trip was a memorable



experience of how the mission works is done for a fruitful harvest. The team toured some parts of UP where they were led to witness house Church fellowship, Trainings for the new believers, Social ser-



vice development program and prayer walks. The response and thirst of the new believers to come closer to Christ speaks volume to the churches in North East India to unite and pray for the UP Mission by YBPS. The team also shared and encouraged the believers to stay firm as one in Christ irrespective of diverse customs, cultures and locations. Testimony of one woman expresses of how God has been using her to witness for the Lord and give trainings among the woman folks in spite of being uneducated signifies how our wonderful our God is. The team was blessed and encouraged by the YBPS Mission in UP and the humble efforts they are investing for the glory of Gods kingdom to come. The team after visiting some UP areas felt the need to challenge and encourage all the North East churches to pray and send more workers into the UP mission field to prepare His coming. The team would like to express gratitude to Retd. Lt. Col Arun Kumar and his team for the hos-

pitality towards the CBCNEI Mission leaders and also the Mission department CBCNEI for organizing a memorable tour. Let the efforts and seeds sown in the field be multiplied for a rich harvest.



Triennial Gatherings of Tangkhul Baptist Churches Association (TBCA), Sinakeithei (March 28-30)

Under the leadership of Rev Yarngam Muivah, Executive Secretary of the TBCA, the churches under TBCA assembled at Sinakeithei village for their triennial gatherings. Around 5000 delegates stayed together for three days in hundreds of temporary huts made up of straw and plastic sheet in the open agricultural field. The local church and the surrounding villages deeply impressed the guests with their sacrificial hospitality. The theme of the Conference was, *“Unity in the Spirit.”* Rev Dr A. K. Lama ministered the



Word. One of the very inspirational events of the celebration was the marching of the delegates around the village singing hymns and beating the drums.



Consultation on Northeast Christian University (NECU) CBCNEI, Mission Compound, Guwahati, Assam (April 8)

The Executive Committee (EC) of the Council met for a Consultation on Northeast Christian University (NECU) at CBCNEI. This was a special gathering to finally put into action whatever discussed in The First Large Consultation on Northeast Christian University (NECU). A number of educated and highly qualified academicians, officials and former CBCNEI leaders were invited to the consultation to deliberate on the issue concerning the University. Along with the EC members the following invites were present in the meeting; Prof. Dr. D. Khathing, Prof. Department of Physics, NEHU, Shillong; Mr. A.K. Goldsmith, former President of the Council, working with ARLDF, Guwahati, Dr. J.M. Ngul Khan Pau, former GS, CBCNEI, Consultant, Development Associates International (DAI); Rev. Taku Longkumer and Rev. Katie Longkumer, Development Consultant, BIM, Mr. Beryl B Sangma, Banking Ombudsman



for the seven Northeastern States and Rev. Dr. Solomon Rongpi, Secretary, Commission on Unity, Mission and Evangelism, NCCI. The meeting was definitely productive with views and suggestions circulating from the bench. There were elaborate discussions on where to begin and governance of the University. Finally the meeting closed with the decision of appointing the Chancellor in the next executive meeting to be held in Arunachal Pradesh.



Annual Conference of Arunachal Baptist Churches Council (ABCC), Balinong (April 4-6)



In spite of the elections in the state, ten members of the Arunachal Baptist Churches Council out of 19 gathered

in a remote village named Balinong for its Annual Conference. There were more than 200 delegates. The highlight of the Conference was a 30 member choir group from the youngest association, Tutsa Baptist Churches Association. The local church and the Tangsa Baptist Churches Association made a sacrificial contribution in making the conference a blessed celebration. Rev Dr A. K. Lama ministered the Word.



Meeting a Church Growth Specialist



by Ron Frost

Last fall I met with a pastor of a New Delhi church and he spoke of the growing spiritual liveliness in the church he leads. It's something new in recent days and with it has come numerical growth—God's blessing is evident. What makes the difference? He attributed the growth to their newfound devotion to Bible reading and prayer.

I met another pastor with a similar story two years ago in Glasgow, Scotland. There the pastor of a young church—founded less than a decade ago—has seen growth from a small band of 10 to the nearly 300 current members. Glasgow, like much of Europe, is very post-Christian so this was a surprise. How did the pastor account for the growth? He gave the same answer the pastor in India offered: Bible-reading, prayer, and a rich sense of community. Bible reading was the motor; prayer was the response; and community growth was the product.

In both cases the Bible reading started with a simple premise that God offered me through a retired Scottish missionary some decades ago. For more than fifty years Sam, the missionary, read through the Bible two to three times each

year. That vision captured me and since then I've passed it along to others. The Glasgow pastor was captured by Sam's story in a Bible college classroom I taught; and two years ago I shared the story in a children's Sunday school class in Delhi where Isaac, an 11 year-old listened. God did the rest.

Here are some of the particulars. In India the momentum for Bible reading came when young Isaac responded by reading through an entire adult Bible in just four months. Then he did another reading in even less time. And he kept up the pace. After that, when the word spread and some adults picked up on their own Bible reading—including the pastor—the now-13-year-old boy did a 40 day Bible read through. This time the pastor invited others to join him by reading at the same pace. Many did, and succeeded, and they began to share how captivating and satisfying the Bible is. The momentum ultimately came from the Bible itself and not the prodigious example of young Isaac. He may have had a role in starting the fire but the spread came from God's own words.

What about the Glasgow setting?

There I saw a church prospering in a very gritty city. Glasgow is not a prime zone for Christian faith these days: it has a reputation for drinking, drugs, and decay. So picture dozens of clusters of young men and women—the average age of the church is about thirty—avidly flipping Bible pages in public settings throughout the westside of town, between the shipyards and the university. People noticed and some started to attend the church to see what was happening.

I was also reminded that prayer and worship comes with bold Bible reading. Almost an hour before the morning service about thirty members came to the building and joined in a lively time of prayer. When the service began

the singing was heartfelt and the preaching solid. Two adults were baptized as well and a meal followed.

Read-through groups are part of the Glasgow community fabric with many if not most of the regular Sunday participants fully involved—with dozens of groups among the 300 members. Brian, the pastor, explained that each week groups of three, four, or five meet together in local coffee shops and pubs to share verses and lessons with each other that they've marked in their personal reading during the week. Many have been doing it for years.

I talked with one man, Scott, who noticed the Bible groups when he was an unbeliever. He sat near one once and was listening in to their conversation from his own table, captured by what they were saying. One of the Bible group men noticed.

“Would you like to join us?”

“Yes!”

Scott's appetite for God's word carried him forward from there. Many others in the church have repeated his story. They just needed to see someone leading the way—actually enjoying God by reading his words.

Over the years I've seen remarkable transformations through Bible reading in other settings as well. There's a reason for it. God offers himself through words. And the church begins to grow with the power I've described only when his Word is the focus of ministry. The more direct the exposure to his words, the more powerful the growth.

Let's think about the theology of Bible reading for a moment. In Gen 2 God gave his word to Adam—instructing him to avoid a forbidden fruit—and the serpent then called God a liar in Gen 3. Adam, against all reason, sided with the serpent's words rather than God's words.

Ever since the events in Eden a battle has raged between God's words and the opposed claims of the prince of the power of the air. God promises the truth, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Satan offers the Lie—"you can be a god! You can decide what is good and what is evil for yourself."

The solution? "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31).

Jesus, in making this claim, was actually displaying what John wrote as the introduction of the fourth Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In this respect God confronts the world and calls the world to himself with the simple reality that the Triune God is an eternal communicator. He speaks and he invites us to listen. The Son is the ultimate expression of God's self-disclosures and the Son's life and presence is offered both by and throughout the Bible. The Spirit then takes the word of God to birth men and women of God.

How should we respond? By taking Christ, the Word himself, to be the ultimate Church growth specialist: he alone can set people free from Satan's falsehoods by telling us the truth. Faith comes from hearing God's word.

Our role as leaders and pastors, then, is to be better lenses of the Word. As we abide in the Bible ourselves we meet Christ most directly—not through supplementary books and resources. They can be useful but must never be central. We, in turn, need to do more to invite people to the Word himself rather than to our ministries as ends in themselves.

The starting point for us may be as simple as doing what an 11 year-old boy can do: read through the Bible ourselves, desiring to meet God there. Then do it again, and then

again. And, with that, start to pray more boldly. And then invite others to what we are already doing and experiencing. No leader can lead others where we aren't ready to go ourselves.

So our opportunity for church growth—both as persons and in numbers—is something Christ is happy to offer. But let's let him do it by our simply abiding in what he shares of himself. He's a very good builder.



Introducing Alpha Courses

Alpha is an International organization specialized and committed for the growth of the church. They are in partnership with CBCNEI for the benefit of our churches. You may contact us if you need any of the given courses for your church members. These courses can be run as Bible study groups, Sunday school class, or small group fellowship, etc. for a year.

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E. Eyingbemo Ngullie, Mission Promoter, CBCNEI
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White Memorial Hostel - *the Trailblazer*

by Mrs L. Bendangla Jamir, Chaplain, White Memorial Hostel Ministry

The beginning Challenges, Joy and Vision

In 1937, May, at Satribari, in the heart of Guwahati Sarah E. White Memorial Hostel (WMH), the first exclusive women hostel for college going girls for the whole north east region was officially founded. The record of WMH from its inception unequivocally brings into mind, the pride and history it involves not only of the hostel, but of Assam in general, and Guwahati, in particular. It exudes the rich heritage that Guwahati was and continues to be center of almost all major landmarks in political, culture, social and educational strike of the whole region. The fact that WMH was set up in Guwahati is a testimony to substantiate these assertions. It was no doubt, benchmark for women aspirations to seek higher education and learning in a secured, vibrant and homely environment. We recognize those men and women who put concerted effort to champion this radical thinking into a reality amidst challenges and diffi-

culties in tiring times.

To set up an exclusive women hostel fervent appeals were sent out by the mission to procure financial assistance, Sarah E white , an American lady who had never been to India responded to the appeal by donating a generous gift of ‘ 5000. It was her desire that the money be used for the service of the Indian women. And accordingly the first hostel for college girls in the whole of North East became a reality.

Through this hostel numerous triumphal virtuous women has been sheltered, nurtured and developed. Today with great joy, love and respect, we salute and fondly remember Sarah E. White. In her honour the hostel was christened Sarah E. White Memorial Hostel. We are indebted to American Baptist Mission and Baptist Women’s Foreign Mission Society for the generous endeavor in lending this kind hand towards this remarkable project bearing untold fruits in the uplifting of the educational paths to the past pioneers and the younger learner from generation to generation.

Miss Marion Burnham who was the corresponding secretary and the treasurer of the American Baptist Mission Guwahati was the first Superintendent of W.M.H who competently nurtured the hostel in the first borders of 25 young girls who came different parts of the then Assam Province. Borders came as far as from Tinsukia, Cheerapunji, Kohima, Darang, Lushia Hills, to name a few. The names of the first batch of border as registered in record are:

1. Lahimya Das, Jorhat, 2. Pratima Das Gupta, Sibsagar 3. Nilima Das Gupta, Sibsagar, 4. Elia Wallang, Shillong, 5. Mesilda Khongwin, Cheerapunji, 6. Molina Beguon, Jorhat, 7. Labonya Kenwar, Guwahati, 8. Roselind D. Sakhrino, Kohima, 9. Matilda Zille, Guwahati, 10. Trilliant War,

Shillong, 11. Juanada Chowdhury, Dibrugarh, 12. Trissily Rynjah, Shillong, 13. Lily Dey, Nowgong, 14. Rupisboti , Darrang, 15. Nelima Chowdhary, Tezpur, 16. Blodwen Blah, Shillong, 17. Lalsanglumi, Lushia Hills, 18. Amiya Das, Guwahati, 19. Lakshmi Hazarika, Sibsagar, 20. Jyoti Saika, TitaborMary Khatun, Dibrugarh, 21. Masuli Khatun, Dibrugarh, 22. Henadini Shira, Satribari, 23. Padma Saikia, Nowgong, 24. Juana Borpujaria, Tinsukia

Those young bright, courageous girls were in more ways than one, breaking the barriers of strong hold patriarchy and stereotypes, and became trailblazers in their own communities. The hostel report of 1939 reads, “There were three of our hostel girls in the 4th year class...One of this was a Khasi Christian, the first Khasi girl to obtain English honors in Cotton College, the second was the first Moham-medan girl to receive her B.A degree from the College, a Hindu Assamese girl and the first women student to get the B.SC degree from the College.” Since then thousands of girls have found their home in White Memorial Hostel when away from home for their studies. Such is the illustrious history of W.M.H.

The Hostel witnessed, withstood and adapted to the changing socio political and educational landscape which took place in Guwahati in the northeastern region in general, since the colonial period. But the vision of the founders to “furnish a home for these young women a cosmopolitan hostel to which girls of any caste or creed might come and find care, guidance and opportunities for study and recreation that she should need during college years” remain intact till today.

Today, it is under the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India and placed under the hostel ministry. We have completed 75 years of its existence and to commemorate

its anniversary a grand and historic function was successfully observed on 24th November 2012. By Gods grace this unique hostel in such a beautiful and enchanting place in the heart of the Guwahati metro city. It is indeed, a very pleasant, comfortable and silent admired by denizens of the city whoever pay visit to this place.

As far as the present building infrastructure is concerned it is not in an up to date shape but still people prefer to stay in this hostel perhaps because of its uniqueness. With many more new mushrooming educational and technical institutional establishment in and around this progressive city, being designated as the capital city of entire north eastern state many young and working girls are rushing into this place for seeking education and we foresee that this trend would be tripled within a couple of decades.

As of now we hardly accommodate 50 boarders and the total fee collection from boarder hardly meet the salary expenses of the present workers as the fee structure is reasonable compared to other private hostel in the city. But we purposely fix such a minimum fees as it is a part of CBCNEI Hostel ministry for the needy students.

Now time has come and it is wise to set a viable call with vivid objectives to give the historic life of this hostel alive and envisioning to preserve this heritage with new outlook for future generation.

I would like to give some vital points so as to challenge those who are concerned towards it.

1. Being aware that the future belongs to youngster it is perfectly wise to wake up upright and befitting action be initiated. CBCNEI need to pay special attention by constituting a pragmatic hostel committee and to plan out a vigorous and broader project

so as to accommodate at least 100 girls with latest standard of infrastructure, since by Gods grace there is spacious land for extension of building.

2. To incorporate in the hostel, a recreational centre with reference to library, computers, musical instruments and counseling units so that boarders can develop and explore their highest potential as caring and responsible citizen and women of our society.

3. We can also project for well furnished with a provision to stay as a quest house for the women travelers of the region and even for missionaries from abroad so that it become a house of rest and also a source of income generation and if possible we add conference hall to conduct training programme with all the facilities.

Management of such a historic property and heritage is a formidable responsibility. We continue to beseech your support, direction, suggestion, collective wisdom and your continuous prayer.



Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.

Titus 1:7 (NIV)

Mission Challenges Baptist Churches facing in the North-east India:

An Interview with Rev Dr A. K. Lama, General Secretary, CBCNEI.

Baptist News: What are the most significant challenges for Missions in Baptist Churches?

Dr A. K. Lama: In the last two decades, we have witnessed phenomenal changes in the way Christian missions are done. Advanced technology and increased number of mission agencies (both Church based and para-church based) have produced remarkable results. However, modern Christian mission agencies are neither without challenges nor it shall be free of challenges in the next decade as well.

Following are some of the most significant challenges that I have faced thus far:

i) How do we make everybody excited and involved in missions?

The body of Christ, the Church, is called out from the world to reach out the world so that the whole world may become one new humanity under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and all that has breathe may glorify His Name. While worship is lifestyle, **MISSION** is the purpose for which the church exists on this side of heaven.

Mission is best understood from the Bible as acronym of **My Involvement Sincerely Sacrificially In Others Needs**. The locations, formats, methods might be different but the ultimate objective is same—the glory of the God of the Bible, that those who receive our ministry through our missions (local or global) may give glory to him.

Those who participate in Missions are still a minority. Most Churches' mission budget is less than 10% of their income. In most churches, the effective management of the institution, providing member care, and serving best possible liturgy experience has become recipe to survive and succeed. Housekeeping expenses such as salary to Church staffs, maintenance, activities and program within the Church, conference and training, financial obligation toward associations, conventions, and other affiliated bodies, building infrastructure and amenities, development for the future, and etc. accounts much bigger portion in our budget than mission itself. They are certainly important but most Churches while being pre-occupied with these; they tend to consider missions as a smaller financial obligation to fulfill.

Vision and mission statement are carefully drafted with high ideals but translating them into actions to its fuller sense shall remain an ongoing challenge for every Church or institution.

Much would depend on our prayer, strategy, and plan to face this challenge.

ii) How do we establish distinctiveness of my mission amidst many other mission agencies?

Those who want to give and involve in Missions have **many options today**. The numbers of corporate, interdenominational, private, non-Church based, non-governmental mission agencies in and around the world have increased. Missions have become very competitive. Hence, the question is: what would motivate anyone to give or involve in mission through our Church?

The Church as a body may resolve to fund a mission agency, but to involve in mission field with firsthand experience is

powerful and could transform the lives of members participating. It is the personal touch of the missionaries, authenticity of the work, and the way the mission activities are carried out attract givers and goers. In any mission activity, what, how, and why do we do things differently requires a serious study, consultation, and research. It requires pioneering spirit of courage and trust in the Lord to become uniquely biblical and distinct in the crowd.

While the vision, mission, values, and method are oriented and reoriented, there is need of regular feedback, good evaluation process, and the flexibility to adjust in order to improve and perform better.

iii) How do we help Church balance between local and Cooperative Denominational Mission?

Autonomy and independence of the local church is the Baptist distinctiveness. It is part of our rich legacy. However, it certainly needs to be re-interpreted to our time and context. How should this autonomy and independence be practiced in local Church without undermining their obligation to global Church?

The Body of Christ does not limit itself to a local Church but it transcends to Association, Convention, and global gathering. The principle of selflessness, sacrifice, and dying for others apply also in the matters of the common good of the larger family. Unity is the essential component of Great commission and also one of the hurdles. Jesus foresaw this hurdle and he prayed for us (John 17:20-21). We need collective wisdom to overcome this hurdle.

iv) How do we empower the indigenous workers and mission agencies?

The active involvement of sending Churches (both eastern and western) can become both an asset as well as liability,

depending on how we do missions. In comparison to early 70s the mission fields have undergone great changes.

In some places one can find good number of qualified and genuine indigenous workers and mission agencies. In other places, socio-political scenarios restrict and restrain the active and frontier role of western missionaries. Some-time establishing foreign sponsored mission institutions might help, but other time it might induce competition, comparison, frustration, jealousy and disappointment among the indigenous workers.

Of course, the missionary mandate to go remains valid even today but we have to discern the changing role of the sending Churches. We must wrestle with the questions such as: How do we go? How long we go? How often we go? And with what we go?

The cross-cultural missionaries need extra-efforts and skills to help and allow the newly formed Church to become indigenous and relevant to her own context and culture.

The sending mission agencies need the art of listening, observing, and discerning the wisdom from above. So that when time comes to leave the indigenous Churches, we leave them as mature and strong to carry forth the missions better than us.

v) How do we remain new and relevant without losing the old but essential core values?

On the one hand, we need to understand the trend, evaluate, reflect, and adapt the necessary changes. On the other hand, we must consider holistic approach and long term impact. We must measure the growth in terms of depth while celebrating the width.

The modern world of technology promotes individualism,

impersonal approach, data oriented evaluation, and insensitive competition. They are instant and prompt, but often fail to be sensitive to feelings and emotions.

We must continually seek primacy of the Word of God, the necessity of sacrificial service, the importance of interpersonal relationship, discipleship, mentoring, love and care in our missionary endeavor. Missionaries themselves need continuous pastoral care in these matters. How effective is our supply and support to the missionaries in the frontiers? Equipping, encouraging, and empowering them continuously is the key to success.

Baptist News: What is the role of local Baptist church in global mission engagement in the 21st century?

Global mission begins with information. Local Baptist church can be creative in providing mission information in more than one format to its members. It can form mission interest groups (for each age category) whose responsibility must be to mobilize weekly mission prayer meetings, seminars, workshops, and other activities. Pastor and deacons can set aside one Sunday service every month for mission.

A class room education might become simply an intellectual exercise, but information gained particularly through seeing and touching is very powerful. The local church, therefore, may invite missionaries to share their stories and report. They may organize Annual Global Mission week and provide opportunities to its members for selective involvement in mission works.

In other words, the local Church may have to be intentional in mobilizing all resources (both human and financial) in their hand and direct them to the benefit of the mission field. The pastor and deacons of local church might

have to make some sacrifices for missions to impress on the hearts of its members that mission is truly their priority. A church that is focused to missions, giving sacrificially to its cause may never have financial crisis or problem of disunity.

Baptist News: What should Baptist be thinking about as they seek to engage globally in ways that help and do not hurt those to whom we are called to minister?

Christian missions must be biblically and contextually relevant. For an example, God speaks to us through the scripture but there are sixty six books in the Bible. Listening to the voice of congregation, understanding their struggles, sensing their actual needs, knowing their cultural practices and praying to the Holy Spirit for the divine wisdom might help us to know which passage, chapter and the book of the Bible that God would like us to speak through. In order to be relevant and effective, we must listen, observe, and discern God's wisdom.

Not everything that we know is relevant or beneficial. We must consider long term implications, discern and select how to live, what to say, how do we do things, and etc. What is successful in one place may not succeed in another. Methods might be modified and forms might be renewed to communicate the essentials in different context. In all these things, we must seek holistic growth, not only in present, but also in future. What we do today has future implications. We must consider seriously mentoring indigenous leaders with confidence and trust in them. We must place sustainable and relevant system, structure, process, and policies in mission to reduce human error and manipulations and make it effective. We must consider investing toward projects that would sustain the ongoing mission

and protect it from chronic dependence. We must have time bound support and engagements to seek the maturity and independence of our mission partners.

The line between holding our partner accountable and control is too thin. Speaking truth in love and trust is indispensable in this ongoing relationship. We are not pioneers in 21st century and we are privileged to learn from the human errors of those who have gone before us. We are not immune to errors but we can reduce them if we care to listen, observe, and be flexible.

At the end, our missionary endeavor must result into a relevant, strong, and active witnesses of Christ among those whom we minister.

Baptist News: What are you passionate about personally in terms of global challenges that ought to be addressed? How have you worked to address those challenges?

The power lies in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is unique because it is the good news of love and peace. I have personally experienced and I have witnessed the transformation that it has brought in the north east India. However, the best is yet to come. The fuller potential of the Body of Christ is yet to be actualized. What we do is significant but how we do is more significant. The ultimate goal is not simply passing of information and conversion, but transformation. If that is so then our life must give a glimpse of what gospel can do.

I see that Baptist Churches, in particular, need to come together often, have consultation, draw strategy, networking, and go to the frontier as one army. Listening with humility, discerning the common good, and committing to

each other with trust and love shall make our mission truly Christian.

In the last 25 years, the Lord has used me on various capacities as a catalyst and the facilitator for the mission partnership. In my preaching, I have been mindful of the whole counsel of God. How can we seek not only a born again experience in the lives of individual, but also a gradual transformation of perspectives, morale values, ambitions, and lifestyle? How can we have a Christian whose life aim is to involve in the integral mission of Jesus Christ who mandates his disciples to be concerned for moral fabrics of society, environment, injustice, and immorality in addition to desiring a holy life. How can a Christian be blessings to his surroundings? I have often been engaged in a series of mission consultations to bring Baptist associations, para-Church organizations, and non-governmental agencies to partner with each other. I am currently a member of the Baptist World Alliance Commission on Theological Education and Leadership Formation, Executive member of the National Council of Churches and the Churches Auxiliary of Social Action in India. I have tried my best to advocate **holistic contextual missions and Churches' united witness of Jesus' love** to the world. More effort is needed and we must continue the effort on with joy and delight.



"Once an organisation loses its spirit of pioneering, and rests on its early work, its progress stops."

-Thomas J Watson, US executive, founder of IBM (1874-1956)

A Brief Report from Rev Tage Donyi

**Executive Secretary, Apatani
Baptist Association**



I bring greetings to you from Apatani Baptist Association (ABA), in the precious name of our Lord Savior Jesus Christ. I am Rev Tage Donyi, graduated from Bishops College, 2001. I am presently serving as the Executive Secretary of ABA. I am blessed with a wife who is serving as a pastor and two daughters. We belong to a major tribe, Apatani of Arunachal Pradesh with population of about 50-60 thousand. It is a cold mountainous valley at the height of 5754ft called Ziro or Hapoli.

In our region the first ever baptism took place on Nov 8, 1992. Four people took baptism in Suro River and I was one of them. We started our mission in a thatched house building measuring 15x30ft. Finally from this humble beginning, ABA was founded in 1998 and affiliated to CBCNEI in 2012. Today we have 22 prime lands for church purpose and other establishments. This year, God has been so gracious to us that we received one hector of land from the Government free of cost. By the grace of God we now have established eleven modern buildings with attached bath which was inaugurated on Marcj 20, 2014. On March 15, 2014 we were

also able to purchase ₹ 3.2 lakh worth of land for Nepali congregation.

The strength of the congregation is 4000, 100 Sunday school teachers, four full time fellowship, 165 colony fellowship, two prayer and fasting centres, one school up to grade X, one Vocational Training Centre, 625 leaders and 200 prayer warriors. Out of 26 major tribes in Arunachal, Apatanis are one of the educated tribes in terms of literature and degree. Therefore as evangelists our challenge is to deal with this educated class. Apatani had seven main villages, 56 extended villages with an area covering 10 km circumference. Our vision and target is to reach out to the different tribes in the Capital and other districts under Arunachal Pradesh. Pastor Nada, our dynamic pastor takes care of different outreach missions.

Pray for:

1. Construction of church building for Zoar Baptist Church, Ziro
2. Myoko festivals where the Baptist Christians are forced to involve in animal sacrifices
3. **Personal ministry:** My wife's health and her pastoral ministry and my two children



Knowing how to do a job is the accomplishment of labor - showing others is the accomplishment of the teacher - making sure the work is done by others is the accomplishment of the manager - inspiring others to do better work is the accomplishment of the leader.

-John Maxwell

Advertisement

World Vision India is a Christian grassroots humanitarian organisation that serves all people regardless of religion, caste, race, ethnicity or gender. Through development, relief and advocacy, we strive to create lasting change in the lives of children, their families and communities living in contexts of poverty and injustice. World Vision works in nearly 100 countries and in India since 1962. Today we work in over 5300 urban, rural and tribal communities spread over 163 districts across 24 states impacting the lives of 24 lakh children in our nation.

World Vision India is looking for a passionate visionary who can provide strategic leadership in realising its vision of influencing key stakeholders to create a 'nation fit for children'.

DIRECTOR – CHURCH RELATIONS

The **DIRECTOR – CHURCH RELATIONS** provides leadership to the organisation's engagement with all churches (inter-denominational) towards achieving the primary goal that the local church being God's instruments of healing to a broken society, bringing about wholeness. The community must affirm that the local church is our neighbour. The position is based in Chennai / Delhi and reports to the Group Director, Public Engagement.

Requirements :

- 1. Passion for the Church with ability to focus on the building of God's Kingdom**
- 2. Committed to prayer and strong in interpretation and teaching of God's Word**
- 3. Ability to transfer Biblical and academic knowledge to various stakeholders**
- 4. Committed to the mission of the local church to her neighbourhood and for mission to be integral**
- 5. Committed to live out World Vision's Vision & Mission.**

6. Good understanding of the work of WV and ability to connect the church with the issues of the community

7. Demonstrates highest standard of accountability and integrity

8. Excellent communication & interpersonal skills. Fluency in English, both written and spoken. Ability to converse and communicate effectively with the senior leadership of the Church

9. A good understanding of the humanitarian industry.

10. Keep oneself updated through regular reading and research with ability to write technically sound proposals and concept papers

11. Able to build collaborative relationships internally & externally

12. Capability of practicing innovation and change

Qualifications & Experience:

- **Masters Degree in Divinity/Theology with at least 10 years of leadership experience in similar roles with demonstrated community development skills. Additional PG Qualification (preferred)**

- **Should have experience in working with youth and develop programmes for their development.**

- **Experience in Advocacy**

For more details, please log in <http://www.worldvision.in> and view the Job Description in detail. If you meet the above criteria and interested in this position and aged between 40 and 55 years please email your CV within 2 weeks to wvindiaopportunity@wvi.org

we encourage women candidates too, to apply.

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For Change.

For Life.

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