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HEALING



BAPTIST HERALD

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BAPTIST HERALD EDITORIAL NOTE...

Dear readers,

In a world rife with brokenness, the theme of healing takes center stage in this issue of Baptist Herald. As we explore its profound significance, we're reminded of its pivotal place in the Christian narrative.

Restoring Heart and Soul Beyond physical well-being, emotional healing emerges as a vital facet of our spiritual journey.



We share stories of resilience and growth, showcasing the redemptive threads woven into our faith. By embracing our emotional wounds and turning to God's Word, we unearth solace and strength amid life's trials.



BAPTIST HERALD EDITORIAL NOTE...

Journey to Spiritual Renewal in a world tarnished by sin, spiritual healing becomes our route to redemption and revival. This edition contemplates the profound power of God's grace, tracing narratives of spiritual awakening among believers and as Jesus's followers, we are meant to be peacemakers, not peace lovers.



Agents of Restoration Having experienced God's healing touch, we're called to be healing conduits in a hurting world. This issue brings us to extend compassion to all, actively participating in God's ministry of renewal. By emulating examples of service, we're empowered to illuminate lives and effect transformation.

Dear readers, may we grasp that God's healing is comprehensive—reaching our bodies, minds, and spirits. Let's embrace the role of healers, radiating God's light in a world yearning for completeness.

HEALING

Rev. Sut Khan Thang
Mission Secretary

The Cambridge dictionary defines healing as "the process of becoming well again, especially after a cut or other injury, or of making someone well again." It is to make free from injury or disease, or to make sound or whole, so that our bodies become lighter, our minds sharper, and our spirits lifted.

No doctor is required for a healthy person, but only for the sick. For lack of experience suffering from injury or disease, a healthy person has less concern for the ill-health of others. Once a person who has suffered any kind of serious sickness has empathy for someone who has gone through it, they perceive, Where is God when they hurt?

The basic healing that flows from the heart of mankind is pivotal. "Above all, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." Proverb 4:23. A complete restoration and healing from deprived fallen nature intrinsically found rehabilitative of livelihood That is what sinful human beings are longing for. Day in and day out, internal healing is usually visible externally. Outward healing is mostly deceptive and dangerous unless it is done from the inside out. It is somewhat like a wolf in the sheepfold. "All healing is first a healing of the heart," says Carl Townsend. "A cheerful (joyful) heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." Proverbs 17:22.

With the power and presence of the omnipotent God, sufferings and hardships can be easily triumphed over, overcome, and overthrown. It became a stepping stone for the closure walk with the Lord. Paul prayed thrice to remove thorns from his body, but the Lord answered, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." 2 Cor 12:9. The best way to overcome suffering is to accept and comprehend the fact that we live by God's grace alone. "Although the world is full of suffering, It is also full of the overcoming of it." Helen Keller.

"It is reasonable to expect the doctor to recognize that science may not have all the answers to problems of health and healing," says Norman Cousin. He stated the limitations of human expertise and comprehension. With God, nothing is impossible. It is evident that God, the Creator of heaven and earth, holds authority. Jesus Christ has the answers to the unrest in the world today. He triumphs over the past; He is in control and subdues the present; and He holds the future. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8).

Jesus has forgiven the Samaritan woman who indulged or willfully committed the sin of adulteration (John 4). He also freed her from the bondage of sensual lure, disdainful life, and public boycott and humiliation. It is written: "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147:3). Her adulterous life was perfectly restored by Jesus Christ. Therefore, she became the source of blessing to her community for their salvation because she got healed and transformed.

To become a healer of the community, she met the Great physician who heals every disease and sickness. The Psalmist narrated that there are many reasons to praise the name of the Lord because He is the one "who forgives all your sins. And heals all your disease" (103:3). Through the forgiveness she received from Jesus Christ, she got healing physically, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. "The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world." Marrienne Williamson.

"To me, forgiveness is the cornerstone of healing." Sylvia Fraser. It indicates the meaning of the foundation of healing. So, with the power of forgiveness that springs out of the Lord Jesus Christ, it transmits sound health and healing, which transforms the whole being. Without genuine forgiveness from the innermost part, anything remedial that cures is so temporal and fragile. As it is written, "Forgive each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Eph 4:32). This is how the standard of divine healing originated.

Jesus had spent time discoursed with the Samaritan woman as an intimate friend with love and concern in humility, but not as a Master or Teacher. The way he presents the love of God is amazing, which is so appropriate and timely. Moreover, all mankind is in search of healing from anything that hurts sentimentally. Perhaps the woman sought healing years after years and finally got it when she met Jesus. He is so friendly to the friendless and warmly welcomes the lonely and depressed ones. He is able to cure all sickness and give complete healing. Anyone who accesses His throne of grace for healing is what He has been waiting for. In Christ Jesus, every sickness is treated, His friendship and love endure forever. "The greatest healing therapy is friendship and love" Hubert H Humphrey

If you have any kind of disease and would like to get healed,

(i) Physically: meets the Doctor and takes medication.

(ii) Emotionally: meets the counsellor or Psychiatrist.

(iii) Spiritually: meets the Greatest physician, Jesus, through a pastor or Evangelist.

Above all, bear in mind that eternal healing comes from the Lord, your Maker. "For I am the LORD, who heals you (Exo 15:26). Antidotes are available, and salvation can be obtained by faith in Jesus Christ.



Who are you?

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Perhaps most people have never imagined or faced in their life that the response to the question “who are you?” could decide whether you live or die. Today, in our Manipur, many lives and properties have been lost and many more are in danger due to a very narrow understanding of who others think they are! If you happened to be from the “wrong” ethnicity at the “wrong” place, it does not matter how talented, educated, rich you are or how you had contributed to the common well-being of our State. Your one line response to the question “who are you?” could decide whether you are allowed to live out your true identity or die prematurely.

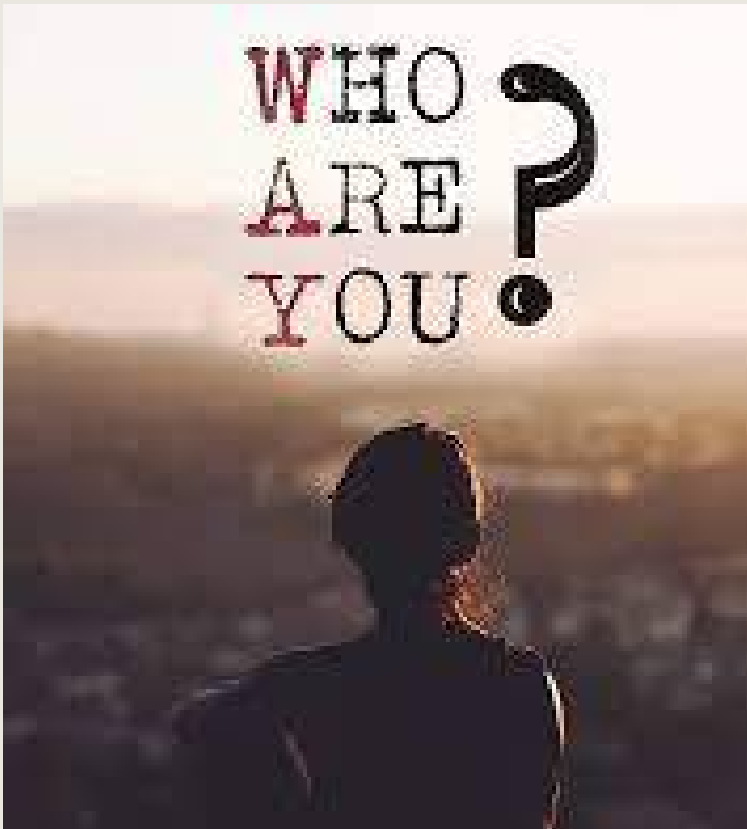
The two years of the Coronavirus pandemic has devastated Manipur along with the rest of the world. It took so many lives directly and indirectly. But thankfully, it spared the buildings and properties where human beings could take shelter. The C-virus has particularly devastated the student community. They lost the best part of their life that could have been used to build a strong foundation. But thankfully, the C-virus did not spread lies, hatred and other sociological and psychological poisons. Therefore, I am confident that the impact of the C-virus will not be long lasting.

As Manipur is crawling out from amidst the debris of the C-virus pandemic, we are hit by a more virulent and deadly virus — the virus of hatred, jealousy, suspicion and lies. Thousands of human beings fled, abandoning their homes and loved ones, in fear of not a virus but of other fellow human beings. Countless were killed, injured or vanished. Lies, hatred, and suspicion spread faster than wildfire. Crimes against women, children and vulnerable became common. Places of worship, instead of being sanctuaries of peace, reconciliation and protection, became easy targets to vent out anger and vengeance.

In the midst of this chaos, hatred and thirst for revenge, many who claim to be Christians are at a loss of how to be human — created in the image of the God of mercy, justice and grace. After all, hatred, anger, and emotions are part of every (fallen) human being irrespective of their creed or religious affiliations. On one hand, the Word of God is the only words of comfort at this trying times. On the other, the teachings of the Bible, such as “love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you, or love your neighbours as you love yourself” are too difficult to accept

while there is so much violence and injustice around. But history will judge how the churchgoers were different from those that do not. Perhaps the unfortunate destruction of church buildings will enable us to go out to love our neighbors and bring healing. Therefore, my prayer remains that those Christians who are alive will not fail to live as Christians even in the midst of this colossal humanitarian crisis. Our true identity is exposed during a crisis rather than during good and comfortable times.

The proper and complete response to “Who are you?” is not how you introduced yourself on your college freshers’ day. To answer the question ‘Who are you?’ one has to live out His/her whole life. One’s lifetime is not sufficient to answer this three-worded question — who are you? For example, to answer, ‘I am a Christian’ is inadequate. But a more adequate, although not complete, answer is how I treat my neighbor who is in need of my help is what defines my identity as a Christian, not what I “say” who I am.



The present ongoing humanitarian crisis in our State has exposed who we are in a different way. Most of us would assume we are peace-loving people and not problem-creators. But often, the so-called “peace-loving” people also become violent when their peace is perceived to be at stake. Most so-called “peace-loving” people do not mind disturbing the peace of others to maintain their peace ignoring the futility of such attempts. But the followers of Jesus are called to be peace “makers” – not peace lovers. The crisis also exposed us to being selfish, unkind, and unloving and acting instinctively and violently; sharing our identity with some other animals. But unlike other animals, aided by technology, we are easily manipulated by lies, hatred, and bigotry which other animals do not.



On the other hand, those courageous women and men who went out of their way, and risked their life to protect their neighbours' life and property instead of coveting them demonstrate that their identity is beyond labels that we normally use to classify people. They may not claim to be heroes. They just did what they ought to do at the moment without thinking about their life or what they would benefit. Perhaps they are the true human ones who are made in the image and likeness of the crucified God. They are the channels of healing.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AT WORKPLACE

Rev. Raimi Rimai
Youth & Education Secy.

Conflict Resolution at Workplace

(Acts 15:36-41):

36 Sometime later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” 37 Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, 38 but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. 39 They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Christ of the Andes

Many years ago, high in the Andes, on the border between Argentina and Chile, a large statue of Christ was built. The statue, known as “Christ of the Andes,” represented a promise made by Chile and Argentina that as long as the statue exists, there will be peace between their two countries. Soon after the statue was placed, the Chileans started to complain, feeling as though they had been treated unfairly because the statue had its back toward Chile. A Chilean newspaperman saved the day just as rage levels in Chile were reaching their peak. He simply stated, “The people of Argentina need more watching over than the Chileans,” in an editorial that not only pleased the people but also made them smile.

Tendency for Conflict

It is very unfortunate that we never outgrow our tendency to disagree or get into a conflict with one another. Even among experienced and matured Christians like Barnabas and Paul, disagreements can occur. In this particular text of Acts 15, Paul and Barnabas fell out over a strong disagreement on John Mark’s reliability.

Paul harshly condemned Mark because he lacked the moral development necessary to make a reliable missionary companion. But according to Barnabas, though Mark was disloyal and had deserted Paul and himself, he was still faithful

to Christ. Strong-willed leaders like Paul frequently struggle to forgive individuals who fail to follow their instructions.

Barnabas tended to be more forgiving as he was prepared to pardon Mark. We must realize that both Paul and Barnabas were basically contending for themselves when they believed they were fighting for the Lord.



When in Conflict

Whenever we are in conflict with our coworkers or anybody, we need to ask the Lord to guide us in finding ways to settle disputes that will bestow the most honour on Him and also learn to respect each person's gifts, callings, and spiritual development with the utmost discernment.

When Christ's love is put into action by the power of the Holy Spirit, all disputes are resolved. God raised Mark's level of dedication through Paul's sternness and at the same time, he felt a sense of connection and healing through Barnabas' love, which was used by the Lord. Without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Barnabas' kindness could have resulted in compromising softness in relationships and Paul's sternness could have turned into abusive leadership. So, in order to help people to be able to utilize the positive qualities of their God-given personality, we need to ask the Lord for assistance in figuring out how to help them become Spirit-controlled.

Conflict into Character Building

Mark abandoned Paul and Barnabas during the first missionary journey for an unspecified reason. In spite of this one bad experience, Mark refused to be deterred, diverted, or demoralized from further missions. He was able to grow in Christ likeness through this humiliating experience because he was prepared to give missionary service another try.

he separation of Paul and Barnabas was powerfully used by God to expand the missionary work. We must learn to put our faith in the Lord's power to use everything for His good. We must love God and attempt to fit into His purposes rather than pursuing our own interests (Romans 8:28-29).

Many people have the tendency to forget that God is sovereign and is capable of transforming what appear to be tragedies into triumphs, defeats into victories, challenges into opportunities, divisions into multiplications, and humiliations into experiences that build character. Let us ask the Lord to help us focus on His amazing promise that, despite our finite understanding, all things will work out for our good.

Solution in the Lord

We must determine just how much each person or set of circumstances is adding to the conflict. No disagreement is brought about by one person or by a particular circumstance. The majority of confrontations are the consequence of complex interactions between numerous elements. When in conflict, we need to turn to the scriptures to find positive answers for the negatives. We need to ask the Lord to help us to remember that we are commanded to "Consider it all joy, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance." (James 1:2-3)

We must be aware of each person's buttons or points of vulnerability in various situations. Some issues tend to aggravate some people more than others. Therefore, we must pray to God for the wisdom, insight, and sensitivity to know how to avoid people's tender spots.

Instead of repressing or harboring our annoyances, disappointments and injured sentiments, let us give them to the Lord. We are vulnerable to developing self-destructive attitudes, behaviour and thought patterns unless we learn to channel our rage and terror towards God in prayer. So, let us confess whatever transgressions we may have committed, including wrongdoings in attitude or incorrect presumptions about others. We must refrain from using past disputes or other people's errors as weapons. Keep in mind that everyone will give an account to God (Romans 14:12). Knowing that God alone is the judge and possesses absolute objectivity, let us refrain from speaking negatively about others. Let us also pray to God for guidance that is more based on reason and logic than it is on emotion.

MOST HIGH GOD RULES OVER THE KINGDOMS OF MEN

*Rev Y Modarshim
Finance Secretary*

Human beings, as creations of God, often do not realize that there is a creator of the universe. The Bible says, “For by Him all things were created that are in heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him” (Col 1: 16-17). Without Him, nothing existed on the land, in the air, and the water. They all came into being with just a command of Him, “Let there be ...” and it all happened according to the creation account in Genesis 1. The very purpose of God's creations is to bring glory and honor to Him. He made all things in His own time in different ways and for different purposes. And above all, man was created in a special way in His image and in His likeness to rule and have dominion over all the creatures. Man was created with great responsibility and with the ultimate purpose of living a meaningful life here on earth. But many a time we human beings often miss out on challenging God-given privileges and opportunities while fulfilling our assigned tasks and duties. So, if a man misses of heating his chance at a particular point of mark that he is supposed to, it may or will not come to his life to hit at that point again. Likewise, the rulers/ kings and authorities of the kingdoms of men never realized that they were appointed as authorities and rulers/kings of the kingdoms by God through their people to govern them accordingly. Because God has His own time and purpose for the authorities and the rulers of the government. Let us examine ourselves by looking at the history of the ancient world and how these appointed/elected authorities and kings desperately failed to achieve their objectives by going against the plan, the purpose, and the will of God.

A. Nimrod, the mighty hunter, confused the universal language

Nimrod was a son of Cush. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord, and the ruler/king over the land of Shinar (Gen 10: 8 -10; 11: 1-9). He was the founder of a great empire known as Babylon. In his lifetime, he built many cities (four in Babylon and four more in Assyria). Therefore, he was known as the founder of several powerful cities. The cities he established became major enemies of Israel. He was proud of his oneness of the language and the people. He called for his people to build a city and a tower for themselves whose top will reach into heaven to make for themselves a name if not they will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth. So, people said to one another, "Come, let us build a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven..." (Gen 11:4). So, they built Babel, the gate of heaven or gateway to a god. God hates our expression of words such as first-person singular and plural pronouns (I, me, mine, we, us, and ours) as they are often intended to be used against the will of God.

The intention of building the Tower of Babel which they thought would reach up to heaven was they hoped that the god or goddess they worshipped would come down from heaven to meet them. The structure of the Tower and the city were called "Babel" which means the gateway of gods. This project was an arrogant declaration of war against the Lord. Warren W. Wiersbe states, "God in heaven is never perplexed or paralyzed by what people do on earth. Babel's conceited 'Let's go up!' was answered by heaven's calm 'Let's go down!' (The Bible exposition commentary 62p). "He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold of them in derision" (Ps 2:4). The word Babel in Hebrew is Balal, which means confusion. Because of God's judgment, "the gate of the gods" turned into "the door to confusion." Instead of making a name for themselves, God titled the project a new name 'confusion.' Our God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor 14:33). But sometimes God uses confusion to humble people and keeps them from wrong uniting against God's will. Thus, God confused the universal language of the whole world and then scattered it over the face of the whole earth (Gen 11:9).

B. Shalmaneser the rod of God's anger fell to his own motives (Isa 10:7-11)

Hoshea son of Elah became the king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned over the kingdom of Samaria for nine years (2 Kings 17:1-6). God raised Shalmaneser the emperor of the Assyrian Empire as God's anger rod to punish His people of wrath. After all, God did not like the attitude Assyrians displayed toward God's people. Shalmaneser was designed by God to correct His people, cure them of their hypocrisy, and bring them nearer to God Himself. Therefore, God ordained the Assyrian Empire through Shalmaneser the king of Assyria as the rod of God's anger for judgment to be an instrument of bringing His people to repentance, but this is not what he intends, this is not what he has in mind, his purpose is to destroy, to put an end to many nations. He never thought that he was either God's elected servant or Israel's friend. That's why Shalmaneser marched to invade the entire land and seized Samaria for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the last king of Israel Shalmaneser captured Samaria and deported Israelites to Assyria in 722 BC. The kingdom of Samaria thus came to an end.

While Assyria was supposed to fulfill God's will and purpose, her mission and motives were out of what God designed for her. Though Assyria was a tool in God's hand (Isa 10:5-6). God was not happy with her. She had a wrong attitude in conquering Samaria. Discounting the greatness of Israel's God, Assyria assumed that Israel and Judah were like any other nations. God punished Assyria because of the king's willful pride evidenced by his haughty look (Ps 18:27; 101:5; Prov 6:17; 30:13). Isaiah 10:13-14 expressed haughty pride words of the king of Assyria Empire. The king felt that what had been achieved was because of his wisdom and strength (six times he said "I"; and three times, "my"). He thought that no one would be able to oppose his military might. Because of Assyria's haughtiness and willful pride, the Lord judged the king of Assyria and his Empire. The instrument (ax or rod or club) is not above the one who uses it (Isa 10:5, 24). Therefore Assyria, though used by God, was not above God. The Assyrian's motives were purely political and land expansion. For these reasons, God destroyed Assyrian soldiers by disease and fire-like trees consumed by forest fires (Isa 10:33-34). The remaining trees (soldiers) 185,000 who surrounded Jerusalem were also killed in just one overnight by angels in 701 BC. Sennacherib king of Assyria withdrew and went back to Nineveh and then was killed by his own sons (Isa 37:21-38). His kingdom, the Assyrian Empire fell to Babylonians at the battle of Megiddo in 609 BC.

C. Nebuchadnezzar the golden head stripped his sovereignty from him

Nebuchadnezzar was the son and successor of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, and the victor over Pharaoh Neco II at Carchemish in 605 BC. He was king of Babylon. He was also a king of kings who had been given a kingdom, power, strength, and glory. All the children of men dwelling, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heaven, God has given them into his hand and has made him ruler over them all. Nebuchadnezzar was proud of his kingdom and hanging gardens. There was no kingdom like Babylon on the earth as great as the Babylonian Empire in the history of humankind. On one fine day, as the king was walking and looking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, the King “spoke, saying, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling, by my mighty power and for the honor and glory of my majesty?” (Dan 4:30). As the word was still in king’s mouth, “a voice came from heaven, “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! And you shall be driven from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; seven times shall pass over you, until you know the Most High God rules over the kingdoms of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.” (Dan 4:31-32)

These words were exactly fulfilled as Nebuchadnezzar became insane and animal-like in his habits and senses. Therefore, he was driven from men for seven years and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws Dan (Dan 4:33), till he realized who God is and how God sovereignly creates men’s kingdom and distributes them to whomsoever He wills. Every ruler or great man has to humble himself before God. The Babylonian Empire was overthrown by Cyrus the king of Medo-Persia in 539 BC while Belshazzar acted as coregent with his father Nebonidus, the son of Nebuchadnezzar during his father's frequent absence from the capital at Tema in Arabia.

In his father's absence Belshazzar acted three foolish things which led to the fall of the Babylonian Empire: 1. He sinned not by ignorance but by disobedience and pride (Dan 5:22), 2. He defied God by desecrating the sacred vessels which were taken from the Temple in Jerusalem (Dan 5:23a) and, 3. He praised idols and so did not honor God (Dan 5:23b).

D. Cyrus the silver chest and arms fell to his inferior kingdom

Cyrus was raised and engineered by God as a great instrumental tool of God to bring back all captives of Judah from Babylon to Jerusalem after 70 years of captivity. The Jewish exiled were permitted to return from Babylon through the proclamation of Cyrus during his first year of reign. The return took place in three phases-first return, rebuilding of the Temple led by Zerubbabel in 538 BC (Ezra 1-6), second return, reforming of the people through Ezra in 458 BC (Ezra 7-10); and third return, rebuilding of the Jerusalem Wall led by Nehemiah in 444 BC (Neh 1-6). Even the Silver Chest and Arms kingdom also fell to the inferior Greek Empire in 330 BC.

Alexander the Great, the bronze belly and thigh too, was dethroned by the iron and clay mixed kingdom (the Roman Empire). Thus, the fall of Empires (Assyria to Babylon in 609 BC; Babylon to Medo-Persia in 539 BC; Medo-Persia to Greek in 330 BC; Greek empire to Roman empire in 63 BC; and Roman empire would also fall to the kingdom of Jesus Christ at His Second Advent to the earth) in the later days according to Daniel's vision (Dan 2, 7, 8). These are the prototypes of all kingdoms that oppose God and His plans for His covenant people.

Every kingdom of men which are established on the earth will come to an end, but only the kingdom of Christ will endure forever. Because God is sovereign and moves according to His predetermined plans. These historical events anticipate the final overthrow of all gentile world powers that rebel against God and are characterized by moral, spiritual, political and

economic corruption. Such a judgment, anticipated in Rev 19:15-16 and Ps 2:4-6, will be fulfilled at Christ's Second Coming to the earth.

E. The kingdom of Israel was fired and judged because of arrogance before God (Isa 9:8-12).

They thought that their capital city Samaria was well fortified for them to stand against Assyria their enemy. Israel's leaders were guilty of six things (Isa 10:1-5).

1. Making unjust laws;
2. Issuing oppressive decrees. These actions were repulsive because Israelites were supposed to care for each other as family members of God's people redeemed from Egyptian slavery by their God;
3. Depriving the poor (leaders made their people feeble, weak, helpless) of their rights;
4. Taking away justice;
5. Hurting widows; and
6. Robbing fatherless.

These actions involved taking advantage of people who could not defend their rights, and violated God's law (Ex 22:22; 23:6; Deut 15:7-8; 24:17-18; cf Isa 1:17). Because of these behaviors, the northern kingdom captivity took place while Hoshea ruled Israel as the last king. Thus, the northern kingdom came to an end in the year 722 BC. God's judgment is always eminent when people are godless and anger God with their sins. People also do live in their desires and makeup ways for their name and glory. There would be no help for them in disaster ... from afar (i.e., from evil force) as they had refused to help those in need.

Five Purposes of the Church

Rev. Raimi Rimai
Youth & Education Secy.

The word “purpose” is defined as, “the intention, aim or function of something;” and “the thing that something is supposed to achieve”¹ Based on this definition, in order to plan for a more productive result in all the activities that we do, we need to think about the purpose behind why we do certain activities. Proverbs 19:21 says, “Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.” We cannot make plans for success if we do not know the Lord’s purpose for us as a church, and we will not accomplish our goal of winning the world for Jesus Christ.

Let us take a look at five goals established for every church in Acts 2:40 – 47. In this passage, we see the beginning of the New Testament church as a result of the miracles of Pentecost and Peter’s gospel preaching where many people were saved. Here, we witness the church functioning as it should with love and harmony, as Christ meant it to.

With citations from Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Zondervan, 1995), five purposes of the church will be explained using five words starting with “E” which summarize each purpose of the church.

Purpose 1: “Evangelism” through Outreach (Acts 2:40-41)

The first purpose of the Church is “Outreach.” In Matthew 28:19, Jesus said, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” “The word ‘Go’ in the Great Commission is a present participle in the Greek text. It should be read ‘as you are going’.”² The Great Commission does not say, “If you choose to go.” Notice that the Scripture certainly says, “Go.” It does not say for the lost people to “come,” or “come to church.” We must take the initiative and go after them. No matter where we find ourselves on a daily basis, we must spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. That is why it is called “Outreach,” and not “Inreach.”

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¹ “Purpose,” Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English, 8th edition, ed. Albert Sydney Hornby and Joanna Turnbull (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1233.

² Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995), 104.

“Outreach” is conducted through “Evangelism,” which is our first word starting with “E”, which is the process of making disciples and teaching others about Jesus Christ. “With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day” (Acts 2:40-41). We see here that Peter was involved in evangelism.

On the basis of Old Testament predictions regarding Jesus Christ, Peter was preaching the gospel. He was proclaiming the “good news” of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, which is where the word “gospel” comes from, because that is what the Greek word for it means. The Greek word for “gospel” is “evangelion/εὐαγγέλιον,” from which we get the word “evangelize.” As a result, we can see that “Evangelism,” or telling people about Christ, is one feature of the church’s purpose.

Rick Warren says, “Evangelism is more than our responsibility; it is our great privilege. We are invited to be a part of bringing people into God’s eternal family. I don’t know of a more significant cause to give one’s life to. If you knew the cure for cancer, I’m sure you’d do everything you could to get the news out. It would save millions of lives. But you already know something better: You’ve been given the gospel of eternal life to share, which is the greatest news of all!”³

Purpose 2: “Exalt” through Worship (Acts 2:42)

The second purpose of the church is “Worship.” Let’s take another look at Acts 2:42: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” We see here the mention of prayer. So, what is prayer? Bill Bright explains that “prayer is communicating with God,” and it’s the channel of devotion with the Lord.⁴ He further explains, “Real prayer is expressing our devotion to our heavenly Father, inviting Him to talk to us as we talk to Him.”⁵ Prayer is an act of devotion, hence, it is an act of worship.

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³ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995), 104-105.

⁴ Bill Bright, *Unlocking the Secrets of a Successful Prayer Life* (Orlando: New Life Publications, 1994), 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*

The English word “worship” comes from the Anglo-Saxon word “weorthscipe,” which is a combination of the two words “worth” and “ship.” Just as the word “kingship” means “to sit in the position of king,” and “sonship” which means “to sit in the position of son,” “worship” means “to sit in the position of worth.” When we worship the Lord, we attribute worth to Him, because He sits in the main position of worth in our lives.

Whenever we worship the Lord, we lift Him high as a banner. We “Exalt” Him, which is our second word starting with “E”. If we exalt the Lord, then the church will grow. If we lift high His holy name, then all people will be attracted to Him. So, another aspect of the church’s purpose is to “Exalt” the Lord through worship.

Rick Warren says, “Throughout Scripture we’re commanded to celebrate God’s presence by magnifying the Lord and exalting His name. Psalm 34:3 (New American Standard Bible) says, ‘O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together.’ We shouldn’t worship out of duty; we should worship because we want to. We should enjoy expressing our love to God.”⁶

Purpose 3: “Encourage” through Fellowship (Acts 2:42,44)

The third purpose of the church is “Fellowship.” We see this purpose mentioned in Acts 2:42&44. “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship” (v.42) and “All the believers were together” (v.44). The believers were gathered together; or gathered together in fellowship.

The Moody Handbook of Theology states, “The word fellowship (koinonia) means ‘sharing’ and emphasizes the unity and oneness of the church.”⁷ The “Moody Handbook” also says that “fellowship . . . emphasizes the fact that believers belong together.”⁸

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6 Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 103.

7 Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996), CD-ROM.

8 *Ibid.*

Fellowship, or helping one another through the sharing of material goods and by being there to support one another morally and spiritually, is one of the reasons why the church exists.

Whenever we fellowship with other believers, we “Encourage” one another, which is our third word starting with “E”. Paul said in Romans 1:11-12, “I long to see you so . . . that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.” Paul said that fellowship is for “encouragement.” So, another feature of the church’s purpose is “Encouraging” other believers through fellowship.

Rick Warren says, “As Christians we’re called to belong, not just to believe. We are not meant to live lone-ranger lives; instead, we are to belong to Christ’s family and be members of His body . . . We have each other for support. I love the way Ephesians 2:19 is phrased in the Living Bible: ‘You are members of God’s very own family . . . and you belong in God’s household with every other Christian.’ The church exists to provide fellowship for believers.”⁹

Purpose 4: “Edify” through Discipleship (Acts 2:42)

The fourth purpose of the church is “Discipleship.” The Great Commission says, “Therefore go and make disciples.” Making disciples is “discipleship,” and the term “disciple” means, “an apprentice or pupil attached to a teacher.”¹⁰ So, discipleship includes teaching. “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching” (Acts 2:42). The word “devoted” means they “studied” the content of the apostles’ teaching.

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⁹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 105-106.

¹⁰ Philip L. Shuler, “Disciple,” *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, edited by Paul J. Achtemeier (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2009), 242.

When we think of what discipleship does for the believers, we come to the fourth word starting with “E”. Discipleship helps to “Edify” believers. Edify means, “to improve people’s minds or characters by teaching them about something.”¹¹ Edifying the believers through discipleship serves to improve them in the knowledge of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, and edifying them in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ is accomplished through studying the Bible. We are instructed to “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

Studying the Bible strengthens the faith of believers, and it gives them a foundation on which to stand and principles to live by. “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness” (Colossians 2:6-7). Discipleship builds believers up in the Christian faith; hence, another feature of the church’s purpose is “Edification” of believers – especially new or young believers – through discipleship.

Rick Warren says, “As the church we are called not only to reach people, but also to teach them. After someone has made a decision for Christ, he or she must be discipled. It is the church’s responsibility to develop people to spiritual maturity. This is God’s will for every believer, Paul writes, ‘so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ’ (Ephesians 4:12b-13, NIV).”¹²

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¹¹ “Purpose,” Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English, 484.

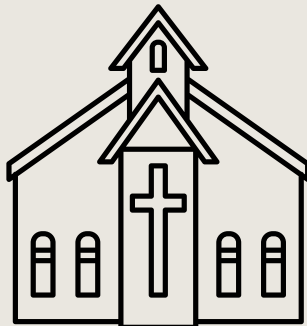
¹²Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 106.

Purpose 5: “Equip” through Service (Acts 2:45)

The fifth purpose of the church is “service” or “ministry.” “They gave to anyone as he had need” (Acts 2:45). We perceive here that they “gave,” and giving is definitely an act of service. It is looking beyond ourselves and our own desires in order to provide for the needs of others. Service, or servanthood, is actually demanded in the Bible. “No one should seek their own good, but the good of others” (1 Corinthians 10:24).

The Bible instructs that pastors are “to equip his people for works of service” (Ephesians 4:12). Our fifth and final word that starts with “E” is “Equip.” Paul declares, “Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible” (1 Corinthians 9:19). Remember that “ministry” is “service.” Paul’s servanthood made it possible for him to win more people to Christ. Even Jesus was a servant too, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor [became a servant], so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

As Christians, we have a responsibility to emulate Christ’s attitude of servanthood in order to help others become spiritually rich in the same way that Jesus did. Paul also did this exact thing. He said how he was “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich” (2 Corinthians 6:10). So, the fifth feature of the church’s purpose is “Equipping” believers to participate in serving others. We must always remember that “service” is “ministry.”



Rick Warren says, “The church exists to minister to people. Ministry is demonstrating God’s love to others by meeting their needs and healing their hurts in the name of Jesus. Each time you reach out in love to others you are ministering to them. The church is to minister to all kinds of needs: spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical.”¹³

Conclusion

While looking at a New Testament church, we’ve seen the vision to which every church should aim for. We were able to identify five important purposes of the church’s ministry; and based on these purposes, the mission of our church is to “evangelize” by sharing the message of salvation; to “exalt” the name of Jesus through worship; to “encourage” one another through fellowship; to “edify” the church through discipleship; and to “equip” the church to serve others. If we fulfil these five purposes then members will be added to our church, “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).



¹³Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 104.

Reminiscing the Heroes of Faith— the First 12 Converts of Manipur

*Rev. Dr. Themshang Horam
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Every season and time of the year brings its own unique reasons to praise God. The month of September is not an exception but outshines the other by serving as the “Ebenezer stone” in the life of the people of Manipur for posterities to come. As the year edges, once again we’re given the opportunity to remember and pay our respects to those heroes of faith who risked it all for the sake of the Gospel on 29th September 1901. They risked losing their life on account of persecution, their rights to inheritance owing to disownment by their parents, and risk of ostracization from the community. Nevertheless, they stood their ground for their newfound belief in Christ Jesus.

Revelation of God’s Missional Heart

Long ago, prior to the advent of the missionary, God spoke in dreams to one of the kings of the Tangkhul Naga tribes by the name Rashing who ruled over Hunphun (aka Ukhrul). In his dream, God revealed that a man with very fair skin, hair as white as cotton, and his eyes blazing like the eyes of a cat would one day come to his village bringing good tidings for his people. He was warned in his dream not to harm the stranger but to extend hospitality, show kindness, and give protection to him. He waited to meet the person revealed in his vision but just as it wasn’t for David to build God’s temple, it wasn’t his privilege to meet the man of his dreams nor his succeeding sons for a few generations. But in the fullness of time, during the reign of his Great-great-grandson Raihao, the man whom God foretold, came to the land of the Tangkhul Naga tribe in Manipur with the gospel of God’s saving grace. Informed by the story of the vision of his Great-grandfather, Raihao allowed the missionary William Pettigrew to remain in his village and informed his villager not to harm the stranger.

Had it not been the vision of God to the then chief Rashing, Mr. Pettigrew wouldn't have lived more than a day in the midst of the head-hunter enthusiasts.

Preparatory Period in Assam

Rev. William Pettigrew first came to India at Bengal under the sponsorship of the Arthington Aborigines Mission towards the end of 1890 as an Anglican missionary (Downs, 1971, p. 64). He was raised in the Church of England where he was administered infant baptism. But after coming to Bengal, he ardently studied the New Testament for the purpose of translating it to a Bengali language. It led him to heartily accept the doctrine of believer's baptism. So, in 1892 he took a believer's baptism by immersion from Rev. R. Wright Hay a missionary of the Baptist Missionary Society — an English Baptist Mission in Dacca but he continued his work under the Arthington Mission (Downs, 1971, p. 64). When Pettigrew was working with the English Baptist Missionary in Dacca, he heard about potential mission field in Manipur prompting him to fervently pray to open door for missionary work in Manipur. That same year, he went to Silchar with Craighead and learned Manipuri language. Finally, after acquiring necessary permissions, Pettigrew arrived in Manipur on 6th February 1894 under the Arthington Aborigine Missions. However, out of his conviction he left the Baptist Missionary Society and started to work with the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) in 1896. Later, Pettigrew was ordained by Reverends E. W. Clark, A. K. Gurney and O. L. Swanson on 22nd December, 1895 during the ABMU missionary conference in Sibsagar Baptist Church, Assam and was appointed as a missionary under the ABMU in January 1896 to work among the Tangkhul Nagas in Ukhrul (Zeliang, 2005a, p. 4).

The Beginning of the Evangelistic Works in Ukhrul

Pettigrew arrived at Ukhrul in February 1896. Then, it was known as 'Hunphun' village. The very first thing he endeavored was establishing a school with the sole purpose of evangelizing the natives. He wrote,

The books they study aim to inculcate Christian truth. The school is opened daily with singing and prayer. On the Lord's Day they come together for singing and to listen to the Gospel story. As soon as the Catechism is printed, they will be able more efficiently to retain in their minds the truths they have learned orally [in the class] (Pettigrew, 1899, pp. 50–55).

Initially, his effort to start a school seemed a futile effort because it was hard to find students. This was due to a very strange legend that once a sage gave the Tangkhul Nagas written scripts inscribed on a hide. But as fate would entail, the hide was hauled by a dog. So, they thought they could never learn since their wisdom is already lost. But Pettigrew's persuasion prevailed. He managed to convince the locals that the dog didn't eat the hide, but he found it on his way. Thus, Pettigrew finally got 20 boys enrolled in his school on February 19, 1897 (Zeliang, 2005a, p. 9). These boys, all adult and some of them married were quite unruly and they made the missionary's life very difficult. To add to the misery, the local people tracked with suspicion every movement of the missionary. This suspicion toward the missionary's activities is partly due to the insensitivity of the missionary himself towards the culture of the native people to which he openly confessed. Pettigrew wrote: "*No doubt there have been mistakes made, and perhaps with more fact, suspicion might have disappeared sooner. Experience teaches; and it is hoped whatever mistakes may have been made, the Lord will overrule them for His glory amongst these people [emphasis mine].*"(Cited in Zeliang, 2005a, p. 10).

In 1898, there was an epidemic outbreak of cholera in Manipur or at least in the hill country of the Tangkhuls. During this epidemic outbreak, Pettigrew diligently gave his service to the people by treating the patients with modern medication. He also opened a charitable dispensary where he made medicines available to the natives at a very minimal rate. He seized the opportunity to get closer to the lives of the people and gained a great deal of trust from the natives (Zeliang, 2005a, p. 9).

After five years of painful labor God gave him the fruit of his toils. 12 of his students were convinced of the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and were baptized into Christian faith on 29th September 1901. In one of his short reports Pettigrew jubilantly wrote,

“First fruits at Ukhrul, 12 baptized here on 29th September. Blessed time. Pray for us. Pray for those who “should walk in the newness of life.”” (Cited in Jajo, 1999, p. 14). The news of this baptism was also covered in the Baptist Missionary Magazine published in the year 1902: “REV. WILLIAM PETTIGREW, our missionary at Ukhrul, Manipur, after several years of seed sowing has had the joy of recently baptizing the first converts, twelve boys from his school. We rejoice with him.” (“The Baptist Missionary Magazine,” Vol. 82, No. 2, 1902, p. 71). These first 12 converts were (Luikham, 2002, pp. 14–15): (1) Rumthao Hollei (Ukhrul), (2) Kashung Sangmayang (Ukhrul), (3) Samrar Ramkaiphung (Ukhrul), (4) Shaiza Leishisan (Ukhrul), (5) Kasar Maninglum (Ukhrul), (6) S. Mangaleng (Ukhrul), (7) Langtangvano Sakhayang (Ukhrul), (8) Kasarnao Shangam (Ukhrul), (9) Chiphang Kaphungkui (Ukhrul), (10) M. Haora (Hundung/Hungpung), (11) K. Mashokring (Hundung/Hungpung), (12) S.K. Thiksha (Hundung/Hungpung).

However, there are some contradictory claims that A. Porom Singh was the first convert in Manipur whose baptism was administered by Pettigrew himself on January 3, 1896, in Imphal river (c.f. Singh, Ph. Dhaneswor).

The Diary of Angom Porom Singh: The First Convert in Manipur (1883 - 1956). Imphal: Laishram Tombi Devi, 2010; Bimol, L. Christianity Among the Meiteis in Manipur: A Missiological Perspective. Christian Heritage Rediscovered 61. Delhi: Christian World Imprints, 2018). Nevertheless, journals of the missionary, his mission reports to the Assam Missionary Conferences, and other archives speak otherwise. It is worth citing here William Pettigrew's report on the baptism of the first Meitei convert: "Two more were baptized on April 5th; one Manipuri lad –the first Manipur (sic) to make a stand for Christ in the State..." (Cited in Jajo, 1999, p. 16). This reference to 'Manipuri lad' is none other than A. Porom Singh. Zeliang in one of his established works recorded that "A. Porom Singh of Phaying village was converted in April 1903 and became the first Meitei convert." (Zeliang, 2005b, p. 28; also c.f. Luikham, 2002, p. 15).

All these took place in Ukhrul as the missionary's enterprise was restricted by the Government and confined to "one corner of the State and to one tribe only" (Cited in Solo and Mahangthei, 2006, p. 83).

The baptism of the first Manipuri (Meitei) lad was also reported to the 'Ninetieth Annual Report of the Executive Committee' meeting of the ABMU held in Cleveland, Ohio on May 17, 1904, that: "A Manipur boy, the first of his tribe, had been baptized and was engaged in study [bold mine]." (c.f. "Minutes of the Ninetieth Annual Meeting," 1904, p. 109). It is worth to note that the Britishers used the term Manipur/ Manipuri to refer to the Meiteis whereas, the rest of the tribals inhabiting the hills of Manipur were specifically addressed by their distinct tribe's name (c.f. "Minutes of the Seventh Session of the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union," 1902, p. 73).

Moreover, Reverend William Pettigrew was ordained at the end of the year on December 22, 1895, at Sibsagar Baptist Church. So, it is reasonably surmised that it would have been impossible for him to reach Imphal within 13 days and baptize A. Porom Singh on January 3, 1896, because it approximately took 20 days from Gauhati (Guwahati) to reach Imphal (c.f. "Baptist Missionary Magazine," Vol. 81, No. 1, 1901, p. 214). Had he made travel plans immediately after his ordination (which is logically specious for any Christians to make travel plans on Christmas and New Year), he would have reached Imphal no earlier than January 12, 1896. So, the claim that A. Porom Singh was baptized on January 3, 1896, is purely conjectural. Therefore, we would like to put on record that the first converts in Manipur were none other than those 12 men of God who were baptized by the missionary on 29th September 1901.

Thus, a year later, with 12 of his new converts, Pettigrew constructed the first Baptist church in Manipur with the missionary himself as its pastor and named it 'Phungyo Baptist Church' which stands tall to this day. Six years later the church grew from 12 to 70 members and by 1916, the number of believers multiplied approximately to over 400 (Downs, 1971, p. 136).

Continuing the Legacy

The first 12 converts stood their ground in the face of persecution, trials, and temptations, and through them, the gospel of Christ spread to different parts of Manipur. As we remember their historic and heroic stance for the gospel of Christ on September 29, 2023, we must be challenged to endure hardship and stand firm in the truth. It wouldn't have been an easy road for them to have trodden the path of righteousness when circumstances all around them turned out to be their adversaries confronting them at every turn, but they stood firm till the end. They are our torch bearers, our fathers and heroes of faith who have cleared the path so that by treading the same path we proudly claim to be people of faith.

Bible Study Method 5 ***The Biographical Method of Bible Study***

In the last four issues of the Baptist Herald, we had deliberated on four methods of Bible Study. In this issue, we would look into the fifth Bible Study Method: The Biographical Method of Bible Study.

1. Required Tools

In order to use the Biographical Method of Bible Study, we need the following tools:

- a) Study Bible
- b) Exhaustive Concordance
- c) Topical Bible
- d) Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia



2. Some Suggestions

a) Start your study with a person on whom you can do simple research.

b) Keep in mind that the person may often be referred to by names other than his/her proper name in many passages.

c) Be careful not to confuse different people who have the same name when you look up the references about them (E.g., there are 30 different people in the Bible with the name Zechariah; 7 women with the name Mary; 5 men with the name John; etc.).

d) Keep away books written on the particular biblical person until you have run through every Bible reference about the person and have drawn every possible insight out of the texts. This is important so that Bible Commentators do not rob you of the job of personal discovery, or prejudice your views on the person.

e)

The secret of a good Biographical Study is to live with that person during the course of your study. To walk in his/her shoes, try to get inside his/her mind and see how he/she thinks, feels, and responds to circumstances. Attempt to see things from his/her point of view, see with his/her eyes, hear with his/her ears, mingle with his/her friends, and fight with his/her enemies.

f) Be alert to find the various names which may apply to just one person. Since the Bible came out of the Hebrew-Aramaic-Greek context, some people's names changed in the different languages, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. The Apostle Peter, for example, is known as Peter, Simon, Simeon, and Cephas.

3. Steps

Ten simple steps are to be followed in the Biographical Method of Bible Study:

Step 1 - Choose an individual from the Bible for your study.

Step 2 - List all references concerning that person. Find as much about the person as you can

Step 3 - Note your first impression of the person after your first reading of the passages.

Step 4 - Make a chronological outline of the person's life after your second reading.

Step 5 - Obtain some insights into the person after your third reading.

Step 6 - Identify some character qualities after your fourth reading.

Step 7 - Show how some other Bible truths are illustrated in this person's life.

Step 8 - Summarize the main lesson(s) you have learned.

Step 9 - Write out a personal application.

- a. Your application should be personal.
- b. Your application should be practical – it ought to be something you can do.
- c. Your application should be possible – it should be something you know you can accomplish; otherwise, you will be discouraged.

- d. Your application should be provable - you must set up some sort of follow-up to check up on your success in doing it.

Step 10 - Make your study transferable.

EXERCISE

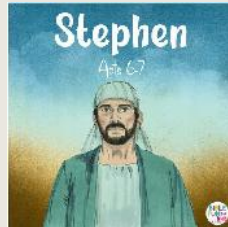
Here is a sample exercise of the Biographical Method of Bible Study:

1. *Name of the Biblical individual:*

Stephen

2. *Scripture References:*

- a. Acts 6:3-8:2
- b. Acts 11:19
- c. Acts 22:20



3. *First Impressions and Observations:*

Stephen was an early Christian who had tremendous testimony in the Church was a powerful preacher and witness, and was willing to die for his faith.

4. *Outline of His Life:*

A. Chosen by the Early Church as a Leader

1. To help resolve a conflict (Acts 6:5)
2. On the basis of certain godly characteristics (Acts 6:3, 5, 8)

B. He had a Wide Ministry

1. Waited on tables (Acts 6:2, 5)
2. Performed miracles (Acts 6:8)
3. Preached and taught powerfully (Acts 6:10)

C. He was Persecuted

1. Opposed by Jews from “overseas” (Acts 6:9)
2. Falsely accused (Acts 6:11)
3. Arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin (Acts 6:12- 14)

- a. False witnesses testified against him.
- b. Defended himself with a masterful review of O.T. (Acts 7:2-53)
- c. Testified to Jesus (Acts 7:55-56)
- d. Lynched by an angry mob (Acts 7:57-60)

D. He had a ministry after death – persecution caused the church to spread (Acts 8:2-4; 11:19).

5. *General Insights (Answers to Questions):*

- A. Why was he chosen to be a leader? Because –
- 1. He was full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3)
 - 2. He was full of faith and the Spirit (Acts 6:5)
 - 3. He was full of God’s grace and power (Acts 6:8)
 - 4. He knew the Scriptures (Acts 7:2-53)

B. What was his response to false accusations?
 He “kept his cool,” remained silent, and only answered when he was directed to speak by the high priest.

C. Is there any parallel with Jesus?
 Yes, he was falsely accused, demonstrated love and concern for his accusers, and died an “undeserved” death.

D. What was his attitude toward his execution?
 He was forgiving, even to the point of praying that God would forgive them for their sin of murder.

E. What were the long-term results of his life?
 They forwarded the plan of God. His death caused the disciples to scatter and take the Gospel to other parts of Judea, Samaria, and regions beyond Palestine in fulfillment of Acts 1:8. His death also helped bring Paul to the Lord.

6. Character Qualities Identified: The Book of Acts

- a. Spirit-filled (Chapter 6:3,5,10)
- b. Wise (6:3,10)
- c. Faithful (6:5)
- d. Available (6:8)
- e. Persistent (6:10)
- f. Holy (6:15)
- g. Knowledgeable (Chapter 7)
- h. Bold (7:51-53)
- i. Brave (7:51-53)
- j. Forgiving (7:60)
- k. Respected by others (8:2)
- l. A witness to Jesus (22:20)



7. Bible Truths Illustrated in His Life:

- a. The presence and comfort of the Holy Spirit in the trials of life (Acts 7:54-55; Hebrews 13:5-6).
- b. False accusations and persecution will come into our lives (Acts 6:11ff).
- c. God's grace is sufficient when we walk with Him (Acts 6:10; 1 Cor 1:27-31; 2 Cor 12:9)

8. Summary of lessons from his life:

- a. The outstanding characteristic of Stephen was his commitment to the Lord and his willingness to do anything for Him, including giving up his life.
- b. This commitment is seen in the fact that he was a man who walked with God (he was “full of the Holy Spirit, wisdom, faith, God’s grace and power”). He had a great testimony before others in the church. He witnessed people both in life and in death.
- c. He was, furthermore, a man of the Word. He really knew his Bible – the Old Testament. He must have spent hours studying the scrolls and the parchments.

9. *Personal application:*

- a. I need to become a person like Stephen – a person of the Word who knows Lord Jesus Christ intimately and who is able to answer others with Scripture when they ask questions.
- b. As a result of this study, I will commit myself to having a daily quiet time for at least 15 minutes to get to know Christ better.
- c. I will also commit myself to memorizing two Scripture verses each week so that I can answer people who ask me questions.

10. *Transferable concepts (ways I can share this with others)*

- a. The concepts in this study are transferable.
- b. The necessity of a personal walk with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c. The only way we can become men and women of faith and wisdom like Stephen is to have a daily quiet time with the Lord.
- d. Stephen had a dynamic walk with Jesus Christ.
- e. The necessity of being in the Word of God on a regular basis – Bible Study and Scripture memory.
- f. If I am to know my Bible as Stephen did, I need to spend quality time in it and be able to teach others how to do so as well, and this book is one means to help me do so.
- g. I need to share these methods with others.
- h. The necessity of courage in times of adversity and persecution.
- i. I need to pray that God will give me boldness with others.

11. *Someone with whom I intend to share this study*

- a. Church
- b. Church leaders
- c. Youth
- d. Youth leaders
- e. A friend or friends
- f. & etc.



MBC UPDATES



Institute of
Community
Transformation ICT
Graduation on 13th
July, 2023



MBC ASSOCIATIONS LEADERS FELLOWSHIP



For the first time since the conflict erupted on May 3rd in Manipur, Church leaders of various communities including Meitei, Naga and Kuki-Zo came together for a 3-day gathering at CBCNEI Mission Compound at Guwahati.

The meeting from August 19th to 22nd was convened by the Manipur Baptist Convention (MBC) and facilitated by the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI) at its head office.

Altogether, 48 Church leaders, comprising of former & present MBC Cabinet Secretaries and leaders of 19 Associations of MBC participated in the congregation and prayed for peace and justice to prevail across all ethnic communities. MBC president Rev Mathotmi Vasha chaired the meeting.

MBC UPDATES



This was the first meeting where all the major ethnic groups – Kuki, Meitei and Naga were together since the ethnic conflict erupted in Manipur on May 3rd. On the first day, General Secretary of MBC, Rev K Losii Mao exhorted that all are bound together in Lord Jesus Christ as one family irrespective of all the socio-political turmoil and troubles ravaging Manipur State currently. The sole purpose of the gathering was to listen to the grieves, pains, and sorrows of one another brought about by the human-made disaster and seek God’s mercy.

The General Secretary further stated “When one part of the human body is injured, the whole body is affected. Likewise, when one community is affected, the whole Manipur Baptist Convention is in deep sorrow... It is unity and love that has brought the various ethnic communities together. It is made possible only through the sacrificial blood of Lord Jesus Christ. If it were not the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ, we have no other hope for peace and healing.”

Rev Dr Akheto Sumi, General Secretary of CBCNEI led the devotional prayers on the morning of August 21st and reflected from Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians in the Bible – “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”

He encouraged the participating Church leaders from various ethnic communities across Manipur that “even when we are bogged down in the depths of despair, we can look up to God who lifts us up.”

The Church leaders from the various ethnic communities narrated and shared their pain and sorrow they have been undergoing due to the social strife. Many of the associations, including the Chongthu Baptist Churches Association, Kuki Baptist Convention, Meitei Baptist Association, and Vaiphei Baptist Churches Association said they are unable to function properly. Some of them are functioning in temporary locations currently besides personal losses due to the destruction of local Church buildings and properties.

However, despite all the pain, trouble and hardship, the Church leaders pledged that they remain united as one in Christ irrespective of whatever is going on in the State. They pledged to continue to uphold each other through prayers and also through any physical and material assistance to one another.

On the morning of August 21st, the leaders spent two hours of intensive prayers which was led by Rev Apila Thangal and Rev Y Modarshim for peace and justice to prevail particularly in the state of Manipur and across all ethnic communities.



Relief Distribution Report

The ethnic conflict that began on May 3, 2023, is playing out right in front of our eyes. Violent mobs have turned on their neighbors, causing the Meitei and Kuki groups to abandon their homes, displacing thousands of people, killing hundreds of innocent people, and torching hundreds of churches and thousands of homes. MBC has been receiving donations of supplies from local Churches, Organizations, Sisters' Conventions, CBCNEL, Regional and Worldwide partners, Individuals, for distribution to Manipur's internally displaced people since March 8, 2023. MBC provided groceries and sanitary kits to 26,000 internally displaced individuals at 102 relief sites across Manipur (both Hills and Valley districts). Relief efforts were made regardless of locality or religion (faith).

Following are some of the pictures of the Relief Distribution



MBC UPDATES



Manipur Baptist Convention, Relief Team



MBC UPDATES









MBC, distribution of Relief Materials for Internally Displaced Person at CCPUR on 4th September, 2023



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