

COVENANT 2026

A bimonthly bulletin of COVENANT BAPTIST CHURCH DIMAPUR

ISSUE #19 / JULY-AUGUST

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

- Sunday Service : 10:00 am
- Youth Express : Saturday 5:00 pm
- Sunday School : Sunday 10:00 am
- Board Meeting : Once a month
- Women's Fellowship : 2nd Saturdays
- Prayer Meeting : Wednesdays at 6:00 pm
- Men's Prayer Breakfast : 2nd Saturdays at 7am
- Holy Communion : Once a month
- Crossover Fellowship : Once a month
- Nagamese Fellowship : Sundays at 4:30 pm

VISION

- To glorify God and advance His Kingdom.
- To strive to bring men and women to acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.
- To build a vibrant and worshipping community.
- To share and propagate the Gospel of Jesus Christ here and beyond.

MISSION

- To make disciples of all nations beginning within our community in and around us.
- To be Christ centered in our worship, preaching, teaching, fellowship and all Christian related ministry.
- To reach the unreached within the community and beyond.

Soul Food

DEVOTIONAL

Pastor Yabang Longkumer

The scent of a perfume is alluring, the smell of grass after the rains is comforting, the scent from a dish is enticing especially for someone with an empty stomach. Different aromas but the appeal is understood so the question I want to address here is, *what do you think attracts people to Christ?* Paul reminds the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 2:12-17) that we are to be an aroma for Christ. Our lives should be centered on Christ; people should be drawn towards us not because of the way we look but because of who we are in Christ. As the Roman priests burned the incense in the parade here in the verse, Paul mentions that believers are like a living aroma sacrificed to God. What did he mean by this? In the Old Testament, priests offered sacrifices, a pleasant aroma to the Lord (Leviticus 23:18, Numbers 28:27). In the New Testament again it mentions, we ourselves are to be a living sacrifice, pleasing to the Lord (Romans 12:1). But those who

hear this message are divided into two groups: "those who are being saved" and "those who are perishing". In a battlefield the aroma for the triumphant soldiers meant victory; but to the captives, it meant death and defeat. The scent affected different people in different ways. When we choose His ways and not our ways we glorify God and become a sweet aroma. To those who don't believe, the gospel is death to them.

Church, we are to be a fragrance to God. Today, everyone is in the habit of pointing fingers at each other, the public points at the politicians, the politicians to the bureaucrats, the bureaucrats to the Church etc. But instead of pointing fingers at each other have we ever considered pointing the finger at ourselves? Am I an aroma for Christ? Is God pleased with my deeds and actions? When I look at the State of affairs, it looks like a mounting task. Because corruption has seeped into every corner of our lives. However, it is possible to bring change and it begins with I, that finger pointed at you first. And it starts with a choice, to start living a Christ centered life. Because when we live a Christ centered life, we are already spreading the aroma of Christ in and through our lives. *Ephesians 5:2, "And live a life of Love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God".* "Who is equal to such a task?" The answer is, no one can. Church, we are not in a position to save people through our intellect, logic and clever arguments. We are not competent, but the truth is "HE IS". So, we rely on God. *2 Corinthians 3:5-6 – Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

Church, I urge you to let people see the aroma of Christ in you, it takes commitment, devotion, prayer, meditation (in the Word) and as I keep on reminding the Church "Doers of the Word". Let people see Christ in you. Amen

Report on the North East India to Indochina Mission Consultation 2026

The North East India to Indochina Mission Consultation 2026 organized by the Head of Mission, Asia Pacific Baptist Federation in collaboration with CBCNEI, was held from July 29-31 in Bangkok, Thailand, with participation from the NBCC team. Our Pastor Yabang Longkumer and Dr Noktang Jamir from our Church's Mission Committee attended this meeting as part of the NBCC team. The consultation focused on strengthening mission engagement between North East India and communities across the wider Indochina region, with particular emphasis on identifying culturally and strategically significant communities, places and pathways for future outreach. Some of the key speakers were **Rev. Gihuka Swu**, Founder, Bless Cambodia Network, **Rev. Dr Narong Tongsuk**, Thailand National Director, The Bible League Thailand Foundation, **Rev. Sonny Largado** (Phillipines) International Director of Ethnos Asia Bangkok, Thailand, **Rev. Benjamin Bawn**, Coordinator of Bangladesh prayer network Dhaka, Bangladesh and Ms. Wahgay, Coordinator of Karen youth Baptist Myanmar-Thailand border.

A major emphasis of the meeting was the mapping exercise, through which priority communities and mission pathways were identified. Five priorities emerged from the mapping sessions.

1. **The Chong community** in Cambodia was ranked first, primarily because existing connections are already available. Established relationships can provide a practical foundation for developing future mission initiatives.
2. **The Akha community** in Laos was ranked second because of cultural relatability, indicating that shared cultural characteristics may facilitate communication, relationship-building and mission engagement.
3. **The Pattani Malay community** in Thailand was identified as the third priority, specifically to facilitate outreach to the Muslim community. This reflects an intentional effort to extend mission engagement beyond predominantly Christian populations.
4. **The Tay community** in Vietnam was ranked fourth, with the stated consideration that Christians constitute only one percent of the population, highlighting a perceived need for greater Christian presence and engagement.
5. **The North Kachin community** in Myanmar was ranked fifth on the basis of cultural similarity.

Overall, the consultation provided a framework for identifying potential mission opportunities linking North East India with neighbouring communities in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and Myanmar. The emphasis on existing connections, cultural affinity and **'unreached'** or **'under represented'** communities provides a basis for future strategic planning. Our Church should also prayerfully plan on how to be a part of these mission works, and join the existing networks to carry out the Great Commission our Lord Jesus has entrusted us.



Lecture Sessions and Group Discussions



*Left: With Rev. Boipu, Mission Secretary, CBCNEI,
Right: Pastor Yabang and Dr. Noktang searching for Naga restaurant in bangkok City*



Group photos of Participants

Vacation Bible School 2026: “Running for the Prize”

Have you ever deeply reflected on the process of stamina building for any situation? It begins in the quiet. It begins out of conviction. It begins without an audience. It takes a certain degree of stretching - mild to immense intensity. But it can also begin when we are unaware in the mundane. I realized the importance of stamina from my school sports coach, Mr. Das, famously known to say with a stern look that made us shift feet, “*without stamina you won’t be able to finish the race.*” I recollect the kind of impact it made on us then and in the years that followed until now. The word ‘stamina’ becomes more relevant when we relate to a runner who needs to undergo strict training in order to run a race. In the spiritual sense also, we ought to build up in the same manner as we walk with the Lord. Thus, the Vacation Bible School (VBS) 2026 took place under the theme “**Running for the Prize- 1 Corinthians 9:24-25**” focusing on how our children can develop grit for the Christian life.

Our VBS was held at El-Shaddai Academy, from 23rd - 26th July, where we experienced an unforgettable time of learning and fellowship through singing, Bible Lessons using visual aids and activities, memory verse training, crafts, games, evangelism session and prayer counseling for the senior classes. Around 164 children, 11 Teachers, 15 volunteers, 4 Interns, office staff and support team for photography together, worked hard to make VBS a meaningful one. We praise God that out of 164 children, about 140 were registered Sunday School children while 24 were friends and family from beyond.

Three main focus topics were: **Salvation** of a believer, God’s **Protection** for a believer and **Encouragement** from God’s Word. Through these topics, the children were taught about building spiritual health and strength to run for the Prize which is eternal life. The children were guided to understand about salvation and make a decision to give their lives to God just like Paul did (Acts 9:1-19). The children were taught that there is always a special protection for those who trust in the Lord (Acts 9:20-31). The final topic was about how Christians receive encouragement with words, just as Paul wrote letters to the churches he planted as a missionary (Acts 28:11-31).

Dr. Adela Mero, *Administrator of Rainbow Academy and resource Centre*, spoke on the theme during VBS Sunday, by raising two crucial questions: *What are we chasing today in this life?* and, *Where should we go when we face challenges or afflictions in life?* With concluding remarks: Chase the Eternal Prize, focus on receiving salvation, allow the Holy Spirit to work in our daily life, read God’s Word to grow and bear fruit and finally to be prepared, for Jesus is coming soon.

We earnestly hope the children learn to keep running towards eternal life, slowly but surely. Often, even when unaware of how mundane things like play or pray, based on God’s love help to build spiritual stamina for young souls in the long run.

***A few children from our mission field in Assam were supposed to join the VBS but could not due to flooding issues. Do continue to pray for them and that they will be able to join next year.**



Glimpses of

CBCD VBS 2026





We thank God for His continued faithfulness and grace upon the Youth Ministry during the months of July and August. Through various fellowships, special programmes, and regular Bible studies, we have witnessed encouraging participation and spiritual growth among our young people. We praise God for the opportunities to minister, build relationships, and challenge the youth to live wholeheartedly for Christ.

Royal Son's Night:

A brief addition for the month of June, we held our Royal Son's Night, a special gathering for the young men. Mrs. Lungyi, Youth Director of Zeme Baptist Church, ministered from the Word of God and challenged the young people in their walk with Christ. The young ladies took responsibility for the entire service, making it a meaningful evening of service, fellowship, and encouragement. We also enjoyed refreshments together and were encouraged to see young people reaching out to and supporting their friends in the faith.

Youth Weekend – July:

In accordance with the NBCC calendar and with the support of our Church, we observed Youth Weekend during the first week of July.

Youth Saturday:

The weekend began with Youth Saturday, where many young people gathered for fellowship. The Youth Pastor shared from the Word of God, challenging the youth to give their best to God while they are young and to use this season of life to grow in faith and service. The evening concluded with a fellowship dinner, providing a wonderful opportunity for interaction and encouragement among the youth.

Youth Sunday:

On Youth Sunday, we were blessed to have Dr. Lithrongla Sangtam as our speaker. Speaking from Acts 17, she challenged the congregation, especially the young people, with the truth that God often uses ordinary people to make an extraordinary impact for His Kingdom and to influence the culture around them.

She encouraged the youth to know the Lord personally, remain firm in God's Word, and live consistently for Christ in every area of life. Her message reminded us that today's youth are not merely the future of the Church but are already an important part of God's work today. Drawing inspiration from Christian leaders who emphasized the importance of young people committed to God, she challenged the youth to become a generation that stands boldly for Christ and makes a lasting impact for His glory.

Combined Youth Fellowship with Chakhesang Baptist Church:

One of the highlights of this period was the combined youth fellowship with Chakhesang Baptist Church, where around 45 young people from our church participated. The message focused on Godly friendship, based on the account of the four friends who brought the paralyzed man to Jesus (Mark 2:1–12). The young people were encouraged to be friends who strengthen one another in faith, support one another during difficulties, and lead one another closer to Christ. The fellowship also provided an opportunity for both churches to worship and serve together. The worship teams from the two churches ministered jointly, making it a valuable learning experience and a meaningful expression of unity among believers. Following the service, we enjoyed a potluck fellowship, which further strengthened relationships and friendships among the young people.

We thank God for the fellowship shared and pray that the relationships formed through this gathering will continue to encourage and strengthen young believers in both churches.

August:

On 15th August, we were blessed to have Ms. Ajem Imchen share God's Word with the youth. She encouraged the young people on the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between their academic responsibilities and spiritual growth. Her message challenged the youth to pursue excellence in their studies while remaining committed to their walk with God, reminding them that true success is

found in honoring Christ in every aspect of life. The gathering was well attended, and the young people were greatly encouraged through the message and fellowship.

Ongoing Ministry:

Alongside these special programmes, our regular youth fellowship and Bible study ministries continue to be an important part of nurturing spiritual growth among our young people. Bible studies are conducted regularly, generally on alternate Sundays, providing opportunities for learning, discussion, and deeper engagement with God's Word.

Conclusion:

As we look back on the past two months, we are grateful for God's faithfulness in every programme and gathering. We have seen young people challenged through the preaching of God's Word, encouraged through fellowship, and strengthened through meaningful relationships with fellow believers.

We give all glory to God for His guidance and blessings upon the Youth Ministry. We covet the prayers of the church as we continue to disciple young people and encourage them to become faithful followers of Christ who will impact their homes, churches, communities, and future generations for the glory of God.



Snapshots of the Weekly Youth Express Fellowship



Combined Fellowship with Chakhesang Church

Bible study:

The Nagamese Cell Group held its first Bible study on 15th August 2026. The group began its study with the Second Epistle to Timothy (2 Timothy), which consists of four chapters. At present, the group is studying chapter 1, with the theme “*Persevere in Your Calling.*”

The study covered chapter 1:1–7 and was divided into two parts. The first part, covering verses 1–5, focused on the theme “*Progressive Faith.*” The discussion highlighted the importance of developing and strengthening our faith through our relationship with God, as well as through the godly influence and examples of others. The second part, covering verses 6 to 7, focused on “*Nurturing the Gift of God.*” The group reflected on the importance of recognizing, developing, and faithfully using the gifts that God has entrusted to each believer. The passage also encouraged the members to live with courage, love, and self-discipline rather than fear, remaining faithful to their calling and responsibilities.

The fellowship concluded with a meaningful time of interaction and sharing, followed by light refreshments.



Discipleship Training Camp:

A Discipleship Training Camp was held from 27th July to 1st August 2026 at the ABC (Assam Baptist Convention) Training Complex, Nagaon District, Assam. The camp brought together 20 participants from different parts of Assam and Nagaland, including 11 believers with a Muslim background. The training was designed to strengthen the participants in their faith and equip them with practical skills and confidence for sharing the Gospel with others.

As part of the programme, the participants were sent out in pairs for four days of personal evangelism and outreach. During this period, 183 Muslims were approached, 125 got the opportunity to hear the Gospel, and 28 responded by accepting Jesus Christ.

From this outreach experience, many challenges were faced while sharing the Gospel with people of other faiths in different parts of India. As a person from a tribal background, I faced suspicion and resistance when approaching people from other communities, which made personal evangelism difficult. However, the experience also helped me recognize the unique opportunity available in Nagaland, particularly in Dimapur, where people from diverse faith backgrounds live in close proximity. Despite recognizing this opportunity, I often remain within my own comfort zone and have not taken sufficient initiative to reach out to people of other faiths. It challenged me to step beyond that comfort zone and become more intentional in sharing the Gospel.

The campers left the workshop with renewed enthusiasm, strengthened in their spirit and received great insights and boldness to witness for Christ.

As Hebrews 10:14–15 reminds us, the work of Christ provides the foundation for our faith and calls us to live faithfully in response to God’s grace.



Crossover Fellowship

Mrs. Kewi Pfüno, Assoc. Pastor (Youth)

Bible Study:

On 5th July, members spent time studying Philippians 4:4-13. 14 members attended. We learned three key lessons from Apostle Paul: to rejoice in the Lord always; replace worry with prayerful thanksgiving to receive God's peace; and find contentment and strength in Christ in every situation.

The session was interactive, with members sharing their personal struggles and how to apply this passage in daily life. We closed with a time of prayer for one another.

Regular Fellowship:

For our 7th Fellowship of the year on 2nd Aug, we were blessed to have Pastor Moatoshi Imsong from DCF (Dimapur Christian Fellowship) minister the Word of God to us.

Pastor Imsong spoke powerfully on the topic "Rewiring Mindsets" based on Romans 12:2. He emphasized that to live a victorious Christian life, especially as young people, we must break old, negative, and worldly thought patterns and align our thinking with God's Word. He ended the time of sharing with encouragement to keep praying without ceasing.

The message was very relevant and encouraging for all our members. We are grateful to Pastor Imsong for his time and ministry. The fellowship concluded with a time of prayer and dinner.



July Bible Study



August fellowship with Pastor Moatoshi Imsong

Women's Fellowship

Dr. Michelle Kamei

We praise God for His faithfulness in our women's ministry over the past two months. This report celebrates the spiritual growth, unity, and beautiful moments of fellowship that have anchored our sisters in Christ during this season.

11th July, Monthly Fellowship: Dr Temsulemla Longkumer, our guest speaker from DABA brought the message drawing inspiration from the life of Jael in Judges 4, reminding us that faithfulness in mundane everyday tasks equips us for spiritual victory when we answer to God's call with obedience

17th July: Mrs Sarila and Mrs Michelle attended and represented the CBCD Women's group at the DBWU 2nd executive meeting at Bangali Baptist Church, Dimapur

4th August, DBWU Dawn fellowship:

Women pastors and ministry leaders from churches under DBWU gathered for an early morning Dawn fellowship at NMM conference hall. The gathering focused on corporate prayer, interceding for key needs, and strengthening relationship among leaders. Mrs Michelle attended and represented our Women's Ministry.



DBWU Dawn Fellowship

8th August, Monthly fellowship: Mrs Zuthunglo Ezung brought the message from 2 Timothy 1: 1-7, reminding us of our rich spiritual heritage and challenging us to use this inheritance to bless one another. She also emphasized on prayer as a foundational legacy, and combined with the call to stir up our God-given gifts, inspired us to intentionally encourage one another and build up the Body of Christ.

14th August: DBWU monthly bazar is an initiative designed to empower women entrepreneurs by providing a space to sell their products, while simultaneously raising funds to support the union's mission. Mrs Sarila Aier attended the event.

15th August: National Day of Prayer, organized by Dimapur Women for City Impact at Rengma Baptist Church, Dimapur. Driven by a shared spiritual duty, men and women from diverse Christian denominations transcends church boundaries to stand together to pray for our nation India, our city Dimapur and for our neighboring state Manipur. Mrs Zuthunglo and Mrs Michelle attended and represented our Women's ministry.

17th August: DBWU combine service cum single mothers' fellowship

A special combined fellowship was organized specifically for single mothers and women under DBWU, with Mrs Khrienuo Moa as the guest speaker. Mrs Honlen Phom and Mrs Nyejoi Yaoham attended and represented our Women's group

29th August, Combined social work:

Team Better Dimapur along with DBWU and other organizations, organized a combined social work to clean and beautify Dimapur city. Our team of eight (Mrs Akhono, Mrs Roselyn, Mrs Honlen, Mrs Aren, Mrs Khonzani, Mrs Zuthunglo, Mrs Katie and Mrs Michelle) lent our hands and services to the cleanup drive. It was a heartwarming experience and an opportunity to practice faithful stewardship of God's blessings by caring for our local environment.



Combined Social Work

Baby Room Renovation:

Our women's ministry took the initiative of renovating our church babies' room. We are deeply grateful to our sisters and families for providing the necessary cash donations, material contributions and logistic support to complete this humble project, and also, to everyone who volunteered their time and hard work to make this vision a reality.

Upcoming events:

1. Monthly fellowship
2. Mission trip
3. Miscellaneous

As we look forward to the next months, we eagerly anticipate all that God will continue to do in our midst. Every woman in our church is warmly invited to join us, grow with us, and experience the beautiful community in Christ.



Women Monthly Fellowships

Men's Prayer Breakfast

Dr. Temjen Longkumer

The Men's Prayer Breakfast Bible study for the month of July could not be conducted due to various reasons but the Men's group led the worship on Sunday devotion, on 12th of July, the second Sunday of the month.

On August 8th, our Bible study was from the book of Revelation 2: 18-29, 'Letter to Thyatira'. Recalling the previous Bible study, we learned that the first Church mentioned was Ephesus meaning 'the desired one', 'the Apostolic Church'. The second Church was the Church at Smyrna – meaning 'Myrrh', 'the persecuted Church'. The Third Church was the Church at Pergamum, meaning 'mixed marriage' or 'the married Church'.

The Fourth Church is the Church at Thyatira, meaning 'daughter', a medieval Church which was cruel and uncivilised. Thyatira was the smallest of the seven cities, but the one that received the longest letter. It lay about 72 km to the southeast of Pergamum. Both Pergamum and Thyatira had things in common, that was immorally behaviour, which was wrong. Without being part of a guild, no one could get into any kind of trade or get any job, and the problem of being a part of any guild was that an individual had to take part in festivals which included sexual immorality other than eating and drinking.

Thyatira was also famous for bronze. Christ's description followed by His introduction as 'Son of God,' indicates that He is the righteous Judge! Bronze is symbolic to judgement, and a serpent is symbolic to sin. When Moses made a bronze snake and mounted it on a pole, God was making it clear that sin will be judged.

In the closing phrases of each letter, Christ was saying to the Churches and to us to 'pay attention to what the Holy Spirit says!'

On August 23rd the Men's group led the praise and worship session of the church's 'Refuel' programme. Looking forward to the remaining few months for the year 2026. God bless CBCD.

The Church conducted the Refuel programme from 21st to 23rd August on the topic, ‘The Godly Family: A Legacy that Impacts Generations’ based on Psalm 128. The resource person was Rev. Dr. Mar Pongener, General Secretary, NBCC. The programme was conducted over three sessions on the topics (i) The God fearing man: The Foundation of a Godly family, (ii) The Godly Woman: Cultivating a fruitful home and (iii) The Godly Family: A Legacy that Impacts Generations

The first session held on 21st August was on the topic, **“The God fearing man: The Foundation of a Godly family”**, which focused on building godly families starting with the man of the household, based on Psalm 128. The speaker emphasized the meaning of “refueling” families by continually returning to God, expressing love, forgiving, understanding, encouraging, and living together. He shared that a godly man demonstrates his faith through everyday life, particularly at home, by prioritizing God, maintaining a prayer life, loving his wife, making time for his family, and managing finances responsibly. Fathers were reminded that their presence, attention, affection, and example matter more than material provision. He reminded the men that ultimately, a father’s greatest legacy is the faith and character his children learn by watching his life. The session concluded with a special prayer for all the fathers in the congregation.

The second session held on 22nd August was on the topic, **“The Godly Woman: Cultivating a fruitful home”** which focused on the woman of the family, reflecting on Psalm 128:3 and the influential role of a godly woman in creating a flourishing family. Like a fruitful vine, her influence brings nurture, encouragement, strength, care, and blessing to the home. The session emphasized that the home is where character, values, relationships, forgiveness, and faith are cultivated. A godly woman brings faith into everyday life, creates a safe and loving environment, prays for her family, and practices what she teaches. The speaker emphasized that, a godly woman’s greatest influence is demonstrated through her character, example, and spiritual roots.

The final session was held on the Sunday devotional service on 21st August on the topic **“The Godly Family: A Legacy that Impacts Generations,”** which explored Psalm 128:4 - 6 and the importance of building families rooted in God. A godly family passes down faith, character, values, relationships, service, and wisdom rather than merely material possessions. The session warned against “little foxes” that damage families, including blame, the love of money, marital unfaithfulness, harmful words, gossip, and judgment. The speaker shared that that faith must be intentionally passed to future generations through love, example, forgiveness, and godly living. A lasting legacy is what parents leave in their children, shaping generations beyond their own.





WHAT IS A CHURCH? Part-2

Dr. N. Temjen Longkumer

A brief architectural history: Evolution of Church buildings in Nagaland.

Initial years: 1872- 1885 (13 years)



Pic 1: Mulongkimong village gate, 1872



Pic 2: A Naga House, 1937

The first foreign missionary landed in Molungkimong on December 21, 1872. I will say with a fair sense of accuracy that the earliest chapels/churches used traditional local material like bamboo walls, wood posts and thatch or straw roofs. The design would have been more or less similar to the ordinary Naga house shown in pic:2.

From 1885- 1930 (45 years):

In 1885, the first CGI (corrugated galvanized iron) sheets roofed Church was built at Molungyimsen village. Impur mission center was established in 1894.



Pic 3: Impur Mission School in 1898



Pic 4: A Church in eastern Nagaland

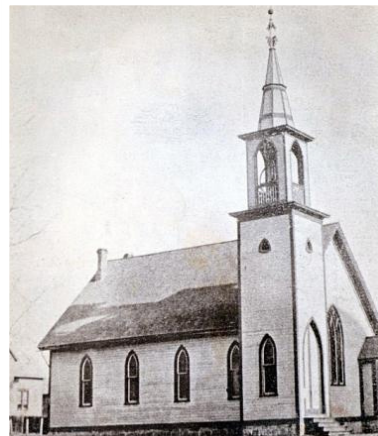
You will notice in pic 3 at Impur mission school, the construction seems like an Assam type of mud house (ikora/ikra) with timber or bamboo framed structure, reed mixed with mud or cow dung wall and a sloping roof, which initially might have been thatch and later converted to CGI. Same with the walls over time might have been converted into semi-concrete with wooden or iron posts. The basic layout seems to have remained during this time, with a hall and may be a raised pulpit.

From 1930s - 1980s (around 50 years):

As Christianity spread, regional administrative and trade centers established larger mother churches, such as the Mokokchung Town Baptist Church founded in 1937.



Pic 6: Pan Creek Baptist Church, Alabama, 1946



Pic 7: First Baptist Church, Ames, 1950



Pic 8: Impur Baptist Church, 1936

The Church buildings were more elaborate now with some resemblance to American Church buildings like those in picture no 6 and 7.

Following the 1962 Christian revival, church construction accelerated rapidly in both remote villages and growing urban hubs like Kohima and Dimapur, to accommodate surging congregations. While local village chapels and thatched structures were common, the year 1960 marked a period of transition toward more permanent chapel structures and organized institutional expansion.

From 1980s- 2000s:

Mary Help of Christian Cathedral, Kohima began construction in 1986 and was consecrated in January 1991.



Pic 9: Mary help of Christian Cathedral, Kohima



Pic 10: MTBA constructed in 1980s

The 1980s marked a massive wave of infrastructure expansion and localized church building projects across various tribal Baptist and Christian councils in the state following regional spiritual revivals.

From 2000s till date:

The era of 'Mega Church Buildings' started with DABA Church being constructed in 2005. It was the largest Church in Nagaland during its construction time.



Pic 11: DABA, 2005



Pic 12: Sumi Baptist Church, Zunheboto, 2017



Pic 13: Konyak Baptist Church, Mon 2023



Pic 14: Thahekhu village Baptist Church, Dimapur, 2026

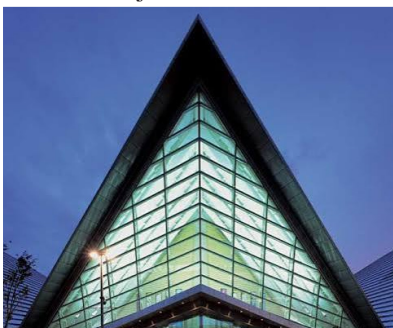
My ideal Church:

A.Church as a building

The design of a Church encompasses symbolic, spiritual and cultural values more than just functional and structural aspects. Late Franklin M. Segler, professor of pastoral ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Forth Worth, Texas states that “Historically, the Church has vacillated between space that emphasized ‘the house of worship’ (home church model) and ‘the house of God’ (sanctuary model). Effective worship space must meet both of these needs; it must be intimate so worshippers do not feel alone and ostracized, and it must also point toward God. Worship space should not look or feel like the family room in a domestic dwelling, nor should it be cold and indifferent to the individual. Worship space must, however, facilitates and encourages worship as action, for its design will have much to do with the congregation’s participation in the Word of God proclaimed, the prayer of the people, the congregation’s voice through music, the choir’s offerings of choral music, and the gift of instrumental music.” Worship space is built for the congregation and their participation in worship is important, so the architectural decision should be considered in the light of the congregation. The congregation should enjoy the space during the worship service.

Basilica typology of Church building in the Eastern Roman Empire were influenced by the theological concepts and liturgical practices. It is characterized by a long, rectangular public hall, central wide space called a nave, side aisles separated by rows of columns, a rounded semi-circular end called an apse, at one end of which often housed the altar. The theological significance of this layout lies in its symbolism of the journey of faith, as congregants move towards the altar, representing the Divine. Even in Nagaland many Churches have copied that architectural philosophy without giving it a thought, maybe just looking at the practical aspect of it.

Personally, I would love to have a Church building that reflects our ‘culture redeemed’. Perhaps a building closer to the initial Churches as in picture 1 and 2. A building utilizing locally available materials like stones and wood or maybe even treated bamboo.



Pic 15: Songdo convention center, Korea



Pic 16: The Arc, Bali



Pic 17: The brick House, Thane

According to “Churches by Daniels Inc” there are four phases of a Church construction.

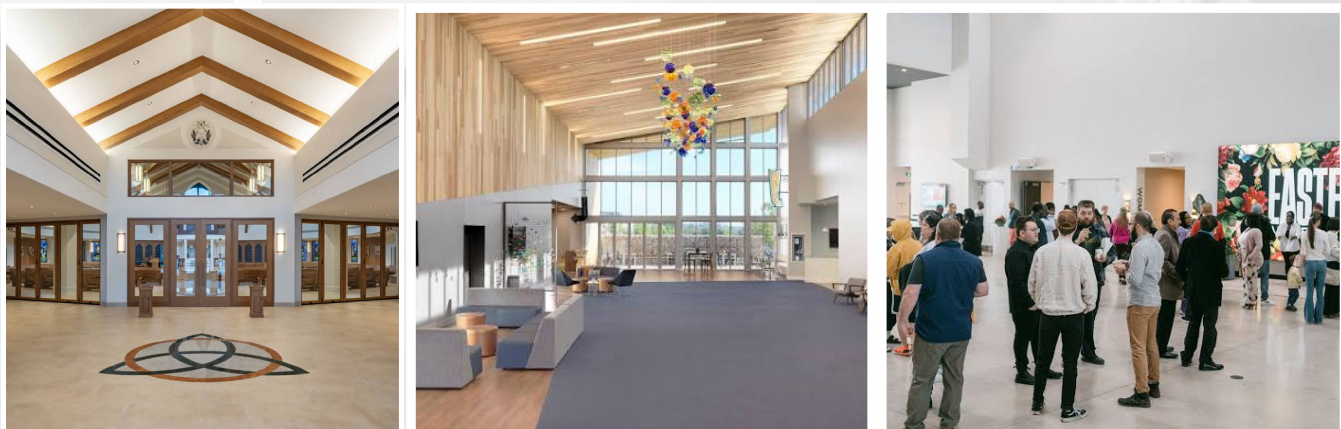
1. Phase one: Consultation & Needs assessment.
2. Phase two: Establishing an accurate scope & budget.
3. Phase three: Design, permitting & construction.
4. Phase four: Project completion & ministry expansion.

Some considerations to be made while building a Church:

1. Location: The location of the Church building should lead the congregation into a more profound experience of the worship.
 - a. Noise: The outside environment of the Church building has many influences in the worship service. The congregation needs a comfortable place of worship and exterior noise can disturb the worship service itself.
 - b. Audibility: Not just the external noise but internal echoing of voices needs to be minimised so as to help the congregation focus on the worship.
2. Flooding: Dimapur especially is prone to flooding like in many of the low-lying areas which is aggravated when lands are reclaimed ignoring the watershed areas of a natural river. Therefore, while choosing a site for the Church building, ample amount of flooding risk should be studied.
3. Earthquakes: Since we live in an earthquake zone, Church buildings must also take into account before construction. Modern construction technology should be applied to enhance earthquake resistance like flexible foundations, strong core frames, and energy absorbing materials, which will prevent the buildings from total collapse and protect lives during severe seismic activities.
4. Accessibility: This should be considered not just for the general congregation but also for those with disabilities and those with special needs.
5. Natural Light: Incorporating ample natural light into a church design creates an inviting and uplifting space. Large windows or skylights can provide beautiful views and allow in natural sunlight, reducing the need for artificial lighting during daytime services.
6. Parking: This is another important aspect of a Church building construction which needs to be considered before finalizing on a plot.

Church Interior

Lobby fellowship space- should also be an important consideration, as they have become an integral part of the worship experience. It not only controls the flow of the congregation but serves as a meeting place before and after the Sunday devotion.



Pic 18: Church lobby

The Nave:



The nave, which is the main hall in a Church, should be designed in such a way that reflects the local culture, a sense of awe and calmness. Acoustic principles should be applied in its design, balancing reflection, absorption, and diffusion so that sound is loud, clear, and evenly distributed without unwanted echoes or background noise.

Use of the Church space:

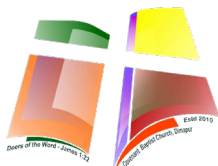
According to an interesting study conducted by Byeong Sun Im, from Liberty University School of Divinity, South Korea, on the use of Church space on Sundays and weekdays. A questionnaire was conducted, in which 125 pastors participated, all of whom were involved in church ministries. More than 80% of the participants of the survey admitted that the churches did not provide a space for the local community members, but they believed that it should be open to outsiders (including the local community) in addition to the church members, and the use of the space should be modified accordingly. Participants responded that the attitude of the congregation toward the use of the building should change (26.3%), facility and budget issues should be resolved (25.7%), and pastors should also be amenable to change (19.1%) to have the space open to the public. An overwhelming number of pastors responded that the church should provide educational facilities (52%) and recreational and leisure facilities (18.4%) to the community, followed by welfare (15.2%) and cultural facilities (14.4%). It will be interesting and enlightening if we could do such a survey before we construct our own Church building.

Personally, I would prefer a dedicated Church Hall where Sunday service and all worship services are to be conducted and it should be kept sacred. The Church can have axillary buildings or different floor rooms for other activities which are essential for a proper Church to function.

Common pitfalls while constructing a Church building:

- Poor initial planning:** Rushing into construction without a clear vision leads to delays and cost overruns. The solution to this is to invest heavily in the pre-construction planning phase, clarifying 'why' before 'what.'
- Inadequate budgeting:** Underestimating total costs is a major problem.
- Lack of communication:** This can derail a project and erode support. Implement a transparent communication plan from the start.
- Scope creep:** Adding unvetted features impacts budget and timeline. Use a strict change order process, vetting all changes with the committee and design team.
- Not hiring specialized partners:** Generalists may not understand ministry needs. Hire partners with proven experience in Church construction.
- Underestimating long-term operational costs:** This can cause financial strain after completion. Plan for long term costs by using sustainable design and durable materials.

An ideal Church according to me: Part B- Church as the body of Christ (to be continued)



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