

Northeast Christian University (NECU), Council of Baptist Churches of Northeast India (CBC-NEI) Report

Don Ng, 3/5/2016

During my two-week trip to India, I met with University Chancellor Dr. Anjo Kiekung and three other NECU volunteer staff persons on Feb. 13th to update one another on developments related to the proposed NECU.

NE India

Dr. Anjo and others have been meeting with leaders of the 9 Baptist conventions in NE India to gain support and commitments. They are having some success but are also encountering the expected reactions of prioritizing the conventions' specific needs over NECU. The Indian government continues to negotiate and buy land from the farmers for NECU in the Kohima area. The temporary site of a training facility in Dimapur will need some renovation before inaugural classes begin. Officially, NECU is approved by CBC-NEI with a long-termed view in place.

At the end of the 2015 BMS in Overland Park, I met Dr. Peter Armacost, former president of Ottawa (ABC) and Eckerd colleges. When I heard that Dr. Armacost was instrumental in negotiating with the Pakistani government to establish a college, I was able to arrange a Monday morning breakfast meeting with Drs. Anjo and Peter. On March 2nd, Dr. Anjo informed me that Dr. Armacost was arriving for a 5-day consultation on NECU in Nagaland. I believe this can only be God's providence!

ABCUSA

In November 2015, the WRC approved a \$40K grant as seed money for NECU to network and seek funding. Dr. Anjo Kiekung is scheduled to visit the US in 2016 to attend the Asian Alliance Convocation on June 21-24 in NJ and the World Missions Conference in July at Green Lake.

From the two visits that I have experienced in NE India, I learned that there are ongoing mission cooperation with ABC regions and churches. Rob Ely of West Virginia visits Harding Theological College in Tura, Meghalaya annually. Randy Rasmussen and the Dakotas churches are supporting medical work. And TABCOM where Fred and Mary Downs live has deep historic commitments in NE India. In fact, the week before I arrived, the Downs were there as potential benefactors to NECU.

Presently, ABC-related colleges of Judson, Ottawa, and Sioux Falls have been considering sending faculty members to begin teaching when NECU begins offering classes in Dimapur.

Recommendations

1. To help more American Baptists capture the NECU vision, it is proposed that the regional executives of the Dakotas, WV, and TABCOM and perhaps others would visit Nagaland and NE India next year in 2017. This would be scheduled to coincide

with the CBC-NEI annual convention in Assam or perhaps one of the many gatherings that they have.

2. To continue to share the NECU vision and solicit financial support, the NECU leaders would like to sponsor a choir from NE India to sing at the 2017 BMS in Portland. The choir hopes to also schedule singing engagements in as many churches as possible while they are in the US. This would be shared with the BMS Planning Committee in the end of March. This idea would need the collaboration of Ben Chan in IM.

Summary

Almost 200 years ago, ABC missionaries started many Bible colleges and seminaries. But today's Indian government is engaging in a national program of "Indianization" which equates nationality with Hinduism. When young people who are gifted with vocations other than Christian ministries, they are not safe or welcomed in state-run universities. There's a need to establish NECU to offer liberal arts and sciences in order for a community to possess a variety of skilled professionals and trades to function well. NECU is the answer to this challenge and American Baptists still has a contribution to make.