

**ISSUES FACING THE  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH TODAY**

*(With special reference to North East India)*

*REV. H.M. RAPTHAP*

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## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>FOREWORD</b> : <i>Rev. Lalhmangaiha</i>	a
" : <i>Rev. D. C. Haia</i>	b
<b>A Tribute</b> : <i>Dr. I. M. Simon.</i>	c-d
<b>Preface</b> : <i>Rev. H.M. Rapthap</i>	e

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- I. Inter- State Relations in North East India - —1-15  
With special reference to regional co-operation.
- II. Christian Response to the Problems of today.—16- 22
- III. The Church A Caring Community. —23-27
- IV. The Missionary Enterprise in the Hill —28-34  
Districts of Assam. ( Now generally known  
as North East India)
- V. Ecumenical Witness in the Context of—35-39  
Religious Plurality in India.
- VI. Mission and Rules of Comity in the present —40-52  
context of North East India.
- VII. Necessity of Church Union in North East India. —53-57
- VIII. Reflections on the 'Lima Document - Ministry. —58-69
- IX. Problem of Theological Education in North —70-80  
East India.
- X. Decade of Evangelism. - Opportunities and —81-91  
Challenges.
- XI. Jesus Christ The Hope of the Whole Creation. —92-100
- XII. Thy Kingdom Come. —101-108

## FOREWORD

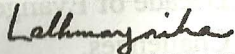
**NORTH EAST INDIA** has been witnessing various kinds of difficulties and troubles in the last century. Killings, insurgencies, bandhs, curfew, bombing, kidnappings etc. are increasing and have become almost the fashion of the day. In recent years, accusations against Christians have been steadily increasing too. In such a context the Christian Churches are facing various kinds of issues and the author fittingly draws our attention to some of those issues for our discussion and reflection. He has brought out some hints or possible suggestions to the problems for further thought and action.

The author, Rev. H. Mashel Rapphap, is a well-known Pastor among many. He has been invited to be one of the resource persons at various Seminars and Consultations, which indicates that he is not an ordinary person. He can be described as a "friend of all kinds of people" because of his humility and kindness. The more I work with him the more I respect and admire him.

I really appreciate that his *Papers* would be published in a book form. It is my sincere wish that "A collection of Papers" like this will prove to be of great help for other Church leaders in identifying issues facing the Christians and in solving the problems.

I recommend that this book should be read by all Pastors, leaders, and other members of the Church.

Shillong  
August 21, 2000

  
REV LALHMANGAIHA  
Secretary  
North Eastern India Christian Council

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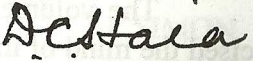
## FOREWORD

This book is a collection of lectures, essays and sermons delivered by Rev H M Rapphap reflecting upon the issues facing the Christian Church today with special reference to North East India. It is an attempt to address the socio, economic, political and religious realities of the world today and the call on the Church to wake up from its slumber. Various issues in this book have been raised for Christian involvement in the socio, political transformation of the region in particular; and the nation in general.

Rev H.M. Rapphap used the rich resources he has experienced as a Pastor, Principal of a theological college, Acting registrar of the Senate of Serampore College (University), a Senior Executive Secretary of the Khasi Jaintia Presbyterian Synod and a Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of India. He is infact an ecumenist who is deeply involved in bringing transformation to the life of the people. His book emphatically reflects the passionate concern for the Gospel and its implication for India today. Rev H M Rapphap is also a great preacher who always expresses the Gospel and Theological truth in a simple language to the understanding of the common people.

With great admiration and gratitude, I recommend that this unique book will not only be a source of blessing to most of us and our times but it should also involve us in dealing with the issues that we face, as we live our lives from day to day as persons and as Christians in communities in this New Millennium. May it give new insights and vision with commitment to many readers and glory be to God whose mission we share.

Shillong  
September 15, 2000

  
REV D.C. HAIA  
Administrative Secretary  
Presbyterian Church of India.

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## A TRIBUTE

Rev H Mashel Raptap needs no introduction to the Christian Community by virtue of his involvement in its work, within and outside the North East Region. He has been in the forefront of Christian activity for a period spanning over half a century; not only as a youth worker and a theological student being groomed for his future vocation but also as teacher and Principal at the prestigious Cherra Theological College at Sohra (Cherrapunji). His reputation as a preacher is indisputable and no one who has heard him can doubt that his conviction and experience as a Christian has been total.

Even as a young man Rev Raptap showed promises of being a perceptive thinker, and, when occasions demand, unafraid to tackle issues that many would prefer to avoid, although it is only in very recent times that they have been recognized as vitally relevant to the over-all spiritual health of the Church in this corner of our country!

The papers included in this volume give a historical perspective of the Mission of the Church as envisaged by the Founder, that it might be the Leaven that would bring about a change for the ultimate good of all people, not only by catering to its spiritual needs, but also by keeping in proper focus the material dimensions of the life of man, for no one can dispute the judgement of the ancients that a sound body must also have a sound mind as its complement, in order that it might fulfill perfectly its role as the *Temple of God*, as so beautifully brought out by St. John.

The volume addresses several issues that have exercised the mind of many Christian workers over the years, but sadly with not enough outward expression. Because it has supplied this need, this volume needs to be read by Christians who

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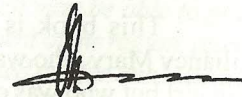
are concerned with the spiritual growth of the Church, irrespective of what denominations they may belong to. A few chapters that find place in this volume highlight several issues that are becoming more and more important at this present time, when the Church across this country is being made the target of the intolerance of those "who do not know what they do".

One other important issue that Revd Raptap has raised is of particular relevance today when, of so many Christian organizations in North East, the whole purpose of Christ's Commission to His workers throughout all ages seems to have become blurred, in that although they have indeed gone out to the World to bring out the Gospel to an unbelieving world, as they are expected to do, in the process they seem sadly to have been more concerned with preaching the Word *according to their light* and in doing so have done grievous harm to the Church- the Body of Christ- by sowing the seeds of disunity instead.

Perhaps this is the Cross that the Church is being called upon to carry in every age, and one believes, nay, must believe, that the Church will again more than vindicate itself, in God's own time.

To me the several questions that the author has raised and discussed have helped me to look at them with a new eye, and I am sure that others like me also find them at least as useful.

Umjaiur, Shillong  
August 30, 2000



IVAN M. SIMON

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## PREFACE

I had not thought before that there would be need to publish some of my papers which I have presented at different consultations and seminars and some of my sermons and addresses which I have given on different occasions. However, at the suggestion and request of some of my friends from whom I have received great support and encouragement throughout my ministry, I have decided to have them printed in a book form. I am fully conscious of my limitations, but if this volume can be of some help and inspiration to some one, I shall be greatly satisfied.


It will be seen that the papers and addresses deal with different issues both secular and religious keeping in view the role and mission of the Church in a pluralistic society. Many books, magazines and other writings have been consulted in preparation of my papers and addresses. I am greatly indebted to all of them. Wherever necessary and possible, acknowledgment and references to them have been made in the course of each presentation.

I want to place on record my sincere thanks to Rev. Lalmangaiha, Secretary of the North East India Christian Council; Rev. D.C.Haia, Administrative Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of India and Dr. I.M. Simon, a renowned scholar, Church elder and a prominent citizen of Shillong, who in spite of their pre-occupations have been very kind to go through the manuscripts and make their valued comments and suggestions. They have also very kindly written the Foreword and Tribute, which have been incorporated in this volume.

My wife and children have never complained about my frequent absences from home but have always given me full support and encouragement as I travelled from one place to another in fulfilling my responsibilities as a humble servant of God engaged in the ministry of the Church. I am deeply grateful to them.

This book is dedicated to my beloved daughter (Late) Liliancy Mary who was illustrious, intelligent and a devoted Christian girl but who was called home to be with her Lord and Master at the prime of her life some years back.

Shillong  
October 10, 2000

  
H. MASHEL RAPTHAP

**R**ev. H.M. Rapphap is a holder of B.D. and M. Th degrees of the Senate of Serampore College (University). He taught at Cherra Theological College, Sohra, for twenty nine years during which period he was Principal of the College about fifteen years. As an ordained minister of the Khasi Jaintia Presbyterian Synod, Rev. Rapphap has served the Church in different capacities at the local, regional and national levels.



He studied for some time at the Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Studies in Tantur, Jerusalem, Israel. He had the opportunity to attend and participate in some national and international conferences and consultations. His wide experience as a theological teacher, a pastor, a member and chairman of various committees and governing boards of different organisations has enabled him to make a significant contribution to the growth and strength of the Christian Church and upliftment of the society.

In his sermons and writings Rev. Rapphap takes the social issues seriously and applies the biblical truths to contemporary situations. According to his understanding and conviction, Christian Spirituality is not confined only to an act of worship and personal devotional life, however important these may be, but it means total involvement in social and national life because Christians are expected to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (*Matthew 5:14-16*).