CHAPTER THREE

THE EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY OF THE BCM: IN THE CONTEMPORARY SETTING

I. THE FOUNDING OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH OF MIZORAM (BCM)

Following the advent of Christianity in Mizoram, the transformation of the Mizo community within the short span of fifty years is indeed a matter of general interest. With regard to the Baptist community, from a handful of thirteen baptized Christians, who used to gather for fellowship in a small meeting-house, the BCM has become an organized church with a membership of 117,471 people representing 405 local churches today (2005). The work of the BMS, as has been noted above, was productive in that within a decade and a little more, there was a large number of Christians among the Mizo as a result of the pioneering work of Savidge and Lorrain.

These native Christians felt the need for organizing themselves into a formal body that would look after their religious and organizational needs. These needs were addressed formally in 1914 when the BCM held its first Presbytery and also ordained its first Mizo pastor, the Reverend Chuautera. What followed were a series of meetings at the levels of the Pastorate Committee and the Presbytery. However, the

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2. The report of the missionaries in 1904 stated that within a year, the Christian community numbered 259. Till the beginning of the year 1913, Mizo Christian congregations in various villages were not organized as "churches." Although they gathered on Sunday and on certain days of the week for worship, praise, prayer and mutual instruction and encouragement, there were no particular leaders. The best fitted to lead the devotions acted as pastor and teacher.
3. K. Thanzauva, "BCM Today and Tomorrow," in *Compendium: The Baptist Church of Mizoram* (Serkawn: The Centenary Committee BCM, 2003), 192. See also *The Minute of the Assembly of the BCM No. 109 August 2004 & January 2005* (Serkawn: BCM, 2005), 5. No. of Families 22,974; No. of pastors 114; No. of deacons 1,944; No. of elders 3,004; No. of registered Sunday school learners 65,063 (58.05%);
educational mission was kept under the immediate supervision of the BMS missionaries while the Church was still in its initial stage. Over the decades that followed, a number of emphases were introduced in the BCM. The emphasis on indigenized worship, financial support, administrative dynamics and witnessing the gospel along with the educational enterprises and the waves of revival that swept across Mizoram facilitated the rapid growth of people turning to Christ that, in turn, led to the growth of the BCM in the south Mizoram.

A. Formation of the Organized Church

Almost concurrently with the introduction of Christianity and educational ministry, Mizo from different villages were becoming Christians despite intermittent wars, natural calamities and incidents of persecution and opposition. It was in spite of the odds that the young church gradually grew. By 1905 there were already a good number of Christians, three hundred forty scattered in thirty villages around the southern Mizoram. From the following year onwards, growth and expansion of the Church was noteworthy.5

The origin of the BCM as an organized church was interesting as it had developed through a series of annual sessions which had its beginning at the "Annual gathering." With the purpose of encouragement and mutual help, the "Annual

4Lorrain, et al., "Arthington Mission to the Lushai Tribes (BMS) in The BMS Printed Report for 1907, 43 mentioned that the word “church” was used to denote a body of more than twelve believers meeting together regularly for worship and mutual spiritual help.

5Lorrain et al., “South Lushai” in The BMS Printed Report for 1905, 19. The Christians who were not dependent on others usually gave a tenth of their crops to forward God’s work amongst their fellow-human and to help the poor. By 1927, the Christian community was 9,935 with 3,484 full church members. By 1937 the total church membership was 7515 out of the Christian community numbering 19,463 in the south Mizoram according to The BMS Printed Reports for 1927, 231 and 1937, 351.

6Ibid. "South Lushai Mission (BMS)" in The BMS Printed Report For 1906, 25. Lorrain described that with a purpose to encourage and strengthen new converts who are scattered in different distant villages, Christians were called to meet together once a year at a Christian village. This was the only occasion when the converts, scattered in different villages could meet together for mutual help and
Gathering of the then South Lushai Christians was held in 1905. Historically, this gathering was important because several directives for Christians were constituted. Full-Membership of the Church depended on the basis of abiding by these rules. Most of the principles formed here are still followed to date. On this occasion thirty-four new believers confessed their genuine faith in God by water baptism. During this convention, several important issues concerning Christian principles were discussed and taught. Similar Christian Conventions continued annually until 1913. From 1903 to 1913 there was no recognized official name for the church such as the BCM today. Lorrain reported in 1913 that, till then, the Christian congregations in all the villages were not organized into “Churches” in the usual concept of that term. However, the pioneer missionaries looked after the congregations on the principle of self-supporting and self-propagating entities, which helped the converts to plant churches and be involved in evangelism and mission.

The missionaries were careful to choose capable leaders who could be entrusted to teach a simple Christian faith, hymns and reading skills. They depended on mature Christians in other areas to start pastoral work under their supervision. With neither committee bodies nor any Assemblies in existence as yet, the missionaries needed to discern the needs of the new converts in order to meet their spiritual needs.

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7The first gathering was held earlier at Pukpui in 1900 under the leadership of Rev. Edwin Rowland, a missionary in Northern Mizoram. The number of Christians was very small then. The second gathering was held in 1904 under the supervision of the BMS missionaries Lorrain and Savidge.

9Lalzawnga, Zoram Baptist Kohran Chanchin Pawimawh Lakhwam, 41.

10Lorrain et al., "After Ten Years" in The BMS Printed Report for 1913, 98. The members consisted of believers in Jesus who gathered together on Sundays and also on certain week evenings for worship, praise, and mutual instruction and encouragement. The best qualified men and women led the devotions and acted as pastors and teacher under the leadership of the missionaries.

11John, L. Nevius, Planting and Development of Missionary Churches (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1958), 1. See also Pratap Chandra Gine, The System of Elementary Education of the Serampore Mission (Jorhat: Dr. Gine, 2001), 12. This principle was the statement of purpose emphatically admitted by the pioneer missionaries on assuming their work.
Every difficulty and trouble had to be settled by the missionaries even as they were responsible for making arrangements for ministerial work. As the year went by, the native Christian leaders gradually shared this load of ministry.

Since the Annual Gathering of 1913, the missionaries and the congregation felt that the time had come to adopt a system of an organized church function, which would best suit the Mizo Christians. The nature of the organization at that time, according to Lorrain, was a combination of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist and Welsh Presbyterian practice. The governing system seemed to be that of the Presbyterians while conducting of their services was much more akin to that of the Methodists.¹²

Therefore, “the missionaries aimed at bringing the Mizo organized church which shall be a happy blend of all that is best in Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodists, with something added perhaps which no Western denomination can supply.”¹³

Subsequently, elders for the Mission Station church were elected to form a sort of Central Committee, which would for the time being exercise a certain amount of control over all the churches. They were to meet for special meetings at the Mission Station in the spring and autumn seasons to discuss matters of importance.¹⁴ This central committee appointed a separate committee to appoint and pay the evangelists and deal with all matters connected with the finance of the church.

¹²Lorrain et al., *The BMS Printed Report for 1913*, 99. Furthermore, the missionaries, with regards to the form of church organization made it clear that they were not there to make Mizo Christians Eastern duplicates of Western Baptists, but to bring them to Christ and to so guide them that they shall develop along their own national lines into a strong Lushai church of God which shall be a living witness of the Power of the Gospel to change savages into saints and head-hunters into soul-hunters.

¹³Ibid. When a Christian community contained ten or more baptized members those members are at liberty to apply to the Church Council for permission to choose elders from amongst themselves and to form an organized church. There were then 12 such churches by 1915 in the south. See also, “The BMS mission in the South Lushai Hills” in *The BMS Printed Report for 1915*.

¹⁴The duties of the elders were to deal with all matters of discipline in their respective churches, to receive new converts, to examine catechumens and to pass them for baptism. They were responsible to arrange for the services and activities of those under their charge, and to exercise a general pastoral oversight.
The central committee thus formed was responsible to meet after the model of what has hitherto been called ‘annual gathering’ in advance, to plan projects pertaining to the Church ministry. This could be understood as the beginning of the organized church. There was no clear cut paradigm shift to suggest that the BCM had single handedly run the Church as the overall supervision continued to function under the missionaries. The administration and ministerial structures and function have been inseparably intertwined since the beginning. The missionaries continued to play an important part as role models in leadership while cautiously avoiding over direction.

The one unique feature was the interest, the Mizo Christians had cultivated in giving support for the work of the church from the beginning. The missionary introduced the principle of local church autonomy, which meant each church was self-supporting and self-governing. They were taught about Christian giving and also self-administration under the guidance of the missionaries and the area pastor or deacon. Commenting on the progress of the church and leadership development, Lorrain affirmed, “Already the Church today is self-supporting and self-propagating and we hope that ere (sic) long she will also be self-governing.”

B. Early Effort in Evangelism

Evangelism occupied an integral part of the church since the beginning of the BMS ministry and so it became the legacy of the BCM. The church seemed to have a clear understanding of evangelism and related evangelism with their educational activities.

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15 Lorrain et al., *The BMS Printed Report for 1913*, 100. Lorrain commented that these are indications that the native leaders was growing and were beginning to develop the power to think and act for the church. *The BMS Printed Report for 1913*, 115.

16 Lorrain et. al., *The BMS Printed Report for 1913*, 100.

17 C. Peter Wagner, *Strategies for Church Growth* (California: Regal Books, 1987), 128. “To evangelize is to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men and women shall come to put their trust in God through him, to accept Him as their Savior, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church.” It means the proclamation of the saving act of God in Jesus Christ to people by word and deeds, so that the people by their own choice will decide to become Christians, to have fellowship in the church to serve Him. It is the art of persuading people to consider the claim of Christ.
Among the Mizo, within the purview of the BMS, Thankunga and Zotawna had the privilege of carrying out the first evangelistic thrust among the native people. Their works deserve a special mention in the history of the BCM so far as they represent the pioneering efforts of the BMS. The first church supported the two evangelists as they toured Mizo villages extensively, later joined by Parima and Lengkaia, who joined them in the work of evangelism. During the rainy season, the evangelists would return from their evangelistic tours to the missionaries at Headquarters to report and receive further instruction.

The pioneer missionaries were engaged in preaching, education, philanthropic work and literature publication and distribution as part of the evangelistic activities. Hrangkhuma opines that the first aim of evangelism of the BMS was to win all the Mizo for Christ. The second aim was to organize the Christian church as an evangelizing agency and to inculcate in each Christian the desire to serve Christ by bringing others to Him. This mission ethos and legacy continues in the BCM even today.

There is evidence that, from the earliest movement of Christianity in Mizoram, the individual Christian members and the native evangelists, contributed significantly to the growth and development of the church. One of the strategies of the BMS for

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19 Ibid. 1913, 16. There were also women engaged in evangelism in the early period. The first Mizo woman evangelist was appointed by the church in 1921, followed by another in the following year. They were supported by the special fund raised by the women. Lorrain et. al., "From Darkness to Noonday in Lushai Land" in *The BMS Printed Report for 1921*, 121.
20 The evangelists were constantly traveling in pairs over the different villages, proclaiming the Gospel. They returned to the mission station at intervals before the rainy season of the year. They gave reports to the church of the things, which had befallen them during their travels and the reception accorded to their message in the various villages.
21 Hrangkhuma, "Mizoram Transformational change: A Study of the process and Nature of Mizo Cultural Change and Factors that Contributed to the Change," (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1989), 111.
22 Hminga, *Life and Witnesses*, 60. Sohan Roy (Khasi) a Government contractor based at Lunglei witnessed the Gospel zealously. Several traveling evangelists and native Christians as well as series of revivals were effective in bringing more Mizo to the Christian faith.

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educational ministry was the introduction of Sunday school.\textsuperscript{23} The Sunday school ministry from the beginning served a useful purpose of teaching Mizo alphabets, as well as teaching the new converts about Christian principles and practice through simple stories of the Bible. So wherever a Christian lived in a village, he or she would collect children together on Sundays and instruct them in catechism. Even those who were unable to attend school had the opportunity to learn reading and writing in Sunday school. The attendance was successful and the result satisfactory.\textsuperscript{24}

The singing of hymns, and the art of reading and writing made it all the more interesting and played an effective role for education and evangelism.\textsuperscript{25} Beginning with training, teaching and preaching from the grass roots level, the missionaries laid the foundation of the BCM. Commenting on the eventual success of the Church, Lianzuala comments,

The foundation and working principle adopted by the missionaries was so good that all future growth and expansion adopted in Baptist Church history was an effect of an outgrowth of the pioneer missionaries foundations.\textsuperscript{26}

From 1903-1913\textsuperscript{27} the BMS missionaries assumed leadership in the Southern church in Mizoram. The co-ordination between the Mission (refers to the BMS) and the church (the church for native church leaders) was cordial. As financial resources allowed, they recruited and trained a number of native leaders for evangelism and a teaching ministry.

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid. The primary aims of the early Sunday school were 1. To make Christians and 2. to make the Christians able to read the scripture and the hymn book for themselves.


\textsuperscript{25}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{26}P. L. Lianzuala, “Development of Pastoral Ministry in Mizoram,” in \textit{Compendium: The Baptist Church of Mizoram} (Serkawn: The Centenary committee BCM, 2003), 84.

\textsuperscript{27}Chungnunga, “A Transition from Mission to Church,” in \textit{Compendium}, 16. He also uses Mission to mean the BMS who sent missionaries to Mizoram, and Church here refers to the native Mizo people who embraced Christianity through the preaching of missionaries and who eventually formed themselves into a Church.
C. BMS and the BCM: Integrating the Mission\textsuperscript{28} and the Church

Up to this point, we note that there were two parallel bodies working at tandem. The BMS had, from its entry into Mizoram, focused much on the broader areas of service that included the educational and the medical fields. The BCM, formed as a result of the work of the BMS, was more focused on parochial matters initially. Although the differentiation of their particular responsibilities is not neatly separable, we look into the merger of the two bodies so that the BCM becomes the continuing agency of the Baptist Church in Mizoram.

Under the supervision of the missionaries, the Church in the South Mizoram emerged, grew and matured. Many Mizo Church historians also attributed the rapid growth of Christianity among the Mizo to a series of revivals that occurred in Mizoram. When in 1944 the 50\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary of the arrival of the missionaries was celebrated throughout Mizoram, the Christian community within the field of the BMS was 23,108.\textsuperscript{29}

In 1946 there were 141 local churches with 16 ordained pastors. The total membership of the church was 27,357 of which 10,525 were baptized members. H.S. Luaia was elected to the post of Church Secretary (equivalent to the present General Secretary of the BCM) and he looked after the Sunday school Department.\textsuperscript{30} This was a big transition for the native leadership in the church. Prior to this, the missionaries, from 1903 to 1945 took turns looking after the administration. They represented the Mission in the meetings of the Church at the local, pastorate or the presbytery levels.

\textsuperscript{28}The word "mission" here applies for the BMS missionaries and their ministry and the "Church" for the native church and their leadership.
\textsuperscript{29}Hminga, "The Work of BMS in Mizoram" in Compendium, 12.
\textsuperscript{30}Chungnunga, "A Transition From Mission To Church," in Compendium, 16. See also Zawnga, Mizoram Baptist Kohhran Chanchin, 52.
The shift in 1946 led to the understanding of the need to integrate the work of the mission and the native church with the native leadership. The mission on their part, reading the signs of the time took the initiative in this process. Besides, the Indian Independence movement had an important impact upon what was later to transpire as the policy of the missionaries in this matter. The BMS was considering the hastening of transition of leadership from that of mission leadership to national leaders because the BMS was uncertain for how long the Indian government would allow the foreigners to continue their work in India.

The issue of integrating the “Church” and “mission” was raised at the annual Presbytery meeting at Zotlang in 1947, but with little success until several years later. A series of Presbyteries and related Committee meetings took place leading to the abolition of the Station Committee of the missionaries. A Joint Committee of the mission and the native leaders was created in 1948 to work out the integration. It comprised sixteen members, with eight representatives each. This Committee operated for ten years and during this tenure there were forty-three meetings conducted, implying that although the Joint Committee was in existence, active action had not been taken for materialization. The native Christian leaders represented the church to participate in the deliberation of the matter that concerned the mission and the Church.

In 1957, E.G.T. Madge, the then BMS Field Secretary for India came to Mizoram to attend the Annual Presbytery meeting at Theiriat, Lunglei. The Secretary

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31Ibid., 17.
32It is the process by which the BMS missionaries transferred responsibilities, administrative power and their properties to the native church leaders. This transition process took a long time.
33Chungnunga, “A Transition from Mission To Church,” in Compendium, 17. Perhaps there was time needed in preparing the native leadership for the responsibilities required of them. It could be also that the native leaders sensed the possible problems that might have cropped up.
34Ibid., 17.
expressed the need to fully integrate the Church and the Mission under one
administration, meaning, an administration by the Mizo Church leaders. Consequently,
the Presbytery gladly accepted the proposal. The final integration of the Mission and
the Church into one body as the Baptist Church of the Mizo was agreed on October
24,th and 25,th 1958. Commenting on the process of this transition, Thanchungnunga,
one of the first General Secretaries of the BCM said,

The missionaries did not always have the authority to exercise any
special power. Therefore, when the idea of integration was discussed in
the church, it was sometimes difficult for them to impose their ideas on
the issues. With our shortcomings and impediments, it was the
missionaries who guided us with parental concern and because of that,
the integration of the Church and Mission was smooth.

Consequently, four Departments, namely General, Literature, Education and
Medical were created, which would continue the emphasis of the erstwhile BMS. Full
integration of the Mission and the national Church was officially effected a year later
in March, 1959. B. Pradhan, the then Secretary of the Council of Baptist Churches in
Northeast India, inaugurated the transition and with it a new era began in the life and
ministry of the Baptist Church of Mizoram.

This transition is a significant milestone in the history of the Baptist Church in
Mizoram. The missionaries planted the Church and what the pioneer missionaries had
envisioned, that of having a Church that was self-supporting, self-propagating and self-
governing was in the process. With the integration, the “Southern Church,” as
previously known came to be “The Baptist Church of Mizo District.” Since then,
there have been some modifications in the name and ultimately it came to be called “The Baptist Church of Mizoram” when the Mizo District attained the status of Union Territory in 1972.

Even in the merger of the BMS and the BCM, it has been noted that the initial emphases of the missionaries of the BMS was perpetuated through the departments functioning under the BCM, namely, (a) Education (b) Medical (c) Literature and (d) General. The main concern of the General Department was the administration of the Church and its various activities. The BCM continued to retain its predecessors’ urge and passion to reach out with the gospel, particularly through the educational institutions. Thangchina rightly takes note of the passion for winning souls and the zeal for evangelism in the hearts of the first generation Christians.

According to the latest statistics, the Baptist Church of Mizoram has 22,974 families, 114 Pastors, 1,944 elders and 3,004 deacons and 65,063 students enrolled (58.05%) in the Sunday Schools. Today, the Baptist Church’s organizational structure is purely congregational, which is quite adaptable to the Mizo society, which has an independent mind by nature. The missionary introduced the principle of local church autonomy, which meant each church was self-supporting and self-governing, having its own local leaders.

They were taught about Christian giving and also self-administration by the local church under the guidance of the missionaries and the area pastor or deacon. The local church management and administration was left solely to the local congregations which constrained them to compete with each other in all respects of church activities

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“Assembly of the Baptist Church of Mizo District” and the “Standing Committee” came to be addressed as the “Executive Committee.”


such as evangelism, fund raising for church management, helping the poor, supporting the younger sister churches, helping the other neighboring Christians who were in need, contribution to the headquarters and associations and to the extension of mission work.

II. THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION OF THE BCM

The history of the educational mission of the BCM is traced to the educational mission of the BMS, in the personalities of the pioneer missionaries, Lorrain and Savidge. Education was part of the BMS activity from the very beginning of the 20th century in Mizoram. In the period prior to the 1950s, establishing and maintaining elementary schools, and teaching through the medium of the vernacular language formed the bulk of the BMS educational enterprise. Therefore, it is a well-known fact that the Mizo owe so much to the BMS and churches for the educational progress in Mizoram. In those days, the educational work of the missions and churches could be divided into several branches; a system of organized secular education, combined with religious instruction beginning with Primary education to the higher levels of Middle English School, training schools for the mission workers and schools for girls.

The term, educational ministry used here, deals with the system of organized secular school education which included a component of religious education and the entire educational process interpreted through the Christian worldview. It refers to the education given by the missions and churches. The evangelistic zeal of the

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It was said of Lorrain that he got up early in the morning before the light dawned and carrying a lantern in his hand, he preached in the open door with tears during the Annual Conference at the village called Lungrang. No wonder, that the Mizo boys and girls eagerly undertook evangelical work during their school vacation in their respective villages. They brought with them the story about Christ to their parents, friends and relatives and shared with them whenever they had an opportunity.
missionaries was embedded in the hearts of the Mizo people, coupled with a spirit of evangelism brought by repeated revivals in Mizoram.43

Hrangkhuma defined evangelism as, “the communication and sharing by word, supported by life-style, and loving service of good deeds that God in his sovereign love has reconciled the world to him in Christ.”44 The understanding of mission prior to 1950, cited by Hrangkhuma, ‘the act of sending missionary agencies from a presumably Christian land to a non-Christian land with the purpose of converting the people to the Christian faith”45 applied to the Mizo.

In fact, even before the Mizo indigenous Church leadership officially administered the Church in the South, several early mission-minded Christians decided to send volunteers among the non-Mizo group, (Chakma and Bru) to share the gospel of Christ. Evangelism was the primary task of the BCM mission, which implied that the mission is something (evangelism), to be done, and a work to be accomplished by the Church members. Thus, the mission of the BCM was clearly defined and the members were made to understand and accept its mission.

Through evangelism, people are invited to accept for themselves the good news that, “through Jesus Christ, their sins are forgiven, its power over their lives broken and they are restored to a life-giving fellowship with God.”46 Apparently, Mizo Christians became convinced that they were chosen by God to spread the gospel to other people, particularly to other tribes within and outside of Mizoram. Lloyd has testified that, “it was not the missionaries themselves who did most of the evangelizing after all. That was done by Lushai (sic)...it was begun by young Lushai men.”47

43Hminga, The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram, 82.
45Ibid., 36
46Ibid., 47.
The missionaries were very energetic and enthusiastic to spread the gospel and traveled extensively despite difficulties in road communications. The Mizo evangelists followed suit and traveled throughout the length and breadth of Mizoram to preach the gospel. In fact, they were allowed to stay at their homes in their villages only for a stretch of a week. Similarly, the mission schoolteachers were also like the missionaries as well as evangelists wherever they were posted. For a very long time, therefore mission schoolteachers were regarded as prominent religious persons, next to the pastors. Moreover, the Christian Government employees were also very zealous in communicating the Christian faith to the students; Carter commented that the Church employed many evangelists without paying salaries.

The key theme of the Mizo Christian has always been that every believer must be a worker for the extension of God’s Kingdom. The BCM has emphasized the urgent need for mission and evangelism and this is exemplified in the motto of the BCM, “Gospel for everyone.” The members of the BCM were encouraged to understand that the goal of mission and evangelism was the conversion of individuals and Church planting. One of the strategies adopted by the BCM towards fulfilling this end was the educational ministry. Hnuni rightly pointed out, that education has been one of the prime focuses of the BCM and was carried out in two forms, through formal education and Sunday school. The main emphasis was literacy, training persons to be able to teach others at least in the primary school and Middle school levels.

To the members of the Baptist church of Mizoram, the mission of the church is the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 18-20) and the outstanding objective stated in the constitution of the BCM is, “to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, everywhere by

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48 Saiaithanga, Mizo Kohhran Chanchin, 37.
49 Carter, Chhimbial Kohhran Chanchin, 65-75.
50 Lloyd, On Every High Hill, 32.
51 R. L. Hnuni, “Theological Education in Baptist Church of Mizoram,” in Compendium, 60.
words and deeds and to establish churches." Thus, from the beginning, proclaiming the gospel was the key target of the BCM in the footstep of its predecessors. For many decades, the Mizo were eager to share the gospel to the non-Christians not only within Mizoram but also to the other tribes outside Mizoram. The first areas of concentration for educational ministry were directed against the non-Mizo (Bru and Chakma) communities, residing on the western border of Mizoram.

With the progress of the work, the numbers of missionaries were increasing. Despite several setbacks as a consequence of the insurgency in Mizoram (1966-1986), the BCM continued to engage in the ministry of evangelism and church planting among the Bru and Chakma. The BCM also enhanced its evangelistic operation among different ethnic groups working in Mizoram since 1969. While still in the infant stage, being enthusiastic about mission, the church had ventured in cross-cultural mission in sending missionaries among the non-Mizo communities.

A. The Educational Mission among the Non-Mizo

Like its predecessors, the BCM continued in evangelism and church planting. This was by being involved in school education in accordance with the 'Great Commission.' The BCM leaders stirred its members to commit themselves to the

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52 BCM, Baptist Church of Mizoram Constitution and Rules (Serkawn: BCM Board of Publication, 2004), 11.
53 The BCM Report for 2005, 31st Jan., there are 55 BCM mission workers, of which 35 are Mizo and 20 of them are the native people. 21 churches have been established among the Brus and the Chakmas in Mizoram and the total number of Bru Christians is 3746. However, the number of Chakma Christians is comparatively small and they are only 1969 in 19 churches. The number of BCM mission workers is 56 (44 Mizo and 12 native workers). Apparently, the Chakma are less responsive to the gospel.
54 These are groups of people who came from different States of India to work as laborers, peons, drivers etc under the Border Security Force and private organizations. These groups are categorized under non-Mizo evangelism. The number of Christians among them are 1337, having regular worship in 13 churches under the supervision of 10 BCM mission workers, The BCM Report for 2005.
55 The Great Commission (Matthew 28: 18-20). For centuries, the church has known the concluding verses of Mathew's Gospel as 'the Great Commission,' in the same way that Mathew 22:37-39 is known as 'the Great Commandment.' This makes it clear that there are inescapable tasks
task of this important mission by motivating them to be involved in mission service. In the early days, they were involved in evangelism through direct preaching. However, as they recognized the direct relationship between education and serving, they incorporated educational programs into their evangelistic strategies among the non-Mizo.56

The BCM’s first evangelistic plan was discussed at the Assembly of the BCM on March 10, 1939, at Thiltlang village and it resolved to send evangelists to the non-Mizo residing in Mizoram.57 In that year, there was a collection of Rs. 244/- for the mission. This was followed by a yearly special collection for the mission and in the absence of enough funds the workers would continue to work without pay until they could be repaid. No expenditure could be levied from the general fund of the church.58

The evangelistic teachers automatically became the key figures in the process of church planting. Thus, traditionally for the BCM, the first and foremost concern apart from evangelism was the use of school system to teach rudimentary education. These strategies were employed not only for evangelism, but also for preparing native leaders according to their potential. In the process of the educational ministry, the

to undertake in order to fulfill this command. Each of the saying, going, baptizing and teaching embraces a significant portion of what is involved in making disciples. The last words of Jesus Christ before His ascension must have impacted the hearts of the missionaries to the cause.

56Here the non-Mizo referred to here are Bru and Chakma. The Chakma are Buddhists by religion, where as the Bru were animists. Originally the Bru have come from Bangladesh and Tripura. The Mizo know them, as ‘Tuikuk’ and they inhabit the western part of Mizoram mostly.

57Lalzawnga, Mizoram Kohhran Chanchin, 171. For this work, Pastor Zathanga, who was already a full time worker, Kawha, and Siama were appointed on 28th October 1939 to work among the Chakmas. There was a substantial response to the Gospel and several Bru and Chakma professed faith in Christianity.

By 1945, the Assembly of the BCM at Pukpui resolved to enlarge the mission work by starting schools for them to teach the new converts and to motivate other tribes. Kama at Taplabagh and Taikhara at Tipragath were the first evangelist teachers. There was a moderate response from the Bru and Chakma accepting Christianity and gradually they also developed an interest in reading and writing. More evangelists were sent, Lalthansanga at Laisawral and Khuma at Sirte. Funding for this work was done from the donation of the Presbytery of 1949, which lasted for some years. Again in 1950, Bawlliana and Sialngena were appointed to be the evangelists among the Bru. Zoram Baptist Mission Golden Jubilee Souvenir 1939-1989 (Serkawn: BCM, 1989), 18-20.

58Minutes of the Standing committee, 28th October 1939 and 16th March 1942.
focus was two fold; the formal day-school education system and the Sunday school program, which was more non-formal.

The main emphasis in the former system was literacy teaching in the Elementary schools. They served as centers for imparting the Gospel and Christian virtues often through the lives of Biblical characters. The Sunday schools served well in “teaching the passages of the Bible, catechism, prayers and hymns.” Sunday schools were where the students received their primary theological education, their spiritual guidance and their early training to become leaders of the church and the society. The educational institutions became the leading role-playing centers for evangelism among the non-Mizo. Funding for the cause of this mission was to be obtained from the collection of offerings in the churches on Sundays.⁵⁹

The Assembly of the BCM promoted the mission educational ministry from July 1962, introducing the “Ramthim (literally “Dark land” understood as Mission) Sub-Committee” with five members. This Committee had the sole responsibility of looking after the affairs of the educational ministry among the non-Mizo. The Ramthim Sub-Committee appointed nine evangelist teachers who were posted to different non-Mizo areas in 1964. The educational missions ran smoothly with evangelistic zeal for some years and there was an encouraging report about the progress of the work from the non-Mizo (Bru). The educational mission was greatly hampered in 1966 due to the outbreak of political insurgency in Mizoram. The people were scattered and most of the mission schools had to be discontinued.

Eventually, in 1966, the Executive Committee of the Assembly (BCM) amended the functions, rules and regulations of the “Ramthim Sub-Committee” and

⁵⁹Hnuni, “Theological Education in the Baptist Church of Mizoram,” in BCM Compendium. ⁶⁰

⁶⁰The Minutes of Assembly (Presbytery) 1939 at the BCM office.
resolved that “Ramthim” be replaced by “Zoram Baptist Mission” (ZBM). The ZBM from 1976 was to give oversight to the work of the Church related to educational work among the non-Mizo, separately managed as the Bru and the Chakma. Despite several obstacles and difficulties, the years between 1969 and 1988 were marked with sincere efforts to continue the educational ministry among the non-Mizo groups.

The Planning Commission of the Assembly (BCM) in 1983 categorized the non-Mizo mission as a “Home Mission,” with a new vision and articulated a plan and

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61 Lalzawnga, Mizoram Kohhran Chanchin, 173. Elders, Labliakthanga, K. Chawnga, C. Kaisanga, K. L. Vammaia and Rev. Zathanga were the members of the Ramthim Sub-Committee for the Bru and Chakma mission. Rev. H.S. Luaia, the Church Secretary headed the Committee comprised of fourteen members. The ZBM meeting in November 1967 targeted ten villages of Chakma and Bru-dominated areas for educational centers and subsequently appointed ten evangelist teachers respectively. The Bru experienced peace in their newfound faith as well as the benefits of education from the mission for sometime. Nevertheless, the peace and tranquility they enjoyed did not last long due to the political insurgency that plunged the whole of Mizoram into a state of unrest. It hampered the educational activities of the mission and affected the life and faith of many Bru. This chaotic time had a detrimental effect on the Bru Churches, which had sprung up as a result of the educational mission of the BCM. Ultimately, in 1969, there was only one Bru Church remaining in the Nghalimlui village in the Chhimtuipui District of Mizoram. See also C. L. Hminga, The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram, 234. Consequently, several Bru villages were grouped together into larger villages, viz; Darnagawn, Bunghmun, Lungslen, Talung, Chawngte, Vaseilang and Pharva. See also Golden Jubilee Souvenir, ZBM 1939-1989 (Serkawn: BCM, 1989), 95.

62 Zoram Baptist Mission Golden Jubilee Souvenir, ZBM 1939-1989 (Serkawn: Baptist Church of Mizoram, 1989), 95. The Golden Jubilee of the Zoram Baptist Mission reported that there were 21 BCM Primary schools established in different villages of Bru and Chakma people and there were 41 evangelist teachers during those years. This became possible with the return of peace to the country when Mizoram attained its Union Territory status in 1972. The ZBM in 1972 renewed its thrust for educational mission and a new Church was born at Pharva. Following this, the ZBM appointed F. Lianchhinga as headmaster, four teachers and staff to run the Vaseilang Boarding School with 28 students in 1973. Unfortunately, soon the school had to be shifted to another Bru village, Chawngte in 1984, due to a lack of adequate food and the scarcity of other commodities. The move resulted in a heavy loss of resources, time and money. For students it involved the loss of one year. The incident should become a useful lesson to BCM authority regarding its decisions when contemplating a site for an educational institution. Here at Chawngte, for the first time the BCM started opening a school with the medium of instruction in English where Lalrotluangi, was appointed as the headmistress.

The Committee resolved that Bru Churches should function under the Mizo Baptist Church pastorate within the home mission because majority of them have learnt Mizo. Second, to train one Bru pastor within five years, since there was only one Bru evangelist working among them. Third, to establish mission schools in Bru villages provided there was access by jeep-able road or by boat. Fourth, school would be opened if Government grants were available. Fifth, to prepare books in Bru dialect for teaching basic Christian principles.

However, to nurture them the use of the Mizo Bible and Mizo hymnal was encouraged. By then, with the gradual progress in school education, the mission adopted the Comprehensive school pattern after the government educational system in Mizoram. As a consequence, simultaneously, there came into being a Comprehensive mission School at Dinthar in 1978, at Putlungasih in 1978, at Dinthar in 1983, Ngalimlui in 1986, Vathuampui in 1986 and Zehtet in 1988. Besides these, there were 25 other Primary Schools in different villages of Bru in Mizoram.
objectives for the non-Mizo (Bru group) and Lianchhinga was appointed as the Home Mission Field Director. These schools served as important evangelistic centers for the Bru group. The majority of the students have become Christians and the educational programs are continued by the BCM. However, there were problems in the educating of the non-Mizo, e.g. financials, poor physical facilities in the schools and a lack of well-qualified teachers. Despite these limitations there is evidence that more Bru have responded to Christianity. At present, majority of the Bru have become Christians.

School education ministry is the key factor and there are 32 missionary teachers with 21 native workers ministering among the Bru.

With regards to the educational mission among the other non-Mizo group (the Chakma), the first step was taken in 1945 where two evangelist teachers Kama and Taikhara were posted at Taplabagh and Tiperaghat, followed by the posting of Khuma as an evangelist teacher at Taplabagh in 1949. With regards to the educational mission among the other non-Mizo group (the Chakma), the first step was taken in 1945 where two evangelist teachers Kama and Taikhara were posted at Taplabagh and Tiperaghat, followed by the posting of Khuma as an evangelist teacher at Taplabagh in 1949.  

The ZBM in 1979 planned for an educational center for the non-Mizo group at Chawngte. Consequently, small churches have been planted in different Chakma villages. However, the educational mission among them was renewed and intensified only in recent years, in the 1980s. The Chakma Literature Committee prepared the

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64 Golden Jubilee Souvenir ZBM, 17-20. Emphasis was given to evangelism and a significant number of Chakma responded to the gospel. At Kauchhuah alone there were already 70 Chakma Christians. However, progress of the work was hampered due to the political disturbance in Mizoram in 1966. With the return of peace and stability in the country, the BCM has actively participated in the educational mission among the Chakma since 1978.

At Kauchhuah, Hmunnuam, Udalthansora, Damlui, Tuikhurlui, Hmunthar, Puankhai, Serhuan and Phairuangkai (Zotlang), it was reported that the Chakma Christians numbered 500 prior to the insurgency of Mizoram in 1966. However, in the 1970s, it was found that there were only 121 Chakma Christians. The reasons for the decline may be that many left Mizoram for their safety. Perhaps some even denied their faith in Christianity. Others may have lost their lives due to the disturbance in Mizoram.

65 ZBM Golden Jubilee Souvenir ZBM, 19 reports for the first time in 1981 the Chakma Christian Conference was organized at Tuichawng in which Lianchhinga, the then School Inspector of Schools and several BCM staff participated. The Conference passed the following resolutions for the
Chakma alphabet in Roman script and unlike the Bru, they were able to learn in their own dialect.

With the purpose of assessing the educational mission of the BCM among this non-Mizo group, the Assembly appointed a Field Study group in 1983, headed by the BCM executive leaders namely, Hminga, Hrangena, and Chungnunga. The Committee made several suggestions and submitted a report for the improvement of Chakma mission education. The Chakma Christians have increased to more than 1,000 under the BCM in 1987 and construction of seven churches has been undertaken in fifteen different Chakma villages; as well, more evangelist teachers were posted in each of these villages.

The Chakma Adult Education program was formed and a Summer School was planned at four villages, namely Chawngte, Marpara, Tlabung and Vaseitlang. In all these villages, the BCM posted evangelist teachers. Funds amounting to Rs 10,000/ were dedicated to the writing and publication of literature. Training for leadership and evangelism was also on the agenda. From 1988 to 1998, the number of Primary educational ministry of the Chakma mission: First, translation of Bible and preparation of Hymn Book be undertaken with immediate effect. Second, more Sunday schools in Chakma villages be opened where learning to read and write should be incorporated as in the time of the early BMS. Third, the appointment of a native Chakma Christian leader and evangelist was focused. Fourth, more strategic plans for evangelism might be developed to reinforce the missionary focus among the Chakma. The use of Chakma dialect for educational mission purposes was proposed. Following this, the BCM administered the Chakma mission separately from 1983. Lianchhinga had surveyed the population of Chakma within the BCM area in Lunglei District and Chhimtuipui District and reported that the total population of Chakma was approximately 30,000. See also F. Lianchhinga School Inspector BCM, letter No. CMM 30/79/60 of 13.11.1979.

The Literature Committee of the BCM had consultation with the Chief Executive Member of Chakma District Council at Chawngte. See F. Lianchhinga, School Inspector, BCM “Official letter No. CMM No. 30/79/60 of 13/11/1979.

Planning Commission Reports of BCM 1983, F. vii, (4), 16. The Commission suggested addressing the missionaries working among the Bru and the Chakma as Home-missionaries and the field to be regarded as “Home-Mission.” Sapa in his thesis, “Educational mission,” mentioned that the study group reported that for the last forty years of ZBM among the Bru and Chakmas, there were 30 church elders among the Bru with 70 Deacons where as there was only one Chakma Church in Tuichawng.


Ibid., 20.
mission schools among the Chakma increased to 23, with evangelist teachers under the BCM respectively.\(^70\)

Thus, the educational mission that began among the non-Mizo (Chakma) in 1939 was given a serious effort only after the 1960s and that too was interrupted due to the political insurgency in Mizoram. Therefore, by 1995, after 25 years of the BCM work among this non-Mizo group (Chakmas), the number of missionaries engaged was 74, along with 13 native workers. Even though direct evangelism was practiced, the emphasis was on education. Twenty-three churches were recorded with a total strength of 1840 Christian members.\(^71\) There is not much progress in the growth of Christianity when we compare the report of 1999 with that of 1995, despite the serious efforts made by the BCM. The number of missionaries in 1999 was 55, with 11 native workers in 18 local Churches. There were seventy-five new believers and the total Christian population was 1425.\(^72\)

This suggested that there must be something seriously wrong with the BCM educational mission. One possible reason could be that there was no ordained Chakma pastor among them. The decline may be a reflection of the political uncertainties and preoccupations. The Assembly of the BCM being aware of this stagnation suggested that the Planning Commission investigate the actual status of the educational mission (Chakma Mission) in 1999.\(^73\)

In response to this, the Planning Commission of the BCM took action and proposed that the General Education Department of the BCM should directly supervise


\(^71\)BCM Assembly Minutes and Report for 1995. 48.

\(^72\)BCM Assembly Minutes and Report for 1999. 113.

\(^73\)Ibid.
it. Accordingly, the Chakma Mission educational program was shifted to the care of the General Education Department of the BCM in April 2000. Dropout cases were common among the students mostly due to economic reasons and it was reported that some of the schools had to be closed down. In 2000, there were 1478 Christian members with 52 missionaries in 18 local churches. The native workers were 12 and there were 78 new believers added that year. By 2002, the number of missionaries was 53 with 12 native workers, with an increasing number of Christians numbering 2348.

Considering the amount of time spent in working among this non-Mizo group for more than fifty years, it could be observed that the progress of school education was quite poor. There have been several shifts with regards to the plan and programs of the BCM for the non-Mizo groups. There appears to be no systematic plan to develop and implement the educational mission among the Chakma. The religious practices of the Chakma and their migratory habits appeared to be hindrances to their progress in education. The medium of instruction that was initially introduced was Mizo and this seemed to be the principal reason the Chakma were less responsive to the gospel.

Training for the evangelist teachers was not given top priority and the lack of communication due to inability to use the Chakma dialect created problems for the missionaries and the Chakma. Political reasons could also play some significant part to thwart the progress of educational ministry among the Chakma. Among several problems that were seemingly significant, Hrangkhuma contends that the biggest problem was the lack of in depth study to understand the Bru and Chakma on the part of the missionaries and the sending body. There were no serious attempts made to find

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75 Assembly Reports of BCM 2001-2002.
points of contact, and to meet them in their own situation.\textsuperscript{76} Lalpa Grep Huan, highlights the characteristics of the people,

Many converts could not receive proper guidance in Christian doctrines since they shifted too often. They were not far sighted economically. Even when they had a good harvest, most of them sold their rice just after harvest and soon spent all the money bought by it. They rest of the year they lived in extreme poverty, earning daily wages when possible.\textsuperscript{77}

Furthermore, Hrangkhuma also observed that the nominal Christianity of the Mizo living around them caused the Chakma to conclude that Christianity was not better than their own religion.\textsuperscript{78}

The BCM began to have a wider vision in its mission operation towards the outside of Mizoram. This had begun with an open opportunity that was offered to it with the invitation from the Australian Baptist Missionary Society to take over their mission work among the Rabha tribe in lower Assam, since the Government of India denied the extension of a residential permit. Consequently, the first Mizo missionaries, Rev. Rokhama and his wife were sent in 1968 by the BCM to work among the Rabha followed by a few other Mizo missionaries.\textsuperscript{79} Over 9000 Rabhas have been brought to Christ with 54 churches at present. Particularly the whole village of Mendavari has become Christians with a number of 710 believers. A school ministry has been in operation and children have taken board exams for the past four years. Forty students have graduated from high school with good positions.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{77}Lalpa Grep Huan cited in Hrangkhuma, 56.
\textsuperscript{78}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{79}According to the Report given by Rev. Rokhama in the Millenium Missionary Conference at Aizawl in Jan. 2001, there were 8360 Christians and 52 local churches. See also Z BM Golden Jubilee Souvenir 1939-1989 (Serkawn: BCM, 1989), 25.
\textsuperscript{80}F. Sangvela, Baptist today, vol. v. March 6-12, 2005.
Similarly, the BCM had an opportunity among the Tribes in Tripura from 1971. The New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society working in Tripura State could not extend the visa of the missionaries. Therefore, the Tripura Baptist Christian Union invited the BCM to work with them in running school education and evangelism. The BCM immediately responded by sending seven missionaries to work with the Tripuri-Halam Kuki. Presently, 50% of the Halam tribes have become Christians.

Among Jamatia of Tripura, and Noatia, the BCM started their ministry in 1983 and now there are 5000 (8%), Jamatia Christians and Noatia having 10% Christian members. Debburma has become very responsive and every year it is reported that there is an increase of Christianity by 1000 members; where, according to the census of 2001, there was only 3.7% Christianity in Trupura. With the progress of the mission work, there was a demand for more missionaries in Tripura, as a result the highest numbers of missionary educators of BCM are stationed in this state.81

It is interesting how the BCM involved itself in mission work not only within Mizoram but also beyond. In 1973, the BCM started working among the Nepalis and Rajbhongsi in Dhubri, Assam. The church soon became a center for evangelization work in the surrounding areas.82 The BCM, in 1975 started to work among the Nepali settlers and Adivasi in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal.83

The Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society (CBFMS), working among the Korku tribe in the states of Maharashtra and Madya Pradesh in 1975, have invited the BCM to take over their work. In response to this, the BCM has sent two missionary

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81Baptist Today, vol. v. March 6-12, 2005. There are 92 BCM mission workers of which 28 are Mizo and 64 are native people. The number of Christian from various tribes is 25192 with 252 local churches.
82Baptist Today, vol. v. March 6-12, 2005. By 2002, there were 1146 Christians with 12 local churches according to Thangchina in the BCM Compendium. There were 14 BCM mission workers.
83Ibid., Church planting has been the main thrust here and an English Medium school is established. The latest report shows that there are 1245 Christians and 11 local churches.
couples in 1979. The mission work here was not very progressive and after 25 years, there are only seven small churches with 16 mission workers supported by the BCM\textsuperscript{84} with 641 church members. In Dhubri, among the Nepali and Rajbongsi, the mission started in 1973. The BCM started working with the Boro Baptist Union in Goalpara, Assam in the districts of Nalbari and Barpetta in 1988.\textsuperscript{85} According to the recent reorganization of the mission administration set up under the BCM, all the fields in Assam and West Bengal are integrated to be called as Assam-Bengal Field.\textsuperscript{86}

The State of Arunachal Pradesh had been closed to the gospel for many years. The BCM started to work among the Adi, Adi-Galong, Khamti and Deuri in 1990. By 1994, the work was extended to the Apatanis where there were hardly 50 Christians. The number rose to more than 2000 within less than a decade with six local churches. The Nishi tribes are open to the gospel and the school ministry was started at Naharlagun in 2003.\textsuperscript{87} Recently, for administration purpose, the mission fields in Arunachal Pradesh was re-organized and divided into two, Arunachal West and Arunachal East.\textsuperscript{88} It is likely that more and more missionaries from Mizoram will be joining the mission work to engage in educational institutions in this vast state of India, where the majority of the tribes are unreached by the gospel of Christ.

Apart from engaging in direct mission work, the BCM also functions in partnership with different organizations in India and abroad for its educational

\textsuperscript{84}F. Sangvela, Baptist Today, vol. March 6-12, 2005. 
\textsuperscript{85}Ibid. The Boros in these areas are most unevangelized. There have been many set back due to political disturbances initially and eventually the missionaries had to vacate for some years. Despite several problems, in 2003, it was reported that there were 1447 Christians with 16 local churches. There were 12 BCM mission workers.
\textsuperscript{86}The BCM Report for 2005, indicate that in Assam Bengal Field, there are 73 BCM mission worker in this field, 21 of them are missionaries from Mizoram and 52 are the native people looking after 95 churches in different areas. The total numbers of Christians are 12885.
\textsuperscript{87}Sangvela, Baptist today, vol. v. March 6-12, 2005.
\textsuperscript{88}The BCM report for 2005 says in Arunachal East, there are 40 BCM mission workers with 11858 Christians having 130 local churches. In the Arunachal West, there are 284 churches with 42500 Christians having 41 BCM mission workers.
ministry. The total number of missionaries supported by the BCM at present is 436 and the number of churches in its different fields is 894 with 109236 church members. Therefore, the total mission budget of the BCM for the year 2004-2005 is Rs.36,756,848/- out of the total budget for the whole of BCM is Rs.121,941,321/-. The following table shows the status of BCM educational centers among the non-Mizo outside Mizoram.

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89 Ibid., Partnership bodies are the Leprosy Mission, The Baptist Missionary Society, The Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) and the Australia Baptist Missionary Society in Thailand, China, Nepal and Bangladesh.


91 The BCM Reports for March 9-13, 2005, 61.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Teacher &amp; Staff</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>Tribes focused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>St. James, Gongrai</td>
<td>Cl. V - X</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>Halam – Kuki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yakhili, ADC Complex</td>
<td>Cl. KG – X</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>Debbarma</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Elm, Dulukma</td>
<td>Cl. KG – II</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Jamatia</td>
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<td>18 primary Schools</td>
<td>Cl. 1 – IV</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1220</td>
<td>Halam – Kuki</td>
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<td></td>
<td>St. John H.S.</td>
<td>Handing over to the native</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jamatia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Bengal</td>
<td>BMS, Birpara</td>
<td>Cl. KG – X</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Nepali/Adivasi</td>
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<td>Assam</td>
<td>Mt. Olive, Debitola</td>
<td>Cl. KG – X</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Rabha</td>
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<td>BBES, Dhubri</td>
<td>Cl. KG – X</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
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<td>Arunachal</td>
<td>MEC, Ziro</td>
<td>Cl. KG – VII</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>Apatani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pradesh</td>
<td>Huto,</td>
<td>Cl. KG – I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Nissi</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arshang, Pasighat</td>
<td>Handing over to the native</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Empu</td>
<td>Cl. I – IV</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Miria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>3039</td>
<td>Tribes - 11</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The table indicates that there are five high schools from Kindergarten up to the tenth standard under the BCM outside of Mizoram with one Middle school having up to the seventh standard. Two of the English schools were handed over to the natives to continue on their own.

The educational effort of the BCM among the non-Mizo within Mizoram at present is seen from the following statistics.\(^\text{92}\)

\(^\text{92}\)Ibid. 61. Other than the schools in Home mission, the BCM has 27 mission schools outside of Mizoram. These are located in the states of Tripura, West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal and Bangladesh. The medium of instruction in most of these schools is English. The total strength of the students in all these schools is 4648 with 275 teaching staff. More than fifty percent of the mission staff are engaged in teaching ministry.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Estd</th>
<th>No. of Staff</th>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Enrolment of Students</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Boys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rotlang (W) P/S</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cl. I - III</td>
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<td>Boliaveng P/S</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cl. I - IV</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Belthei P/S</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Chandur (P) P/S</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMS, Tuichawng</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cl. B - VII</td>
<td>61</td>
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<td>Zawlpui P/S</td>
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<td>BBS, Chawngte</td>
<td>1984</td>
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<td>Cl. KG I - X</td>
<td>179</td>
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<td>Hmunthar P/S</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Cl. I - IV</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zohmun</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Phairuangkai P/S</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cl. B - IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comp. M/S. Marpara (S)</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cl. A - VII</td>
<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comp. M/S. Nghalalimlui</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Cl. I - IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chawngtelui P/S</td>
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<td>Cl. I - IV</td>
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<td>Rolui P/S</td>
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<td>Rangte P/S</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sachan P/S</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cl. I - II</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H/S, Damrengpui</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cl. I - IX</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedailui 'P' (Pawi Dist.)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cl. I - II</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhuahthum</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cl. I - II</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauzam</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cl. I - II</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>111</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>952</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that in every school there are 59.59% students. The noticeable recent development is that the school at Damrengpui is recognized to send candidates for Class X in the Board examination. The School at Vairawkai has only fourteen children, but with a purpose to look after the church one evangelist teacher is posted. As the table shows, it is only from the 1960s that serious effort has been taken for the non-Mizo by means of an educational ministry. However, at present, the BCM laments their failure to maintain the former ethos and standard of the BMS ministry. There arose a sense of need within the community to return to the zeal of the founder missionaries.
B. Mode of Selection of the BCM Educators

This includes the selection of fields of works, selection of educational workers and methods of raising fund for the education mission. Hrangkhuma concludes that the Mission did not follow any clear-cut policy or pattern with regard to selecting fields of works. As for selecting workers for the mission, ideally and theoretically, the Assembly of the BCM has to approve it and create a post and advertise for the missionary posts on a need basis. Applicants were then called for written tests and personal interview before the Board members officially assigned by the Assembly on a fixed date.

Having gone through this process, the successful candidates are sent to the fields either immediately or depending on the conveniences. There was no prior training required in most cases for the workers. However, in some cases, the ZBM had given a few days orientation course in the BCM headquarters. Basically, the workers of the BCM in the fields were required to study the native language during the first three years. In case of failure to learn the language within this specified time, the worker's case would have to be reconsidered by the sending it to the mission Board.

However this policy was not strongly enforced

Wherever mission fields were opened, Mission quarters were built and the Field Directors were appointed in each station. By rule, the BCM workers were given three months furlough after three years of service in their respective fields. Educational institutions, medical facilities, literature and preaching ministry were the main strategies employed by the BCM with evangelical goals. To the BCM, the work of developing people is necessary, but the government and other agencies can do it.

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94 Minutes of the Executive Committee of the BCM, No. 1,2, 5 of 10-11-70; Minutes of ZBM, No. 2 of 8.6.70.
however, the work of leading people to Christ is the responsibility of the church. Moreover, the BCM perceives that the main basis of material development for the educationally backward class is the gospel. Through the gospel, the people can discover themselves, which helps them to stand on their own feet, recovering their humanity.\(^5\) This is the best means of developing the disadvantaged. Therefore, the BCM gave priority to the method of schooling system and aimed at establishing churches by means of educational ministry. Individuals or groups are encouraged to give gifts and lend their support towards this ministry in various dimensions. Material gifts to the converts are encouraged with cautions, since it can easily be misappropriated and easily misunderstood by others. It can also easily produce a tendency to lean on others on the part of the converts.

Hrangkhuma quoted Lianchhinga having stated that the BCM, while they claimed that they have chalked out a clear policy and method, there was no such thing in writing. It could have been in the minds of the leaders if there was a policy, and clear instructions were never given to the workers.\(^6\) Despite the absence of written rules, regulations and clear instructions, the workers adapted themselves to the BCM principles of evangelism and church planting according to the situation as far as practicable. As regards the observance of the Feast and Festivals of the non-Christians, the workers used their conviction not to contradict the word of God. Indigenization was emphasized, and church constructions normally undertaken in mutual cooperation.

The culture and customs, which were not alien to the Christian faith, were not repudiated. Generally, the BCM policy was financial self-sufficiency, and almost all the mission funds were raised from indigenous sources. The Mission Department made

\(^{5}\text{T. C. Lahtlawmlova, "Mission and Evangelism Department Report Tlangpui," (Serkawn: BCM, Mission \& Evangelism Department, January-July 2003, photocopied), 1.}\)

\(^{6}\text{Hrangkhuma, Mizo Missions, 101.}\)
an annual budget and after the approval by the Assembly of the BCM, it was divided into Pastoral areas to raise the required amount. Each local church tried to accomplish the “target” assigned to them by various means.97

Problems concerning the mission education of the BCM seem to be the lack of definite policy and training of the workers, which resulted in the uncertainty of many workers as to how to proceed.98 Generally, the BCM mission work is in co-operation with other Christian organizations. In some cases, the BCM had no voice in the decision and policymaking concerning how the missionary works in the particular mission field. The BCM sends missionaries or evangelist teachers to the fields and supports them financially. But in the actual work, it does not have direct influence and leaves the administration and work plan in the hands of the individuals to a large extent.

C. Educational Ministry of the BCM among the Mizo

The educational mission of the church, with the approval of the Government, continued to enjoy the benefit of monopoly of running the educational enterprises in the South for a long time. Within thirty-seven years, from 1915 to 1952, there were

97 There were several ways, by which the mission raised funds by the local churches to meet the target requirement, such as distribution of envelopes to individuals and family for voluntary contribution for mission funds and these were collected on a specified time; and *Fethchhuah*, a particular time set aside for raising funds. Literally, it means a ‘Journey into the Mission Fields’ where people particularly women gathered together bringing their crops, rice and money. These items were sold at a higher price than the ordinary rate in the market with a purpose to achieve their targets. This practice has become one of the principal means of achieving the mission fund. Rearing pigs, fowls and cows for the mission fund, practice of jhumming cultivation by groups and gardening with a purpose to sell the products for mission fund were common practices by many villagers. Going for daily labor for specific days and opening tea-stalls and vendors have also become very useful means for fund raising. Moreover, collection of firewood from each house amounts to a significant contribution to raise funds. It was popularly known as “firewood missionary.” Another major source in raising mission funds practice by almost every family is *Buhfai Tham* (handful of rice). The people set a small portion of rice aside before every cooking of rice. The collected rice is then sold out to the church members and this has a significant bearing for the needed mission fund. Pledge cards and faith promises are also popular means of raising funds. Missionary Day observed by the churches also added strength to the target mission fund as on such occasions; several teams and associations, individuals and family specifically contributed for the mission target.

563 Mizo who have passed the Middle English Examinations. And 367 of them have completed their Middle vernacular Examination between 1938 and 1950.99

However, in the 1940s, there was a possibility that the Government might take back the monopoly of education from the mission as per the Government Act of 1935 in 1937,100 when the most pressing need of the time was meeting the demand for more mission primary schools in villages. The Director of Public Instruction stated in 1938 that the education policy of the Government for the Mizo was under consideration.101 The shift from mission to Government would have an adverse effect on the educational system where missionaries had enjoyed freedom and authority in implementing education in Mizoram. The educational mission of the Church would have been affected in several ways had the system been implemented.

Firstly, the financial grant for education, which the Mission received, would not have been in their hands. Secondly, the curriculum would have been altered and religious instruction would have been curtailed. Thirdly, appointment of staff would have been on the Government's basis of selection. The general practice was that the missions sent people of their choice for teacher training and they had the authority to install teachers of their choice in the school. This freedom ensured the Christians influence in teaching, modeling and Christian character building. Therefore, with the government in control of education, such an environment would be lost.

Nevertheless, the Government in 1938, after inspection decided to let the missionaries and the Church carry on the management of schools. The BCM in 1938 contemplated drafting an educational plan for ten years by which they had aimed to

99Rokhuma, Mizoram Zirnaa Mission Leh Kohhran, 139.
100Ibid., 172.
101ASR, Education B. September 1936 Nos 16-20. From the D.P.I. to the Secretary, Transferred Department, Govt. of Assam, No. 11E. 2G-301 of 35, dt. 7.1. 1936. See Hluna for detail information about the Government procedure and the school education system.
have fifty village primary schools, four Middle Vernacular Schools and a Middle English School.\textsuperscript{102} There was a marked progress of schools in the South by 1941, where 144 students appeared for the Primary Board Examination.

While effort were made to open more educational centers, a shift in educational leadership took place due to political factors that had an adverse effect on the educational policy of the mission after the Independence of India in 1947. The Indian Government took control of education by giving recognition to schools and by appointing more teachers. The year 1947 marked a departure for the Serkawn Boy’s school as it was handed to the Government.\textsuperscript{103} The Middle vernacular course was replaced with Middle English course with the introduction of co-education system.\textsuperscript{104} Rokhuma commented on the achievement of the mission school as one of the best Middle Schools in the entire Northeast India.\textsuperscript{105} The number of scholars was small, yet the quality was superior. The existing schools in the southern region alone under the church in 1948 were 123 Primary Schools with 3,668 students, and 11 middle Schools with 1,007 students.\textsuperscript{106}

The position of Mizoram during the education mission era from 1904 to 1951 census of India shows that among the population of 196,202 there were 61,093 (31.13\%) literate and 157, 575 (80.31\%) of these were Christians. The women’s literacy was noted as 19.47\%. The literacy level grew from 0.92\% of the first census of

\textsuperscript{102}Lorrain, et al., \textit{The BMS Printed Report for 1938}, 368.
\textsuperscript{103}Thangzuala, \textit{Serkawn Sikulpui}, 21.
\textsuperscript{104}Ibid., 21.
\textsuperscript{105}Rokhuma, “Contribution of the missionaries in Mizoram education,” in \textit{Compendium}, 100.
\textsuperscript{106}Rokhuma, \textit{Mizoram Zirnaa Mission Leh Kohhran}, 170. By 1952, most of the existing educational institutions under the missions were taken over by the Government. According to the latest report of the Honorary Inspector of Schools in the south of Mizoram, the number of educational institutions were: 42 Government Primary schools, 78 mission aided schools, 27 Mission unaided schools and 9 other private unaided schools, totaling altogether 153 schools.
1901, to 31.13% by 1951. The figure showed that Mizo society within fifty years underwent an unprecedented period of transformation in the education field as well as in its social and religious context due to the educational ministry of the Church. The latter part of the 1950s was a period of transition for the education of the Mizo for it 'witnessed the introduction of many more schools under the Government.'

With the Government’s encouragement and recognition, there was a mushroom growth of educational institutions in many villages of Mizoram. There were political influences in the appointment process for staff and teachers in the educational department. Despite the increasing number of schools, there has not been a sign of progress in the quality of education.

107 The first census in 1901 recorded only 45 Christians in Mizoram and there were 761 (0.92%) literates. Within half a century, Christianity has come up to 80.31% with an increase of 31.13% in literacy level, which is quite amazing.

108 In 1952, the Government of India undertook direct responsibility for supervision of the entire Primary and Middle Schools in the Mizo District. The position of Deputy Inspector of Schools for the Primary and the Middle Schools in the Mizo Hills was created in place of the Mission Education in charge. Lalchungnunga was appointed the first Inspector of Schools in May 1952. The Inspector of Schools exercised academic control over institutions, and was directly responsible for the supervision of all Primary and Middle schools.

The Government also started sanctioning the opening of Middle Schools as well as High Schools to private entrepreneurs. With this implementation, the over-all management of Education under the Mission was passed on to the Government and with it the system of education underwent change. Furthermore, with the inauguration of the Autonomous District Council of Mizoram in April 1954, the supervision and general administration of Primary Schools and Middle Schools was handed over to the District Council on July 21, 1961. The District Education Officer was appointed to be responsible for academic control and supervision. The first education officer for this post was Thanthuama. There was a rapid increase in the number of Primary, Middle and High schools in the following years.

New enforcement and expansion in the field of education under the Government of Mizoram has been achieved after Mizoram was upgraded to the status of a Union Territory. The District Council Act was revoked and all Primary Schools run by the Mizo District Council were taken over by the Government of Mizoram on April 29, 1972. In the meantime, the establishment of a Public High School for the Mizo in the North and South was envisaged. This impetus for Higher education started in 1926.

The Presbyterian Church in the North highlighted its desire to have a High School in 1929, but the Government at that time refused permission, citing that the timing was not propitious. The Mission also saw little need for education beyond the primary and middle school level. There was even a difference of opinion among the missionaries concerning higher education. Therefore, the Mizo initiated the first High School in Aizawl, Mizoram in 1944, fifty years after the introduction of education in the country.

Similarly the 'Lunglei-South Lushai Education Association,' was formed to open a High School at Lunglei. A.R.H Macdonald, the then Superintendent of Lushai hills, refused to give the permission to open a High school. However, with the contribution of Dr. Williamson, Foreign Secretary of the BMS and of the local people a public High School at Lunglei was opened in 1948. The missionaries and the church leaders had a significant contribution to its early stage of development.
The difference between the Christian educational institutions and those run by the government or other private enterprises was in the context of religious educational instruction. The educational work of the mission was directed to educating the masses through schools and subtly spreading the knowledge of Christ’s Kingdom. There was a difference in the objectives of the Government education department and those of the church.  

This led the church to re-thinking, in terms of *praeparatio evangelica* or long-term preparation for preparing future church leaders, whereby Christian schools had to create a climate of Christian consciousness, which would later lead to socio-religious transformation. Thus, the government’s aim and priorities did not seem to match with those of the Church’s objectives whose aim was to work towards amelioration of the church and outreach. The government school did not have a program for religious instruction, as this would violate the principle of religious equality.  

The dedicated members of the BCM gradually found it necessary to have its own run school. Education has always been regarded as one of the most important strategies of the church for the establishment of a strong and progressive church.  

III. INTRODUCTION OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY OF THE BCM  

With the introduction of education and the acceptance of the new religion, Mizo society experienced a dramatic change. The propagation, reception and

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109 This was basically with regard to the aim and plan. For the Church and Mission, prime importance given was impartation of Christian education. They felt the necessity of giving education that understanding of the Bible must be followed along with teaching in the school. Hence it was often called that education became the “hand-maid of religion” in Mizoram. On the other hand, the Government though assisted education by giving grants and scholarship was not in favor of imparting religious beliefs. The Government as in other parts of India adopted religious neutrality as the fundamental principle of their rule and therefore scrupulously forbade any form of religious teaching, directly or indirectly in schools and colleges, which had received financial support from the Government. See also R.C. Mazumdar, ed. *Struggle for Freedom* (Bombay: Bhartya Vidya Bhavan, 1969), 895.

110 Ibid.

111 Reports of BCM Assembly, March, 2005, 60.
subsequent appropriation of the new faith, all occurred with a great speed and contributed towards change in the society. New social norms and values were being taught and embraced. With the gradual realization of the value of education, its benefits and the importance of mission schools in particular, there developed a general consensus among the church members that there should be a separate Mission High School in Lunglei.

The General Assembly of the BCM in August 26, 1959 discussed the significance of this issue and was convinced of the need. The Assembly entrusted the Education Committee to study the feasibility of introducing a mission high school at that stage. Eventually, the Assembly Committee decided to open a mission high school in 1961 at Serkawn with the motto, “The Utmost for the Highest.” Thus, the first Christian High School under the name, Serkawn Christian High School was dedicated, with 26 male students on February 8, 1961. A decade after in 1971, the Assembly changed the name to “Christian High School Serkawn.” The High School was upgraded to the status of Baptist Higher Secondary School in 1996.

The BMS missionary, R.F. Tucker led the pioneering work as the principal for a year, with K.L. Rokhuma as the first teacher and Lalkunga as the boys’ hostel warden. On the departure of Mr. Tucker in 1962, Mr. Rokhuma succeeded him as the principal. In 1965 the first batch of students took the High School Leaving Certificate examinations. The school has crossed its infancy and has come to its adulthood and according to the report of 2000, this school had 38 on the teaching staff with a total student population of 582 from Class V11 to X. The student enrollment in

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112 Rokhuma, Mizoram Zirna, 151.
113 A fee of 10 Rupees was collected every month from each student. The first group of teaching staff included C. Kaisanga, H. Pahlira; R. Lalsawia and V.L.Ngena. Schools for girls with boarding were also opened in 1962, with K, Hrangthuami as the hostel warden.
2005 is 760 (334 in arts stream and 162 in science stream), which is the highest in the Lunglei district.114

One can truly say that this institution since its inception has served the people of the south Mizoram in particular and has been the torchbearer in the field of education and sports. So many eminent leaders in the church, Government services, Engineers and Doctors who today serve the State in various capacities are the proud products of this institution. Today, the institution continues to maintain its lead in the field of education and as such has been recognized by the people of Mizoram.

In view of the pressing need of the people in Mizoram, churches were compelled to run their own schools in several towns. The BCM was no exception to this and it started opening more educational centers within its jurisdiction. The actual position of the BCM in 1993 as to the number of its educational centers was, 37 Primary schools, 6 Middle schools and 2 Secondary Schools, totaling 45.115 By the year 1996, the number of educational centers had grown to 74 in all (60 Primary schools, 9 Middle Schools, 4 High schools and 1 Higher Secondary School).116 Most of the above seventy-four schools were for the non-Mizo. The major focus for the Mizo was and is, the Baptist Higher Secondary School at Serkawn.117 By 2004, according to the BCM report, the number of schools under the BCM is 54 (41 Primary Schools; 4

114K. L. Biakchungnunga, “Report for Baptist Higher Secondary School, 2005” in Baptist Today, Vol. v. no. 28 July 17-23. The school has from its inception correctly claimed to produce pioneer services to the people of Mizoram in general and to the people of the south in particular. A survey of the school history reveals that the school has had a very rich and popular heritage in the field of academics and athletics. Quality and not quantity has been the basic target of the school.
115Rokhuma, Mizoram Zirna, 177.
116Ibid., 178.
117The school has produced competent leaders and officers in various capacities in the state as well as in the central service apart from producing significant ministers in the service of the Lord. The school has also produced top scorers in Mizoram in the Department of Economics and History. The pass percentage in 2004 in the Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate was 94.73% and in the High School Leaving Certificate the pass percentage was 98.07%.
Middle Schools and 9 High Schools).

Since recent times, the BCM has made big strides in the expansion of educational facilities. The educational objective of the BCM is to integrate Christian teaching with holistic education as an avenue for the Gospel witness. The BCM introduction of an English Medium School among the Mizo started only in 1998.

IV. INTRODUCTION OF ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOL

By 1997 the BCM began to seriously concentrate on the educational ministry within Mizoram and planned for an English Medium School. In 1998 the Baptist English School from Kindergarten level to Class II was opened. Three teachers were appointed initially, and the total enrollment was 53. In 1999 they accepted students up to class III and 135 students enrolled with five teachers. In 2000 the school admitted students up to classes V with a total number of students at 183. The aims and objectives were (1) to build up the Christian life of the children; (2) to train the children for ministry in the church and (3) to benefit Church workers.

Indeed, the Mizo have now come a long way from their raiding practices and traditional beliefs. The Baptist missionaries in their contact with Mizo society brought about Christianity and progress in accessibility to education, effecting changes in all aspects of Mizo community life. Such changes occurred as a consequence of the educational ministry carried out by them and followed by the BCM. The educational mission of the Baptist Church of Mizoram contributes to the spiritual progress and academic development of the Mizo people. The BCM is fortunate to have gifted, hard working personnel and their legacy continues to influence her on its ongoing mission.

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120 Ibid.
121 The BCM Report for 1999.
V. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Mizoram celebrated the golden jubilee of the missionaries’ arrival in January 1944. To commemorate the occasion, the BCM resolved to start a Bible School with the aim of giving training to Church leaders and to develop a program of theological study. The Church collected a sum of Rupees 2,902, with which it decided to establish a “Jubilee Bible School” (JBS) in 1945. The initiative was one of the significant contributions of the BCM educational enterprise. JBS was opened on June 1st, 1946 with three objectives (1) to prepare and train church leaders. (2) To pass on Biblical knowledge to the students and (3) to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Christianity in Mizoram. R. F. Tucker B.D. B.Ed. (1946-1950) was the first Principal. Thus, many people started going to this Bible school for theological training.

The first class of students studied from 1946 onwards. Many Mizo have attended this Bible school to receive their pastoral training or Diploma-level theological training. The majority of students who were trained in the JBS returned to their respective villages, and they came to play important roles of leadership in their local churches. They proved themselves able church leaders and have become instrumental in the spread of the gospel to many people. The report mentioned that 811 students received a Diploma from Jubilee Bible School and most of them have effectively served in their respective local church while some have become cross-

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123 Hnuni, “Theological Education in Baptist Church of Mizoram” in BCM Compendium, 63.
124 Ibid. Rev. H.S. Luaia, Rev. Challiana and Rev. Chuautera were the first teaching staff. The duration of the course was three months beginning from June to August and the syllabus followed the Serampore Layman Training Course. The course of duration was changed to one year since 1948. The curriculum for the pastoral ministry was reviewed from time to time and changed according to the requirement of the church in context.
cultural missionaries. The Jubilee Bible School served the purpose of its existence meeting the need of the people in many areas of leadership development.

As a result of the increasing interest in the mission work in the 1960s, a shift of emphasis from self-supporting to outsourcing mission took place. The increasing number of committed people engaging in missionary work within and outside Mizoram created an urgent need for a Missionary Training Center. Consequently, the Assembly of the BCM in 1991 opened a center to equip missionaries who do not have a theological background. Thus, in place of Jubilee Bible School, a Missionary Training Institute was introduced. The motto of the MTI was “making disciples” and the objectives of the institution were (1) to give in-service missionary training (2) to train people for missionary tasks and (3) to impart Biblical knowledge to trainees with a view to developing a missionary spirit within the Church.

This Training Institute served as an important educational center where the missionaries as well as pre-service candidates received preparation for service. So far, 223 students have received their Certificate from this Missionary Training Institute (MTI). Within ten years the MTI trained almost 250 students who have worked in various parts of India as missionaries, evangelists, schoolteachers, and church leaders.

Ultimately, when the BCM opened a Theological College, the ‘Academy of Integrated Christian Studies’ (AICS), at Aizawl in 2001, the General Committee attached the MTI to this new institution and offers an M.A. in Missiology.

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125 Hnuni, “Theological Education in Baptist Church of Mizoram,” 63. Three theologians have served in this JBS as principals viz, Rev. H. Killuaia, Rev. Lawmsanga and Rev. B. Thangchina. Sapa also mentioned that the first batch of students, viz Hrangchhingpuia, Vantawna, Thangseia, Lawmsanga, Thanchungnunga, Vailinga all became pastors in the BCM in later years.

126 Ibid., 69. This Training was a one-year Certificate course. Both missionaries of the BCM as well as other churches and Pre-service candidates did their studies at MTI. In most cases, those who have undergone this training have become important leaders and are instrumental in the BCM ministry in various aspects.

127 Ibid.
The Academy of Integrated Christian Studies is the latest development in the theological educational process. As the BCM is growing in quality and number, the need for more qualified pastors is the demand of the church and in the mission fields. Candidates for pastoral ministries were sent to different theological colleges in India. With the increase of young people coming forward for theological study, the BCM felt the need of having its own theological college. Moreover, the leaders of the BCM sensed that it was necessary to run its own theological seminary to provide the required skills that would be relevant for effective ministry in the Mizoram context. The time was hastened when the Gospel Centenary in Mizoram was celebrated in 1994 and to mark such an auspicious occasion, the question of a theological college was discussed in the Assembly of the BCM in 1995.

After a series of studying and debating over the pros and cons of the proposed theological college, it was finally resolved to start a theological college in the Assembly of the BCM in 1999. Accordingly, R. L. Hnuni, the then professor at Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, was appointed to shoulder the responsibility of establishing an, “Academy of Integrated Christian Studies,” (AICS). The initiation of AICS is a landmark in the history of the BCM as the Church and the name itself reflected the vision and mission of the BCM. In 2000 the college was given provisional affiliation by the Senate of Serampore University. Now it has become a full-fledged theological college under the same. Twenty-six have successfully passed out with the degree of Bachelor of Divinity from the Academy of Integrated Christian Studies, five other students have completed M.A. in Missiology. Presently, there are twelve faculty

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1^29 Hnuni, “Theological Education in BCM,” 77.
1^30 Ibid.
members with 84 B.D. students with 12 missionaries in training. The BCM anticipates to successfully carrying out the establishment of theological education with satisfactory achievements.

The educational ministry of the BCM is always the area of concern and it has made a significant contribution right from its inception towards this aspect. Peace and benefits were brought to the people through the spiritual force of the Christian faith channeled through the medium of the BCM Schools. The church leaders in Mizoram have exhibited an awareness of the contemporary educational ministry and that it has shown several trends. As the BMS and BCM administration and ministerial structures have been separate but intertwined since the beginning, the following chapter is set for field research related to the BMS and BCM with reference to the educational ministry.

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131 Reports of the Principal of AICS, Nov. 20th 2005.