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## A Passage to India



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*This piece was written by the Rev. Dr. Bruce Cochran, reflecting on his time in Nagaland (NE India) as Speaker of the 7th Ronmei Naga Baptist Association Youth Conference this past January. Bruce serves as a Region Minister for the [American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky](#).*

Last spring (2018), Daisok Penmei, pastor of the Miami Baptist Church in Logansport, Indiana communicated to me that the Ronmei Naga Baptist Association was inviting me to be the main speaker at their 7<sup>th</sup> Youth Conference in January, 2019. Daisok was born and raised in the Ronmei area of Nagaland, and Miami Baptist Church was once served by the missionary who took the gospel to the Naga people in the early 1900's, but that's another story.

I was shocked, but pleased, to be offered this opportunity, especially after hearing the conference is normally attended by over 15,000 youth, young adults and their families. Following my acceptance, the planning committee indicated the theme for the event was "Run for Glory." The theme was supported by the Apostle Paul's direction given in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

Spiritually, the highpoint of the trip occurred on the last night of the conference. After I concluded the sermon, Nehemiah Penmai, one of the conference leaders, met me at the pulpit. He expressed his appreciation for my messages and my presence, and offered the best gift to me—their prayer! At that point, he, and 15,000 others audibly prayed for me in the Ronmei dialect. It was an awesome and humbling moment. I was speechless. Tears swell up in me even now when I tell of this moment. I commented that those five minutes made the entire trip worthwhile.

I am grateful for all the assistance given me and want to express my appreciation for the Ronmei Naga Baptists for their hospitality. I am also grateful for the advice and counsel provided by International Ministries. I am especially appreciative of the confidence and support of Soozie Ford, Executive Minister of American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky, as well as the region board who financially supported my journey.