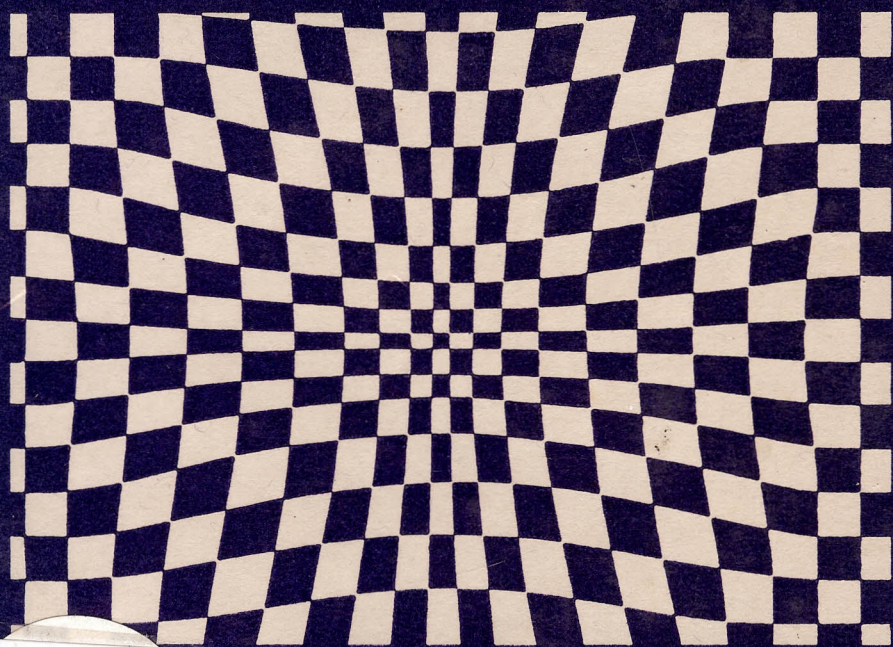


# LONGRI AO

## A Biography



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O.M. RAO



**LONGRI AO**  
**A BIOGRAPHY**

by  
**O. M. RAO**



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**PANBAZAR, GUWAHATI, ASSAM**

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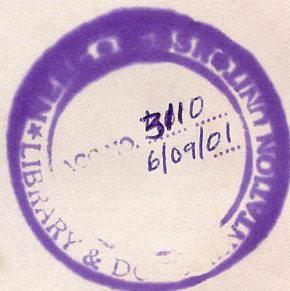
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## A Biography

### Members of the Editorial Board :

Rev. Y. L. Mingthing, Chairman

Dr. Renthly Keitzar

Rev. Phuveyi Dozo

Rev. Lanumeren Ao

Rev. Alem-meren Ao

Mr. Kenneth Kerhuo

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## FOREWORD

This book will continue to tell an unforgettable story of a chosen person of God, namely Rev. Longri Ao, who was to the Nagas a special gift. As a leader, organizer, preacher and minister of the Gospel of Christ, Longri Ao was widely recognised and accepted by friends at national and international levels. An out and out man of God, he was honoured by the Nagaland State Government with the title of **The Man of Peace** on the 7th of August 1981.

Rev Longri Ao lived amongst his people in a time of many social, political and spiritual challenges. He met them all boldly with courage, opening the eyes of his people to God and channelling His blessings to them. Of his ever so many memorable works, his gospel mission amongst the Konyaks, his leadership in the Nagaland Baptist Church Council during its pioneering stages, his peace mission in the midst of political storm in Nagaland, and founding the Naga Gospel Outreach Mission, are the most outstanding, and will be ever cherished by generations to come.

After living a full and fruitful life, Rev. Longri Ao left for his eternal home on the 6th August 1981 at the Nagaland Baptist Mission House, Kohima, Nagaland. His works are yielding a rich harvest. Not departed but just laid in rest, he will be met by the rest of God's children on the day of the Lord's return. Therefore, this book should be read by one and all, in homes, churches, schools and theological colleges—specially in Nagaland and in the the fields ministered by the of Baptist Churches in North East India. Its readers will certainly be blessed.

Rev Phuveyi Dozo  
General Secretary  
Nagaland Baptist Church Council, Kohima  
NAGALAND

## INTRODUCTION

There are various motives for writing a book. In the case of this particular biography, there is only one. The Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI) desires to enshrine the life and example of the late Rev Logri Ao for posterity.

A number of voluntary groups, printers, individual writers, Christian agencies etc. came forward offering to write a biography of Rev. Longri Ao. While deeply appreciating the offers, the CBCNEI felt that the project should be undertaken by the Council itself; consequently a Special Committee consisting of competent leaders was set up with Rev. Y.L. Mingthing as Convener. The readers will agree with me that the Committee has, through its tireless corporate efforts, done a splendid job in getting this biography written up. Dr. O. M. Rao and the members of the Editorial Board (the Special Committee later converted itself into an Editorial Board) richly deserve the congratulations of the Council.

Rev. Longri Ao was a person at once nature-made, man-made, self-made and God-made. With his imposing physical stature, endowed with fair complexion and handsome looks, he was no match for his fellow Nagas. He was an extraordinary man with most extra-ordinary endowments (*soja-soba* in Ao Naga Language). Descendant of a traditionally priestly family, his dedication to the cause of the Gospel remained supreme till his last breath. A man of *ahimsa* (non-violence) he would not move an inch from the path of reconciliation in any conflicts arising from religious, political and communal issues. His leadership as preacher, evangelist, reconciler, peace-maker, and missiologist was acclaimed far and wide.

His charisma, his humour, his mastery of linguistics, his seasoned leadership, his boldness and frankness, and many other coveted qualities will linger in our memory. However his physical presence in the total ministry of the CBCNEI is

no more; and we will continue to feel this vacuum created by his departure.

This book is an account of a dynamic leader of extremely high calibre. The book has given a vivid narrative of a very active person who spent his entire life in service to others. Each stage of his life gives us some fresh insight. His early life, his teaching ministry, his missionary labours, his executive life, his untiring struggle for peace, his life-long devotion to a mission, and the utterances of his last days cover almost the whole spectrum of the Gospel of Christ. Many of us groping in the dark will hail this book : 'Lead, Kindly Light, amid the Encircling Gloom'.

Rev.K. Imotemjen Aier  
General Secretary,  
C B C N E I

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The news of the sudden passing away of the Reverend Longri Ao on 6 August 1981 brought sadness to many all over north-east India. Church leaders, social workers, political leaders, and all the peace-loving citizens felt the loss. For that same reason the Theological Education Committee of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India proposed and recommended to the Council the writing of a biography of the late leader. The Council (CBCNEI) decided to undertake the project in collaboration with the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) and the following persons were appointed as members of the Editorial Board : Rev. Dr. O.M. Rao, Dr. Renthly Keitzar, Rev. Phuveyi Dozo, Rev. Lanumeren Ao, Mr. Kenneth Kerhuo, Rev. Alem Meren Ao and Rev. Y.L. Mingthing (Convener).

The Editorial Board at its first meeting, decided to ask one person to write the book, so that literary unity could be maintained. Accordingly Dr. O.M. Rao was elected to be the writer. The members also elected Rev. Y.L. Mingthing to be the Chairman of the Board and began working on the assignment. The Board has received assistance from different Church bodies and people in many ways. Besides the CBCNEI and NBCC allotment, the members of the late Longri Ao's family met the expenses of the Board. The Ao Baptist Church and the Sema Baptist Church in Dimapur took care of lodging and food expenses of one meeting each.

The late Longri Ao's family, the Nagaland Missionary Movement, the NBCC, the CBCNEI and other friends have co-operated fully by rendering services in many ways and supplying materials like photographs, files, personal diaries and other valuable documents. The Eastern Theological College has requested his family and NBCC to be allowed to preserve some of these materials in its archives.

Each member of the Board has worked hard collecting materials, supplying information and assisting the publication in ever so many ways. Yet the actual draft has been made

by Dr. O.M. Rao. He has worked day and night for the success of the project which has involved a great deal of correspondence and even personal interviews with many people. The accomplishment of the work in good time is due to his untiring and sincere effort.

As readers go through the book they may realise how a Christian can serve mankind in promoting peace and friendship and building healthy relationships and forging the bonds of brotherhood among people. Here is a man who believes that Christ belongs to the whole world and to be a believer is to proclaim this Good News to one and all. He believes that a man lives within a time which is given by God and if he does not use it for His service he is misusing it. Thus this man certainly has a message for all Christians in particular and for all people in general.

Y. L. Mingthing  
Chairman  
Editorial Board

Jorhat, Assam  
February 10, 1983

When Longri Ao passed away in 1981, it was said that it will be difficult to get such an honest and courageous man in the future for many generations. This tall and robust Naga church leader firmly believed that Christians should speak out boldly on matters of public importance. He put this in practice in his own life.

Hailed as the Apostle of Peace, he was the moving spirit in Nagaland to bring about an end to the fierce fighting that had ravaged the state over political problems. The Peace Mission of which he was the president at the time of his death, still continues to seek peace in this North Eastern State.

The author, Dr. O. M. Rao, has truly traced the formative forces behind this great man of peace with the combination of Christian commitment and political conviction. This present volume enlightens some of the crucial issues for the political unrest in this region of North East India and the efforts of church leaders like Rev. Longri Ao to bring about a peaceful solution to it.

Rs. 20.00

Dr. Ontimetta Madhusudhana Rao (55) hails from Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, of the Canadian Baptist Mission Centre. Serving at the Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, Assam, since 1956, he is at present the Registrar of the College. He married the daughter of Prof. Kumud Goldsmith of Jorhat and is the father of three children.

Dr. Rao took his B.A. from Andhra University, M.A. from Madras University, B.D. from Serampore College, Th. M. from Eastern Baptist Seminary, Philadelphia, USA, and Ph.D. from New College, Edinburgh University. He is the author of books like Life and Teaching of Christ, Gems from John's Gospel, Baptist Distinctives, Some Concerns of the Indian Church, in addition to some Christian plays, poems and articles published in various Christian journals.