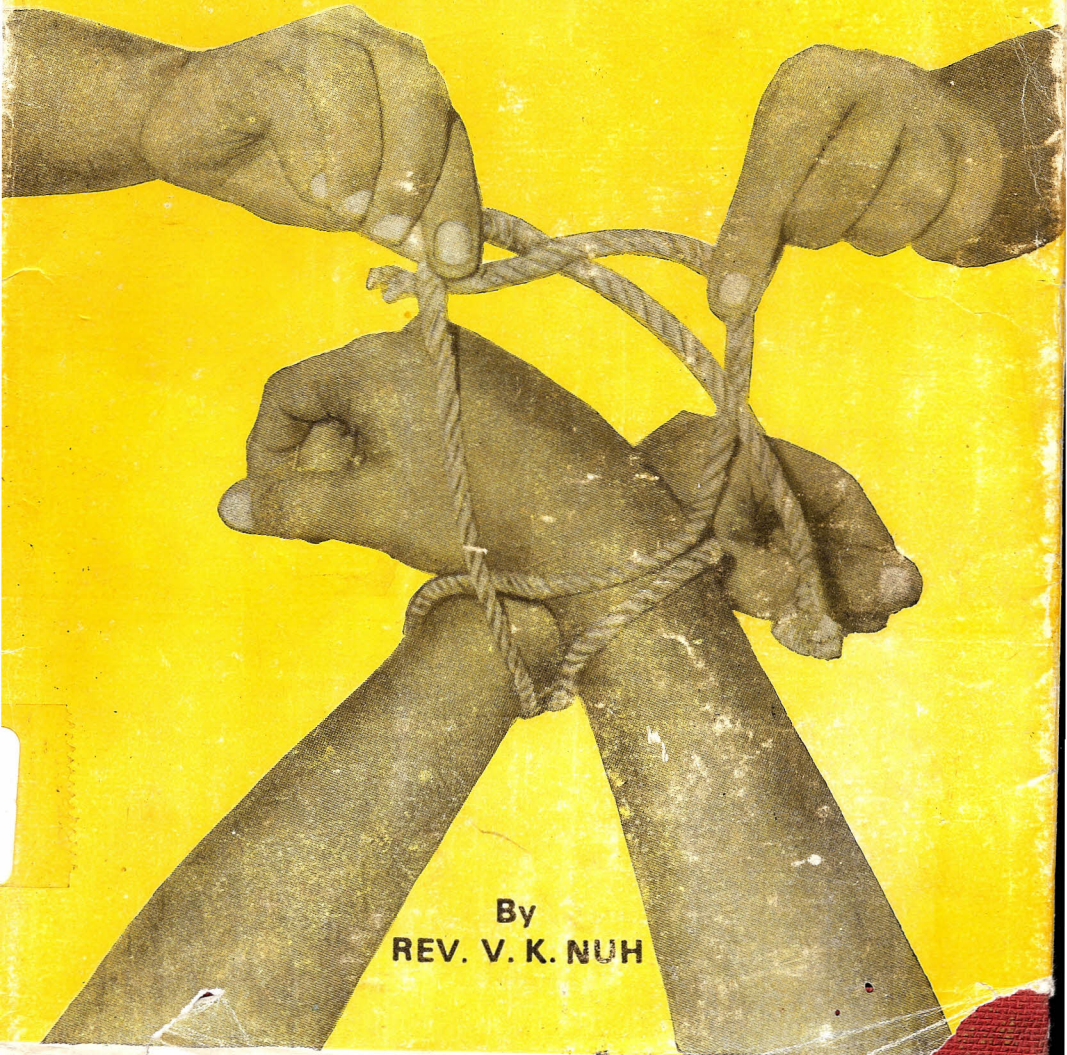


NAGALAND CHURCH AND POLITICS



By
REV. V. K. NUH

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO
THOSE
NOBLE LIVES
WHO
UNSELFISHLY SACRIFICED
THEMSELVES
FOR THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM
IN JUSTICE AND TRUTH IN
WHICH I HAD THE GREATEST
PRIVILEGE OF SHARING IN
IMMEASURABLE LOVE

"A TIME OF WAR AND A TIME OF PEACE"

THIS MONUMENT IS ERRECTED IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF THE NAGALAND PEACE MISSION AND IN COMMEMORATION OF THE HISTORIC DAY OF PEACE

THE NAGALAND PEACE MISSION WAS SET IN MOTION BY THE NAGALAND BAPTIST CHURCH COUNCIL UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE NAGALAND BAPTIST CONVENTION HELD AT WOKHA FROM FEBRUARY 2-4, 1964, TO BRING ABOUT A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVT OF INDIA AND THE FEDERAL GOVT OF NAGALAND.

IT WAS AT THE SOKRABA MEETING ON MAY 24, 1964, THAT A CEASE FIRE & CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES WAS SECURED ON SEPTEMBER 5, 1964. ON THIS MEMORABLE DAY HOSTILITY GAVE WAY TO PEACEFUL NEGOTIATION AND AN ERA OF PEACE WAS USHERED IN.

THIS COMMEMORATIVE MONUMENT IS ERRECTED IN MEMORY OF THE VALIANT DEAD AND THE LIVING HEROES PEOPLE WHO HAD VOLUNTEERED IN THE MOST DIFFICULT DAYS IN UPHOLDING THE CAUSE OF PEACE AND JUSTICE.

WE PAY TRIBUTE TO ALL AND IN THIS INCOMPLETE LIST IN THE ROLL OF HONOURS FOR THEIR GREAT SERVICE.

NAGALAND PEACE COUNCIL
KOHIMA: NAGALAND.

10 TH FEB 1984.

Monument Peace Memorial Sakraba

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It would be impossible for me to name all those who have contributed their valuable helps for this book. However, I would like to acknowledge some sources which helped me to shape my thought into reality.

My primary sources include personal participations and observations in church activities and social organizations throughout my career, in which I got opportunities to participate in both national and international levels. Here, I would like to mention some conferences and consultations I attended :

1. Baptist World Alliance, Tokyo, July 12-18, 1970.
2. International Congress on World Evangelism, Laussane, July 16-21, 1974.
3. All India Evangelical Social Action, Madras, October 2-5, 1978
4. Consultation on Development in North East India Gauhati, September 26-30, 1979.
5. Consultation on Theological Development, Bangalore, November 17-21, 1980.
6. Nagaland Leaders' Consultation, Kohima, October 30, 1982.
7. International Conference of Itinerant Evangelists, Amsterdam, July 12-21, 1983.
8. Baptist World Alliance, Los Angeles, California, July 2-7, 1985.

These meetings have provoked my thinking in different ways, but specifically I have been aroused to work on this book after a Seminar on "Nagaland Churches in the Eighties" which was held at Clark Theological College, Aolijen, near Mokokchung, Nagaland from June 16-19, 1981. This was initiated by Dr. I. Ben Wati and sponsored by Clark Theological College. This was an opportunity for me to begin my study on Church and Politics in Nagaland. I was further enlightened in a Seminar on Political Ideology organized by Pfulsero College, April 18-19, 1983, in which

I was also a participant. Furthermore, my association with Nagaland Baptist Church Council and my participation in various programmes and seminars on relevant issues gave me deeper insight.

I also had discussions and interviews with many distinguished leaders in the State, both in social and religious fields. Also, I made use of some books written about Nagas or Nagaland as they are listed in the bibliography. These works have been of much help that added great interest in me for which I am deeply grateful.

I am greatly indebted to the leaders of Naga Federal Government, who gave me their documents without any reservation and without them my work would be incomplete. I must express my heartfelt thanks to Mr. Vekhonyi Mudeo for helping me in writing all the seminar papers. I am grateful to Mr. Neingulo Krome for reading through the manuscripts patiently and for polishing the flows of language.

It will be incomplete if I do not mention Dr. Renty Keitzer and K. Lasuh Eastern Theological College who have done final edition of the manuscripts.

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Last but not the least, I should never forget to express my gratitude to all my colleagues at Pfutsero Christian Centre, who are indeed my constant source of encouragement and strength. I am grateful to my beloved wife and members of the family who are always with me in my concerns for a "better tomorrow" and for their supports as I serve the Lord and His People.

PREFACE

There are various approaches in interpreting political philosophy and theological concept of politics. My frank treatment with political situations and theological understanding may differ from others. However, I present here my convictions in my own way. I would like to stress that any suppression of truth is unfair and so we must be utterly frank in our assessment of the situation.

I started writing this book without any scholarly research before hand. It is the prevailing situation that has prompted me to write down here my concerns. I hope the readers will find the facts which this book tries to tell openly.

This book is not for any academic interest. This is an attempt to show that peace has not come to Nagaland despite Government's claim that there is peace. Once Nagaland was praised for its natural beauty and the honesty and simplicity of the people, but sadly enough, everything has gone wrong within a span of thirty years. The situation in Nagaland has gone beyond control. The beauty and quality of Nagaland are being destroyed by power-seeking politicians and public leaders in the State. The Church which has been entrusted to proclaim "liberty to the captives and sight to the blind" has failed in carrying out its responsibility. The Church in Nagaland has failed to maintain a theological balance: the churches preach what they cannot practise. We have failed the society, because we have disobeyed the living God in fighting for justice. When we refuse to listen, there will be God's judgement upon us. We try to spiritualize everything in our own way, but we do not recognize the biblical truth for justice.

Having seen the deteriorating situations in Nagaland, various programmes such as seminars, consultations and conferences with both church and political leaders have been conducted by the Church as well as by the students, but people remain the same. Something must have gone wrong. In a state where almost 85% of the population are Christian, I particularly feel that the Church in Nagaland is responsible for the many failures. The affirmation of Bangkok Missionary Consultation (1972) is quite

meaningful that evangelism and socio-political environments are both part and parcel of Christian duty ... and faith without work is dead.

The socialism that is sweeping throughout Europe and the coming of 'haves' and 'have-nots', the Islamic Revolution for Islamic States, the Sikh Revolution in India for an Independent Sikh State, and so on may serve for us as an eye-opener in many ways. It will be a shame on our part if we do not wake up with a new sense of responsibility for self-reliance and self-identity and response to the prophetic call to fight for justice.

For many years, we have not been able to speak out our own right, not to speak of writing something about it. The Church was preaching only the future salvation as if it were the only role, and social responsibilities were set aside.

We all believe in the freedom of expression as our fundamental right. In this book I am expressing my views about the role of the Church, State and National politics. Since the Naga people are a distinct race, I want every Naga to realize the Naga Struggle for a common cause irrespective of tribes, customs or creed. I strongly feel that everyone should be free to express his or her own opinion, and that his or her opinion should be respected without any prejudice.

Abbreviation

B.C.P.	...	Burma Communist Party
C.I.D.	..	Criminal Intelligent Department
C.A.S.A.	...	Church's Auxiliary for Social Action
CRDS	...	Comprehensive Rural Development Services
D.C.	....	Deputy Commissioner
D.S4	---	Dalit Shosht Samaj Sanghars Samati
EFICOR	...	Evangelical Fellowship of India Committee on Relief
G.N.P.	...	Gross National Product
G.O.C.	...	General Officer Commanding
I.C.O.W.E.	....	International Congress on World Evangelism
M.N.C.	....	Myama National Convention
M.L.A.	--	Member of Legislative Assembly
N.B.C.C.	....	Nagaland Baptist Church Council
N.N.C.	....	Naga National Council
N.H.G.	...	Naga Home Guard
N.P.C.	...	Nagaland Peace Council
N.P.C.	....	Naga People Convention
N.S.C.N.	....	National Socialist Council of Nagas
N.F.G.	...	Naga Federal Government
N.N.D.P.	...	Naga National Democratic Party
NEICORD	..	North East India Committee on Relief and Development
N.N.O.	...	Naga National Organization
R.S.S.	....	Rashtriya Swayamaserat Sangh
TEV		Todays English Version
U.S.S.R.	...	Union Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia
U.N.O.	...	United Nation Organization
U.D.F.	....	United Democratic Front of Nagaland
V.C.	....	Village Chief or Village Chairman
W.C.C.	..	World Church Council
W.V.	...	World Vision

Glossary

Khalistan	—	Sovereign State of Punjab.
Qumran	—	Dead Sea scroll.
Brahmin	—	High Caste of India Society.
Khakhyen	—	Traditional name of Kachin or Karen.
Khym	—	Khymungam dialect (Water).
Akali	—	Regional Party of Punjab.
Sanhedrin	—	Assembly of Jews Elders.
Mukti Bahiri	—	Patriot Soldier.
Ahimsa	—	Non-violence.
Naka	—	Ear-boring and Earing.
Oking	—	Federal Government Head Quarters.
Ato Killonsser	—	Prime Minister
Kedahge	—	President
Kilo Killonser	—	Home Minister.
Lota Killonser	—	Agriculture Minister.
Tatar	—	Member of Parliament.
Tatar Hoho	—	National Parliament.
Yahweh	—	Hebrew term of God.

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Introduction

Politics

The term *politics* was first used by Aristotle. It is derived from the Greek word *polis* which means city. To the Greeks, the city was the state where all human problems were dealt with. So, politics is an art, dealing with people to live together and to co-operate in matters of common interest.

An Athenian interest was all centred in the city. His art was civic; his religion, so far as it was not a family matter, was the religion of the city; and his religious festivals were civic celebration. Therefore, to the Greeks, the city was a life in common; its institution, as Aristotle said, was a mode of life. The fundamental thought in all Greek political philosophy was the harmony of the common life (ethics, social, economics etc).

Aristotle tells us a simple truth which says: he who is unable to live in a society, or who has no need to, because he is sufficient for himself must be either a beast or a god. It means man is a social animal, because he is born in a society and lives in it. He is easily affected by sympathy, and the desire for sympathy. He prefers company to solitude.

This society must be properly organized (a definite territory distinct from others) and such a society or Community requires mutual adjustment and co-operation. A life to share with each other's weal and woe. Its activities sometimes, somehow become political, the term is reserved for those common affairs which are under the direction of an authority or agency, managing or controlling these affairs on behalf of and in the name of the community. This agency or authority is what we call the state. Now, then politics is the concern of every man with a sense of responsibility, for everybody is affected by its rules and decisions.

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In a situation like that of Nagaland, the important roles that politics and churches have to play cannot be underestimated. Here in Nagaland, in the heart of the defenceless and helpless situation, there is a deep desire for political stability, social security and spiritual balance. Risks are high but the responsibilities of the churches are great. There is no time to waste but fight for social, political and religious justice in accordance with the will of the Lord. This is what I mean to be politics.

Church

The Hebrew word *qahal* (meaning, assembly) is considered to be a proper meaning of the church. The Greek word *ecclesia* (...meaning, called out...) had been accepted by the New Testament writers in order to give the true meaning for the church. Anyway, whatever good meaning we have for the church is not our main concern, but the responsibility of today's church in relation to human life is what counts most.

God becoming man is the centre for theological reflection and action, especially the incarnate life and work of Christ, based on love (love in biblical theology is the chief criterion in establishing a good social relationship as it is to God-man relationship).

As it has been in God's plan, Jesus Christ was called out with a heavy responsibility and so was the church called out with a purpose. Choosing seven deacons (*Acts 6:1-6*) was an administrative body to maintain equal rights and equal sharing in socio-economic and religious life of the early Christian community. Therefore, forming an Apostolic body or establishing a church body was to execute the plans and commands Jesus Christ left with us. For this purpose, Jesus came preaching good news to the poor; forgiving the sins of men; healing the sick; proclaiming liberty to the oppressed and release to the captives (*Luke 4:18-19*). This is what the Lord of the church did. And so our theology should not leave any corner of human life unconcerned. Many people consider the Kingdom of God as a small part of human concern, but in a sound theology, political

kingdom is a small part in God's Kingdom. Thus the church and politics are like two rooms under a single roof, which is the Kingdom of God. If so, "Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations" (*Matthew 28:19f.*) is our emphasis in order that "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (*Matthew 6:10*) be accomplished.

The Meaning of Christianity

The Christian Church is described as disciples, Saints, brothers and believers. In Greek the word Ecclesia which literal meaning is 'called out community' call out from "Darkness into light" (*I Peter 2:9*).

In other words, *Ecclesia* (A chosen People) before Jesus was not a simple physical race. But it is inclusive of every race who is called by God and obeyed that call.

This Christian Church is compared to a living body of an individual. The Implication that the body has a function and that its member has to take the responsible part in the function of the visible Church. But an individual Christian in the Church (whether invisible or visible only God knows) is responsible in Ethical life and must be demonstrated in visible Church. "The Church is not a Graduate School for saint, but is a kindergarten for Sinner" (Billy Sunday).

No true society can exist without common belief and common aim. Religion declares that belief and aim, where as Politics regulates the Society in practical realisation. That is why Washington "said it is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and Bible". Our civilization cannot survive materially unless it is redeemed spiritually. Moral values cannot be retained without spiritually sound. I believe this is an urgent challenge to our society today. Unless we build up the concept of Christian responsibility it is impossible to make our country survive with all kinds of programme and policy. The Christian life an its purpose must be practical and personal, living with responsibility respond to God's act of redemption in Christ. The political history of Nagas begins with Christianity and must

end with it. Any organisation in Nagaland without basing on the Christian faith will be a failure. Because God has a special purpose for Nagas as a peculiar treasure just like Israel. As it is mentioned in the book of Amos. "of all the nations of the Earth, You are the only one I have known and cared for, that is what makes your sins so terrible and that is why I must punish you for them. *Amos 3:2.*

Christian Contribution to the Society

The establishment of the educational Institutions by Christian Missionaries namely William Carey, Alexander Duff, John Wilson (and many others who deserved special mention) in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Serampore had imported Western Education and Culture, which resulted in the liberation of India.

No society or religion had done so much to change the whole structure in the country. Most of the productive leaders and intellectual class were brought out from Christian institutions, such as Wilson College in Bombay, Stephen College in Delhi, Serampore College, Christian College in Madras and many other institutions contributed to the building of the new India. There is no place to mention all about the Christian contribution like Hospitals and other Christian activity for human welfare.

Whatever the reformation took place in India there was no reformation without Christian influence like Raja Ram Mohan, Roy the founder of Brama Samaj. It attracted many intellectual people like Rabindranath Tagore and later Suroni Vivekananda and Sri Rama Krishna. They all adopted Christian thought and way of living whether it is Philosophy or literature or art. Thus it created spiritual and national consciousness with patriotic sentiment in many people of India. As a result of these changes, National Congress came into being on Dec. 30, 1885, Led by Benerjee who happened to be a Christian. Another remarkable man Rev. C. F. Andrew, a missionary from England was very often misunderstood both by European and Indian. He was insulted by

British community and called him TRAITOR, "And other Indians called him a Spy" who later became the most admirable man among the white. He participated in Indian Congress and advocated for the rights of India, that is why M.K. Gandhi called him "Friend of India" and so Indian leaders gave him the title DHEENA BHANDU, Indeed he was a Christ's faithful apostle who shared life of mixture, tragedy and laughter in the days of freedom struggle of India.

Christian View of Patriotism

Patriotism is the love of one's country. It is natural for a man to feel proud for his own country. The Place where he grows up in the midst of beautiful surroundings, mountains, valleys, rivers and trees, plants and flowers of his natural land, where his fore-father handed down to him all kinds of heritage.

And I am not surprise to see when a man willing to suffer for the sake of his Fatherland and his people. It was a man called Mazzini from Italy who wrote to his fellow Italian.

"Without a country you have neither name, token voice, nor right. In the same way you will not find neither faith nor protection, none will be Sureties love for you."

A man who does not love his country can love nothing. The place where I can rest with my possession of field to sustain, a home to cover me is my fatherland; because I have to live on the heritage of my father who defended the territory of my homeland and the society against external attacks and danger.

It may be big or small country, it is all because of patriotism a nation came into existence. It was Patriotism which enable the colonial people in different countries to discover their rights to fight for their independence, and finally to realise their nationalhood. It made the people to feel the sense of independence and self respect and has

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provided them a new social Solidarity to replace the traditional bond.

Patriotism does not mean to be natural leaders, nor the elected members only. We should not wait in silence till we are elected to the legislature or to some Executive or administration post. There are many opportunities in every day life to live as Patriotic citizen. It is very unfortunate that many so-called leaders became ineffective when they are not in high position. I can simply admire J. F. Kennedy who said, "Do not ask what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country".

These words can be uttered from the mouth of only a patriotic man. I wonder how many Politicians can say like Abraham Lincoln, when he was elected as the President of U.S.A., he started choosing man here and there for his Cabinet Secretariatship. Can you imagine Mr. Lincoln selected one of his enemies called Stanton. Immediately one of his advisor said. "Mr. President, you are making a mistake, he will seek to sabotage your programme, he is your enemy. Have you thought this through?" Mr. Lincoln answered, "Yes, I know Mr. Stanton, I am aware of all the terrible things he said about me". But looking over the Nation, I said he is the best man for the Job. So Stanton had become War Secretary. And he rendered his valuable service for his Nation and his President.

Do our Politicians and Leaders follow the example of Mr. Lincoln who only think for the Welfare of his Country?

A Country without having genuine patriotic leader can never usher prosperity into the country.

However, it is always dangerous when patriotism become extremist, who says, "My country right or wrong". That is why we must temper our patriotism with Wisdom and Christian Love.

Donald W. Shriver, in his speech on Church and social change, said, "As late as World War I, American Clergyman was telling some young men of my country that

they should go off to fight the German with assurance that Jesus is looking at you down the barrel of your gun". That is why a German Christian did not hesitate to kill a British Christian. A Christian should see the difference between violence and nonviolence. People want justice and so they go to the extent of fighting for it through violence, because circumstances compel them to do so. It is not enough in just crying for peace: one must react on the great basis and moral principles of the Christian religion in creative spirit that are necessary for peace and justice.

Sometimes this doctrine is called the doctrine of righteous war. The great example of recent western history is that the Nazis in Germany, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer a German Theologian came to conclusion, that Nazism is a devilish political movement. So he took part in this plot at the attempt on Hitler's life. Ethically he was justified as a Christian.

In January 1933 the Nazis Party won one-third of popular votes in the last Democratic Election. One may wonder what made Adolf Hitler to keep the power, where minority of Protestant & Roman Catholic Church leaders were branded as anti-Nazi. Consequently, most of them were executed; and 6 million Jews were executed. In this context a Christian may have different opinion.

In some Christian circles, it is felt that it is working to stress concerns on issues like peace, social justice and equality, and that the Church should rather keep preaching for conversion of non-Christians. However, the Church's concern is not to be one-sided. For example, the New Testament bears witness that Peter protested against the effort of the Sanhedrin to silence the witness of Christ and in the Old Testament, the prophets had no hesitation in condemning the rulers of the State whenever they went against the principles of Divine justice. One also sees that Paul was very quick in his defence of the right of his citizenship in the presence of the state authority, when he felt that it was acting wrongly or illegally (*Acts 16:17, 23:11*). If Christians are faithful citizens, they should not feel hesitant to raise their voices on political issues for the benefit of every citizen. Therefore, the Church must be

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prepared to take risks and speak and work for the right of all its members who are good citizens of the country. As Rouscher Pueck said, Christians should take direct role in the struggle for social justice and in doing so the Church must be convinced that what it does is just and right.

Now the question is: Do our churches realize the Theological basis of Christian faith and practice. Very often we forget the word—'Life Service' and preach soul-winning but ignore the cry for justice. If the love of God and love to men is absent in my life, no gift, no talent nor possession can substitute to fulfill the will of God.

ABOUT THE BOOK

This book deals with past and **evaluation** of the present and critical views into **future** controversy of political thinking.

Today Nagaland has not only a **political** settlement issue, but the state politics is **under** crisis. But under any circumstance **Church** cannot surrender its faith to secularism.

The Churches of Nagaland failed to **main-**tain their stand not only on **Theological** balance, but in ethical life also.

The author not only unfolds the **Biblical** truth, but political assertion also.

The Christian life, the author feels is not a compromise but a fight for truth and justice.

The responsibility of Naga Churches is great and its future is bright if Nagas obey the Lord.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rev. Vetsotsü K. Nuh was born in Thechumi Village, Chakhesang, Nagaland. He had his primary education at Pfutsero. High School at Ukhrul at Kohima, and Bible College at Calcutta.

He was Pastor at Chizami Baptist Church and was ordained on 15th March 1970.

He was an Evangelist and Head Master in Bible School at Pfutsero. He is the Executive Secretary of Chakhesang Baptist Church Council since 1971.

He was deeply involved in peace work. He is associated with Peace Mission from 1965 till today. He has travelled extensively all over the country and participated in various seminars on Church and its development works.

He has also been abroad several times and participated in International Conferences relating to Church work.

Proclaim Liberation to the captives, preach sight to the blind, set at liberty them bruised that are bruised, go into all the world and tell men that are bound mentally, spiritually and physically that "The Liberation has come".

This is a new dimension in mission thinking today.