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Abstract

Nagas are an ethnic and religious minority in India, and they are a Christian minority in Hindu majority India. Nagas in the northeastern part of India have been in violent conflicts for more than seventy years. This **problem** originated as a struggle for independence from the Union of India but degenerated into a cycle of the Naga political group's factional clashes that have drawn the society into a whirlwind of hatred, suspicion, and vengeance. The **purpose** of this research is to show the impact of religious institutions on peacebuilding and restoring stability in Nagaland. This paper discusses the role of a Christian prayer center, namely, Naga Shisha Hoho, in the formation of the Naga Forum for Reconciliation and the reconciliatory journey it took among the Nagas. The **literature** used in this work consists of religion and violence and religion and peace. The research **methodology** used in this article was the qualitative case study research design focusing on the work of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation. **Findings** reveal that the peace initiative in Nagaland by religious institutions has a positive impact on peacebuilding. This paper **recommended** the potential of religious actors to resolve conflict and decrease tensions.

Keywords: Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR), Naga Shisha Hoho (SH), Religious peacebuilding, Nagaland, Religious Institution.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Context of the Nagas

Nagaland¹ is the north-eastern state in India, it borders Manipur to the south, Assam to the west, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam to the North, and Myanmar to the east. Many Naga scholars are of the view that they migrated from southwest China through Myanmar during the Great Wall construction or at the end of the construction following different directions and places. Scholars believe that: (1) migration took place from Southwest China during the Great Wall construction under a tyrant ruler, (2) the Nagas migrated out from the same origin but traveled out intermittently, (3) geographic and mountainous isolation began to develop ethnic or tribal grouping and variations of dialects and languages, and (4) subsequent migrations followed the route of the pioneering migrants who processed both mixed settlement and crossover, and by-pass took place as well (Changkiri, 2015; Dozo, 2017; Iralu, 2009; Jamir & Lanunungsang, 2005). Under the British annexation in the late nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, they came under British rule. (Chaise & Hazarika 2009).

With the declaration of Indian independence from Great Britain in 1947, Naga Hills territory was simply transferred to India. Under this circumstance, the Nagas became a part of it the power of control over the Naga Hills – Naga inhabited areas was transferred to the Indian Union. The Indian government faced opposition from the Nagas, who did not wish to become part of India. Despite the tension, Naga Statehood was signed between the Indian government and the Naga People's Convention, and a small group of Nagas served as government officials in

¹ Nagaland was inaugurated as a state in the federation of India, made up of 29 states and 7 union territories. Nagaland was formally recognized as a separate state on 1st December 1963, with Kohima being declared as its capital.

the Assam Government (Chasie & Hazarika, 2009; Iralu, 2009). Prior to all these events, the first political organization established by the Nagas was the Naga Club in 1918. The next step in the Naga political organization was the formation of the Naga National Council (NNC) in 1946 with its goal of unifying all the Naga tribes and their freedom. Not wanting to be a part of the Indian Union NNC declared independence on August 14, 1947, one day before India, even though it was unable to materialize under the heavy hand of the Indian Union. With the passage of time due to the differentiation of the opinion another faction emerged, namely, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) in the 1980s but later on it was split into two groups – NSCN(IM) and NSCN(K). The proliferation and fragmentation of insurgent factions in Nagaland has led to an increase in the number of such groups in the region. In the process of all this, there was a lot of bloodshed and political unrest in the state among the faction groups coupled with the Government of India's draconian law Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) where the military and paramilitary to interrogate, beat, shoot to death, and arrest anybody without any warrant, who is suspected of being an insurgent (Iralu, 2017; Jaiswal, 2021; Saikia, 2014; The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, 1958). Against the backdrop of that violent context in Nagaland, the formation of FNR through the religious group SH is critical.

Problem Statement

The Nagas have been immersed in one of the world's longest violent battles for nearly seven decades. The Naga conflict began as a struggle for Naga independence but has now devolved into a cycle of factional and inter-tribal feuds that have engulfed Naga civilization in a vortex of hatred, bloodshed, and retribution. The murder among Naga factions came to a halt until after the creation of the FNR. Going back in time, it was the religious group, Shisha Hoho, that played a vital part in the founding of the FNR, putting an end to the bloodshed in Nagaland

(P. R. J. Schreiter & Jorgensen, 2013). Nevertheless, there exists a dearth of comprehensive research regarding the role of the Christian prayer center, Naga Shisha Hoho, in the facilitation on the formation of the FNR, a pivotal factor in fostering peace among the various insurgent factions in Nagaland.

Research Question and Research Purpose

Factional clashes among the Naga Insurgencies group were daily experiences while this researcher was growing up in Nagaland. Following the active function of the FNR, the violence and bloodshed among the different factions have come to a halt. Against the backdrop of those experiences, this research paper is developed to answer the following questions.

1. What was the role played by the Christian prayer Center – Naga Shisha Hoho (religious institution) in the formation of FNR?
2. How did the Forum for Naga Reconciliation contribute to the peace in Nagaland?

This paper contributes to the continuing scholarship on religious peacebuilding by highlighting the importance of Naga Shisha Hoho, the development of FNR, and its contribution to peacebuilding in Naga society. The work will be significant due to the lack of research on the origin and function of FNR, which may be due to its being overlooked in the larger context of conflicts in North East India.

Definition of Terms

Religion, Naga Shisha Hoho (NSH), Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR), and Naga Peace Convention are the key terms defined in this paper.

Religion: Religion is by definition, a yearning for transcendence, for moving and reaching beyond the mundane, the spatial and temporal, the physical and contingent (Appleby, 2000).

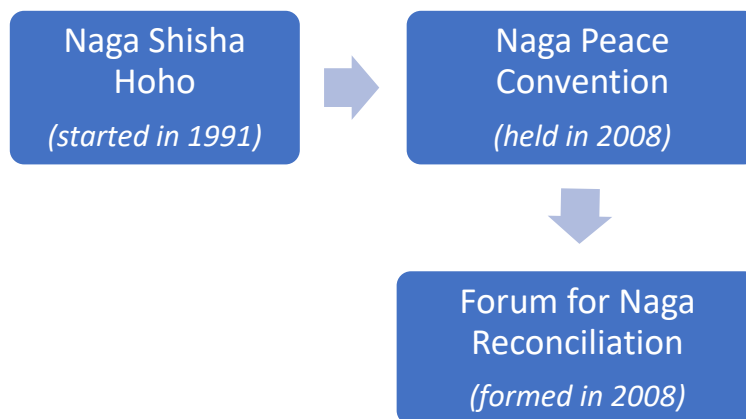
Furthermore, it implicitly or explicitly makes the claim that, as human beings, we possess an inherent inclination toward a future that transcends the confined of the past. Consequently, the metaphysical assertion elicits the manifestation of self-sacrifice as a significant behavioral pattern. Religion exhibits a range of dynamics, encompassing both violent and pacifist tendencies. Appleby named that dynamic as ‘militance’ bearing double meaning. By ‘militance,’ he means the willingness and, under certain conditions, even an eagerness to sacrifice oneself, one's family, one’s loved ones, and one’s most precious possessions in the service of a noble cause that is perceived to be transcendent, sacred, beyond time and space, engaging at the deepest level of humanity.

Naga Shisha Hoho (NSH): A Christian prayer group, a driving force behind the formation of FNR. Shisha means “doing in obedience,” and Hoho means “organization” (Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Centre, 2016).

Naga Peace Convention: A three-day program organized by Naga Shisha Hoho in Dimapur to pray and contemplate unity among the Nagas. (Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Centre, 2016).

Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR): Formed in 2008 after the Naga Peace Convention organized by Naga Shisha Hoho. FNR was instrumental in facilitating the “Covenant of Common Hope” and the “Covenant of Reconciliation” among the Naga armed groups. The consistent involvement of the FNR in peacebuilding initiatives has played a significant role in mitigating instances of violence withing Naga nationalist factions, leading to a notable reduction in casualties (Schreiter & Jorgensen, 2013). See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Formation of FNR



LITERATURE REVIEW

This article examines two sets of literature. The first one deals with religion and violence. The second set is concerned with religion and peace. Critiques of religion's negative effects in conflict scenarios abound on library and bookstore shelves. For many years, many scholars have questioned and stereotyped religion as a source of conflict. However, some contemporary scholars claim that religious institutions play an important role in peacemaking (Abu-Nimer & Garred, 2018; Appleby, 2000; Broadhead & Keown, 2007).

Religion and violence

The study of religion and violence shows two prominent types of violence associated with religion (Appleby, 2000). The first type is *ethnoreligious or ethnonationalist violence*. Here the power and militance of religion are brought to bear in a cause that is, strictly speaking, not religious, or not primarily for religious goals. In ethnoreligious violence, religion itself claims that its institutional self-understanding and prerogatives are implicitly or unconsciously subordinate to a different ideology, such as the nation-state or the ethnic group. Nationalist and

ethnic leaders recruit religion to make sacred their struggles are therefore legitimate. This kind of dynamism and activity includes martyrdom and suicide, as well as acts of sacrifice and compassion for fellow countryman and woman or other co-religionists. It is an extreme form of religious militancy that legitimizes violence and sometimes sees violence as a sacred duty or obligation.

The second type of religious violence is *religious extremism* which is often called “fundamentalism”. Fundamentalists believe the solution to problems besetting society is the building up of religion as a viable alternative to secular society, which has replaced religion or rivals it. Therefore, these so-called extremist religious movements in which the component of religion is very strong, tend to sustain good momentum over time, superior organization, and can be transnational. Many religious movements in the world today are fundamentalist in the sense that they are defending and promoting a version of religion as the answer to society’s sickness.

Religion and Non-Violence

There are numerous pieces of literature that discuss the negative impact of religion in a conflict scenario. However, there are several academicians (Appleby, 2000; Coward & Smith, 2004; Creamer et al., 2015) who suggest that religious organizations play a more positive role in conflict than a simply negative one. Faith-based organizations, and their workers, are often found on the frontlines of conflict throughout the world, conducting conflict management and resolution activities as well as advancing peacebuilding initiatives.

Religion fulfills four basic social functions which define its role in politics, society, and conflict. Firstly, it provides a meaningful framework for understanding the world. Secondly, it provides rules and standards of behavior that link individual actions and goals to this meaningful

framework. Thirdly, it organizes its adherents through its institutions. Lastly, it provides legitimacy to all related actors, actions, and institutions (Fox, 1998). These functions engage society in many ways, on many levels, and usually peacefully so. Well-versed people in that religious basics, which Appleby termed as “nonviolent religious militant” and “religious virtuosi” – holy monks and gurus, learned rabbis and mullahs, dedicated priests and ministers, and devout laity, are the people who place themselves in jeopardy by working in conflict zones among the poor and dispossessed (Appleby, 2000). These are the people who make themselves available as conflict mediators, and they take responsibility for rebuilding the institutions of war-ravaged societies. Religious actors dedicated to pursuing justice and peace through non-violent means operate at various distances from life-threatening conflict, in various relations to the religious community and its official structures need to be taken seriously. For nonviolent religious militancy becomes politically effective over the long term. Furthermore, political effectiveness is not the only measure of social potency, but it is critical to accomplishing sustainable peace in society.

An increasing number of scholars in the field of international relations have come to devote their attention to phenomena such as ‘religion as a conversation starter’ (Merdjanova & Brodeur, 2009), ‘the global resurgence of religion and the transformation in international relations’ (Thomas, 2005), ‘making peace with faith’ (Mohammed Abu-Nimer & Garred, 2018). For an overview of this phenomenon let us consider the argument of Thomas (2005). He stated, “a global struggle for authenticity and development is taking place, and learning how to take cultural and religious pluralism seriously has become one of the most important aspects of foreign policy in the twenty-first century” (Thomas, 2005). More specifically, many recent academic writings describe religion as a key factor for peacebuilding: religious actors have some

distinctive features that make them particularly valuable as peace-building agents. In her edited publication, *Bridge or Barrier*, Gerrier ter Haar argues that "... religious actors tend to enjoy institutional legitimacy, have an available methodology, and possess the structures and networks necessary for the mobilization of people" (Haar & Busuttil, 2005). In addition, she expresses concern about the fact that insufficient attention is paid to the non-material aspects of social change.

In summary, religion plays a dual role. It promotes violence as well as peace. This paper explores the way in which religion, in this case through NSH, promoted peace. This paper fills the gap in the area of religion in peacebuilding in the context of Nagaland.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In dealing with the religion and peacebuilding Appleby posits two pertinent questions. Firstly, why and under what conditions do some religious actors choose the path of violence, while others seek justice through non-violent means and work for reconciliation among combatants?" Secondly, what might be gained by involving what he calls "nonviolent religious militants" in peacebuilding? (Appleby, 2000). Under the premises of those two questions this paper is developed and append on the positive side of the religious institution on peacebuilding.

This research work used the qualitative research design and done ethnographic case study on the work of FNR. Data collection for this research includes reviewing the FNR documents, publications, books, newspaper articles, and digital data posted on social media. Employing Qualitative interviews, the researcher conducted telephonic interviews, which are unstructured and generally open-ended questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) designed to elicit the viewpoints of the key leaders, members of the FNR committee, and leaders of Shisha Hoho.

Member Check was conducted through follow-up emails and messages to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the research findings by emailing the interviewee. It involves sharing data with participants and asking them to review it and provide feedback. This feedback helps validate the researcher's findings, identify errors or misunderstandings, and improve the overall quality of the research

FINDINGS

This section provided the answers to the two research questions. The first question is, what was the role played by the Christian prayer Center – Naga Shisha Hoho (religious institution) in the formation of FNR? The second research question is, how does the Forum for Naga Reconciliation contribute to the peace in Nagaland?

Table 1

Structural-Functional Relationship

Elements	RQ1: Prayer Center (NSH)	RQ2: FNR
Date Origin	1991	2008
Religion	Christian	Christian
Relationship	Mother	Offspring
Structure	One prayer center	Coalition of Naga leaders
Functions	Programs for leaders to pray together	Joint actions vis-à-vis government & Naga political groups

Christian prayer group NSH – A Force in Naga Peacebuilding

The ‘Shisha’ means ‘doing in obedience’, while ‘Hoho’ is a word representing an organization or a conference. Shisha Hoho was started in a small village, Kutsapo under the Phek

district of Nagaland (P. Khusoh, personal communication, December 2022; Kraft et al., 2020). This small village was one of the last villages to accept Christianity in a predominantly Christian state. Although Christianity arrived in Kutsapo in 1948, the spread was slow. Even up to the 1990s, when Christianity had entrenched itself fully in many parts of Nagaland, in Kutsapo village only 30% of the population was Christian. In 1991, something dramatic happened that saw an increase in Christian numbers. It was down to one man named Chosayi Lohe and the Naga Shisha Hoho prayer house (Kraft et al., 2020; Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Centre, 2016). Chosayi, the main figure behind the Naga Shisha Hoho, is a shy 61-year-old man who was told by God to cease working in the fields and work for Him instead. He was hesitant to obey, but a series of misfortune and supernatural events hit his life he surrendered to God. He hears God's words in dreams and tongues in prayer, sometimes undecipherable even to himself (P. Khusoh, personal communication, December 2022).

In the 1990s Naga Shisha Hoho prayer center was started. It was established at a crucial time. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, factional violence between the NSCN-K, NSCN-IM, and the NNC was at its height. It was a time when the situations of the Naga Political Groups (NPG) were in a state of epic weariness because of the situation between the various factions. At this juncture, the so-called NPGs sought the help of the church and the village where they could come together and energize their spiritual growth and also get physical aid. It is also to be noted that, at this point in time, there was no other prayer center in Nagaland. The prayer center became a place where irrespective of position or profession, whoever has the heart and burden for society comes together for prayer and fasting. During this period Chosayi heard the voice of God for the Nagas to come together. But he was unsure how to put this into practice. God then instructed him to go to the various nationalist leaders and “say to the leaders that they must stop

killing each other” (P. Khusoh, personal communication, December 2022; Kraft et al., 2020; Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Centre, 2016).

Although Chosayi had no background in dealing with nationalist leaders, God directed him to speak. Some believed while others doubted Chosayi’s intentions. Violence continued amongst the various factions, but eventually, they realized the futility of it and people started to believe in him. Chosayi’s role as God’s emissary allows him to travel to different Naga political group leaders and different locations (P. Khusoh, personal communication, December 2022; Kraft et al., 2020), See Table 1 below.

Table 2

Chronological development of Shisha Hoho Prayer Center at Kutsapo Village and its work towards the formation of FNR (Original Table by the Author of this Article)

Source: (Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Centre, 2016)

Timeline	Events
1964	Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) requested the NNC to hold talks and make a ceasefire with GOI. Following that Kutsapo villagers hosted the meeting and 700 delegates attended. At this meeting, the NNC resolved to accept the Bi-lateral ceasefire with the GOI, and the representative were appointed.
1991	In a spiritual awakening at Kutsapo village the divine revelation of “Shisha” meaning, ‘doing in obedience’ came to Chosayi and thus, Shisha Hoho was stated.
1993	First Shisha Hoho -As directed by the Lord to spread Shisha, three series of meetings were hosted at Kutsapo where they resolved to name the

	<p>prayer center as Naga Shisha Hoho, since it concerned all Nagas. Also resolved to invite all the Naga political groups to the second Naga Shisha Hoho meeting.</p>
November 1993	<p>The Second Naga Shisha Hoho – Around 15,000 delegates attended the conference at Kutsapo village. All the different factions were represented. At that conference, Chosayi prophesied and rebuked Nagas for not being united, and for killing among themselves.</p>
February 1994	<p>The Third Naga Shisha Hoho – It was held from February 16-18 1994, at Kohima, the capital city of Nagaland. About 1,50,000 delegates attended.</p>
March 2004	<p>The Fourth Naga Shisha Hoho – was held at Lozaphühü village. After the mass service, there was a meeting of the leaders of the factions and the public leaders on how to unite the Nagas.</p>
April 2007	<p>The Fifth Naga Shisha Hoho – The main purpose of this conference was to stop killings and bloodshed among the Nagas but owing to the lack of concern of the NPGs and tribal leaders the purpose could not be served.</p>
February 2008	<p>The Naga Peace Convention was organized by the Naga Shisha Hoho. During this convention, FNR was formed in principle through Naga Shisha Hoho to facilitate reconciliation among the Naga political groups. One of the convention's main speakers Rev. Dr. Wati Aier was assigned to lead the Forum as convener. The members of the Forum comprise of representing Churches, different tribal organizations, civil society, and frontal organizations.</p>

Post FNR	The Naga Shisha Hoho continues to be held till date, praying for reconciliation and peace but the following details are not presented in a safe space and time.
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FNR and the Peace Process in Nagaland

This section responded to the second research question, What is the contribution of FNR to peace in Nagaland? The Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) was formed at a time when Naga society was torn apart with intense “interfactional” violence, suspicion, distrust, and divisive political rhetoric. Indian leading Newspaper *Hindustan Time* has reported that between 2002 and 2005, 171 persons were killed in militancy-related violence in the state, with 113 (66.08%) militants, 52 (30.40%) civilians, and 6 (3.50%) security force SF personnel. Most militant deaths have been the result of factional clashes. (Hindustan Times, 2008; Singh, 2006).

FNR was formed in principle on February 24, 2008, as one of the outcomes of the Naga Peace Convention organized by the Naga Shisha Hoho in Dimapur. It was christened on March 25, 2008, at Kohima with the support of 39 Naga frontal organizations, the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC), and the Council of Naga Baptist Churches (CNBC). In 2008, the forum comprised 14 members, and Wati Aier, a prominent Naga theologian, was the founding convener (MorungExpress, 2017). Chosayi and Wati are one of those religious virtuosi in whose dedication and commitment FNR is founded and the violence among the Naga factions came to a halt. The echo of such commitment is seen in Wati’s *A. Kevichusa Citizenship Award* receiving speech; “We must immediately shun the fallacy that seeking forgiveness is a sign of weakness. Rather it is the other way around. Seeking forgiveness should be the greatest power of the Nagas at this moment. By not forgiving, are we not destroying the thing we all wanted? ... as a mark of

our faith in Christ, the Naga identity needs transformation through forgiveness, healing, and peace.” (MorungExpress, 2019)

The FNR comprises members representing Naga Churches, tribal councils, and civil society organizations. FNR is a neutral body that is neither affiliated nor supportive of any Naga political group or any party involved in electoral politics in Nagaland. It continues to work for Naga reconciliation in an impartial and fair manner keeping in mind the interest and rights of the Naga people as its primary principle, see table 2 below.

Table 3

FNR reconciliatory activities since March 2008 (Original Table by the Author of this Article)

Source: (Aier, 2019; MorungExpress, 2011, 2017, 2019; Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Centre, 2016)

Number of Events	Person involved	Place
Eleven official Reconciliation meetings	Different Naga political groups, Naga Hoho, Naga Student Federation, Nagaland Baptist Church Convention, Nagaland Christian Forum, the Catholic Church, ENPO, Nagas from Burma, and various tribal organizations.	Chiang Mai, Thailand; Nagaland, India.
Four public consultations	Naga Hoho, tribe hohos, churches, civil society organizations, and one	Nagaland, India

	consultation with the Naga intelligentsia	
Seventy-two official meetings	Naga political groups jointly and separately	Nagaland, India
Five meetings with NSCN	Khaplang, Chairman NSCN and NSCN leaders.	NSCN HQ, Myanmar
Three meetings with NNC	Adino Phizo, President NNC	London, UK Nagaland, India
Twelve special programs (soccer matches, special church services, joint social work, joint food and relief distribution)	Different Naga Political groups	
Nineteen public meetings in various Naga towns	Naga public	Nagaland, India

The factional killings in recent memory took place during the months and years leading up to the ‘Covenant of Reconciliation’, signed on June 13, 2009. The years 2007 and 2008 were particularly bad as the commercial hub of Dimapur and its surroundings became almost a battleground for rival groups to seek and kill. The state of affairs was so severe that the Nagaland State government was powerless to do anything. Even the Government of India seemed helpless despite the ceasefire regime in place. There was a deep hurt and anger felt by each of the rival groups against the other. This made it even more difficult to contain the situation. Despite the

hopelessness, timely mediation and back-channel diplomacy were being pursued. A 10-point ‘A Covenant of Common Hope’ was adopted by representatives of Naga political groups, frontal Hohos, Churches, and Civil Societies during the Naga Peace Summit III at Chiang Mai, Thailand, on August 21, 2008. This became the basis for the subsequent “Covenant of Reconciliation”. All this took place under the initiative of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR). Independent observers, government officials, and even the security establishment in Delhi publicly admitted that killings arising out of factionalism all but ended post-2009 because of FNR’s efforts (MorungExpress, 2017, 2019)

Sanjib Baruah in his *In the Name of the Nation: India and Its Northeast* a book on the critical and historical account of India’s troubled relations with the borderland region, he noted that for a number of years following the ceasefire agreement of 1997 between the Indian government and the NSCN-IM, fatalities as a result of inter-factional warfare increased, whereas violence between armed rebels and security personnel came down. The killings were reduced only after a covenant for reconciliation was signed between Naga factions in 2008. See Table 3 below. The role of the Christian themes of covenant and reconciliation in this context is noteworthy.

Table 4

Agreements Between Naga Political Groups under the purview of FNR toward peace in Nagaland (Original Table by the Author of this Article)

Sources: (MorungExpress, 2011, 2017, 2019; Today, 2022)

Title	Date	Remarks
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Covenant of Reconciliation	June 13, 2009	The signatories committed before God to offer themselves to Naga Reconciliation and Forgiveness based on the Historical and Political Rights of the Nagas. They resolved to work together in the spirit of love, nonviolence, peace, and respect to resolve outstanding issues among themselves. The Covenant of Reconciliation was instrumental in the cessation of armed confrontation and bloodshed among the Naga Political Groups.
A Public Affirmation	December 8, 2009	The Affirmation was made to honor “A Joint Declaration” signed on September 28, 2009 to “jointly reject any form of conditional package offered to the Nagas by the Government of India.”
Joint Appeal	March 10, 2010	The Appeal reaffirmed “to cease all offensive activities in toto; and all Naga army commanders in the Naga areas are hereby requested to uphold and abide by this principle.”
Statement	August 22, 2011	The signatories stated, “... In the spirit of love, respect and understanding, have agreed

		to strengthen and broaden the peace process based on the “Uniqueness of Naga History.”
August 2011 Meetings of Naga Leaders Agreement	August 24 & 25, 2011	<p>The signatories stated that they have arrived “to work towards a shared Naga future on the foundation of our Historical and Political rights.” In this statement they accorded on the following six points, which reads as:</p> <p>“RECONCILED on the basis of the historical and political rights of the Nagas;</p> <p>ACKNOWLEDGED that we have hurt one another and that in the spirit of love, we have forgiven each other, and are prepared to understand each other towards a shared future; REAFFIRM the resolve not to harbor any non-Naga organizations adverse to the Naga political cause Furthermore, serious note is taken on the harboring of non-Naga organizations opposed to the Naga political cause and hence, strongly denounce such acts;</p> <p>DISENGAGE in and from all forms of actions and associations detrimental to the Historical and Political cause of the Nagas;</p> <p>AFFIRM to work for the territorial integrity</p>

		of all Nagas; and ANY INTERIM arrangement of the political rights of the Nagas shall be outside the purview of the Indian Constitution per se.”
Naga Concordant	August 26, 2011	The signatories stated: “Having Reconciled on the basis of the Historical and Political Rights, the top Naga leaders have agreed that Nagas are ONE. Therefore, in pursuance of this agreement, the following signatories have resolved in principle to work towards the formation of one Naga National Government. To expedite this process of eventually forming the Naga National Government, a High-Level Commission was formed with the Forum for Naga Reconciliation as facilitators.”
Lenten Agreement	March 28, 2014	In the Agreement, the signatories stated: “We request the FNR to work out the modalities to expedite the process. While this task is being carried out, we call for the maintenance of the status quo, by vigilantly refraining from any unwarranted activities by the Nagas. Furthermore, in the spirit of Naga unity,

		through reconciliation and peace, we remain open to other Naga groups who are committed to Naga reconciliation and agree, to abide by and uphold its aim and purposes.”
Joint Statement	2022	The signatories stated: “The Covenant of Reconciliation (COR) of June 13, 2009— signed by the late Isak Chishi Swu, late SS Khaplang, and Brig (Retired) S. Singnya— will be honored in letter and in spirit. Hence, we renew to work together in the spirit of love, and desist from all forms of armed violence, and refrain from indulging in violence of words through print and social media among Naga Political Groups and the general public. From this time forward, in order to chart a path forward, we remain committed to “peace and respect and to resolve outstanding issues among us (COR).”

CONCLUSION

Summary

Response to Research Question 1. Research question 1 inquired about the Naga Shisha Hoho prayer center establishment. The Finding revealed the role played by the Christian prayer Center Naga Shisha Hoho (religious institution) in the formation of FNR. The Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) was formed in 2008 to work for Naga reconciliation in an impartial and fair manner, with the interest and rights of the Naga people as its primary principle.

Response to Research Question 2. Research question 2 inquired whether the Forum for Naga Reconciliation contributes to the peace in Nagaland. A Covenant of Common Hope was adopted at the Naga Peace Summit III in 2008, which became the basis for the subsequent "Covenant of Reconciliation" by FNR.

Conclusion

In Nagaland, religious institutions have played a vital role in promoting peace. If religious virtuosi like Chosayi and Wati Aier's commitment to promoting peace is absent, there will be factional fighting and bloodshed among the Nagas, which could have been worse. It is worth noting the role of NSH, FNR, and the NBCC played in the 1960s in pressing for a bilateral cease-fire agreement between the GOI and the NNC. These actions are motivated by a strong belief in Jesus' message of love and forgiveness, which is evident in their activities.

Recommendations

Popular perceptions about religious fundamentalism have led, to both a widening gap between different religious communities and to an increasing awareness among (secular)

policymakers that religion can play an instrumental, potentially problematic role in local, national, and international conflicts. At the same time, there is a growing appreciation among practitioners of the fact that religious actors also have great potential to resolve conflict and decrease tensions. This holds true, in the case of the Nagas where religion has contributed to a wide range of peace-building activities. Religious communities are ‘drivers of change’ in peacebuilding because of their moral authority and ability to instill a genuine commitment to peace among large segments of the population, of which 87.93% are Christian.

The spiritual dimension of peacebuilding is largely neglected by secularists; however, religious actors can play a positive role in conflict settings by combining spiritual guidance with organizational capacity. Religious actors have contributed positively to peace and have been engaged in a wide range of peace-building activities in both religious and non-religious conflict settings. They have specific strengths and weaknesses in terms of peacebuilding and encourage donor agencies to recognize and utilize their peacebuilding potential. They should be considered with some caution, but policymakers should also acknowledge the potential for religion to build a sustainable peace. This paper filled the gap of research on the origin and function of FNR in the context of conflicts in North East India. This paper recommends further exploration and research on the peacebuilding models used by FNR both Naga indigenous model as well as Christian faith principles.

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