CHAPTER – 3
The coming of the Christian Missionaries among the Karbis

Among the various Christian denominations working in North East India, it was the American Baptish Foreign Mission Society followed by the Welsh Presbyterian Mission and the Roman Catholic Mission that came to work among the Karbis of present Karbi Anglong district. While work among the Karbis by the American Baptish Mission was undertaken from the Nowgong station, the Presbyterian Mission entered from the N.C. Hills district through a native convert when he migrated to Umpanai in West Karbi Anglong in 1892. He, Sangbar Kro, happened to be the first Presbyterian convert among the Karbis and the Seed of the Gospel was sown by him among his people at Umpanai.[1] The Roman Catholic Mission initially did not enter the Karbi area but worked from the Khasi and Jaintia hills of Meghalaya. Even Baptism for the early converts was under taken inside the Khasi-Jaintia area. A mission station in the heart of Karbi Anglong could be established by them only in 1967. By virtue of being the first to contact with the Karbis and perhaps due to the existing comity agreements, the American Baptist missionaries got the major responsibility of working among the tribe. Even today, the majority of Karbi Christians belonged to the American Baptist denomination.

The coming of the American Baptist missionaries among the Karbis: The plan of working among the Karbis was initiated in the year 1857 when Rev Miles Bronson and William Ward undertook a tour in the Karbi inhabited area. In his diary, William ward writes, "The Mikirs, one of the hill tribes of Assam, have been repeatedly noticed on our pages as holding out peculiar opportunity, and encouragement to evangelical labor".[2] In the Baptist Missionary Magazine of November 1854, Nathan Brown writes, "The Mikirs are one of the most interesting tribes in Assam and are mild, quiet and industrious race. They very much resemble the Karens. We should be glad to make some efforts for their conversion, but it would be a folly to extend our labors, while we are unable even to carry on the mission we have already established among the Assamese".[3]

---

1. J.F Jyrwa, *Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Khasi-Jaintia Hills, 1899*, Christian communication Department, K.J.P. Synod, Shillong, Page-527, Year-1998

2. Hillary Terang and Anderson Tokbi, *Day break in the Hills*, Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention, Diphu, Page-8, Year-2009

3. Ibid, Page-8

Inspite of the dearth of missionaries at that time Miles Bronson did not hesitate to include the Karbis in their mission's list and after his tour in 1857 he wrote to the Home Board, to spare a missionary for them. In his journal which was published in February 1857, he writes, "I have taken a most interesting excursion, accompanied by Mr Ward, over a section of the Mikir hills where no missionary and probably no European has ever been this tour, which I can truely say was the most interesting of my whole missionary life. This simple hearted people seemed ready to welcome us everywhere, and listened eagerly to all we had to say which led me to devote some effort to preparing an elementary Catechism in Mikir, giving them as simply as possible, the out lines of Christianity in their own tounge".[4]

The tour that Miles Bronson and William Ward had was accompanied by a Karbi young man who acted as an interpreter. In one of their reports it reads, "A few understood Assamese pretty well; but we depended chiefly upon the young man, Long Bong to interpret and explain what we had said. Though a young man of most quiet manners, we were astonished at the eloquence and power with which he seemed to electrify and sway the minds of the whole company. In perfect naturalness and beauty of gesture, and control over the passions of others, he could hardly be surpassed by the most studied orator; but he seemed to be as self-forgetful and artless as a child. As he explained and enlarged upon what we said, burst of approval broke forth from the whole company, and sometimes paronysms of laughter. Had you been present with us, as we sat on the floor, with this company around us, you might have seen tears; and you could not but have felt with us an agony of prayer that God would make that young man a preacher of the Gospel to his countrymen. He has promised to come to Nowgong to learn during the next rains, and become a true Christian".[5]

The report sent by Rev Miles Bronson to the Home Board of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) was accepted and in 1859 the Board appointed Rev and Mrs C.F Tolman for the newly created Mikir Department of the Nowgong Mission. Rev Miles Bronson deserves to be called the 'torch bearer' of all mission activities in Karbi Anglong. Rev and Mrs C.F. Tolman arrived at Nowgong in May 1859.[6] He was the Son-in-law of Rev Miles Bronson. The Tolmans were specially designated to work among the Karbis, but upon their arrival they had to take charge of the Nowgong station. However, they made a tour

---

4. Ibid. P-8-9.
5. Ibid, P-9
6. Opcit, Milton Sangma, *History of American Baptist Mission in North East India, Vol-I*, P-90.

to the Mikir hills the following winter and in this tour Rev Tolman imbibed malaria which broke down his health. He was compelled to go back to America in June, 1861 having been on the field for only two years. A short profile of Rev C.F Tolman is given below.[7]

Full Name	-	Cyrus Fisher Tolman
Born	-	25 October, 1832 at Meridian, New York
Date of ordination	-	20th October, 1858, at Calvary Baptist Church, New York.
Graduation	-	Hamilton Literature and Theological Institute, 1858.
Appointment	-	17 September, 1858. Assigned to work among the Mikirs in Assam.
Marriage	-	Married Rebecca Bronson the daughter of Rev Miles Bronson in October 1858.
Children	-	Edgar Bronson, John Newell, Minie Lizzio and Julia Ruth.
Date of Journey	-	Sailed on 26 November 1858 from Boston and arrived at Nowgong on 25 May, 1859.

Tour and exploration of Mikir hills - December 1859

Year of return to U.S.A. - June, 1861. Reasons of return - Ill health Year of his wife return to USA 1862. In USA served as a Pastor of St, Laurence Church, Massachusetts. Death of his wife 2 December 1903 at Chicago Illinois.

Date and year of his death - 3 August 1921 Slingerlands, New York.

After the departure of the Tolmans, the station was left at the hands of Dr and Mrs Bronson, the in-laws of C.F Tolman. They worked without any companion till November, 1863 when Rev and Mrs E.P Scott arrived, having been assigned specially for the Mikir department. Rev and Mrs E.P Scott were the second designated American Baptist missionary couple to the Karbis. They arrived at Nowgong in 1863 and started serving with deep love and commitment. Rev Scott died at Nowgong on 18 May, 1869 due to Cholera and was buried there. His wife continued to serve until January 1871.

---

7. The material was supplied by Rev Tom Horn, USA for Sesqui Centennial Celebration of the Gospel in Karbi Anglong, 1859-2009.

The first Karbi convert : The first recorded Karbi convert was baptisted in October, 1863 by Rev Miles Bronson.[8] The convert namely Rongbong Killing, a Government Mauzadar was baptised at Nowgong and later became a member of the Nowgong Baptist Church. Andrew was his Christian name. He married an Assamese lady who was then a teacher at Nowgong Christian Patty. His native place was Amguri bordering the present Karbi Anglong district. The missionaries at Nowgong greatly hoped that Rongbong would act as a catalyst among his people and bring many to Christ. But unfortunately, he was a weak Christian who had to be frequently disciplined by the Church at Nowgong. He died while he was under discipline.[9]

When Rev and Mrs E.P Scott entered the field, they worked with enthusiasm but soon fell ill because of the unhealthy climate of Karbi Anglong. They worked very hard for about two years but had to return to America owing to ill health. They were able to return in 1868 but could remain in Karbi Anglong only for one year. Rev E.P Scott died of Cholera at Nowgong on 18 May, 1869. According to Rev P.H Moore's report, He had been greatly interested in the Mikir people and had endured himself to them so that they felt his death as a real benevolent.[10] Rev and Mrs R.E Neighbor who had been designated as the successor of Rev E.P. Scott in the work among the Mikirs arrived in January, 1871.[11] Rev Neighbor took up in earnest the work for the Mikirs but due to ill health he had to retire from the field in 1878.[12] F.S Downs writes, "Missionary service among the Mikirs was proving to be an unhealthy occupation".[13] In 1874 the Neighbors were left in charge of Nowgong station and the works for the Mikirs were neglected. When Rev and Mrs Neighbor went to America on furlough in 1878, from that time until January, 1891 there was no missionary for the Mikirs. During these 13 years period, Rev P.H Moore included the Mikirs in his work as much as possible and in 1883 the Church at Nowgong supported a preacher to them.[14] The Evangelist namely Sarlok Tokbi a Karbi was the first convert from the eastern part of Karbi Anglong.

---

8. F.S Downs, *Christianity in N.E India*, ISPCK, Delhi, P-58, Year 1983.
9. Opcit, Davidson Ingti, *Christianity among the Karbis and its impact*, P-14.
10. P.H. Moore, '*The American Baptist Missionary Union Report*', Nowgong. December 18-29, 1886 P-33.
11. Opcit, F.S Downs, *Christianity in N.E India*, P-58
12. Opcit, P.H. Moore, *'The American Baptist Missionary Union Report'* P-36.
13. Opcit F.S Downs, *'Christianity in North India'* P-58.
14. Opcit, Milton Sangma, *History of American Baptist Mission in North East India, Vol-I*, P-91.

He received a monthly honorarium of Rs. 8/- per month to preach the Gospel among his people.[15]

The coming of Rev P.E Moore and the establishment of a temporary Headquarters: In January 1891, Rev P.E Moore, the brother of Rev P.H Moore came to work among the Karbis. He married Mrs. Charlotee Pursell and at once set up a temporary Headquarters at Krungjeng (modern Kolonga) in West Karbi Anglong. Rev P.E Moore spent three winter season and Mrs Moore once at Krungjeng.

The arrival of Rev John Moses Carvel: In January, 1895 Rev J.M Carvel, an Englishman by birth arrived and joined the Moore family in the Mikir hills. Rev Carvel married Miss Amy of Nowgnong and procceded to Krungjeng.

The search for a permanent Headquarters: Krungjeng was not a suitable place for establishing a permanent Headquarters for the Karbis. Immediately, after the Conference in 1895, P.E Moore and J.M Carvel made an extensive tour in the Mikirs hills trekking south, north and east as far as Golaghat. They made this tour on foot covering hundreds of miles. But due to the nomadic nature of the Mikirs they could not find a permanent concentration of population. They returned to Nowgong on 7 April, 1896. In May of the same year, P.E Moore made another tour south of the Borpani Tea Garden and finally found the right building spot. In October, P.E Moore accompanied by his brother P.H Moore and J.M Carvel went to the spot and selected Tika Anglong (Tika hills) as the future home of the missionaries.[16] Besides Tika Anglong (Tika hills) the missionaries inspected Socheng, Tirkim and Sermanthu but Tika hills seems to be the right choice as it is near to Kampur Railway station and the Sidgamari Tea Estate where a European family resides. Rev J.M Carvel proceeded at once to building and Rev P.E Moore went to Krungjeng where he had already spent two winters. Mrs Moore joined him at Krungjeng on 1 December, 1896. On 18 January, 1897, they left for Tika Anglong arriving there the next day. Carvel's house was under roof and one room closed so that he could live in it. Mrs Carvel came out from Nowgong in February 1897. Four happier, more hopeful men and women would have been hard to find. The houses were finished, plastered and white washed before the rains set in. The American Baptist missionary Union

---

15. P.H. Moore, *History of Nowgong Field Report*, Assam Mission Jubilee of the American Baptist Missionary Union. P-37

16. Opcit, Milton Sangma, *History of American Baptist Mission in North East India, Vol-I,* P-92.

had allowed Rs. 500/- for a temporary house in the hill. The houses at Krungjeng with out-houses and servant's houses had been built at a cost of Rs. 130/-. The remaining Rs. 370/- were spent on the building at Tika Anglong.

The death of Laura Amy Carvel: In August, 1897 Mrs Laura Amy Carvel died. She was the first missionary to be buried at Tika hills. On 19 December of the same year Rev J.M Carvel remarried Miss Alice Parker of Nowgong and he began to work at Tika again. A short profile of Laura Amy Carvel is as follows.[17] Born in 1862 at Wisconsin. Appointed as a missionary in 1890. Married to Rev J. M. Carvel on 3 August, 1895. Stationed at Tika hills from early 1897. Contracted Malaria. Unconscious for 12 hours. Died on 1 August, 1897 during child birth.

The death of Charlotee Pursell Moore: In 1907 when Rev and Mrs Carvel were on a furlough, Mrs Moore died at Tika on 9 May, 1907. Due to the death of his wife Rev P.E Moore too was deeply hurt and his health deteriorated. He went on a furlough to America in 1909. Mrs Moore worked dedicatedly and loved the Mikirs till the end of her time.[18] A short profile of Mrs Charlottee Pursell Moore is as follows.[19]

Charlottee Pursell Moore was the younger sister of Mrs M.C Mason of Tura, Garo hills. She was married to Rev P.E Moore on 09 October, 1891 at Tura which was solemnised by Rev William Carey (Grandson of William Carey, Father of modern mission). The Moore couple had their temporary station 18 miles away from Nowgong. Their son Carrey Pitt Moore was born on 9 September, 1892. Mother and son went to America in June 1894 and returned to Nowgong in December 1894. She died at Tika in 1908.

After returning from America, Rev J.M. Carvel was transferred back to Nowgong and for a while to Golaghat where he was given other responsibilities in addition to the Karbi work. Rev Carvel then returned to Tika where he served until his death in 1925.

The death of Rev J.M. Carvel: Mrs Alice Parker Carvel, the second wife of Rev Carvel went to America taking with her their young son. According to the inhabitants of Tika hills particularly Sri Chandra Timung who celebrated his 110 birthday in 2007 said that Mrs

---

17. Opcit, Rev Tom Horn, USA.
18. Peter Jisso, *'Paster Ari' (Pastor's Hand Book)*, Christian literature Centre, Pan Bazar Guwahati, P-8, Year-1967
19. Opcit, Rev. Tom Horn, USA.

Carvel left her husband because her husband contracted a severe skin disease.[20] Rev Carvel was relieved from mission's activities and did not stay at the mission station at Tika but constructed a house in Tika village. After his retirement his relatives particularly his sister used to send him money from America. During the years of his loneliness at Tika hills he came very close and intimate with a Karbi lady, a widow namely, Kajek Terangpi who used to attend to Carvel's domestic chores.[21] Carvel presented a diamond and silver jewellery to the lady. Later the diamond was sold to Hijal Ingti and the Silver Jewellery, 'Nothengpi' to Sar-ik Terang (Governor Terang) of Bordongka Baptist Church. According to the account of Kave Ronghangpi, Carvel out of shame, frustration and loneliness committed suicide. Her account almost tallied with that of Sri Chandra Timung who narrated that Carvel did not show any sign of suffering but died in his sleep. The doors and windows were locked from inside and in the morning when the domestic helper went to the house and finding no response from Carvel alerted the villagers. The villagers had to break the door and found Carvel already dead. The matter was informed to the nearest British Authority, the Tea garden manager of Sidgamari Tea Estate. Thus, Rev Carvel might have died in his sleep or he might have committed suicide by consuming poison as told by Kave Ronghangpi. Rev Carvel was buried at Tika hills alongside his first wife. A long obituary note written by Rev G.R. Kampfer on 8 December, 1925 was sent by Rev Tom Horn for the Sesquicentennial celebration of the Gospel in Karbi Anglong (1859-2009) which is given below.

Obituary Notice of Rev John Moses Carvel, the Missionary who became a Karbi in Body and spirit: Another deepfelt loss was sustained by the missionaries in Assam on October 30th 1925 in the death of Rev John Moses Carvel, missionary to the Mikirs. This sad message was brought into Nowgong by runners who made the trip from the hills post haste and it was ten days before one of our missionaries in the plains could reach Mount Tika where the remains of our brother lie beside those of his first wife in the mission compound. The blow was felt all the more coming at a time when so many other losses had already left our hearts very heavy.

Mrs Carvel was born in London, England on January 28th, 1866. In 1887, he was brought to America, where he became a consecreted Christian and pledged his life for Christ

20. An interview with Sri Chandra Timung Date of interview 21 January, 2007 Place Tika Hills.

21. Kave Ronghangpi of Borthoipi Baptist Church used to tell the story.

in foreign mission service. He arrived in Nowgong, Assam on January 5th 1895 where for two years he gave his undivided attention to the study of the Mikir language. And here he wisely faltered by the Late Rev P.H Moore. Here also he became acquainted with Miss Amy of the Nowgong Girl's school whom he married and took to Mount Tika but she was not destined to share the trials of an almost unapproachable hill station with her husband for long. Death claimed her on the altar of mission service. In 1908-1909 Mrs Carvel was again in Nowgong and from 1909-1921 Golaghat was his Headquarters for work among the Mikirs. He was married again to Miss Alice Mound Parker of England. A son Doughlas J was born to him by this marriage on March 28th, 1901 who is now living with his mother at Kansas City. Two sisters Jane and Elizabeth of Augusta, Michigan also mourn his loss.

Few will ever realize what the task was that confronted him and his colleague in this work among the Mikirs, a race hedged in behind by the sturdy Khasias and infront by the plain Assamese, ground between these upper and rather millstones the Mikirs became the most notorius opium eaters in Assam, neglected and intimidated. Mr Carvel told a number of us of some of his early difficulties. When he came to Tika the first time to begin his labors he was obliged to carry his own luggage and tents up to the summit on his own back. It took him four days. The people fled. One man braver than the rest, left some plantains and an egg and ran. The second day he left some more supplies. The Mikir King hearing of this fined the poor Mikir, Rs. 10-08-0. This Mount was taboo, supposedly inhabited by the demon Tika. Here, this courageous missionary built his bungalow on the very summit and defied all the demons of Mikir land. The Christian community increased to its present strength of about five hundred souls. For the last year and eight months, Mr Carvel had spent his days here alone as an independent missionary, adding his knowledge of the people, of the language, and of the prospects of the Gospel to the feeble efforts the missionary society could put forth during those days of spiritual famine and depletion of our forces. He had build himself a modest house near Tika and was about to build himself another house two days journey farther in the interior and at a much higher altitute and had already felled a number of trees for this purpose when he came down with a two weeks attack of obstinate malaria from which his death resulted.

He had given himself unreservedly to his people. And no greater blow could have come to his poor bewildered flock than that he should rise no more from his shelter to watch beside their beds of pain, through the long night hours, to visit them no more in their affiction,

nor to advise them in their difficulties nor be their spokesman in affairs that affected their government.

Mr Carvel left a beautiful legacy in Assam, in the numbers of buildings he erected among which are the mission bungalows of Jorhat, Golaghat and Satribari (Gauhati), the girls school building, Gauhati, the spacious Boys Dormitory, Jorhat and last but not the least the Shirk Memorial Church, Golaghat. But most precious of all is the legacy he left in his life wholly devoted to the service of others, the memory of his serene spirit and the faithulness of his walk in the steps of the Master.

December 6, 1925, R.G Kampher.

Disappoinment of the Mission's Secretary: Rev A.J Tuttle, the Mission Secretary felt that effort of the missionaries for the progress of the Karbis was discouraging. Inspite of their relentless sacrifices, very few Karbis accepted the Christian message. The mission Secretary felt that this is a waste of time and money and decided to abandon the Tika Mission compound. Establishment of a new station for the Karbis at Jamnamukh near Nowgong was planned by him but this did not materialised. Work for the Karbis was thus carried on from Nowgong. To add to the woes of the missionaries the Tika Station was burnt by fire due to a bolt from the sky on October 15, 1916. Rev P.E. Moore reported that medicines, missions record, books, film materials, pianos, besides others where destroyed in the fire.[22] Thus, as per the order of the Mission Secretary, Rev P.E Moore left Tika hills on March, 1917, but he continued his work for the Karbis from Nowgong.

The coming of Rev W.R Hutton: Inspite of the abandonment of the Tika station, the missionaries did not give up hope and continued their work from Nowgong station through the likes of Rev P.E Moore, Rev J.M Carvel and O.L. Swanson. In 1918, Rev. W.R Hutton left America and arrived at Nowgong. The same year Rev O.L. Swanson gave the charge of the Karbi Field to Rev W.R Hutton. In 1924 when Rev P.E Moore left for America, Rev W.R Hutton becomes the sole incharge for the Karbi affairs.

About Rev W.R Hutton: Of all the missionaries designated for the Karbis, Rev W.R Hutton served for the longest period. He gave his service for about thirty years in the midst of trials and sufferings. Rev. William Ralph Hutton was born in U.S.A in the State of Iowa on October

---

22. Opcit, Peter Tisso, *Pastor's Hand Book,* P-10.

18, 1889. For about ten years he remained in his birth place and was an obedient child. From his early years he helped his parents in the field and attended Church services regularly. He even used to present songs during Christmas in the Church. At the age of eight, he read the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation and could remember most of the Bible stories. His mother used to accompany him to the Church and she became the source of inspiration to young William. In the living room of the Hutton's, there hanged a picture of Dr. Livingstone and young William used to be curious to know the story of the greatest missionaries of all times.

The state of Iowa is extremely cold during winter and it did not suit the Hutton's especially William's father. Due to this reason they migrated to Oklahoma, a much warmer place. Being agriculturist, William's father cultivated cereals like wheat and also varieties of fruits at Oklahoma and young William often helped his father along with attending school regularly which was situated at a distance of two miles from their home.

Before passing the High School, William was compelled to teach the primary school. While as a teacher he read the stories of the missionaries working in China and he decided to become a missionary. In 1908 he passed the Matric Examination and joined South-Western College for further studies. After four months of his enrolment at the College his father died but his mother continued to support him and he got his B.A degree in 1912. For a year he joined service and later enrolled himself at Groyer Theological Seminary in Pennsylania. After studying for a year at the seminary, he enrolled himself at the school of Divinity in Chicago University and got his M.A. and B.D degrees in the year 1918. While studying at Chicago University, he met Miss Elsie Cloe Sprecer and they got married in 1917. After his marriage the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Union appointed him as a Missionary for India and after the end of the First World War he sailed for India along with his wife and reached Gauhati in the month of March, 1918. After a year, he went to Nowgong. In 1920 a daughter Virginia was born to them. In the Annual conference of 1920 held in Nowgong, Rev O.L. Swanson attended it and he handed the charge of Nowgong district to Rev W.R Hutton. The same year Rev Hutton visited Tika and conducted a Bible class at Golaghat. With the departure of Rev P.E Moore the responsibility of looking after the Tika field was given to Rev W.R Hutton and by 1924 he was given the charge of the whole Karbi field. After taking the new assignment, Rev W.R Hutton went to America for a furlough and during his stay he learnt Greek for the purpose of bringing out the New Testament of the Bible in Karbi. In 1925 he came back to Assam and settled at Furkating. During this time he started learning the

Karbi language from Rev Mongve Ronghang, the first ordained Reverend from the tribe. In 1940, Rev W.R Hutton again went for a furlough. As the Second World War was still on, he returned to Assam leaving his wife in Ameria. In the year 1954 he took complete retirement and returned to America.

The coming of Rev M.J Chance: After the departure of Rev W.R Hutton, Rev M.J chance took over the responsibility of looking after the Karbi field but he couldnot continue for long as he died after a few years.

The coming of Rev K. Savino: The Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI) appointed Rev K. Savino a Naga in 1957 after the demise of Rev M.J. Chance. Rev Savino came to Diphu and made an attempt to establish the Mission Centre. But due to various difficulties he did not succed in his attempt. Since the departure of Rev K. Savino the Baptist in the district of then Mikir hills became independent in administration. At present the Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention look upon the entire Baptist population of the district with its Headquarters at Diphu. At present there are 11 Associations having 272 local churches and a membership over 18,000 under Karbi Anglong Baptist Convention.

The Presbyterian missionaries among the Karbis: The Presbyterian Church of Wales was formerly known as the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist and the Mission Board was known as The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Foreign Missionary Society. It was founded in 1840 with its Headquarters at Liverpool. The first Welsh Missionary to India was Rev Thomas Jones, who arrived at Cherra Punji in Meghalaya with his wife on 22nd June, 1841. After 18 months Rev and Mrs Willaims and Dr Owen Richard joined the Jones on 22nd January, 1843.[23]

The Presbyterian missionaries worked in the Karbi area from their stations at Jowai, Shangpung and Wahijer of Meghalaya. The first Presbyterian convert from the tribe was Sangbar Kro who was baptised in 1880. He became a school teacher a Sangbar a village near Umrongso (Garampani) in N.C hills district. Later on, he shifted from Sangbar and came to Umpanai in West Karbi Anglong and spent the rest of his life there.[24]

---

23. Opcit, Rev J.F Jyrwa*, Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Khasi-Jaintia Hills, 1864-1899,* PP. 527-528.

24. Opcit, Davidson Ingti, *Christianity Among the Karbis and its Impact*, P-17

The story of Sangbar Kro the first Presbyterian convert from the Karbi tribe: Mr Daniel Sykes opened a school at Pynthor Mynsong, a place on the other side of the Klopi River in North Cachar. In about eight months the school was given up. Sangbar who joined the school had learnt to read the first part of the first Khasi book when the school was given up but he continued to learn to read. Soon after Mr Jerman Jones had come out and took the charge of Jowai District, Sangbar came to Jowai and became a stipend holder, remaining in the school at Jowai for five years. While in School, Sangbar became a Christain. At the effort of Jerman Jones, two or three girls from Pynthor Mynrong came to study at Jowai. One of them was Ka Ior (Kajor Timungpi) who afterwards became Sangbar's wife. Later they both went back to their village and became teachers.

One day when Kajor, Sangbar's wife was cutting firewood, a tiger came by, seized her by the shoulders, and carried her some distance to the forest. The villagers and their dogs followed the tiger and the tiger let go his hold of Kajor.This circumtance was fatal to the school as the villagers took it to be a sign of the wrath of the demons against the school and the Christian relegion. As parents would not send their children to school it had to be given up. It was arranged that Sangbar should be sent to Nongsawlia for further training. After remaining there for two years and a half, he became a teacher in Dr. Griffith's district in Mawphlang and afterwards under Mr Robert Evans in Shangpoong. After sometime he returned to his own people who had removed from Pynthor Mynrong to Madan Ritong and then he along with his family members came to Umpanai in West Karbi Anglong. Sangbar's father, Sar Kro is the 'Basiko', Chief of Judges of the village. Sar Kro is a noble old man. Though favourable to Christainity, he didnot have sufficient courage to profess it publicly. When Sangbar returned to his people the last time again the people were not desirous of having a school. But in about a year, a few were induced and became favourable. From that time, eight years ago, until the present, the work has continued to make progress from year to year, and its influence is felt in the villages around. Through the kindness of Miss Hannah Jones of Rhyl, he was able to begin schools in Ningkring and Langweh where there are seven Christians in one of these villages and twentytwo in the other. Thirty children altogether are under instruction of whom fifteen are able to read the Khasi Testament.[25]

Sangbar Kro along with his family members left their native village Pynthor Mynrong

---

25. Opcit, Rev J.F Jyrwa, *Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Khasi-Jaintia Hills, 1864-1899*, PP. 527-528.

for Umpanai in 1892 due to some reasons. Firstly, the British Commissioner stationed at Haflong issued a strict order to contribute free labour for the construction of railway line to connect the Brahmaputra Valley with that of the Barak Valley. In order to avoid this, Sangbar and his followers left the area. Secondly, the Jaintia Daloi (Minister) under whom the Karbis of N.C hills were living was very oppressive. Therefore Sangbar and his brother-in-law left for Umapanai. Lastly, the school established and taught by Sangbar and his wife at Pynthor Mynrong was boycotted and abandoned and they were looking for an alternative place.

After a long and weary journey traversing through Madan Ritong, Horkanghong, Mukiaw of present Meghalaya, Sangbar reached Tapat and Am-ih by crossing the Kapili and Amtereng rivers with a raft and finally reached Umpanai where he spent the rest of his life.

Sangbar Kro was fluent in English. At Umpanai he once again engaged in his old profession as a teacher and medicine distributor of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission. In 1893 the Welsh Presbyterian missionaries, Rev John Jones, Mr Jenkins and Dr. Williams, paid a visit to Umpanai travelling through the Jaintia hills in the midst of dense forest and unfamiliar geographical conditions. At Umpanai they were welcomed by Sangbar Kro and his group. The school children presented a song in Karbi. By the tune the missionaries could understand that the song was, 'We have heard the joyful sound Jesus saves, Jesus saves.'

Even to this day the older folks of the Biate tribe inhabiting North Cachar hills kept their memories alive by fondly calling Sangbar Kro as 'Pu Sangbar' because the was not only one of the missionaries who brought the Gospel among the Biates but was also a teacher in their area at what is now called Sangbar situated near Umrongso (Garampani) in N.C hills.[26]

The Roman Catholic Missionaries among the Karbis: The Salvatorian Fathers adopted Khasi hills as their main field of missionary activity. They reached the boundary of Karbi Anglong but not really entered it. A certain Langtuk Hanse from the village of Marjong just a few Kilometres from the present Parish Centre of Umswai was the first to hear of the Gospel message. On 25th of January, 1914, he led a group of six people from Marjong to Umtyrkhang in the Khasi hills and received Baptism at the hands of Fr Christopher Becker. These six became the bearers of the Good News to others in the village. On May, 1916, 31

---

26. An article by Mr. Daniel Teron, titled, *'A Glimpse of the early Christian Missionaries with short reference to the early convert'*. Published by the 'Arleng Daily'. 29 April, 2010 Editor- T.P. Hanse, Diphu, Karbi Anglong.

others received Baptism from the hands of the Catechist, Stephan Manik. On 15th of the same month another 22 received Baptism from Fr Grignat, S.J. In 1920 some of these who received the faith went to settle at Umpanai and thus a Christian community was started there too. Later on, a Church was started at Mynser. The work in this region was not restricted only to the Karbis as the Tiwas (Hill Lalungs) too responded to the faith. In 1950 the people of Bor Marjong and Umswai received the faith and they became agents of Evangelization.

The first one to receive Baptism from Jirikinding area was a certain Joseph Millik and his four children. They went to the Raliang mission and were baptised by Fr. Mellina, SDB on the 6th of March, 1942. From Umkhyrmi the Catholic faith spread to the Karbis of Mawthade, Langsomepi, Amreng and later on to Tapat, Langkeroi and Rongpangbong.

In Karbi Anglong, not everyone who became a Catholic came from their original animistic faith. Some of the Protestants too became Catholic. Thus in 1949 a certain John Kathar with a group of 27 others were received into the Catholic Church by then Fr O. Marengo, SDB. In the same year in the month of November, eighteen others, in February 1950, fourteen others and in May of the same year, ten others joined the Catholic Church. Thus the Church gained quite a strong foothold in the area of Rongkhang which for the Karbis is one of the main centres.[27]

---

27. S. Karotemprel, Ed, *The Catholic Church in N.E India*, *1890-1990*, Vendrame Institute, Shillong PP 196-197, Year-1993.

****