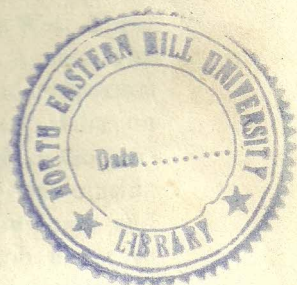


HISTORY OF AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSION IN NORTH-EAST INDIA (1836-1950)

VOLUME—One

MILTON S. SANGMA



MITTAL PUBLICATIONS
DELHI-110035 (INDIA)

1987

Shri Datta
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HISTORY OF AMERICAN
MISSION IN
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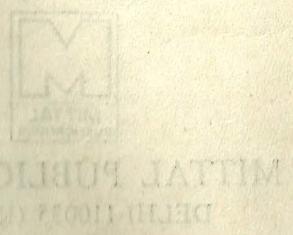
First published in 1987

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ISBN 81-7099-035-1
ISBN 81-7099-034-3

Published by
K.M. MITTAL
MITTAL PUBLICATIONS
B-2/19-B, Lawrence Road
DELHI-110035 (INDIA)

Printed at
Ankur Composer
at Sunil Printers
1067, Naraina,
NEW DELHI-110028



Preface

History involves not only a mere record of facts—it requires an interpretation of facts. A number of historical forces have been at work in the past that ultimately made the people of North-East India of what they are today. One great factor that added to the cultural dimension of the people of North-East India, especially, the hills people, was the arrival and the activities of the various Christian Missions from the West. These Christian Mission Societies were not Government Agents. The societies were formed by the individual believers and supporters of the Mission. Neither did they come to North-east India on their own. Initially, they were invited by the British Government officials in their private capacity with a view to using them as instruments of taming and controlling those fierce and untamable tribes. This would make their job easier as administrators. On the other hand, the Missionaries also, in their zeal and enthusiasm, for spreading the message of Love as taught by Jesus in the Gospels, accepted the invitations and the challenges as God-sent Opportunity, and more readily in North-East India as the Government officials promised protection of their lives and property. Thus each wanted the other in the process of carrying out their own respective missions. It was under these circumstances that the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society in USA sent their Mission to North-East India which was to play a great role in bringing about a cultural revolution, especially amongst the hill people. One object of this work is to explain in a small way, the cultural deposition of this great historical force.

Many excellent books have been published on the history of the American Baptist Missions operating in different parts of the globe since the Movement began in 1814. Each made its contributions to the treasured story of the pioneering works and

contributions of the American Baptist Missionaries in different lands. Of late, there have been also published a number of authoritative books on the works of the American Baptist Mission in North-East India, especially by Dr. Frederick S. Downs. Besides, quite a few books dealing with the works of this Mission in different States of North-East and a number of learned articles on different aspects of this Mission have been also brought out. Despite this emergence of increasing mass of literature on the subject, a fresh-telling of the story of the works and activities of this Mission is felt necessary from the point of view of historical perspective. Therefore, the other object of this work is to present the case from its historical perspective.

A mass of informations contained in the Missionary reports, papers and discussions and correspondences though consulted, have not yet been brought to light for the benefit of the general public. Hence, the other object of this work is to provide sufficient details for the understanding of the historical forces that were at work that led to the making of the people of North-East India as they are today.

Originally planned to cover two volumes, the present volume deals with the origin of the Baptist Church in Europe, its spread to different parts of the world, its developments in USA, and the coming, establishment and expansion of the American Baptist Church in different parts of North-East India till 1950 when the whole management of the church was handed over to the local Christians. The second volume will deal with the contributions of the Mission in the field of education, literature, medical and other humanitarian works.

The work is based on the original sources, such as the official reports, papers and discussions, letters and correspondences, journals and magazines. A large number of published works have also been consulted. Long years have been spent in collecting materials, consulting people, trying to understand the problem and in drafting. During these long years of patient work, my wife, son and daughter have borne with me all the inconveniences ungrudgingly, for which, I am thankful to them. I also thank Shri K.M. Mittal of Mittal Publications, Delhi, for having brought out this volume in such a short time.

MILTON S. SANGMA

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