

i have decided

"if anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." matt 16:24

and now as paul harvey used to say... the rest of the story. the true story behind the hymn "i have decided to follow Jesus." the song is based on the last words of nok seng, a man from garo tribe of assam. it is today the song of the garo people. it is a christian hymn originating from india. the lyrics are based on the last words of a man in garo, assam.

about 150 years ago, there was a great revival in wales. as a result of this, many missionaries came to northeast india to spread the gospel. the region known as assam was comprised of hundreds of tribes who were primitive and aggressive head-hunters.

into these hostile and aggressive communities, came a group of missionaries from the american baptist missions (those good old bible preaching baptist) spreading the message of love, peace and hope in Jesus Christ. naturally, they were not welcomed. one missionary succeeded in converting a man, his wife, and two children. this man's faith proved contagious and many villagers began to accept christianity.

angry, the village chief summoned all the villagers. he then called the family who had first converted to renounce their faith in public or face execution. moved by the Holy Spirit, the man instantly composed a song which became famous down the years. he sang: "i

have decided to follow Jesus. i have decided to follow Jesus. i have decided to follow Jesus. no turning back, no turning back."

enraged at the refusal of the man, the chief ordered his archers to arrow down the two children. as both boys lay twitching on the floor, the chief asked, "will you deny your faith? you have lost both your children. you will lose your wife too."

but the man sang these words in reply: "though no one joins me, still i will follow. though no one joins me, still i will follow. though no one joins me, still i will follow. no turning back, no turning back."

the chief was beside himself with fury and ordered his wife to be arrowed down. in a moment she joined her two children in death. now he asked for the last time, "i will give you one more opportunity to deny your faith and live." in the face of death the man sang the final memorable lines: "the cross before me, the world behind me. the cross before me, the world behind me. the cross before me, the world behind me. no turning back, no turning back."

he was shot dead like the rest of his family. but with their deaths, a miracle took place. the chief who had ordered the killings was moved by the faith of the man. he wondered, "why should this man, his wife and two children die for a Man who lived in a far-away land on another continent some 2,000 years ago? there must be some remarkable power behind the family's faith, and i too want to taste that faith."

in a spontaneous confession of faith, he declared, “i too belong to Jesus Christ!” when the crowd heard this from the mouth of their chief, the whole village accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior.

believers in india are often shunned, unjustly arrested, attacked—even killed—because they choose to follow Jesus and not hinduism or the local religion. our indian family needs the prayers of the global church to stand strong in the midst of persecution – and to remain a light for Christ in the world’s second-most populated country.

have you made a decision yet and are you willing to follow no matter what? no turning back! no turning back!