



METHODS AND STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN CONVERTING THE INDIGENEOUS MARA TRIBE INTO CHRISTIANITY

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Abstract: This study has been undertaken to investigate the strategies and methods adopted by the British Christian Missionaries in converting the Mara into Christianity. Qualitative method of study was employed to study the strategies and methods adopted by Christian missionaries in converting the indigenous and unknown Mara tribe that inhabited the Southern part of Mizoram, India. The Mara Tribe was so primitive that head-hunting was practiced at the time of arrival of Christian missionaries to their land. This study will reveal the major strategies practiced by the Christian missionaries to win the indigenous and primitive head-hunting Mara tribe to a God-fearing Mara tribe.

Index Terms - Mara, Christian, Missionaries.

I. INTRODUCTION

The word 'Mara' is a proper name of the Mara tribe, and is hardly known as to various writers. The Maras are popularly known as 'Lakher' in various historical publications of the Tibeto-Burman family as they belong to mongoloid race (Fachhai, 1994, p. 1). In the word of Reginald Arthur Lorrain, "There was no likeness between these people and their neighbours, the Lushais, they were quite different nation, much darker, and their manners and customs were quite different nation (Lorrain, RA, 1912, p. 11)." They are the people with distinctive ethnicity, language, custom, culture and traditions, who had commonly inherited history as their legacies (Lewin, 1870, p. 281). There is clear doubt that this ethnic group migrated to Burma from China about the fourteenth century. They settled in the Chin Hills of Burma after travelling there in search of good land along with other nearby tribes from North-East India (Fachhai, 1994, p. 1).

The Lakher or the Mara is one of the hill tribes who are living in the North-Eastern corner of India. Based on their socio-linguistic, rich cultural heritage, economic and political independence, they were classified as a distinctive people and different from the neighboring Tribes (Lewin, 1870, p. 190). They were non-literate and simple living people. The Mara people believed and practiced animism and they believed to have two spirits- of good and evil. They believed in the existence of spirits in nature such as rocks, trees, mountains, rivers and so on, which could cause many undesirables diseases, even causing death. They occasionally worshipped these spirits and sacrificed their domestic animals to propitiate them Lorrain, 1920, p. 7). They also believed in the good and highest god called *Khazohpa* who was believed to be above all gods. They were not touched by any other organised religion before the advent of Christianity. They lived in isolation for centuries and never came into contact with the outside world as outside exposure and influence was very less. Their traditional world-view in their pre-Christian life was highly associated with their cultural and social life as well as highly connected with taboos and superstitions.

On September 26, 1907, when the lovely feet of the Pioneer Missionaries, namely the Reverend and Mrs. Reginald Arthur Lorrain of London, touched its soil and settled at "Saikao" to spread Christianity among the Mara, the message of eternal life was delivered for the first time to the lost world of Maraland. Within half a century, Christianity gained a significant growth and almost the whole Mara population became Christian (Hminga, 1987, p. 225). Before they came to Mizoram for missionary, Lorrain founded a Mission Society known as "Lakher Pioneer Mission" in order to reach the people of Maraland in London on 11th February 1905. With his hard work and devoted, Lorrain established the Evangelical Church of Maraland (ECM), in the southern part of Mizoram and its headquarters is in Siaha.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study primarily used Descriptive method of study. The study was conducted by gathering primary and secondary source. This includes collection of information from Books, Articles, Reports and minutes of Church Assembly, and unpublished thesis were collected for the study. These are collected from March 2018 to September 2018.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Rev. Reginald Arthur Lorrain and his wife Mrs. Maud Louise Ulander Lorrain were the first missionaries to Maraland. The Lorrains arrived in Maraland in 1907, only for the purpose of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ amongst the Mara. As a result of Christianity, education and the process of modernization, things began to change in every aspect of life of the Mara. The Mara Church is one of the three leading Churches in Mizoram and one of the many Churches in the North Eastern India as well as the whole of India founded by the foreign missionary societies. The Church is a democratic, centralized, congregational Church. The Church is purely self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting from its foundation in 1907 although the pioneer missionaries used to receive financial helps from friends and relatives in the initial stages from abroad.

The Christian Missionaries to Maraland had a significant influence on how the Mara tribe lived. The Mission School was established on August 24, 1908, and the Mara language was written down as soon as the Mission Station in Saikao Village was established. Since the spread of Christianity, the Mara people have been transformed by a new system of Christian faith and work in an effort to live more standardized lives. It should be mentioned that Christianity not only had a crucial role in the establishment of the Mara identity and solidarity, but it also helped the members of that tribe form strong bonds with non-Mara people.. F.S Downs has observed that Christianity, apart from affecting changes in the life of the people, helped them to adjust with the new development (Downs, 1994, p. 187). The Christian missionaries were responsible for the majority of the changes to Mara society as a whole, including their worldview, religious beliefs, social, economic, and political life, once the British arrived in this region. In turn, the response to Christianity led to a reconstruction of the spiritual and socio-cultural milieu as well as new strategies for resolving inter-cultural conflict. It is impossible to distinguish between social, religious, cultural, and political elements in tribal communities since they are communitarian and integrative, like the Mara. If one aspect of their society is affected, everything is affected (Downs, 1994, p. 24). Thus, one of the most valuable changes brought in by Christianity in the life of the Mara was in their belief system. This change was important because it transformed their outlook, idea, perception and understanding of things, in short, their whole life. Christianity played a vital role to free them from many of the traditional superstitious beliefs and practices as well as from the sense of oppression and suppression of the demons. F.S. Downs (1983, p. 217) rightly put it this way, "At its best, Christianity has liberated the people from a worldview in which they were socially and psychologically enslaved by the fear of the spirits. The burden of cultural practices of the society paved the way for the Gospel in its full swing. With a view to lead the Mara to Christianity, the Missionaries introduced new education system in the school and the main teaching method was based on Christian education. R.A. Lorrain (1912, p. 260) rightly put it this way, "The work of school is the backbone of the Mission. In it we have our hope of reaching every tribe throughout the Mara area. Through it we have the hope of winning numbers of soul for Christ..." Thus, the Mara people's embrace of a new way of life has been encouraged by the implementation of a new system at the school. The Mission owes the Mara tribe a debt of gratitude for providing them with an education out of a selfless and unceasing love. The Mara are one of the more literate tribes in Lushai Hills and in the world as a whole due to the missionaries work in creating the foundation for education (Sanga, 2016, p. 74). In particular, they introduced Christianity and education, which opened the door for more developments. There was a massive conversion to Christianity as a result of the spread of Christianity and the founding of the first Mara Christian church in Saikao village and the nearby communities. The entire population has been converted to Christianity by 1959's end (Beicho,

2014, p. 151). The Mara community has undergone numerous changes as a result of the embrace of Christianity and the establishment of a new political administrative system.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The strategies and methods adopted by the missionaries obtained from the study are discussed below.

1. Translation and Literature Work Method

The first work done by the Lakher Pioneer Mission missionaries was the introduction of Mara literature and reducing the Mara language into a written language. R. A. Lorrain knew very well from the beginning that the first requisite for evangelism was the availability of the Bible and making the natives able to read the Bible and other Christian writings in their own language, so that all believers and non-believers could read and study the Bible themselves (Sanga, 2016, p. 65). After day and night of hard labour, he completed the New-Testament in 1927 (Zakonia, 2011, p. 206).

For his inter-cultural evangelism, R.A. Lorrain quickly learnt the Mara people's vernacular tongue. After learning the language, the missionary couple began to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the Mara by any means necessary.

In order to spread the Good News to the people, he introduced the first printing press to Maraland and produced numerous pamphlets and booklets beginning in 1908 (Hlychho, 2009, p. 245). According to R.A. Lorrain (1912, p. 212) once more, "Thus, I set myself the task of compiling a suitable Primer to reach the needs of these tribesmen in order that they might learn to read and write in their own language...has been one of the greatest aids in introducing the Lakher tribesmen to the mysteries of reading and writing." He further made a translation of 32 hymns in 1912, resulting in the creation of a hymn book with 70 hymns and a catechism book in the Lakher language. In 1910, he also completed the book, the English-Mara Dictionary and Grammar of the Lakher language, the Pilgrim's Progress (Mara version) and some Bible Commentaries. The Mara natives like Mr. Saro Nohro, Evangelist A Nyusa, and HC. Hrachho assisted the missionaries in the translation of the New Testament (Beithie, 1997, p. 6, 7). From 1938, the Rev. Albert Bruce Lorrain Foxall also started to help R.A. Lorrain. Unfortunately, R.A. Lorrain passed away on February 1st, 1944, before he could finish the translation. However, before he did, he gave the Rev. A. B. Lorrain Foxall control of the Church and gave him permission to take on the Bible translation seriously. The complete Bible was translated into Mara in 1951 thanks to the efforts of the Rev. A. B. Lorrain Foxall and others (Hlychho, 1972, p. 253).

After a painstaking hard work for forty nine years, the whole Mara Bible was released on the 25th February, 1973 at Siaha Vaihpi Local Church (Beithie, 1997, p. 8). The missionaries also already started the first Church Journal called *Krizyhpva Chiamie* back in 1926 (Fachhai, 1994, p. 25). One incident that happened to the Rev. A.B. Lorrain Foxall while he was translating the Bible into Mara that is important to remember. Rev. A. B. Lorrain Foxall fought Satan in a physical battle through the windows, but the devil was ultimately defeated by the mighty power of God. The demon twice interfered with the translating process. After the demon withdrew from him, Rev. A.B. Lorrain Foxall became exhausted and briefly lost consciousness.

Due to R.A. Lorrain's enormous contributions in the field of Bible and Hymnal which were made in part as a result of his tremendous achievements for the Mara, the Mara were able to keep their separate character and identity among numerous tribes in India and the rest of the world.

2. Educational Method

Education has always been an important and perhaps the main effective method and instrument to strengthen mission's work. Knowingly this, R.A. Lorrain (1912, p. 260) described the importance of education in his mission strategy to evangelize Maraland and its people as he writes, "The work of School is the backbone of the Mission. In it, we have our hope of reaching every tribe throughout the Lakher country. Through it we have the hope of winning numbers of soul for Christ..."

If there were no education, the identity of the Mara might not be seen today. Education and mission are related to each other in spreading the Gospel of Christ. The mission's and evangelism's main support system is education (Beicho, 2014, p. 125, 126). It serves as the foundation for human growth as well as for human minds and inquiry. In the outside world, using education as a mission instrument has been effective. John R. Mott (1904, p. 26, 27) says, "The method of educational mission has been demonstrated to be one of the most effective agencies in spreading Christian truth and in establishing and extending the reign of Christ." Konrad (1967, p. 205) is right when he says, "From the beginning of Christian Church, education and mission have been related." Moreover, education as a method of mission or strategy for mission has become a successful medium in reaching others for Christ. Hence, it may be

observed that the motive of the Mission method then was educating the natives for the purpose of evangelizing the land with Gospel as well as the native school boys would be able to read and write the Scriptures (Beicho, 2014, p. 126).

2. 1. Mission School

Education has always been an important instrument to strengthen and widening one's horizon in mission's work. Since the inception of the missionaries in Maraland, they gave much importance to Mission School. By adopting the Roman Script, they reduced into Mara language on 16th March, 1908.

On August 24, 1908, R.A. Lorrain (1912, p. 235) started the Mission School in Saikao village with two pupils. Six pupils were enrolled at the beginning of the year, followed by eleven by the conclusion. The Mission School was a precious factor for evangelization. Many students at the school converted to Christianity, and those converts joyfully shared their conversion experiences with their families and communities, resulting in a significant number of conversions (Fachhai, 1994, p. 25). The growing number of students each year made R.A. Lorrain happy and excited. The simple native students were instructed in reading and writing in their native tongue. More than 200 (two hundred) locals had acquired literacy by 1920 (ECM Newsletter, 1934).

Lt. Colonel, G.H. Loch, a British Army Officer was sent to inspect the school on 18th April, 1911, and he visited the Mission School at *Tlosai* village, run by R.A. Lorrain and his wife and gave a wonderful report about the Mara people to the British Government probably in 1922. He was really moved and impressed by the Mission School at *Tlosai* village, and made a noteworthy observation as below:

The handwriting of the Mara students were better than English students back home. The Mara have an excellent natural aptitude gift in singing. Many Mara boys were clean and tidy unlike their neighboring tribes. Mr. *Riatlo* of *Tisopi* village was the first person to be able to read and write. In 1913, fifty persons of the Mara were able to read the New-Testament (Nohro, 2000, p. 19-21).

Normally, missionaries employed students who had completed four years of study and were eligible for teaching positions as Teachers (Hlychho, 2009, p. 253). Therefore, the missionaries' goal was to educate the primitive tribe so that they could evangelize the Mara with the eternal truth of God.

2. 2. Weaving and Tailoring School

In 1917, Mrs. Maud Louise Ulander Lorrain also started the Tailoring School, which focused on serving women. Mara women learned to sew and passed that skill on to others with the aid of friends from London. As she grew older and reached the age of seventeen, Miss. *Tlosai* Lorrain, the Rev, and Mrs. R.A. Lorrain's only child, assisted her mother at this tailoring school (Lorrain, 1992, p. 5). These students were given foreign skirts, clothing, and other gifts in addition to obtaining tailoring education. Many of the girls' classmates were drawn to these skills as a consequence, which helped the tailoring school fill up quickly. The missionaries were able to teach the girls how to sew while also teaching them a few verses from the Bible. In this way, the missionaries helped the Mara women with both physical and spiritual support (Nohro, 2000, p. 26-27).

2. 3. Girl's School

Girls were taught reading and writing in this school till the end of 1947. The girl's school and kindergarten were founded in 1929 by Miss Irene E. Hadley and *Tlosai* Lorrain. R.A. Lorrain and his wife planned a separate school with the purpose of empowering the Mara women since they had a clear vision for them. Miss Lorrain's girl were all those who have been out at the *jhum* farming all the week and to have no opportunity to come up to school in the week, so she spent the first part of her time helping them to read and write, and ended by teaching Scripture and new hymns and explaining their meanings (Lorrain, 1920, p. 3).

2.4. Sunday School

The primary teaching methods used in this Sunday school were learning the Mara alphabets, singing new songs, and teaching English choruses that would be very attractive to young people. Accordingly, the Lakher Pioneer Mission's Annual Report for Further India said that the overall number of Sunday school attendees in all of Maraland in 1930 was a respectable 2144 male students and 1326 female students (Lorrain, 1920. p. 3f). This Sunday school was also conducted for older people who could not come to Mission School. They were taught Bible stories and how to read and write by the missionaries (Beicho, 2014, p. 130).

3. Musical Work Method

Media including movies, photos, dramas, and gospel hymns had a significant role in spreading the gospel among the Mara people. Gospel songs from Sankey's Sacred Songs, Solos and Redemption Songs were translated into Mara and they were effective means in leading people to Christ. The missionaries used biblical and secular films, pictures, and dramas from Bible stories to attract the people (Hlychho, 1972, p. 257-258). Film ministry began as early as 1908 when the Mission School started to function. Day time was for the students to study, Mara alphabets and Mara language and a short Chorus singing etc. However, night time was meant for the whole village. The Missionaries were aware of the curiosity of the Mara and used it as a great opportunity to attract them to the Gospel, and almost every night, a slide or film was shown (Hlychho, 2009, p. 250).

R.A. Lorrain had in mind that, hymns are a very effective way of preaching the Gospel and its faith towards the natives. In 1910, R.A. Lorain was able to compile a book of 37 hymns (Sanga, 2016, p. 79-91).

4. Healing and Medical Work Method

Despite his limited knowledge of only a year's course of medical study in Livingston Medical College, London, R.A. Lorrain gained Mara's trust as well as the hearts of many people into Christian folk through his healing and medical work methods (Sanga, 2016, p. 75). The healing and Medical Work Method was also applied by the Maraland Missionaries in the Maraland, just as the Salvatorians of the North-East had done (Joseph and Thekkedathu, 1984, p. 54). An essential component of missionary work and a successful strategy is the practice of healing ministry. It is crucial for evangelization campaigns among the populace. The missionaries knew that Medicare might get the message out to people to whom it was impossible to share the Gospel. This was not only to help the needy and the distressed physically, but also out of a desire to create an opportunity to present the Gospel and lead people to Christ. To clarify this argument, George M. Foster (1973, p. 147) said, "Nineteenth and twentieth century, missionaries who established hospitals and schools saw these institutions as aids in saving souls for Christianity." Through restoration of their health, the super-naturalistic traditional worldview and belief systems of the Mara were destroyed and it restored their broken relationship physically and spiritually with creation and the creator (Hlychho, 2009, p. 246). Xaxa has rightly observed that equally significant in their contribution of the missionaries in the North East India is the medical facilities extended by the Christian missions through Health Centers such as 'Hospitals and Dispensaries (Xaxa, 1991, p. 1)'. Medical aid offers many chances to the missionary to speak about God and answer doubts and questions on religious matters. This in turn leads people to Christ. And this selfless way of exercising Christian charity did not failed to have its effects (Beicho, 2014, p. 120).

Despite the fact that Maraland lacked doctors or physicians, R.A. Lorrain was prescribing, administering, and providing for the medical requirements of the Mara. All the medications required to be distributed for the missionaries' healing ministry, as well as the medications, check-ups, were kindly donated by Mr. Calow of London. R.A. Lorrain and his wife also took full advantage of all the available medical aids in Maraland (Hlychho, 2009, p. 246). At Missionary Bungalow, the missionaries used to make free medications available to the public every evening at 4:00 PM. In 1963 alone, 4739 people received free medications, according to Rev. A. B. Lorrain Foxall's reports (Nohro, 2000, p. 30-31). One of the remarkable things that happened during the medical ministry is the miraculous healing that happened to the sick people. R.A. Lorrain and his wife, along with the Rev. A.B. Lorrain Foxall and his wife, used to lead prayer services for the sick every evening during the distribution of free medications and free medical care. These services affected and physically cured the ailing people (Hlychho, 2009, p. 246-257). It can thus, say that the Missionary did play both the role as a healer of body and a soul.

A British Army officer from the Lushai Hills, Lieut. Col. G.H. Loch, who appreciated the healing and medical work done by R. A. Lorrain, says this about the importance of the Mission's healing and medical work for the evangelization of the region: "The Dispensary in connection with your Mission should prove to be a great factor in its success." Nothing is more valuable to these hill people than medical care. They are without remedies, even of the most simple kinds themselves and a great deal of suffering can be obviated by timely and comparatively simple treatment...From the numbers you now treat (126 cases in January, 1911), I should say that you will find this branch of Mission will rapidly expand (Lorrain, 1912, p. 262).'

5. Method of Evangelism

The Maraland missionaries, R.A. Lorrain and Rev. A.B. Lorrain Foxall were visited every village throughout the land on foot carrying their backpack, remaining three or four days in one place, sometimes even a week or two. They moved on from village to village, preaching and administering the sacraments, encouraging the Christians, dealing with their problem and spreading the Gospel in every village (Mokia, 1981, p. 13).

In Christianity, evangelism is the act of preaching the Gospel with the intention of sharing the message and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Within the last 150 years or so, the Church's thinking has become increasingly concerned with how the phrases "evangelism" and "evangelization" are used. This can be compared to the widespread usage of memorable rallying cries, which started with "The evangelizing of the globe in this generation" (Yates, 1994, p. 12-13). 'In every missionary society and churches' ministry, evangelism is the ultimate goal as it was the method that our Lord Jesus Christ also applied during His earthly period even the early Christians and missionaries also used to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ through this method. The Maraland missionaries used open air or direct preaching in the streets or house visits when they arrived in Maraland. Give up all your drinking, *Sahma* (Rice-beer), performing useless sacrifices, etc. but believe in Jesus and you will go to heaven, the Maraland missionaries would typically stand in the streets and at doors and proclaim (Nohro, 2000, 16-17).

At the playground in front of Mr. Thylai Hlychho, the Chief of Tlosai, R.A. Lorrain gave his first preaching in public. October 1908, the thirteenth month after his arrival in Maraland, was the month in which he preached. A lavish feast was served in honor of the royal guest, the chief of Siaha, to the chief of Tlosai, Mr. Thylai Hlychho. R.A. Lorrain was also invited and came to observe certain things. As the feast proceeded, the Siaha *Beino* (the wife of Siaha chief) asked R.A. Lorrain if he had come to tell the good news to the Mara, why didn't he try it with them right there? As soon as he was requested, R.A. Lorrain immediately stood up and declared the wonderful, sweetest, enlightenment word for the Mara in Mara language, "*Marahpa sawzy Thyu ula khaih the u, Nama khaihna cha a vaw tlo haw,*" which means "Arise and Shine the Maras, Your light has come (Mokia, 1981, p. 19)." At least two hundred men and women were gathered at this time, and they were wondering by hearing such words, and very surprised in hearing that a white man could speak that language (Fachhai, 1994, p. 5).

6. Power Encounters Method

Working on missions is not an easy task. There is always a force working against the mission work. Kraft says, "The term 'Power encounter' comes from missionary Anthropologist Alan Tippett (Kraft, 1991, p. 408)." Tippett (1971, p. 6) observed that most of the world's peoples are power-oriented and respond to Christ readily through power demonstrations. Early on in Maraland, power struggles between Christians and followers of traditional religion were widespread. This was done in order to confront Satan's powers and show them the visible power of God in their animistic context (Rheenen, 1991, p. 62). The Mara were afraid of demonic beings, holy items, and objects of an abnormal size. However, the missionaries' proof of Gods' power over evil spirits turned upside down their entire worldview and lead them to Christ (Hlychho, 2009, p. 248). The Rev. A. B. Lorrain Foxall himself fought a demon in his own room while translating the Bible into Mara language. During his translation of the Bible, Rev. A. B. Lorrain Foxall met physically with a devil at midnight; he dropped his pen and was on the point of going mad. In the life of Rev. A. B. Lorrain Foxall, this was the dreadful manifestation of the devil in physical form. The demon was expelled, but the job of translation did not cease as a result of his inner reflections and prayers (Mokia, 1988, p. 21). Evangelists should not hesitate to pray and believe for the demonstration of Christ's supernatural power over disease (Athyal, 1982, p. 54). The Apostle Paul was a successful missionary. The secret of his success was his deep conviction of his call, complete surrender to the will of God, complete dependence on the Holy Spirit, and delivered demon possessed people and healed the sick with God's power. The Maraland missionaries were frequently observed crossing over the lines set by taboos and evil spirits. The missionaries experienced no harm from these evil spirits or demons since the power of God is greater than the force of their forbidden and evil activities (Hlychho, 2009, p. 248). Once R.A. Lorrain drank poisoned water which was, unknowingly served to him but nothing happened to him. After realizing the mistake and further seeing the uninfected missionaries, a Mara couple became Christians as they believed that the power of the Gospel is greater than that of the power of the spirits whom they used to appease (Mokia, 1981, p. 21). By seeing this, the Mara were attracted and curious to know more about the powerful God and their willingness to give up their old life style and fears of demons were soon taken over by the love of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Many were drawn to Christ only after their fears of evil spirits were driven away when the missionaries through the power of Jesus Christ controlled evil powers and forbidden things (Hlychho, 2009, p. 249).

7. Mission Bungalow Approach

The goal in a typical modern colony called Bungalow or Compound, missionaries constructed homes for themselves, including offices, houses, a school, a church, and other structures for a hospital and an orphanage (McGavran, 1955, p. 45, 46). It became a shelter for the new converts from persecution and for basic Bible Studies (Federick and Margaret, 1975, p. 22). When the missionaries reached to Maraland, they bought a plot of land for a mission station and started building homes for Christians and the locals inside the mission compound, along with churches, administrative buildings, post offices, schools, and medical offices. *Mission Vaih* (Mission Colony) is the name given to this place till today (Hlychho, 2009, p. 249). The entire village of Mizoram flocked to Missionary Bungalow lots of times for safety during the civil war. Additionally, the missionaries gave very clear instructions to the people that they should inform the missionaries and visit Mission Bungalow if something had happened to them. The missionaries waited the people to know the Mission Bungalow as a place of safety and peace, a place of the presence of God, in which God cares for everyone through missionaries (Hlychho, 2009, p. 249).

8. Missionary's Church Polity

R.A. Lorrain was the first introducer of the Biblical principle of the three Self's: self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating since 1925. According to Melvin L. Hodges (1953, p. 17) in his book, *On the Mission Field* said, "The establishment of native Churches is the goal of missionary work. The Mara missionaries who used native practices at the start of the nineteenth century would have approved of it more. Since the start of the Mission, the Mara missionaries have instructed the locals to practice the 'Three Self's' in order to disseminate the good news (Hlychho, 2009, p. 279).

The Polity set up of the Church is a democratic, centralized and Congregational Church, lay leadership, including preaching, teaching, administration and finance, is highly emphasized and encouraged (Fachhai, 1994, p. 31). The Church has always been a self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating organization, following in the footsteps of missionaries. Foreign aid or any other form of financial support is never received; instead, the regular source of income is the contributions of its members, whether in cash or in kind. For its purpose, it made decisions on its own (Mokia, 1981, p. 94), but now is willing to received financial assistance only for big projects like Hospital, Office building, Theological college and natural calamities as and when needed.

9. Raising Local Resources

The ECM Mission is a financially self-supporting as mentioned earlier and a sending missionary society, Local contributions from different local churches, fellowships and groups, and individuals of the ECM are the main sources of the Mission fund (Fachhai, 1994, p. 50). The ECM uses all the available resources and methods for raising needed Mission funds with the aim of exceeding their respective targeted amounts.

The Church of Christ has made a commitment to become a witnessing church because it has been called to do so. To fulfill the mission of her founder, Jesus Christ, the Church of Christ must all engage in missionary activity because God wants to use his people to reach out to those who he has called to be his people. To do this, every Christian is a part of an evangelistic force. One needs to go forth into the mission field, not necessarily in person, but with his prayer, gifts, and spiritual resources. But because people are God's method of spreading his Kingdom, missionary work is not just something that happens; it must be done in order for it to happen. The goal is to accomplish goals rather than to be in the business of doing. One needs approaches, ideas, and tactics that are prayerful and Biblically based if they are to accomplish anything (Hlychho, 2009, p. 291).

9. 1. Tithing System

This is a regular practice of the committed Maraland Christians. Two tenths of their income is set aside for Christ and His Mission. Half of it goes to the General Establishment of the Church while the other half goes to the Mission Fund (Fachhai, 1994, p. 51). The tithing system instills discipline and transparency both on the part of the collectors and the donors. It helps church members in contributing towards God's ministry regularly and systematically (Hlychho, 2009, p. 295).

9. 2. Envelope system

Missionary envelopes are distributed to the members of the Church from time to time and are collected for the Mission Fund (Fachhai, 1994, p. 51f). This method of raising fund earns more stable sources of income for missions.

9. 3. Individual Target System

In some Local Churches, the total Local Mission Board Budget is divided and targeted accordingly to each individual member of the local church, and is collected from time to time (Fachhai, 1994, p. 51). This fund is meant especially for the support of missionaries. This is a designated fund.

9. 4. Firewood for Mission

The system of collecting firewood is another method of raising money for missions. Selling firewood to raise money for missionaries is a highly widespread practice, especially in rural churches, as firewood is utilized for cooking in the majority of Maraland. A village has a location to assemble firewood at the local church. This is normally at the gate of the village. Therefore, firewood is sold monthly or bi-monthly and the sale proceeds go to missions (Fachhai, 1994, p. 52). In this way, even a stick of firewood can become a support for a missionary.

9. 5. Hosting of Missionaries or Hosting of an Unseen Quest

To raise money for missionaries, one additional strategy is to pretend that they are temporarily hosting a missionary from the mission field. Each host or hostess receives a missionary. There is enough money saved up to cover the missionary's travel expenses, including meals and lodging along the trip. Missionary support is provided with the money that has been gathered or set aside. This works really well (Sangvela, 1988, p. 33). Some practice the uncooked rice of one person's share at every meal is set aside for Missionary support. Through this way, a family is easily able to contribute for missionary support every day. The day is spent in prayer for the Mission (Beicho, 2014, p. 135).

9. 6. A Handful of Rice for Mission

Storing a small amount of rice is another method the Mara Church has employed to further the spread of God's kingdom. A handful of rice was divided between the family members when the mothers of the home made breakfast and dinner. Members of the Christian Women's Fellowship then went from house to house on Sundays to collect the separated rice. The sale proceeds, which typically generate a great deal of cash, are donated to the church for the mission fund (Fachhai, 1994, p. 53). This mission strategy helps and supports the church in her ministry of the mission.

9. 7. Rearing pigs and chicks

Piglets and chicks are purchased with missionary funds, given to specific families to raise, and then sold for the mission fund when they are old enough. The majority of families have their own small poultry in most villages. Therefore, raising hens for mission work is common in rural churches. Typically, women are in charge of caring for the chickens and donating the proceeds to the missionary fund. One way of raising support is to earn-mark a chicken as soon as it is hatch. It is reared and sold, the sale proceeds go to the missionary fund (Hlychho, 2009, p. 293).

9. 8. Missionary Funds

God uses men and women as well as resources in the missionary service to accomplish his goals. As a result, money, which stands for material, is essential to missionary work. Even if it's true that money cannot buy a soul, a mission cannot be completed without it. Therefore, there must be carefully thought out means of raising money. Generally speaking, every level of the church must have a mission fund committee. All levels of the local church mission board should have goals specified by the general mission board. The local mission board can then choose the appropriate aim for each person or family (Hlychho, 2009, p. 292). Here are some strategies for mission funding experiences that the Maraland missionaries had from the inception and later the church used to raise money for missions.

9.9. Missionary Labor Contribution

To serve for the Lord in His missionary ministry, the Maraland Christians set aside one to three specific days or more. While some local churches operate in fellowships or groups, others operate alone (Fachhai, 1994, p. 53). Every talented church member is required to contribute one to three or more day's labor in his own occupation.

9. 10. Missionary House Rent

The Local Mission Board or Fellowship Branches or Groups build a house and its rent goes to the Mission Fund. The rent of the donated-for-missionary work houses, too, goes to the same (Fachhai, 1994, p. 56).

9. 11. Tea Stall

Under the supervision of the Local Mission Board or a Fellowship branch or a group, a tea stall is run and the church members take their turn in looking after the tea stall its income goes to the Mission Fund (Fachhai, 1994, p. 52). This practice can become supportive of a missionary.

9. 12. Faith Promise

A family or individual makes a commitment to donate a specific sum, which will be paid periodically or by the end of the year. The term Faith Promise is a common and mostly used by the youth and students who do not have regular source of income. Typically, this is started at missionary conventions (Hlychho, 2009, p. 298-299). In his helpful book *The Challenge of Mission*, Oswald J. Smith (1983, p. 61), refers to the Faith Promise Offering as a "Pauline Offering" and says, "God blesses it."

9. 13. Missionary Fete

The Women's Fellowship members in both the town churches and the rural churches in Maraland are particularly fond of this additional method of earning money for the support of missionaries. It is organized occasionally and quite a large amount of money is usually raised for the Mission Fund, (Fachhai, 1994, p. 51) which are found to be very useful towards missionary support.

9. 14. Sponsoring for Missionary

The system of fund raising for missionary is very effective and helpful in the ministry of God today. An individual group, fellowship or Local Church sponsor a particular missionary of the partner mission through the church mission headquarters, and they contribute monthly salary and other gifts for particular missionary. Till today, almost all the partner missionaries are being supported by individuals, groups and local churches through this means of sponsorship which has impacts in the life of God's mission (Hlychho, 2009, p. 300). This is one of the most important assets for the Missionary as well as the Church for widening their horizon in serving the Lord. This method of sponsoring for Missionary earns more lasting source of income for the Missions.

9. 15. Missionary Ark

The mission board of every local church maintained saving box for the mission fund and the family members contributed whatever they can for mission fund. Sometimes, the members of local churches work in groups and individual and their wages go to the mission fund (Hlychho, 2009, p. 294).

R.A. Lorrain and his fellow Maraland missionaries gave their all to the Lord Jesus Christ in Maraland, using a variety of strategies and approaches to win the Mara to Christ. In 1969, there was yet another huge revival among the Maraland Christians. This revival was the biggest and most wonderful one Maraland Church has yet to experience. The Maraland Christians had been instilled with a very powerful vision, dedication, and challenge for lost souls (Fachhai, 1994, p. 37). S. Mokia (1981, p. 41), observed how the Mara had experienced and were blessed by the revival. He said that the Missionary Ark called *Rahzohpa Byh* (Mission Box), a one foot-square wooden box, was carried from village to village throughout the land. It took two years to cover the whole area.

9.16. Missionary Shop

Some local Churches in towns and cities opened a small shops meant for Missionary fund. Church members take turn to work in the shop. Whatever profit they gained out of the sale proceeds goes for missionary support (Hlychho, 2009, p. 296). This is found to be very effective and useful for widening one's horizon in the mission field.

10. The Establishment of the Mara Church

When the Missionaries entered the Saikao village, there seemed to have been very few people. They first met the village Chief named Thylai and further proceeded to upper Saikao and stayed at the government *Basha* (Temporary Bamboo House) for nearly four years (Lorrain 1912, p. 68). Thylai, Chief of Saikao, warmly accepted them into their folk and thus, started their missionary work at Saikao. This marked the victorious journey at a new life for the people of Maraland from darkness to the light of God (Lorrain, 1912, p. 68f).

The first years of the Lorrain's life were spent alone but excitingly learning a new language and seeing and adjusting to a new culture. R.A. Lorrain amazingly reduced the Mara language into writing in 1908 through hard labor using its alphabets adapted from the Roman script. After only a year in Maraland, this was accomplished. In the same year, they established a mission school at Tlosai, and Mr. *Mawkho* and Mr. *Laihnao* (Both from siaha village) were the first students of the school. They also started literacy and Bible translation program in 1908 and began publishing a few scripture portions in Mara (Fachhai, 1994, p. 23). The missionary, R.A. Lorrain, was preaching in public for the first time in Maraland at the playground in front of the house of the chief of *Tlosai*, *Thylai Hlychho*. On the thirteenth month after their arrival, R.A. Lorrain preached, "*Marahpa Chysahzy thyu te u, Nama Khaina cha vaw tlo haw tlo ta*" (Arise the people of the Maras, your Light has come) (Mokia, 1988, p. 13). He preached in Mara language in front of some two hundred men and women. He found some people curious about what he spoke on and how a white man could speak their language (Fachhai, 1994, p. 23).

11. Conclusion

The Missionaries preached the Gospel among the primitive tribe of the Mara through Education, Bible study, catechism, sewing and stitching, medical practices, social reform measures etc. after three years of hard labor in Maraland, Mr. *Thytu Tlapyu*, a mission school boy of 12 years old from Saikao village (Mission Station) was the first convert and a follower of Christ. This occurred through the preaching of R.A. Lorrain on 16th September, 1910 (Mokia, 1981, p. 15). In all of the Mara and Lorrains' history, 1910 was probably the most happy and notable year. 1911 saw the occurrence of the second conversion. By 1920, there were 94 believers, after which time more and more people were added (Fachhai, 1994, p. 24). And in the course of time, by the year 1960 (i.e. after 50 years on the Golden Jubilee on 26th September, 1957) a warlike clan became totally a Christian land. There were 19,026 Mara Christians, of which 10,623 took Baptism, and 3,425 were married according to the Christian marriage and 6,158 children were dedicated (Hlychho, 1972, p. 254). Since then throughout Maraland, every village has a Church building erected. The first Local Church was founded at Lorrain Ville (Saikao) in 1914, consisting of a few members along with the Pioneer Missionaries (Mokia, 1981, p. 15). Thus by the end of 1935, there were 50 churches founded in Maraland (Beicho, 2014, p. 138). Today there are 93 local churches and 2 preaching stations, consisting of 48,136 Mara members. This is according to the latest Church's statistics record given in 2021 (ECM Statistics, 2021). That is what God has shaped during the last hundred years. The Gospel has brought tremendous changes in physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally in the life of the Mara. It can be firmly said that, it was the Christian missionaries who brought the most changes into the Mara society.

R.A. Lorrain and his wife, Mrs. Maud Louise Ulander Lorrain, launched their mission in Maraland by using a wide range of methods and techniques to share the eternal love of God with the Mara tribe. The first work done by the Lakher Pioneer Mission Missionaries were the introduction of Mara literature and reducing the Mara language into a written language with its alphabet derived from the Roman Script. This was done just one year after their arrival in Maraland as they knew very well from the beginning that education was central to their evangelistic method. After the coming of the British to this area, it was the Christian missionaries who brought the most changes in education into the Mara society. The system of education as introduced by the missionaries in Maraland was that of the English Pattern, primarily with a view to making the people read and writes the Scriptures. Education brought new opportunities, new occupation such as teaching, Government jobs and so on. Better education means better source of income which ultimately affects the general standard of living of the educated Mara.

The spread of Christianity and the establishment of the first Mara Church at Siaha village led to a remarkable Mass-conversion to Christianity and its surrounding villages. By the end of 1957, the whole populations of the Maraland have converted into Christianity. As a result, it can be shown that receiving an education and becoming a Christian are the two primary causes of change. The Mara, like other tribal communities, still have a lot of adjusting to do.

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