

Conversions and Transformations: Missiological Approaches to Religious Change

Interpreting Religious Conversions among the Peoples of Myanmar from Missiological Approach

The present study shall examine religious conversions among the different ethnic peoples of Myanmar, in particular. First of all, to do so, we shall trace back to the historical backgrounds of the cultural heritages in the region. Thereby, we shall try to interpret their conversions of religions and the impact of Christian mission particularly in the nineteenth century British colonial era.

The study will investigate the primal beliefs of animistic religious system of the Chin people, in particular, together a bit with Karen and Kachin peoples and thereby provides the context in which missionaries engaged in the vernacular translation of the Christian faith. This analysis will enable scholars to have a more in-depth and nuanced interpretation of how and why people convert to Christianity.

With regard to religious conversion among the Chin people, when the American Protestant missionaries first reached the British Chin Hills by the end of the nineteenth century, there had already been *Pathian* the Supreme Being in the indigenous Chin vernacular. Through the 'translating the message' of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Chin people came to know the Christian God in the name of *Pathian* their native animistic Supreme Being. The present study argues, therefore, that religious conversions usually take place only through primal religious

cognition. People change their religions through their primal religious systems by being transformed from one cognition to another level of religious cognition.