

Guillermin Library  
Liberty University  
Lynchburg, VA 24502

**LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE

**A DISCIPLESHIP MODEL FOR MISSIONARIES  
ESTABLISHING CHURCHES IN THAILAND**

**A Thesis Project Submitted to  
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary  
In Partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree**

**DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

**By**

**Yong Woong Lee**

**Lynchburg, Virginia**

**May 2003**

**LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**THESIS PROJECT APPROVAL SHEET**

---

**GRADE**

---

**MENTOR**

---

**READER**

## ABSTRACT

A DISCIPLESHIP MODEL FOR MISSIONARIES ESTABLISHING CHURCHES IN THAILAND

Yong Woong Lee

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003

Mentor: Dr. Frank Schmitt

This project focuses on using a discipleship program for new church plants in Thailand. This is one way to help accomplish world evangelization. This author's experience in Thailand has been under the ministry of Global Partners (GP) and his ministry includes both church planting and campus ministry.

The author develops an indigenous discipleship model for missionaries and the Thai church leaders to use based on the surveys and interviews. A successful mission program depends on training faithful and powerful native leaders.

Discipleship Training through effective and Biblical methods is the best way to shift the Thai Christian's paradigm which is so strongly affected by Buddhism. Discipleship programs from Western countries should be contextualized to the Thai situation, without losing the focus of a changed life. Nurturing and evangelization should go side by side.

Abstract length: 133 words

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
<b>1. INTRODUCTION . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Statement of the Project . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Statement of Scope and Limitation . . . . .</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Biblical and Theological Basis . . . . .</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Statement of Methodology . . . . .</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Summary of Literature Review . . . . .</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2. HISTORICAL FOUNDATION FOR A DISCIPLESHIP MODEL</b>	
<b>IN THAILAND . . . . .</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Historical Factors . . . . .</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Political Factors. . . . .</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Socio Economic Factors . . . . .</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Religious-Cultural Factors . . . . .</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Educational Factors . . . . .</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>3. HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN THAILAND . . . . .</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Catholic Missions in Thailand . . . . .</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Protestant Missions in Thailand . . . . .</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Global Partners Mission . . . . .</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>4. THE FOUNDATION OF DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY . . . . .</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Biblical Foundation . . . . .</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>The Biblical Purpose of Being a Disciple . . . . .</b>	<b>48</b>

The Requirements for a Disciple .....	51
The Biblical Definition of the Church .....	54
The Biblical Purpose of the Church .....	57
<b>5. MISSIONARY WORK AND CHURCH PLANTING .....</b>	<b>63</b>
Issues in Church Planting by Missionary .....	63
A Church Planting Model by Missionaries .....	66
Leadership .....	79
<b>6. A DISCIPLESHIP MODEL FOR THAI CHURCHES .....</b>	<b>89</b>
Surveys with Thai Church Leaders .....	89
Interviews with Thai Church Leaders .....	92
Ministry of Sahakorn Church and Leadership Training .....	100
Discipleship Training Model .....	102
<b>7. CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>127</b>

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROJECT

World evangelization is the responsibility of all those who believe in Jesus Christ. Evangelical groups are making an effort to deliver the gospel to unbelievers by planting churches, using radio, television, and internet; distributing Bibles; and through many other means.

This project, "A Discipleship Model for Missionaries Establishing Churches in Thailand," focuses on using a discipleship program for new church plants in Thailand. This is one way to help accomplish world evangelization. This author's experience in Thailand has been under the ministry of Global Partners (GP) and his ministry includes both church planting and campus ministry.

Thailand, officially the Kingdom of Thailand, formerly Siam, is a country situated in the west of the Indochina Peninsula of Southeast Asia, covering an area of 209,411 square miles. The capital is Bangkok. Thailand extends about 930 miles from north to south, and about 500 miles from east to west. It is bordered on the northwest by Myanmar, on the northeast by Laos, on the southeast by Kampuchea (Cambodia) and the gulf of Thailand, on the south by Malaysia, and on the southwest by the Andaman Sea.

Thailand's geographical location is very important for reaching with the gospel the neighboring countries and Southeast Asia. The population in 1985 was 50,548,000.

Now Thailand has 60 million people in a country as big as the state of Texas. Although Thailand has a mission history from 1828, the number of Christians and churches are small. Less than 1% of the population in Thailand is Christian (including Catholic). Buddhists make up 95% and Muslims, 4%. Strong Buddhism is the main factor that has hindered evangelism. But missionaries and native church leaders' neglect for church planting has also limited evangelism. Nominal Christians who are not trained are burdens to evangelization. Christianity has brought education, medical sciences, physical sciences, and technology to Thailand. The Thai people admired technology and wanted very much to learn from the missionaries, but they responded negatively to the gospel in a quiet way inside their hearts.

The Thailand mission is passing through a transition period. Industrialization, urbanization and the development of the Information and Technology industry are impacting the Thai's view of value. The Thai government is restricting the number of foreign missionaries. The revival of Islam and Christianity will not be welcomed by the Buddhist. Sooner or later Christian missionaries will be banned in working as missionaries. Before facing that time, it is necessary to make committed disciples in the Thai churches.

In this project, the author will develop an indigenous discipleship model for missionaries and the Thai church leaders to use. A successful mission program depends on training faithful and powerful native leaders.

Discipleship training through effective and Biblical methods is the best way to shift the Thai Christian's paradigm which is so strongly affected by Buddhism. Korea and Thailand share an Asian culture, which means the two countries have some common

views on culture, history and religion. The background of Buddhism in Korea is very helpful in understanding the Thai people and their culture.

Korea's churches have sent 8,103 overseas missionaries to 162 different countries. This number is second only to American missionaries. The number of Korean missionaries in Thailand is increasing but they are experiencing trials and errors. There are about 200 Korean missionaries in Thailand. These missionaries constitute about 20% of all missionaries in Thailand. One thousand missionaries could be in Thailand, based on the number of missionary visa quotas. Korean missionaries' home churches, most of which are in Korea, are commissioning their missionaries to plant churches. But the problem is in the lack of trained native church leaders who are the key factors in successful church planting. Hong Shik Shin who has been a missionary to Thailand since 1971 said, "The lack of church-planting experience in home churches and improper training for it are being pointed out as the reasons why too few church-planting missionaries have been produced."<sup>1</sup>

It is desirable that Thai Christians recognize the importance of their role in planting and making disciples. Even though there are about one thousand missionaries in Thailand, the churches need to be under Thai leadership. From 1992 to 1999 the number of Thai churches increased by 986. Statistically, the ratio of church growth reached 239%, but the number of people who were converted did not reflect this same ratio. The reason is that Thai Christians were interested in planting churches under the movement of 'Vision 2000,' which targeted having 6,000 churches, 600,000 believers and 60 missionaries sent to other countries. Unfortunately, they did not reach even half of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Hong Shik Shin, Principles of Church Planting as Illustrated in Thai Theravada Buddhist Context. (Bangkok: Kanok Bannasan-OMF Publisher, 1989), 25.



goal. What was the problem? Is it possible for all the Thai people to declare Jesus Christ as their Savior?

Discipleship and building leaders are not easy in the Thai Christian community. Thailand has her own language and unique culture. The native church leaders expect the missionaries to build leaders for the Thai churches. So many missionaries are involved in seminary and the pastor education programs in Thailand. That is why this author feels that this topic; "A Discipleship Model for Missionaries Establishing Churches in Thailand," is a meaningful addition to the Thai mission and literature.

#### STATEMENT OF SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The main focus of this project is the biblical discipleship model in the Thai churches. The author will examine Buddhist society in Thailand historically, politically, socio-economically, psychologically, religiously, and culturally to gain an understanding of the Thai people. The purpose is to establish an ideal discipleship model for missionaries establishing churches. The scope will be limited to the Thai churches and discipleship. The content of this project is from an evangelical point of view.

Korean mission work in Thailand will primarily feature the GP mission. The GP mission is a pioneer Korean mission in Thailand, which started in 1987. This writer is a missionary for GP, and serves the Sahakorn Church and campus ministry. Much information was gathered from these sources. In May 29, 1996, this author arrived in Thailand as a missionary and began a new church in March 1, 1998 in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand. He will use his personal data to establish a valid discipleship model.

Several references, surveys and personal experiences of the writer in establishing a church in Thailand are used in suggesting a discipleship model. Surveys are gathered in the “Good Shepherd Training Conference” which was held in Chonburi, Thailand. Because of the number of respondents (fifty responded) in the sampling group, this survey is limited.

Discipleship Training is the program in a local church with regular training and curriculum which make applications to the learners’ lives.

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS

Jesus’ disciples were faithful in keeping the Great Commission of Matt. 28:19-20 after His ascension. Jesus Christ was an outstanding teacher who trained His disciples without any manual or formal system. We can find substantial principles on what a disciple is and how we can follow Him in Christ's teachings (Matt. 16:24; Lk. 9:23). Jesus said, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed” (Jn. 8:31, NKJV).

Saul's conversion became a great milestone in world missions. The Holy Spirit guided Paul (Saul's Greek name) to be a Gentile missionary for the expansion of God's Kingdom. In spite of many difficulties, he did great things for the Gentile mission through three mission journeys. Paul's concern was for the gospel to spread into every corner of the Gentile world. Doctrinal problems such as circumcision could be overcome successfully by his wise explanations and the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul's teams produced great fruit in church planting.

Paul's successful strategies for world missions are models to all Christian missionaries. His pioneer spirit, team ministry with his co-workers, discipleship training,

urban missions and contextualization became a guide to all church leaders. Even persecution, terror, and imprisonment could not stop his ministry. Paul's mission strategy should be viewed from different angles in order to find an ideal solution for Thailand.

Buddhism dominates the Thai people as their national religion, with 95 percent of the population confessing it as their own faith. Religion in Thailand is totally saturated with Buddhist philosophies, animist practices, and rituals. Thailand's worldview is shaped by shared and mixed religious beliefs and practices. Paul's approach is so important in showing how to be equipped to witness for the Kingdom of God in a Gentile world.

This author, as a missionary to Thailand, experienced many trials and errors during the first term from 1996 until 2001. His ministry focused on church planting and campus ministry in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand. How to harmonize the biblical mission within the Thai context was a burden. Paul worked in the Hellenistic areas, which were under the rule of the Roman Empire and used Greek, their language, in their cultures. This writer's situation was quite different from Paul's. This project will present the biblical principles for missions first, then an application of these principles in the Thai mission field and, finally, suggestions for an effective discipleship model.

The Holy Spirit and the Great Commission are the keys to the Book of Acts. After the Resurrection, the disciples of Christ were taught by the Holy Spirit. They had to wait in Jerusalem for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit (1:5). The Risen Christ gave important instructions about the kingdom; "It is not for you to know the times or seasons" (1:7), and "But you shall receive the power . . . shall be witness to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (1:8).

This command was implemented by Jesus' disciples, not by His followers. The disciples focused on building disciples in their mission field, not building mission boards or buildings. People are more important than organizations. One disciple is far more important than untrained multitudes.

### STATEMENT OF METHODOLOGY

Following this introduction, the second chapter of this project examines the historical, political, socio-economical, psychological, religious and cultural aspects of Thailand. This information is important because of Thailand's unique situation. The country has a history of independence, and a national identity linked tightly to the monarchy and Buddhism.

The third chapter studies mission work in Thailand. Since 1828, Protestant missionaries have been working in Thailand, but less than one percent of the people are Christians. The Catholic and Protestant mission work in Thailand are examined. Their strengths and weaknesses are assessed from the perspectives of Asian cultures. The specific work of GP is also reviewed.

The Biblical foundation of discipleship ministry in the local church will be studied in chapter four. A Biblical definition of discipleship and church will be explained. A variety of materials will be used to present discipleship and its importance in planting churches in a country like Thailand.

The necessities of missionaries, church planting and leadership will be reviewed in chapter five. In this chapter Paul's church planting principles are examined in view of a contemporary missionary perspective.

Finally, in chapter six, this project will develop a model for a discipleship-training program in a Thai context. A questionnaire to churches in Thailand provided statistical data used to determine the present situation and the felt needs. The kinds of Bible study and discipleship training materials utilized by these churches, and their weaknesses and strengths were examined.

### SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Many publications of Thai mission organizations were used to understand the situation of the people and culture. In 2000, the Korean Thailand Missionary Fellowship held a mission conference under the title of “Church Planting Ministry in Thailand by Western Mission Organization.” The representatives of the two organizations, OMF (Overseas Mission Fellowship) and C&MA (Christian & Mission Alliance), were invited to present their experiences. Articles provided at that time were useful in this project. Materials that have been produced by Korean and Western missionaries and native church leaders were used.

Literature on discipleship was utilized. Curriculum used for Bible study and discipleship training was reviewed. John Han Hun Ok’s thesis at Westminster Theological Seminary, “A Discipleship-Making Program for Lay Leadership Development at Sarang Presbyterian Church in Korea,” gave the author many ideas for this project.

## CHAPTER TWO

### HISTORICAL FOUNDATION FOR A DISCIPLESHIP MODEL IN THAILAND

It is necessary to understand the historical foundation including historical, political, socio-economic, religious-cultural and educational factors to develop a discipleship model for the church.

Paul Hiebert wrote:

In communicating the gospel to non-Christians and in discipling young believers, it is important to begin where they are in their cultural and social settings. Too often we know the gospel well, but are insensitive to the fact that all people, including ourselves, live in specific contexts.<sup>1</sup>

#### HISTORICAL FACTORS

Thailand can be divided into four physiographic regions. In the mountainous north is a series of parallel and longitudinal mountain ranges incised by steep valleys. The central plain region, forming the Thai heartland, is the largest region of the country, chiefly consisting of the Chao Phraya River Delta. This fertile and densely populated central plain is the center of the country's agricultural, commercial, and industrial

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hibert Meneses, Incarnational Ministry (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 18.

In the northeast is the Khorat Plateau; its soils are poor and sandy and rainfall is scant. The densely forested southern region, occupying the northern half of the Malay Peninsula, consists of rolling hills to mountainous topography with little flat land. Much of Thailand's mineral wealth (tin) and rubber cultivation are here. She has a subtropical monsoon climate with three distinct seasons: the hot season (March-May), the rainy season (June-October), and the cool season (November-March). Annual average temperatures range between 75<sup>0</sup>F and 86<sup>0</sup>F.<sup>2</sup>

The country has lots of mineral resources such as tin, tungsten, antimony, and iron. The peasants harvest rice twice a year. Thailand is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary government dominated by the military.<sup>3</sup> Thai never experienced colonization even though many Asian countries were colonized by Japan and western countries during World Wars I and II. These factors make the Thai resistant to any social and religious changes. Buddhism dominates the Thai people as their national religion, with 95 percent of the population confessing it as their own faith. The Thai religious field, however, is totally covered with Buddhist philosophies, animist practices, and Buddhist rituals. Thai's world-view is influenced by the shared and mixed religious beliefs and practices.

Little is known of the earliest inhabitants of what is now Thailand, but 5,000-year-old archaeological sites in the northeastern part of the country are believed to contain the oldest evidence of rice cultivation and bronze casting in Asia and, perhaps, in the world. In early historical times, a succession of tribal groups controlled what is now

---

<sup>2</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, 15 th ed., s.v. "Thailand," 668.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Thailand. The Mon and Khmer peoples established powerful kingdoms that included large areas of the country. They absorbed from contact with South Asian peoples religious, social, political, and cultural ideas and institutions that later influenced the development of Thailand's culture and national identity.<sup>4</sup>

The Thai, a people who originally lived in southwestern China, migrated into mainland Southeast Asia over a period of many centuries. The first mention of their existence in the region is a twelfth-century A.D. inscription at the Khmer temple complex of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, which refers to *Siam*, or "dark brown" people (the origin of the term *Siam*) as vassals of the Khmer monarch. In 1238 a Thai chieftain declared his independence from the Khmer and established a kingdom at Sukhothai in the broad valley of the Mae Nam (river) Chao Phraya, at the center of modern Thailand. Sukhothai was succeeded in the fourteenth century by the kingdom of Ayutthaya. The Burmese invaded Ayutthaya and in 1767 destroyed the capital, but two national heroes, Taksin and Chakkri, soon expelled the invaders and reunified the country under the Chakkri Dynasty.<sup>5</sup>

Samuel I. Kim comments that: "The dominant ethnic group in Thailand migrated from the southern part of China. The primitive people who occupied the land before them were Malays, Khmer, Soai, Karen and other minor mountain tribes. The Chinese are the most recent immigrants, coming during the last hundred years."<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Babara Leitch LePoer, editor, Thailand-A Country Study, <book on-line> (Washington D.C.: Federal Division Library of Congress, 1987) available from [www.ask.com/thailand/history](http://www.ask.com/thailand/history).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel I. Kim, The Unfinished Mission in Thailand (East-West Center for Mission Research & Development: Seoul, Korea, 1976), 4.



Over the centuries the Thai national identity evolved around a common language and religion and the institution of the monarchy. Although the inhabitants of Thailand are a mixture of Thai, Mon, Khmer, and other ethnic groups, most speak a language of the Thai family. A Thai language alphabet, based on Indian and Khmer scripts, developed early in the fourteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Thai is the official language even though there are 75 different languages. The Thai people are Thai 80.4%, Chinese 10.5%, Mon-Khmer 3.4%, Tibeto-Burman 1.1%, Meo-Yao 0.2% and others 0.6%.<sup>8</sup> Later in the century a famous monarch, Ramathibodi, made Theravada Buddhism the official religion of his kingdom, and Buddhism continued into the twentieth century as a dominant factor in the nation's social, cultural, and political life. Finally, the monarchy, buttressed ideologically by Hindu and Buddhist mythology, was a focus for popular loyalties for more than seven centuries. In the late twentieth century the monarchy remained central to national unity.<sup>9</sup>

During the nineteenth century, European expansionism, rather than Thailand's traditional enemies, posed the greatest threat to the kingdom's survival. Thailand's success in preserving its independence (it was the only Southeast Asian country to do so) was in part a result of the desire of Britain and France for a stable buffer state separating their dominions in Burma, Malaya, and Indochina. More important, however, was the willingness of Thailand's monarchs, Mongkut (Rama IV, 1851-68) and Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1868-1910), to negotiate openly with the European powers and to adopt European-style reforms that modernized the country and won it sovereign status among

---

<sup>7</sup>LePoer.

<sup>8</sup>Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, Operation World (WEC International: Paternoster Publishing, 2001), 618.

<sup>9</sup>LePoer.

the world's nations. Thailand paid a high price for its independence, however: loss of suzerainty over Cambodia and Laos to France and cession of the northern states of the Malay Peninsula to Britain. By 1910, the area under Thai control was a fraction of what it had been a century earlier.<sup>10</sup>

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Thailand's political system, armed forces, schools, and economy underwent drastic changes. Bangkok, the capital city, preserves the traditional temples, architectures, and idols, although the city is equipped with high office buildings and apartments crowded with 10 million people. That means Thailand is trying to keep old things that represent her own culture. She did not like war or collision, but instead chose tolerance and negotiation. These characteristics helped to save Thailand from Western imperialism, but made it difficult for both Roman Catholics and Protestants to be effective in evangelism.<sup>11</sup>

### POLITICAL FACTORS

Thailand is comparatively stabilized both politically and economically among the countries in the region. It is said that the Thais can maintain political stability simply because of the Thai people's indifference and disinterest toward politics, particularly the peasants who made up 54 percent, in 1996, of the entire population. In recent years, however, modern education and mass-communication certainly have accelerated the people's political concern for their country.<sup>12</sup> Samuel Kim states,

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Samuel I. Kim, 6.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

It is not only the peasants who have little interest in politics, but the city people also have little enthusiasm over political issues. Traditionally, the Thai people have respected the upper social class and its authority and it is a taboo to criticize one's superior's ideas and those of higher officials. It is not the custom or tradition for common people to get involved in political affairs except for small intellectual minorities.<sup>13</sup>

In 1932, a constitutional monarchy developed from the absolute monarchy. King Bhumibol Adulyadej (1946- ) formally reigns over a highly centralized unitary state, but real decision making in affairs of the state rests with the prime minister. The prime minister need not be an elected member of the National Assembly, the national legislature; but can assume the position solely by assertion of leadership, with his role subsequently legitimized through pro forma royal appointment. The new governmental system, based on the Constitution, promulgated in December 1978 and divided into executive, bicameral legislature (House of Representatives and Senate), and judiciary. Thailand has developed a multiparty system with sixteen parties participating in the 1986 election. Partisan politics are gaining in importance but are still largely a function of personalities. Basically, politicians are confined mostly to members of military-bureaucratic elites and their supporters.<sup>14</sup> Even though Thailand has changed into a constitutional monarchy from the absolute, the Thais still retain their reverence for the King. This reverence is based in part on the history of the monarchy; Thailand has had an unbroken line of kings since the kingdom of Sukhothai (A.D.1238).<sup>15</sup> The king has influence on the lives of the Thai people and politics also.

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> LePoer.

<sup>15</sup> Jung Woong Kim, "Third World Mission-Church Relationship: A Korean -Thai Church" (D.Miss. Thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1985), 17.

David A. Wilson analyzed the Thai kingship in the following aspects: 1) the Wheel-rolling king, emperor or *chakraphat*; 2) father of people or *Pho-Khun*; 3) the god-king or *deva raja*; and 4) a splendid and majestic being of great power or *chao phaen din* (1962:87).<sup>16</sup> Before watching movies in Thailand theaters, the movie viewers must stand up to pay respect to the king, watching his life (King Bhumibol Adulyadej ) with the Royal anthem.

In a crisis, the king stands between the government and the people. On October 13, 1973, more than 250,000 people rallied in Bangkok to press their demands for a more democratic constitution and authentic parliamentary elections. The troops opened fire on the demonstrators, killing seventy-five, and occupied the campus of Thammasat University. The king, Bhumibol Adulyadej, took a direct role in dealing with the crisis, and called the prime minister, Thanom, and his cabinet for talks. In the evening, the king went on television and radio to announce a compromise solution. Many of the students' demands would be met. But the king, overruling the student militants, allowed Thailand's three most hated men, Thanom, Praphat, and Narong, to leave the country secretly.<sup>17</sup> This is called "royal influence."<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> David A. Wilson, *Politics in Thailand*. (New York: Conference for the World Council of Churches), 43-44, quoted in Samuel I. Kim, *The Unfinished Mission in Thailand*, 29.

<sup>17</sup> Frederica M. Bunge, *Thailand: A Country Study*. (Washington: American University, 1981), 41; Quoted in Jung Woong Kim, "Third World Mission-church Relationship: A Korean -Thai Church", (D.Miss. Thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1985), 22.

<sup>18</sup> Samuel I. Kim, 32.

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

Thailand attracts 10 million tourists annually from all over the world.<sup>19</sup> She has a number of attractive places to see such as Cha-am, Hua Hin, Bangkok, Phuket, Pattaya and Chiangmai. She has stable natural conditions- no typhoons, earthquakes nor storms. The social and political environment is relatively safer than other Southeast countries. In addition, inexpensive accommodations, food and a kind attitude of the people to foreigners are important factors in drawing many tourists.

Thailand, the land of the free<sup>20</sup>, is also called “the land of smiles” and visitors appreciate that. Thailand is among the more peaceful and balanced countries in Southeast Asia, in its socio-political and economic aspects.<sup>21</sup> Because of diverse ethnic groups in Thailand, although Thais are the majority at 80.4 % of the population, there is some possibility of social instability. In spite of some political coup d’tats and the social transformation from the absolute monarchism to the constitutional, and from an agricultural society to an industrial society, the country has maintained a high degree of stability.

All kinds of concepts and ideologies in Thailand are bound to the realities of the king, religion, nationhood, and their autocratic form of democracy.<sup>22</sup> The Thais believe

---

<sup>19</sup> According to the statistics of TAT(Tourism Authority of Thailand) 9.4 million of tourist came to Thailand, 9 million during Jan.2001-Nov.2001. Tourism Authority of Thailand Website. <on-line> available from [www.tat.org.th/](http://www.tat.org.th/)

<sup>20</sup>Because it successfully retained its freedom when surrounding countries were colonized by Western powers. It is believed that a special guardian angel, Phra Sayam Devadhiraj, protected the land, and a golden image of this spirit being was made. Patrick Johnstone, 619-620.

<sup>21</sup>Jung Woong Kim, 19.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel I Kim, 19.

that these are the main factors, which keep their country prosperous and safe. The flag of Thailand is designed to characterize those significant factors.

In Thailand there are, of course, social classes but they don't have a caste system such as in India, aside from major class divisions, namely, the ruling class and the lower peasant class. Some scholars have divided them into three classes: the king and royal families, the bureaucratic government officials and the commoners. Besides, one could argue that the Buddhist monks who number in excess of 200,000 constitute a distinct class. Class boundaries are neither sharply defined nor clearly visible as in India and Pakistan, and yet, class functions still exercise a major influence on society.<sup>23</sup>

Although Thai society appears homogeneous, it actually represents a compromise between various groups, which, in order to preserve their own identity, accepts certain aspects of general Thai identity, or *Ekkalak* Thai. As in the past, in modern Thailand the basic social and communal structure has been controlled by a power elite system comprised of the monarchy, the military, and upper level bureaucrats. These groups have had a symbiotic relationship with the economic and business community that have strongly influenced decision-making. As a result of modern education and international influences, however, the composition of all parts of the elite system began changing in the late 1980s.<sup>24</sup> Education is one way for advancement to the special avenue of social mobility. Thai young men would like to be policemen or officers in the army. Those ranks are regarded as the ruling power in Thai society.

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> LePore.

Thailand has fertile agricultural land and exports rice, sugar, and rubber. Rapid industrialization has led to a strong electronic and garment industry.<sup>25</sup> The ratio of peasants is being reduced, but the industry and service ratios are increasing. The labor force in 1996 was agriculture 54%, industry 15%, and services 31%. But the GDP composition of agriculture is 13% compared to industry at 40%, and services at 47%.<sup>26</sup> Thailand is becoming an industrial nation. Income per person at \$2,740 (9 % of USA income per person) is relatively higher than neighboring countries: Burma (Myanmar), Laos and Cambodia. The majority of Thai peasants can easily survive without the hard struggles or economic horrors of other countries in Asia. The tropical surroundings and vast cultivated land provides the people with all the necessary conditions for their survival.<sup>27</sup>

Now, their concern has changed from survival to quality of life. The low cost of rice, corn, sugarcane and rubber cannot meet the high cost of their children's tuition and necessities of life. Television sets are common, even in rural areas. Cellular phones (2.3 million in 1998) and computers are being sold explosively. Young people in rural places are trying to move to Bangkok or other big cities for studying and jobs. These cause many other negative side effects such as drugs, prostitution, and AIDS. According to statistics for 1999 there were 755,000 infected with HIV/AIDS and 66,000 deaths from AIDS.<sup>28</sup> Bangkok is known as the city of sin. Over 2 million people derive their income

---

<sup>25</sup> Patrick Johnstone , 619.

<sup>26</sup> "Thailand-The World Fact," <on-line> (Washington D.C: Central Intelligence Agency); available from <http://www.ask.com/main/followup.asp?qcat=geop&ask=thailand+history>; internet.

<sup>27</sup>Samuel I. Kim, 22.

<sup>28</sup>LePoer.

from the sex industry. Most of the country's 100,000 male and 700,000 female prostitutes cater to the lusts of Thai and foreign tourists. Crime and related drug and alcohol abuse are widespread. AIDS has become a major scourge; some estimate that 40-80% of prostitutes end up with the disease.<sup>29</sup>

Air pollution from vehicle emissions, water pollution from organic and factory wastes, deforestation, soil erosion, and wildlife populations threatened by illegal hunting are others social problems in Thailand. The disputes with neighboring countries are: parts of the border with Laos are indefinite; parts of the border with Cambodia are indefinite; sporadic border hostilities with Burma (a minor producer of opium, heroin, and marijuana) over border alignment; and illicit transit points for heroin en route to the international drug market from Burma and Laos.

### RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL FACTORS

Thais regard Christianity as a foreign religion (*sasna farang*). They think of Thailand as a Buddhist country. *Wat* (Buddhist temple in Thailand) is the center of the community, so most of the Thais are deeply related to Buddhism from birth.

#### ***Buddhism and the Thais***

Freedom of religion is guaranteed in the constitution, which was modified in 1998, to loosen ties between the State and Buddhism and increase harmony between religious groups.<sup>30</sup> However, Buddhism dominates the Thai people as their national religion, with

---

<sup>29</sup>Johnstone and Mandryk , 621.

<sup>30</sup>Johnstone and Mandryk, 619.



95 percent of the population confessing it as their faith. Religion in Thailand is totally saturated with Buddhist philosophies, animist practices, and Buddhist rituals. The Thais' worldview has to do with the totality of the shared and mixed religious beliefs and practices. In 1999, the minority religions were distributed as follows: Muslim, 3.8 percent; Christianity, 0.5 percent; Hinduism, 0.1 percent; and all others, 0.6 percent. Statistics are different according to the survey organization. The 21<sup>st</sup> edition of Operation World says that Buddhism is 92.34 percent, Muslim is 5.24 percent, and Christian is 1.62 percent in Thailand.<sup>31</sup>

The external Thai religion is known as Theravada Buddhism, but internally or practically speaking, the popular Thai religion is syncretism, containing elements of animism, Brahmanism, Hinduism, Mahayana Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Islam, and human rationalism. All kinds of religious superstitious elements are harmoniously integrated in the syncretistic nature of Thai society.<sup>32</sup> William Klausner wrote, "Thais are enjoying a 300 % state of grace as they are 100% Buddhists, 100% animists and 100% Brahman ritual observers."<sup>33</sup> Like other Asian religions, Thai Buddhism is mixed with other religious beliefs and practice.

Samuel I. Kim describes Thai Buddhism as follows:

Thais are more religious than any other Asians. They dedicate themselves to their religion in terms of continual merit-making, rituals, and festivals. There are thousands of colorful temples and shrines. They not only feed more than 200,000

---

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Jung Woong Kim, 44-45.

<sup>33</sup>William Klausner, Reflections on Thai culture, Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1987, 366; quoted in Soo Gil Yoon, "Discipleship Ministry as Power Encounter in Thailand," (D. Miss. Thesis Trinity Divinity Evangelical School, 1994), 67.

monks<sup>34</sup> and novices, but they also donate and spend at least 25 percent of their annual income for their religion. Thai Buddhism is more a national ethic and culture than pure Buddhism itself.<sup>35</sup>

From birth to death, Thais are deeply related to Buddhism and monks. If Thais do not participate in the communal religious practice, they would be alienated.<sup>36</sup>

### *Thai Buddhism History*

Thai Buddhism was based on the religious movement founded in the sixth century B.C. by *Siddhartha Gautama Sakyamuni*, later known as the Buddha, who urged the world to relinquish the extremes of sensuality and self-mortification and follow the enlightened Middle Way. The focus was on man, not gods; the assumption was that life was pain or suffering, which was a consequence of craving, and that suffering could end only if desire ceased. The end of suffering was the achievement of *nirvana* (in Theravada Buddhist scriptures, *nibbana*), often defined negatively as the absence of craving and therefore of suffering, sometimes as enlightenment or bliss.<sup>37</sup> Buddhists believe that they can be saved by losing all desires.

By the third century B.C., Buddhism had spread widely in Asia, and divergent interpretations of Buddha's teachings had led to the establishment of several sects. The teachings that reached Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) were given in a final written form in Pali (an Indo-Aryan language closely related to Sanskrit) to religious centers there in the first century A.D. and provided the Tipitaka (the scriptures or "three baskets"; in

---

<sup>34</sup>Operation World states Buddhist monks in Thailand number over 300,000, 621.

<sup>35</sup>Samuel Kim, 14.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>37</sup>LePoer.

Sanskrit, Tripitaka) of Theravada Buddhism. This form of Buddhism reached what is now Thailand around the sixth century A.D. Theravada Buddhism was made the state religion only with the establishment of the Thai kingdom of Sukhothai in the thirteenth century A.D. The details of the history of Buddhism in Thailand from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century are obscure, in part because few historical records or religious texts survived the Burmese destruction of Ayutthaya, the capital city of the kingdom, in 1767.

King Mongkut, king of Siam (also known as Thailand) from 1851 to 1868, was a distinguished scholar of Pali Buddhist scripture and a religious reformer who tried to purge all superstitions and syncretistic religious patterns and bring about the renaissance of Theravada Buddhism in Thailand.<sup>38</sup> In 1902 King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1868-1910) made the new *sangha*<sup>39</sup> hierarchy formal and permanent through the Sangha Law of 1902, which remained the foundation of the *sangha* administration in modern Thailand.<sup>40</sup>

### *The Doctrine of Thai Buddhism*

The natural concern of all Thai religious activity is individual acquisition of merit. The aim is to store up as much merit and to reduce as much demerit possible.<sup>41</sup> According to the original teachings of Theravada Buddhism, individual salvation must be

---

<sup>38</sup> Samuel Kim, 16.

<sup>39</sup> The Buddhist hierarchy.

<sup>40</sup> LePoer.

<sup>41</sup> Jung Woong Kim, 51.

achieved by personal efforts. This is basically contradictory to Christian concepts.<sup>42</sup>

Buddhism is a human centered religion that says that people determine their own destiny and are responsible for their choices. This really is the religion of humans. This religion enchants human will for self-reliance and thus self-respect.<sup>43</sup>

Thais believe that man is the product of nature and is part of nature. Man simply must obey the rules of nature and not go against them. Man should be passive and not confront nature, because nature is absolute. They believe that nature has no beginning and no end. Nature is the timeless supreme element. The people assume that the flow of time is cyclical.<sup>44</sup> God in the Bible is not cyclical. He is linear. He is not a God of many times, but is once-for-all.<sup>45</sup> Thai people generally believe that all religions are equally good and have the same goals and purposes. Therefore they don't think that they have to segregate any religion but can accept everything.<sup>46</sup>

That's one of the reasons that the Thai government allows Christian missionaries to work in this kingdom, but they are less receptive toward Christianity because of the deep-rooted Buddhism thought.

---

<sup>42</sup> Samuel Kim, 15.

<sup>43</sup> Soo Gil Yoon, 81.

<sup>44</sup> Samuel Kim, 17.

<sup>45</sup> Kosuko Koyama, Water Buffalo Theology. (N.Y: Orbis Books, 1974), 33.

<sup>46</sup> Samuel Kim, 16.

## EDUCATIONAL FACTORS

This project's topic, "A Discipleship Model for Missionaries Establishing Churches in Thailand," makes it very important to survey the Thais' educational background. Discipleship training is targeted for those who are ready to learn and become disciples.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the United States and British missionaries introduced formal European education, primarily in the palaces. Up to that time, scholarly pursuits had been confined largely to the Buddhist temples, where monastic instruction, much of it entailing the memorization of scriptures, was provided to boys and young men. Like his father Mongkut, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1868-1910) wanted to integrate monastic instruction with Western education. Unsuccessful in this effort, he appointed his half brother, Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, to design a new system of education. Western teachers were engaged to provide assistance, and in 1921 a compulsory education law was enacted. In 1917 the first university in the country, Chulalongkorn University, was established.<sup>47</sup>

A great change in the social structure occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century. The coup of 1932 that brought military and bureaucratic elites into power both reflected and contributed to changes in local social patterns.<sup>48</sup> Educational opportunities provided opportunities for social mobility, so the needs for education were expanded. Many schools were established and the government tried to reduce illiteracy with a compulsory education law.

---

<sup>47</sup> LePoer.

<sup>48</sup> Jung Woong Kim. 32.

Access to education and the quality of education varied significantly by region. At the primary level, rural schools, administered since 1963 by the Ministry of Interior, tended to have the least qualified teachers and the most serious shortage of teaching materials. In an effort to increase the number of teachers, other ministries, including the Ministry of Defense, offered teacher-training programs. Although more students gained access to education, this arrangement led to a duplication of resources. Competition began to replace cooperation among some of the teachers' colleges and universities. Opportunities for secondary education were concentrated in major towns and in the Center. In the mid-1970s, Bangkok, with 10 percent of the country's population, had 45 percent of the secondary-school population, while the North and the Northeast combined, with 55 percent of the nation's population, had only 26 percent of these students. The government has since attempted to rectify these inequities by improving administrative structure, making education more relevant to socioeconomic development, and adding qualitative and quantitative support to both public and private systems. Nevertheless, in the late 1980s the underlying problem of inequitable distribution of funds between the Center and the outlying provinces remained.<sup>49</sup> In 2001, the rate of literacy was 94 percent.<sup>50</sup>

Those who live in Bangkok and big cities have high expectations for education, compared to the rural areas. Basically, the Thais are not serious about learning and education. *Sanuk*, (amusement), *Mai Pen Rai*, (never mind) and *Sabai* (comfort) are characteristic terms, which signify the Thais' lives. They will not stick to studying and

---

<sup>49</sup> LePoer.

<sup>50</sup> Johnstone and Mandryk, 619.

working because of their culture. Thais are blessed by a stable monarchy and natural resources. There is no reason to be excessively attached to something, even to learning. These are considerations when planting churches and building disciples.

## CHAPTER THREE

### HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN THAILAND

As it is reviewed in Chapter Two, Thailand has had a long history and diverse cultural background with many ethnic groups. Even though Buddhism has dominated Thai society, Thailand has decided to open the country for the purpose of developing with the influx of western science and culture. Because of that Thailand was left with no choice but to face Christianity. But Thais have not been so serious about other religions because they have believed that all religions teach people to be good men.

To understand Thai Christianity, it is essential to review the history of Catholic Missions. The author will describe the Catholic Missions in Thailand first and Protestant Missions will follow. Lastly, the GP Mission, with which the author is affiliated in Thailand, will be examined.

#### CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN THAILAND

Thai Buddhists do not know the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism, but regard them as the same, even though Catholics started mission work here more than 500 years ago. Today, Catholics have over 200 organized congregations, which is about half of the total Christian community. This is the smallest number of any country in Asia.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Nantachai Mejudhon, "Meekness: A New Approach to Christian Witness to the Thai people," (D. Miss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 1977), 22.



### *Portuguese Catholic Missions*

Samuel I. Kim wrote, “It was in 1498 that the first Portuguese reached Thailand. Portuguese soldiers were a key element of the Siamese Army in the Ayutthaya period, and the Portuguese commanded the Bangkok garrison as early as 1685.”<sup>2</sup> During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Portuguese and Spanish Dominicans and other missionaries introduced Christianity to Siam.<sup>3</sup>

Portuguese soldiers and traders were accompanied by missionaries to Thailand and Indochina before they established colonies.<sup>4</sup> J. Herbert Kane wrote, “The earliest contacts with the West came with the arrival in 1551 of the Portuguese; they were followed by the Dutch and later by the British. With the Portuguese came Roman Catholic missionaries and they have been there ever since.”<sup>5</sup>

The Spanish claim to have sent missionaries to Siam as early as 1585; and fifteen years later don Tello de Aguirre came from Manila to make a treaty of friendship and begin commerce with Siam.<sup>6</sup> They were Jesuit Dominicans and the Portuguese controlled all Catholic missions until the French concentrated her attention there about 1655.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Samuel I. Kim, 35.

<sup>3</sup> “Thailand-The World Fact,” <on-line>. [www.ask.com/thailand/history](http://www.ask.com/thailand/history)

<sup>4</sup> David M. Knapp, “Kudijin, Thai-Portuguese Community”, *Bangkok Magazine*, (Bangkok: May 1968), 26:2. Quoted in Samuel I. Kim.

<sup>5</sup> J Herbert Kane, *A Global View of Christian Missions*, (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1975 c1971), 160.

<sup>6</sup> Virginia Thomson. *Thailand: The New Era*. New York: Paragon Book, Reprint Cooperation, 168. Quoted in Samuel I. Kim.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

### *French Roman Catholic Missions*

The French appeared on the scene of Thai history during the reign of King Narai (1656-1688), and the credit for opening the relations between Thailand and the French belonged to the French Catholic missionaries whose bishop, Monsignor de la Motte Lambert, traveled to Ayutthaya in 1662, where he then established a mission.<sup>8</sup>

King Narai (or *Phra Narai*)<sup>9</sup> was very interested in the missionaries' charitable work and western civilization. He questioned the bishop about the power of France and asked him if he thought Christianity was better than Buddhism. The king sent ten small boys to the mission school to be taught European sciences. He granted land and materials for building a church and compound to be named for St. Joseph.<sup>10</sup> Louis XIV dispatched Chevalier de Haumont as the first French ambassador, accompanied by 1400 French soldiers and 300 skilled workmen under the direction of Ceberet and de la Laubre, the bishop, in 1687.<sup>11</sup> In a letter to the King of Siam from the French King, he emphasized friendship and Christian mission:

In the meantime we should be extremely glad to find occasions of expressing to you the gratitude wherewith we have learnt that you continue your protection to the Bishop and other Apostolic Emissaries, who labor to instruct your subjects in the Christian religion; and the particular esteem we have for you, makes us ardently desire, that you would yourself condescend to hear them, and learn of them the true maxims and sacred mysteries of so holy a law, wherein one has the knowledge of the true God, who alone can, after a long and glorious reign over your subjects here, make you eternally happy hereafter.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Government of Thailand, 1964, 9, Quoted in Samuel I Kim, 35-36.

<sup>9</sup> *Phra* means 'monk' in Thai.

<sup>10</sup> Virginia Thomson, *Thailand: The New Era*, (New York: Paragon Book), Reprint Cooperation, 171. Quoted in Samuel I. Kim, 36.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel I. Kim, 36.

<sup>12</sup> B. J. Terwiel, *A Relation of the Voyage to Siam*, (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1999), first published in 1688, 148.

Curiosity for European science by the Thai King and competitive expansionism of European foreign missions made the early development possible. The French Catholic leaders had good relationships with the court officials and the Siam King. But problems occurred when Constantine Phaulkon, an English adventurer, joined the office of the *Prakland* (Treasurer) and won rapid promotion as a Thai nobleman. He became the King's favorite.<sup>13</sup> Through his efforts, Thailand and the French exchanged embassies. He showed himself to be a linguist well-versed in the intricacies of foreign trade.<sup>14</sup>

Even though King Narai was attracted by the culture and philanthropy of those missionaries, the missionaries misunderstood the quality of the King's interest. Their hope of converting him was aroused and with it their patriotism, which had probably been previously stimulated by their struggles with the Portuguese.<sup>15</sup> Sometimes the King of Siam intimated to the Catholic missionaries that he wished he had an exact map of his own dominions and the surrounding kingdoms. He had Lord Constance tell the missionaries that he would give them letters of recommendation for the princes in the neighboring lands, to assist with gaining liberty to travel through their countries and to make an exact description of them.<sup>16</sup>

In March 1688, the King became seriously ill with dropsy, and this precipitated the usual palace intrigues over the succession. He was persuaded to appoint as regent *Phra Pitraya*, the head of the anti-foreign element and sworn enemy of Phaulkon, whom he thus displaced in the King's favor. *Phra Pitraya* had

---

<sup>13</sup> Government of Thailand, 1964, 19, quoted in Samuel I Kim, 36.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>15</sup> Virginia Thomson, *Thailand: The New Era*. New York: Paragon Book, Reprint Cooperation, 171. Quoted in Samuel I. Kim, 37.

<sup>16</sup> B. J. Terwiel, 220.

distinguished himself during the Burmese wars, and his popularity with the army was now enhanced by his opposition to Phaulkon and the French.<sup>17</sup>

In the mean time, Phaulkon, aware of the danger, had sent for General Desfarges to bring the French troops to his assistance. Desfarges actually started out but turned back prudently to Bangkok when he learned of the King's death. Actually, before the death of King Narai, *Phra Petraya* had already ordered his soldiers to arrest Phaulkon on a charge of treason. Being condemned to death with all his property confiscated, Phaulkon was beheaded at Loppruri in 1688. As soon as Narai breathed his last, Pitraya seized the throne and expelled the French soldiers from the country.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Evaluation of the Catholic Mission***

Results of the Roman Catholic Mission in Thailand have been distressingly small; only 0.4 percent of the people are professing Roman Catholics now.<sup>19</sup> After the French soldiers were expelled from Thailand, an anti-French reaction swept the capital of Ayutthaya and the French priests and monks were driven from the country or jailed.<sup>20</sup> Their work among the Thai languished during the following 140 years; in 1828, however, they still had four churches in Bangkok, one in Ayutthaya and one in Chantaburi.<sup>21</sup> During this time, the Roman Catholic faith achieved one of its greatest

---

<sup>17</sup>Virginia Thomson, 173. Quoted in Samuel I. Kim, 37.

<sup>18</sup>Government of Thailand, 1964, 19. Quoted in Samuel I Kim, 38.

<sup>19</sup>Johnstone and Mandryk, 619.

<sup>20</sup>K. E. Wells, History of Protestant Work in Thailand. (Bangkok: Church of Christ in Thailand, 1958), 5, Quoted in Samuel I Kim, 38.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

successes in the Philippines. After the Philippines, Vietnam was the most Christian country in Asia.<sup>22</sup>

Although the Roman Catholics established a seminary and a number of chapels,<sup>23</sup> they failed to take root in Thailand. Thailand means the “land of free.” The word “Thai” also means “independent.”<sup>24</sup> In the whole of East Asia, only one country did not become the victim of Western imperialism and that was Thailand.<sup>25</sup> To the Thais, Roman Catholicism had a close tie with colonialism. The first Catholic missionaries entering Thailand with soldiers made the Thais have a prejudice against them. The Catholics needed not only fellowship with King Narai, but also indigenous churches and Catholic Christians were necessary. Thais feared that the new religion would either undermine the local regime or destroy the indigenous culture, as was the case in China (1368), Japan (1614), and Korea (1864).<sup>26</sup> One of the important reasons for the revival of Korean Christianity is that Christianity was closely connected with the grassroots during the colonization of Japan 1907-1945. It was also important to the Protestant mission in Thailand.

### PROTESTANT MISSION IN THAILAND

The first Protestant missionary to Thailand was Dr. Karl F. A. Gutzlaff of the Netherlands Missionary Society. He was there for only three years, from 1828 to 1831, but during that time he translated the Bible into Siamese and portions of it into

---

<sup>22</sup> J. Herbert Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission*. (Michigan: Baker Book, 1996 ), 62-63.

<sup>23</sup> K. E. Wells, 5. Quoted in Samuel I Kim, 38.

<sup>24</sup> Nantachai Mejudhon, 23.

<sup>25</sup> J. Herbert Kane, 129.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

Lao and Cambodian. In addition, he produced a dictionary and a grammar of the Siamese and Cambodian languages. Jacob Tomlin, of the London Missionary Society, arrived in Bangkok the same year as Gutzlaff, but remained less than a year.<sup>27</sup>

Mr. Tomlin and Dr. Gutzlaff worked with such diligence that within two months their stock of Chinese Bibles was exhausted. They also threw themselves into the study of the Siamese language. Within six months of their arrival they had translated from Chinese the four Gospels and the Epistles to the Romans with the help of Dr. Gutzlaff's wife.<sup>28</sup> But with so much haste and so little help, it is doubtful that the translation was accurate. There is no evidence that this translation of the Bible was ever published. The first portion of the Scripture in Thailand appeared in 1834, the New Testament in 1843, and the whole Bible in 1883.<sup>29</sup>

They also wrote a Siamese dictionary. After three more years in Bangkok, Gutzlaff became ill and discouraged. He found the Siamese fickle and regretted not having found a single honest man among them; but at any rate, he thought them morally superior. Nevertheless, during his brief stay, Gutzlaff had sown the seed; he succeeded in converting a Chinese named Boon Tee, who was destined to render great service to Siamese Christianity.<sup>30</sup>

In response to Gutzlaff's appeal, two American missions entered Thailand: the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the American Baptist Convention. The leading missionary of the American Board was Dan Beach Bradley, whose thirty-eighty-year career as physician, surgeon, publisher, diplomat,

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>28</sup> Kenneth E. Wells, 5-6, quoted in Samuel I. Kim, 39.

<sup>29</sup> J Herbert Kane, 166.

<sup>30</sup> Virginia Thomson, 657, quoted in Samuel I. Kim, 39.

and man of God, was fabulous.<sup>31</sup> Neither group continued its work in Siam for long. The American Baptists came to work among the Chinese in Siam from 1853 to 1893. When towards the end of century they found the Presbyterians handling the local work so well, the Baptists decided to leave the field to them and move on to China.<sup>32</sup>

As for the American Board of Commissioners, they started work in 1831 by sending their first missionary, Dr. David Abel to Siam. They sent additional missionaries and their families, but they all withdrew and ended their mission work in 1849. Even though their work was for a relatively brief period of time, their achievements and contributions were extremely great in establishing the Protestant mission in Siam. David Abeel, Dan Beach Bradley and Jesse Caswell of the American Board are particularly noteworthy as great pioneers among the Siamese people.<sup>33</sup>

The hardest thing of all to bear was the reaction to their message. As a rule a missionary was not welcomed as a missionary, but as a doctor or as an educator. In its mission history, Thailand was regarded as the most barren country as is stated by J. Herbert Kane;

Adoniram Judson, America's first and greatest missionary, landed in Rangoon in 1813. After six long years, he won his first convert. Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China, took seven years to win his first convert. The primitive Methodists in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) labored for thirteen years before the first African came forward for baptism. In Thailand it was even worse. The American Congregational missionaries arrived in 1831 and labored for eighteen years without baptizing a single convert. They became weary in well-doing and withdrew in 1849. The American Baptists had a similar experience. They baptized a few Chinese converts but not a single Thai. After seventeen years of futile effort they withdrew and did not return until after World War II. The American Presbyterians entered in 1840 and refused to leave, but it took them nineteen years to win their first Thai convert!<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> J Herbert Kane, 166.

<sup>32</sup> Virginia Thomson, 657, quoted in Samuel I. Kim, 40.

<sup>33</sup> Samuel I. Kim, 40.

<sup>34</sup> J Herbert Kane, 97.

### *The Ministry of Dan Beach Bradley*

Dan Beach Bradley, following his only furlough, returned to Thailand in 1850 under the American Missionary Association.<sup>35</sup> During his thirty-eight years in Thailand, Bradley had several careers-doctor, printer, government advisor, and unofficial ambassador, each of which added greatly to his fame. But it was Mo Bradley that the Thai remembered.<sup>36</sup> As a doctor he did outstanding works for the development of Thai medicine. He performed the first surgical operation in Thailand in 1837. He introduced vaccinations and inoculations in his fight against smallpox. He served as a physician to three of Thailand's kings. His passion and love for the Thais could not be confined to the field of medicine.

As a publisher, he founded Thailand's first newspaper, the Bangkok Recorder. As a diplomat, he was entrusted by King Mongkut with the delicate task of translating papers, foreign treaties, and other important documents. He was the best-known, most-loved foreigner in the country. To this day, Mo Bradley is a legend in Thailand.<sup>37</sup> When Chan Fa Monkut, the father of King Chulalongkorn, was a mere youth and in monk-hood, Bradley was his first close foreign friend. Through the kind teachings of devoted missionary friends like Mo Bradley and his colleague Jesse Caswell, Monkut became the first Asian monarch to read, write, speak and understand the English language as well as the first to become a student of the Christian religion. Both of these greatly contributed to making the missionary movement in Thailand one of the most unique chapters in the history of the Christian Church.<sup>38</sup> He not only introduced

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>36</sup> George B. McFarland, ed., "Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam, 1828-1928" 196. Quoted in Donald C. Lord, Mo Bradley and Thailand, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1969), 69. 'Mo' means doctor in Thai.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Samuel I. Kim, 41.



modern medicine to Siam, but he also treated all the people, disregarding social classes and ranks in the process. Sometimes he treated the king's slaves, other times he treated high monks and members of the royal families.<sup>39</sup> So even until now, missionaries are accepted as good persons who do philanthropy.

Unfortunately, by his own standards, based on the number of converts he achieved, he was a dismal failure as a missionary. Yet he contributed to establish missions outside Bangkok. According to the Harris Treaty, American missionaries were limited to Bangkok, but through Bradley's influence Protestant missions were established in many parts of Thailand.<sup>40</sup>

### *Thai Chinese Ministry*

The American Baptist work got under way in 1833 when the Reverend and Mrs. John Taylor Jones were transferred from Burma to Thailand. Although appointed to work with the Thai, Mr. Jones was attracted to the large Chinese colony in Bangkok and found a ready response among them. In six months time he baptized three Chinese. Two years later the Reverend William Dean joined the Thailand mission and took over the Chinese work. The Chinese church, founded in 1837 with eleven charter members, is today one of the largest churches in Bangkok. During the work of the first Thai missionaries, Gutzlaff and Tomlin, their only convert to Christ during these three years was a Chinese, named Boon Tee.<sup>41</sup> Before he gave up his Christian profession because of opium, he assisted the first Congregational missionary and the first American Baptist missionary. Now the Chinese Thai make up 10.5

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 40-41.

<sup>40</sup> Carl Zimmerman, *Christian Missions in Siam*, 85; and G. B. McFarland, 26. Quoted in Donald C. Lord, 207.

<sup>41</sup> Carl Edwin Blanford, *Chinese Churches in Thailand*, (Bangkok: Suribayan Publishers), 32.

percent of the population in Thailand, and they control 85 percent of the Thai economy.<sup>42</sup> Most Chinese consciously retain the beliefs and practices of the popular religious traditions in China, namely Confucian social ethics, veneration of ancestors, Mahayana Buddhist doctrines, and Taoist super-naturalism.<sup>43</sup> So they are more attracted to Christianity than the Thai and more influential in society because they have economic and political power. Chinese churches grew faster than Thai churches and became self-supporting early. In 1973, two Chinese churches in Bangkok were large by Thai standards. Sapan Luang Church had a membership of 1147 and Sathorn Christian Church had a membership of 326.<sup>44</sup>

A comparison of the growth of Thai and Chinese churches in Thailand during 1948-1973 revealed a growth rate of Thai churches at 2.1 percent, and Chinese churches, 5.1 percent. At that time annual population growth was 3 percent.<sup>45</sup>

### *Northern Thailand Mission*

Northern Thailand responded to Christianity more rapidly than Bangkok and Southern Thailand. The people in the north were influenced less by Theravada Buddhism, so they did not show the strong resistance like Bangkok and Southern Thailand.

Chiangmai, the largest city in north Thailand, is the center of Presbyterian work. Besides a church, the complex includes the Prince Royal's College (boys), Dara Academy (girls), Thailand Theological Seminary, McCormic Hospital, and the

---

<sup>42</sup> Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, 618.

<sup>43</sup> Carl Edwin Blanford, 23.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 42-49.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

famous McKean Leprosy Hospital, which cares for five hundred leprosy patients.<sup>46</sup>

Samuel I. Kim said that:

Since the Rev. Daniel McGilvary started their mission work, the good news of the Christian Gospel was spread all over the Northern kingdom by missionaries who traveled by elephant, river-boats and ox-carts. Mission stations were established in almost every province in the Northern Area within a few decades and missionaries poured in after the McGilvarys. The people's receptivity toward the Gospel was amazingly good and many were converted. Many churches were established in jungle areas as well as in provincial towns. Often, the entire village denied their heathen gods and turned to Christ.<sup>47</sup>

In 1999, the two provinces, Chiangmai and Chiangrai, had 528 churches out of the 1,697 total churches in all 76 provinces of Thailand.<sup>48</sup> This shows that the northern Thais are more sensitive to the Gospel and easier to win to Jesus Christ. Thai Christianity is strong in the northern area now.

### ***Church of Christ in Thailand and Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand***

In 1934 the Presbyterian churches got together and organized the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT). The complete integration of the church and mission came in 1957. In 1970 it had twenty-five thousand members, making it by far the largest group in the country. Today it is not the largest Christian group. In 1999 CCT had 641 churches with 155 missionaries. The other large group, Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand (EFT), had 825 churches with 600 missionaries.<sup>49</sup> However CCT was the first Christian group recognized by the government and still has a strong influence. Besides these two groups, there are Baptists.

---

<sup>46</sup> J Herbert Kane, 163.

<sup>47</sup> Samuel I. Kim, 44.

<sup>48</sup> Thailand Christian Directory, 1999.

<sup>49</sup> Thailand Christian Directory.

Many mission groups such as the Christian & Mission Alliance, WEC, and OMF, did not affiliate with CCT, but they needed recognition from the government and cooperation from other Christian groups to spread the Gospel. The idea of coordination and cooperation between like-minded groups working to spread Christianity in Thailand began to emerge in 1956.<sup>50</sup>

For many years the Thai government had recognized only two denominations of Christians, namely Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, i.e. the Church of Christ in Thailand. In 1969 Rev. Suk Pongnoi along with other missionaries began the “Evangelical Federation of Thailand,” with the aim of evangelizing the people of Thailand. Later the name was changed to the “Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand” (EFT). Eventually, other Protestant denominations desired to join in order to express their unity and have mutual help in relating to the Government. EFT applied to be licensed as an organization officially recognized by the Government and on June 19, 1969 the Department of Religious Affairs, under the Ministry of Education, recognized EFT as the third official Christian organization in Thailand after the Roman Catholics and the CCT.<sup>51</sup> The organization and management of CCT and EFT are different. The former is organized with 12 districts served by 135 full-time leaders. On the other hand EFT, is just a fellowship organization as is stated below:

The objectives were:  
 To promote coordination  
 To promote the preaching of the Gospel  
 To promote the spiritual life and growth of Christians  
 To promote production and use of Christian media  
 To promote social welfare and the public good<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> 1999-2000 EFT Meeting and the 30th Anniversary Manual, EFT, 2000, 9.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> 1999-2000 EFT Meeting and The 30th Anniversary Manual.

### *Thai Church Growth*

Today Christianity shows the most rapid growth of religions in Thailand: Christianity, 4.7 percent; Muslim, 2.1 percent; and Buddhism 0.6 percent.<sup>53</sup> Officially, Thai Christians account for 0.5 percent of the total population,<sup>54</sup> but Operation World published in 2001, records that in 1900 Christians comprised 0.6 percent of the population. In 1985 this had risen to 0.9 percent, but in 2000 this was 1.6 percent.<sup>55</sup>

Sigmund J. Laschenski, S. J. states, "The religion of the Thai is under attack from many quarters: industrialization, consumerism and injustice in society. At the same time, there are revival and missionary movements."<sup>56</sup> A holistic mission effort requires hospitals, education and leprosy work. But the ultimate goal for the mission should be conversion and church planting. For some two hundred years the church in Thailand has been in many ways a ghetto church.<sup>57</sup> Christianity is a minority group with a small number of Christians. But recently there has been a breaking out of the ghetto mentality, a growing pride of identity in being Thai, and a readiness to take one's place with his or her fellow citizens in the life of the country. This is especially noticeable among university students and the educated.<sup>58</sup>

Seminary students lack calling and vision. The church leaders and missionaries need to encourage young Christians to be full-time church ministers with

---

<sup>53</sup> Johnstone and Mandryk, 619.

<sup>54</sup> Tourism Authority of Thailand Website. <on-line> available from [www.tat.org.th/](http://www.tat.org.th/)

<sup>55</sup> Johnstone and Mandryk, 619.

<sup>56</sup> Sigmund J. Laschenski, S. J., "The Meaning of the Incarnation for the Church in Thailand", (East Asia Journal of Theology: 2:1, 1984), 76.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

vision and confidence. If young Christians know the glory and joy as church workers, Thai churches will experience revival and spiritual maturity.

### Global Partners Mission (GP)

In 1999 Korea Global Mission (KGM) and Partners World Mission (PWM) united to become the GP Mission in Seoul, Korea. Its mission statement was; “GP is a community that seeks to glorify God by performing leadership for world evangelization by developing creative strategy, mutual cooperation, and indigenous national leadership in this last generation.”<sup>59</sup>

### ***GP Unification***

The Korean Church’s Mission started in 1907 by sending missionaries to Jae Ju-do, the southern island of Korea. It also started a foreign mission work to China in 1912. But modern missions started with Korea International Mission (KIM) by Rev. Cho, Dong Jin in 1968. Its motto was to dispatch trained Korean missionaries to the harvest areas. KIM implemented an outstanding effort in recruiting, training, and dispatching Korean missionaries to the world. Not only that, it initiated two-thirds of the world mission movement through the Asia Missions Association (AMA) and Third World Missions Association (TWMA), restricting the western church’s mission domination. After twenty-years, Thailand was the most important mission field of KIM. But in 1987, Korean Thai missionaries became independent from KIM and formed KGM. After five years, KIM’s missionaries working in Philippines and Indonesia, formed PWM in 1992.

---

<sup>59</sup> Global Partners Manual, (Seoul: GP Mission, 1999), 1-8.

As time passed by, the two organizations felt a need for unification because they both came from the same origin, KIM. In 1997, there was an Asia Missions Congress (AMC) in Bangkok, Thailand. There, the senior missionaries of KGM and PWM attended the meeting and suggested cooperation and partnership as much as possible. From this time on, the two mission councils discussed the partnership and decided to have the Summer Training Institute for Missions together in 1998. During that time, the missionaries discussed the mission unification beyond cooperation. After that, the two missions, including councils and missionaries, met together and signed a treaty of unification. This was a significant historical event for the Korean church's mission. The reason for this is that, although there were church unifications in the past, there was never a mission council's unification. They decided that KGM and PWM could spread the gospel to the world effectively and enlarge the kingdom of God. Therefore, the two missions agreed on the unification and composed the arrangement committee. The motive of the unification was the expectation of 'the synergy effect'<sup>60</sup> in the world mission. In spite of some struggles about different ideas on unification, the two councils united in 1999. They both agreed to change the name to Global Partners with a rebirth for the twenty-first century world mission.

### *GP Missionaries in the World*

Today GP has 126 missionaries (73 units) in 19 countries. The majority of them are working in Asia: Thailand (13 units), China (9 units), Indonesia (5 units), Philippines (3 units), Malaysia (3 units), Japan (1 unit), Vietnam (1 unit), Nepal (1 unit), and Korea (3 units). The other GP missionaries are in: Turkey (4 units), Russia

---

<sup>60</sup> In 1998 Korea was passing through an economic turmoil so called 'IMF Shock' that accelerated an enterprise merger for 'the synergy effect.' By saving personnel and management expenses, GP Mission expected an effective world mission.

(3 units), Alaska (2 units), Mexico (1 unit), Brazil (1 unit), Chile (1 unit), Paraguay (1 unit), USA (3 units), both intern and partners missionaries.<sup>61</sup>

The characteristics of GP missionaries' lifestyles are holiness, joy, servanthood, and temperance. GP cooperates with evangelical churches and mission organizations in the mission field and develops indigenous leadership for the effectiveness of world mission. The International Headquarters is in Singapore and National Councils are in Korea and USA.<sup>62</sup>

### *GP Thailand*

At present, the 13 units of GP Thai missionaries are concentrating on Bangkok and Chonburi, on the outskirts of Bangkok. The thirteen families are divided into four teams working in the Chonburi Center, the Seminary, Publications, and Campus Ministry with church planting ministry.

1) Chonburi Center Ministry: This includes ministries of pastor's re-education, an orphanage, and drug rehabilitation center. For the development of Thai pastors, re-education is required. Every two months, this training program is conducted. Also, there's a ministry for the Karen tribes.

2) Seminary Ministry: It is located in Bangkok and trains students in the Bible. The biblical philosophy is Isaiah 61:22, "A little one shall become a thousand and a small one a strong nation. I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time."

3) Publication Ministry: In spite of 180 years of mission history, there were no commentary sets of the Bible in Thailand. The Tyrannus Ministry Team, and the

---

<sup>61</sup> Global Partners, (Seoul: GP Mission, 2002), vol.11, 18-19.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.



Publication Ministry, translated a commentary set of Old and New Testament.

Besides this, this ministry holds a “discipleship training seminar” also.

4) Campus Ministry: This ministry is targeted to win college students. The vast majority of the 1.2 million students remain unevangelized.<sup>63</sup> Ramkamhaeng University in Bangkok and Mahanakhon University of Technology in Nongcok are the stations now. They train and encourage Christian Bible Groups for the purpose of building Christian leaders.<sup>64</sup>

GP Thailand is focusing on educating Thai church leaders in Chonburi Center and the Thailand Evangelical Seminary; in addition the Publication Ministry and the Campus Ministry perform important works for the Thai mission under a partnership with native leaders.

---

<sup>63</sup> Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, 621.

<sup>64</sup> Global Partners, Seoul: GP Mission, 2002, vol.10. 20.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE FOUNDATION OF DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY

Even though Thailand has had a long history of Christianity, church growth has not been satisfactory except for Chinese and northern Thailand missions. Today Thai Christianity shows a rapid growth in Thai religions. It means a good opportunity has come to breakthrough the Thai Christianity stagnation.

Building healthy churches under the foundation of discipleship ministry is the key for the revival of Thai churches. It is a mandate to all believers as well

#### BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations (Matt. 28:18, NKJV) is Christ’s Great Commission to all believers. Today our Christianity is too shallow. Many Christians do not take the gospel seriously.

Tony Evans says, “The greatest tragedy is that we don’t have enough Christians who know who they are. They may be genuine believers, but their faith is just another addition to their portfolio. When it comes to the bottom line, they define themselves in the terms of their name, their job, their possessions, or the people they know.”<sup>1</sup> This comment is ascertained in statistics. According to the Operation World 2001 Edition,

---

<sup>1</sup> Tony Evans, What a Way to Live, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), 107.

84.53 percent of Americans are Christians.<sup>2</sup> Barna Research discovered that in 2001, only eight percent of Americans called themselves saved and believed the Bible is infallible. Another thirty three percent claimed to have experienced conversion, but do not believe the infallibility of the Bible.<sup>3</sup> Christianity in Thailand has the same problem. Among the small number of Christians in Thailand, many have remained nominal Christians or pew-warmer Christians.

Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary defines "disciple" as "someone who accepts the doctrine or teachings of another, especially an early follower of Christ, one of the Twelve."<sup>4</sup> Encarta World English Dictionary states the meaning more seriously, "somebody who strongly believes in the teachings of a leader, a philosophy, or a religion, and tries to act according to them."<sup>5</sup> The Biblical Greek word for the English "disciple" is *mathetes*, which comes from the word *manthano* which means simply to learn. The word basically means, a follower or pupil of a leader, teacher, or philosopher including disciples of Zen Buddhism, but the Oxford Dictionary supports that this term denotes any early believer in Christ, especially one of the twelve Apostles.<sup>6</sup> Harold K. Moulton spells it out for us: "to learn by practice or experience, *acquire a custom or habit*."<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, 658.

<sup>3</sup> Hankook-Ilbo (Korea Newspaper), Feb. 23, 2002

<sup>4</sup> The New Lexicon Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary, (Lexicon Publications, 1992), 270.

<sup>5</sup> Encarta World English Dictionary, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Oxford Dictionary, (Dorling Kindersley Ltd. and Oxford University Press, 1998), 233.

<sup>7</sup> Harold K. Moulton, ed., the Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 1981, 57. quoted in Christopher B. Adsit, Personal Disciple Making, (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1989), 32.

In the Old Testament Hebrew, the word “*Limmuwd*”, which was translated as “disciples” (NKJV), appears just one time. K. H. Rengstorf explains the reason it is only used once was that the Israelite people are the chosen people of God.<sup>8</sup> The word, disciple, is found frequently in the four Gospels and Acts. Walter Bauer presented many uses of the word:

- 1) John’s disciples, in Matthew 9:14; 14:12; Mark 2:18; 6:29; Luke 5:33; 7:18; 11:1; John 1:35; 3:25).
- 2) Moses’ disciples in John 9:28.
- 3) Pharisee’s disciples in Matthew 22:16; Mark 2:18.
- 4) Jesus 12 disciples in Matthew 10:1; 11:1; 28:16.
- 5) Followers of Jesus after He was taken up to heaven in Acts 9:1.
- 6) Become a disciple of Jesus in Matthew 27:57.
- 7) “Disciple” used passive with active meaning, was used in Matthew 13:52.
- 8) A disciple of kingdom of heaven in Matthew
- 9) Made many disciples in Acts 14:21.
- 10) Paul’s disciple in Acts 9:25.
- 11) The early church frequently used the word “disciple” to refer to the disciples of Jesus.<sup>9</sup>

Bauer’s illustration tells us that the word, disciple, was used in diverse ways in the Bible.

According to the authors of the four Gospels and Acts, the usage is a little bit different.

Yo Sup Lee states that:

In the Gospel of Mark, it was narrower in its meaning, it means that “disciple” means the disciple of Jesus at that time, but in Acts, “disciple” had a broader meaning. This means that the word “disciple” was used with two different meanings: one was “all believers,” and the other was “12 disciples of Jesus.” Luke, John, and Acts uses the two meanings, but use for “all believers” disappeared later. It eventually was added to the nickname “Christian” in Acts 11:26.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> K. H. Renstorf, “Disciple”, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. IX, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 426.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 485-486. Quoted in Yo Sup Lee, “An Analysis of the Discipleship Bible Study for the Korean Immigrant Church Growth,” DMin Thesis of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA, 1998, 16.

<sup>10</sup> Yo Sup Lee, 16.

The four Gospels, with the exception of the Gospel of Mark, used the word “disciple” to mean a believer who has confessed that Jesus is Lord, and a believer who came back to the church.<sup>11</sup> However, as the church grew in hierarchical differentiation, the word “disciple” became archaic, and was replaced by “Christian” (Acts 11:26).<sup>12</sup> In the Epistles, the word “disciple” disappeared and somewhat reappeared as the word “Saint.” Why did the word “disciple” disappear? The word “disciple” had been used as a student who was learning secular wisdom in the Gentile areas, and the philosophers especially had been using this word for their followers.<sup>13</sup>

Discipleship was practiced by Jesus (Matthew 4:19). It was focused not on His teaching, but on His personality.<sup>14</sup> So “being a disciple in Jesus Christ” means a holistic changed life.

### THE BIBLICAL PURPOSE OF BEING A DISCIPLE

When someone is dying or leaving us, his or her last words are very important. Jesus left the disciples with His last words in the Great Commission.<sup>15</sup> Jesus Christ committed us to: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:18-20, NKJV).

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> The Oxford Companion to the Christian Thought, (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1669.

<sup>13</sup> John H. Ok, Called to Awaken the Layman, (Seoul: Tyrannus Press, 1984), 98. Quoted in Yo Sup Lee, 17.

<sup>14</sup> Yo Sup Lee, 17.

<sup>15</sup> Life Application Study Bible, (Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale House, 1996), 1474.

Christianity has become the most global of religions. There is no country without a Christian witness and only ten without a visible congregation of indigenous believers (8 in Asia, 2 in Africa). There are, however, eighteen countries with a resident Christian population of less than one percent, and an additional twenty-two countries with less than five percent. Over the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Christianity declined slightly from 34.5 percent of the world's population in 1900 to 32.5 percent in 2000. The precipitous decline of the past thirty years in Europe has been balanced by the growth in Asia and Africa.<sup>16</sup> What is the problem? There were no world-wide persecutions on Christianity. Nominalism has become a major issue.<sup>17</sup> Nominal Christians are the most serious problem for world evangelization. It is estimated that 1.2 billion (60 percent) of Christians are nominal and non-practicing Christians.<sup>18</sup> Many do not know the Bible and the basic tenets of the faith. They do not distinguish syncretism from Christianity. Liberal theology, which claims that other religions have salvation, helps the nominalism also. Discipleship Training is the solution to these problems.

The purpose of Discipleship Training is not reading books and storing up knowledge.<sup>19</sup> The ultimate purpose is to build mature Christians through adequate training. Gary W. Kuhne introduced three steps in discipleship.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, 13.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> George Barna, Growing True Disciples, (Colorado Springs, Colorado: WaterBrook Press, 2001), 15.

<sup>20</sup> Gary W. Kuhne, The Dynamics of Discipleship Training, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 15.

First, to be growing in Christ, a Christian must meet certain conditions. He must have a basic understanding of his faith, have a regular quiet time, be involved in good fellowship, and be instructed in the Word of God. Second, the Christian desiring to grow in Christ must be obeying and applying what God has commanded him through the Bible. Such a life style of obedience is basic to true discipleship. Third, he must receive regular training in the practical aspects of outreach and ministry so that he can be fruitful and conserve that fruit.

When Jesus called Peter and Andrew in Galilee, He said, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). His last words to the disciples were, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19). The primary purpose of discipleship could be summarized in making other disciples in all the nations.

'Nations,' in Greek is *ethnos*, mean tribe, especially a foreign-Gentile or heathen.<sup>21</sup>

Discipleship is not one of the church programs, but it is the core in the Christian life to fulfill Jesus' commandment.

At first, church leaders must encourage the new born-again Christians to become faithful disciples through discipleship training. Regular Bible studies, cell group meetings and fellowship can be ways for them to start becoming disciples. Secondly, Christians should know their talents and gifts from God to serve the church and community.

I Corinthians chapter 12 explains the principle of serving one another with spiritual gifts. The church is one system or body that is composed of diverse parts. Lastly, Christians must evangelize the unbelievers in the community and other nation's peoples by praying, providing materials and personnel resources. The early Christians did not hesitate to share with and preach the gospel to their friends and neighbors as soon as they

---

<sup>21</sup> New Strong's Concise Dictionary, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 26.

accepted Jesus as their Savior (John 1:41; 4:28; Acts 8:4). Barna stated, “Discipleship, in other words, is about being and reproducing spiritually mature zealots for Christ.”<sup>22</sup>

Many Christians confuse Discipleship Training with Bible Study which does not make application to their lives. Today’s disciples need commitment, sacrifice and attitude of servanthood like Jesus’ early disciples. It’s not a heavy burden. Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28).

### THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A DISCIPLE

Buddhism dominates the Thai culture and worldview, with 95 percent confessing it their religion. It is said that, “Thais are enjoying ‘300 percent state of grace’ as they are 100 percent Buddhists, 100 percent animists and 100 percent Braham ritual observers.”<sup>23</sup> This represents a major difficulty in Christian discipleship. Most of the rituals in the community, school and nation are held with Buddhism monks. In the Thai public schools, the students and teachers recite Buddha’s teachings every morning. Buddhist monks are invited to hold new company’s grand opening ceremonies. These spiritual and social situations do not help build Christian disciples. Almost every house compound has the spirit shrine of “phraphum,” that is, the lord of place, namely the local spirit ruler whose presence should be recognized and respected.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> George Barna, 18.

<sup>23</sup> William Klausner, Reflections on Thai Culture, (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1987), 366. quoted in Soo Gil Yoon, “Discipleship Ministry as Power Encounter in Thailand,” Trinity Evangelical Divinity School DMiss Thesis, 1994, 67.

<sup>24</sup> Soo Gil Yoon, 75.



Pastor Phaitoon, who was a vice president of EFT in 1995, said that seven layers of spirits surround Thais;

- 1) S1 (Self Faith): Belief in Self
- 2) A (Animism): Believing nature
- 3) B1 (Brahmanism): Base of all rituals
- 4) B2 (Buddhism): Buddhist belief
- 5) C (Culture): Believing Thais' traditional culture
- 6) S2 (Satan): Belief captured by Satan
- 7) S3 (Secularism): Secular beliefs such as technology, science and economy

He challenged that the power of the Holy Spirit, God's word and personal witness are tools to get over those barriers.<sup>25</sup>

So Discipleship Training is required to fulfill the Great Commission in Thailand. Jesus selected the Twelve He Himself wanted (Mark 3:13). Luke wrote, "He (Jesus Christ) called His disciples together" (Luke 9:1). It means that there were some requirements when Christ called the Twelve. Every follower of Jesus did not become His disciple. Finding faithful men to fulfill the will of God was the main successful factor for Jesus' ministry.

Khune stated a checklist for faithful men:

1. A hunger for God's Word
2. A thirst for holy living
3. A desire for greater knowledge of God
4. A basic commitment to the lordship of Christ
5. A desire to be used by God
6. A love for people<sup>26</sup>

The author will suggest practical requirements for Thai Christians.

---

<sup>25</sup> Seung Hoi Jung, 271.

<sup>26</sup> Gary W. Kuhne, 28.

First, a good church member, who is faithful in service and Bible study, can be a good disciple. People who are not faithful in their church activities lack this requirement. Early Christians in Acts 2:43-47 are models for modern Christians.

Second, Christians who love to learn to teach the Bible and pray meet the requirement for a disciple. Disciples in the Bible were fervent in learning the word of God and praying (Acts 1:14; 2:42; 8:4). Part of the Thai culture, 'Sabai' which means 'comfort', appears in discipleship in the Thai church. *Sanuk* (amusement), *Mai Pen Rai* (never mind), and *Sabai* (comfort) are words which denote the Thais' life. They don't like stress. How the church leaders stimulate the congregation to be interested in training is a very important factor for successful Discipleship Training.

Third, commitment and sacrifice are essential factors in being a disciple. Jesus said to His disciples, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). Then Peter and Andrew left their nets and followed Him (Matthew 4:20). Sacrifice does not mean giving up a job or entering seminary to be a full time minister. It means a total life change for Christ.

Fourth, a vision for building the Kingdom of God in his or her community and all nations is a key requirement for a disciple. George Patterson says, "An obedient, spirit-filled church has to produce at home or abroad. It's her very nature; she is the Body of the risen, life-giving Son of God."<sup>27</sup>

After the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they had power in making disciples. This is the decisive requirement for discipleship.

---

<sup>27</sup> George Patterson, "The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches" *Perspectives*, (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1999), 604.

## THE BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH

The word “church” is a common word in Greek language (*ekklesia*) and was used originally for a political gathering constituting the government of a particular area.<sup>28</sup> The Greek term, *ekklesia*, comes from *ek* denoting ‘from’ ‘out’ and *kaleo* meaning ‘call.’<sup>29</sup> In secular Greek it meant an assembly, primarily of citizens in a self-governing city (e.g. that of Ephesus, Acts 19:39).<sup>30</sup>

In the Old Testament the same word in the sense of “an assembly” was used to characterize Israel when she was assembled in one geographic location. In the New Testament, though the word was used occasionally for a geographic assembly as in a local church, sometimes it included the entire church (Acts 9:31) whether in heaven or in earth (I Corinthians 10:32; Eph.1:22; 5:23-25,27,29; Col.1:18; Heb. 12:23).<sup>31</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer says:

In the Old Testament Greek translation (LXX), *ekklesia* is a translation of several Hebrew words, but in each case it refers to a geographic assembly of people and is never used in the theological sense of the body of Christ. In the New Testament the church including all regenerated persons from Pentecost to the Rapture (I Cor. 15:52) was united together and united to Christ by baptism of the Spirit (12:12-13). Christ is the Head of the body (Eph. 1:22-23). The church is a holy temple for the habitation of God (2:21-22), and is one with Christ (5:30-32). The church is described as a chaste virgin waiting for her husband (II Cor. 11:2-4).<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, Vol. Two, (Wheaton, Ill: Victor Books, 1984), abridged edition, 234.

<sup>29</sup> James Strong, Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, (Gordonville, TN: Dugan Publishers), 26, 39.

<sup>30</sup> The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, edited by F. L. Cross, (Oxford New York: Oxford University, 1997), 344.

<sup>31</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, 234.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

But Hendrikus Berkhof views the church as a covenant community from Israel. He states, "God's faithfulness watches over Israel. Its extraordinary way of persecution and continuing existence, of exile and return, of destruction and liberation puts us in touch with God's faithfulness in yet an entirely different form."<sup>33</sup> This is the difference between dispensation and covenant theology.

Roman Catholics define the church to be the company of men professing the same faith, united in the communion of the same sacraments, subject to lawful pastors, and especially to the Pope.<sup>34</sup> Charles Hodge points out the difference between the Protestant doctrine concerning the common faith of the church and the Roman Catholic doctrine of tradition:

First, when Protestants speak of common consent of Christians, they understand by Christians the true people of God. Romanists, on the other hand, mean the company of those who profess the true faith, and who are subject to the Pope of Rome. Secondly, when the common consent for which Protestants plead concerns only essential doctrines, Romanists, on the contrary plead the authority of tradition for all kinds of doctrines and precepts, for rites and ceremonies, and ecclesiastical institutions, which has nothing to do with the life of the Church. Thirdly, the common faith of Protestants is faith in doctrines plainly revealed in Scripture. On the other hand, tradition is with the Romanists entirely independent of the Scriptures. Fourthly, Protestants do not regard "common consent" either as an informant or as a ground of faith. With them the written word is the only ground of our faith. Whereas, with Romanists, tradition is not only an informant of what is believed, but the witness on whose testimony faith yielded.<sup>35</sup>

The difference of criteria between Protestants and Roman Catholics is the written word for the former and tradition for the latter. Biblical traditions should be kept by the Church, but traditions which contradict the word of God should be eliminated. The

---

<sup>33</sup> Hendrikus Berkhof, translated by Sierd Woudstra Christian Faith, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmann Publishing, 1979), 339.

<sup>34</sup> Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology Vol.I, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmann Publishings, 1970), 111.

<sup>35</sup> Charles Hodge, 115-116.

Protestant Reformers claimed, “Let the Church become the Church.” It means that the Church should try to reform to retrieve the essence of the Church on the basis of the Bible, not the tradition.

In Acts 7:38 the word , *ekklesia* , is used with OT reference. It is translated as *assembly* (NKJV, NIV). Stephen used the word to describe the congregation or people of God in the wilderness. Stephen’s point was that the giving of the law through Moses to the Jews was the sign of the covenant. By obedience, then, they would continue to be God’s covenant people. But because they disobeyed (7:39), they broke the covenant and forfeited their right to be the chosen people.<sup>36</sup> In the Gospels, the word, *ekklesia*, occurs only twice on the Lord’s lips, in Mt. 16:18(‘on this rock I will build my Church’), and in 18:17 (‘and if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the Church’). In Acts the word is first found, in its Christian sense, in 5:11, where ‘all the Church’ is to be identified with ‘the Church in Jerusalem’ in 8:1.<sup>37</sup>

The author will describe the meaning of the Church in Mt 16:18: “and I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” “My Church” means the body of Christ, not the building or house. The “rock” has been identified as (1) Jesus himself (His work for salvation by dying for us on the cross); (2) Peter (the first great leader in the church at Jerusalem); and (3) The confession of faith that Peter gave and that all subsequent believers would give.<sup>38</sup>

It seems likely that the rock means Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Christ. Jesus Christ declared that God’s people who confess true faith about Him will build a new and

---

<sup>36</sup> Application Study Bible, (Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale House, 1996), 1702.

<sup>37</sup> The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 343.

<sup>38</sup> Application Study Bible, 1441.

whole community as the body of the Lord. People tend to define the Church as an organization, house or building. The first Christians did not need official facilities for meetings. As numbers grew, they needed buildings. After the conversion of Constantine I, some Christian communities may have already commissioned halls especially for worship, and certainly small shrines, such as during the second century.<sup>39</sup> During the Medieval period, the Catholic Church focused more on decorating the Churches than on recovering the essence of the Church. That is one reason that people regard the Church as a building, not an assembly or the body of Christ.

The image of the body in the NT teaches us that the ekklesia is to function as an interdependent, ministering community, gathered so that the members can serve one another, and in this way the individual and community will grow.<sup>40</sup>

### THE BIBLICAL PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

Leading the Church according to the biblical purpose is very important for discipleship. Rick Warren says, “What is needed today are churches that are driven by purpose instead of by other forces.”<sup>41</sup> The NT church started on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Pentecost, the filling with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13), was the beginning. Afterwards the infant Jerusalem church grew with Jesus’ disciples and faithful believers. (Acts 2:43-47). The Jerusalem church in Acts 2 is a model for the purpose of the church.

---

<sup>39</sup> The Oxford Classical Dictionary, edited by Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 330.

<sup>40</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 164.

<sup>41</sup> Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Church, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 80.

## ***Worship***

Worship is the main purpose of the church. The Jerusalem congregation was together with one accord in the temple, and praised God (Acts 2:46-47). The importance of worship is proved in Jesus' instruction. He said, "but the hour is coming, and now is , when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn. 4:23-24). God is looking for the people who worship Him with spirit and truth. Even in churches that focus on Discipleship Training, the numbers who join the program do not exceed twenty percent.<sup>42</sup> When church-goers are challenged and blessed by worship, they are ready to receive discipleship training.

## ***Follow Up***

Christians are blessed by gracious worship and grow through follow-up including Bible Study, Cell Group Study and Discipleship Training. Warren says, "The church exists to edify, or educate, God's people. Discipleship is the process of helping people become more like Christ in their thoughts, feelings, and actions."<sup>43</sup> In the Bible we cannot find organized Discipleship Training or Bible study programs. But the first century Christians were very active in learning the words of God. Christ spoke to the disciples, saying, "Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded to you (Mt. 28:20).

---

<sup>42</sup> It is said in 'Awakening the Laymen Seminar' in the Love Church, Seoul, by Rev. John Han Hum Ok.

<sup>43</sup> Rick Warren, 106.

The apostle Paul asked for Timothy to be strong in grace, stating, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witness, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (II Tim. 2:2). Paul told Timothy, “Christians are good soldiers of Jesus Christ” (II Tim. 2:3).

The tragedy of today’s church is that many Christians do not favor ‘training’. It is not popular terminology. It is no wonder that soldiers who are not trained are defeated in the war. Kuhne said, “The soldiers were on active duty, not on furlough or in the reserves. Warfare was his constant occupation. There was never a time when he was not on the alert.”<sup>44</sup>

As the numbers of Thai church’s pastors are lacking, it is urgently needed to cultivate the entire laity through proper Discipleship Training. They are told that Thais enjoy their spirits of “*sanuk*” (amusement), “*sabai*” (comfort), and “*saduak*” (convenience). However, they are so diligent that they get up at five o’clock in the morning to prepare food and other things for the alms collecting monks. If they understand and are well-motivated, they are persistent in fulfilling what they are doing.<sup>45</sup>

### ***Evangelism***

The Jerusalem Church grew rapidly in quality and quantity also. “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47). Jesus was an outstanding evangelist, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” (Mt. 4:17). When he called His disciples, He promised to make them fishers of men (Mt. 4:19). His last message was “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” (Mt. 28:19). After

---

<sup>44</sup> Gary W. Kuhne, 63.

<sup>45</sup> Soo Gil Yoon, 173.



his Ascension, His disciples and believers scattered all over the world to evangelize the world. (Acts 8:1) The words of God were delivered to the unbelievers by evangelism. Paul urges us to preach the gospel to the world, “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10:14).

According to the Barna Report, only one percent of all adult believers in America contend that they have the spiritual gift of evangelism.<sup>46</sup> Before we develop the gift of evangelism in practical life, we do not know if we have it or not. The church should prepare an adequate evangelism program to win the unbelievers in her community and all nations. Foreign missions is included in this area.

Thai missions have considerable freedom for ministry compared with other Asian countries. Major involvement in the past was institutional; medical works and schools played an important role in winning the first converts and planting the first churches in many parts of the land. The major emphasis is now on urban and rural evangelism, church planting and Bible teaching.<sup>47</sup> Contextualized evangelism needs to be developed.

### *Serving*

The early Jerusalem church was a serving community where believers shared all things in common (Acts 2:44). Warren says, “The church exists to minister to people. Ministry is demonstrating God’s love to others by meeting their needs and healing their

---

<sup>46</sup> George Barna, 61.

<sup>47</sup> Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, 620.

hurts in the name of Jesus.”<sup>48</sup> The purpose of Jesus’ coming to the world is ascertained in Mk. 10:45, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” When a lawyer asked Jesus which is the greatest commandment in the law, Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord...This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matthew 22:35-39).

During Paul’s third missionary journey, he collected money for the impoverished believers in Jerusalem. The churches in Macedonia-Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea had given money even though they were poor, and they had sacrificially given more than Paul expected. Although poor themselves, they wanted to help.<sup>49</sup> Frank Schmitt said, “Christians must be taught the grace of giving and the responsibility to tithe. Stewardship must be taught as a part of the total commitment to Christ. A strong financial program is an indication of a strong spiritual program.”<sup>50</sup>

Unbelievers are more easily moved by a Christian’s heartfelt serving than evangelism. Warren points out that very little actual ministry takes place in many churches.<sup>51</sup> In Thailand, AIDS, drugs, refugees from Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia and tribes are social problems. Christian mercy ministries are necessary to fulfill the purpose of the church.

---

<sup>48</sup> Warren, 104.

<sup>49</sup> Application Study Bible, 1842.

<sup>50</sup> Frank Schmitt, “A Guide to Church Finance”, (LBTS: Private paper, 1980), 6.

<sup>51</sup> Warren, 104.

## ***Fellowship***

‘Fellowship’ was an important factor in early Jerusalem. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42) denotes spiritual fellowship among believers. Paul said, “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (I Cor. 1:9).

The earthly church should be the model of a heavenly church. When the church is filled with the Holy Spirit, the congregation can be united in strong fellowship. Ezra Earl Jones warns, “The church fails when it does not perform its task effectively and completely and the corporate and social nature of the Christian faith is not manifest in the community through the lives of its members.”<sup>52</sup> Warren says, “As Christians we’re called to *belong*, not just to *believe*.”<sup>53</sup>

Christian fellowship in a church helps the maturity and dynamics in life. The church without fellowship is far from the essence of the church as the ‘Body of Christ’. Paul comments, “You are the body of Christ, and members individually” (I Cor. 12:27).

The author described five purposes of the church. Discipleship training contains those elements also. Worship in spirit and truth makes us fervent Christians. Follow-Up leads born-again believers to become disciples of Jesus Christ. Evangelism is the fulfillment of the Great Commission. We can manifest that we are ‘salt’ and ‘light’ in the world by serving the world. Fellowship is the real proof that we are one family under

---

<sup>52</sup> Ezra Earl Jones, Strategies for New Churches, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 31.

<sup>53</sup> Warren, 105.

Heaven. When these purposes are balanced, churches become healthy. God will keep and bless the churches that try to keep the biblical purposes faithfully and sincerely to the end.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MISSIONARY, CHURCH PLANTING AND LEADERSHIP

#### ISSUES IN CHURCH PLANTING BY MISSIONARIES

##### *The Necessity of Missionaries*

Christianity is the only truly universal religion in the world.<sup>1</sup> World missions is a mandate to all believers because Jesus Christ commanded them, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matt. 28:19). After Christ’s Resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the apostles went to the Gentile areas to spread the gospel. They were faithful to the command, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Paul and Barnabas became the first missionaries to the other countries (Acts 13:1-3). Paul’s successful mission trips became the catalyst for Christians to be interested in world missions. Persecutions and difficulties could not stop the missionaries’ march. Eventually the Emperor Constantine approved Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire.

Without the great missionaries, St. Patrick, Augustine, Boniface and groups like the Moravians, Europe would not have been evangelized. William Carey (1761-1834),

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Herbert Kane, A Concise History of the Christian World Mission, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1982), 7.

the English Missionary to India in 1793, is regarded as the Father of modern Protestant Missions. Carey was no longer alone in his plans for the evangelization of the world.<sup>2</sup> Adoniram Judson went to Burma in 1813. Robert Morrison landed in China. Gutzlaff and Tomlin were the first Protestant missionaries to Thailand in the year 1828. Horace Underwood and Henry Appenzeller, one a Presbyterian and the other a Methodist, landed in Korea in 1885.<sup>3</sup>

The Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Missions, published in 1967, lists 1,437 missionary agencies based in the West. Operation World, published in 2001, lists: “Mission agencies: 2,932; Missionaries sent to other lands: 97,732; Cross-cultural missionaries: 143,189; Missionaries serving in homelands: 103,528. All missionaries: 201,260.”<sup>4</sup>

In 1980, at the second Edinburgh conference, a slogan, “A Church for Every People by the Year 2000,” emerged. The focus on people groups rather than either individuals or political countries gave a new strategic boost to the principle of diffusion (of missionaries).<sup>5</sup> Paul G. Hibert and Eloise Hibert Meneses said, “The planting and nurturing of churches is first and foremost a spiritual ministry.”<sup>6</sup> But from the early 1960s, “Missionary, go home” first exploded on the world missions scene.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>4</sup> Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Darrell Daniel, “Deployment Strategy,” Korea Missions Quarterly, spring 2002, 72-73.

<sup>6</sup> Paul G. Hibert and Eloise Hibert Meneses, Incarnational Ministry, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 21.

<sup>7</sup> Jim Reapsome, “Missionary, go home revisited.” Evangelical Mission Quarterly(EMQ), 1997, 390.

It seems to be the same sound, “Yankee, go home.” Most countries where missionaries are working need more church planting with missionaries. Ajith Fernando, the national director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka, stated, “Missionaries are still needed-but of a special kind.”<sup>8</sup> In the interview he said, “The memory of colonial rule is still quite fresh and there is growth of anti-Western sentiment in countries like Sri Lanka. However brilliant they (missionaries) may be in their field, that knowledge must be contextualized. We must work on a theology of cooperation, which is one of the crucial issues facing the church in our part of the world.”<sup>9</sup>

Native church leaders do not want missionaries to initiate the church planting and missionary work. Cooperation and partnership are important words in successful church planting and discipleship training in mission fields. Thailand did not experience colonialism as much as Asia. But because the first Catholic missionaries came to Thailand with soldiers and traders, the Thai people could not differentiate the identities or intentions of the Westerners.<sup>10</sup>

Nantachai Mejudhon said, “Because Protestantism and European powers came to Siam without realizing the cultural and religious values of the Thai, the Christian witness and demonstration of power were judged aggressive by the Thai.”<sup>11</sup> It is not the matter of “necessity of missionaries,” but the problem of “how missionaries cooperate with the native people and contextualize themselves.”

---

<sup>8</sup> An interview with Ajith Fernando by EMQ, Missionaries Still Needed-but of a Special Kind, EMQ, Jan. 1988. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 22-23.

<sup>10</sup> Nantachai, 42.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

## A CHURCH PLANTING MODEL BY MISSIONARIES

Glenn Kendall who has served with the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society for fifteen years, most of the time in Rwanda, stated, "Missionaries should not plant churches."<sup>12</sup> In his challenging article, he said missionaries must be facilitators of new churches instead of leaders of them. He does not mean that missionaries should not be involved in church planting ministries. Instead they must be helpers, not direct church planters. Most of the native church leaders favor this strategy.

In the same context Craig Ott introduced three church planter's roles with the church planting model as follows:

1) The pastoral church planter

The goal of the pastoral church planter is quite simply to begin a new church and pastor it until it can call and pay its own pastor. The missionary can then move on and plant another church. This model of church planting works well under three conditions: (1) high potential for rapid church growth, either because the people are responsive or through transfer; (2) affluence, where the new church can finance its own pastor; and (3), where there are trained national believers available to be called as pastor.

2) The apostolic church pastor

This church planter models himself after the Apostle Paul, thus apostolic, who rarely allowed himself to become pastor of a church he planted. Instead he focused on empowering the local believers to minister, who would as laymen carry on and expand the work after his departure. This model maps out how the missionary must continually change his or her role from learner to evangelist, to teacher, to resident advisor, to itinerant advisor, and finally to absent advisor.

3) The catalytic church planter

The catalytic church planter is one who plants a church, and remains as pastor or a resource person in that church to become a catalyst or facilitator for church multiplication. Rick Warren is an example of a catalytic church planter. Though Warren did not himself directly plant or pastor any other churches, Saddleback, under his leadership went on to plant twenty-six new churches.

---

<sup>12</sup> Glenn Kendall, Missionaries Should Not Plant Churches, EMQ, July 1988, 218.



He was no doubt a significant catalyst used by God to ignite that multiplication of churches.<sup>13</sup>

All countries need missionaries. There are many missionaries in North America to reach Indians and minorities. South Korea, which is known as a church flooding country, also needs missionaries to activate youth mission and church planting partners.

In Thailand the apostolic church pastor's role is preferred. Even though the Thai church shows growth in church planting, its growth rate is not a satisfactory one and decreased in 1970-79 compared to the previous years, 1940-1969.<sup>14</sup> The Thai church needs more correlative partnership with missionaries in church planting ministry.

Missionaries can plant churches, and Thailand needs more churches all over the country. Before starting a church planting ministry by themselves, missionaries should have native partners who can share the biblical church planting ministry together.

### ***Paul's Mission Strategy***

Jesus' disciples were faithful to keep the Great Commission of Matt. 28:10-20 after the Lord's ascension. Saul's conversion became a great milestone in world missions. The Holy Spirit guided Paul (Saul's Greek name) to be a Gentile missionary for the expansion of God's Kingdom. In spite of many difficulties, he did great things for the Gentile mission through three missionary journeys. Paul's concern was that the gospel be spread into every corner of the Gentile world. Doctrinal problems such as circumcision could be overcome successfully by his wise explanations and the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul's company produced great fruit in church planting. Paul tried to establish indigenous

---

<sup>13</sup> Craig Ott, Matching the church Planter's Role with the Church Planting Model, EMQ, July 2001, 338-343.

<sup>14</sup> Hong Shik Shin, 89.

churches, not his home base church model. The attitude of the Antioch church, his sending body, and the Jerusalem church as a mother church shows us that local churches are parts of Christ body.

Paul's successful strategies for world missions are models to all Christian missionaries. His pioneer spirit, team ministry with his co-workers, urban mission and contextualization became a textbook to all church leaders. Even persecution, terror and imprisonment could not stop his ministry. It is helpful to view Paul's mission strategy from different angles, and this project hopes to find an ideal solution in Thailand's mission field.

#### *a) Introduction*

The Holy Spirit and the Great Commission are the key words in Acts. After the Resurrection, the disciples of Christ were taught by the Holy Spirit. They had to wait in Jerusalem for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit (1:5). The risen Christ gave important instructions about the kingdom; "It is not for you to know the times or seasons"(1:7), and "But you shall receive the power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"(1:8). Christ affirmed the Great Commission which He gave in Matt. 28:18-20. John R. W. Stott says, "He (Luke, the author of Acts) goes on to describe the transition stage in which the foundations were laid for the Gentile mission by Stephen's martyrdom and the founding of the Greek church in Antioch. From this international city and church the world-wide Christian mission was launched."<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> John R. W. Stott, The Message of Acts, (Downers Grove, Ill: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 9.

Historically, the Roman Empire ruled most of Asia and Europe under the motto of Pax-Romana. This enabled the colonized countries to be united with the Hellenistic culture and Greek language. Besides these, Rome developed travel routes to dominate the colonized countries effectively. How wonderful it is that these circumstances could help Paul's mission journeys. In the times of Paul the Jews maintained their interest in the hope of seeing the coming of Messiah. Paul, who was Spirit-filled and had enough knowledge about the Old Testament, could explain clearly and powerfully how Jesus was Christ to the Jewish hearers. At first Paul approached the Jews who were scattered in the Gentile areas. The religious Jews allowed Paul to talk about Jesus in the synagogue.

As John B. Polhill pointed out, the gospel began in Jerusalem (Acts 1-5), then it started moving out from Jerusalem into all of Judea and Samaria (Acts 6-8), and finally Paul went "to the end of the earth" (Acts 13-28).<sup>16</sup> Paul's message focused on the covenant, which started with Abraham, Moses and David. In the process of developing the covenant concept, Paul's sermons culminated on the premise that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ. By the grace of God, great numbers of believers and churches in Gentile areas were added in less than 10 years.

### *b) The Purpose of Acts*

The author of Acts tried to show the triumph of the Gospel to the end of the earth with the power of the Holy Spirit. If we survey the general statement of purpose, we can acknowledge that point (1:1-5). F. F. Bruce states that Acts takes up the tale after the resurrection of Jesus and carries it on for some thirty years; Luke traces the progress of

---

<sup>16</sup> John B. Polhill, Acts: the New American Commentary, (Nashville: Broadman Press: 1992), 62.

Christianity from Judea to Rome, and ends with the chief herald of the gospel proclaiming it at the heart of the empire with the full acquiescence of the imperial authorities.<sup>17</sup> Some have argued that Luke-Acts was written to encounter a particular false teaching.<sup>18</sup> John B. Polhill comments;

Most often suggested has been Gnosticism.<sup>19</sup> Any evidence for Luke fighting Gnosticism in his book is indirect at best. In Acts the threat to the church is not from within the fellowship but always from without.<sup>20</sup> The same can be said for Marcion. The emphasis on Christianity's roots in Judaism can be better explained on other grounds than as a polemic against Marcionism.<sup>21</sup>

The book of Acts focuses on prayer, the awakening for the Great Commission, the power of the Holy Spirit and Paul's three mission journeys with the power of the Holy Spirit. Luke does not describe Paul's life in detail, but tells how God's hands govern Gentile nations for the expansion of His Kingdom. Acts reminds us of the importance of prayer, Bible study and the reality of the Holy Spirit. Besides these, Paul's fervent missionary life challenges us to be a witness to our nation and Gentile countries also. Paul's church-planting ministry in Gentile nations was very effective in winning souls. In doing so, his company tried to develop pastoral leaders to care for the indigenous churches. The churches were managed by themselves and even had grown to help the

---

<sup>17</sup> F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Book of Acts, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 20.

<sup>18</sup> Polhill, 56.

<sup>19</sup> C. H. Talbert, Luke and the Gnostics: An Examination of the Lucan Purpose, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), Quoted in Polhill, 57.

<sup>20</sup> J. Knox, Marcion and the New Testament, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942). Quoted in Polhill, 57.

<sup>21</sup> W. C. van Unnik, "Die Apostelgeschichte und die Heresien," sparsa collecta (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 402-409. Quoted in Polhill, 57.

Jerusalem church. The book of Acts contains the normative model for the Church of all times, such as the way of selecting church leaders, helping the poor in the church and the role of the home church for the missionaries, etc.

*c) Historical Transition in Acts*

Hans Conzelmann said, "Fundamental to Acts is a picture of the whole of salvation history divided up into three epochs: the time of Israel, the time of Jesus (as the center), and the time of the church. This picture emerges mostly clearly from Luke's Gospel."<sup>22</sup> After the ascension of Jesus Christ, the gospel could not be confined to the Jews only. The Pentecost occasion in Acts 2 caused the spreading of the gospel to Gentile nations. As Conzelmann states, "The continuation of the gospel by Acts is neither accidental nor is it motivated by purely literary considerations. The presupposition is that the church is a historical entity which has its own particular time; in other words, that the imminent end of history has been transformed into a portrait of history."<sup>23</sup>

The period of Acts, A.D. 30-62, corresponds with the earlier Roman Empire. It is necessary to review the political background to understand the historical transition in Acts. John W. Mauck summarizes;

Two of the four emperors who reigned during that period, Gaius aka Caligula (A.D. 37-41) and Nero (A.D. 54-68) were base tyrants. The first, Tiberius (A. D. 14-37) does not figure significantly in Acts. The third, and only emperor mentioned by name in Acts, Claudius, reigned from A.D. 41 to 54. Nero, although not mentioned by name in Acts, is a central behind-the-scenes character of the drama. By the time Acts was written about A.D. 62, he had been emperor eight years. All of Acts (and its companion volume, Luke) could have been written with

---

<sup>22</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, translated by James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), □ | □.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

the hope that it would be read by Nero (25:10-11). To understand Acts, it helps enormously to consider the possibility of Nero as one of the intended eventual readers of the legal defense of Paul and Christianity. Nero was feared for his murders of leaders who opposed him, his cruelty, and his wild suspicions. Most famously, he is remembered for blaming the fire which destroyed most of Rome, on July 19, A.D. 64 on the Christians after the rumor had spread that Nero himself was the instigator of arson. The historical portraiture which emerges is Joseph Stalin in drag.<sup>24</sup>

In this situation, the Jews were waiting for the Messiah who would save them from the cruel Roman persecution. The Pentecost occasion in Acts 2 was a ground-breaking event to spread the gospel to the Gentiles. The Good News was to spread geographically, from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria, and finally to the whole world. It would begin with devout Jews in Jerusalem and Samaria, spread to the mixed race in Samaria, and finally be offered to the Gentiles in the uttermost parts of the earth. It has often been pointed out that the geographical terms of Acts 1:8 provide an "Index of Contents" for Acts. "You shall be witness to Me" might be regarded as the theme of the book; "In Jerusalem and Samaria" Acts 8:1 to 11:18; and the remainder of the book deals with the progress of the gospel outside the frontiers of the Holy Land until at last it reaches Rome. This is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isa.2:3, "For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

Paul's conversion became a great milestone for world missions. In spite of his record as a persecutor, he was a chosen missionary in Jesus' name more than anyone else. Even those who are opponents in the eyes of Christians can be wonderful instruments if they are in His hand. Paul's journey to Damascus was a dramatic turning point from zealous Jew to faithful apostle (Acts 9). The story of the Damascus road experience describes Paul's definite conversion and changed life. Paul shared the gospel boldly

---

<sup>24</sup> John W. Mauck, Paul on Trial, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 10-12.

though he knew that serious persecution and suffering were waiting for him. At that time the Roman Empire tried to unite her colonies with Hellenistic culture, Greek language and a well-developed route for the efficiency of ruling. Paul's mission trips were targeted in these areas because of the easy approach to win souls. His successful ministry might be due to the above good conditions.

*d) Paul's Mission Strategy in Acts*

Paul's ministry to the Gentiles focused on church planting. Native leaders, not Paul and Barnabas, ruled the churches. After planting churches, Paul visited the churches which he started in order to encourage them. The churches were taken care of by native leaders.

*i) Church Planting*

During the first missionary journey, Paul visited synagogues to share the gospel. His speech focused on the message that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah who was prophesied in the Old Testament. His Spirit-filled words and miraculous ministry impacted many Gentiles, so great numbers turned to Christ. After Paul left the field, he put the native leaders in charge. In less than ten years Paul would plant churches in Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia and Asia, which were the territories of the Roman Empire. Before AD 47 there were no churches around those areas, but Paul could say his church-planting ministry was finished in those fields in AD 57.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Rolland Allen, Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?, (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1962). 3.

Even though Paul was an itinerant missionary, he established many churches. The churches became the base to evangelize the unbelievers in that area. And he did not become the senior pastor at one church, but he appointed other leaders from among the congregation. In this way the churches could grow indigenously.

Paul tried to establish indigenous churches, not mission structures or buildings. He knew that structures and buildings could be destroyed but the church, the body of Christ, would be forever.

#### ii) Building Leaders

When Paul left Lystra, he exhorted the disciples to continue in the faith (14:22) and appointed elders in every church, and after praying and fasting, he commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed (14:23). The elders did not come from other churches, but the congregation selected them. Luke did not explain enough to know if the elders believed in Jesus after meeting Paul or not. We assume that the church leaders were already Christians for the reason that Paul didn't stay in that area long, so there was not time enough to train elders. Concerning the qualification of church officers, Paul said, "Not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnations as the devil" (1Tim. 3:6). Paul's ministry was not fixed in one field. Three years of ministry in Ephesus was the longest term during his missionary journey (Acts 19). Paul could be an itinerant missionary because his ministry was possible with the Greek language. Paul did his best to establish churches and train leaders. His powerful and fervent ministry was the driving force to attract many people. His modeling was enough for the other leaders to sacrifice themselves for the churches.



### iii) Vision Casting

It is said, "A missionary should be a visionary." Paul's ultimate goal as a missionary was Rome, the heartland at that time, and Spain, known then as the end of the world. His mission field was enlarged whenever his team went out for a missionary journey. After the successful ministry at Ephesus, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome" (Acts 19:21). The vision came from the Spirit, not from worldly ambition. Paul's outstanding ministries such as team ministry, church planting, building leaders and contextualized application is our textbook for all missionaries. This was possible because Paul experienced the love of Jesus truly and deeply.

The road to Rome, however, led Paul first by way of Jerusalem; and his journey to Jerusalem caused Paul to go to Rome, his ultimate aim as a missionary. Much as Jesus' own journey to Jerusalem was marked by trial and persecution, it was God's sovereignty that Paul would see Rome as a prisoner. His prophesy, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome" (Acts 19:21) was fulfilled. During this time, Paul wrote letters, commonly called his Prison Letters, to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians. He also wrote personal letters, such as the one to Philemon, which today are impacting so many people and missionaries who want to follow the apostle's methods in approaching the unsaved.

Along with these, Paul could associate the people with himself in all that he did.<sup>26</sup> Many people followed him around. Paul kept in touch with them through prayer

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 154

and visiting. His wonderful ministry could not be done alone, but by the help of co-workers it was possible. Many names listed in his letters were Paul's co-workers.

#### iv) Christ-centered mission

Paul's mission strategy is based on a Christ-centered faith. In the letter to Corinth Paul said, "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). His dramatic conversion experience at Damascus forced him to exalt Jesus Christ, so he could say that he had been crucified with Christ. "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

This conviction drove Paul to be a missionary to the Gentiles. He made it his aim "to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation" (Rom. 15: 20). He motivated many followers to pioneer the unreached land with their pioneering spirits. Even in jail, Paul did not hesitate to share the gospel boldly (Phil. 2:12-30). This power came from the Holy Spirit, and it originated from a life of prayer. Paul strongly emphasized the importance of prayer (Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17). Prayer was the origin of miracle and wonders in his ministry (Acts 13:1-3, 16:25, 19:6). When God's will and Paul's will were different, he was ready to yield to the Lord's command because he was a man of prayer (Acts 16: 6).

#### v) Contextualization

Paul was wise enough to contextualize the Gentile circumstances into biblical principles. At Lystra Paul enlisted Timothy to take the place of John Mark just as Silas

later replaced Barnabas.<sup>27</sup> Timothy's mother was Jewish, but his father was Greek. Because of Timothy's mixed parentage, Paul decided to circumcise him before taking him along as a missionary partner. Paul worried that Timothy's lack of circumcision would cause Jews to reject him. Paul was confident in the principle of keeping the Law but was open-minded in applying the rule (I Cor. 9:20).

If we emphasize the context strongly, we are apt to miss the text, the Bible. On the contrary, there is a pitfall that we still stay in the first century situation if we fail to apply the biblical principle effectively. Liberal theology that eliminates the essence of the Cross is threatening the mission field. Keeping the balance between text and context without changing the original meaning of the Bible is the task for missionaries and church leaders.

Yasuko Nagai says, "In many Asian countries, it is almost impossible to separate culture from traditional religions. Giving up cultural practices means to live outside the culture."<sup>28</sup> The Holy Spirit is the best counselor for that.

### ***Conclusion***

Paul was an outstanding strategist as a missionary to win souls. Hesselgrave designed "The Pauline Cycle," a step-by-step church planting model applicable in the United States as well as abroad. He addresses ten headings in the model from theological, scientific, and practical perspectives: (1) missionary commissioned, (2) audience contacted, (3) gospel communicated, (4) hearers converted, (5) believers congregated, (6)

---

<sup>27</sup> Homer A. Kent, Jr. Jerusalem to Rome, (Grands Rapids: Baker Book, 1972), 132.

<sup>28</sup> Yasuko Nagai, "Being Indigenous As Well As: A Case of Maiwala Christians in Papua New Guinea," Missiology: An International Review, No. 3, July 1999. 393.

faith confirmed, (7) leaders consecrated, (8) believers commended, (9) relationships continued, and (10) sending churches convened.<sup>29</sup>

Many types of mission models can be developed according to the views of the readers of Acts. Rolland Allen stated five principles of the secret of the Apostle's success in founding churches as this: (1) all teaching to be permanent must be intelligible and so capable of being grasped and understood that those who have once received it can retain it, use it, and hand it on, (2) all organizations in like manner must be of such character that it can be understood and maintained, (3) all financial arrangements made for the ordinary life and existence of the church should be such that the people themselves can and will control and manage their own business independently of any foreign subsidies, (4) a sense of mutual responsibility of all Christians one for another should be carefully inculcated and practiced, (5) authority to exercise spiritual gifts should be given freely at once.<sup>30</sup>

The important factor in Paul's mission strategy is that his life was devoted to world evangelization. He was confident that being a missionary to the Gentile people was God's calling (Gal. 2:8). The confidence for the calling was the main force to get over many difficulties and persecutions. These obstacles could not hinder sharing the gospel with the unsaved. When Paul was a prisoner at Rome, he was confined to quarters, a rented house, with limited freedom to receive all who came to him for two years (Acts 28:30). It is not surprising that Paul could preach the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ with all confidence, with no one forbidding him (Acts 28:31).

---

<sup>29</sup> Tom A. Steffen, "Selecting a Church Planting Model That Works," Missiology: An International Review. July 1994, 362.

<sup>30</sup> Allen, 151.

## LEADERSHIP

### *Why Do We Need Leadership?*

Everything rises and falls on leadership.<sup>31</sup> We are living in a changing world and Christian leaders need spiritual leadership. John C. Maxwell says, “Leadership is influence.”<sup>32</sup> Biblical leadership is found in Jesus Christ. He showed us ‘Servant Leadership.’ “And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all,” (Mk. 10:45) was a paradoxical instruction to His disciples. Jesus was a model in servant-hood by washing the Twelve’s feet and being crucified on the Cross for our redemption (Rom. 5:8).

Paul also led his mission team with servant-hood. His leadership did not come from physical or world power, but from spiritual power with perseverance, signs, wonders and mighty deeds (II Cor. 12:12).

Leadership is the ability to obtain followers.<sup>33</sup> When Jesus met Peter and Andrew, He said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt. 4:19). After that, “They immediately left their nets and followed Him” (Mt. 4:20). According to Paul’s final commendations and greetings to many congregations, we can see that he also had many followers (Rom. 16:1-27). In discipleship, leadership is a key factor in mobilizing, training and reproducing.

---

<sup>31</sup> John C. Maxwell, Developing the Leader within You, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), Introduction.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

The world is experiencing a significant cultural and worldview transformation. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the world is changing rapidly with the Information Technology revolution. Researchers claim to clone human embryos which has drawn protests from religious and political leaders who see it as a step toward cloning human beings.<sup>34</sup> Richard Tiplady in writing on a “Generation X Worldview”<sup>35</sup> stated as follows:

1) Individuality

We have a major focus on and concern for individuality and identity (who am I?) This diversification and fragmentation of lifestyle and society lead to situations where we have more acquaintances but fewer friendships (hence the popularity of “Friends” –type TV programs).

2) Flexibility

We see a paradoxical unwillingness to commit too deeply to any one identity. We allow for the concept of self-invention. We don’t just deal with information overload by customizing the information to our need. We “surf” the internet, or we channel-hop while watching TV.

3) Scientism

In a post-modern worldview, all meta-narratives (constructions of reality) are used by the powerful to maintain their own interests and extend them to the detriment of others. These values encourage skepticism towards all authority holders, secular or religious.<sup>36</sup>

Those situations are challenges in leadership, not only for native church leaders but also for the missionaries. Missionaries should break through two obstacles, the Generation X gap and the cross-cultural gap. For missionaries who are establishing churches and doing Discipleship Training, cultural backgrounds can become important elements in successful Discipleship Training.

---

<sup>34</sup> The News and Advance (Lynchburg, VA.), “Researchers Claim Coning of Hman Embyro, Nov. 26, 2001.

<sup>35</sup> The label “Generation X” has been applied to those born more or less between 1965 and 1980. Richard Tiplady, “Let X=X: Generation X and World Mission”, Global Missiology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, edited by William, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2000), 463.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 468-469.

### *Leadership Perspectives of East and West Worldview*

Charles H. Kraft of the Fuller School of World Missions compared the Korean perspective with the Western perspective like this:<sup>37</sup>

Korean Perspective	Western Perspective
Relationship Orientation  Pastoral missions (start church in order to pastor it for years to come).	Functional Orientation (job description).  Apostolic ministries (in a churchless area to start a church, but turn it over to a national)
Pastoral authority (key reason the Korean church has grown) (emphasis on ordaining pastors)	Lay Leadership is an infinitely reproducible model
Building a church building limits the movement to funds available and makes nationals dependent on foreign funds.	House church reduces financial investment needed in establishing churches
Patriarchal Attitudes (Mature missionaries know what should be done and want to teach proven methods)	Leadership Training – On the Job training allows the national to learn while ministering and provides a multiplication of the missionaries’ ministry through training.
Import - - theology, resources, funds (form over function)	Indigenuity - - (function over form) should not take precedence over biblical culture
Institutional training - - (schools and seminaries) provides growth dynamics of fellowship and discussions.	Local Church Training in small groups provides time and cost-efficient means of training leaders in their ministry setting.
Bold Witnesses cannot be low profile. Whatever they do they do 100 %.	Security Consciousness protects the platform of co-workers at the expense of openly proclaiming the gospel at every opportunity.
Self Expression causes one to speak exactly what is on their mind with little thought of the consequences set in motion.	Consequence Awareness causes one to think about what the impact will be on others before acting and speaking.
Risk Takers, though aware that some locals will be persecuted are willing to take calculated risks because the payoff is worth the persecution.	Protecting Co-workers can displace the aggressive accomplishment of the goals.
Sending Body can dictate the strategy by demanding results commensurate with investments.	Receiving Body must dictate the tactics to begin a church planting movement.

<sup>37</sup> Charles H. Kraft, “Comparison of East and West Worldview”, *KMQ*, (Seoul: KWM, spring 2002), 81.

Emotion Centered people act spontaneously and reveal their feelings and opinions.	Logic Centered people act according to empirical logic at the expense of concealing their feelings and opinions.
Shamanistic heritage leads one to counter spiritual causes by praying for healing, deliverance of target groups.	Scientific heritage leads one to explain circumstances by physical causes.
Prayer Generated strategy subjectively leads one to do what God is leading them to do.	Research Generated Strategy logically sets a plan based on empirical demographic information.

These differences of worldview impact establishing churches and building leaders in mission fields. Korea churches which are sending bodies of Korean missionaries, the new tigers of the globalization of missions,<sup>38</sup> experienced church growth until 1984.<sup>39</sup> In 1900, there were about 16,000 missionaries all over the world, and most of them were European and American. Now 12-15 percent of 420,000 missionaries are Western missionaries.<sup>40</sup> In 1988 there were 50,500 Canadian and American missionaries, but the numbers were reduced to 41,142 in 2002. In that year Korea sent 10,600 missionaries into the world.<sup>41</sup> Without a background of church growth in Korea, it would be impossible to send so many missionaries.

Prayer and faith were important factors for successful church growth in Korea. Naturally, Korean missionaries implanted the same model in their mission fields. Even though the author does not agree with all of Kraft's opinions, his overall statements are right.

---

<sup>38</sup> Stan Guthrie, "Korean Church Catches a Whiff of Trouble in the Air," *EMQ*, April 1996, 199.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Heung Ho Jung, "Missions in the Third Millennium", *KMQ*, spring 2002, 90.

<sup>41</sup> *KMQ*, 109.



Those trends are common to other Asian missionaries also. In Western culture the education system places much weight on factual information. The analytical and rational ways of thinking formulated Western perspectives, but the Asians use different combinations: integration and emotion. Confucianism, Shamanism and Christianity contribute to form those perspectives. Some perspectives are strengths to break through crisis and difficulties.<sup>42</sup> But patriarchal attitudes, intuitional-centered training and emotion-centered perspectives should be harmonized and contextualized with the natives.

### ***Biblical Leadership***

A church should emphasize discipleship. Every Christians should be involved in edifying other believers.<sup>43</sup> For successful Discipleship Training, building biblical leadership is the most significant factor. Jesus Christ was an influential leader in discipline. His disciples, Paul, and His followers preached the gospel and built Christ's disciples like their teacher, Jesus Christ.

#### 1) Trust

Trust is the conviction that the leader means what he says.<sup>44</sup> Some people are not consistent in words and actions. At first some leaders can get followers because of eloquent speech, wisdom or external attractions. Those do not last long. Peter F. Druger

---

<sup>42</sup> *Time* March 25, 2002. Edition reports that *Samsung*, once a maker of cheapo gadgets, the Korean Giant is churning out cutting-edge stuff that's cool to own. The company demonstrated a century's worth of catching up in a very short time. Diligences, investment and research were regarded as successful factors.49-51.

<sup>43</sup> John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Master's Plan for the Church*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 106.

<sup>44</sup> Peter F. Druger, *Managing for the Future*, (New York: Truman Tally Books, 1992), 122.

says, “A leader’s actions and a leader’s professed beliefs must be congruent, or at least compatible.”<sup>45</sup>

In spite of difficulties in the wilderness, Moses could maintain strong leadership because the Israelites trusted him. They believed in him as a man of God. When plagues struck Egypt, the Israelites believed Moses to be their leader (Ex. 7-11). Moses and God talked face to face in the Tent of Meeting (Ex. 33:11). That meant God’s presence was with Moses. The Israelites trusted him fully. When Jesus spoke, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, for he taught as one who had real authority—quite unlike the teachers of religious law (Mt. 7:28-29). His spiritual authority made his followers trust him without hesitation. Even though there was no formal or institutional discipleship training, Jesus’ disciples became successful because He was consistent in teaching and in life. Paul was very careful in handling gifts, so no one could fault him for financial mismanagement (II Cor. 8:20-21). His powerful spiritual authority was enough to earn trust from his followers.

In leadership, earning trust is a requirement. When the author asked for any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of discipleship training in the Thai church, a Thai respondent commented, “My church leader does not become a model and does not have clear purposes.” This means that the church leader did not earn trust from the members. Teaching is easy, but leading is hard. Leading is hard, but modeling is harder. Earning trust from members in a church is the first step in successful leadership.

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

## 2) Commitment

Great leaders build great churches.<sup>46</sup> Their common features are attainable goals, clear vision and commitment. Those are essential requirements for church leaders.

Jerry Falwell, founder of Thomas Road Baptist Church and chancellor of Liberty University, is known as “a man of commitment.” His commitment to the work grows out of a driving conviction that people are lost and going to hell.<sup>47</sup> Falwell’s commitment to the ministry is measured in giving an invitation to those who want to be saved even in a Commencement Ceremony.

Nehemiah, who rebuilt the Jerusalem wall with Ezra, demonstrated excellent leadership through planning, teamwork, problem solving, and courage to get the work done.<sup>48</sup> Nehemiah faced scorn, slander, and threats from enemies, as well as fear, conflicts, and discouragement from his own workers.<sup>49</sup> He did not stop the work, but completed the work by committing himself and suffering and rejoicing together. After the wall was built, Ezra read the law to the people, bringing about national repentance.<sup>50</sup>

Leaders are devoted to their ministry. Jesus asked for deep commitment. “He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (Jn. 12:25). And He commanded us to take our crosses and follow Him (Mt. 10:38). Jesus’ commitment is measured in His love, mercy and death on the cross to fulfill His mission. Without the commitment of leaders, there are no followers. The pitfall

---

<sup>46</sup> Elmer L Towns, America’s Fastest Growing Churches, (Nashville: Impact Books, 1972), 10.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 28.

<sup>48</sup> Life Application Study Bible, (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 741.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

of leadership is that everybody wants to be leader, but not everybody wants to take a risk or sacrifice themselves.

### 3) Servant-hood

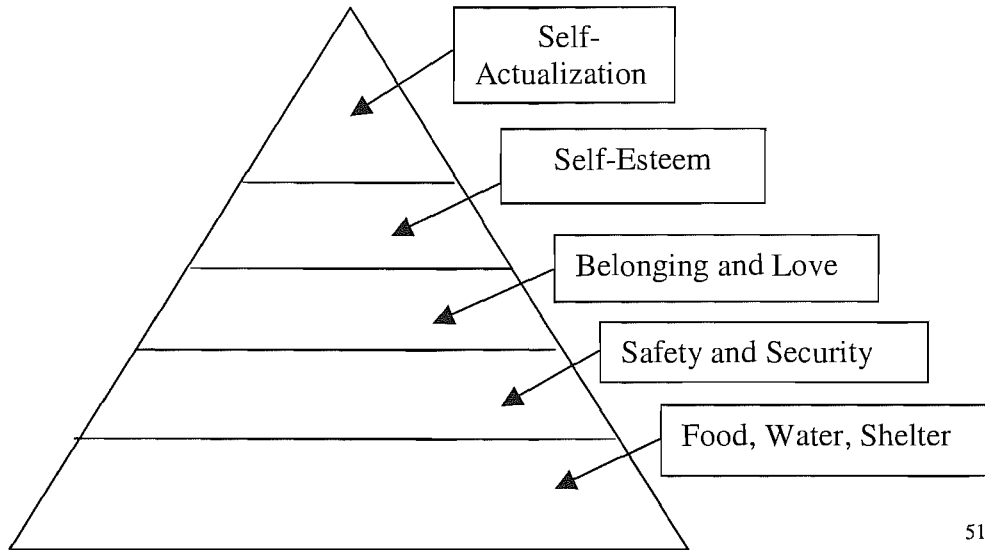
Secular leadership has a nuance of ‘dominating others.’ But Christian leadership is the opposite. “And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave,” says Jesus in Mt. 20:27. He displayed His servant-hood by washing the Twelve’s feet. Jesus said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be saved, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mk. 10:45). This paradoxical teaching differentiates Christian leadership from worldly leadership. Leadership is not management. The climax of Jesus’ leadership is shown in His crucifixion on the cross. Even His followers and the Twelve thought He was defeated. They were frustrated and scattered. But He rose and assured them the Holy Spirit would come and equip them with new spiritual power.

Christ’s humility and exaltation in Philippians 2:5-11 characterize Christian servant leadership. Even though He is equal to God because He is God (Jn 1:1 ff; Col. 1:15-19) He became a man to fulfill God’s plan of salvation for all people. But God glorified Christ because of His obedience. God exalted Him and gave Him the name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9). Christ’s servant leadership impacted Paul, that he confessed, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs tells us that self-actualization is the last goal in our life. Christ did not ignore the importance of bread, but He taught what the goal of

self-actualization was. It is written in Matthew 4:4, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”

### MASLOW’S HIERARCHY OF HUMAN NEEDS



51

Christ recognized human needs so He healed the sick and fed the five thousand with five loaves of bread and two fish (Mt. 14:13-21). He liked to be with tax collectors and sinners (Mt. 9:10). Christ showed the importance of ‘belonging and love’ by lowering Himself. But He had heavenly authority in His teaching and speech which empowered His leadership (Mt. 7: 29). Self-actualization of human beings is accomplished by finding Jesus Christ who makes us free (Jn. 8:32). James C. Hunter suggested ‘servant leadership’ as follows:

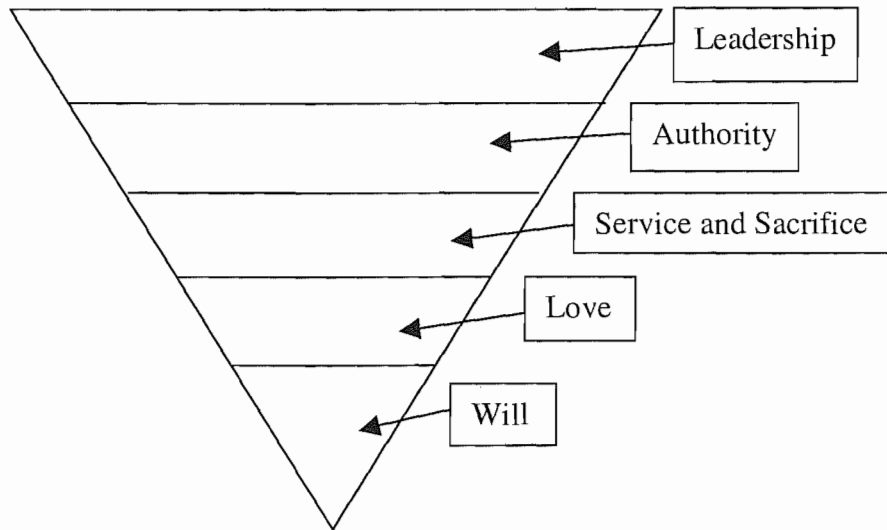
Leadership begins with the will, which is our unique ability as human beings to align our intentions with our actions and choose our behavior. With the proper will, we can choose to love, the verb. When we meet the needs of others we will be called upon to serve and even sacrifice. When we serve and sacrifice for

---

<sup>51</sup> James C. Hunter, *The Servant*, (Boston: Prima Publishing, 1998), 69.

others, we build authority or influence. And when we build authority with people, then we have earned the right to be called leader.<sup>52</sup>

#### LEADERSHIP MODEL



In Thailand the graduates of Bible schools or seminaries are young, lacking ministry experience and academic achievement. In addition most of the seminary students come from rural areas. For example, seventy to eighty percent of Bangkok Institute of Theology (BIT) students are from rural areas or tribes.<sup>53</sup> These are factors that lessen leadership for native church leaders when they work in Bangkok or urban cities. Timothy, the disciple of Paul, was young, but Paul encouraged him, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (I Tim. 4:12). Leadership in the Thai church should focus on providing spiritual and life training for the prospective church leader. The power of prayer and teaching the Bible with a holy life is the means to conquering those external leadership problems in the Discipleship Training of Thai churches.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>53</sup> Dae Young Cha, “Leadership Development of Church Leaders.” '99 Korean Thailand Missionary Theology Seminar, (Bangkok: Privately Published by Korea-Thailand Missionary, 1999)

## CHAPTER SIX

### A DISCIPLESHIP MODEL FOR THAI CHURCHES

#### SURVEYS WITH THAI CHURCH LEADERS

Missionaries work in cross culture situations which faith, wisdom and leadership are necessary. If missionaries dominate too much and for too long for the local churches, the churches would not be able to grow within itself and eventually be weakened. Cooperation and partnership are pointed out as important concepts in building discipleship churches in Thailand.

Thai churches need training to be mature. Discipleship training is the biblical mandate to all believers, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (II Tim. 2:2).

Successful discipleship depends on the church leader’s philosophy of ministry. The author surveyed Discipleship Training situations in Thai churches at the Good Shepherd Training Conference<sup>1</sup> held in Chonburi, Thailand. Fifty-four leaders from different areas, denominations and backgrounds answered the questionnaire. Twenty-four (44 %) were pastors and the other thirty (56%), were laymen including elders, deacons and students. Thirty-eight (70%) responded that their churches have Discipleship Training, compared to forty-six (85%) churches having Bible study programs. Because the author did not give a definition for Discipleship Training in the church on the questionnaire, responders’ concepts about Discipleship Training may be

---

<sup>1</sup> This seminar is held every two months for the Thai church leaders to equip them with the biblical leadership in Chonburi, Thailand. The survey was done during March 12-15, 2002, [Table 1].

different. But the results shows an active involvement and interest in Thai churches' Discipleship Training.

### *Responders Point of View*

Until the 1970s, the Thai church was ineffective in reaching the Theravada Buddhists and it grew only out of biological evangelism. However, since the 1980s, Thai churches' growth have exceeded the birthrate. Although industrialism, urbanism and the influx of the tribes contributed to the growth, native church leaders' interest and effort for church growth also strongly affected church growth. Materials and seminars for Discipleship Training stimulated the church leaders to be interested in discipleship training.<sup>2</sup>

Thai Church leaders doing Discipleship Training are satisfied that the trainee's life is changed after they begin Discipleship Training. The responses to the question, "What do you expect from Discipleship Training?" indicate this. The responses were: "individual change in life" (34%), "church revival" (28%), "knowledge of the Bible" (26%) and "increased fellowship" (12%) [see Diagram 1]. Those diverse responses indicate that many respondents did not understand the biblical meaning of "Discipleship Training."

The difference between "Traditional Bible Study" and "Discipleship Training" is Christian maturity and a changed life through training. One of the reasons why many church-goers remain as "pew-warming Christians" is the lack of training and application of the Bible to their daily lives. Thai Christianity is not any different. As Christ's disciples, trials and errors will happen in daily life. Discipleship Trainings can help Christians win these trials. Discipleship Training will produce a changed life

---

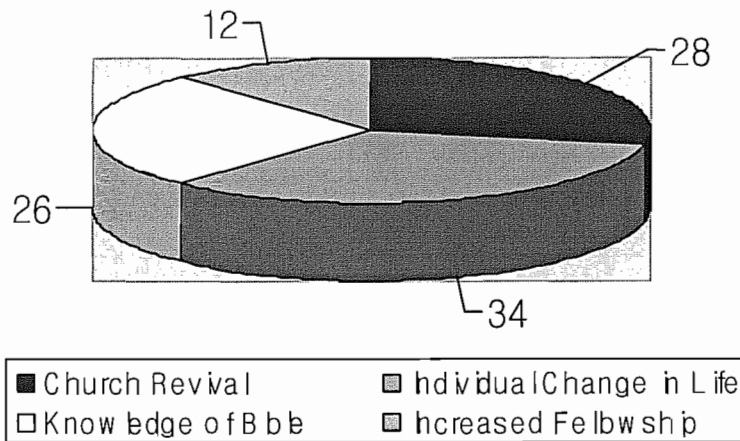
<sup>2</sup>Tyrannus ministry team of GP Thai, which focuses on publishing books for Thai church leaders, published 'One to One Discipleship Training' and held seminars.



but without Discipleship Training, life may not be significantly changed and a person will remain a nominal Christian.

Church revival cannot be the primary goal for starting Discipleship Training. At first the church may lose some members who are not used to training. Church growth in numbers follows Discipleship Training automatically if church members' lives are changed. Discipleship Training is not a means to church revival in numbers, but it should be a fundamental base that pursues a changed life as a Christian.

[Diagram 1: Expectations from Discipleship Training]

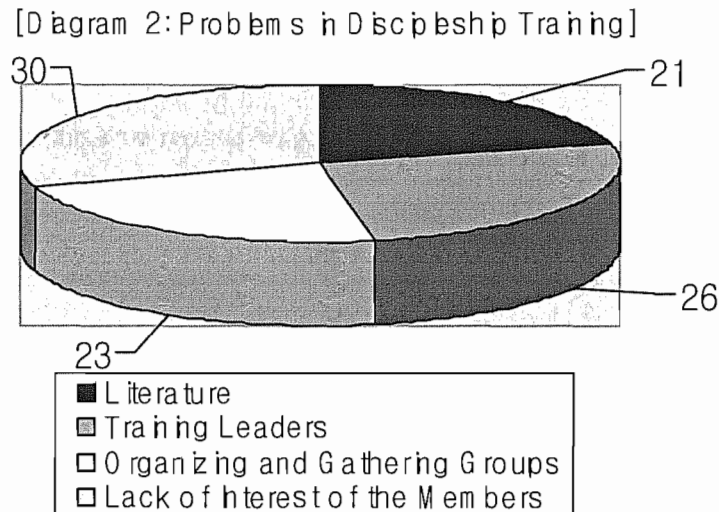


### ***Problems in Discipleship Training***

Literature, organizing groups, gathering groups, and training leaders were all indicated as problems in the survey responses. There was not much difference in the percentages [see Diagram 2]. "Lack of interest of the members" ranked as the most serious problem (30%). This is related to the pastor's ministry. When the pastors and church leaders do not emphasize Discipleship Training, members tend to neglect it. Mature Christians are not born, but are produced by training in churches. Growth and maturity in the Christian life should be permanent goals of all believers. Discipleship

Training can help accomplish these goals. Leaders emphasizing Discipleship Training through sermons, teaching and ministry can solve the problem of 'lack of interest'.

The next problem related in the survey was 'training leaders' (26%). This don't like the word 'training' because they are used to an easy going life and comfort. The essential solution to this problem rests on pastors and church leaders who initiate the churches. If they are equipped with the philosophy of Discipleship Training as the mandate of Jesus Christ, God will provide the churches with good leaders to be trained. The problem of 'organizing and gathering groups' (23%) and 'literature' (21%) are minor problems when church leaders emphasize the importance of training.



## INTERVIEWS WITH THAI CHURCH LEADERS

### *The Professor's Point of View*

There are about twenty seminaries and Bible schools in Thailand, but the number of students is small. Large seminaries such as Bangkok Bible College and Seminary (BBCS) and Bangkok Institute of Theology (BIT) have 100 to 150 students in BA and 20 to 50 in M.Div. courses. Thai churches always are lacking full time

ministers. The Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), one of the largest protestant denominations, has 700 churches, but forty percent of the churches do not have full time pastors. Because Christianity is a minority religion in Thai society, there is a tendency for even some Christians to disdain the office of pastor. On the other hand, Buddhist monks are estimated to number 30,000, and are honored by society. The lack of honor and respect is the main reason that few apply to the seminaries and Bible schools. The graduates of seminaries tend to work for mission organizations and other Christian organizations because they guarantee more pay and are less stressful than becoming local church pastors.

#### 1) Problems of Discipleship Training in Seminary

Most of the Thai seminaries make it a rule for the undergraduate students to live in the dormitory during the weekdays. Many focus on Discipleship Training also, but there are some problems. Soo Gil Yoon, the principal of Thailand Evangelical Seminary, suggested three.

Firstly, discontinuity of Discipleship Training occurs during vacation breaks and weekends as they leave the dorm. Without a discipler and partner who care for each other, they feel difficulties in practicing discipleship in their lives. Secondly, the goal and content of the Discipleship Training course do not get accustomed to because of the weakness of the trainee. Thirdly, evangelism is hard to win two unsaved in a year. Some students do not reach the goal until graduation.<sup>3</sup>

Some seminaries do not emphasize Discipleship Training because they do not have the ministry philosophy and professors who have experience. Many seminaries are lacking in practical ministry professors as full time teachers.

---

<sup>3</sup> On the interview with Soo Gil Yoon and Tae Min Ha, March 14, 2002.

## 2) Practical Teaching and Application

TES is one of the seminaries that focuses on Bible study and discipleship on campus. The students are trained in the community dorm during the semester. Starting in 1989, TES set three goals:

- a) A school of discipleship training
- b) A school of evangelism
- c) A school of church planting<sup>4</sup>

To achieve those goals, the principal and dorm teachers stay at the dorm to take care of the students. Besides the regular curriculum on discipleship training, the students labor daily to experience the importance of physical work. Once a week they go to their assigned villages or communities in which they preach the gospel by using various kinds of evangelistic methods. This evangelism will be followed by personal contact and follow-up.<sup>5</sup> During the vacation, organized teams are sent to different provinces to preach the gospel for one to two weeks.

Pajorn, a graduate of TES and pastor of Phraphon Thai church, applied discipleship training in his church ministry successfully. He cares for the individual souls in his church as Christ cares for the church. In organizing church programs, discipleship training is given more weight than other programs. Members' lives are changed and the church shows growth.

God's servants should be armed with discipleship training before they go to the warfare field. Christ' disciples who are well trained in the Bible and discipleship training with the power of the Holy Spirit can win battles against the evils of adultery, drug and corruption. This can be done effectively when seminaries and Thai churches are linked in a strong partnership under the same spirit to provide Discipleship Training for prospective Thai church leaders.

<sup>4</sup> Soo Gil Yoon, 193.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 204.

### *LAYPERSON'S POINT OF VIEW*

All Christians need training. Sarang Presbyterian Church is famous for its rapid church growth, applying para-church discipleship principles to the local church in Seoul, Korea. The church started in 1979 and now numbers over 18,000 adults. Many Christians moved to this church because they wanted to be trained. There is a tendency to be comfortable, but making disciples is Christ's mandate to all churches.

#### 1) Modeling Problem

Jesus Christ, Paul, Peter and their descendents won souls and many made disciples because of their holy lives and the power from God. Even though curriculum, material and organization are important factors, these do not exceed the importance of the discipler's personality. Students are influenced by great personalities more than by good materials and facilities.

Most students graduate from the seminary at 22 to 25 years of age. In the Asian culture, young men and women who are under 30 or unmarried are regarded as too young to be a leader. If they work in Bangkok or other cities, the ministers who come from the tribes and rural areas may feel complexity or disdain. To get over those problems, developing spiritual gifts and living a holy life are important.

Like in any other country, Thai church leaders are expected to be Christian models in their churches, communities and society. Congregations get hurt when the church leaders lose their trust.

Self-supporting churches are another problem which weakens leadership. Many Thai churches cannot afford to fully support their pastors. Forty percent of CCT churches have not become self-supporting churches, although the CCT makes it a

principle to be a self-supporting church within twenty years. Pastors cannot avoid seeking jobs to provide for their needs. When their time must be divided between church work and other employment, the churches suffer.

### 2) System Problem

Although new pastors recognize the importance of discipleship, it cannot be implemented effectively if the church and denomination do not provide support. For instance, CCT churches give votes of confidence to the pastors every two years. Every church has a church management committee to decide that. If the pastor founds the church, the problem is less. But if he is a replacement, it is hard to change the ministry style and he will try to read the committee's mind about the vote of confidence.

The neglect of the Sunday school in CCT, EFT and Baptist churches is another reason laymen lose interest in church education, including discipleship training. Learning should be an everlasting habit in a Christian. Unfortunately, except for a few churches, Sunday Schools are not developed in Thailand. If Thai churches show much interest in Christian education for the children, youth and adults, Discipleship Training would be easier and more effective.

### 3) Illiteracy Problem

As is stated, the rate of literacy was 94 percent in 2001.<sup>6</sup> But the illiteracy problem in rural provinces is serious because it blocks Bible study and discipleship training. One of the respondents of the survey, a pastor from Chiangrai province, commented that illiteracy in his church was a problem in implementing church

---

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, 619.

programs. Many tribe church members such as Karen cannot speak or write Thai. Even though they are regarded as Thai churches, second generations who are used to Thai do not know their ethnic language. It is not difficult to find interpreters during services in those churches. The illiteracy eradication campaign by the churches can be a good outreach program to win souls.

### *Pastor's Point of View*

Most Thai pastors are used to the term Discipleship Training and recognize the importance of church education to nurture their members. But the problem is that the number of churches that are doing Discipleship Training effectively are few. Before the author suggests a practical and Biblical model, case studies of two churches will be presented from an interview process.<sup>7</sup>

#### 1) Huamark Church in Bangkok

This church affiliated with the OMF Mission is located in the outskirts of Bangkok, on Ramkamhaeng Road. The church is over twenty years old and the average attendance of the Sunday morning service is sixty to seventy. The pastor, Caren Sawat, came to the church thirteen years ago.

The reason for Discipleship Training at this church was the felt need for church education. The church had a Bible study time before the Sunday morning service, but it was not effective. After the service, the church provided a Bible study and Discipleship Training program in the afternoon. It's settled now.

At first the pastor alone led the group, but now there are four leaders who are involved in this program and seven people have been baptized as a result of this

---

<sup>7</sup> Interview with two Thai pastors and Sun Jin Park, GP Thai missionary, in March, 2002.

program. The discipleship training classes are classified into four groups: Interest, Bible Study, and Discipleship I & II.

The trainees of this program are not the unsaved, but church members who are committed. The author regards this church's discipleship as contextualized discipleship.

The pastor identified two problems in this program: leaders and consistency. Leaders are not fully devoted to Discipleship Training. During the vacation periods, student leaders leave for their hometowns and do not care for the groups. So the trainees fail to keep consistency in the training. He also pointed out the problems of idleness and sincerity. That causes a problem with Modeling.

In spite of that, the trainees' change of life gives joy to the pastor and leaders. Young adults joining in this program show growth in faith and try to become models at home and in society.

The pastor emphasized sound management of programs and application in Thai churches. In delivering messages and Bible studies, leaders need to use terms easy for the trainees to understand. Unlike the other churches that have Bible study hours before the Sunday morning service, Huamark church's discipleship training time after the service and lunch was regarded as effective by the pastor.

Appropriate selection and training of leaders by the pastor make local church's Discipleship Training successful. Because of limited personnel resources in Thai churches, that is not easy. Impatience and hastiness cause the church to appoint immature leaders that cause the training to fail. The pastor should train leaders directly as they are partners who share the ministry in small groups.



## 2) Sapanluang Klongtan Church

Ajarn Itichai started Sapanluang Klongtan church with ten members from Sapanluang church, the mother church in Bangkok. In his 30s, he planned a new church model by studying the Bible and other materials. One day, a Cell Group Ministry Seminar challenged him. After he extensively studied the literature, he started a new church in Bangkok under the vision and strategy of Matt. 28:18-20. His church emphasizes three types of Christian training: body evangelism in daily life, relationship evangelism in servanthip and heart evangelism with neighbors.

Three years ago there were three cell groups, now there are sixteen cell groups with 80 church members. This expansion was possible with a servant concept of the members, which is the result of discipleship training. When a cell size grows to 12, it is divided into two. The cell size is 5-6. It takes 8 weeks to train leaders. The church also puts leaders as a priority in successful discipleship training. Without keeping the same vision among the pastor, leaders and trainees, it cannot be successful. The pastor reported the trainees' lives were changed after Discipleship Training because they focused the training on application, not just Bible study.

Ajarn Itichai emphasizes 'sharing' in discipleship, because Thais are used to one-sided teaching. Effective Discipleship Training is based on the premise of two-way communication between leader and trainee. Trainees are encouraged to share the gospel and their daily lives with the leaders, so the groups become dynamic.

Sapanluang Klongtan Church is applying the cell group principle<sup>8</sup> in discipleship training. This church is focusing on reproduction that is the final step in a discipleship program. It is desirable to encourage the trainees to be interested in winning souls.

---

<sup>8</sup> 'Cell Group' here is the concept of small churches under one local church. A cell group has limited autonomy in Bible study and worship, so it is an upgraded group compared to a traditional 'cell group.'

## MINISTRIES OF SAHAKORN CHURCH AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING

### *Sahakorn Church*

Sahakorn Church, located on the outskirts of Bangkok, began in March 1998 with three visions: Church Planting, Youth Ministry and Leadership Training.

Before starting a church ministry, the author surveyed many villages. At first the author checked to see if there were churches because he had made it his aim to “preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation” (Rom. 15: 20). About two thousand houses stood roof to roof. It was a typical Thai Buddhist village. Even the word “church” was not familiar to them, so we approached the youth and children first with music, English and sports. Taekwondo (the Korean Marshal Art) was a good instrument for approaching Thai youth and children, including their parents. We taught them Taekwondo three times a week with Bible teaching. Soon forty members came to learn the sport and also the Bible. This program helped to grow an adult ministry. On Sunday 30 adults come to worship the Lord.

Early every morning the members have a Quiet Time with Bible reading and sharing. They pray for each other and the evangelization of the Thai. On Fridays the members go to the village to preach the gospel. During the Friday evening prayer times, the members fervently pray for the people who showed an interest in the gospel.

### *Youth Ministry and Mahanakorn University*

Timothy, who teamed up with Paul, was regarded as a young man (1 Tim. 4:12). Young men and women are more open to the gospel. They can be a seed bed to

evangelize their nation. Likewise, God gave the author a burden to evangelize Thai University students.

Besides the church planting ministry, the author led one University Christian group of Mahanakorn University which is located near the Sahakorn church. This ministry is a cooperating work with the Thai Christian Students Association. Thai Christianity showed rapid growth after the industrialization and urbanization from the 1970s. Many youth from rural areas came to Bangkok and other large cities converted to Christianity. They are the future leaders in Thai society so youth ministry is very important. There are about 20 thousand students and 200 professors on this campus. Among them are ten Christian students who have a regular meeting once a week. One Christian professor allows them to use his room for the meeting. Thai Christian students send one worker and one missionary to teach English at the university. The Christian students gather together to study the Bible and they invite their friends to this meeting. Retreats and evangelizing activities on campus are other training opportunities for discipleship.

No churches are there, so the author is planning to start a new church outside the campus. The problem is that no young Christians have committed themselves for campus evangelization after graduation. Now the author is praying that God will touch their minds to commit themselves for full time ministry. Thais are very open-minded to other religions though they are Buddhist. Even public schools give us opportunities to teach Bible once a week during religion times. Forty students from elementary to middle schools come to listen to Bible stories in their school. Thai Christians are trying to realize Paul's instruction, "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and teaching" ( 2 Tim. 4:2).

### *Leadership Training*

Discipleship and building leaders is not easy in the Thai Christian community. Thailand has her own language that is hard to learn. The native church leaders' expectation for the missionaries is to build leaders for the churches, so many missionaries are involved in seminary and the pastor re-education program in Thailand.

The author and his spouse are involved in teaching English and music for the seminary students of Thailand Evangelical Seminary. One of the Sahakorn Church members is studying at this seminary under the scholarship of the church.

### DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING MODEL

Recently the phrase 'Discipleship Training' has become a familiar term in Thai churches. The basic principle of discipleship is to lift the quality.<sup>9</sup> Discipleship training has a goal of changed lives and spiritual maturity, so formal training is necessary. The lack of interest was pointed out in the survey as the most serious problem in discipleship training in the local Thai church.

### *Pastor's Clear Ministry Goal*

The key factor in successful discipleship is the pastor having a definite ministry goal for discipleship. Without the pastor having a discipleship goal, discipleship training is only one more Bible study program. Discipleship training is not just one of the church's programs, it is Christ's mandate to all believers. Many church programs fail because the leaders are not involved in them actively. Paul said

---

<sup>9</sup> John Han Hum Ok, "A Discipleship-Making Program for Lay Leadership Development at Sarang Presbyterian Church in Korea" ( Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary's D.Miss Thesis I, 1996), 70.

to Timothy, “and the things you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (II Tim. 2:2).

### *Cultural Adaptions*

A Thai pastor suggested flexibility in discipleship training. He basically meant easy learning and application. Thais get stressed if they have burdens about their religious life. Except for monks, Buddhism does not emphasize training, but “doing goodness.” Hot weather and the abundance of natural resources contribute to them wanting to enjoy comfort and an easy life-style. Thais are not as competitive in college entrance examinations, except for upper class students, compared to Korean, Chinese and Japanese students. Thais are more or less relaxed in their lifestyle, including learning and training.

A good strategy for Discipleship Training would be to not give burdens to the members, but the leader should do most of the preparation with adequate materials and planning. Time for Discipleship Training is another consideration because Thais, even women, are not generally willing to be trained except on Sunday because many women work on weekdays. Many churches provide Discipleship Training before or after the Sunday morning service. As the weather is hot in the afternoon, the author recommends having the program before the Sunday morning service.

Thais, like other Asians, are used to one-way communication in teaching situations. They are ready to hear their teachers without asking questions and being involved in dialogue. Thais do really honor their teachers. In Discipleship Training, two way communication between teachers and students should, however, be strongly encouraged with sharing and witnessing.

### *Improving the Structure*

Before starting this program, church leaders and members should have a consensus on the importance of training. Most Thai Christians go to church only one time, Sunday morning. They are used to listening to the sermon, but not applying it in their lives. The principle that Jesus used in His discipleship was not just teaching, but He emphasized an application to life (Matt. 7:20-27, 10:40-42).

Christ's Church should be reformed into the 'body of Christ' that is equipped with spiritual armor (Eph. 6:14-17). To do this the importance of training must be emphasized. The pastor should have a clear philosophy of ministry on this. This should be strongly preached and taught not only in sermons but also in Bible teaching. Preparing the soil for effective planting is the key to successful discipleship in local churches. In the case of inviting speakers from other churches or organizations, it is better to invite those who are involved in this ministry.

### *Training Leaders*

At the first stage of church planting, it is inevitable for the pastor to nurture faithful members one by one. 'Faithfulness' is more important than intellectual level, Christian experience and position in the church. It does not take a long time to find that kind of person. After finding faithful persons, the pastor can start 'one to one discipleship' or 'group discipleship.'

Even though someone is faithful, availability is essential to train leaders. It means that the persons should be ready to attend the discipleship training at least once a week. If they have a business or jobs, they must be available during the times of training and must try to finish their homework. Therefore idle members cannot become prospective discipleship leaders. Prospective leaders need to recognize they

are newly-enlisted soldiers in a recruit training center. It requires patience and temperance. Daily quiet times and homework are not easy for those who stopped studying after graduation. A pastor's encouragement and love are necessary to build discipleship leaders. Even private meetings and graduates' associations should be avoided during the period to avoid disturbing the training.

Some members seem to be faithful in church activities and in the eyes of church leaders, but not in home or business. Before appointing them, the pastor needs to visit their home and business to see if they meet the requirements for leaders of discipleship. A pure marriage relationship is basic not only in the Christian life but also for becoming leaders. If they are not clear in this part, they should be taught to follow the way of biblical teaching (Matt. 19:7-9, Mk. 10:8-9, Eph. 5:21-30, I Cor.7:1-40). Idols at home or in the business place mean that they are not yet free from the condemnation and the spirit of fear (Rom. 8:1). They are not eligible to be members of discipleship training. Prospective discipleship trainees are to be pure in the eyes of people and God.

A daily quiet time(devotion) is essential to disciples for following the teachings of God. The pastor should be a model and check the trainees' notes to see if it is done well. A quiet time should follow the orders of observation, exposition and application. If they are not trained to do this, they can do daily Bible readings chapter by chapter according to the 'Guide to Bible Reading' that helps them to understand the Bible [Table 2]. Writing down the sermons of the Sunday morning service, Wednesday night and Friday prayer meetings helps accustom them to inductive Bible study and exposition. The other effects are that the trainees would not skip any meetings and would concentrate on the sermons.

‘Inductive Bible study,’ is opposite the concept of ‘deductive Bible study.’ The former focuses on the way of studying the Bible with the process of observation, exposition and application. A ‘deductive Bible study’ starts with teaching and preaching from the conclusions of the teacher and preacher. But ‘inductive Bible study’ starts with precise observation of the Bible and tries to find out the real meaning from the Bible, not from the teacher. The trainees get excited when they hear the words of God directly and kneel down spontaneously.

That is the power of the ‘inductive Bible study.’ In discipleship training the reason for ‘inductive Bible study’ is to lift the quality of the trainee by studying and applying the Bible personally.

### ***Organizing the Group***

Church members need to make a difference between Bible study and discipleship. Discipleship emphasizes laymen’s involvement. After a church gets two or more leaders, she needs to spread the discipleship movement to the church. A testimony from a trainee whose life is changed after the training is the most effective way to motivate interest.

Before starting a regular discipleship program, the pastor needs to train core groups of the church’s elders. If a church fails to get support, she faces resistance from this group because they feel isolated from church management. Not only to the congregation but also to the trainees, ‘servantship’ should be stressed to the extent they are tired of hearing. Some churches experience splits after starting discipleship programs because the church lacks in servantship and has elders or some lay leaders who do not understand discipleship.



Organizing the groups is important to successful discipleship. Basically the pastor selects trainees who have the potential to be disciples and prospective leaders. There should be guidelines for the applicants. After being baptized, they must serve the church at least one year with sincerity. This can be a basic requirement for a discipleship class. Even though some people come from other churches, they should meet the same requirements.

When Christ selected the Twelve, He called to Him those who He Himself wanted, and He appointed twelve (Mk. 3:13-14). But it is better that the church announce that people apply for discipleship training. After checking the applicants from the application forms, the church leaders can contact those who need to be trained in discipleship. To those who lack the requirements, pastors should meet them directly to see if they are ready to join this program in faith, life and commitment.

Afterwards, those who are admitted need to be divided into small groups of seven to nine. This group size is expected to be dynamic and effective for the leader to lead and communicate. In grouping, it is better to pool every person from different backgrounds such as age, education and social position. From this grouping, trainees should know that they are the partial body of Christ even though they come from diverse backgrounds. Each leader must contact the trainee before starting the regular class to see if they are willing to commit the time to discipleship class. An inauguration service is recommended to stress the importance of the discipleship training. Church members who do not attend the class are challenged to pray, help and encourage the trainee because we don't know what kind of difficulties they will face.

### *Group Management*

For effective discipleship classes, a director to serve the group is needed to be selected from each small group. If necessary, an assistant director can be added to help the director as a treasurer. A fee of about 300 Baht is collected, and a gospel song book, a Bible, a binder, memory cards, colored pencils and other items are given. In the binder are Discipleship Training materials, Quiet Time materials, sermon note forms, and other materials. The house is chosen as the place of the meeting, which is comfortable and easy for group members to reach.

To train efficiently, the following are required: Firstly, the meeting time is kept punctually. They are encouraged to arrive five to ten minutes before the meeting time and anyone late has to pay a penalty. The amount of penalty is decided by them on the first day and collected by the treasurer. This regulation motivates members not to be late to the meeting. Being absent without a special reason is a major fine.

Secondly, homework is given to the student every week: Quiet Time, Bible Reading, Memory Verse [Table 3] and sermons notes are taken. The leader checks the homework submitted according to the 'Homework Check up Schedule' [Table 4]. The leader should check the homework at home and make encouraging comments with a colored pen.

Thirdly, prayer requests should be shared freely at the meeting time. This helps the students to feel 'oneness' and build up each other.

Fourthly, the discipleship training must use inductive Bible study and be applicable to daily life. In order for the study to be a life-changing experience, everyone knows that the study must be inductive, not deductive. If it is not done carefully, it could become only delivering Bible knowledge and boring. So the

curriculum should be prepared carefully and researched thoroughly by the leader. The curriculum is prepared for thirty-three programs.

Fifthly, servanthip should be emphasized in the group. It is a good opportunity to serve each other during the discipleship classes because they can share their prayer requests and pray for each other. Serving and helping practically in family and business must be encouraged. Faithfulness should be stressed as the students may neglect their family affairs because of homework and stress of discipleship.

Sixthly, singing gospel songs, sharing witnesses, and praying are followed by the study. At the time of conclusion, the students and leader share the lessons from the study. Practical decision-making should be followed at this time with meditation and the students are allowed to record them on their notes. The meeting will close with the leader's prayer.

Lastly, eating a light meal together highlights the fellowship. Christ often had food when He taught His disciples (Matt. 9:10; Mk. 8, 14:18; Lk. 22:7-23).

As a follow up, the leader should record the student's growth and evaluation every week. Sometimes the leader should visit the trainee's home and work place to check the growth in daily life. This can be a good opportunity to get the response naturally. Using the phone and email are other good means to enforce the follow up process. If the trainees are good at the Internet, chatting on line is encouraged.

Success and failure depend on the management skill, spirituality and interest of the leader. If some trainees show laziness and depression, individual counseling is necessary to get over the problem. Even though it is not easy to be in leadership, the joy and glory in seeing the spiritual growth of the trainee can counter the trouble. When they finish the discipleship class, a commencement service in front of the congregation is necessary to bless and encourage continuous growth. Some trainees

who show leadership potential can be prospects to train other members. Prayer and evangelism for reproduction should be emphasized during this process.

### *Curriculum and Material*

In Thailand there are not enough materials for discipleship training. “One to One Discipleship Training” translated by Tyrannus Publications are the favorite books. Fifty percent of the respondents replied that their churches use those books for discipleship training. The rest use materials prepared by their churches and the Bible. ‘One to One Discipleship Training’ is made for ‘one to one’ and not ‘group discipleship.’ But because of the lack of resources in discipleship, many Thai churches use this material in Bible study and discipleship. Churches doing Discipleship Training without regular curriculum are regarding discipleship as informal education. ‘Discipleship Training’ here means formal education which has regular curriculum, leader and registered students.

The curriculum developed by this author is divided in three levels: basic course, intermediate course and advanced course. The basic course is intended to confirm students’ faith and train them in use of Quiet Time materials and inductive Bible study. Five weeks of classes are outlined to do this. In the intermediate course, doctrinal teachings will be presented on Church, Salvation, Jesus Christ, God, Holy Spirit, Sanctification, and the Second Coming of Christ during fifteen weeks. The advanced course will cover areas related to the believer’s life such as Servantship, Worship, Family Life, Spiritual Warfare, Life in Society and Leadership. The trainees who finish the Discipleship Training successfully are expected to be leaders in the next term.

A. Basic Course

- A-1 My Testimony and Christian Life
- A-2 Quiet Time
- A-3 Inductive Bible Study
- A-4 The Power of the Word
- A-5 Prayer

B. Intermediate Course

- B-1 Authority of the Bible
- B-2 What is a Church?
- B-3 Church History
- B-4 Assurance of Salvation
- B-5 God
- B-6 The Life of Jesus Christ
- B-7 Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ
- B-8 Second Coming of Jesus Christ
- B-9 Discipleship of Jesus Christ
- B-10 The Life of the twelve
- B-11 Who is the Holy Spirit?
- B-12 The Role of the Holy Spirit
- B-13 Spiritual Gifts
- B-14 The Trinity
- B-15 Sanctification of the believer

C. Advanced Course

- C-1 Servantship
- C-2 Fellowship in Church and Society
- C-3 Family Life
- C-4 Pure Life
- C-5 Finding the Will of God
- C-6 Spiritual Worship
- C-7 Life in Society
- C-8 Christian's Social Responsibility
- C-9 A Witness
- C-10 Spiritual Warfare
- C-11 Stewardship
- C-12 World Mission
- C-13 Small Group Bible Study and Leadership

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

In this project, the author examined the Thai situation and suggested a Discipleship Training model for Thai Churches. In conclusion, the author suggests six points for effectively developing Discipleship Training in Thai churches.

First, missionaries should help native church leaders nurture disciples. Although missionaries can disciple Thai Christians, there are limitations in communication because of inevitable cultural differences. It is better to do Discipleship Training by providing materials and seminars on discipleship for native leaders in pastor training and publications. Thai churches should be self-governing and self-supportive churches in case all missionaries have to leave Thailand.

Seminars offered through a partnership with CCT, EFT and Baptists are desirable for impacting other churches. Before designing those seminars, missionaries and native church leaders need to study adequate curriculum and practical models for Thai churches. Foreign speakers as well as native speakers who are doing well in the field of Discipleship Training ministry can awaken church leaders' interested in training. Missionaries can provide resources as well. After that there should be a follow-up.

Resources for Discipleship Training are not adequate in Thai churches. More missionaries and native church workers should have an interest in developing Discipleship Training resources. They should be cheap, handy and easy to apply.

Missionaries should be cautious about heroism. Even though they are involved in establishing churches in Thailand, their role should be limited to being helpers and catalysts. Excessive caring and involvement in ministry can damage self-supporting churches. Like Paul, missionaries should be ready to empower the local minister to minister and delegate all. Native church leaders' roles are the key to evangelizing the Thais.

Missionaries should not stay too long in the same place. They should be ready to switch to other ministries for more effective mission. Missionaries should focus on rearing native church leaders through Discipleship Training. Not only planting churches but also building church leaders are important works for missionaries. In view of the Thai culture, diverse effective methods of Discipleship Training must be developed.

Second, discipleship programs from Western countries should be contextualized to the Thai situation, without losing the focus of a changed life. Nurturing and evangelization should go side by side. If Discipleship Training is introduced as part of Bible study in a local church, it may fail in taking root. Before starting, the pastor should investigate the church's maturity and soil in order for Discipleship Training to be applied more effectively.

The situations of urban and rural churches, old and new churches, big and small churches are different. The Biblical principle of Discipleship Training as is stated in chapter four cannot be changed, but the application can be modified according to the situation. Pastors should be sensitive and wise in contextualization.

Thai rituals, festivals and traditional customs need to be screened in view of Biblical teachings. Animism, Buddhism and Hinduism are mixed in Thai culture, and they also influence Christians' worldview.

Paul was very successful in overcoming theological issues on circumcision (I Cor. 9:20). Without compromising through syncretism, he contextualized the issue biblically. Those cases can happen to missionaries and church leaders. Spiritual prayer and knowledge of the Word of God help to solve the problem of contextualization. Missionaries tend to reflect the biblical view of their home churches and denominational background on issues. Some issues are not a problem of biblical principle but a problem of context. If this is the case, Thai church leaders' opinions should be considered more important. Cultural adoption is a key concept for successful Discipleship Training in a local church anywhere. Communication skill in managing Discipleship Training is important in the Thai culture. It is hard to find out about the changed life through Christianity in a traditional one-way communication. Small group leaders should develop two-way communication techniques through small group Discipleship Training.

Third, the role of Christian women in Thai church should be emphasized through discipleship training. Not just in Thai seminaries but also in Thai churches, the number of women students is more than that of men. Women are important resources for the churches.

It should be emphasized that women are equal with men in creation (Gen. 1:27). They have different roles but same goals as men (Gen. 2:21-23). In Jesus' ministry, He treated women equally and was helped by them (Luke 8:1-2). Women had important



roles in the early church (Rom. 16:1-2). Paul emphasized the equality of women with men (I Cor. 11:3).

In the Thai culture, there is no notion of preferring a son to a daughter. On the other hand, daughters are favored in birth. Many old parents live with their daughters. This reflects that Thai churches have better opportunities for women to serve churches.

Women have spiritual gifts in the field of counseling, caring and giving wise advice. Many Thai families are falling apart including Christian families. Mature women Christians can serve to build and nurture family ministry.

In Discipleship Training, women should be trained to become leaders as stewards of local churches. In Thai Buddhism, women are banned from becoming monks, but they can become novices. In churches, Thai women get more opportunities to be leaders in serving the body of Christ.

Fourth, Discipleship Training should develop lay leadership. It is more effective for developing lay resources than pastoral resources in church personnel. Thai church leaders, missionaries and denominational leaders in Thailand should recognize the importance of lay leadership and reinforce it through Discipleship Training.

The possibility and potentiality of laymen should be emphasized and encouraged by pastors. 'Good Shepherd Training,' is one of the good programs that provides opportunities for the Thai church leaders. This seminar is held every two months. Through this seminar pastors, elders, deacons and laymen are equipped in biblical leadership.

The twelve disciples of Christ were not educated well. Instead their lives became changed after they met Jesus Christ (Matt. 4:19). They were laymen, but they became

great church leaders after Pentecost (Acts 2). Paul appointed elders in every church and commended them to the Lord (Acts 14:23).

Leadership training is the essence for successful Discipleship Training. Spiritual, intellectual and technical leadership training should be provided to lay leaders. Christian leadership is servant-hood leadership. Leaders should be trained to serve, not to be served. Commitment and sacrifice are requirements for becoming lay leaders. Without faith it is impossible.

Missionaries are expected to be helpers to build leaders for churches. They should not stay at the same church too long, because that may cause the problem of dependence that hinders them from becoming self-governing and self-supporting churches. Even though missionaries leave the mission field, the church should be ready to be governed by themselves. That is the reason for emphasizing the importance of lay leadership.

Many Thai churches do not have pastors, so elders and deacons preach and teach the Bible in those churches. With the lack of resources for church leaders, they feel a challenge. Fortunately, the Tyrannus ministry team of the GP Thai mission finished a publication of a commentary set of the whole Bible, the first in Thai Christianity. Those materials should be supplied and church leaders should learn how to use them in Discipleship Training for lay leaders.

Fifth, Thai seminaries should teach Discipleship Training to the students as a required course. This is not possible only in a classroom, but students should be involved in local churches through effective Discipleship Training programs. On that point,

seminary professors should be equipped with pastoral experience and theology regarding Discipleship Training.

Thailand Evangelical Seminary (TES), which is located in Bangkok, is one of the seminaries that emphasizes Discipleship Training and the Bible. Dorm teachers and teachers take care of students during and after the class regarding Discipleship Training. As most of the seminary students serve churches on the weekend, they can lead groups in local churches. Partnerships with local churches and seminaries guarantee successful Discipleship Training.

It is impossible for seminary students to try Discipleship Training if their local church leaders do not understand and allow it because it is a reform comparing traditional Bible study. Thai churches should know that traditional Bible study has limitations for changing life in a Buddhist society without Discipleship Training. Seminary students who are well equipped with Discipleship Training should be welcomed and encouraged also to become models when they serve the Lord in local churches.

Church problems are the leader's problems. Like other nations' churches, many Thai churches have the problems of leadership, disputes, ethics and stagnation. As pastors are delegated with the Word of God, most of the responsibility is turned over to pastors. Discipleship Training during the seminary period is a good opportunity to experience practical problems. If they are trained in Discipleship Training, strong characters are trimmed up with the Holy Spirit and Word of God.

Lastly, church members who are not involved in discipleship training should be motivated to participate in this program by praying and indirect participation in cell

groups and Bible studies. The preacher's sermons should encourage participation in Discipleship Training.

Generally there is a tendency of rejection and resistance among church members who are not involved in Discipleship Training when pastors begin Discipleship Training. Church members who do not like training and Christian education in daily life with Discipleship Training do not feel good when a church focuses on Discipleship Training.

Pastors need wisdom to persuade elders and group leaders with a sound approach to the Word of God. Before starting Discipleship Training, pastors need to provide them with a taste of natural Discipleship Training. When they have business meetings in their churches, pastors encourage them to share the daily life in view of the sermon from the previous Sunday. If the Holy Spirit touches their minds, they will favor the way of Discipleship Training and support it actively.

As less than twenty percent of members join in Discipleship Training in general, the problem of isolation happens among the members who are not involved with Discipleship Training. The pastor should not segregate them but encourage them to have interests and pray for the Discipleship Training. Because of timing, character and other reasons, it is inevitable that all members cannot join in Discipleship Training. Instead they can be blessed with gracious preaching by pastors.

The Second Coming of Christ is near. We should prepare to meet Him as the bride sees her bridegroom. The end will come when the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the entire world as a witness to all the nations (Matt. 24: 14). Who will become His witness? Shallow Christians cannot become witnesses to preach the gospel, just as a coward cannot become a good soldier.

A disciple must be filled with the Holy Spirit and be trained regularly. Not only the pastor but also the congregation should become disciples in order to build the kingdom of God in Thailand. God will bless Thai churches when they are committed to being trained, nurtured and equipped through Discipleship Training until the day of His coming.

## APPENDIX

[Table 1]

### Questionnaire on Church Discipleship Programs

Church Name \_\_\_\_\_

Church Address \_\_\_\_\_

Denominational Affiliation of the Church

- Presbyterian
- Pentecost
- Baptist
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- No denominational affiliation

Your Church Position

- Senior Pastor
- Pastor
- Elder or Deacon

How old is the church?

- 1-2 years old
- 3-5 years old
- 6-10 years old
- Over 10 years old

Church location would best be described as

- Bangkok
- Urban
- Rural

Average Attendance at Sunday Morning Service

- less than 50
- 50 to 99
- 100-199
- 200-499
- over 500

Does your Church have an organized program of Bible study?

- yes
- no

Does your Church have an organized program of discipleship training ?

- yes
- no

What kind of materials are being used?

- One to One Discipleship (Tyrannus)
- Materials are prepared by this church

How many Bible study groups does your church currently have?

- 1-2
- 3-5
- 5 or more

Who leads the Bible study groups?

- Senior Pastor
- Pastor
- Deacon or elder
- Laymen

What are the problems in your discipleship training? (Number from 1 to 4 with one being the biggest problem and 4 being the smallest problem)

- literature
- training leaders
- organizing and gathering the group
- the lack of interest of the members

What do you expect from discipleship training?

(List options that you expect.)

- Church Revival
- Individual Change in Life
- Knowledge of Bible
- Increased Fellowship
- Others (if any)

[Table 2]

## GUIDE TO BIBLE READING

Week	New Testament	Old Testament
1	Matthew 1-14	Genesis 1-20
2	Matthew 15-28	Genesis 21-40
3	Mark 1-16	Genesis 40-50 Exodus 9-30
4	Luke 1-12	Exodus 9-30
5	Luke 13-24	Exodus 31-40 Numbers 1-15
6	John 1-14	Numbers 16-36
7	John 15-21	Deuteronomy 1-28
8	Acts 1-14	Deuteronomy 29-34 Joshua 1-5
9	Acts 15-28	Joshua 6-24
10	Romans 1-16	Judges 1-21
11	1 Corinthians 1-16	Ruth 1-4 1 Samuel 1-10
12	2 Corinthians 1-13	1 Samuel 11-31
13	Galatians 1-6 Ephesians 1-6	2 Samuel 1-24
14	Philippians 1-4 Colossians 1-4	1 Kings 1-16
15	1 Thessalonians 1-5 2 Thessalonians 1-3	1 Kings 17-22 2 Kings 1-20
16	1 Timothy 1-6 2 Timothy 1-4	2 Kings 21-25 1 Chronicles 1-19
17	Titus 1-3 Philemon Hebrews 1-13 James 1-5	1 Chronicles 20-29
18	1 Peter 1-5 1 Peter 1-3	2 Chronicles 1-26
19	1 John 1-5 2 John 3 John Jude	2 Chronicles 27-36 Ezra 1-10 Nehemiah 1-7
20	Revelation 1-12	Nehemiah 8-13 Esther 1-10 Job 1-12
21	Revelation 13-22	Job 13-42



22	Matthew	1-14	Psalms	1-32
23	Matthew	15-28	Psalms	33-68
24	Mark	1-16	Psalms	69-103
25	Luke	1-12	Psalms	104-131
26	Luke	13-24	Psalms	132-150
27	John	1-14	Proverbs	1-20
28	John	15-21	Proverbs	21-31
			Ecclesiastes	1-12
			Song of Solomon	1-8
29	Acts	1-14	Isaiah	1-15
30	Acts	15-28	Isaiah	16-40
31	Romans	1-16	Isaiah	41-66
32	1 Corinthians	1-16	Jeremiah	1-20
33	2 Corinthians	1-13	Jeremiah	21-40
34	Galatians	1-6	Jeremiah	41-52
	Ephesians	1-6	Lamentations	1-5
			Ezekiel	1-7
35	Philippians	1-4	Ezekiel	8-35
	Colossians	1-4		
36	1 Thessalonians	1-5	Ezekiel	36-48
	2 Thessalonians	1-3	Daniel	1-12
37	1 Timothy	1-6	Hosea	1-14
	2 Timothy	1-4	Joel	1-3
			Amos	1-9
38	Titus	1-3	Obadiah	
	Philemon		Jonah	1-4
	Hebrews	1-13	Micah	1-7
	James	1-5		
39	1 Peter	1-5	Nahum	1-3
	2 Peter	1-3	Habakkuk	1-3
			Zephaniah	1-3
			Haggai	1-2
40	1 John	1-5	Zechariah	1-14
	2 John		Malachi	1-4
	3 John			
	Jude			
41	Revelation	1-12	Leviticus	1-13
42	Revelation	13-22	Leviticus	14-27

<sup>1</sup> John Han Hum Ok, II, 338-339.

[Table 3]

**BIBLE MEMORY VERSES**

Theme	Week	Title	Bible Verse 1	Bible Verse 2
A. New Life	1	Christ Centered	2 Corinthians 5:17	Galatians 2:20
	2	Obey Christ	Romans 12:1	John 14:21
	3	Word	2 Timothy 3:16	Joshua 1:8
	4	Prayer	John 15:7	Philippians 4:6,7
	5	Fellowship	Matthew 18:20	Hebrews 10:24,25
	6	Witness	Matthew 4:19	Romans 1:6
	7	Review 1-3 Week		
	8	Review 4-6 Week		
	9	Examination		
B. Spreading the Gospel	10	Everyone has Sinned	Romans 3:23	Isaiah 53:6
	11	Penalty of Sin	Romans 6:23	Hebrews 9:27
	12	Christ Takes the Penalties	Romans 5:8	1 Peter 3:18
	13	Cannot be Saved by Good Works	Ephesians 2:8,9	Titus 3:5
	14	Must Accept Christ	John 1:12	Revelation 3:20
	15	Assurance of Salvation	John 5:24	1 John 5:13
	16	Review 10-12 Week		
	17	Review 13-15 Week		
	18	Examination		
C. God	19	Holy Spirit	1 Corinthians 3:16	1 Corinthians 2:12
	20	Power	Isaiah 41:10	Philippians 4:13
	21	Faithfulness	Lamentations 3:22,23	Numbers 23:19
	22	Peace	Isaiah 26:3	1 Peter 5:7
	23	Supply	Romans 8:32	Philippians 4:19
	24	Help from Temptation	Hebrews 2:18	Psalms 119:9,11
	25	Review 19-21 Week		
	26	Review 22-24 Week		
	27	Examination		
D. Qualifications of Christ's	28	Christ Centered	Matthew 6:33	Luke 9:23
	29	Removed from Sin	1 John 2:15	Romans 12:2
	30	Stand Firm	1 Corinthians 15:58	Hebrews 12:3
	31	Serving Others	Mark 10:45	2 Corinthians 4:5
	32	Giving Generously	Proverbs 3:9,10	2 Corinthians 9:6,7

Disciple	33	World Vision	Acts 1:8	Matthew 28:19,20
	34	Review 28-30 Week		
	35	Review 31-33 Week		
	36	Examination		
E. Imitating Christ	37	Love	John 13:34,35	1 John 3:18
	38	Humility	Philippians 2:3,4	1 Peter 5:5,6
	39	Purity	Ephesians 5:3	1 Peter 2:11
	40	Honesty	Leviticus 19:11	Acts 24:16
	41	Faith	Hebrews 11:6	Romans 4:20,21
	42	Good Works	Galatians 6:9,10	Matthew 5:16
	43	Review 37-39 Week		
	44	Review 40-42 Week		
	45	Examination		
	46	Final Cumulative and Examination Review		

2

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 340.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adsit, Christopher B. Personal Disciple Making, (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1989).
- Allen, Rolland. Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?, (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1962).
- Barna, George. Growing True Disciples, (Colorado Springs, Colorado: WaterBrook Press, 2001).
- Berkhof, Hendrikus. translated by Sierd Woudstra, Christian Faith, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1979).
- Blanford, Carl Edwin. Chinese Churches in Thailand, (Bangkok: Suribayan Publishers, ,1975).
- Bruce, F. F., Commentary on the Book of Acts, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984).
- Chafer, Lewis Sperry. Systematic Theology, Vol. Two, (Wheaton, Ill: Victor Books, 1984), abridged edition.
- Conzelmann, Hans. Acts of the Apostles, translated by James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).
- Druger, Peter F. Managing for the Future, (New York: Truman Tally Books, 1992).
- Encarta World English Dictionary. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).
- Encyclopedia Britannica. 15 th ed., s.v. "Thailand."
- Evans, Tony. What a Way to Live, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997).
- Global Partners Manual, (Seoul: GP Mission, 1999).
- Global Partners, (Seoul: GP Mission, 2002), vol.10 & 11, 2000.
- Hiebert , Paul G. and Eloise Meneses. Incarnational Ministry (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995).
- Hodge, Charles. Systematic Theology Vol.I, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishings), reprint 1970.

- Hunter, James C. The Servant, (Boston: Prima Publishing, 1998).
- Johnstone, Patrick and Mandryk, Jason. Operation World (WEC International: Paternoster Publishing, 2001).
- Jones, Ezra Earl. Strategies for New Churches, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978).
- Jung, Seung Hoi. With the Thai's Danger, (Seoul: Kidok Shinmunsa, 1995).
- Kane, J. Herbert, A Global View of Christian Missions, (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1975 c1971).
- \_\_\_\_\_. A Concise History of the Christian World Mission, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1982).
- Kent, Homer A. Jr. Jerusalem to Rome, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 1972).
- Kim, Jung Woong. "Third World Mission-Church Relationship: A Korean -Thai Church," (D.Miss. Thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1985).
- Kim, Samuel I. The Unfinished Mission in Thailand (East-West Center for Mission Research & Development: Seoul, Korea, 1976).
- Koyama, Kosuko. Water Buffalo Theology. (N.Y: Orbis Books, 1974).
- Kuhne, Gary W. The Dynamics of Discipleship Training, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978).
- Lee, Yo Sup, "An Analysis of the Discipleship Bible Study for the Korean Immigrant Church Growth," (D.Min. Thesis of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA, 1998).
- Life Application Study Bible, (Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale House), 1996.
- Lord, Donald C. Mo Bradley and Thailand, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1969)
- MacArthur, John F. Jr. The Master's Plan for the Church, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991).
- Mauck, John W. Paul on Trial, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001).
- Maxwell, John C. Developing the Leader within You, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), Introduction.
- Mejudhon, Nantachai. "Meekness: A New Approach to Christian Witness to the Thai people," (D. Miss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 1997).

New Strong's Concise Dictionary, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995).

Ok, John Han Hum. "A Discipleship-Making Program for Lay Leadership Development at Sarang Presbyterian Church in Korea," (Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary's D.Miss. Thesis I,1996).

Oxford Dictionary, (Dorling Kindersley Ltd. and Oxford University Press, 1998).

Polhill, John B., Acts: the New American Commentary, (Nashville: Broadman Press: 1992).

Richards, Lawrence O., New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 1991.

Shin, Hong Shik. Principles of Church Planting as Illustrated in Thai Theravada Buddhist Context, (Bangkok: Kanok Bannasan-OMF Publisher, 1989).

Stott, John R. W. The Message of Acts, (Gordonville, Ill: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990).

Strong, James. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, (Gordonville, TN: Dugan Publishers), 26, 39.

Terwiel, B. J., A Relation of the Voyage to Siam, (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1999), first published in 1688.

Thailand Christian Directory, (Bangkok:Thailand Christian Directory,1999).

The New Lexicon Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary, (Lexicon Publications, 1992).

The Oxford Classical Dictionary, edited by Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

The Oxford Companion to the Christian Thought, (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1669.

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, edited by F. L. Cross, (Oxford New York: Oxford University, 1997).

Towns, Elmer L. America's Fastest Growing Churches, (Nashville: Impact Books, 1972).

Warren, Rick, The Purpose Driven Church, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

Yoon, Soo Gil. "Discipleship Ministry as Power Encounter in Thailand," (D. Miss. Thesis Trinity Divinity Evangelical School, 1994).

## ARTICLES

Cha, Dae Young, "Leadership Development of Church Leaders," '99 Korean Thailand Missionary Theology Seminar, (Bangkok: Privately Published by Korea-Thailand Missionary, 1999)

Daniel, Thomas Darrell, "Deployment Strategy," Korea Mission Quarterly (KMQ), Spring 2002.

Fernando, Ajith. "Missionaries Still Needed-but of a Special Kind," Evangelical Mission Quarterly (EMQ), Jan. 1988.

Guthrie, Stan, "Korean Church Catches a Whiff of Trouble in the Air," EMQ, (Wheaton: Billy Graham Center, April 1996).

Hankook-Ilbo (Korea Newspaper), Feb.23, 2002.

Jung, Heung Ho, "Missions in the Third Millennium," KMQ, (Seoul: KWM, Spring 2002).

Kendell, Glenn, "Missionaries should not plant churches," EMQ, July 1988, 218.

Kraft, Charles H., "Comparison of East and West Worldview," KMQ, (Seoul: KWM, Spring 2002).

Laschenski, Sigmund J., S. J., "The Meaning of the Incarnation for the Church in Thailand," (East Asia Journal of Theology: 2:1, 1984).

Nagai, Yasuko. "Being Indigenous As Well As: A Case of Maiwala Christians in Papua New Guinea," (Missiology: An International Review. No. 3, July 1999).

Ott, Craig. "Matching the church Planter's Role with the Church Planting Model," EMQ, July 2001.

Patterson, George, "The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches," Perspectives, (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1999).

Reapsome, Jim, "Missionary, go home revisited," EMQ, Oct. 1997.

Renstorf, K. H. "Disciples," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. IX, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976).

Schmitt, Frank. "A Guide to Church Finance," (LBTS: Private paper, 1980).



Steffen, Tom A. "Selecting a Church Planting Model That Works," Missiology: An International Review, July 1994.

Tiplady, Richard. "Let X=X: Generation X and World Mission," Global Missiology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, edited by William, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2000).

The News and Advance (Lynchburg, VA.), "Researchers Claim Cloning of Human Embryo," Nov. 26, 2001.

Time March 25, 2002.

1999-2000 EFT Meeting and the 30th Anniversary Manual, EFT, 2000, 9.

## INTERVIEWS

Interview with Soo Gil Yoon and Tae Min Ha, March 14, 2002.

Interview with two Thai pastors, Cen Carensawat and Itichai, in March 2002.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

LePoer, Babara Leitch, editor, Thailand-A Country Study, <book on-line> (Washington D.C.:Federal Division Library of Congress, 1987) available from [www.ask.com/thailand/history](http://www.ask.com/thailand/history).

Washington D.C: Central Intelligence Agency. "Thailand-The World Fact," <on-line>; available from <http://www.ask.com/main/followup.asp?qcat=geop&ask=thailand+history>

Tourism Authority of Thailand Website. <on-line> available from [www.tat.org.th/](http://www.tat.org.th/)