

#2 – Theses Topics at McGilvary

The Office of History has recently compiled a list of all of the student theses produced at the Thailand Theological Seminary and McGilvary Faculty of Theology currently held by the Faculty of Theology library. The list extends to 93 theses dating back to 1965. The following is a break down of the topics covered by these theses:

New Testament	26 theses	Contextualization	6 theses
Pastoral Care	17 theses	Social Witness	5 theses
Christian Education	12 theses	Evangelism	5 theses
Theology	8 theses	Church History	4 theses
Old Testament	6 theses	Ethics	3 theses
		Worship & Liturgy	1 thesis

That is to say, over the last 35 years the students at TTS/MFT have devoted the bulk of their attention to two fields: biblical studies (Old and New Testament), 32 theses, and nurturing ministries within the church (Pastoral Care, Christian Education, and Worship & Liturgy), 30 theses. Theological issues (Theology and Contextualization) total some 14 theses, while outreach ministries (Evangelism and Social Witness) account for 10 theses. This is an admittedly rough break down and not entirely accurate—and potentially misleading if taken too seriously. Some of the biblical theses, for example, discuss contextualization of the Gospel in Thailand in light of Scripture. Still, this analysis does reveal some insights regarding what these CCT theological students are concerned about and interested in:



First, it is particularly evident that their attention is largely focused on the internal life of the church and its faith. Only about one thesis in ten is devoted to outreach ministries.

Second, these students reflect a clear commitment to the Bible. They see the Bible as an important source for Christian understanding. It will surprise no one who knows the Thai church that they are generally more focused on the New Testament (26 theses) rather than the Old (6 theses).

Third, it is painfully clear that these students are not interested in the Thai church's past. There were only four church history theses (one person wrote two of them), and of these four two were written by tribal students (one Karen, one Lahu).

Finally, it is interesting that issues of contextualization have received relatively little attention. Where contextualization is the dominant issue for most of the foreigners working with the Thai church, it would seem that the seminarians have not been particularly concerned about the issue—not, at least, to a great extent. These students, by and large, seem far more concerned to understand the Bible and strengthen the inner life of the church. In light of this observation, it is somewhat surprising (and troubling) that only one thesis was devoted to the topic of worship and liturgy, which implies that the students do not see strengthening worship as an avenue for strengthening the church.