

HeRD #35 - Evangelism Interview I

Here's a bit of a change of pace. I've been interviewing a few people concerning evangelism in the CCT for a presentation I will make in October. I'd like to share the results of two of the interviews with you, one today & one tomorrow. Ach. [VK] is moderator of the Third District, Lampang. I asked him to talk about successful evangelistic methods in northern Thailand. He made four points. **FIRST**, he observed that he has never seen a successful mass evangelism project, such as a Billy Graham crusade, work in the North. Western-style revivalistic healing services may generate momentary enthusiasm, but there are no long-term results. Northern Thai respond best to a "northern Thai" style that emphasizes closeness, friendliness, and mutual respect based on a longer-term relationship. **SECOND**, he strongly emphasized the importance of Christian education and biblical knowledge. His motto is, teach, teach, teach. He has seen first-hand results when church members begin to know their faith more deeply. They bring friends to church and can explain their faith to others more clearly. Churches that know their faith grow. **THIRD**, he said that the pastors are particularly important. They must give time to teaching and preaching. **FINALLY**, he noted that there are several obstacles to conversion. In some places overt oppression of new Christians drives them out of the church. Zealous-type Christians, at other times, create unnecessary opposition, and people are repelled by Christian faith rather than drawn to it. On the other hand, uncommitted, disinterested Christians give the impression that Christians are just like everybody else.

A general theme in most of the interviews was a rejection of Western evangelistic styles and a missionary role in evangelism. One interviewee said, jokingly, of the missionary role in evangelism, "I let them drive, but I don't let them get out of the car."

HeRD #36 - Evangelism Interview II

Views on evangelism again. Ach. [SD], moderator of the CCT's Fourteenth District, also specified four factors for "successful" evangelistic work among northern Thais. **FIRST**, church leaders must be committed to evangelism. If the pastor and elders aren't enthused the church won't be. **SECOND**, there needs to be a strong Christian education program that will enable Christians to know and share their faith well. Ach. [SD] emphasized that this must be Christian education directed specifically at training for evangelism. **THIRD**, where there is a new church to be started up substantial money is required up front for buying land, building a church, and creating a place to bring potential converts. He cited the example of a successful CCT new church in C'Mai and argued that its success was in part due to the foreign mission funds available to it. **FINALLY**, Ach. [SD] emphasized the importance of giving close, loving, friendly attention to new Christians and to potential converts. In general, Ach. [SD] believed that successful northern Thai evangelism was a gradual process. People came to the church thru relatives and friends. He used the term "natural increase."

It is interesting to note the points at which Ach. [VK] [HeRD #35] and Ach. [SD] agreed and disagreed. The main point of disagreement would be that Ach. [VK] felt that emphasizing evangelism as such is not necessary or even desirable. Teach and the church will grow! Ach. [SD] would not accept this premise. He argues that major emphasis has to be given to evangelism for a church to grow.