

## **First Protestant Worship Service in Thai?**

The Rev. Charles Robinson of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) mission in Bangkok wrote in a letter dated 11 February 1836 that the ABCFM mission held what he believed to be the first public worship of God in Thai on 24 January 1836. He wrote, "The meeting was held at the dispensary, of course most of the hearers were sick, but no less in need of the Great Physician on this account. About thirty were present on the first Sabbath. It was a time of deep interest to us. We had prepared a prayer and a hymn in Siamese, and this was probably the first time that ever a prayer to the true God, or his praises, were publicly heard in that language. The people appeared very attentive." [in *Missionary Herald* 32, 10 (October 1836), 380-381.]

Robinson himself wrote that this was "probably" the first public Christian worship service in Thai. Catholic churches had, of course, been worshipping in Siam for centuries, but in Latin not Thai. Protestant public worship in Siam up to January 1836, so far as he knew, had been conducted in Chinese. It seems reasonably likely that Christian worship in Thai did actually begin on January 24th, 1836.