

## If I Had It To Do All Over Again

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Soon we will celebrate 30 years of ministry to Thai people with [OMF](#). I was asked what I might have done differently if I knew what I knew today and as I reflected, I came up with the following items. Looking back, all of our mission experience has been by God's grace and it has been a tremendous privilege to serve Him. God has been faithful and gracious to our family for three decades and even though I may mention a few areas where I could have been more circumspect, overall my regrets are few.

1. An AOG missionary to Thailand sent a personal letter to all the other missionaries in Thailand back in the 1980s challenging us all to pray for one hour per day for the needs of Thailand. I wish I would have taken that challenge more seriously and adhered to it better. I was challenged ten years ago to fast for at least one day each week, a habit which I have followed since that challenge but now wish it would have come twenty years earlier.
2. I wouldn't have waited until 45 years old to attend a prayer counseling seminar in order to work on some long standing personal issues. Attending such a seminar would have meant that I could have started "inner healing" with Thai people much earlier than I did.
3. I would have studied and grounded myself better in a balanced biblical view of demonology. Many Christian Thai leaders tend to slip into an animistic mode and try to manipulate the spirit world rather than taking Christ's authority over the evil one. I would have studied the armor of God more and fastened it on more tightly on a daily basis.
4. I would have recognized that the Thai are predominantly oral learners and would have internalized key story sets that address the Theravada Buddhist world view. My preaching, discipleship, evangelism and counseling would have been driven by the telling and trading of stories (not the western analytical and print driven method that continues to be used almost exclusively in Thai contexts).
5. I would have listened and studied more to understand the world view of the Thai, making more of an effort to communicate to them in "their religious language" rather than in the typical missionary "Christianeze".
6. For my own physical shalom I would have exercised three times per week and made sure to protect a weekly Sabbath rest (day off) as well as a date night with my wife.
7. I would have figured out a way to purchase a house on the homestead early in my career and thus set up a solid base for my family in subsequent years. I would also make sure I deputized less and rested more during Home Assignment.

8. I would have sought to redeem as much of Thai culture as possible in church life (including the use of sticky rice and [roselle juice](#) for communion, functional substitutes for Buddhist celebrations such as [loy kratong](#), weddings, funerals, bowls instead of bags for offerings, Thai creedal statements, music, drama, etc.) I would have memorized more Thai proverbs and Buddhist sayings and stories which act as bridges for the gospel.

9. I would have reduced the huge number of distractions that diluted my focus such as email and internet use, too many visits from relatives and friends, attendance of way too many conferences, workshops and training seminars, etc.